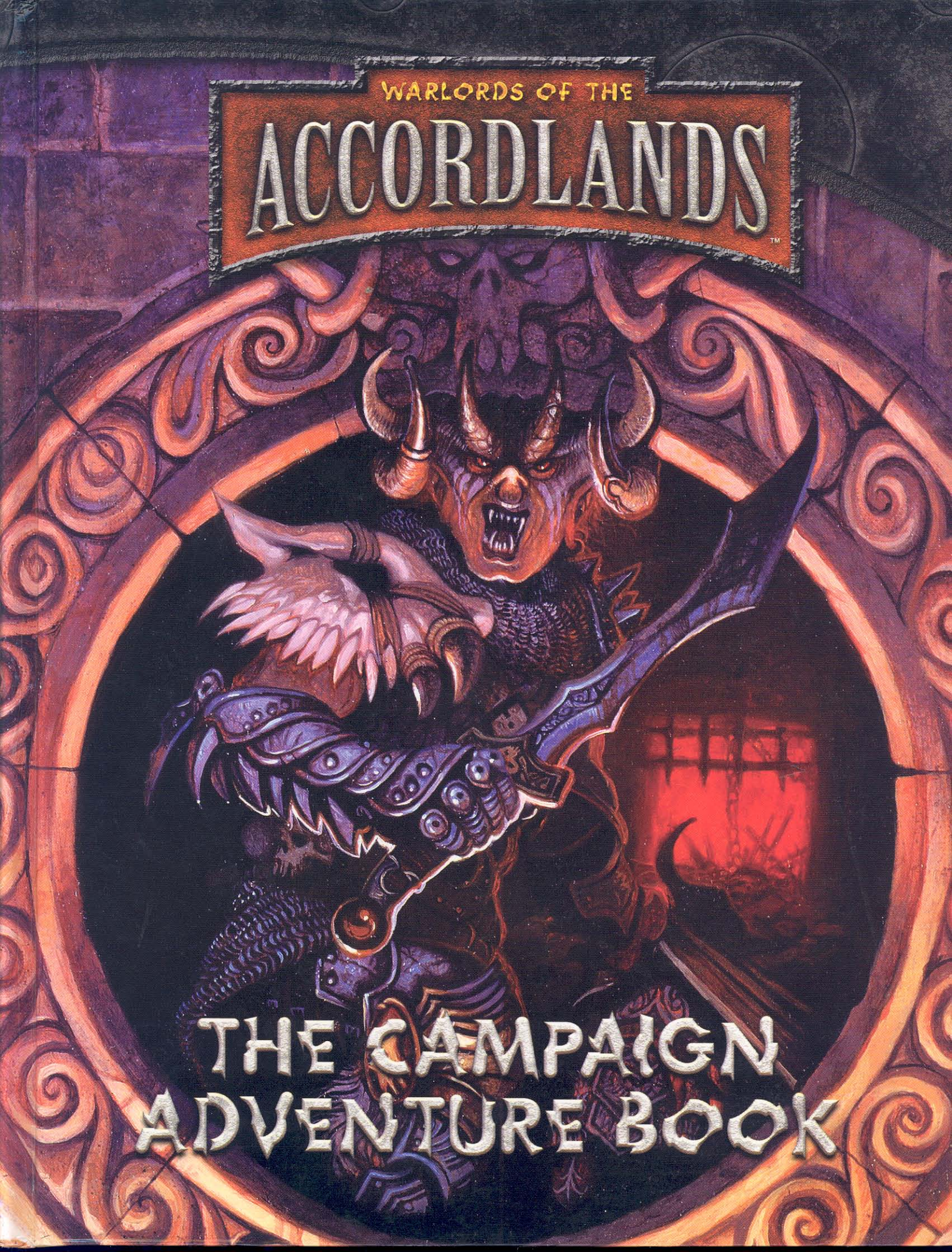

WARLORDS OF THE
ACCORDLANDS
THE CAMPAIGN ADVENTURE BOOK

# WARLORDS OF THE ACCORDLANDS

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# Introduction

Welcome to the Accordlands! Bound within the pages of this tome are adventure, intrigue, and danger. And for the courageous and hardy few, there is glory and treasure undreamed of. A mammoth roleplaying campaign comprising twenty-five interlocking adventures provides limitless opportunity for daring deeds, heroism, excitement, and glory.

The twenty-five adventures in this book allow an adventuring party to take part in the greatest story of the Accordlands, the epic struggle against the enigmatic and deadly Medusan Lords. If you are not a DM, we strongly recommend against reading any further, because much of the enjoyment of this campaign is in uncovering the Medusan Lords' plot to bring the entire world to its knees, and advance knowledge of that plot may dampen enjoyment of it later. Players familiar with the Warlord Collectible Card Game will meet many of their favorite characters. There is one thing, however, that distinguishes this book from other epic roleplaying campaigns. The PCs are more than just the heroes of the story; they are among the last heroes in the world.

The story begins on the infamous night of the Assassins' Strike, a single night when the Medusan Lords slew the greatest leaders and heroes of the Accordlands. People went to bed that night just as they always had, but when they awoke, everything was different. Their leaders, their kinsmen, their heroes were dead, except for a precious few scattered like chaff across the world. As the news spread, the magnitude of the event seeped into the minds of people everywhere. Who could have orchestrated such a deed? Who would have orchestrated such a deed?

The 1st-level PCs discover this powerful conspiracy, and they must stop the Medusan Lords before their fiendish scheme comes to fruition. It must be the PCs who stop them, because there is no one else. The few leaders who remain are desperately struggling to hold their shattered societies together, or to defend them from the rise of power-hungry warlords. The few heroes who remain are on the run from omniscient, omnipotent, incomprehensible forces. Therefore, the task of saving the world falls to the PCs. Not only must they struggle against the Medusan Lords, they must survive against the other evils rising across the world, already potent threats made worse by the deaths of so many. The dreaded abyssals are swarming from the depths of the earth to drive the dwarves from their ancient homes. Nassiral Hate has united legions of united his banner, and now sets his steely gaze upon the other nations. The Deverenian Empire is preparing once again to expand its dominion across the world. A long-buried Elven necromancer is prepared to escape his prison, threatening all living creatures. A mysterious summoner is gathering a horde of monsters to herself to do... what? Bizarre creatures crawl and slither from the blighted vastness of the Shattered Lands. The Elves tear across the beleaguered human kingdoms of the west, destroying towns and cities in vengeance for an ancient curse. A band of brigands slaughtered the paladins of the Aroch Paladins, leaving only a relative novice alive. Dragons emerge from centuries of myth at the behest of the mysterious man calling himself the Dragon Lord.

This tale sweeps across the breadth of the world of Larisnar and back again, from rarefied mountain peaks to the blackest dungeons in the underbelly of the earth, from snow-swathed forests to pest-ridden swamps to desolate plains. Only the bravest, the strongest, the most resourceful, the most worthy of heroes will triumph. If they fail, the entire world will be cast into darkness.

Sounds like fun, doesn't it?

## How to Use This Book

These adventures are meant to be played as a single continous campaign, each part of the epic struggle against the Medusan Lords. However, they can certainly be played and adapted to other campaigns with minor modifications, or even played as discrete unrelated adventures.

The campaign begins with level 1 characters at The Ghostwood Treaty, where diplomats seek to forge a treaty between the Elves and Andover. Instead, the Assassins' Strike settles over the proceedings, claiming the lives of many present. So begins a long and difficult campaign. As the characters gain levels, the adventures become increasingly deadly, until the PCs finally gain levels sufficient to face the dreaded Medusan Lords in The Final Showdown.

The adventures are arranged in "tiers" with all the adventures on the same tier written for characters of a specific range of levels: for example, second-tier adventures are appropriate for characters of levels 4ñ6. Each adventure tier increases in difficulty. While the characters can certainly go backwards to a lower-level tier to do something they might have missed, it is not recommended that the characters be allowed to attempt an adventure from a tier that is beyond their capabilities. Characters must be of 19th or 20th level to have a prayer of defeating the Medusan Lords, so the more experience they garner, the better off they will be. Every campaign is different, so it may become necessary for the DM to introduce his own mini-adventures, encounters, and side plots along the way to make sure the PCs are strong enough to face the next challenge.

The adventures on a particular tier can be played in any order, but in many cases, changing their order also changes the circumstances of subsequent adventures. For this reason, we encourage the DM to take copious notes in this book as the campaign progresses. This book is an adventure log as much as a map to the adventures themselves.

## Campaign Theme

In this campaign, the PCs may well be the world's last hope: they should feel it. They begin the campaign as relative nobodies, too insignificant for the Medusan Lords to bother with. As the campaign progresses, their power and notoriety grows, and they come to the Medusan Lords' attention. No one wants to be noticed by the Medusan Lords. The PCs are the last bastion of good in lands riddled with the forces of evil. The common people of the Accordlands are all but helpless to resist, and yearn for heroes to save them from the encroaching darkness.

The odds the PCs face seem insurmountable. The Medusan Lords' power is vast yet undetectable; their influence seems to permeate the fabric of the world. Thteir agents are everywhere. No one in the world is safe from them. But they must be stopped, and it falls to the PCs to do it. The PCs must disrupt the Medusan Lords' plans, while at the same time fending off all the other evils in the world. If the PCs proceed in their fight against the Medusan Lords, their deaths seem assured. Nevertheless, proceed they must, because there is no one else!

# The Medusan Lords

## The History of the Medusan Lords

From his stronghold in the Shattered Lands, Malrog the Destroyer leads the mysterious cabal of the Medusan Lords. But they did not start out with their current level of power and influence. In the beginning, their conspiracy had no name at all.

Malrog spent over 150 years scheming, gathering power and information. He had slain a dragon, and its heart had granted him unnaturally long life, among other powers. To fill the long decades, Malrog traveled the world. In his journeys, he encountered others as powerful and ambitious as himself: Majeral the Ghoul Lord, Cear Adinerach, Tiberius Blackthorn, and many others. It was apparent to all of them that they could not coexist as adversaries, but each respected the power of the others. It seemed a pity to destroy one another, when they would be much more powerful if they combined their strength. They agreed to part ways without combat.

Malrog's vision slowly took shape: a vision of a secret cabal of the world's most powerful beings. With all of them working together, they could bring even Deverenia to its knees. Fifty years ago, Malrog invited them to his fortress, the Pit. Cear Adinerach and Tiberius Blackthorn were the first to come. Majeral brought with him two other undead lords, Casrian Furio and Lord Levishinus. Casrian and Levishinus were too set in their ways, too blinded by their own shortsightedness and greed to understand Malrog's vision, and they returned to their homelands. Majeral remained. A conspiracy of power had been born, but it did not yet have a name.

They decided that they needed to make a bold statement. They represented a new power in the Accordlands, one that could strike from anywhere without warning, a group wielding unimaginable might. They wanted to strike fear into kings and generals, and cast about for a suitable target.

The coming of Bascaron (*see World Book*) had devastated the Medusan civilization, located within what were now the Shattered Lands. Its greatness was diminished, but much of its grandeur remained. Its military was weak, barely able to protect the Medusans' remaining city from the savage beasts that roamed the Shattered Lands. Malrog and his partners chose the great city of Medusa to be their statement. Malrog returned to his native Nothrog lands and gathered a new legion, usurping control of two of the bloodthirstiest legions. No Nothrog warlord could stand before him. He hammered these hostile bands into a single powerful legion, as large as any in existence, and he led them into the Shattered Lands to the city of Medusa. Blackthorn used his own influence to gather a force of Deverenia's finest knights to add to the army. Majeral, Lord of the Ghouls, called minions from around the world, mustering a horde of shambling terrors. Cear Adinerach gathered a group of professional killers and moved them into the city as a prelude to the attack.

The assassins killed all of the city's most influential leaders, throwing the Medusans into chaos. Then the Nothrogs attacked, supported by the skilled Deverenian knights and the ravenous horror of the flesh-hungry ghouls. The Medusans did not have a chance. Within two days, every Medusan in the city had been slaughtered, young and old, men and women. But that was not good enough for the conquerors. Cear Adinerach and his assassins sought out and killed the rest wherever they were hiding. In an astonishingly short time, all known Medusans were dead. Their city was razed, its stones scattered. Their entire existence, all of their history and civilization, all of their accomplishments were gone as if they had never been.

The victory was so complete, so devastating, that Malrog and his partners triumphantly styled themselves "the Medusan Lords."

What the Medusan Lords still do not know is that one Medusan escaped the slaughter — but only one, a young summoner named Sorscha (*see the adventure Shadow of the Black Tower*).

Just as quickly as the forces that destroyed Medusa had gathered, they dispersed, disappearing like smoke. The Nothrogs, the assassins, the Stormknights, the ghouls, all returned from whence they came, As for the Medusan Lords' own armies, those who survived returned to their homelands, there to serve their masters more subtly. They never spoke of what had happened during their travels. The Accordlands were stunned into paralyzed silence. The shocking brutality, the sheer audacity, and the lightning speed with which the Medusans had been wiped out terrified them. Where had the army come from? Where had it gone when the carnage was finished? Who had arranged and ordered the heinous deed?

After the leaders of the Accordlands had been allowed to stew for a time, Malrog sent each of them a cryptic message:

*"Our day will come. All the lands of Accord will grovel at our feet. Until then, look over your shoulder and fear. If you doubt, remember the city of Medusa. We are among you. We are you!*

*The Medusan Lords"*

The infamous destruction of the Medusan civilization caused another effect that Malrog had anticipated, and welcomed. Powerful, ambitious individuals from across the Accordlands began to seek out these mysterious Medusan Lords. Malrog and his companions watched them from afar, choosing those they deemed worthy of inclusion.

Over the next few decades, the Medusan Lords gathered to them others of incredible power like Cassica Moonseed, a powerful cultist of Bascaron, and Nassiral Hate, an albino Nothrog with the ambition to unite all of the Nothrog legions under his banner. All pledged their power to the mutual benefit of the Medusan Lords.

The ultimate goal of the Medusan Lords, Malrog told them, was total world domination. The lords of the human kingdoms, the Elven Houses, even the Deverenian Emperor would kneel before the Medusan Lords, and none of them would see it coming.

Malrog did not tell them all how he planned to achieve those goals. It quickly became apparent to him that beings of this nature and this level of power were destined to squabble. Their cabal was destined to fracture; therefore, he had to work quickly. So he handpicked a few of them, those whose capabilities would be most useful or who appeared most committed to the goals of the cabal. To them — Tiberius Blackthorn, Cear Adinerach, Majeral the Ghoul Lord, and Cassica Moonseed — he imparted the full scope of his plans. In conceiving his grand scheme, he

looked into dark depths of ancient days. Athanae had slain the Great Dragon and had become a god herself; Malrog intended to achieve divinity by similar means. He had conceived a bold scheme to steal the remnants of the Dragon's power, the Storm, for himself and those who helped him.

Malrog and his closest compatriots wanted to become gods themselves.

Today the name of the Medusan Lords sends a shiver of fear through all in the Accordlands. Their name and their deed are legendary, but they are otherwise a terrible mystery.

### Cassica Moonseed

Cassica began studying wizardry at an early age under the prestigious tutors of Arak Spire. She loved gardening and the mysteries of the world of plants. The gifted daughter of affluent Corinthian nobles, the idealistic Cassica soon rose to the top of her class. She was beautiful and talented, ambitious and strong-willed, but not evil. Not yet.

Cassica foolishly fell in love with one of the highest-ranked wizards of the school. The tower's chatelain discovered the affair, who, to forestall any hint of scandal, banished Cassica from Arak Spire. She was never to return; the affair was swept under the rug, protecting the teacher. The situation shamed her parents, and she lived with them for only a short while before they cast her out as well. Outraged and embittered, she wandered Andover as an adventurer, selling her spellcasting abilities to any would pay her. Then her fortunes took a turn for the worse.

Slavers out of Jalpa captured her and sold her to a Nothrog chieftain. The Nothrog took her all the way across the Accordlands to the lands of the Nothrog legions, thinking he could tame her. Despite his brutal attempts to break her fiery spirit, she never submitted to his will. He was careful not to disfigure her during his tortures, so she fetched a better price when he sold her again. For two years, she was handed around to several Nothrog chieftains, but none of them could subdue her. Every day she prayed to Ishara for strength to resist her captors, and to heal her wounded body. The goddess never answered. Then one day, her current captor foolishly fell asleep in her presence, while leaving her bonds slightly loose. She seized the opportunity to escape, but not before slitting his throat and scattering his corpse throughout his tent.

She fled blindly east, into the wilderness of the Shattered Mountains. She did not know where she was going, only that an entire nation of Nothrogs laid between her and Andover, and she hated and feared them them fo fiercely that she simply had to get away from them. Starving and near death from abuse, she stumbled into the Shattered Lands. She wandered their desolate expanses for a vague, nightmarish period of time, surviving by eating unspeakable things and licking the dew from the rocks. One evening she lay upon a rock, exhausted and emaciated, gazing at the darkening heavens. She contemplated praying to Ishara as she had so many times during her captivity, but she remembered that Ishara had never answered her prayers.

Then the Banshee Moon's blood-red shape heaved itself from the black silhouettes of the mountains. She lay bathed in its sanguine light, closed her eyes, and felt strangely comforted. When she opened her eyes again, Bascaron was directly above her, looking down like a blood-smeared, ruptured eyeball. She raised her hand to Bascaron and begged for aid, for life, for revenge, for everything that had been taken away from her. The Banshee Moon answered. She felt its light upon her like the warm rays of the sun, and she fell into a deep sleep. When she awoke, she felt different, as if the moon had planted something within her. Her weakness and hunger were gone, as were the wounds that had taken so long to heal. Before long, she felt her body's changes as well, even though it looked the same as ever. She had gained a preternatural resilience, stamina, and youth, but there was a price. Every time she slept, she was now haunted by nightmares of blood and torture, and the only thing that can assuage her agony is Bascaron. These nightmares have left her slightly unhinged.

She wandered the Shattered Lands for years, and encountered the monstrous Blighted Beast. For her it was proof of Bascaron's power. She does not remember clearly, but she believes the Blighted Beast took her into its bosom for some interminable period. Eventually she made her way back into the Accordlands, and set about gathering magical knowledge and power for herself. She had scores to settle.

Today there is no one alive who remembers the girl named Cassica, the pariah cast out of Arak Spire. All of them mysteriously disappeared; Cassica found it disappointingly easy. She kept them in cages like birds, entertaining herself with their discomfort. Her "collection" of prisoners so amused her that she took to incarcerating innocent people. Her nightmares have stripped away her regard for living creatures, and she now sees everything as a "pet" to be cared for or disposed of at her whim. She feels compelled to collect pets, and enjoys "playing" with them, which often results in their gruesome deaths. She chooses victims for their uniqueness. They have unusual physical features, like incredible beauty or extreme ugliness, or unusual talents, like artists or musicians. Those who find themselves in Cassica's clutches never see the outside world again.

She has made several trips back to the Shattered Lands seeking to further commune with Bascaron. On one of these excursions, she discovered a strange stone in the center of a large crater, and instinctively knew it for a fragment of Bascaron. She has heard of other fragments, but this one is unlike any of them. She called it the Blood Moon Shard, taking it with her, and sometimes uses it on her pets for her amusement.

When she discovered the existence of the secret cabal calling themselves the Medusan Lords, she approached them. As a pledge of her desire to join them and to demonstrate her power, she offered them a token of her good faith: the entire kingdom of Andover. She delivered her pledge on day she married Sir Robert in the guise of Cassandra, his young betrothed. Since that day she has shaped events in Andover with unseen hands, molding its history and manipulating the actions of those in power with Cassandra's beauty and her own immense charisma. To cover her frequent absences from Sir Robert's house, she long ago constructed a simulacrum in Cassandra's likeness.

She has long desired to destroy her old school, Arak Spire, but those wizards are still too powerful to overcome when they stand together. She hopes that when the Medusan Lords' Great

Ritual is complete, she will have the power to blast Arak Spire into tiny bits and scatter the ashes across the breadth of the Accordlands. In the meantime, she works closely with the other Medusan Lords to achieve the group's goals.

She despises Nassiral Hate with a white-hot passion. He is a Nothrog, one of the vile breed that caused her so much suffering in her youth. Majeral is a distasteful fiend, but a powerful and resourceful ally. She has attempted to seduce Tiberius Blackthorn on several occasions, but thus far he has politely deflected her advances, much to her chagrin. Cear Adinerach is an incredibly dangerous creature whom she much prefers to have as an ally, rather than an enemy. Malrog is an avatar of raw, brutal power, a force of nature, and she secretly fears him.

### Cear Adinerach

Cear Adinerach was once merely a talented and ambitious footpad, an apprentice in the Thieves Guild, devoted to his family and to House Tansiq. Even though his entire house had been cast out of Elven society as heretics, he was proud of his family and his lineage. In those days, his name was simply Cear.

Even as a youth he knew of his House's cannibalistic rituals and the religious beliefs that prompted them, but he did not believe in such things himself. Religion never held much meaning for him. The shackles of any kind of moral code made his profession more difficult, so he eschewed religious sentiments, but he did not judge those who felt the need for them. What was it to him if some priests of Flesh in House Tansiq chose to eat flesh? His parents were two such individuals, and he respected their beliefs even if he did not follow them. The other Elven houses were not so forgiving. When Cear was still an apprentice assassin, his parents were discovered among a cabal of Tansiq "heretics" by House Calix and House Dythanus, and executed. His parents had been proud of him, and their unjust deaths left him with a bitter hatred of the other Elven houses, Houses Calix and Dythanus in particular. Cear's thirst to avenge his parents' deaths led him to defy the will of his guildmaster, and hunt down the individuals who had ordered his parents' execution.

For several weeks he planned his assassinations: priests of Bone, Spirit, and Blood; influential nobles of House Calix and House Dythanus; and anyone else who got in his way. When these victims inexplicably died, Cear's guildmaster realized what was happening and called upon him to cease, but that call went unheeded. The kings and queens of the Elven houses demanded that something be done, so the guildmaster dispatched his deadliest servants to kill the stray assassin. Cear used his knowledge of their techniques, his resourcefulness, his skill, and considerable luck to survive these attacks. No one could kill him. Finally the great Elven wizards turned their magical powers against him; he could not escape their combined efforts, even with the geas against necromancy still in effect. He was forced to flee Elven lands or be slain, his parents unavenged.

Cear contacted guild houses in other lands, even human lands, and worked with them. He could not go home, and his thirst for vengeance grew. He applied every thought and effort to honing his craft, becoming a master assassin, surpassing the talents of even the guild. By then he was twenty-five years old. His time would soon be over. With little life left to lose he returned to Elven lands and sought his kin in House Tansiq. They gladly took him in, and taught him the ways of the Tansiq Fleshers, showing him how to extend his life by robbing the lives of others.

Then he began to hear whispers of a mysterious creature called Malrog, who was said to be seeking individuals of great power and talent. Intrigued, Cear traveled to the dread Shattered Lands and sought out this Malrog, and found in him a mighty tool for vengeance. Malrog was planning a devastating raid on the city of Medusa, last home of the nearly extinct Medusan race. Malrog asked Cear to gather a force of assassins to infiltrate the city and kill dozens of carefully selected targets, and he backed up his request with a pile of gold large enough to buy an entire Elven city. Cear knew the perfect killers for the job: the assassins of House Tansiq.

The Medusans never saw them coming. The assassins ran rampant through the city of Medusa's halls of power, killing leaders, guards, and nobles; anyone with power, or talent, or of tactical importance in the imminent attack. The surprise attack on the city was a shocking success, thanks in large part to Cear and his assassins. As a badge of his success, he adopted the word "adinerach" meaning "dark slayer" from the language of the murdered race, and added it to his name.

He also left the Shattered Lands with a huge share of treasure pillaged from the city of Medusa. With this vast wealth he clandestinely recruited many of the assassins who had assisted with the Medusan assassinations. They became his personal agents, scattered throughout the Accordlands. The most deadly people in the world were loyal to him, and no one knew it.

He found another treasure in the halls of the Medusa's ancient libraries, before the city was razed: knowledge. The Medusans' volumes of ancient lore were breathtaking. He found a method of forging weapons that left their victims truly dead, with no hope of resurrection. With this information he created his Black Knives and their lesser copies, the weapons used on the night of the Assassins' Strike.

He also discovered a special ritual wherein the soul of a dragon could be stolen, and used to grant a mortal immortality. Cear believed that after the ritual his power would rival that of the legendary Syneri, the immortal Elven wizard. He enlisted the help of Cassica Moonseed to enact the ritual. Together they captured and subdued a black dragon, ripped the dragon's soul from its body, and forced it to join with Cear. When it was over, Cear's skin had become a dark bluish-gray, almost black. His long, flowing hair had turned silvery-white. His eyes lost their natural features and became a glittering yellow. Since then he has not aged a day, with no further need for the dark, bloody rituals of House Tansiq to extend his life. He has since learned that this ritual is similar to the means Syneri, Artheon, and a handful of others used to become immortal. He has joined with these other elves, collectively the Ten, as a double-agent in service to Malrog. Their appearance is altered as well, but Cear is the only elf in existence with dark flesh and burning eyes.

The success of Cear's ritual may have given Malrog the idea of the Great Ritual. If the soul of only one dragon could do that for Cear, what could the soul of the Eternal Dragon accomplish in the hands of mortal beings? Cear's interest was piqued. Even though he was already immortal, the thought of the power to wreak true vengeance against the Elven Houses secured his devotion. Cear single-handedly organized the night of the Assassins' Strike, using his own assassins, and hiring Black Tom of Corinth, the naster of the Assassins Guild and Thieves Guild, to supplement his forces. The wealth stolen from the rape of Medusa was useful once again.

Cear Adinerach is perhaps the most quietly lethal individual in the Accordlands. He does not have the raw power of the other Medusan Lords, but his victims seldom see him coming until it is too late, if they see him at all. To this day, he has never failed to kill an intended target, and thanks to his Black Knives his victims cannot be resurrected. His network of agents covers the Accordlands, perfect for inflicting terror and chaos wherever such pressure must be exerted.

### Majeral, the Ghoul Lord

Majeral is so old that neither he nor any other remembers who he was or when he lived, when he was alive. In the tortured half-existence of undeath, he does not even remember the first few decades or centuries of his existence as a ghoul. As far as he can remember, like the hills and the rivers and the sands of his native land, he simply exists, and he always has. His memory still troubles him sometimes; the decades, the centuries slip past so quickly, so easily, that he lives in the thoughts and goals of the moment.

Majeral is tall, with pale, rubbery skin only half-covering wiry black muscles. He wears ancient, rotten rags and a thick belt with rusty 15-foot chains attached to it. Each chain ends in a collar around the neck of a half-dead humanoid slave, doomed to relinquish its lifeforce to maintain Majeral's failing health. Majeral has a large stable of slaves, all of whom are fated to die in this manner. When Majeral sucks the last of his slaves' lifeforce, they usually become ghouls under his command. Majeral releases ghouls that are chained to him and replaces them with fresh slaves whenever possible.

Majeral has many names: the Flesh Render, the Ghoul Lord, the Putrid One, Grave Spawn, and Death's Head. Many of his multitudes of victims have doubtless called him worse. His history is long and shrouded in mystery. Majeral's goals have always been ambitious, which is what led him to join the cabal of powerful individuals calling themselves the Medusan Lords.

Majeral is a fearsome adversary. The other Medusan Lords often call upon him to kill those who have displeased them or who pose a threat. He is powerful, but he has a major weakness. Despite being an undead creature, he is perpetually dying. This is his reason for working with the other Medusan Lords. Their quest for apotheosis drives him as well. He has spent centuries struggling to maintain his unholy existence, and slain countless thousands of hapless slaves in the process. He despises this existence, chained to his supply of slaves, and his disintegration is accelerating. These days he has little time for anything except keeping himself rejuvenated.

### Malrog Iron Face

Two centuries ago Malrog was a powerful Nothrog warlord who led one of the largest legions. The lands under his domination were wide and rich, and he enjoyed the fear and respect of every other Nothrog legion,and even the Deverenian Empire and the southern nations. One fateful day he heard a tale about Deathbile, an ancient black wyrm living deep within the Shattered Lands, with a treasure hoard that could buy all of Deverenia.

After months of searching and untold tribulations, Malrog and his legion found a tremendous pit, an arrow wound in the face of the world. They prepared to attack, but the dragon was ready. It was old, and spiteful, and had long sensed their coming. The wyrm's power was staggering, and it seemed indestructible. Catapult stones and ballista missiles glanced like pebbles off of its impenetrable hide, and its acid breath rained mercilessly upon the Nothrog legion. The hopeless battle raged until the great wyrm had slain the entire legion.

Malrog lay among the dead, horribly burned, his right arm seared off just below the elbow, his right eye blinded by acid. Deathbile taunted him as he lay dying, and, defiant to the end, Malrog heaved himself to his feet, facing his tormentor. The dragon's scornful laughter was like the thunder of the Storm. Then, in one bite, the colossal beast devoured him whole. Malrog landed in Deathbile's belly, where the acid of its gullet seared his already agonizing wounds. Rage and defiance exploded within him, and he desperately attacked the dragon from the inside. It thrashed and writhed, bellowing in helpless agony, as Malrog hewed away with his battle-axe. He tore through the dragon's tough but unarmored innards, awash in blood and acid, until it finally fell dead. It seemed like forever that Malrog chopped and hacked, the dragon's digestive fluids eating his flesh away, before its armored hide parted and Malrog burst out into the light of day. But he was dying; he felt his life slipping away.

Then he looked about him at the ruin of his once-great legion. Rage consumed him, and the lust for vengeance. This dragon had taken everything from him. The rage fueled his strength and dulled his pain. Again his battle-axe carved a path for him, and he hacked his way to the dragon's heart, carved off a huge chunk of meat, and ate it. The taste of vengeance was the sweetest thing he had ever experienced, and he tore into the hot flesh with the zeal of the starving. Before he knew it, he had eaten every scrap of the dragon's heart and drunk a huge quantity of its blood. His rage and bloodlust began to wane, and he realized that all of his pain was gone. Then a wave of exhaustion washed over him, and he lost consciousness.

He knew not how long he slept within the corpse of the ancient wyrm, but when he awoke he could tell that days had passed, for the corpses of the thousands of Nothrogs who had followed him lay rotting all around him. He crawled out of the dragon's corpse, and breathed the stench of death. Something was different. He looked at himself. He stood all but naked now; he had somehow grown much larger, bursting the seams of his armor. His skin was horribly scarred, and all the hair had been burned from his body. His right eye and right hand were gone.

eaten away by Deathbile's acid. His trusty battle-axe, wielded in so many battles, was now little more than a toy in his hand, half-dissolved. Nevertheless, he felt stronger than he had ever felt before.

Malrog, Warlord of the Malrog Legion, was dead, slain by the dragon. Malrog was reborn as something else, something better.

The tales of Deathbile's vast wealth were true. Deep in the wyrm's lair was the great hoard, and it held treasure much more precious than mere gold and jewels. There was magic there, magic that was old when the Accordlands were born. Magic that he learned to use. Magic that made him more than he was before. And knowledge. Deathbile had been spawned by the Great Dragon, and his hoard held knowledge of the Great Dragon that the rest of the Accordlands had long forgotten.

Malrog claimed the dragon's lair as his hidden stronghold and set out to rebuild his power. He has had two hundred years to do it, rebuilding himself in the process. Like all beings of great power, he has many names: Malrog Iron-Face, Malrog the Destroyer, Malrog the Unconquered, the Pit Fiend.

He stands almost 9 feet tall, and the hide from Deathbile's armored breast is his suit of armor. Half of his face and head are covered by a thick iron mask. In place of his right eye is a bauble from the dragon's hoard, the Protean Gem, which has incredible magical powers and glitters with different hues as its magic is released. For decades he wore a gigantic battle axe on the stump of his right arm, but these days he wears a wondrous device created by his fellow Medusan Lord, Cassica Moonseed. It is a clawed iron gauntlet magically bound to his right arm, which has merged with his stump and serves him as well as his right hand ever did.

### Tiberius Blackthorn

Tiberius Blackthorn may be the single most dangerous mortal man in the Accordlands. His power, both from his station and his own ability, is overwhelming. Those who know of him know there are two things one must feel for him: respect and fear. Those who fail in the first are foolish, and those who fail in the second are fools.

Tiberius Blackthorn joined the Knights of the Black Sun at an early age, and has served it his entire life. Although he is the brotherhood's most powerful member, Blackthorn has avoided drawing attention to himself throughout his career, and willingly serves the lesser men who have been promoted above him. Blackthorn's contacts within the Black Sun are extensive, as are his allies in the Deverenian church hierarchy. The few who know him know he is a great scholar of the Storm, but they do not suspect the true depth of his first-hand knowledge, nor do they suspect his interest is not entirely an expression of his piety, but rather of his devotion to the Medusan Lords' plans to conduct their Great Ritual.

Blackthorn first became involved with the Medusan Lords when he received a summons from a creature called Malrog, promising incredible power and wealth. The arrogant paladin lord was outraged to be summoned, but his curiosity drove him to answer. He took a legion of loyal troops with him; if this Malrog were unworthy of his respect he would crush him.

Malrog delivered on everything he had promised. Prominent and mysterious figures from across the Accordlands attended the summit, and together they swore an oath to reshape the Accordlands in their image. After the destruction of the Medusan race, they became the Medusan Lords. At last Blackthorn felt he had discovered the means to reach his true destiny: godhood.

While Blackthorn did not conceive of the Assassins' Strike, he did coordinate significant portions. Cear Adinerach and his lackeys arranged the majority of the attacks, but the hardened military outposts that were destroyed during that infamous night fell to the peerless tactical mind of Tiberius Blackthorn. Deverenian fortresses, Nothrog dens, western castles, and Elven strongholds were all brought low by Blackthorn's brilliance.

Although he was involved in the initial stages of planning the Assassins' Strike, Blackthorn left his castle several years ago to seek out the Storm. He loathed being gone for so long, neither trusting his fellow Medusan Lords nor placing his faith in their ability to complete their agreed-upon tasks. Still, seeking the Storm was too important a task to leave to another. Unfortunately, Blackthorn trusted no one in the Accordlands other than himself.

His answer came from the infernal being with whom he had made an evil pact many years earlier. In his youth, Blackthorn had discovered a magical means of contacting a powerful Abyssal trapped deep beneath the Accordlands. In exchange for power, Blackthorn committed many atrocities in this creature's name. Each such act weakened the bonds that imprison the creature, and it hopes to use Blackthorn to escape. Unbeknownst to the creature, Blackthorn is well aware of the nature of the creature's imprisonment, and has no intention of releasing it. Once he has exploited its power as much as he can, he will discard it as he has so many other allies in the past.

In exchange for one of Blackthorn's weaponsmiths, the Abyssal provided him with an artifact of terrible power: the Doom of Souls. This sinister dagger allowed Blackthorn to destroy the soul of one of his most talented underlings, replacing it with an exact duplicate of his own. This created essentially a younger, less powerful version of Blackthorn enslaved to the original's will. With this new ally, whom he called Duke Blackthorne, Blackthorn set out to find the Storm, leaving his vassal to carry out his plans.

Blackthorn is a gigantic man, standing nearly seven feet tall with a build that makes him nearly as wide as two grown men. His features are dark and sinister, yet they retain a strange allure that draws others to him. He inspires fear and a terrible loyalty in those who serve him, and those who call him master would give their lives in his name without question or reservation. Those he sends to act in his name must succeed or perish. Tiberius Blackthorn does not tolerate failure.

# Tier 1

The party's war against the Medusan Lords begins simply at Ghostwood Keep, with the elves preparing to sign a treaty with the human kingdom of Andover, ending a bloody war almost before it began. Soon enough, the vagaries of politics are the least of anyone's concerns as a pack of killers descends, just one tiny part of the Assassins' Strike. This adventure is suitable for level 1 characters.

At this point, the PCs may not know one another, and in fact come from wildly different races and societies. While the keep has plenty of mercenaries to help keep the peace, to say nothing of seers insisting that something important will soon happen there, players may wish to have personal reasons for their characters' visit to Ghostwood. If so, here are a few reasons for characters to come to Ghostwood Keep, by race:

- Deverenians: Though the Deverenian Empire officially has no business at Ghostwood Keep, most Deverenians are curious about what is happening. PCs may be here simply to investigate whether peace is indeed happening. Others may simply visit Ghostwood in search of a new quest worthy of their time; before night's end, they will certainly find it.
- Dwarves: Most dwarves are still below ground, save for a handful of exiles. Recently, however, Gnorrow Yaw convinced King Xod to send an expedition to the surface in search of allies against the Abyssals. A rockslide separated many dwarves from the main group, and PCs may well include such a lost dwarf. As Yaw was looking to sign treaties, these dwarves may follow the treaty rumors to Ghostwood looking for him.
- Elves: As one of the two nations signing the treaty, elven PCs have plenty of reason to be present. Perhaps they are present to visit relatives on duty at the keep, or to deliver messages. They might also look to protect the elven and human ambassadors from assassins in either camp, or even take part in the treaty themselves.
- Halfbreeds: In addition to those reasons involving their parent races, halfbreed PCs may look to foster the tolerance any treaty at Ghostwood might provide. Toris Kelt is a haven for halfbreeds and at war with the elves, so halfbreeds may have personal reasons to end the elves' attacks on the human settlements.
- Humans: As with elves, human PCs have many reasons to be interested in Ghostwood Keep. While the elves may yet sign a treaty with Andover, Andover is only one human nation among many, and PCs may seek to include their homelands in the treaty.
- Nimbics: Though a small race with extensive ties to the elves, most nimbics have little taste for black magic. They would quietly welcome any treaty limiting elven necromancy. Nimbics also have a taste for anything exciting, and so many different people pushing their agendas in one place guarantees some amusement.
- Nothrog: Though the Nothrog lands are far to the east of both the elven lands and most of the human kingdoms, the leader of the Nothrog, Lord Nassiral Hate, has allied with one eastern kingdom, Misear, and taken another, Baraxton, as a protectorate. Nothrog PCs may wish to ensure that the elves leave both nations alone.

## A Note on Evil PCs

The Accordlands is a world infested with evil, and in truth it took an act of greater evil than the Dragon's nihilism to slay it. Three of the major factions (the Deverenians, elves, and Nothrog) are predominately evil, while the remaining "good" peoples struggle to survive while making desperate choices.

As befits such a setting, PCs may also be of evil alignment, whether the callous lawful evil of the Deverenian Empire, or the bloodthirsty zealotry of some of the Nothrog tribes. Such characters may be evil, but should not be villainous.

There's a fine line between antihero and villain, but it is a line the PCs should not cross. However dubious their virtues might be, evil PCs are still the heroes of this setting. It is the Medusan Lords who are the true evil, and their power and the scope of their ambitions should far outstrip those of any PC.

When designing an evil PC, players should bear in mind that "evil" does not mean "foolish." The Accordlands have a low tolerance for fools. Players and PCs alike should be fully aware of the enormity of the challenge that the Medusan Lords present. Almost casually and literally overnight, the Medusan Lords slaughter the Accordlands' greatest heroes, an event that the party personally witnesses. As the campaign progresses, the party attracts this dangerous group's attention. A player intentionally disrupting the party's unity is not role-playing evil, but an act of suicidal foolishness.

To aid in role-playing, players who wish to play an evil character, an antihero, should choose some virtue that their character respects above all else. Perhaps the character is profoundly devoted to his deity, who set him on this path. Maybe the character always keeps his sworn word, and gave it to someone at Ghostwood Keep, only to find it binding him to fight the Medusan Lords. Lawful evil characters, especially Deverenians, might follow their own strict code of honor. Chaotic evil characters might thirst for revenge after Cear mocks them. Even neutral evil characters, normally the very definition of traitors, might wish to join the party just to have a little added protection against the Medusan Lords. In any case, the PCs and players both should remember that the enemy is greater than any personal squabbles, and selling out another PC is effectively helping the Medusan Lords. No PC with an ounce of self-preservation instinct should want that.

This air of forced tolerance should extend to good-aligned PCs as well. While no good paladin would choose a necromancer as an ally, a paladin PC does not have that choice, and even working with such a disgusting magician is infinitely preferable to the Medusan Lords' victory. Indeed, should the paladin push the issue, he might find himself suddenly stripped of his divine favor as his god reminds him of the greater good.

While the essence of drama is conflict, party conflict should be fun for all involved, not disruptive to the game. The above paladin and necromancer team should indeed argue almost constantly, but not to the point that they lose sight of the greater goal of defeating the Medusan Lords. It is the PCs' destiny to overthrow Malrog and his inner circle, a task made impossible if the party turns on itself.



# The Ghostwood Treaty

## Introduction

*The Ghostwood Treaty* throws adventurers into a small keep assaulted by assassins and thieves, leaving them to minimize the damage and gather information about those behind the attacks.

This is the only adventure in Tier 1. It is meant for brand-new 1st-level characters.

## Adventure Background

Peace.

Diplomats believe that most elusive goal in the Accordlands is finally at hand. Age-old enemies on the brink of a disastrous war have somehow negotiated a peace agreement, and representatives of the major nations of the Accordlands have come to witness the historic event. The small keep of Ghostwood, a holdover from the earliest days of war between the Elves and Andover, will host the ceremony.

Ghostwood overflows with diplomats, soldiers, servants, and hangers-on, as well as uninvited guests. Some tag along to see what all the fuss is about. Some want to mingle with the rich and powerful. Some know that this historic gathering provides an unequalled opportunity for sowing chaos. Those dangerous few lurk in the woods near Ghostwood Keep.

On the rare occasions peace has been achieved in the Accordlands, it was short-lived. If the planned strikes are successful, the flickering light of peace will be extinguished, and the Accordlands will plunge into darkness.

# Adventure Synopsis

*The Ghostwood Treaty* begins with the PCs coming to Ghostwood for the treaty signing. They may arrive with disparate goals (*see Character Hooks, below*), but when the sun rises on the day the treaty was supposed to be signed, most of those goals will be changed.

The adventure begins the night before the rumored date of the signing ceremony. The PCs have a chance to explore the keep, get a feel for the climate, make some contacts and, if necessary, meet one another.

In the morning, all hell breaks loose: both delegations' head ambassadors have fallen to assassins. The PCs are trapped in the keep along with the assassins and a variety of NPCs who help or hinder the PCs' efforts.

More disasters follow the assassinations: the barracks sheltering newly-trained paladins explodes; the assassins attempt more murders, a prison break, and a theft; and simmering hostilities between Elves and Humans may erupt into open fighting.

Many of this adventure's tasks do not involve combat. Information gathering, diplomacy, bluffing, and other skills are important, and competent use of these skills can both help the PCs stay alive and yield them information they will need in future adventures.

Once the ambassadors die, the GM must keep careful track of the passage of time, as several events happen at specific times (*see* **Part 4** *for more details*). Nevertheless, the GM must also have some flexibility; a party that keeps missing crucial events by half an hour is going to be frustrated. If the PCs are on the right track and heading for a specific location when an event is supposed to take place, the GM should let them arrive in time. One event, the encounter with Cear Adinerach, takes place at a specific time but not a specific place. The GM should adjust the encounter according to where the PCs are at the time.

For the PCs, the principal goal of the adventure is survival. They are locked in the Keep with individuals who are perfectly willing to kill them if it would cause more chaos in the Accordlands. Beyond survival, the PCs should concentrate on minimizing the damage caused by the assassins and gathering information about events in the Keep. The more they know, the better prepared they will be for the adventures to come.

# Character Hooks

There are many ways to get PCs to the crucial events in Ghostwood Keep. Every faction in the Accordlands has sent representatives to the signing. PCs could be brought to Ghostwood Keep for any of the following reasons:

- They are assigned to guard an attending dignitary.
- They were hired to guard the keep during the special event.
- They were asked to spy on other factions.
- They are rogues attracted to a gathering of wealthy individuals.
- They are working on a business opportunity, hoping to sell some materials to those attending the signing.
- They have enough connections to the Assassins' Guild to know something big is going to happen, although they are not directly involved.

### What About Paladin PCs?

**For the first part of the adventure, Ghostwood Keep's Hall of the Holy is sealed off. Then, just as the newly minted paladins are about to emerge, the entire building blows up, killing all inside. What does this mean for a PC who wants to be a paladin?**

**If a paladin PC is present and in service to one of the Human gods (Albrecht, Ishara, or Neus) he or she begins the adventure in the chapel. Ambassador Caolwader has asked for a paladin to maintain a vigil: that paladin is the PC. Other PC paladins are not present, as this is an observance practiced specifically by these religions.**

**The paladin PC may stay in the chapel all night or go elsewhere in the keep.**

**The Hall of the Holy remains sealed after the assassinations. The priests warn the paladin PC that once he or she is let out after the start the vigil, there will be no re-admittance until the ambassadors reopen it — which they never will.**

These are just a few examples. Almost any reason a PC can come up with for wanting to be at Ghostwood Keep is acceptable. Under no circumstance, however, should PCs have an assignment that puts them inside the Central Keep building. That building is reserved for the highest-level diplomats and their entourages. Low-level adventurers like the PCs would not be assigned to jobs in such a crucial area.

# Area 1: Ghostwood Keep

The keep has stood for over a century on the border of the free kingdom of Andover and the Elven forest of Myreth. Its name comes from an Andoveran nickname for Myreth, a forest known to be populated by Elven spectres and other undead.

Established by the army of Andover to provide a staging point for sorties into Myreth Forest, it has survived because of its strategic location. It has changed hands many times but has never been destroyed; conquering armies always chose to repair rather than raze it. It has never held a large garrison since it is too far away from major population centers, but its location has kept it in use ever since its construction.

After the fall of Corinth, Andover rushed troops to Ghostwood and surrounding areas. The keep comfortably holds 200 troops (supporting personnel puts normal keep population at 250) but it has housed many more in recent days. More than 100 troops have had to move out of the keep itself to make room for the mobs of dignitaries and their entourages arriving for the ceremony, meaning the bailey around the keep is filled with encamped soldiers. Most of them are Andoveran troops, as representatives from the other kingdoms are quartered inside (where they can be watched).

Water diverted from the adjoining river feeds the keep's moat, 25 feet wide and 15 feet deep.

The stone outer walls are 10 feet thick at the base, rise to a height of 20 feet, and have a DC of 25 for climbing.

Guards are posted at every exterior door inside the walls (*see map*). There are several ways for PCs to get past the guards — Bluffing, getting clearance from higher authorities, sneaking past the guards (by either using skills or spells), or spells of persuasion.

## Table 1–1: Modifiers to Bluff Checks on Guards

| Andover / Llyr | Deverenia | Elves | Nothrog | Other | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Andover / Llyr | –5 | +10 | +15 | +10 | +5 |
| Deverenia | +10 | –5 | +15 | +10 | +5 |
| Elves | +15 | +15 | +10 | +5 | +5 |
| Nothrog | +10 | +5 | –5 | +10 | +5 |
| Other | +5 | +10 | +10 | –5 | +5 |

Ghostwood Keep (Hamlet): Conventional; AL LG; 100 gp limit; Current population: 370 (high because of attendance at treaty signing; does not include Andoveran troops stationed in the immediate area); Mixed (Andoveran 54%, Elves 35%, Mercenaries 5%, Deverenian 3%, Nothrog 2%). *Authority Figure:* Edwin Moss, Commander of the Keep, Human male, Ftr 7, LG.

**Table 1–1** shows modifiers to Sense Motive checks if PCs want to Bluff past any guards within the keep. The left column is the nationality of the guard, while the top row is the nationality of the PC. PCs do not need to attempt to Bluff their way past guards that share their nationality, but Bluffing is one way to convince those guards to let PCs of other nationalities go by.

Dwarves have no guards present. Dwarves have an additional +10 (+15 total) to their Bluff checks in dealing with Deverenian guards, but otherwise use the "other" category. As Deverenia and the Nothrog have recently entered into a mutual non-aggression pact, both guards have been warned never to strike first blow if witnesses are about.

Unless otherwise noted, all guards share the same statistics except for hit points. The statistics are as follows:

**Andoveran/Llyran Guard, Male Human Ftr 2:** CR 2; Medium humanoid (Human); HD 2d10+4; hp 15; Spd 30 ft.; Init +5; AC 14, touch 11, flat-footed 13; Base Atk +2; Grp +5; Atk +7 melee (1d8+4(19–20/x2), longsword), or +3 ranged (1d8+3/x3; longbow); Full Atk +7 melee (1d8+4(19–20/x2), longsword), or +3 ranged (1d8+3/x3; longbow); SA Favored weapon (longsword); SQ —; AL LN; SV Fort +5, Ref +1, Will +1; Str 16, Dex 12, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 8, Cha 10.

*Skills and Feats:* Climb +6*, Intimidate +4, Jump +6*, Ride +4; Improved Initiative, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (longsword). *includes –1 armor check penalty

*Favored Weapon (longsword):* An Andoveran/Llyran guard gains a +1 competence bonus to attack and damage rolls with the longsword.

*Possessions:* Studded leather armor, longsword, longbow, 20 arrows.

**Deverenian Guard, Male Deverenian Ftr 2:** CR 2; Medium humanoid (Deverenian); HD 2d10+4; hp 15; Spd 30 ft.; Init +1; AC 13, touch 11, flat-footed 12; Base Atk +2; Grp +5; Atk +7 melee (1d8+4(19–20/x2), longsword); Full Atk +7 melee (1d8+4(19–20/x2), longsword); SA Favored weapon (longsword); SQ Deverenian traits; AL LE; SV Fort +5, Ref +1, Will +2; Str 16, Dex 13, Con 15, Int 10, Wis 11, Cha 12.

*Skills and Feats:* Climb +7, Intimidate +6, Ride +4; Iron Will; Weapon Focus (longsword).

*Favored Weapon (longsword):* A Deverenian guard gains a +1 competence bonus to attack and damage rolls with the longsword.

*Possessions:* Leather armor, longsword.

**Elven Guard, Male Elven Ftr 2:** CR 2; Medium humanoid (Elf); HD 2d10; hp 11; Spd 30 ft.; Init +2; AC 14, touch 12, flat-footed 12; Base Atk +2; Grp +5; Atk +6 melee (1d6+4(18–20/x2), scimitar), or +4 ranged (1d6/x3; shortbow); Full Atk +6 melee (1d6+4(18–20/x2), scimitar), or +4 ranged (1d6/x3; shortbow); SA Favored weapon (scimitar); SQ Elven traits; AL CE; SV Fort +3, Ref +4, Will +0; Str 16, Dex 15, Con 10, Int 12, Wis 10, Cha 11.

*Skills and Feats:* Handle Animal +2, Intimidate +3, Listen +4, Spot +5; Lightning Reflexes, Point Blank Shot.

*Favored Weapon (scimitar):* An Elven guard gains a +1 competence bonus to attack and damage rolls with the scimitar.

*Possessions:* Leather armor, scimitar, shortbow, 18 arrows.

**Mercenary Guard, Male Human Ftr 2:** CR 2; Medium humanoid (Human); HD 2d10+4; hp 15; Spd 30 ft.; Init +5; AC 14, touch 11, flat-footed 13; Base Atk +2; Grp +5; Atk +7 melee (1d8+4(19–20/x2), longsword); Full Atk +7 melee (1d8+4(19–20/x2), longsword); SA Favored weapon (longsword); SQ —; AL LG; SV Fort +5, Ref +1, Will +1; Str 16, Dex 12, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 8, Cha 10.

*Skills and Feats:* Climb +5*, Jump +6*, Ride +3, Sense Motive +2; Improved Initiative, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (longsword). *includes –1 armor check penalty

*Favored Weapon (longsword):* A Mercenary guard gains a +1 competence bonus to attack and damage rolls with the longsword.

*Possessions:* Studded leather armor, longsword.

**Nothrog Guard, Male Nothrog Ftr 2:** CR 2; Medium humanoid (Nothrog); HD 2d10+4; hp 18; Spd 20 ft.; Init +0; AC 14, touch 10, flat-footed 14; Base Atk +2; Grp +5; Atk +6 melee (1d8+4/x3, warhammer); Full Atk +6 melee (1d8+4/x3, warhammer); SA Favored weapon (warhammer); SQ Nothrog traits; AL LE; SV Fort +5, Ref +0, Will +2; Str 16, Dex 10, Con 14, Int 12, Wis 10, Cha 10.

*Skills and Feats:* Climb +3*, Handle Animal +3, Intimidate +4, Jump +3*; Iron Will, Toughness. *includes –4 armor check penalty.

*Favored Weapon (warhammer):* A Nothrog guard gains a +1 competence bonus to attack and damage rolls with the warhammer.

*Possessions:* Scale mail, warhammer.

**Development:** The current commander of Ghostwood is Edwin Moss, assigned here a decade ago. The fall of Corinth ripped his heart out, since he had to stay at his post and do nothing while the great city burned. He has never liked the Elves, but the attack on Corinth made him yearn for peace instead of destruction. He supports the peace, though some of his immediate subordinates (like Janse Stallings) would happily kill every Elf with the slightest excuse.

At the start of the adventure, the highest Andoveran authorities present are Ambassador Reginald Caolwader and his guard, Sir Erik Kaisen. That will not be the case for long.

# Adventure Synopsis

*The Ghostwood Treaty* begins with the PCs coming to Ghostwood for the treaty signing. They may arrive with disparate goals (*see Character Hooks, below*), but when the sun rises on the day the treaty was supposed to be signed, most of those goals will be changed.

The adventure begins the night before the rumored date of the signing ceremony. The PCs have a chance to explore the keep, get a feel for the climate, make some contacts and, if necessary, meet one another.

In the morning, all hell breaks loose: both delegations' head ambassadors have fallen to assassins. The PCs are trapped in the keep along with the assassins and a variety of NPCs who help or hinder the PCs' efforts.

More disasters follow the assassinations: the barracks sheltering newly-trained paladins explodes; the assassins attempt more murders, a prison break, and a theft; and simmering hostilities between Elves and Humans may erupt into open fighting.

Many of this adventure's tasks do not involve combat. Information gathering, diplomacy, bluffing, and other skills are important, and competent use of these skills can both help the PCs stay alive and yield them information they will need in future adventures.

Once the ambassadors die, the GM must keep careful track of the passage of time, as several events happen at specific times (*see* **Part 4** *for more details*). Nevertheless, the GM must also have some flexibility; a party that keeps missing crucial events by half an hour is going to be frustrated. If the PCs are on the right track and heading for a specific location when an event is supposed to take place, the GM should let them arrive in time. One event, the encounter with Cear Adinerach, takes place at a specific time but not a specific place. The GM should adjust the encounter according to where the PCs are at the time.

For the PCs, the principal goal of the adventure is survival. They are locked in the Keep with individuals who are perfectly willing to kill them if it would cause more chaos in the Accordlands. Beyond survival, the PCs should concentrate on minimizing the damage caused by the assassins and gathering information about events in the Keep. The more they know, the better prepared they will be for the adventures to come.

# Character Hooks

There are many ways to get PCs to the crucial events in Ghostwood Keep. Every faction in the Accordlands has sent representatives to the signing. PCs could be brought to Ghostwood Keep for any of the following reasons:

- They are assigned to guard an attending dignitary.
- They were hired to guard the keep during the special event.
- They were asked to spy on other factions.
- They are rogues attracted to a gathering of wealthy individuals.
- They are working on a business opportunity, hoping to sell some materials to those attending the signing.
- They have enough connections to the Assassins' Guild to know something big is going to happen, although they are not directly involved.

### What About Paladin PCs?

**For the first part of the adventure, Ghostwood Keep's Hall of the Holy is sealed off. Then, just as the newly minted paladins are about to emerge, the entire building blows up, killing all inside. What does this mean for a PC who wants to be a paladin?**

**If a paladin PC is present and in service to one of the Human gods (Albrecht, Ishara, or Neus) he or she begins the adventure in the chapel. Ambassador Caolwader has asked for a paladin to maintain a vigil: that paladin is the PC. Other PC paladins are not present, as this is an observance practiced specifically by these religions.**

**The paladin PC may stay in the chapel all night or go elsewhere in the keep.**

**The Hall of the Holy remains sealed after the assassinations. The priests warn the paladin PC that once he or she is let out after the start the vigil, there will be no re-admittance until the ambassadors reopen it — which they never will.**

These are just a few examples. Almost any reason a PC can come up with for wanting to be at Ghostwood Keep is acceptable. Under no circumstance, however, should PCs have an assignment that puts them inside the Central Keep building. That building is reserved for the highest-level diplomats and their entourages. Low-level adventurers like the PCs would not be assigned to jobs in such a crucial area.

# Area 1: Ghostwood Keep

The keep has stood for over a century on the border of the free kingdom of Andover and the Elven forest of Myreth. Its name comes from an Andoveran nickname for Myreth, a forest known to be populated by Elven spectres and other undead.

Established by the army of Andover to provide a staging point for sorties into Myreth Forest, it has survived because of its strategic location. It has changed hands many times but has never been destroyed; conquering armies always chose to repair rather than raze it. It has never held a large garrison since it is too far away from major population centers, but its location has kept it in use ever since its construction.

After the fall of Corinth, Andover rushed troops to Ghostwood and surrounding areas. The keep comfortably holds 200 troops (supporting personnel puts normal keep population at 250) but it has housed many more in recent days. More than 100 troops have had to move out of the keep itself to make room for the mobs of dignitaries and their entourages arriving for the ceremony, meaning the bailey around the keep is filled with encamped soldiers. Most of them are Andoveran troops, as representatives from the other kingdoms are quartered inside (where they can be watched).

Water diverted from the adjoining river feeds the keep's moat, 25 feet wide and 15 feet deep.

The stone outer walls are 10 feet thick at the base, rise to a height of 20 feet, and have a DC of 25 for climbing.

Guards are posted at every exterior door inside the walls (*see map*). There are several ways for PCs to get past the guards — Bluffing, getting clearance from higher authorities, sneaking past the guards (by either using skills or spells), or spells of persuasion.

## Location 1.2: Gatehouse — Second Floor (EL 20)

**Read aloud:** *The low mutter of tense conversation becomes louder at the top of the stairs. About eighty soldiers are in a large barracks designed to hold fifty. Four guards are on duty, two at each stairwell at either end of the room. Guards in cots sleep, while those without cots sit on bedrolls on the stone floor, talking and shooting dice. The stairway continues upward for a short distance to the top of the keep's walls.*

The eight towers along the keep's walls can be accessed through the stairs leading out of this room. This is the only entrance for six of the towers; the two in the north wall have additional entrances at their base. Each tower holds three guards at the top who never abandon their posts. If the PCs manage to talk their way past the guards here, they can walk the entire perimeter of the keep's walls.

Most questions the PCs have for the guards are referred to Acting Commander Janse Stallings, who is watching but not participating in a dice game. PCs who ask to play in the dice game may join even if they are not Human. The guards figure anyone the lower guards let by is not out to harm them, and they are willing to take anybody's money.

Janse Stallings is acting commander of the gatehouse guards; all higher-ranking guards, including Gatehouse Commander Edwin Moss, are in the Central Keep.

**Creatures:** Seventy-seven guards (66 Andoveran guards, 11 Mercenary guards), 2nd-level fighters; Acting Commander Janse Stallings, a 5th-level fighter.

**Andoveran guards (66):** Roll hp as needed if combat occurs *(see Area 1 for stats)*.

**Mercenary guards (11):** Roll hp as needed if combat occurs *(see Area 1 for stats)*.

**Janse Stallings, Male Human Ftr 5:** CR 5; Medium humanoid (Human); HD 5d10+10; hp 47; Spd 20 ft.; Init +5; AC 15, touch 11, flat-footed 14; Base Atk +5; Grp +8; Atk +10 melee (1d8+6(19–20/x2), longsword); Full Atk +10 melee (1d8+6(19–20/x2), longsword); SA Favored weapon (longsword, shortsword), improved damage (longsword); SQ —; AL LG; SV Fort +6, Ref +2, Will +3; Str 16, Dex 13, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 12.

*Skills and Feats:* Bluff +3, Climb +3*, Intimidate +6, Jump +3*, Ride +4, Spot +2; Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Power Attack, Quick Draw, Weapon Focus (longsword). *includes –4 armor check penalty

*Favored Weapon (longsword, shortsword):* Stallings gains a +1 competence bonus to attack and damage rolls with the longsword and the shortsword.

*Improved Damage (longsword):* Stallings does an additional +2 (+3 total) damage with the longsword.

*Possessions:* Scale mail, longsword, 45 gp.

**Development:** The only NPC with useful information is Stallings.

*Initial attitude:* Helpful to any PCs working for Andover, friendly toward Andoveran subjects, unfriendly toward Elves, indifferent toward all others.

*Helpful (DC 20 for Humans, 40 for Elves, 30 for all others):* Shares concerns about secret entrances into Ghostwood. According to Stallings, three secret entrances — one entering the chapel, another entering the grove, and a third coming out just inside the walls south of the stables — have been sealed. He is worried that there exist tunnels, designed in the distant past, that have never been found. He consoles himself with the thought that exhaustive searches by the guards did not find anything, so most likely no one else will be able to find them, either.

## Location 2: The Thorns

**Read aloud:** *Two 100 ft. towers, narrowing to thin spires, stand forty feet apart. Small windows near the top of each look upon only the surrounding territory, but the view extends for miles. The tower doors face each other. Two Andoveran guards in front of the door to the west weather the glares of the two Deverenians guarding the east tower.*

**Creatures:** Two Free Kingdom guards, 2nd-level fighters; two Deverenian guards, 2nd-level fighters *(see Area 1 for stats)*

**Andoveran guards (2):** hp 18, 14.

**Deverenian guards (2):** hp 15, 19.

## Location 2.1: West Thorn

**Read aloud:** *Ten sullen Andoveran guards and diplomats, sitting or lying on the floor of the tower, are listening to an angry man rant. All the furniture in the room has been pushed to one side.*

*"Caolwader owes us more respect than this! The Elves sacked Andover, and as punishment they are treated like royalty while we are crammed into this tower! If Andover does not appreciate its allies, it will soon find itself without them!"*

The speaker is Ambassador Son of the Clouds, of Llyr. He is not seriously considering pulling Llyr out of the discussions (and does not have the authority to do so); he is blowing off steam because he is upset about his lodgings outside the Central Keep.

Each member of the Llyr delegation, including Son of the Clouds, insists that all questions be directed to the ambassador.

If the PCs ask who else is in the tower, Silwan tells them that there are Andoveran guards stationed at the top of the tower, but the door to the tower is locked from the inside (DC 30 for lock, 23 for door). He advises the PCs against going up, telling them that it is 150 steps to the top, and there are four well-armed Andoverans waiting up there.

**Creatures:** Eight Andoveran guards, 2nd-level fighters *(see Area 1 for stats)*; two diplomatic aides, 1st-level scouts; Son of the Clouds, a 4th-level fighter.

**Andoveran guards (8):** hp 11, 12, 23, 15, 7, 13, 22, 16.

**Diplomatic Aide (2), Male Human Sct 1:** CR 1; Medium humanoid (Human); HD 1d8+1; hp 6; Spd 30 ft.; Init +3; AC 14, touch 13, flat-footed 11; Base Atk +0; Grp +1; Atk +1 melee (1d4+1(19–20/x2), dagger); Full Atk +1 melee (1d4+1(19–20/x2), dagger); SA Sneak Attack +1d6; SQ —; AL NG; SV Fort +3, Ref +5, Will +2; Str 12, Dex 17, Con 13, Int 15, Wis 11, Cha 12.

*Skills and Feats:* Bluff +3, Diplomacy +3, Disguise +2, Profession (Diplomat) +4, Sense Motive +2, Speak Language (Elven), Spot +2, Survival +4, Use Rope +6; Alertness, Iron Will.

*Sneak Attack:* Anytime a diplomatic aide's target is denied a Dexterity bonus to AC, or when the aide flanks a target, the aide deals an additional 1d6 points of damage on a successful attack.

*Possessions:* Padded armor, dagger.

**Son of the Clouds, Male Human Ftr 4:** CR 4; Medium humanoid (Human); HD 4d10; hp 22; Spd 20 ft.; Init +0; AC 13, touch 10, flat-footed 13; Base Atk +4; Grp +7; Atk +9 melee (2d6+5(19–20/x2), greatsword); Full Atk +9 melee (2d6+5(19–20/x2), greatsword); SA Favored weapon (greatsword); SQ —; AL NG; SV Fort +4, Ref +1, Will +5; Str 16, Dex 11, Con 10, Int 10, Wis 14, Cha 13.

*Skills and Feats:* Climb +5*, Craft (leatherworking) +2, Diplomacy +3, Intimidate +4, Jump +3*, Listen +4; Cleave, Endurance, Iron Will, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (greatsword). *includes –3 armor check penalty

*Favored Weapon (greatsword):* Son of the Clouds gains a +1 competence bonus to attack and damage rolls with the greatsword.

*Possessions:* Hide armor, greatsword, 43 gp.

**Development:** Son of the Clouds is not too put out about being interrupted — he is ranting rather than giving an official speech

*Initial attitude:* Son of the Clouds is initially friendly to Free Kingdoms, indifferent to Mercenaries and Dwarves, unfriendly to Deverenians and Nothrog, and hostile to Elves. He is helpful to any PCs working for him.

*Helpful (DC 20 for Free Kingdoms; 30 for Mercenaries and Dwarves; 40 for Deverenians and Nothrog; 50 for Elves):* Son confides that he is hopeful the treaty signing will bring peace; however, he still fears the world is descending into chaos. Llyr is a poor cousin to Andover, and Son worries his people will not receive help when they need it. He has hopes of new allies from a recent encounter. Before coming to Ghostwood, Son met some Dwarves who said they wanted to establish diplomatic ties with other nations. If the PCs are interested, Son might be able to arrange an introduction with one of these Dwarves after he is recalled from duty. This Dwarf is K'evan of the Green from the beginning of the Temple of the Undyifg Flame adventure.

*Treasure:* Son of the Clouds is carrying money for the entire contingent. His pack contains 183 gp, a potion of speed, and a potion of cure light wounds.

## Location 2.2: East Thorn

If PCs try to persuade the Deverenian guards to let them through, remember the high priority Deverenians place on etiquette and adjust Diplomacy checks according to their courtesy (+2 if the PCs show exemplary courtesy, –2 if their manners are lacking).

**Read aloud:** *Ten Deverenian soldiers sit quietly and stiffly around the base room of this tower. They do not speak, and barely glance your way when you enter. The room is furnished with a small square table, three chairs, and four cots.*

The Deverenians convey the impression that they are conserving energy for later. They do not consider the PCs to be important.

Knight-Marshall Pym Dashin of Order Rellion leads this group and is the only Deverenian inside the Thorn who will converse with the PCs. He freely admits that he is not here to investigate the possibility of Deverenia forging its own peace agreements, but rather to determine what effects peace between Elves and the Free Kingdoms might have on Deverenia's war efforts. Deverenians, he tells the PCs, do not ask for peace — they listen to their enemies beg for it.

**Creatures:** Nine Deverenian guards, 2nd-level fighters *(see Area 1 for stats);* Knight-Marshall Pym Dashin, a 6th-level fighter

**Deverenian guards (9):** hp 18, 9, 21, 17, 19, 18, 8, 14, 16.

**Knight-Marshall Pym Dashin, Male Deverenian Ftr 6:** CR 6; Medium humanoid (Deverenian); HD 6d10+6; hp 49; Spd 20 ft.; Init +5; AC 16, touch 11, flat-footed 15; Base Atk +6; Grp +9; Atk +11 melee (1d8+6/x3, warhammer); Full Atk +11/+6 melee (1d8+6/x3, warhammer); SA Favored weapon (warhammer, longsword), improved damage (warhammer); SQ Deverenian traits; AL LE; SV Fort +8, Ref +3, Will +5; Str 17, Dex 12, Con 12, Int 13, Wis 12, Cha 12.

*Skills and Feats:* Bluff +6, Climb +2*, Diplomacy +7, Intimidate +5, Jump +2, Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Persuasive, Weapon Focus (warhammer). *includes –5 armor check penalty

*Favored Weapon (warhammer, longsword):* Dashin gains a +1 competence bonus to attack and damage rolls with the warhammer and the longsword.

*Improved Damage (warhammer):* Dashin does an additional +2 (+3 total) damage with the longsword.

*Possessions:* Chainmail, warhammer, 56 gp.

**Development:** Knight-Marshall Dashin is the only source of information here.

*Initial Attitude:* Dashin is initially friendly to Deverenians; indifferent to Nothrog, Mercenaries and freemen; and unfriendly to Dwarves and Elves.

*Helpful (DC 20 for Deverenians, 30 for Nothrog, Mercenaries and Free Kingdoms, 40 for Elves and Dwarves):* In haughty Deverenian fashion, he lets on that he knows things about Ghostwood Keep that the PCs do not. According to him, an Elf spy named Cynarre who helped foil some Rellion efforts to gain a foothold in Tyraniel a few years ago was recently captured by Andover. If Dashin could return to his Order with proof of Cynarre's death, his standing would be enhanced. Anyone who provides him with that proof would be rewarded. That reward is a Deverenian pass with Dashin's personal seal, which allows PCs more access to the Deverenian Empire than they would have otherwise (though not, of course, total access).

*Treasure:* Dashin carries 56 gp, and each of his companions has 25 gp.

## Location 2.3: Top of the Thorns

The top of each thorn is identical. Read this if the PCs manage the door leading to the top of either thorn:

**Read aloud:** *A spiral staircase curves into darkness ahead of you. A voice echoes from above: "Entrance is not authorized! Leave now or we will use force!"*

It is 150 steps to the top of the towers. If any PCs reach the top of the stairs, the five guards inside attack with the flats of their swords, doing subdual damage (–4 on attack rolls). If they subdue the entire party, the guards attribute the whole affair to high spirits and tension and dump the unconscious PCs outside the Thorn.

If the PCs counter-attack the guards and do any normal damage, the guards respond in kind.

If the PCs attack a Thorn a second time, the guards attack with their blades and do normal damage.

**Creatures:** Five Andoveran guards, 2nd-level fighters *(see Area 1 for stats)*.

- *Andoveran guards (5):* hp 15, 14, 14, 15, 18.

## Location 3: Stables

**Read aloud:** *A long stone building is built into the city wall, its roof sloping forward. Loud neighing and glowing lamps from inside indicate that the stables are full and active tonight.*

There are two doors to the stables, one on each end. The guards allow anyone through.

INSIDE THE STABLES:

**Read aloud:** *The stables are packed, with two or three horses in most stalls. Stable boys run up and down the corridors, throwing hay, passing brushes back and forth, and otherwise doing more work than they are accustomed to.*

*"No more room here!" one calls out as soon as you enter.*

*"No room!" echoes another.*

*"We're full," says a third stable boy, this one just inside a stall to your right. "If you're leaving a horse to be tended, there's a temporary stable being set up between the moat and the wall. If you're taking your horse from us, you have our gratitude."*

The talkative stable boy is named Rurrishay, and he is the only one to engage the party in conversation. He knows little.

There are two rows of twenty stalls each. The map shows the location of a hidden entrance to the keep located in one of the stalls. At this time, the entrance is sealed by three feet of seamless rock. As it is not yet a door, detect secret doors will not find it. Only high-level spells such as vision would have a chance of helping the PCs find the hole.

*Treasure:* The shoes on a horse in the southwestern-most stall are horseshoes of speed. The horse belongs to Pariah of the Dark Horsemen.

## Location 4: Central Keep

**Read aloud:** *A heavy, square building squats in the middle of Ghostwood's walls. Most of the windows are dark, but a few flickering lights indicate that the final work on the peace agreement will continue all night long. The main door to the keep is heavily guarded by Elves and Andoveran troops. The ambassadors must have hand-picked troops who could work with their enemy, for not so much as a suspicious look is exchanged between the enemies at this door. They all look forward, intent on keeping out anyone who does not belong. High above, for the first time in the history of Ghostwood, Elven flags and Andoveran flags fly jointly from the top of the main building.*

Five Elves and five Andoverans guard the main (south) door; three from each force guard the rear (north) door. The central building is on lockdown. Everyone who needed to be in the building was admitted hours ago, and no one is allowed in or out of the building. The guards readily (almost cheerfully) tell the curious that unauthorized entry into the keep is punishable by death, and there are 47 Andoveran troops and 40 Elf troops inside in addition to the diplomats and their staff.

Three Andoveran archers and three Elf archers, each with longbows, patrol the roof. An Andoveran wizard also keeps watch.

The doors are locked (Open Lock DC 30, Break Door DC 25). There are windows around the entire perimeter on the second and third floors. The walls are cut stone (DC 25) and the windows are locked (Open Lock DC 25, Break DC 14). The walls and windows are too thick to allow passage of any noise. Attempts to gain information from the inside (through scrying or related spells) show many diplomats involved in intense negotiations, but no useful information. There are no secret plots being hatched inside the walls of the Central Keep.

For details about the interior of the Central Keep, including placement of guards, *see Location 5.*

**Creatures:** By front door: five Elf guards,2nd-level fighters; five Andoveran guards, 2nd-level fighters; By back door: three Elf guards, 2nd-level fighters, three Andoveran guards, 2nd-level fighters. On roof: three Elf archers, 2nd-level fighters, three Andoveran archers, 2nd-level fighters *(see Area 1 for stats)*; one Andoveran wizard.

**Andoveran guards (front door) (5):** hp 21, 15, 15, 10, 12.

**Elf guards (front door) (5):** hp 11, 19, 8, 7, 11.

**Andoveran guards (back door) (3):** hp 16, 7, 14.

**Elf guards (back door) (3):** hp 12, 15, 13.

**Elf archers (on roof) (3):** hp 15, 13, 12.

**Andoveran archers (on roof) (3):** 17, 13, 19.

**Andoveran wizard (on roof):** hp 7.

**Andoveran Wizard, Female Human Wiz 3:** CR 3; Medium humanoid (Human); HD 3d4; hp 7; Spd 30 ft.; Init +2; AC 13, touch 13, flat-footed 10; Base Atk +1; Grp +1; Atk +1 melee (1d4(19–20/x2), dagger); Full Atk +1 melee (1d4(19–20/x2), dagger); SA Spells; SQ Eidetic Memory (resist energy), summon familiar (rat); AL LG; SV Fort +2, Ref +3, Will +4; Str 11, Dex 15, Con 11, Int 17, Wis 13, Cha 11.

*Skills and Feats:* Balance +4, Concentration +5, Decipher Script +3, Knowledge (arcana) +5, Listen +4, Search +4, Spellcraft +5; Alertness, Enlarge Spell, Great Fortitude, Scribe Scroll, Dodge

*Eidetic Memory:* The Andoveran wizard may spontaneously cast resist energy in place of a prepared spell of equal or higher level. This loses the prepared spell to fuel the memorized spell.

**Familiar (rat):** The wizard's rat familiar has the following statistics:

Rat (Familiar) CR —; Tiny magical beast; HD 3; hp 3; Init +2; Spd 15 ft, climb 15 ft, swim 15 ft; AC 16, touch 14, flat-footed 14; Base Atk +1; Grp –11; Atk +4 melee (1d3–4/x2, bite); Full Atk +4 melee (1d3–4/x2, bite); Space/Reach 2–1/2 ft./0 ft.; SA —; SQ low-light vision, scent, empathic link, share spells, improved evasion, deliver touch spells; AL N; SV Fort +2, Ref +2, Will +4; Str 2, Dex 15, Con 10, Int 7, Wis 12, Cha 2.

*Skill and Feats:* Balance +10, Climb +12, Hide +14, Move Silently +10, Swim +10; Weapon Finesse (bite).

*Low-Light Vision:* A rat can see twice as far as a Human in starlight, moonlight, torchlight, and similar conditions of shadowy illumination. It retains the ability to distinguish color and detail under these conditions.

*Scent:* A rat can detect opponents within 30 feet by sense of smell. If the opponent is upwind, the range increases to 60 feet;

if downwind, it drops to 15 feet. Strong scents, such as smoke or rotting garbage, can be detected at twice the ranges noted above. Overpowering scents, such as skunk musk or troglodyte stench, can be detected at triple normal range. When a rat detects a scent, the exact location of the source is not revealed — only its presence somewhere within range. The rat can take a move action to note the direction of the scent.

Whenever the rat comes within 5 feet of the source, the rat pinpoints the source's location.

*Familiar Ability Descriptions:* All familiars have special abilities (or impart abilities to their masters) depending on the wizard' combined level in classes that grant familiars. The abilities are cumulative.

*Alertness (Ex):* While a familiar is within arm's reach, the wizard gains the Alertness feat.

*Improved Evasion (Ex):* When subjected to an attack that normally allows a Reflex saving throw for half damage, a familiar takes no damage if it makes a successful saving throw and half damage even if the saving throw fails.

*Share Spells:* At the wizard' option, she may have any spell (but not any spell-like ability) she casts on herself also affect his familiar. The familiar must be within 5 feet at the time of casting to receive the benefit. If the spell or effect has a duration other than instantaneous, it stops affecting the familiar if it moves farther than 5 feet away and will not affect the familiar again even if it returns to the wizard before the duration expires. Additionally, the wizard may cast a spell with a target of "You" on her familiar (as a touch range spell) instead of on herself. The wizard and her familiar can share spells even if the spells normally do not affect creatures of the familiar's type (magical beast).

*Empathic Link (Su):* The wizard has an empathic link with his familiar out to a distance of up to 1 mile. The wizard cannot see through the familiar's eyes, but they can communicate empathically. Because of the limited nature of the link, only general emotional content can be communicated. Because of this empathic link, the wizard has the same connection to an item or place that her familiar does.

*Deliver Touch Spells (Su):* If the wizard is 3rd level or higher, a familiar can deliver touch spells for her. If the wizard and the familiar are in contact at the time the wizard casts a touch spell, she can designate his familiar as the "toucher." The familiar can then deliver the touch spell just as the wizard could. As usual, if the wizard casts another spell before the touch is delivered, the touch spell dissipates.

*Wizard Spells Prepared (4/3/2; save DC 13 + spell level):* 0 — daze, ray of frost, read magic, resistance; 1st — color spray, magic missile, ray of enfeeblement; 2nd — acid arrow, web.

*Possessions:* Dagger, 13 gp.

**Development:** Any attack by the PCs, or attempts to sneak in that are discovered, brings the attention of all guards located in the keep and at the doors. Guards blow alarm horns as soon as possible. Roof guards remain on the roof while ten Elf guards from the grove and ten Andoveran guards from the gatehouse run to the keep and arrive in 1d2 minutes.

## Location 5. The Grove

**Read aloud:** *A small forest, covering slightly more area than the Central Keep building, grows between that building and the wall. It is packed with Elves. Elven tents sit just inside the trees, and almost every tree on the outer circle of the forest holds two or three Elves. The grove is quieter than any part of Ghostwood. The trees absorb any noise, and the Elves by them are quiet to begin with.*

PCs of any race can walk through the Elven camp as they please. The Elves believe the guards in the trees give their camp more than enough protection.

The Elven rank-and-file are under orders not to talk to anyone. Their answer to any question is, "Our leaders speak for us." If asked who leads them, they point to a tent that is the same size as the others but whose flaps are lined with green. Elven PCs receive the same treatment.

The former tunnel in the grove is easy to find, as a large rock has been dropped down a hole near the east keep wall. As with the chapel tunnel, this entrance is very well sealed.

If they so choose, PCs may enter the leader's tent, checking their arms at the door.

**Read aloud:** *A serene Elf sits in this tent, looking over her papers. She is still but alert, looking as if she could remain awake all night for days in a row. Two other Elves stand on either side of her chair.*

Wynnerik, Deputy Ambassador, is nonplussed by the entrance of any PCs. She treats them with customary Elven aloofness. She does not offer any information on her own, and responds to most questions by saying the ambassador is working on the matter and things should be resolved by morning. She definitely does not divulge any details about the Elf forces within the keep.

**Creatures:** The Elven encampment currently holds 80 Elves. 30 are in tents; the other 50 are sitting on the ground, standing watch, or sitting in trees *(see Area 1 for stats)*. In the leader's tent: Two Elf guards, 2nd-level fighters *(see Area 1 for stats);* Wynnerik, a 4th-level scout.

**Elf guards (2):** hp 16, 11.

**Wynnerik, Female Elf Sct 4:** CR 4; Medium humanoid (Elf); HD 4d8+8; hp 18; Spd 30 ft.; Init +3; AC 14, touch 13, flat-footed 11; Base Atk +3; Grp +4; Atk +4 melee (1d6+1(18–20/x2), scimitar); Full Atk +4 melee (1d6+1(18–20/x2), scimitar); SA Sneak attack +1d6; SQ Camouflage, Elf traits, sniper, uncanny dodge; AL NE; SV Fort +5, Ref +7, Will +3; Str 13, Dex 17, Con 12, Int 15, Wis 11, Cha 12.

*Skills and Feats:* Bluff +5, Climb +6, Diplomacy +5, Profession (diplomat) +6, Ride +8, Sense Motive +3, Spot +4, Survival +4, Use Rope +8; Alertness, Iron Will.

*Sneak Attack:* Anytime Wynnerik's target is denied a Dexterity bonus to AC, or when she flanks a target, Wynnerik deals an additional 1d6 points of damage on a successful attack.

*Camouflage:* If she has at least ten rounds (one minute) to prepare a hiding place without detection, Wynnerik my take 20 on her Hide check in natural surroundings provided she remains perfectly still. This may require a Move Silently roll and does not exempt Wynnerik from circumstance penalties due to unfavorable terrain.

*Uncanny Dodge:* Wynnerik retains her Dexterity bonus to AC if caught flat-footed or struck by an invisible attacker.

*Sniper:* Starting at 4th level, when Wynnerick is making a sneak attack with a ranged attack the AC value of cover or concealment of her target is reduced by 2. Total cover and concealment are unaffected by this ability.

*Possessions:* Padded armor, scimitar.

**Development:** Wynnerik is extremely cautious in her speech, since she would hate to upset the delicate balancing act occurring in the Central Keep.

*Initial attitude:* Wynnerik is friendly to Elves; indifferent to others; and unfriendly to Deverenians.

*Helpful (DC 20 for Elves; 30 for others; 40 for Deverenians):* All of Wynnerik's thoughts are centered on tomorrow's supposed treaty signing. She indulges in some speculation about the treaty and the truce. If the signing does not happen, the truce is likely to be very fragile — and, she will confide, some Elves, possibly including herself, may not be too interested in preserving the truce. Anyone who is caught in the keep at such a time had better talk fast or get out of the way. She is unaware that the treaty is false, as her superior hopes that the pressure of the rumors will aid in a quick agreement.

*Treasure:* PCs making a tent-by-tent search of the area discover an empty tent near the east wall of the Central Keep. This is where Wynnerik sleeps. Inside is a bag containing 88 gp, a potion of sneaking, and a potion of vision. Any PCs caught walking into this tent have a warning arrow shot at them by archers in the trees. If the PCs persist in their course of action, the archers begin shooting for real.

## Location 6: Chapel of Neus

**Read aloud:** *A small chapel, constructed from the same stone as every other building in the keep but given extra polish, is nestled near the back of the keep. The newly varnished wooden doors are open, letting the light of several braziers and lamps spill out into the night. A sign posted on the door says "Pray for Peace." Faint chanting is the only sound coming out of the building.*

INSIDE THE CHAPEL:

**Read aloud:** *A few people of various races are spread over five rows of pews. A flame burns on a battered altar at the chapel's front. Two priests in white and gold robes, one male, one female, walk silently along the chapel's perimeter. The female priest walks up to you as you enter and gestures for you to sit.*

All seven visitors (two Elves and five Humans) are praying in their fashion (not all, presumably, to Neus). They do not respond to questions, and the priests try to prevent any prayers from being interrupted. If PCs persist in interrupting visitors, one of the priests summons guards. Six Andoveran guards arrive in 1d6 minutes to escort the PCs out.

Adept Carlotta (the female priest) happily speaks with any PCs, but not in the chapel. If they want to talk to her, she gestures to them to walk outside and talks with them just outside the chapel doors. Carlotta's favorite topic is Neus, and if the PCs allow her, she lectures on how knowledge, properly applied, inevitably leads to peace, while war stems from ignorance.

**Creatures:** Two Elven guards, 2nd-level fighters; a Mercenary guard, a 2nd-level fighter; four Andoveran guards, 2nd-level fighters (*see Area 1 for stats*); Adept Carlotta, a 3rd-level cleric; Adept Koler, a 2nd-level cleric.

**Elf guards (2):** hp 16, 11.

**Mercenary guard (1):** 15.

**Andoveran guards (4):** hp 15, 14, 14, 15.

**Adept Carlotta, Female Human Clr 3:** CR 3; Medium humanoid (Human); HD 3d8+3; hp 19; Spd 30 ft.; Init +1; AC 13, touch 11, flat-footed 12; Base Atk +2; Grp +2; Atk +2 melee (1d6/x2, club); Full Atk +2 melee (1d6/x2, club); SA Spells, turn undead 4/day; SQ Cleric domains (Good, Knowledge), spontaneous casting; AL LG; SV Fort +6, Ref +2, Will +6; Str 10, Dex 12, Con 12, Int 15, Wis 17, Cha 12.

*Skills and Feats:* Concentration +6, Diplomacy +4, Heal +8, Knowledge (religion) +10, Listen +6, Spellcraft +8; Great Fortitude, Scribe Scroll, Skill Focus (Knowledge (religion))

*Spontaneous Casting:* Carlotta can "lose" a prepared spell (except for a domain spell) in order to cast any cure spell of the same level or lower.

*Turn Undead:* Carlotta can attempt to turn undead 4 times per day.

*Cleric Spells Prepared (4/3+1/2+1; save DC 13 + spell level):* 0 — cure minor wounds, detect magic, purify food and drink, virtue; 1st — cause fear, deathwatch, doom, protection from evil*; 2nd — aid*, delay poison, endurance. *Domain spell

*Possessions:* Leather armor, club.

**Adept Koler, Male Human Clr 2:** CR 2; Medium humanoid (Human); HD 2d8+2; hp 12; Spd 30 ft.; Init +1; AC 13, touch 11, flat-footed 12; Base Atk +1; Grp +1; Atk +1 melee (1d6/x2, club); Full Atk +1 melee (1d6/x2, club); SA Spells, turn undead 4/day; SQ Cleric domains (Good, Knowledge), spontaneous casting; AL LG; SV Fort +6, Ref +1, Will +6; Str 10, Dex 12, Con 12, Int 15, Wis 17, Cha 12.

*Skills and Feats:* Concentration +5, Diplomacy +3, Heal +7, Knowledge (religion) +9, Sense Motive +6, Spellcraft +7; Great Fortitude, Skill Focus (Knowledge (religion)).

*Spontaneous Casting:* Koler can "lose" a prepared spell (except for a domain spell) in order to cast any cure spell of the same level or lower.

*Turn Undead:* Koler can attempt to turn undead 4 times per day.

*Cleric Spells Prepared (4/3+1; save DC 13 + spell level):* 0 — cure minor wounds, detect magic, purify food and drink, virtue; 1st — cause fear, doom, protection from evil*, summon monster I. *Domain spell

*Possessions:* Leather armor, club.

**Development:** Carlotta is very friendly and, as an adept of Neus, quite knowledgeable about many things. She answers any questions she can. She knows about the sealed secret tunnel that was discovered behind the altar.

She has heard of the prisoner Cynarre, but is uncertain of his status. First, she says, he was scheduled for execution; then Ambassador Caolwader thought he might prove a useful bargaining chip in reaching a treaty agreement. When the Elves showed no interest in getting Cynarre back, his status became unclear. Most likely, no final decision will be made before Cynarre dies of old age in about ten months.

PCs successfully searching the chapel (Search check DC 20) find traces of the sealed tunnel behind the altar. The tunnel is tightly sealed with a large plug of granite and mortar.

## Location 7: Hall of the Holy

**Read aloud:** *A long, narrow building is wedged in the back of the keep behind the chapel. Much of the exterior stone is moss-covered, as if the building had been ignored in recent years. It is clearly in use tonight; the building practically hums with arcane energies. A single priest stands by the west wall. "Good Evening!" he says cheerfully when you are in earshot. "I'm afraid admittance is not permitted until tomorrow."*

The priest, Adept Dixall, is posted more to give information than to physically prevent anyone from entering. The building is sealed with two guards and wards spell as cast by a 12th level wizard, meaning the doors on either end of the building are covered by glamers and arcane locked (Search DC 30, Break DC 28). Each door has an acid blast glyph of warding as cast by a 6th-level cleric, doing 3d8 damage to any intruders.

It should be clear that, for now, the Halls of the Holy are no place for low-level characters to break into. Should PCs persist in trying to enter, Dixall does not attempt to physically stop them. If they survive the glyphs and make it through all the guards and wards, the cleric who cast the glyphs leads five paladins against the PCs.

**Creatures:** Adept Dixall, a 3rd-level cleric. Inside, Adept Correg, a 6th-level cleric, and ten 1st-level paladins. Most likely the PCs will not encounter NPCs inside the building; the GM may roll them if the PCs somehow manage to enter the Hall of the Holy.

**Paladins (10):** hp 6, 7, 9, 5, 8, 8, 9, 9, 6, 7.

**Adept Dixall Male Human Clr 3:** CR 3; Medium humanoid (Human); HD 3d8+3; hp 17; Spd 30 ft.; Init +1; AC 13, touch 11, flat-footed 12; Base Atk +2; Grp +2; Atk +2 melee (1d6/x2, club); Full Atk +2 melee (1d6/x2, club); SA Spells, turn undead 4/day; SQ Cleric domains (Good, Knowledge), spontaneous casting; AL LG; SV Fort +6, Ref +2, Will +6; Str 10, Dex 12, Con 12, Int 15, Wis 17, Cha 12.

*Skills and Feats:* Concentration +5, Diplomacy +4, Heal +9, Knowledge (religion) +11, Listen +6, Spellcraft +7; Combat Casting, Great Fortitude, Skill Focus (Knowledge (religion)).

*Spontaneous Casting:* Dixall can "lose" a prepared spell (except for a domain spell) in order to cast any cure spell of the same level or lower.

*Turn Undead:* Dixall can attempt to turn undead 4 times per day.

*Cleric Spells Prepared (4/3+1/2+1; save DC 13 + spell level):* 0 — cure minor wounds, detect magic, inflict minor wounds, virtue; 1st — cause fear, doom, protection from evil*, summon monster I; 2nd — augury, calm emotions, detect thoughts*. *Domain spell

*Possessions:* Leather armor, club.

## Location 8: Northern towers

Two towers, larger than the ones built into the walls, guard the north end of the keep. There are no guards at the base of these towers.

## Location 8.1: Northwest tower

**Read aloud:** *The chamber at the base of this tower is more comfortably furnished than other guard towers in the keep — two of the chairs actually have cushions. A tapestry portraying King Michael hangs on the wall near a stairway leading up. Four Humans and a Sutek sit casually around the room, talking and laughing loudly. They seem much more relaxed than others in the keep.*

The five Mercenaries are Dark Horsemen here to handle any problems that arise between the factions, and have received a lucrative contract to assure their neutrality. So far, everyone present has policed their own, so the soldiers have enjoyed extended leave. They are easily the most relaxed people present.

In the course of their conversation, they make many Nothrog jokes (since the Nothrog are quartered nearby). They express surprise that the Nothrog even showed up, and that when they did they were allowed to stay. While Mercenaries in general do not have a particular grudge against Nothrog, these five seem not to care much for them, especially those with ties to the seer who took Baraxton, Nassiral Hate.

One of the Mercenaries, Pariah, is the leader of this group, but that is not readily apparent from the conversation. Any conversation about hiring or working with the Mercenaries will be directed to him. He knows more Nothrog jokes than anyone and is the most vehement in saying representatives of Nassiral Hate have no place at any diplomatic gathering.

**Creatures:** Three Human Mercenary guards, 2nd-level fighters *(see Area 1 for stats)*; Pariah, a 5th-level fighter; Kss-da, a 3rd-level barbarian.

- *Mercenary guards (3):* hp 13, 11, 13.

**Pariah, Male Human Ftr 5:** CR 5; Medium humanoid (Human); HD 5d10+10; hp 47; Spd 20 ft.; Init +5; AC 16, touch 12, flat-footed 15; Base Atk +5; Grp +8; Atk +10 melee (1d8+6(19–20/x2), longsword); Full Atk +10 melee (1d8+6(19–20/x2), longsword); SA Favored weapon (longsword, longbow), improved damage (longsword); SQ —; AL LG; SV Fort +6, Ref +2, Will +3; Str 16, Dex 13, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 12.

*Skills and Feats:* Bluff +4, Climb +4*, Gather Information +4, Intimidate +5, Jump +3*, Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Quick Draw, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (longsword). *includes –4 armor check penalty

*Favored Weapon (longsword, longbow):* Pariah gains a +1 competence bonus to attack and damage rolls with the longsword and the longbow.

*Improved Damage (longsword):* Pariah does an additional +2 (+3 total) damage with the longsword.

*Possessions:* Scale mail, longsword, ring of protection +1, 56 gp.

**Kss-da, Male Sutek Bar 3:** CR 3; Medium humanoid (Sutek); HD 3d12+6; hp 25; Spd 30 ft.; Init +1; AC 17, touch 11, flat-footed 16; Base Atk +3; Grp +6; Atk +7 melee (1d10+4/x3, halberd); Full Atk +7 melee (1d10+4/x3, halberd); SA Barbarian rage 1/day; SQ Fast

movement, illiteracy, resist magic +1, Sutek traits, totem animal (crocodile); AL CN; SV Fort +7, Ref +2, Will +2; Str 16, Dex 13, Con 14, Int 11, Wis 13, Cha 8.

*Skills and Feats:* Climb +5*, Intimidate +4, Jump +3*, Ride +5, Swim +0*, Survival +6, Great Fortitude, Weapon Focus (halberd). *includes –4 Armor Check penalty.

*Barbarian Rage (1/day):* While Kss-da rages, his statistics change as follows: HD 3d12+12; hp 31; AC 15, touch 9, flat-footed 14; Grp +8; Atk +9 melee (1d10+6/x3, halberd); Full Atk +9 melee (1d10+6/x3, halberd); SV Fort +9, Will +4; Str 20, Con 18. His fit of rage lasts for 7 rounds. At the end of the rage Kss-da is fatigued (–2 to Strength, –2 to Dexterity, can't charge or run).

*Fast Movement:* Kss-da has a speed faster than the norm for his race by +10 feet when wearing no armor, light armor, or medium armor (and not carrying a heavy load).

*Illiteracy:* Kss-da cannot read nor write.

*Resist Magic:* Kss-da gains a +1 morale bonus to saves against effects generated by spells, spell-like abilities and magic items. Kss-da also reduces additional damage inflicted against him/her by enhancement bonuses by the same amount.

*Totem Animal (crocodile):* Bonus Ability — Improved Swimming. Kss-da may add his Dexterity modifier to his Swim checks.

*Possessions:* Scale mail, halberd, 15 gp.

*Treasure:* Pariah's pack contains a package wrapped in oiled cloth. The package contains a ring and a letter (*see sidebar*). The ring is a ring of protection +1 with a stylized representation of a storm cloud carved into it.

While the Dark Horsemen are open to any reasonable job, Pariah's group is experienced enough that they do not usually contact clients directly — they are put in contact with them through a condottiere. These Mercenaries are probably too expensive for low-level characters to hire.

As his men are currently contracted, Pariah declines offers to hire the group. He listens to any serious offer, particularly against the Nothrog, but insists that he and his men are busy for the foreseeable future.

### Pariah's Letter

*"Pariah —*
*Cardinal Ulloft of Deverenia will be traveling to Harranshee soon. He is concerned about attacks on his journey and is willing to pay a considerable sum for protection. Get to him as soon as the ceremony is over. The enclosed ring should persuade the Cardinal to trust you.*

*—K."*

**If the party is respectful to the Dark Horsemen, Kss-da gives them this letter and the ring it mentions at the adventure's conclusion, saying that Pariah asked for them to carry out its commands. Pariah, Kss-da says, died defending the keep, and the remaining Mercenaries have received orders to return to Kerebrus. The commission also transfers to the party, he elaborates, so they earn Pariah's reward if they fulfill the contract. Kss-da does not know how much Pariah was to be paid, having not originally been assigned the contract.**

Pariah keeps his reasons for hating the Nothrog private, but hints that Nothrog serving Nassiral Hate led to him being with the Dark Horsemen instead of with his family. He offers no details. He neither confirms nor denies rumors of riches possessed by his group.

## Location 8.2: Northeast tower

**Read aloud:** *Seven Nothrog sit quietly around the room. They scowl at anyone who walks in.*

*The Nothrog are perhaps the most cynical group in the keep. They are not here to explore possibilities for peace on their own nor to exploit the new political climate. Rather, they are here because they are convinced the peace effort will not end war but rather shift it somehow, and that the chaos in the Accordlands will continue. They want to know who will suffer the brunt of future chaos, and who can gain from that suffering.*

This mindset renders them uninterested in intrigue. They are aware that the nearby Mercenaries are not fond of them but are more amused than offended.

The leader of the Nothrog is Kr'ttcuck. None of them feel like talking to strangers much and ask the PCs to leave after a few minutes unless the PCs have successfully instilled a helpful attitude in Kr'ttcuck or if the PCs ask them about the food situation, which inspires plenty of complaints.

**Creatures:** Six Nothrog guards, 2nd-level fighters (*see Area 1 for stats*); Kr'ttcuck, a 5th-level fighter.
**Nothrog guards (6):** hp 12, 13, 9, 15, 9, 14.

**Kr'ttcuck, Male Nothrog Ftr 5:** CR 5; Medium humanoid (Nothrog); HD 5d10+10; hp 41; Spd 20 ft.; Init +5; AC 15, touch 11, flat-footed 14; Base Atk +5; Grp +8; Atk +10 melee (1d10+6(19–20/x2), bastard sword); Full Atk +10 melee (1d10+6(19–20/x2), bastard sword); SA Favored weapon (bastard sword, warhammer), improved damage (bastard sword); SQ Nothrog traits; AL NE; SV Fort +6, Ref +2, Will +3; Str 17, Dex 13, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 12.

*Skills and Feats:* Climb +3*, Intimidate +5, Jump +3*, Listen +2; Exotic Weapon Proficiency (bastard sword), Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Weapon Focus (bastard sword). *includes –4 armor check penalty

*Favored Weapon (bastard sword, warhammer):* Kr'ttcuck gains a +1 competence bonus to attack and damage rolls with the bastard sword and the warhammer.

*Improved Damage (bastard sword):* Kr'ttcuck does an additional +2 (+3 total) damage with the bastard sword.

*Possessions:* Scale mail, bastard sword.

**Development:** Kr'ttcuck is not in a fighting mood now; he is saving his energy for his return to Baraxton.

*Initial attitude:* Indifferent to all.

*Helpful (DC 30):* Kr'ttcuck knows that Pariah, the leader of the Dark Horsemen contingent, hates Nothrog, but so far all the Mercenary has done is yell insults from a distance. He and his group have stayed close together at all times, and most of the time they are near their quarters. Kr'ttcuck thinks they have something — money or other treasure — from a recently completed mission that they are keeping a careful eye on. Were it not for that, Kr'ttcuck believes Pariah would have at least challenged him to a fistfight by now.

*Treasure:* Kr'ttcuck has 23 gp, a bastard sword, and a healer's kit.

# Part 2: The Night Before

The night before the scheduled start of the ceremony, a joint force of 10 Elven and 10 Andoveran guards sweeps the keep, making sure everyone is on the lawn in front of the Central Keep. Resisters are subdued and thrown into the keep's prison on the third floor. They will be released after the ceremony is over. But these precautions are not enough to stop the assassins.

At the GM's discretion, PCs may have the opportunity to see one or more of these assassins moving through the keep. Regardless of the party's actions, the ambassadors are fated to die.

**Read aloud:** *The night is dark and silent, with a deathly chill on the air that leeches strength from your bones. Suddenly a strident bell rings throughout the keep, and loud voices rise in the distance. "Betrayal! Assassination! Murder!"*

*An Elven horn echoes among the stone walls, high and grimly mournful, followed by Elven voices. "Quindoll is slain! We are tricked! Guard yourself well, Elves! Guard yourself well!"*

*The castle erupts in chaos.*

Two crews of assassins, along with Cear Adinerach, broke into the keep during a shift change for the guards. The crews came through the stables' tunnel, while Cear sneaked in over the walls. Right now, one crew and Cear are in the Central Keep, the other crew in the central tunnel.

Ambassador Caolwader has been assassinated. Sir Erik narrowly escaped his own killer, killing the assassin in a struggle. Sir Erik has confiscated his foe's black knives. The assassin was an Elf with his bone brow ridges filed smooth, wearing slate-gray clothing to blend with the castle walls.

All groups present in the courtyard immediately retreat to their quarters. Commanders of individual groups call for their troops to return with them to their quarters, and PCs attached to any units are expected to return to them. Some units attempt to pack and leave, but the Andoveran army has already locked down the keep, and no one wants to fight their way out yet.

No one is allowed to leave Ghostwood from this point and guards at the main gate are not susceptible to Bluffs. PCs attempting to force their way out are attacked and pursued until they are captured or slain.

PCs may be allowed into the Central Keep if they have sufficient reason, or can lend a hand with the investigation.

# Part 3: Aftermath

The assassinations start the clock on a chaotic series of events. Some of them can be altered by the PCs, while others are unstoppable. The events are listed by the time that passes after the assassinations, with the assassinations starting the clock at Hour 0. The unstoppable events are noted:

- 00:00: The ambassadors are killed in the Central Keep (unstoppable). Sir Erik escapes assassination.
- 00:20: Hall of the Holy explodes, killing all inside (unstoppable).
- 01:00: PCs encounter Cear as he leaves.
- 01:20: Attempted assassination of Edwin Moss.
- 01:40: Attempted assassination of Son of the Clouds.
- 02:00: First team of assassins attempts escape through the stable tunnel.
- 03:00: Second team of assassins attempts to break Cynarre out of jail.
- 03:30: Fighting between Elven and Andoveran troops erupts inside keep.
- 04:00: Second team of assassins attempts to leave through the stable tunnel.

These events occur regardless of PC action. Other actions might occur because the PCs cause them. For example, the Mercenaries might be coaxed into an attack on the Nothrog.

More detailed descriptions of these events are in Part 4.

Soon after the news of the assassination spreads, PCs who are tied to a military unit should report to their officers. Those officers, regardless of their nationality, send PCs to talk to Sir Erik, and the PCs receive written orders allowing them past the Central Keep guards. Until the PCs enter the Central Keep and receive orders from Sir Erik or Edwin Moss, all other guards will treat them as they did the previous night.

PCs without commanding officers may have a little more difficulty making it into the Central Keep. Nevertheless, unlike the previous night, the Central Keep is no longer locked down, so PCs have a chance to talk their way past the guards. They may also talk to the officers of other nations, who might be convinced to give the PCs a pass to the keep (for Bluffs, use the modifiers in Table 1–1; for Diplomacy, use the initial attitudes given in Part 1 with one exception; see next paragraph). Any officers that were helpful to the PCs the night before give the PCs a pass to the Central Keep if asked.

There has been one change since the previous night: Wynnerik the Elf is no longer in charge of the Elven encampment. That duty has fallen to Sulluman, the former chief deputy to Quindoll. He sits in the tent formerly occupied by Wynnerik. He is indifferent to all nationalities at this time, as his main goal is to just get out and back to Myreth. He now has 130 Elves camped in the grove instead of just 80. Seventy of these Elves are in tents, waiting for the order to leave, while the others stand alert around the grove.

Sulluman, if helpful (DC 30), can tell the PCs that there is an Elf prisoner named Cynarre in the keep, but that Quindoll never expressed interest in freeing him as part of the negotiations. Quindoll often kept his motivations to himself, so Sulluman is not sure why he did not want Cynarre back. If he had to speculate, he would say Quindoll had reason to believe that the Elves no longer held Cynarre's chief allegiance.

Descriptions used in Part 1 can also be used here, with one exception: the Stables (Location 4). Here is the new information for them:

## Location 3: Stables

**Read aloud:** *With no one coming or going, the stables have become quiet except for the impatient whinnying of the horses. A few stable boys wander about grooming horses, but most have gone somewhere else.*

The secret tunnel exiting in the stables *(see the "x" on the map)* has been opened and is covered by a board and some hay. A successful Search check (DC 20) finds the trapdoor and the assassins on the other side.

**Creatures:** The second team of assassins *(see Part 4 for stats)*.

## Location 4: Central Keep

**Read aloud:** *The guards in front of the main door look vigilant, but the occasional arm twitch or sideways glance reveals that they are shaken.*

The Elven guards from the night before have retired to the grove. The front door is protected by six Andoveran guards, the back door by four. The archers on the roof were killed but have been replaced by four more guards.

The guards let by anyone with a pass from any leader, including Sulluman. Since the whole keep is locked down, they do not feel it is as crucial to prevent people from entering or leaving the Central Keep, and they do not want to hinder investigations into the assassinations. They are also now susceptible to Bluffing and Diplomacy (Initial Attitude: Hostile to Elves, helpful to Andoveran subjects, indifferent to all else. Helpful: DC 50 for Elves, DC 10 for freemen, DC 30 for all others; if they are helpful, guards let PCs pass).

**Creatures:** Fourteen guards in various locations *(see Area 1 for stats)*. The four guards on the roof have longbows.

**Andoveran guards (front door) (6):** hp 21, 15, 15, 10, 12, 8.

**Andoveran guards (back door) (4):** hp 12, 15, 13, 9.

**Andoveran guards (on roof) (4):** hp 15, 13, 23, 13.

## Location 4.1: Central Keep — First floor *(map page 481)*

The Central Keep is in chaos. Loud voices can be heard on every floor, and each floor has four guards on perpetual patrol (passing by the PCs every 3d4 minutes). Everyone inside the keep knows the basic layout of the building, and can tell the PCs where certain rooms are (e.g., Sir Erik is on the second floor, the jail is on the third).

## Location 4.1.1: Reception Room

**Read aloud:** *Six smooth granite columns form a corridor leading to an empty throne. The room is eerily empty — a few guards pass through from time to time, but none linger.*

*The east and west walls have tremendous tapestries, one showing the coronation of King Michael, the other showing High Queen Tepheroth.*

No NPCs want to stay in this room for long. The empty throne is too vivid a reminder of the night's events.

## Location 4.1.2: Weapons Ready Room

**Read aloud:** *This large room is empty of any furnishings except for weapon racks on the north, south and west walls. There are spaces for swords, pole arms, axes and bows. The floor in the middle of the room has been scarred by countless practice sessions.*

On normal days, many of the guards in the keep would be on a low level of alertness and most of their weapons would be resting here. Today, only a few weapons sit unused. Four guards stand impatiently in the room, as if they would rather be guarding something more important.

The guards will let any PCs except Elves take any of the weapons in the room, on the assumption that if they were allowed into the Central Keep, they must be okay (Elves, at this time, do not get the benefit of the doubt).

**Creatures:** Two Andoveran guards, 2nd-level fighters; two Mercenary guards, 2nd-level fighters *(see Area 1 for stats)*.

**Andoveran guards (2):** hp 22, 16.

**Mercenary guards (2):** hp 12, 12.

*Treasure:* The room contains the following: a morningstar, two longswords, a bastard sword, a halberd, a composite shortbow, and a battleaxe.

## Location 4.1.3: Armor Ready Room

**Read aloud:** Armor stands are scattered throughout this room, along with four guards who look like they wish their armor were on a stand instead of on them. Most of the stands are empty.

The guards in this room behave like the guards in B.2, the weapons ready room.

**Creatures:** Two Andoveran guards, 2nd-level fighters; two Mercenary guards, 2nd-level fighters *(see Area 1 for stats)*.

**Andoveran guards (2):** hp 14, 16.

**Mercenary guards (2):** hp 12, 8.

*Treasure:* Two sets of leather armor, one chain shirt and one chainmail.

## Location 4.2: Central Keep — Second floor

### Location 4.2.1 — 4.2.5: Free Kingdoms Diplomat Quarters

**Read aloud:** *These rooms were lavishly decorated for Ambassador Caolwader's visit, but now everything on the walls and most of the furniture is covered by black fabric. Solemn guards stand throughout the rooms, vigilant but all too aware of their recent failure.*

None of the distraught guards speaks a word. They do not challenge the PCs. As with other guards in the keep, they assume that if the PCs made it into the keep, they must be okay.

**Creatures:** Sixteen guards in various locations (see Area 1 for stats).

**Andoveran guards (entry room into the suite) (2):** hp 19, 15.

**Andoveran guards (sitting room — Location 4.2.1) (2):** hp 23, 12.

**Mercenary guards (sitting room — Location 4.2.1) (2):** hp 15, 20.

**Andoveran guards (dining room — Location 4.2.2) (2):** hp 13, 12.

**Andoveran guards (standing by the ambassador's body in the servants' quarters — Location 4.2.3) (6):** hp 9, 23, 20, 12, 17, 16.

**Andoveran guards (Sir Erik's room — Location 4.2.5) (2):** hp 22, 11.

**Location 4.2.1** and **Location 4.2.2** contain furniture typical to a sitting room and dining room, all of it covered. No other items are in these rooms.

### Location 4.2.3: Servants' Quarters

Normally these rooms house the personal servants of those staying in this suite. At this time, it has been turned into a funeral parlor.

**Read aloud:** *The corners of this room are dark, while the middle is illuminated by the dozens of candles surrounding the black-shrouded corpse of Ambassador Caolwader. The eight guards here look ready to kill anyone who dares to so much as look at the body without the proper respect.*

Any attempt to get closer than ten feet causes the guards to issue a curt warning to step back. If the PCs refuse, the guards attack.

### Location 4.2.5: Sir Erik's room

**Read aloud:** *Like most of the rooms in the suite, this bedroom is draped in black fabric. A simple desk and chair remain uncovered, and a determined-looking man shuffles through a stack of papers. When he looks toward you, only his eyes betray the loss he has suffered.*

This is Sir Erik Kaisen, the late ambassador's closest ally. He has only one order for the PCs: find the assassins. He recommends that they speak to Edwin Moss, Commander of Ghostwood, on the third floor.

If the PCs are not yet working together, Sir Erik attempts to co-ordinate their efforts, instructing the PCs to find the assassins together.

He does not have much to tell about the assassination. The assassin was only in the ambassador's room for a few moments, but slashed the body nearly beyond recognition. Three servants were also killed in the lightning-fast attack. One guard reported seeing a single dark figure leaving the ambassador's room, and believes it was an Elf. Sir Erik does not want to credit his story, as he still holds out hope for a treaty. Sulluman has refused to sign before he returns to Myreth to consult with his rulers.

According to Sir Erik, things had gone well the night before. Negotiations, held in the third floor war room, went all night long, but progress was obvious, and Ambassador Caolwader insisted he might have found a way to satisfy Tepheroth's bloodlust without compromising Andover. Sir Erik was a bit surprised, in fact, that he did not have to release the Elf spy Cynarre as part of the deal. Everything had seemed promising a few hours ago.

Sir Erik suggests that the PCs keep an eye on Son of the Clouds, of Llyr — not because he suspects him, but he believes any Human diplomat might be a target.

**Creature:** Sir Erik Kaisen, a 10th-level fighter.

**Sir Erik Kaisen, Male Human Ftr 10:** CR 10; Medium humanoid (Human); HD 10d10+30; hp 85; Init +7; Spd 20 ft.; AC 19, touch 12, flat-footed 17; Base Atk +10; Grp +14; Atk +16 melee (1d8+8(17–20/x2), +1 longsword), or +15 ranged (1d10+3(19–20/x2), heavy crossbow); Full Atk +16/+11 melee (1d8+8(17–20/x2), +1 longsword), or +15 ranged (1d8+3(19–20/x2), heavy crossbow); SA Favored weapon (longsword, heavy crossbow, battle axe), improved critical threat (longsword), improved damage (longsword, heavy crossbow); SQ —; AL LG; SV Fort +10, Ref +6, Will +7; Str 18, Dex 16, Con 16, Int 11, Wis 14, Cha 16.

*Skills and Feats:* Climb +6*, Intimidate +13, Jump +7*, Ride +11, Spot +6; Cleave, Combat Reflexes, Exploit Weakness, Feat of Strength, Great Cleave, Improved Bull Rush, Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Power Attack. *includes –4 armor check penalty

*Favored Weapon (longsword, heavy crossbow, battleaxe):* Sir Erik gains a +1 competence bonus to attack and damage rolls with the longsword, heavy crossbow, and the battleaxe.

*Improved Damage (longsword, heavy crossbow):* Sir Erik does an additional +2 (+3 total) damage with the longsword and heavy crossbow.

*Improved Critical Threat (longsword):* Sir Erik's critical threat range is increased by +2 (to 17–20) with the longsword.

*Possessions:* +2 chainmail, +1 longsword, heavy crossbow, 2 potions of cure light wounds.

**Development:** If the PCs give Sir Erik proof of the death of some of the assassins, he offers the party a suitable reward at the end of the adventure (*see Edwin Moss, below*).

### Location 4.2.6 – 5.2.10: Elven Diplomat Quarters

**Read aloud:** *These rooms were living quarters until recently. Chairs have been shattered by maces and swords, furniture has been blasted apart, and scorch marks dot the walls and floor. In one corner, the remnants of a table still smolder. Some blood streaks and pools are still wet.*

These rooms were a mirror image of rooms 1–5 until this morning. The assassination of the ambassador sent the Elves into a rage, and they took it out on the quarters.

### The Note in the Conference Room

**Caolwader has offered Cynarre as a concession — does not know we no longer want him, Wynnerik suggested we could trade for him to ensure his swift disposal, but allowing him to rot in jail until his impending death will be just as efficient and will not cost us anything.**

## Location 4.2.8 Servants' Quarters

This room looks like the others — ruined. Nevertheless, if the PCs walk in before the attempted assassination of Edwin Moss, they sense the presence of invisible beings (the first team of assassins) with a successful opposed Listen check. If the assassins see the PCs are getting suspicious, they attack, dropping their invisibility.

**Creatures:** First assassin team (*see Part 4 for stats*).

# Location 4.3: Central Keep — Third floor

## Location 4.3.1: War Room

**Read aloud:** *A long oval table in the middle of this room is surrounded by high-backed wooden chairs. The ambassadors conducted negotiations on the treaty here just hours ago. Now it is empty and silent.*

As long as the PCs take a somewhat detailed look around the room, they find a crumpled piece of paper in a corner. It is a note written in Elven. Anyone who speaks Elven can read it; others will need to get it translated (*see sidebar The Note in the Conference Room*). If Sulluman is helpful toward the PCs, he translates it if they bring it to him.

## Location 4.3.2: Prison Guard Room

Two guards standing by a metal door look suspiciously at anyone who enters the room. Anyone who tries to pass through the north door without clearance from Edwin Moss is attacked unless the guards are successful on an opposed Bluff check. Guards receive +10 on their Sense Motive checks as the guards are highly disinclined to let anyone through without a pass.

**Creatures:** Two Andoveran guards, 2nd-level fighters (*see Area 1 for stats*).

**Andoveran guards (2):** hp 15, 16.

## Location 4.3.3: Cynarre's cell

**Read aloud:** *A thin, famished-looking Elf sits on a wooden bench, the only furniture in his cell. He smiles as you approach.*

*"Visitors!" he says, trying to sound cheerful through a worn, hoarse voice. "Please talk to me — anything to distract me for a moment or two."*

All cells but Cynarre's are empty.

Cynarre is tired, hungry, and bored. He is also arrogant and speaks freely to the PCs about almost anything because he is confident he will be rescued and will not have to deal with anyone in the keep for long.

**Creature:** Cynarre, a 4th-level assassin.

**Cynarre, Male Elf Asn 4:** CR 4; Medium humanoid (Elf); HD 4d6; hp 15; Spd 30 ft.; Init +8; AC 15, touch 14, flat-footed 11; Base Atk +3; Grp +5; Atk +5 melee (1d3+2/x2, unarmed strike); Full Atk +5 melee (1d3+2/x2, unarmed strike); SA Crippling strike, sneak attack +2d6, Spells; SQ Elf traits, poison immunity and resistance +1, poison use, skilled brewer; AL CE; SV Fort +1, Ref +10, Will +1; Str 14, Dex 18, Con 10, Int 13, Wis 10, Cha 12.

*Skills and Feats:* Hide +7, Jump +5, Listen +4, Move Silently +8, Open Lock +8, Poison +7, Search +4, Sense Motive +3, Sleight of Hand +7, Spot +4; Improved Initiative, Lightning Reflexes.

*Crippling Strike:* When Cynarre scores a critical hit in melee combat, rather than inflicting damage he may inflict normal damage (the hit point damage is not doubled as usual for a critical hit) plus his Intelligence modifier (+1) in temporary damage to the victim's Strength, Dexterity, or Constitution.

*Poison Immunity and Resistance:* Cynarre has a +1 save bonus against all poisons and is immune to quicksilver poison.

*Poison Use:* Cynarre is trained in the use of poison and never risks accidentally poisoning himself/herself when applying poison to a blade.

*Skilled Brewer:* Cynarre is trained to brew poison and always has a +2 competence bonus to Poison skill checks.

*Sneak Attack:* Anytime Cynarre's target is denied a Dexterity bonus to AC, or when he flanks a target, Cynarre deals an additional 2d6 points of damage on a successful attack.

*Assassin Spells Prepared (1; save DC 11 + spell level):* 1st — spider climb.

*Possessions:* Padded armor.

**Development:** Cynarre shows no surprise that the Elves do not want him free, as he no longer works for the Elves; he works for "an Elf." He says his work with the Elves became meaningless when he found out where the real power in the Accordlands lies. He gives no other details.

He also mentions that he hopes to be in Deverenia soon, as he has work to do there. Some Deverenians have reason to want him dead, he says, but he believes he can handle them. If asked what those reasons are, he will say it has to do with the constant fighting over Tyraniel.

Cynarre has an endless supply of stories about his days as a spy, and tells them for as long as the PCs are willing to listen.

## Location 4.3.4: Commander's Office

**Read aloud:** *A commanding man, with a scar running up his cheek, across his forehead, and into a white strip in his dark gray hair, stands by a desk. One hand holds a paper, the other a sword.*

The room's only decoration is a Ghostwood banner on the north wall.

This is Edwin Moss, Commander of Ghostwood Keep. He echoes Sir Erik's orders about finding the assassins, and readily provides the following information for the PCs:

- Cynarre was captured near Corinth after it fell. His captors were convinced he was gathering information for the Elves, but the Elves have shown no interest in getting Cynarre back or even meeting with him. Moss suspects Cynarre is in someone else's employ, though he has no idea whose.
- Moss does not believe the Elves were behind the day's events.

**Creature:** Edwin Moss, 7th-level fighter.

**Edwin Moss, Male Human Ftr 7:** CR 7; Medium humanoid (Human); HD 7d10+14; hp 69; Init +5; Spd 20 ft.; AC 16, touch 11, flat-footed 15; Base Atk +7; Grp +10; Atk +12 melee (1d10+6(19–20/x2), bastard sword); Full Atk +12/+7 melee (1d10+6(19–20/x2), bastard sword); SA Favored Weapon (bastard sword, flail), improved damage (bastard sword); SQ —; AL LG; SV Fort +7, Ref +3, Will +4; Str 17, Dex 13, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 12.

*Skills and Feats:* Climb +4*, Diplomacy +4, Intimidate +8, Jump +5*, Listen +2, Sense Motive +2; Dodge, Exotic Weapon Proficiency (bastard sword), Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Leadership, Quick Draw, Weapon Focus (bastard sword).
*includes –3 armor check penalty

*Favored Weapon (bastard sword, flail):* Moss gains a +1 competence bonus to attack and damage rolls with the bastard sword and flail.

*Improved Damage (bastard sword):* Moss does an additional +2 (+3 total) damage with the bastard sword.

*Possessions:* +1 scale mail, bastard sword, flail, 113 gp.

**Development:** Moss is initially friendly to any PCs who enter his office, regardless of nationality. There are two ways to make him helpful: Diplomacy (DC 20), or presenting him with dead assassins. If he is helpful, Moss issues orders giving the PCs access to all areas of the keep.

Moss and/or Kaisen offer the PCs their choice of items from the vault at the end of the adventure if they have killed a number of assassins equal to or exceeding the party's size, one item per character.

## Location 4.3.5: The Vault

Moss has the only key to this room, and he is always in his office. He notices any attempts to go into the room and sounds an alarm if PCs attempt to break in. Ten guards from room 6 come in to assist him. The lock is DC 30; the door is DC 18 to break. If Moss has a helpful attitude toward the party, he escorts them himself.

**Read aloud:** *Flickering torches reflect from shiny metal scattered around the room. With Moss in front of the room and dozens of guards nearby, this may be the safest place in the keep.*

**Treasure:** The room contains the following items: a +1 longsword, a +1 longspear, a scroll of see invisibility, a potion of cure moderate wounds, and a ring of jumping.

## Location 4.3.6: Central Keep Barracks

A standard barracks room housing the local soldiers. The soldiers present are marshaled and ready for any further trouble.

**Creatures:** Nine Andoveran guards, 2nd-level fighters; three Mercenary guards, 2nd-level fighters *(see Area 1 for stats)*.
**Andoveran guards (9):** hp 14, 20, 17, 16, 11, 10, 14, 16, 10.
**Mercenary guards (3):** hp 12, 15, 16.

## Location 4.3.7: Kitchen

A standard kitchen for a keep, but deserted now, after the deaths of the ambassadors.

## Location 4.3.8: Servants' Quarters

Ten shiftless servants are in this large room that has cots, a few dressers and not much else. With the ambassadors dead and Sir Erik ordering all servants away from him, these servants have nothing to do. They have no information for the PCs.

One of the servants, Milar Cone, is a cleric and offers her services to the PCs if they look wounded. She is the only NPC in the room with an adventuring class.

**Creature:** Milar Cone, a 1st-level cleric.

**Milar Cone, Female Human Clr 1:** CR 1; Medium humanoid (Human); HD 1d8+1; hp 6; Spd 30 ft.; Init +1; AC 11, touch 11, flat-footed 10; Base Atk +0; Grp +0; Atk +0 melee (1d4(19–20/x2), dagger); Full Atk +0 melee (1d4(19–20/x2), dagger); SA Spells, turn undead 3/day; SQ Cleric domains (Good, Knowledge), spontaneous casting; AL LG; SV Fort +3, Ref +1, Will +5; Str 11, Dex 12, Con 12, Int 15, Wis 17, Cha 11.

*Skills and Feats:* Concentration +4, Diplomacy +3, Heal +7, Knowledge (religion) +8, Sense Motive +5, Spellcraft +5; Scribe Scroll, Skill Focus (Knowledge (religion)).

*Spontaneous Casting:* Milar can "lose" a prepared spell (except for a domain spell) in order to cast any cure spell of the same level or lower.

*Turn Undead:* Milar can attempt to turn undead 3 times per day.

*Cleric Spells Prepared (3/2+1; save DC 13 + spell level):* 0 — cure minor wounds (x2), virtue; 1st — augury, cure light wounds, protection from evil*, *Domain spell

*Possessions:* Dagger, 3 gp.

## Location 4.4: Central Keep — Roof

Four guards with bows are on the roof. They are watchful, as the previous guards were killed in the first strike. They do not welcome company and ask PCs to leave as soon as they arrive. They do not attack the PCs unless unduly provoked.

**Creatures:** Four Andoveran guards with longbows, 2nd-level fighters *(see Area 1 for stats)*.

**Andoveran guards (4):** hp 15, 13, 23, 13.

# Part 4: Scheduled events

Many of these events involve either the first or the second groups of assassins. All assassins of the same level have the same statistics. The groups are as follows:

**First team:** One 3rd-level assassin, two 2nd-level assassins, one 1st-level assassin, one 1st-level wizard.

*Treasure:* The leader of this group (3rd-level assassin) carries a document that is a code key. He also has 54 gp, a 200 gp silver pearl, and a +1 dagger. Other assassins have short swords; the wizard has a ring of protection +1. Each assassin carries 2 potions of invisibility.

*Location:* From the time of the ambassadors' assassinations to 01:20, this team is in the Elven diplomats' quarters in the Central Keep (Location 5.2.8). At that point they leave, attempt two assassinations (Edwin Moss and Son of the Clouds), then make their way to the tunnel in the Stables (Location 3) by 02:00.

**Second team:** One 3rd-level assassin, one 2nd-level assassin, one 2nd-level wizard, one 1st-level assassin, one 1st-level cleric.

*Treasure:* The leader of this group (3rd-level assassin) carries a coded letter (see sidebar The Second Team's Coded Message), a +1 dagger, and 89 gp. Other assassins have short swords; the wizard has a ring of protection +1. Each assassin carries two potions of invisibility except for the leader, who has three (one for Cynarre).

*Location:* The second team hides in the tunnel under the Stables (Location 3) until they attempt to free Cynarre. They return to the tunnel after that mission until 03:40, when they attempt to steal documents from the top floor of the keep. Then they attempt to flee through the tunnel.

All assassins wear the uniform of Andoveran guards. Sir Erik and Edwin Moss can identify dead assassins as counterfeit guards.

The leader of the first team carries a key to a code; the leader of the second team carries a message encrypted using that code. A PC making a successful Decipher Script check (DC 27) can decode the message without the key *(see sidebar The Second Team's Coded Message)*.

If the PCs wipe out one of the teams of assassins before it completes its assignments, the other team takes over for it. Thus, if the PCs discover and kill the first team before the attempt on Edwin Moss' life, the second team will make the attempt at the scheduled time. Similarly, if the second team is killed before its attempt to free Cynarre, the first team attempts that task.

If the PCs manage to kill both teams, they should be able to convince whoever is in charge of the keep that all the assassins have been found (see Part 5).

**1st Level Assassin, Male Human Asn 1:** CR 1; Medium humanoid (Human); HD 1d6+1; hp 4; Spd 30 ft.; Init +3; AC 15, touch 13, flat-footed 12; Base Atk +0; Grp +1; Atk +1 melee (1d6+1(19–20/x2), short sword); Full Atk +1 melee (1d6+1(19–20/x2), short sword; SA Sneak attack +1d6; SQ Poison use, skilled brewer; AL CE; SV Fort +1, Ref +5, Will –1; Str 13, Dex 16, Con 12, Int 12, Wis 9 Cha 9.

*Skills and Feats:* Balance +5, Escape Artist +5, Hide +7, Listen +2, Move Silently +7, Open Lock +5, Poison +6; Blind Fight, Dodge.

*Poison Use:* The assassin is trained in the use of poison and never risks accidentally poisoning himself/herself when applying poison to a blade.

*Skilled Brewer:* The assassin is trained to brew poison and always has a +2 competence bonus to Poison skill checks.

*Sneak Attack:* Anytime the assassin's target is denied a Dexterity bonus to AC, or when he flanks a target, the assassin deals an additional 1d6 points of damage on a successful attack.

*Possessions:* Leather armor, short sword, 7 gp.

**2nd Level Assassin, Male Human Asn 2:** CR 2; Medium humanoid (Human); HD 2d6+2; hp 9; Spd 30 ft.; Init +3; AC 15, touch 13, flat-footed 12; Base Atk +1; Grp +2; Atk +2 melee (1d6+1(19–20/x2), short sword); Full Atk +2 melee (1d6+1(19–20/x2), short sword; SA Sneak attack +1d6; SQ Poison immunity and resistance +1, poison use, skilled brewer; AL CE; SV Fort +1, Ref +6, Will –1; Str 13, Dex 16, Con 12, Int 12, Wis 9 Cha 9.

*Skills and Feats:* Balance +5, Escape Artist +5, Hide +7, Listen +2, Move Silently +7, Open Lock +5, Poison +7, Tumble +7; Blind Fight, Dodge.

*Poison Immunity and Resistance:* The assassin has a +1 save bonus against all poisons and is immune to blood boil poison.

*Poison Use:* The assassin is trained in the use of poison and never risks accidentally poisoning himself/herself when applying poison to a blade.

Skilled Brewer: The assassin is trained to brew poison and always has a +2 competence bonus to Poison skill checks.

*Sneak Attack:* Anytime the assassin's target is denied a Dexterity bonus to AC, or when he flanks a target, the assassin deals an additional 1d6 points of damage on a successful attack.

*Possessions:* Leather armor, short sword, 12 gp.

**3rd Level Assassin, Male Human Asn 3:** CR 3; Medium humanoid (Human); HD 3d6+3; hp 14; Spd 30 ft.; Init +3; AC 15, touch 13, flat-footed 12; Base Atk +2; Grp +3; Atk +3 melee (1d6+1(19–20/x2), short sword); Full Atk +3 melee (1d6+1(19–20/x2), short sword; SA Sneak attack +2d6; SQ Poison immunity and resistance +1, poison use, skilled brewer; AL CE; SV Fort +2, Ref +6, Will +0; Str 13, Dex 16, Con 12, Int 12, Wis 9 Cha 9.

*Skills and Feats:* Balance +5, Escape Artist +5, Hide +7, Listen +2, Move Silently +8, Open Lock +5, Poison +8, Sense Motive +2, Tumble +7; Blind Fight, Dodge, Quick Draw.

*Poison Immunity and Resistance:* The assassin has a +1 save bonus against all poisons and is immune to blood boil poison.

*Poison Use:* The assassin is trained in the use of poison and never risks accidentally poisoning himself/herself when applying poison to a blade.

*Skilled Brewer:* The assassin is trained to brew poison and always has a +2 competence bonus to Poison skill checks.

*Sneak Attack:* Anytime the assassin's target is denied a Dexterity bonus to AC, or when he flanks a target, the assassin deals an additional 2d6 points of damage on a successful attack.

*Possessions:* Leather armor, short sword, 20 gp.

### The Second Team's Coded Message

*"Let the first group do the killing — the ambassadors, Kaisen, the Llyran, and anyone who interferes. You must focus on stealth. Make sure Cynarre is safely out of the keep. Keep any fight short. The information he has is too important to compromise.*
*Once you have him, all teams proceed immediately to the assembly point. Ghostwood is finished, but the Great Task begins. If you succeed in all, we will reward you beyond your capacity to bear.*
*— C."*

**1st Level Wizard, Female Human Wiz 1:** CR 1; Medium humanoid (Human); HD 1d4+1; hp 3; Spd 30 ft.; Init +6; AC 13, touch 13, flat-footed 11; Base Atk +0; Grp +0; Atk +0 melee (1d4(19–20/x2), dagger); Full Atk +0 melee (1d4(19–20/x2), dagger); SA Spells; SQ Summon familiar (rat); AL CE; SV Fort +1, Ref +2, Will +3; Str 10, Dex 14, Con 12, Int 16, Wis 12, Cha 11.

*Skills and Feats:* Concentration +5, Decipher Script +7, Hide +4, Knowledge (arcana) +7, Listen +3, Spellcraft +7; Alertness, Combat Casting, Improved Initiative.

*Familiar (rat):* The wizard's rat familiar has the following statistics:

Rat (Familiar) CR —; Tiny magical beast; HD 3; hp 1; Init +2; Spd 15 ft, climb 15 ft, swim 15 ft; AC 15, touch 14, flat-footed 13; Base Atk +0; Grp –12; Atk +2 melee (1d3–4/x2, bite); Full Atk +2 melee (1d3–4/x2, bite); Space/Reach 2–1/2 ft./0 ft.; SA —; SQ low-light vision, scent, empathic link, share spells, improved evasion; AL N; SV Fort +2, Ref +4, Will +3; Str 2, Dex 15, Con 10, Int 6, Wis 12, Cha 2.

*Skill and Feats:* Balance +10, Climb +12, Hide +14, Move Silently +10, Swim +10; Weapon Finesse (bite).

*Low-Light Vision:* A rat can see twice as far as a Human in starlight, moonlight, torchlight, and similar conditions of shadowy illumination. It retains the ability to distinguish color and detail under these conditions.

*Scent:* A rat can detect opponents within 30 feet by sense of smell. If the opponent is upwind, the range increases to 60 feet; if downwind, it drops to 15 feet. Strong scents, such as smoke or rotting garbage, can be detected at twice the ranges noted above. Overpowering scents, such as skunk musk or troglodyte stench, can be detected at triple normal range. When a rat detects a scent, the exact location of the source is not revealed—only its presence somewhere within range. The rat can take a move action to note the direction of the scent.

Whenever the rat comes within 5 feet of the source, the creature pinpoints the source's location.

*Familiar Ability Descriptions:* All familiars have special abilities (or impart abilities to their masters) depending on the wizard' combined level in classes that grant familiars. The abilities are cumulative.

*Alertness (Ex):* While a familiar is within arm's reach, the wizard gains the Alertness feat.

*Improved Evasion (Ex):* When subjected to an attack that normally allows a Reflex saving throw for half damage, a familiar takes no damage if it makes a successful saving throw and half damage even if the saving throw fails.

*Share Spells:* At the wizard' option, she may have any spell (but not any spell-like ability) se casts on herself also affect his familiar. The familiar must be within 5 feet at the time of casting to receive the benefit. If the spell or effect has a duration other than instantaneous, it stops affecting the familiar if it moves farther than 5 feet away and will not affect the familiar again even if it returns to the wizard before the duration expires. Additionally, the wizard may cast a spell with a target of "You" on her familiar (as a touch range spell) instead of on herself. The wizard and her familiar can share spells even if the spells normally do not affect creatures of the familiar's type (magical beast).

*Empathic Link (Su):* The wizard has an empathic link with her familiar out to a distance of up to 1 mile. The wizard cannot see through the familiar's eyes, but they can communicate empathically. Because of the limited nature of the link, only general emotional content can be communicated. Because of this empathic link, the wizard has the same connection to an item or place that her familiar does.

*Wizard Spells Prepared (3/2; save DC 13 + spell level):* 0 — spell ghost sound, open/close, ray of frost; 1st — hold portal, obscuring mist.

*Possessions:* Dagger, ring of protection +1, 4 gp.

**2nd Level Wizard, Male Human Wiz 2:** CR 2; Medium humanoid (Human); HD 2d4+2; hp 6; Spd 30 ft.; Init +6; AC 13, touch 13, flat-footed 11; Base Atk +1; Grp +1; Atk +1 melee (1d4(19–20/x2), dagger); Full Atk +1 melee (1d4(19–20/x2), dagger); SA Spells; SQ Eidetic memory (burning hands), summon familiar (rat); AL CE; SV Fort +3, Ref +4, Will +4; Str 10, Dex 14, Con 12, Int 16, Wis 12, Cha 11.

*Skills and Feats:* Concentration +6, Decipher Script +7, Hide +4, Knowledge (arcana) +7, Listen +3, Spellcraft +8, Spot +3; Alertness, Combat Casting, Improved Initiative.

*Eidetic Memory:* The wizard may spontaneously cast burning hands in place of a prepared spell of equal or higher level. This loses the prepared spell to fuel the memorized spell.

*Familiar (rat):* The wizard's rat familiar has the following statistics:

Rat (Familiar) CR —; Tiny magical beast; HD 3; hp 3; Init +2; Spd 15 ft, climb 15 ft, swim 15 ft; AC 15, touch 14, flat-footed 13; Base Atk +1; Grp –11; Atk +4 melee (1d3–4/x2, bite); Full Atk +4 melee (1d3–4/x2, bite); Space/Reach 2–1/2 ft./0 ft.; SA —; SQ low-light vision, scent, empathic link, share spells, improved evasion; AL N; SV Fort +2, Ref +2, Will +4; Str 2, Dex 15, Con 10, Int 6, Wis 12, Cha 2.

*Skill and Feats:* Balance +10, Climb +12, Hide +14, Move Silently +10, Swim +10; Weapon Finesse (bite).

*Low-Light Vision:* A rat can see twice as far as a Human in starlight, moonlight, torchlight, and similar conditions of shadowy illumination. It retains the ability to distinguish color and detail under these conditions.

*Scent:* A rat can detect opponents within 30 feet by sense of smell. If the opponent is upwind, the range increases to 60 feet; if downwind, it drops to 15 feet. Strong scents, such as smoke or rotting garbage, can be detected at twice the ranges noted above. Overpowering scents, such as skunk musk or troglodyte stench, can be detected at triple normal range. When a rat detects a scent, the exact location of the source is not revealed—only its presence somewhere within range. The rat can take a move action to note the direction of the scent.

Whenever the rat comes within 5 feet of the source, the rat pinpoints the source's location.

*Familiar Ability Descriptions:* All familiars have special abilities (or impart abilities to their masters) depending on the wizard' combined level in classes that grant familiars. The abilities are cumulative.

*Alertness (Ex):* While a familiar is within arm's reach, the wizard gains the Alertness feat.

*Improved Evasion (Ex):* When subjected to an attack that normally allows a Reflex saving throw for half damage, a familiar takes no damage if it makes a successful saving throw and half damage even if the saving throw fails.

*Share Spells:* At the wizard' option, he may have any spell (but not any spell-like ability) he casts on himself also affect his familiar. The familiar must be within 5 feet at the time of casting

to receive the benefit. If the spell or effect has a duration other than instantaneous, it stops affecting the familiar if it moves farther than 5 feet away and will not affect the familiar again even if it returns to the wizard before the duration expires. Additionally, the wizard may cast a spell with a target of "You" on his familiar (as a touch range spell) instead of on himself. The wizard and his familiar can share spells even if the spells normally do not affect creatures of the familiar's type (magical beast).

*Empathic Link (Su):* The wizard has an empathic link with his familiar out to a distance of up to 1 mile. The wizard cannot see through the familiar's eyes, but they can communicate empathically. Because of the limited nature of the link, only general emotional content can be communicated. Because of this empathic link, the wizard has the same connection to an item or place that his familiar does.

*Wizard Spells Prepared (4/3; save DC 13 + spell level):* 0 — spell flare, open/close, ray of frost, touch of fatigue; 1st — grease, magic missile, obscuring mist.

*Possessions:* Dagger, ring of protection +1, 6 gp.

**1st Level Cleric, Male Human Clr 1:** CR 1; Medium humanoid (Human); HD 1d8+1; hp 5; Spd 30 ft.; Init +2; AC 12, touch 12, flat-footed 10; Base Atk +0; Grp +1, Atk +1 melee (1d6+1/x2, light mace); Full Atk +1 melee (1d6+1/x2, light mace); SA Spells; SQ Cleric domains (Chaos, Evil), rebuke undead, spontaneous casting; AL CE; SV Fort +3, Ref +2, Will +5; Str 12, Dex 14, Con 12, Int 12, Wis 16, Cha 10.

*Skills and Feats:* Concentration +5, Diplomacy +1, Heal +7, Knowledge (religion) +4, Spellcraft +5; Combat Casting, Improved Initiative.

*Rebuke Undead:* The cleric can attempt to rebuke undead 3 times per day.

*Spontaneous Casting:* The cleric can "lose" a prepared spell (except for a domain spell) in order to cast any inflict spell of the same level or lower.

*Cleric Spells Prepared (3/2+1; save DC 13 + spell level):* 0 — cure minor wounds, inflict minor wounds, resistance; 1st — bane, doom, protection from good*. *Domain spell

*Possessions:* Light mace, 3 gp.

### 00:20: Hall of the Holy Explodes

If the PCs are north of the Central Keep twelve seconds before the scheduled explosion, read aloud: A priest in a white robe runs around the corner of the Hall of the Holy at top speed, his face twisted in horror.

"Run!" he screams to anyone within earshot. "Get away from the hall. Get away!"

He does not stop to see if anyone listens to him.

Two rounds later, a terrible explosion rocks the interior of the Hall.

**Read aloud:** *Blinding white light hits your eyes just before a terrible crack thunders through the air and shakes the ground. At the north end of the keep, stone rubble showers to the ground, then is engulfed in a billowing cloud. When the debris settles, the Hall of the Holy is gone. The dust of the newly initiated paladins slowly drifts in the wind.*

Any PCs within 100 ft. of the Hall when it explodes suffer 2d8 damage from flying rubble (Ref save (DC 12) for half damage).

PCs may search the rubble immediately after the explosion, which was incredibly powerful but localized, but it yields no survivors and no clues. Any PCs north of the Central Keep less than ten minutes after the explosion who make a successful Spot check (DC 15) see an open window on the second floor of the Central Keep slowly close.

The priest who gave warning is Dixall, who cast augury to see if it was safe to enter the Hall of the Holy. The answer was a resounding "no."

### 01:00: Cear Leaves

The timing on this is approximate. It should happen when the PCs are either outside or in the Central Keep. If PCs are inside some other building, wait until they leave, then begin the encounter.

**Read aloud:** *You hear a flurry of footsteps and feel someone passing by, but do not see anyone. Then you hear a voice.*

*"This is the world we are giving you," the voice says, icy and proud. "Spread this message: there will be no peace."*

**Development:** This is Cear Adinerach, a Medusan Lord and the man behind the chaos at Ghostwood. Aside from his strange appearance, Adinerach is quite different from normal elves, due to the black dragon's soul that he took for his own *(see The Medusan Lords chapter for more information on Adinerach's background)*. The most notable changes are Spell Resistance, higher saving throw bonuses than normal, and a high Constitution. He also has a special ability gained through a combination of his vast experience and his dragon soul, Uncanny Dodge. He possesses this ability as if he were a 7th level scout, which means he cannot be flanked except by someone at least 4 levels higher, and he always retains his Dexterity bonus to AC, even if he is caught flat-footed. He is an Elf with long, white-and-black hair and jagged ridges over his eyes.

He will not kill the PCs, since he wants them to spread his message. He spars with them for his own amusement for three rounds, doing subdual damage. In the fourth round of combat, he departs into the shadows.

His invisibility drops as soon as he starts fighting.

PCs making a successful Listen check (opposed by Cear's Move Silently) detect his presence before he runs by.

His does not use his special weapons, the Black Knives *(see sidebar Black Knives for details)*, in this fight. In this fight, he swats at the PCs with the flat side of a longsword looted from a dead guard.

**Cear Adinerach, Master Assassin of House Tansiq, Male Elf Asn 15/Tansiq flesher 5:** CR 20; Medium humanoid (Elf); HD 20d6+120; hp 193; Spd 30 ft.; Init +7; AC 29, touch 17, flat-footed 22; Base Atk +14; Grp +18; Atk +18 (+14 if doing nonlethal damage) longsword (1d8+4(19–20/x2), longsword) or +26 melee (1d6+9 plus death (17–20/x4), black knife) or +23 ranged (1d6+6/x3, masterwork mighty composite shortbow and +2 arrows); Full Atk +18/+14/+10 (+14/+10/+6 if doing nonlethal damage) longsword (1d8+4(19–20/x2), longsword) or +24/+19/+14 melee (1d6+9 plus death (17–20/x4), black knife) and +24 melee (1d6+9 plus death (17–20/x4), black knife) or +23/+18/+13 ranged (1d6+6/x3, masterwork mighty composite shortbow and +2 arrows); SA Faultless flesh, improved crippling strike (+1d4), ruthless (move-equivalent), sneak attack +10d8, strike and retreat, vital spot, spells; SQ Elf traits, life and death,

poison immunity and resistance +4, poison use, skilled brewer, spell resistance 30, uncanny dodge (flanking), race/class abilities; AL CE; SV Fort +14, Ref +20, Will +10; Str 19, Dex 25, Con 22, Int 18, Wis 14, Cha 16.

*Skills and Feats:* Balance +17, Climb +14, Disguise +13, Escape Artist +17, Gather Information +13, Hide +22, Jump +14, Listen +16, Move Silently +22, Open Lock +17, Sleight of Hand +17, Poison +22, Search +14, Sense Motive +12, Spot +16, Tumble +17, Use Rope +17; Dodge, Exotic Weapon Proficiency (black knife), Mobility, Run, Spring Attack, Two-Weapon Fighting, Weapon Finesse (short sword).

*Race/Class Abilities: Assassin:* Improved sneak attack, memory phase (2x/day).

*Faultless Flesh:* When attacking a helpless opponent, Adinerach can draw out the victim's suffering through a painful rite that bestows a number of years of extended life to the master assassin. The ritual requires 8 uninterrupted hours and as a result Adinerach does not age for a number of years equal to one-quarter of the victim's CR and gains spell resistance (14 + character level) against necromancy spells.

*Improved Crippling Strike:* When Adinerach scores a critical hit in melee combat, rather than inflicting damage he may inflict normal damage (the hit point damage is not doubled as usual for a critical hit) plus 1d4 + his Intelligence modifier (+4) in temporary damage to the victim's Strength, Dexterity, or Constitution.

*Life And Death:* Though Cear gained his immortality through a process similar to the rest of the Ten, he has a supernatural ability that appears to be unique. If Cear personally kills someone, he renders his victim permanently dead, beyond all hope of resurrection. While Cear uses this power sparingly (the other members of the Ten find it disturbing), he may do so at will, as a free action.

Cear may choose to raise those whom he has killed, even if he has permanently slain them with this ability or with the Black Knives, so long as Cear still has access to the body. This use of the ability is still a free action, and raises the slain creature from the dead to full hit points and health, assuming a whole body (i.e. a missing limb would not regenerate). Cear may not raise undead in this manner.

There is a price for this resurrection. The raised creature gains a continuous, supernatural ability to feel Cear's presence (as though through a detect evil spell that only detected Cear; he is considered to be a 5th level cleric of an evil deity, due to the nature of the Tansiq fleshers prestige class). Raised creatures also recognize on sight whether someone has a direct tie to Cear, though not necessarily the nature of it (i.e. the character knows that Sir Robert's wife, Duchess Cassandra, has had some sort of contact with Cear, but could not tell if the association is through her being an ally, a surviving victim, or even if she had simply and unknowingly brushed past him on the street). This new ability manifests as a terrible chill centering on the spot where Cear once slew the creature.

*Poison Immunity and Resistance:* Cear has a +4 save bonus against all poisons and is immune to black lotus extract, deathblade, dark reaver powder, and crypt wine poisons.

*Poison Use:* Adinerach is trained in the use of poison and never risks accidentally poisoning himself/herself when applying poison to a blade.

*Ruthless:* Adinerach may make one coup de grace attack as a melee attack action once per round and an additional coup de grace action as either a melee attack action or as a move-equivalent action.

*Skilled Brewer:* Adinerach is trained to brew poison and always has a +2 competence bonus to Poison skill checks.

*Sneak Attack:* Anytime Adinerach's target is denied a Dexterity bonus to AC, or when he flanks a target, Adinerach deals an additional 10d8 points of damage on a successful melee attack.

*Spell Resistance:* To affect Adinerach with a spell, a spellcaster must succeed a caster level check (DC 30).

*Strike And Retreat:* Adinerach can use his Spring Attack feat to advance, attack, and continue moving into hiding to await his next strike. So long as the master assassin begins and ends his movements outside of his enemies' fields of vision, he may make Hide and Move Silently checks even if others are aware of his presence. If Adinerach suffers damage while engaged in a strike and retreat, he may not use this ability for the remainder of the combat unless something diverts his attackers' attention. While in hiding, the master assassin may not perform any action that would draw attention to himself but may use his sneak attack bonuses when attacking unsuspecting opponents. This ability does not work against opponents with blindsight or scent. Due to the speed of the strike, Adinerach receives only half of his sneak attack bonus (+5d6) while making a strike and retreat. Adinerach can choose to Run (as per the feat) as part of his Spring Attack, but provokes attacks of opportunity as normal from opponents other than the target.

*Uncanny Dodge:* Adinerach retains his Dexterity bonus to Armor Class even if caught flat-footed or attacked by an invisible attacker. The master assassin may only be flanked by opponents of at least 24 levels/Hit Dice who possess the Uncanny Dodge ability.

*Vital Spot:* While using a light weapon against an enemy Adinerach has studied for at least three rounds, the critical threat range(s) for his weapon(s) doubles. The master assassin does not gain this benefit if he has attacked another opponent within the last round or if he is flanked.

*Assassin Spells Prepared (3/2/2/2; save DC 14 + spell level):* 1st — ghost sound, obscuring mist, spider climb; 2nd — alter self, undetectable alignment; 3rd — deeper darkness, invisibility; 4th — dimension door, freedom of movement.

*Possessions:* Two Black Knives, +3 dagger of venom, masterwork mighty composite shortbow, twenty-four +2 arrows, bracers of armor +8, amulet of natural armor +4, brooch of shielding, gloves of dexterity +4, potion of invisibility (5 doses), vial with deathblade poison (7 applications), vial with black lotus extract poison (8 applications), vial with dark reaver powder poison (5 applications), 500 pp, and 800 gp.

### 01:20: Attempted Assassination of Edwin Moss.

The first team makes the attempt in Edwin Moss's office (**Location 4.3.4**).

If the PCs are in Edwin Moss' office at the time of the attack, read aloud: Five guards in Andoveran colors enter the room without a word, the last one shutting the door behind him.

Moss looks at them suspiciously. "Why did you close the door? Are you assigned to this building?"

His only answer is the unsheathing of swords.

## Black Knives

MAJOR ARTIFACT

**The Black Knives are double-bladed weapons slightly over 2 feet long. The blades of this powerful artifact are black, curved, serrated, and strangely shaped, resembling no other weapons in the lands of the Accord. Between the twin blades is a comfortable handle wrapped in burgundy leather. Each weighs exactly the same as a short sword, and is perfectly balanced for throwing (with a range increment of 20 feet). The feat Exotic Weapon Proficiency (black knife) is required to properly wield these weapons. Many of the killers in the Assassins' Strike wielded lesser replicas of Cear's true blades. These copies have only the above features, while Cear's own have many more.**

**The Black Knives act as +5 short swords that deal 1d6+5 points of slashing damage. The blade delivers a critical threat on a natural attack roll of 17 to 20 and a critical multiplier of x4. Every time this weapon strikes a living creature, the target must succeed at a Fortitude save (DC 24) or die immediately. Every victim killed by the Black Knives' special power bestows to their wielder an enhancement bonus to Strength, Dexterity, or Constitution (wielder's choice) of 1d4+1 points that lasts for twenty-four hours. Victims murdered by the Black Knives may never be resurrected or brought back to life by any method short of a wish or a miracle.**

**Should the party recover the Black Knives, the Medusan Lords send their agents after the artifacts. It is unlikely that the PCs will be permitted to keep them for long.**
**Caster level: 20th; Weight: 2 lb.**

If the PCs are on the second floor of the Central Keep (Location 4.2) at the time of the attack, read aloud: Metal clangs on metal, immediately followed by a shout. "Treachery! Murder! I have them!" The voice is Edwin Moss'.

**If the PCs are anywhere else, read aloud:** *Shouts of astonishment and cries for help ripple away from the keep like wind through grass. Finally, the words reach your ears. "Attack on Commander Moss! Someone is inside the keep!"*

News of the attack spreads rapidly. From the beginning of the attack, the GM should commence the melee between the assassins and Moss. If the PCs make it in time, they may fight the assassins. If they do not, he may already be dead.

BETWEEN 01:20 AND 01:40:

Aided by potions of invisibility, the assassins stealthily walk from the Central Keep to the West Thorn. Any time the PCs are between those two buildings at this time, they sense the assassins with a successful Spot check (DC 20).

01:40: ATTEMPTED ASSASSINATION OF SON OF THE CLOUDS.

If the PCs are in the West Thorn (Location 2.1) with Son of the Clouds, read aloud: The door to the chamber flies open with a crash, and five men in Andoveran colors charge in. The Llyrans have no time to speak before the newcomers attack.

If the PCs are anywhere else, read aloud: Alarms are raised in the keep once more. "Attack!" the voices cry. "The West Thorn is under attack!"

Again, the GM should commence the melee and conduct it secretly until the PCs arrive. News travels across the keep at 100 feet per round. If the PCs do not intervene, all of the Llyran are slain.

Any attempt to assist Son of the Clouds is met with deep gratitude. If he has not already done so, Son tells the PCs about the Dwarf he encountered on his way and invites them to come meet with the Dwarf once the lockdown is over.

02:00: FIRST TEAM OF ASSASSINS ATTEMPTS ESCAPE THROUGH STABLE TUNNEL.

PCs in the Stable (**Location 3**) can make a Spot check (DC 18) to see if they notice the entrance opening. The first team is invisible at this point, while the second team has temporarily left the tunnel and is hiding in the woods at the tunnel's exit.

03:00: SECOND TEAM ATTEMPTS TO BREAK CYNARRE OUT OF JAIL.

If the PCs are with Cynarre, read aloud: Suddenly, there are five people in the Andoveran colors standing in the doorway. They did not walk up; they just appeared.

"I'm afraid this visit is over," one of them says, then gestures to Cynarre. "Come on."

The assassins are not interested in attacking the PCs, since they are worried Cynarre would die in combat. They defend themselves, but when the opportunity presents itself, they flee.

If PCs are elsewhere on the third floor of the Central Keep (besides Location 4.3.1, the War Room), read aloud: There is a shout from the north, abruptly cut off, then clanking metal, then the sound of many hurried footsteps.

The PCs must investigate the noises quickly to find Cynarre and the assassins. The assassins run to the northeast stairs (speed: 120 ft. per round). Cynarre drinks a potion of invisibility when he arrives at the stairwell.

PCs must make a Listen check (opposed by the group's Move Silently) to sense the invisible group. They only have the chance to make this check if they are on shortest path from the northeast stairs to the stable tunnel.

Once Cynarre has escaped, word spreads quickly, but not quickly enough for the PCs to stop him from getting out of Ghostwood.

HOUR 03:30: ELVEN AND ANDOVERAN TROOPS INSIDE THE CENTRAL KEEP (LOCATION 4) BEGIN FIGHTING.

Janse Stallings provokes this fight. Tension between Elves and Andoveran soldiers has been high since the assassinations, but it erupts into conflict when Stallings, while walking to the Central Keep, happens to see Wynnerik outside her tent.

If the PCs are near the grove or the south side of the Central Keep (Location 4), read aloud: With long, rapid strides, Janse Stallings crosses the lawn toward the Central Keep. Then, abruptly, he stops, takes some steps toward the grove, then stands, hands on his hips, eyes smoldering. He points toward the grove and shouts. "Don't think I don't know! Don't think I don't know what you did!"

Wynnerik, the object of his ire, stands outside the grove. A few Elves near her step toward Stallings, but she motions them to hold. "You know nothing. Your whole nation knows nothing," she says in icy tones that carry across the lawn.

Stallings turns toward the guards in front of the Central Keep. "How long shall we let those who murdered our kin live?" he cries. "How long shall we allow them to stand on our ground and insult our honor?"

The answer is apparent as the guards by the door nod their heads, step forward, and draw their swords.

Wynnerik lowers her hands and the Elves by her side move ahead. First they step quickly, then they run.

Urged on by Stallings and Wynnerik, the two sides clash on the lawn.

The combatants are Stallings, Wynnerik, six Andoveran guards and four Elf guards, who fight for 20 rounds. At that point, Sulluman runs toward the fight and orders it stopped. He brings with him 12 Elven guards.

If the PCs fight on the side of the Elves, they are no longer allowed into the Central Keep, and if they sneak in they are attacked. The Elves, not widely known for their excess of gratitude, will slip the PCs 100 gp.

If the PCs fight on the side of the Andoveran soldiers, they suffer no negative repercussions from the Elves, who already expected everyone in Ghostwood to be against them.

**Creatures:** Six Andoveran guards, 2nd-level fighters; four Elf guards, 2nd-level fighters (*see Area 1 for stats*); Wynnerik, a (*see Location 5 for stats*), and Janse Stallings (*see Location 1.2 for stats*).

**Andoveran guards (6):** hp 17, 21, 18, 10, 13, 12.

**Elf guards (4):** 15, 11, 14, 8.

**Janse Stallings:** hp 47.

**Wynnerik:** hp 22.

04:00: SECOND TEAM OF ASSASSINS ATTEMPTS TO LEAVE THROUGH THE STABLES (LOCATION 3).

This functions the same as 02:00.

### When the PCs are a step ahead

Based on information from various NPCs, the PCs may well get the idea that there may be more assassinations yet this night, or an attempt to free Cynarre. They may opt to guard these areas, set traps or glyphs in them, or to try to convince an NPC to keep a particular eye on these things. In these cases, the GM needs to be flexible with the event descriptions. If the PCs did something that would let them know about something happening away from them, reward them for their actions and adjust event descriptions accordingly.

## Part 5: Concluding the Adventure

If the PCs decoded the message held by the leader of the second team and presented it to the current leader of Ghostwood, read aloud: Sir Erik scans the decoded message and sighs. "This does not help me know who did this, or why," he says. "But it makes it clear there is more to come." His eyes are beyond exhaustion. "We cannot be sure if everyone involved in this atrocity is gone, but I can no longer justify a lockdown. Too much is happening in the world for us to remain locked in this small piece of it.

"You are free to leave. I have no power to command your next actions. But I urge you to seek those who sent the assassins. Discover what their plans are. If this was only the beginning, I shudder to think of the end."

If the PCs do not have the coded message (or are unable to decode it), Sir Erik summons them at the end of the adventure. If they refuse to come, 12 guards politely escort them.

**Read aloud:** *Sir Erik starts talking as soon as you enter the room. "I know not if this is over," he says. "But I cannot keep everyone here any longer. In one more day, there will be open fighting throughout the keep.*

*"The answers do not lie here anyway. Whoever gave the orders for the killings is gone. I have no power to command your next actions, but I urge you to discover who sent the assassins. Find out their plans. Our hopes for peace are gone, but if we do not stop whoever did this, all our hopes for the future may be destroyed."*

The lockdown is lifted. The Elves depart immediately; other groups depart two hours later.

**Read aloud:** *As you depart, a dozen knights on horseback ride toward you, their Andoveran standards whipping wildly. Sir Erik, himself about to leave, speaks from behind you. "Those are Sir Robert's men, but we did not send word until a short while ago. How could they have heard of the deaths so quickly?"*

*As the riders draw to a halt a few yards away, their ranks part, allowing a woman in fine white silk to dismount. Sir Erik steps forward, and they briefly exchange words. He bows his head, then beckons you.*

*"Friends, this is Her Grace the Duchess Cassandra, wife of Sir Robert, Duke of Andover. He..." Erik frowns for a moment, and closes his eyes before continuing. "He is now acting regent after King Michael's passing. The king of Andover — indeed, many great men and women of all the lands — has been assassinated."*

Allow the party a moment to react to the knowledge that Ghostwood was not an isolated incident.

**Read aloud:** *Duchess Cassandra speaks now. "Yes, my husband's cousin is gone, and he shall be missed. We cannot, however, afford the luxury of mourning without taking action. Whatever gains Ambassador Caolwader made are lost to us now, and surely High Queen Tepheroth is rallying her forces to press the attack anew. Andover's remaining forces — noble heroes such as your Sir Erik — must prepare to face them. We can spare no one to investigate these attacks, but Sir Erik has recommended you to me. The assassins that escaped will surely tell their masters of you, and I daren't hope that your actions will not have consequences.*

*"Please, friends... in the hour of Andover's need, I beg you to find the men who committed these atrocities."*

Whether the party accepts or not, Cassandra apparently accepts their decision before continuing. In truth, the party has no real choice. She is quite correct about the assassins coming back for the party, and she knows it, as she herself is secretly the Medusan Lord Cassica Moonstone (see the adventure The Traitor for stats). Cear has already told her of the party's actions, and she decided to investigate them personally.

**Read aloud:** *"Then before you go, allow me the honor of giving you a gift." She takes off her necklace. Its setting holds a stone nearly the size of a Human eye bearing odd looping engravings. She offers it to [the party member with the highest Charisma], saying, "This gem bears only a simple enchantment, but is no simple treasure. In your darkest days, hold the stone tight, and it will remind you of why you fight. Know that whatever else may come, you were heroes here today."*

# Part 6: The Stone of Fortune

**Read aloud:** *As you clutch the stone a light bursts up from your hands, focusing into an image: that of an Elven man [if the party encountered Cear, confirm that it is the same man] with coal-black skin and white hair, sharpening double-sided daggers like the ones the assassins wielded earlier today. Behind him, several other figures stand in shadow. As the man raises his weapon, so too do the shadows behind him. The image wavers and vanishes.*

# Part 7: Adventure Hooks

If the PCs heard about the Dwarf emissary or found the Mercenaries' message about protecting Cardinal Ulloft, they may choose which mission to pursue next. If they did not find out about either mission, a Dwarf should intercept the PCs on the way out and let them know about the missing artisan. The Mercenaries do not ask for help, preferring to do the job and claim the payment themselves.

The PCs cannot leave this scenario with a clear victory — no matter what they do, the ambassadors are dead and chaos has broken out. Sir Erik, at least, will fight again, having been only slightly wounded.

Survival is the central victory for the PCs, along with obtaining the first pieces of information about the Medusan Lords. In the coming days, they will hear more stories with growing alarm, about how hundreds of people from cities and village all across the Accordlands were murdered in a single night... the Assassins' Strike.

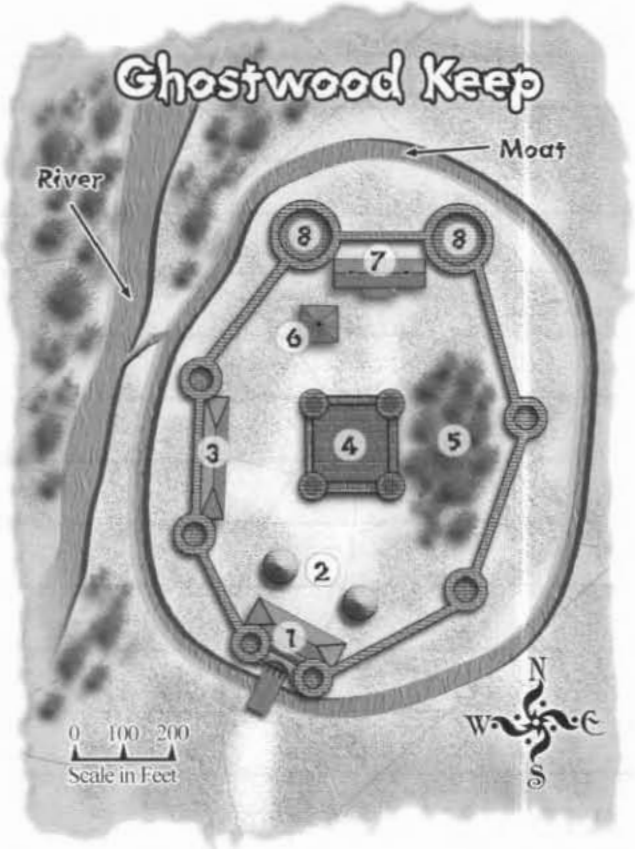
# Part 8: New Magic Items

## The Stone of Fortune

MINOR ARTIFACT

This is Cassandra's dubious "gift," a minor artifact and a variation of her own seeing stones. Cassica has modified this stone specifically for the party. Instead of the normal benefits of the seeing stones, the Stone of Fortune holds two enchantments: one shows the holder the consequences of their recent actions in visions, as above, when held tightly. The other enchantment informs Cassica of the stone's every use. Cassica intends for the stone to demoralize the party by reminding them of their failures, but it shows their successes as well.

A character activates the stone by gripping it tightly, a free action, but it only creates visions if the party recently (within the last day) made a significant loss or gain for their destinies, such as by completing an adventure. Even then, it only shows the direct consequences. For instance, in the above vision, the vision shows only that Cear is preparing for another attack, and that he is one of many foes the party must face. It does not, however, show who these other foes are, nor that Cassica herself is one of them.



# Tier 2

Two new adventures await the party in the second tier, suitable for characters from levels 1–3, accessible based on the party's members and their actions at Ghostwood Keep. The party may complete these adventures in either order without affecting the overall campaign.

## Temple of the Eternal Flame

If the party saves Son of the Clouds in Ghostwood Keep, he arranges for them to meet K'evan of the Green, a dwarf in need of help. Unlike most dwarves on the surface, K'evan is not lost, but actively looking for a kidnapped gargoyle artisan.

If Son of the Clouds did not survive, K'evan may approach the party on his own, particularly if there are dwarves present. Alternately, the party may find the kidnappers' trail on their own, perhaps on the way to the "Church of the Storm" adventure, though in this case K'evan shows up at the adventure's conclusion to recover the artisan.

## Church of the Storm

If the party spoke with Cynarre the assassin in Ghostwood, he made vague mention of his next mission in Deverenia. While this is not enough on its own to track him to Cardinal Ulloft, the news of the Assassins' Strike spreads quickly, and the sheer oddity of a mere kidnapping that night catches their attention.

Of course, if the party found Pariah's letter in Ghostwood, the party may directly seek out the good cardinal.

## Campaign Notes:



# The Temple of the Undying Flame

## Introduction

In *The Temple of the Undying Flame*, the PCs must find a kidnapped Dwarven gargoyle artisan and prevent an evil Nothrog shaman from recovering an artifact from the forgotten Temple of the Undying Flame

This is one of two adventures in Tier 2. It is meant for characters of levels 1–3.

## Adventure Background

Five months ago, after a lifetime of searching, the cunning Nothrog shaman Garkar'l discovered the abandoned Temple of the Undying Flame in the Broken Plains of Sarakia. Garkar'l had investigated, and found signs that deep beneath the temple lay the fabled *Crystal of Corrosion*, a magical artifact believed to be so potent he could not fathom its power. But he did know that with such a powerful relic in his possession, he could seize leadership of his legion and make a name for himself by invading the Free Kingdoms to the west.

Shortly after he discovered the Temple of the Undying Flame, Garkar'l realized he would need to wait a while before his dreams could come true. During his search, he found a pair of powerful sandstone gargoyles guarding a hidden lower level where, the legends said, he would find the *Crystal of Corrosion*. Twice he sent his minions to dispatch the gargoyle guardians, and twice his men died. Because he needed his Nothrog war band to secure the temple, he dared not expend any more of his men.

Nassiral Hate was intrigued by Garkar'l's tale of gargoyles in the temple. He had heard of such creatures created by the Dwarves, the mysterious race that lived in the endless caverns of the underworld, and ordered Garkar'l to send him one of these Dwarven artisans.

Garkar'l hired Borka Redmane, a devious Human mercenary, and her band of followers to capture one of these Dwarven gargoyle artisans, buying her loyalty with wealth looted from the Temple and providing her with information supplied by Hate. Borka and her followers made their way beneath the surface, where Hate's powerful divinations guided them to the right place and time to capture a Dwarf gargoyle artisan. Garkar'l wanted the gargoyle artisan for himself so that he could learn how to pass the gargoyles unmolested. Borka has brought the Dwarf to Garkar'l at the Temple of the Undying Flame.

The PCs, hired by the Dwarves, must discover who is behind the kidnapping and recover the missing artisan before his knowledge is spread to others — and, hopefully, before Garkar'l uncovers the *Crystal of Corrosion*.

## Adventure Synopsis

A week ago, a Dwarven master gargoyle artisan was kidnapped by a group of armored Humans. Fearing for his safety, the Dwarves from the western reaches of the World Below dispatched a small delegation to find someone who can retrieve their missing artisan. The leader of the Dwarven delegation asks the PCs to investigate the matter. The heroes' investigation reveals that some of the kidnappers were dressed as soldiers of Andover, and the nobles are eager to prove their soldiers had nothing to do with the kidnapping.

Following the kidnappers' trail across the Broken Plains of Sarakia, the PCs discover a group of peasants who have been brutally murdered. Not long after, they reach the small village of Pine Ridge, whose inhabitants have been bullied and mistreated by a group of armed ruffians. In the village, the PCs learn that a tall redheaded Human woman led these evil men, and the mercenaries also carried a short and stout prisoner whose head they kept covered. Moving on toward Nothrog lands, the PCs face a series of random encounters before reaching a wooded area in which they are ambushed by a wounded Forest Troll (which the mercenaries roughed up a few hours before the PCs' encounter with it).

The kidnappers' trail leads the heroes to a wide plateau where they discover an abandoned stone shrine once dedicated to Kavara: the Temple of the Undying Flame. As they approach, a hail of arrows assails them from the temple's parapets. The PCs can confirm the kidnappers' tracks lead to this structure, so the abductors and their victim are inside. The heroes must take the temple by force, which means taking care of the Nothrog archers and breaking down the temple's barricaded door.

Inside, the PCs first confront the mercenaries who kidnapped the artisan. Later, they face the Nothrog warriors who guard the only staircase leading to the underground levels. On the first level of the dungeon complex, they face Garkar'l, his Nimbic servant, and the mighty Borka Redmane herself. Here, the Nothrog shaman uses a diversion to escape. The heroes find the Dwarven artisan they are seeking, imprisoned in a room prepared for what looks like a ritual murder. Garkar'l has not yet completed the sacrifice, because he was busy torturing the artisan for information on how to control the gargoyles.

The wounded Dwarven artisan reveals Garkar'l's identity, and the PCs pursue him into the underground complex, where they face the gargoyle guardians now under the shaman's control. The heroes must work their way past the gargoyles, prevent Garkar'l from uncovering the *Crystal of Corrosion* before he can use it against them, and defeat the shaman. Once they have thwarted his plans, rescued the artisan, and possibly recovered the legendary crystal themselves, the heroes might have to face the wrath of a powerful fire elemental — the last guardian of the ancient relic. Later, the PCs might return the artisan to the Dwarves, who hail them as great heroes and friends of the Dwarven people.

There are many rewards to be gained in this adventure: the gratitude of the Dwarves, who are extremely generous to the PCs after they have saved the artisan's life; the thanks of Andover, relieved to learn that those responsible for the kidnapping were in truth mercenaries; the accolades of the people of Pine Ridge, whom they may have saved from further danger; the satisfaction of having defeated Borka's group of savage mercenaries, a dangerous Nothrog war band, and the evil Garkar'l; monetary and magical treasures taken from the mercenaries and Nothrog; and enough experience points to go up at least one level.

## Area 1: Ghostwood Keep and the Surrounding Area

Refer to The Ghostwood Treaty adventure for specific details on Ghostwood Keep and the surrounding area, where this adventure begins.

Later in the adventure, as the PCs make their way through the Broken Plains of Sarakia and until the PCs reach the lost Temple of the Undying Flame, several things might happen. Refer to Table 2–1 for further details.

## Part 1: A Strange Disappearance

ENCOUNTER 1: K'EVAN OF THE GREEN

The adventure opens in Ghostwood Keep, the day following the Assassins' Strike (*see the adventure The Ghostwood Treaty, zfor further details*). If the party has no Dwarves, this is likely the first time any of them have seen a Dwarf.

**Read aloud:** *The day after the Assassins' Strike, a short, stout man with a long and grizzled beard — a Dwarf — approaches you. He is dressed in elaborately ornamented white robes, and his beard is braided with gleaming metal. Two stocky warriors in polished plate armor, carrying warhammers that look too large for them, stand a few paces behind him. "Ladies, gentlemen," the dignitary calls in a soft yet commanding voice. "My name is K'evan of the Green. May I have a moment of your time?"*

## Wilderness Random Encounters

**While the PCs are journeying through the Broken Plains of Sarakia, roll 1d6 for encounters three times during the day and twice at night. Day encounters occur on a roll of 1, while night encounters occur on a roll of 1 or 2.**

Table 2–1: Broken Plains of Sarakia Encounter Table

**If an encounter occurs, roll 1d6 during the day and 1d8+2 during the night:**

1. **Lone Traveler. The PCs spot a weary traveler in tattered clothing. The man has a rugged appearance, but he travels with a walking stick, as one of his ankles is broken. Good PCs who help this man should be awarded 75–100 XP. He is a male Rog1 with 3 hp.**
2. **Barrowgrim (1) (CR 4, *Monsters and Lairs*, page 25)**
3. **First Nothrog War Band. Loyal to the evil shaman Garkar'l, this war band has been sent out to patrol the area and keep others from discovering the lost Temple of the Undying Flame. There are five 1st-level fighters in this group.**
4. **Doppelganger (1) (CR 3, *Monsters and Lairs*, page 180).**
5. **Black Bear (1) (CR 3, *Monster Manual*, page 269).**
6. **Dire Boar (1) (CR 4, *Monster Manual*, page 63).**
7. **Dire Wolf (1) (CR 3, *Monster Manual*, page 65).**
8. Second Nothrog War Band: This second war party is also loyal to Garkar'l, but this group is made up of seven 1st-level fighters.
9. Undshyr (1) (CR 3, *Monsters and Lairs*, page 198).
10. Dire Bat (1) (CR 2, *Monster Manual*, page 62).

The man looks at each of you in turn, and his crystal blue eyes seem to probe every line, crease, and dimple of your faces. *"I'm told you did well yesterday. Forgive me, we are not an official delegation; we arrived only recently from the World Below. My people are... unfamiliar with the surface world. We received word that a group of many leaders was meeting here, and as our king had enjoined me to learn about the surface world, I had thought it best to meet them all at once. I was, it seems, too late. I spoke to Son of the Clouds [or Edwin Moss, if Son is dead, or Sir Erik Kaisen if both are] this morning. You impressed him."* His expression betrays worry, and the wrinkles around his suddenly tired eyes deepen. He takes a long and deliberate breath. *"I am afraid we must ask for your help. Although we do not wish to impose upon you, I fear we have little alternative. We do not trust the Elves or the Nothrog, and the Andoverans are mourning their losses. The Deverenians...well, the Deverenians would not welcome our presence. Thus we come to you... but I am getting ahead of myself. May I explain our position?"*

If the heroes agree to speak with K'evan, the dignitary asks them to follow him (and his two body guards) to his private chambers. A Sense Motive check (DC 18) on K'evan reveals that he is not telling the whole truth; he guards his words carefully.

**Read aloud:** *The dignitary leads you to his luxurious suite, and you sit near the comforting fire. After checking the windows and the other small chambers that connect to this spacious living area, his bodyguards take their position near the suite's sole entrance. "What I have to tell you," K'evan says, "is of the uttermost importance. What is said here cannot leave this room." He regards every one of you again. "Not long ago, an artisan from one of our western villages disappeared. We fear the worst. Barrin, the man who disappeared, was no ordinary Dwarf. His skill is renowned among our people. We have reason to believe he was kidnapped."*

K'evan goes on to explain how important it is to the Dwarves that Barrin be found. He does not tell the PCs why Barrin is so important. The gargoyle craft is a closely guarded secret among the Dwarven people, and K'evan does not impart this information willingly. Only Dwarves can create gargoyles, but he worries that the ritual could be perverted.

To ensure the PCs agree to sign up for the proposed mission, K'evan boasts of the legendary gratitude of the Dwarven people and promises the heroes a reward of 1,000 gp worth of gems upon the artisan's safe return.

K'evan gives the PCs the following information:

- Barrin was taken from his village in the western reaches of the World Below.
- Eyewitnesses say he was taken by a band of Humans dressed in colors the Dwarves now know match the Andoveran livery.
- K'evan did not know the colors were Andoveran until he arrived at Ghostwood.
- When K'evan spoke to Edwin Moss, Moss told him that the Kingdom of Andover would have nothing to do with any such deed. K'evan tends to believe him, but he cannot be sure. Dwarves are too new to the World Above to trust anyone.
- The way to the World Below used by both K'evan and the kidnappers lies about days' travel from here, deep into Myreth. On orders from his superiors, K'evan has sealed these tunnels. He is to return with the artisan to New Goldenaxe.
- He gives the PCs a map describing how to reach the sabotaged tunnel, an innocuous cave in an uninhabited area of the forest of Myreth. From there perhaps they can follow the kidnappers' trail.

# Part 2: Kidnappers' Trail

It takes two days' travel through the depths of Myreth forest to reach the opening to the tunnel shown on K'evan's map. Any encounters with hostile Elves should be relatively small patrols of the party's size or less, of Elves with the same statistics as the Elven guards from Ghostwood Keep.

With the map in hand, the PCs are able to find the cave with a successful Search check (DC 15) after they reach the vicinity. They can make one Search check per day of searching. The opening no longer leads to the World Below, as K'evan collapsed the tunnel behind him. Whether he knows of another passage is up to the DM. The kidnappers' path leads through the forest toward the east, and they have left an obvious trail. PCs with the Track feat may roll a Survival check (DC 12) to follow the trail. Several Humans in heavy armor and boots were dragging an unwilling burden, so PCs can also attempt Search checks (DC 18) to follow the kidnappers' tracks. The tracks lead east, south of Tyraniel forest and into Sarakia, a journey of a week. The DM may wish to intersperse Elven encounters with Deverenian ones, again using the statistics of Deverenian guards from Ghostwood Keep.

### Encounter 2: The Broken Plains' Bloody Trail

PCs with the Track feat may roll a Survival check (DC 12) each day of travel to follow the trail. Other PCs may make Search checks (DC 18) instead. If the heroes lose the trail, Survival or Search checks at the same DCs reveal traces of blood or the imprint of a booted foot.

**Read aloud:** *As you follow the trail leading east toward the hills of the Broken Plains of Sarakia, you find traces of blood upon the ground and upon the leaves of shrubs.*

### Encounter 3: Murdered Peasants

On their second day of travel through the Broken Plains of Sarakia, the PCs stumble upon three dead villagers.

**Read aloud:** *As you make your way through the rising terrain of the desolate Broken Plains, you come across a ghastly sight. Just off the trail you are following are the bodies of three Humans dressed in simple garb. Scattered near the corpses are a multitude of crushed raspberries that you at first mistook for bits of bloody flesh, spilled from a wicker basket.*

Investigation reveals many brutal slashes on the peasants' bodies. The fruit is fresh, which should indicate to the PCs they are not only on the right track, but close. The kidnappers must travel slowly because they are carrying their Dwarven burden.

If the heroes can communicate with the dead, they learn these men were from Pine Ridge, a small thorp to the east. They also learn that a group of five mercenaries led by a redheaded woman and carrying a Dwarven prisoner murdered them without provocation.

# Area 2: Pine Ridge Thorp

Pine Ridge is an isolated thorp where the PCs may learn some information about the kidnappers. The day before the PCs' arrival, Borka's band passed through town. Every soul in Pine Ridge remembers the vile mercenaries.

**Read aloud:** *The day after you discover the murdered peasants, the kidnappers' track leads through a small pine forest. By midday, after a few hours of travel through the evergreen woods, you leave the forest and find yourself again in the open, rocky lands of the Broken Plains.*

*In the distance, you notice a small group of houses gathered close together. The kidnappers' trail leads right to it.*

If the PCs choose to avoid Pine Ridge, they must try to pick up the kidnappers' trail on the other side of the thorp, and risk being spotted by the villagers. After the harsh treatment they received from the mercenary band, none in the tiny thorp dares to confront the PCs, so the heroes should be able to search for the tracks in private.

If the PCs go to Pine Ridge, read or paraphrase the following: A score of single-story wooden dwellings with thatched roofs makes up this lonely, tiny thorp. As you head toward the settlement, you notice a few people on the outskirts of town looking in your direction. From far away, you soon see them disappear behind a wooden house.

Some time later, shortly before you reach the outskirts of town, a young man in an ill-kept chain shirt comes toward you. At his side is a short sword in a brown leather scabbard that has seen better days. The man stops in the middle of the dirt path making the main road of the thorp and, with narrowed brown eyes, looks you up and down. "Who are you, and what are you doing in Pine Ridge?" the man asks gruffly.

**Development:** This young man is Vosko, the town's constable. Although afraid the PCs might be another band of rowdy mercenaries, the young constable nevertheless confronts them. His intention is not to drive the heroes away, but to assess whether they are a threat to the community. He is nervous, but a successful Sense Motive check (DC 15) reveals that he only wants to protect the inhabitants of Pine Ridge.

Several more inhabitants observe the PCs from the safety of their homes or from behind a building, a large pine tree, or the town's well. The people of Pine Ridge do not let their young constable take all the risks alone; they are prepared to help him — even though none of them are brave, and none has proper weapons.

If the party suggests they are after the mercenaries that passed through town the day before, the town's headman Karotas comes out of hiding and greets the heroes properly. The PCs have a chance to learn a bit more about the men they are pursuing:

- A woman, Borka, whom the people of Pine Ridge describe as a cunning, uncouth, savage-looking redheaded beauty, leads a group of five men.
- The men were garbed in shiny armor and wore unfamiliar insignia (Andover).
- One of the men seemed to hold higher rank among the mercenaries, and he seemed to be on intimate terms with the woman who led them. This man was called Avaris.
- The mercenaries were carrying a short, stout prisoner. He was bleeding, and his wounds were not bound.

- The mercenaries passed through town yesterday. They bul lied people around and stole some food. The men seemed to enjoy bullying the townspeople, but the woman ordered them to hurry.
- Things could have been much worse had Borka not been in such an obvious hurry; the mercenaries were well equipped, and none seemed afraid to shed blood.
- Jordana, the town's herbalist, was hit in the face by one of the men when she tried to heal their bleeding prisoner. This was the only real incident. The rest was all talk and threats; none in Pine Ridge dared to oppose them.

If the PCs are secretive about their business in Pine Ridge, or if they appear brash, haughty, or violent, the villagers are more tight-lipped.

*Pine Ridge (thorp):* Conventional; AL NG; 40 gp limit; Assets 240 gp; Population 63; Isolated (Human 100%).

*Authority Figures:* Karotas, male Human Ftr2 (mayor).

*Important Characters:* Jordana, female Human Rgr3 (herbalist); Barabas, male Human Sct1; Vosko, male Human Ftr3 (constable); Avrielle, female Human Rog2 (proprietor of the General Store).

## Location 1: The Pine Ridge Thorp

### Location 1.1: Main road.

Most of the buildings in Pine Ridge were built close to the dirt path cutting through the village. A gray stone well sits in the middle of the road passing through town.

### Location 1.2: Constabulary.

This small gray stone building contains one tiny jail cell. Vosko, Pine Ridge's constable, lives in the small apartment on the upper floor.

### Location 1.3: General Store.

This small store is the only place where the people of Pine Ridge may hope to obtain commodities that are not manufactured in the tiny thorp. Avrielle, the friendly middle-aged woman who runs the store, can be found here at all times.

### Location 1.4: Common Hall.

This two-story high log cabin is the biggest building in Pine Ridge. In winter or during the rainy season, the people of Pine Ridge meet here to discuss town matters, celebrate, or simply chat. During the summer months, the long wooden tables lining the hall are usually set outside in front of the building.

### Location 1.5: Temple of Neus.

This small, outdoor chapel has rough benches in front of a simple pine altar. It is clearly dedicated to Neus, in his farmer aspect.

ENCOUNTER 3: WOUNDED FOREST TROLL (EL 3)

Two days past Pine Ridge, the PCs stumble upon a Forest Troll the mercenaries encountered and left for dead.

**Creature:** Wounded Forest Troll.

**Wounded Forest Troll:** CR 5 (currently 3); Large male giant; HD 6d8+36; hp 60 (currently 15); Init +2; Spd 30 ft.; AC 18, touch 11, flat-footed 16; Base Atk +4, Grp +14; Atk +9 melee (1d6+6/x2, claw); Full Atk +9 melee (1d6+6/x2, 2 claws), +4 melee (1d8+3/x2, bite); Space/Reach 10 ft./10 ft.; SA Rend; SQ Darkvision 90 ft, regeneration 5, scent; AL CE; SV Fort +11, Ref +4, Will +3; Str 23, Dex 14, Con 23, Int 6, Wis 9, Cha 6.

*Skills and Feats:* Listen +3, Spot +4; Alertness, Iron Will.

*Darkvision, 90 ft.:* A troll can see in the dark with no light source at all, out to a range of 90 feet. Darkvision is black and white only (colors cannot be discerned). It does not allow the troll to see anything that it could not see otherwise—invisible objects are still invisible, and illusions are still visible as what they seem to be. Likewise, darkvision subjects the troll to gaze attacks normally. The presence of light does not spoil darkvision.

*Regeneration 5 (Ex):* Fire and acid deal normal damage to a troll, while all other damage is converted to subdual damage. If a troll loses a limb or body part, the missing limb or chunk of flesh regenerates in 3d6 minutes. The troll can reattach the severed member instantly by holding it flush against the stump. If a troll's head is severed, its body continues to function for 4d4 rounds, during which time the troll desperately attempts to reattach its head in the above fashion. If it fails to do so in the allotted time, the troll dies.

As usual, the troll is vulnerable to attacks that do not deal hit point damage, such as most poisons and disintegration; similarly, it is affected normally by starvation, thirst, and suffocation. A troll can be killed by massive damage normally; the massive trauma simply shuts down the troll's nervous system, preventing it from regenerat-ing the damage.

*Rend (Ex):* If a troll hits with both claw attacks in a single turn, it latches onto its opponent's body and rends the opponent's flesh. This attack automatically deals an additional 2d6+9 points of damage.

*Scent:* A troll can detect opponents within 30 feet by sense of smell. If the opponent is upwind, the range increases to 60 feet; if downwind, it drops to 15 feet. Strong scents, such as smoke or rotting garbage, can be detected at twice the ranges noted above. Overpowering scents, such as skunk musk or troglodyte stench, can be detected at triple normal range. When a troll detects a scent, the exact location of the source is not revealed—only its presence somewhere within range. The Mountain Troll can take a move action to note the direction of the scent.

Whenever the troll comes within 5 feet of the source, the troll pinpoints the source's location.

**Development:** This forest troll is angry. The mercenaries took him by surprise the day before, felling him and leaving him to rot. His regenerative powers were damaged by the mercenaries' fire, and he is still badly scorched. They left him for dead. When he awoke he realized they had stolen the bag with all of his precious possessions! The only thing the forest troll has left is his enormous club. The monster now plans to exact his revenge upon the adventurers, even though they are not the ones who attacked him.

The forest troll fights savagely, heedless of his wounds.

## Location 2: Rock Wall

**Read aloud:** *Midmorning of the day after your encounter with the Troll, you reach a sheer rock wall some thirty feet high. The ridge forms a high hill, with no easy way up. On top of this cliff you see many large boulders, as well as some tall pine trees thriving atop the lonely hill.*

A successful Search check (DC 15) reveals several scuff marks upon the rocky wall. A successful Spot check (DC 18) shows the rope tied to a large boulder at the top of the ridge. The rope is coiled near the side of the cliff; it is unreachable, but magic or a weight at the end of a rope may help the PCs here. This rope is solid and well tied to the boulder above. If the PCs investigate the tracks more closely, a successful Survival check (DC 13) confirms that the trail ends here, and the only way the kidnappers could have gone is up.

In order to scale the rocks, the PCs must roll Climb checks (DC 15). If they get the rope or attach one of their own, characters with at least five ranks in Use Rope get a +2 synergy bonus to their Climb check.

# Part 3: Storming the Temple of the Undying Flame (EL 2)

**Read aloud:** *The soil at the top of the cliff is even rockier than in the rest of the Broken Plains, with a multitude of boulders and broken rocks. Yet, there are also many trees here: tall pines and wide spruces, short stubby evergreens of all kinds.*

*The top of the hill forms a wide plateau where vegetation thrives. Here a clear trail has been marked. It must have been a wide road of some importance, for here and there you see the cracked remains of the dark blue marble slabs that once paved this path.*

Following this path though the thick forest at the top of the high hill brings the heroes to the Temple of the Undying Flame.

## Location 3: Temple of the Undying Flame

**Read aloud:** *About twenty minutes from the cliff's edge, the path through the green wood leads across a wide, rocky plain to a structure of unbelievable beauty. Made from pearly white stone, a large and ancient building stands 150 feet away from the forest's edge. It is about 50 feet high, its perfect, domed roof glinting in the sunlight.*

*It looks to have been a monastery, and the ancient blue marble slabs lead directly to its entrance. The huge heavy doors seem to be the same stone as the temple, carved to resemble the flames of a restless fire.*

As soon as the PCs move into the open, the Nothrog archers who are standing guard in the temple have a chance to spot them (*see below*).

If the PCs search the area around the temple or are looking for the kidnappers' trail, all evidence points to the temple. There are even traces of dried blood upon the marble path leading to the building. A successful Survival check (DC 13) or Search check (DC 18) confirms that the kidnappers' trail leads to the temple.

Allow the characters a Spot check (DC 18). Successful PCs notice the narrow slits running down the front and side of the temple's walls, just below the domed roof, about 20 feet above ground. A successful Knowledge (engineering) check (DC 15) suggests that these narrow openings, reminiscent of a castle's arrow slits, might provide light inside the building without letting in rain or snow.

**Creatures:** A pair of Nothrog archers stands guard inside the temple upon the parapets on either side of the door. If they spot the PCs, the archers each fire one arrow per round at them from the safety of the narrow slits, which provide them with excellent cover (+8 cover bonus to AC and a +4 cover bonus to Reflex saves; damage from a failed Reflex save is halved, while a successful save negates all damage).

**Nothrog Warriors (2), Male Nothrog Bar 1:** CR 1; Medium humanoid (Nothrog); HD 1d12+2; hp 9; Spd 30 ft.; Init +2; AC 15, touch 12, flat-footed 13; Base Atk +1; Grp +5; Atk +6 melee (1d8+4/x3, battleaxe), or +3 ranged (1d6/x3, shortbow); Full Atk +6 melee (1d8+4/x3, battleaxe), or +3 ranged (1d6/x3, shortbow); SA Barbarian rage 1/day; SQ Illiteracy, Nothrog traits, totem animal (eagle); AL CE; SV Fort +4, Ref +2, Will +0; Str 18, Dex 15, Con 14, Int 8, Wis 10, Cha 6.

*Skills and Feats:* Climb +5*, Listen +2; Weapon Focus (battleaxe). * Includes –1 Armor Check penalty.

*Barbarian Rage (1/day):* While a warrior rages, his statistics change as follows: HD 1d12+4; hp 11; AC 13, touch 10, flat-footed 11; Grp +7; Atk +8 melee (1d8+6/x3, battleaxe), or +3 ranged (1d6/x3, shortbow); Full Atk +8 melee (1d8+6/x3, battleaxe), or +3 ranged (1d6/x3, shortbow); SV Fort +6, Will +2; Str 22, Con 18. His fit of rage lasts for 7 rounds. At the end of the rage the warrior is fatigued (–2 to Strength, –2 to Dexterity, can't charge or run).

*Illiteracy:* A warrior cannot read nor write.

*Totem Animal (eagle):* Eagle Eyes — A warrior gains a +4 competence bonus on Spot checks during daylight.

*Possessions:* Studded leather armor, battleaxe, shortbow, 20 arrows.

**Development:** If the PCs move into the open towards the temple, the Nothrog archers automatically spot them unless the characters are hiding and moving silently, or under the cover of magic; in that case, roll opposed checks to determine if/when the archers notice them.

Should one of the two archers fall, one of the Human mercenaries from the Main Hall (Location 3.1) takes his place in 1d4+1 rounds. A maximum of two mercenaries move to the parapets to replace fallen archers; the others prefer to secure the temple's door and guard the main entrance.

The temple's doors are locked; a successful Open Lock check (DC 25) unlocks them. Otherwise, the PCs might try to break down one of the two doors:

*Temple door:* 8 inches thick; Hardness 8; hp 60; Break DC 28.

Unless the archers have not spotted the party's approach and the PCs have successfully unlocked the temple's doors without making too much noise, the mercenaries inside the temple are waiting for them, ready to fight. If, on the other hand, the PCs have been stealthy enough to avoid being seen or heard by the mercenaries (roll opposed Listen and Move Silently checks, appropriately), they might surprise everyone in the Main Hall (**Location 3.1**).

# Part 4: Inside the Temple of the Undying Flame

The Temple of the Undying Flame is an ancient place of worship dedicated to Kavara. Believed to have been destroyed, it survived on the forested high hill in the Broken Plains of Sarakia, forgotten until the Nothrog shaman Garkar'l discovered it.

Walls and Ceilings: Most of the temple and its dungeon complex have been carved directly out of the rocks of the mountainous terrain. Some rooms contain natural pillars and arches. Ceilings in halls and rooms are 20 feet high unless otherwise noted.

A successful Knowledge (architecture and engineering) or Craft (masonry) check (DC 20) reveals that the walls and ceilings are still sound and present no immediate danger.

**Doors:** All doors in the complex are made of stone. All are 8 feet high, 4 feet wide and 8 inches thick.

**Stone Door:** 8 inches thick; Hardness 8; hp 60; Break DC 28.

**Illumination:** Unless otherwise mentioned, there are no lights anywhere in the temple. PCs without darkvision will have to provide their own light in order to explore the complex, which will make them visible to the many inhabitants of the place.

**Creatures:** As the PCs explore the complex, they have a 20% chance per hour of encountering a patrol consisting of three Nothrog warriors, 1st-level barbarians (*see Location 3 for stats*).

**Nothrog Warriors (3):** hp 9, 9, 9.

## Location 3.1: Main Hall (EL 3)

The main hall of the Temple of the Undying Flame was once a place of reverence, ceremony, and worship dedicated to Kavara, the goddess of fire and magic. Although ancient, the elaborate walls and ceiling are still as splendid as ever.

**Read aloud:** *Torches in dark iron sconces illuminate the elaborate architecture. Like the outside of the temple, the inner walls are white stone, but here and there you see the colorless visages of many strange animals, beasts, and creatures of various kinds and sizes. So wonderfully well-made are these sculptures that the weird faces seem to have been cast into the wall, rather than carved into it.*

*Upon the high, domed ceiling, golden flames seem to dance, bathing the room in an eerie orange light. On the other side of the hall, a 20 foot high wall has been erected, with two stone doors carved like dancing flames upon it. Above this wall, you notice a parapet of some kind. Two smaller stone parapets have been built upon the entrance and sidewalls, standing some 20 feet above ground. Sunlight streams through the slits above the parapets.*

*The strange lighting comes from the sunlight filtering through the narrow slits, as well as the fires from the torches set upon the walls, which reflects upon the gold and bronze architecture of the domed ceiling. The ceiling gives the impression of gazing at a glowing ball of fire, like the sun.*

The walls are the work of a genius sculptor with an overgrown imagination. The sometimes grotesque, sometimes wondrous, sometimes terrible images lining the walls are elaborate but simple bas-relief sculptures.

Long ago, a large fire ceaselessly burned upon the stone parapet at the far end of the room, and worshipers came from all over the world to pay tribute to the Undying Fire. The wooden ladders that once gave access to this parapet crumbled to dust long ago. A closer investigation of the stone floor above Locations 3.2, 3.3, and 3.4 reveals scorch marks, evidence of a great bonfire.

The two smaller parapets near the entrance, where the Nothrog archers stood, seem also to have been carved directly from the stone of the temple's walls. From each parapet, a rope dangles to allow the guards to reach the stone platforms easily.

There are makeshift beds in this room, which serves as barracks to the score of Nothrog warriors loyal to Garkar'l. If all goes according to plan, the shaman plans to recruit more minions, and to use the isolated temple as the headquarters of his new army.

**Creatures:** There are six guards in this room: the two Nothrog archers, 1st-level barbarians (*see Location 3 for stats*), standing upon the parapets (who probably attacked the PCs as they approached the temple) and the four men who helped Avaris and Borka kidnap the Dwarven artisan. Although their leader and her lieutenant are not with them in the great hall, the mercenaries have been told to wait here until they return. These men still wear the colors of Andover. If interrogated, they reveal they are from Nothrog lands and admit they have been hired to kidnap the Dwarven artisan by an important Nothrog leader. However, they know nothing else; their leader, Borka, made all the decisions and dealt with the Nothrog.

**Nothrog Warriors (2):** hp 9, 9.

**Mercenaries (4), Male Human Ftr 1:** CR 1; Medium humanoid (Human); HD 1d10+1; hp 6; Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; AC 14, touch 11, flat-footed 13; Base Atk +1; Grp +3; Atk +4 melee (1d6+3(19–20/x2), shortsword), or +2 ranged (1d6/x3, shortbow); Full Atk +4 melee (1d6+3(19–20/x2), shortsword), or +2 ranged (1d6/x3, shortbow); SA Favored weapon (shortsword); SQ —; AL NE; SV Fort +3, Ref +1, Will +0; Str 14, Dex 12, Con 13, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 8.

*Skills and Feats:* Climb +5*, Handle Animal +4, Ride +5; Cleave, Power Attack. * Includes –1 Armor Check penalty.

*Favored Weapon (shortsword):* A mercenary gains a +1 competence bonus to attack and damage rolls with the shortsword.

*Possessions:* Studded leather armor, shortsword, shortbow, 20 arrows.

**Development:** If the Nothrog archers spot the PCs, everyone in the hall is aware of their presence and waiting for them as they open the only exterior doors of the temple. If the PCs have already dispatched any of the archers, one of the Human mercenaries rushes to Location 3.2 to advise Avaris of the situation. Avaris orders his men to take their places in the great hall and prevent the PCs from entering the temple. He then moves to Location 3.4 where he hides with the Nothrog warriors.

If the PCs surprise the men in the hall or if they do not kill the Nothrog archers before they reach the temple, the mercenaries do not bother to advise Avaris or the other Nothrog standing guard in Location 3.2. Instead, they fight until either they either kill all the PCs or are disabled themselves.

The combat may be loud enough to alert the Nothrog in area 4 as well as Avaris, who is resting in Location 3.2. Allow them to make Listen checks (DC 15) to hear the PCs. If the PCs' presence becomes known, the Nothrog from Location 3.4 stay quiet and wait for the PCs to enter; they have been ordered to guard the staircase, and they will do just that. Meanwhile, Avaris readies himself for combat by drinking a draft of his potion of bull's strength.

## Location 3.2: Lieutenant's Chamber (EL 2)

This area usually serves as Valrok's bedroom (see Location 3.4) but it has been prepared to accommodate Borka's needs. Avaris occupies the small chamber, waiting for his boss to finish her business with the Nothrog shaman who hired the mercenary band.

**Read aloud:** *This small, strangely shaped room must have been a closet of some kind long ago, but now a comfortable-looking makeshift bed takes most of the floor. Two wooden chests as well as a stout table and a small bench make up the rest of the furniture, making the room seem oddly cramped.*

**Creature:** Avaris, a 2nd-level fighter and mercenary in Borka's Band (and her current love interest).

**Avaris, Male Human Ftr 2:** CR 2; Medium humanoid (Human); HD 2d10+6; hp 19; Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; AC 15, touch 11, flat-footed 14; Base Atk +2; Grp +5; Atk +7 melee (1d8+4(19–20/x2), longsword), or +3 ranged (1d8(19–20/x2), light crossbow); Full Atk +7 melee (1d8+4(19–20/x2), longsword), or +3 ranged (1d8(19–20/x2), light crossbow); SA Favored weapon (longsword); SQ —; AL NE; SV Fort +6, Ref +1, Will –1; Str 17, Dex 12, Con 16, Int 12, Wis 8, Cha 13.

*Skills and Feats:* Climb +5*, Handle Animal +4, Jump +5*, Ride +4, Spot +2; Combat Reflexes, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (longsword). * Includes -2 Armor Check penalty.

*Favored Weapon (longsword):* Avaris gains a +1 competence bonus to attack and damage rolls with the longsword.

*Possessions:* Chain shirt, longsword, crossbow, 20 bolts, potion of bull's strength.

**Development:** Depending on the heroes' actions in Locations 3.1 and 3.3, Avaris may either be surprised by the PCs or trying to surprise them. If he has heard combat inside the temple, Avaris takes a draught of his potion of bull's strength, hides on the right side of the doorway, and ambushes the first person who steps inside his room. Otherwise, he is caught in bed, unarmored and unaware.

If the PCs capture Avaris, he resists revealing anything to them — he is totally loyal to Borka. If threatened, or impressed by the PCs' combat skills, Avaris tries to bribe the heroes to spare his leader's life, promising to reveal all he knows about the temple and the Nothrog who inhabit it as long as the heroes agree to let Borka escape unharmed. If the heroes agree to his terms, Avaris accompanies them to ensure they keep their end of the bargain.

Avaris has visited the lower level of the temple once. He is familiar with Locations 3.1 — 3.5 but does not know what is behind the door leading to area 6. He is not aware of the secret doorway that opens to area 8, 9, and 10.

## Location 3.3: Storage

**Read aloud:** *This small room is filled with barrels, crates, and sacks of different shapes and sizes. You notice a strange smell, as if some meat had turned bad long ago. A crude rack on the south wall holds a few heavy weapons. The north wall has a stone door identical to the others.*

*Other than some crude weapons, food, ropes, torches, and other things useful to adventurers, there is little of interest here. The PCs' presence in this room (opposed Move Silently checks) may alert Avaris in Location 3.2.*

**Treasure:** Five large crates containing assorted fruits, vegetables, and slabs of salted meats; 3 barrels of dark mead; 11 bottles of fine red wine; ten 50-foot ropes; 50 torches with 5 sets of flint and steel; 10 shortspears, 5 short swords, 2 battleaxes, 6 daggers, 1 longspear, 2 longswords, and 4 light steel shields.

## Location 3.4: The Nothrog Guard (EL 3)

This area contains the only staircase leading to the underground levels of the Temple of the Undying Flame. This staircase leads directly to Location 3.5, where the real undying fire can be found.

**Read aloud:** The walls of this simple room are lined with solid stone shelves that must have served the clergy of this temple long ago. Now they are empty and dusty. To the south you notice a wide staircase leading down. There are several bundles of clothes and equipment lying about in the room, where a group of Nothrog warriors stands guard.

This room serves as a guard post, staffed by a handful of Nothrog loyal to Garkar'l. The leader, Valrok, is fanatically loyal to Garkar'l. The warriors posted here have been ordered to secure the staircase and prevent anyone from reaching the underground level of the temple — not even Avaris and the other mercenaries loyal to Borka are allowed access to this staircase.

**Creatures:** Two Nothrog warriors, 1st-level barbarians (see Location 3 for stats); Valrok, a 2nd-level barbarian.

**Nothrog Warriors (2):** hp 9, 9.

**Valrok, Lieutenant, Male Nothrog Bar 2:** CR 1; Medium humanoid (Nothrog); HD 2d12+6; hp 22; Spd 40 ft.; Init +2 AC 18, touch 12, flat-footed 16; Base Atk +2; Grp +6; Atk +8 melee (1d8+4/x3, battleaxe), or +4 ranged (1d6/x3, shortbow); Full Atk +8 melee (1d8+4/x3, battleaxe), or +4 ranged (1d6/x3, shortbow); SA Barbarian rage 1/day; SQ Illiteracy, fast movement, Nothrog traits, totem animal (bear); AL CE; SV Fort +6, Ref +2, Will +0; Str 19, Dex 15, Con 17, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 9.

*Skills and Feats:* Climb +5*, Ride +5, Survival +4; Weapon Focus (battleaxe). * Includes –2 Armor Check penalty.

*Barbarian Rage (1/day):* While Valrok rages, his statistics change as follows: HD 2d12+10; hp 26; AC 16, touch 10, flat-footed 14; Grp +8; Atk +10 melee (1d8+6/x3, battleaxe), or +4 ranged (1d6/x3, shortbow); Full Atk +10 melee (1d8+6/x3, battleaxe), or +4 ranged (1d6/x3, shortbow); SV Fort +8, Will +2; Str 23, Con 21. Valrok's fit of rage lasts for 8 rounds. At the end of the rage Valrok is fatigued (–2 to Strength, –2 to Dexterity, can't charge or run).

*Fast Movement:* Valrok has a speed faster than the norm for his race by +10 feet when wearing no armor, light armor, or medium armor (and not carrying a heavy load).

*Illiteracy:* Valrok cannot read nor write.

*Totem Animal (bear):* Hibernation — Valrok can enter into a hibernating sleep. Before he enters into the sleep he must designate how long he wishes to sleep. Once asleep, Valrok cannot be disturbed or awakened. While hibernating Valrok heals 1 hit point per hour and does not require food or water.

*Possessions:* Studded leather armor, +1 heavy steel shield, masterwork battleaxe, shortbow, 20 arrows, potion of cat's grace.

**Development:** Whether or not Avaris is here, if the battle turns sour for the Nothrog, Valrok orders him men to "Fight for the master!" and tries to make good his escape to Location 3.5, where he yells loudly to alert Garkar'l of the PCs' presence.

## Location 3.5: The Hall of the Undying Flame (EL 2 and EL 1)

The main room of the underground level is where the real undying fire is situated. Long ago, this was the true place of worship of the small priesthood that cared for the temple and revered the magical fire.

**Read aloud:** *This vast room is reminiscent of the great hall of the first level of the temple. Its pearl-like walls hold various sculpted visages depicting a multitude of creatures, each one stranger than the next. The ceiling here is over 30 feet high, supported by six pillars carved from the same white stone as the walls. Although it has the same domed shape as the main hall, the ceiling is dark and unlit.*

*In the center of the room a bright fire burns on a golden altar. Even from the stairs you can feel the heat of the restless flames, and the flickering shadows it casts make the faces upon the wall seem alive.*

**Secret Door:** There is a secret doorway opening into Location 3.8. A successful Search check (DC 20) reveals that the open mouth of a particularly grotesque, demonic face is wide and deep enough for a Medium character to insert his entire hand. Inside the throat is a lever about four inches long. When pulled, this lever activates the secret door, and a 15-foot-wide area of the wall slides into Location 3.8 with a loud grinding sound.

A detect magic spell cast in this room reveals that the fire in the hearth is magical (evocation magic) and also that several of the heads are imbued with a magical aura (illusion magic, as per the magic mouth spell). The trapped demonic head holding the trigger that opens the secret door in this room is imbued with magic (transmutation magic).

**Traps:** The secret door is trapped. Anyone who places a hand into the demonic mouth risks being bitten by the stone fangs. Regardless of whether the fangs bite someone, many of the faces upon the eastern wall suddenly begin to shriek horribly. Each character within hearing range must succeed at a Will save (DC 20) or feel paralyzing despair (as the spell emotion) for 2d4 rounds. The only way to deactivate both traps is to chant, "Kavara fears no flame." If the PCs have inquired about the god and the rituals associated with his cult, allow them to roll a Knowledge (religion) check (DC 15) to see if they can come up with the right prayer (this is the most common prayer of the cult). Otherwise, they might find a book of prayers providing clues in Location 3.7.

**Bite Trap:** CR 1; mechanical; touch trigger; automatic reset; Atk +8 melee (2d4); Search (DC 25); Disable Device (DC 25).

**Terror Trap:** CR 1; magic device; touch trigger; automatic reset; spell effect (*emotion*: despair, 7th-level wizard, victims suffer –2 morale penalties to saving throws, attack rolls, ability checks, skill checks, and weapon damage rolls for 7 minutes, Will save (DC 16) negates); Search (DC 29); Disable Device (DC 29).

**Creature:** There is a fire elemental hiding in the magical flames. This creature made the temple its home, and guards the *Crystal of Corrosion* from thieves. The elemental does not reveal its presence until Garkar'l or one of the PCs returns with the *Crystal of Corrosion* in his possession. If anyone with the magical crystal drops it to the floor of this room at any time during the encounter with the fire elemental, the creature breaks off its attack and returns to the magical fire. If someone picks up the crystal up again, it renews its attack. If the heroes retreat to Location 3.8, or if they somehow reach the stairs leading to area 4 above, the fire elemental does not pursue but instead returns to the magical flames of the hearth.

**Small Fire Elemental (1):** CR 1; Small elemental; HD 2d8; hp 9; Init +5; Spd 50 ft.; AC 15, touch 12, flat-footed 14; Base Atk +1, Grp –3; Atk +3 melee (1d4/x2 plus 1d4 fire, slam); Full Atk +3 melee (1d4/x2 plus 1d4 fire, slam); Space/Reach 5 ft./5 ft.; SA Burn; SQ Darkvision 60 ft., elemental traits, fire subtype; AL N; SV Fort +0, Ref +4, Will +0; Str 10, Dex 13, Con 10, Int 4, Wis 11, Cha 11.

*Skills and Feats:* Listen +2, Spot +3; Dodge, Improved Initiative, Weapon Finesse (slam).

*Burn:* A fire elemental's slam attack deals bludgeoning damage plus fire damage from the elemental's flaming body. Those hit by a fire elemental's slam attack also must succeed on a Reflex save (DC 11) or catch on fire. The flame burns for 1d4 rounds. A burning creature can take a move action to put out the flame. The save DC is Constitution- based.

Creatures hitting a fire elemental with natural weapons or unarmed attacks take fire damage as though hit by the elemental's attack, and also catch on fire unless they succeed with a Reflex save.

*Darkvision, 60 ft.:* A fire elemental can see in the dark with no light source at all, out to a range of 60 feet. Darkvision is black and white only (colors cannot be discerned). It does not allow the fire elemental to see anything that it could not see otherwise — invisible objects are still invisible, and illusions are still visible as what they seem to be. Likewise, darkvision subjects the fire elemental to gaze attacks normally. The presence of light does not spoil darkvision.

*Elemental Traits:* The elemental possesses the following traits:

- Immunity to poison, sleep effects, paralysis, and stunning.
- Not subject to critical hits or flanking.
- Unlike most other living creatures, an elemental does not have a dual nature—its soul and body form one unit. When an elemental is slain, no soul is set loose. Spells that restore souls to their bodies, such as raise dead, reincarnate, and resurrection, don't work on an elemental. It takes a different magical effect, such as limited wish, wish, miracle, or true resurrection, to restore it to life.
- Elementals do not eat, sleep, or breathe.

*Fire Subtype:* A creature with the fire subtype has immunity to fire. It has vulnerability to cold, which means it takes half again as much (+50%) damage as normal from cold, regardless of whether a saving throw is allowed, or if the save is a success or failure.

## Location 3.6: Nothrog Shaman's Ritual Chamber (EL 4)

This large room once housed the beds of the resident priests of Kavara. Garkar'l has turned it into an evil place of worship. It is here that the PCs find the kidnapped Dwarven artisan.

Read aloud: The walls of this room have recently been painted blood red. Five sconces hold lit torches, but their flames fail to hold the dreary shadows at bay.

A yellow sand pentagram occupies the middle of the floor, and upon the elaborate design are several splatters of blood from the Dwarf who hangs upside-down above it. Upon the wall opposite from the door is a long, narrow stone table serving as an altar. Upon it are two burning candles of black wax, a dead rat, a thick leather-bound tome, and several jars made from green and orange clay.

Two other figures stand in the dark chamber: a gray-skinned Nothrog in dark robes with a long, crooked nose, and a tall, beautiful redheaded woman in shiny chain shirt with a longsword at her hip.

The Dwarven artisan is bound and gagged, and suspended by a rope that binds his feet. The rope passes through a metal ring set in the shadowy ceiling and is tied to a peg in the altar. He looks weak, and blood drips from his dangling fingers.

A Nimbic servant is hiding in the corner of this room. This creature is loyal to the Nothrog shaman and attacks upon his command.

**Creatures:** Garkar'l, a 3rd-level shaman; Borka Redmane, a 3rd-level fighter; Barrin, a 4th-level cleric; Nimbic servant, a 1st-level rogue.

**Nimbic Servant, Male Nimbic Rog 1:** CR 1; Small humanoid (Nimbic); HD 1d6-1; hp 3; Spd 20 ft.; Init +2; AC 15, touch 13, flat-footed 13; Base Atk +1; Grp –4; Atk +0 melee (1d4–1(19–20/x2), short sword), or +3 ranged (1d3–1/x2, sling); Full Atk +0 melee (1d4–1(19–20/x2), short sword), or +3 ranged (1d3–1/x2, sling); SA Sneak attack +1d6; SQ Hide in plain sight, Nimbic traits; AL CN; SV Fort –1, Ref +4, Will +0; Str 9, Dex 14, Con 8, Int 13, Wis 11, Cha 13.

*Skills and Feats:* Balance +6, Climb +3, Jump +3, Hide +10, Listen +4, Move Silently +6, Spot +4, Tumble +6, Use Rope +6; Dodge.

*Hide In Plain Sight:* Each time the servant makes a Hide check, he may reduce the total penalty (if any) to his skill check by his rogue class level, to a minimum of 0.

*Sneak Attack:* Anytime the servant's target is denied a Dexterity bonus to AC, or when he flanks a target, the servant deals an additional 1d6 points of damage on a successful melee attack.

*Possessions:* Leather armor, shortsword, sling, 20 sling bullets.

**Development:** The Nothrog shaman has learned how to pass the gargoyles to Location 3.10. He also planned to sacrifice the Dwarf, but only after he made certain the knowledge he acquired from him was sound. At the first sight of the PCs, the shaman sends his Nimbic servant against them, and casts offensive spells to support his servant. When he runs out of spells, he uses his ring of passwall to avoid combat with the PCs and go on with his plan of recovering the *Crystal of Corrosion*. Garkar'l knows about the magical mouth and the terror trap of Location 3.5, but has never found the lever opening the secret door. Instead, he uses his ring of passwall. PCs trying to follow Garkar'l should have no trouble seeing him pass through the wall of the secret doorway (which should give them an important clue as where to search for the secret door).

**Garkar'l, Male Nothrog Sha 3:** CR 3; Medium humanoid (Nothrog); HD 3d4+3; hp 0; Spd 30 ft.; Init +1; AC 13, touch 11, flat-footed 12; Base Atk +1; Grp +1; Atk +1 melee (1d4(19–20/x2), dagger); Full Atk +1 melee (1d4(19–20/x2), dagger); SA Spells; SQ Beast bond, familiar (bat), favored terrain (hill), Nothrog traits; AL CE; SV Fort +4, Ref +2, Will +4; Str 11, Dex 12, Con 13, Int 17, Wis 12, Cha 16.

*Skills and Feats:* Concentration +7, Knowledge (arcane) +9, Knowledge (local) +9, Listen +6*, Spellcraft +9, Spot +3, Survival +7; Great Fortitude, Totemic Familiar. *Includes Garkar'l's +3 bonus to Listen checks that he receives as long as he is within 1 mile of his familiar.

*Beast Bond:* Garkar'l may share is consciousness with his familiar, allowing him to share his familiar's perceptions. While using this ability, Garkar'l is unaware of himself, and is considered helpless. He may not move, speak, or act in any way. However, he is in full control of his familiar's actions.

*Familiar (bat):* Bonus Ability: Echolocation. For five rounds a day (they do not need to be consecutive), you can use the blindsight ability to a range of 60 feet. This ability works through echolocation (emitting high-frequency sounds inaudible to most creatures). Blindsight allows you to maneuver and fight targets within range, ignoring invisibility and darkness effects. You gain a +2 circumstance bonus to all Spot and Listen checks to detect creatures within 60 feet. You may not use this ability if you cannot speak. Familiar/Animal Companion Special Abilities: You gain a +2 competence bonus to Spot and Listen checks.

Garkar'l's bat familiar has the following statistics:

**Bat (Familiar):** CR 1; Diminutive animal; HD 3; hp 13; Init +2; Spd 5 ft., fly 40 ft. (good); AC 18, touch 16, flat-footed 12; Base Atk +1, Grp –16; Atk-; Full Atk-; Space/Reach 1ft./0ft.; SA-; SQ Blindsense 20 ft., low-light vision; AL CE; SV Fort +2, Ref +5, Will +5; Str 1, Dex 15, Con 10, Int 7, Wis 14, Cha 4.

*Skills and Feats:* Hide +14, Listen +8*, Move Silently +6, Spot +8*; Alertness. * A bat has a +4 racial bonus on Spot and Listen checks. These bonuses are lost if its blindsense is negated.

*Familiar Ability Descriptions:* All familiars have special abilities (or impart abilities to their masters) depending on Garkar'l's combined level in classes that grant familiars. The abilities are cumulative.

*Alertness (Ex):* While his bat is within arm's reach, Garkar'l gains the Alertness feat.

*Low-Light Vision:* A bat can see twice as far as a Human in starlight, moonlight, torchlight, and similar conditions of shadowy illumination. A bat retains the ability to distinguish color and detail under these conditions.

*Blindsense:* A bat notices and locates creatures within 20 feet. Opponents still have 100% concealment against a creature with blindsense.

*Improved Evasion (Ex):* When subjected to an attack that normally allows a Reflex saving throw for half damage, a familiar takes no damage if it makes a successful saving throw and half damage even if the saving throw fails.

*Share Spells:* At Garkar'l's option, he may have any spell (but not any spell-like ability) he casts on himself also affect his familiar. The familiar must be within 5 feet at the time of casting to receive the benefit. If the spell or effect has a duration other than instantaneous, it stops affecting the familiar if it moves farther than 5 feet away and will not affect the familiar again even if it returns to the master before the duration expires. Additionally, Garkar'l may cast a spell with a target of "You" on his familiar (as a touch range spell) instead of on himself. Garkar'l and his familiar can share spells even if the spells normally do not affect creatures of the familiar's type (magical beast).

*Empathic Link (Su):* Garkar'l has an empathic link with his familiar out to a distance of up to 1 mile. Garkar'l cannot see through the familiar's eyes, but they can communicate empathically. Because of the limited nature of the link, only general emotional content can be communicated. Because of this empathic link, Garkar'l has the same connection to an item or place that his familiar does.

*Deliver Touch Spells (Su):* If Garkar'l is 3rd level or higher, a familiar can deliver touch spells for him. If Garkar'l and the familiar are in contact at the time Garkar'l casts a touch spell, he can designate his familiar as the "toucher." The familiar can then deliver the touch spell just as Garkar'l could. As usual, if Garkar'l casts another spell before the touch is delivered, the touch spell dissipates.

*Low-Light Vision:* Garkar'l can see twice as far as a Human in starlight, moonlight, torchlight, and similar conditions of shadowy illumination. Garkar'l retains the ability to distinguish color and detail under these conditions.

*Favored Terrain (hill):* While in hill terrain, Garkar'l's shaman caster level is 4th and he does not need to have access to his medicine bag to prepare fetishes.

*Shaman Spells Prepared (6/6; save DC 13 + spell level):* 0 — *all;* 1st — *begone, curse of the lady, expeditious journey, foxfire, manacles of might, stone hands.*

*Possessions:* Dagger, bracers of armor +2, ring of passwall, platinum necklace (worth 350 gp), and 22 gp.

**Development:** The mercenary was watching Garkar'l torture the man she kidnapped. She had nothing to do with the torture, but she did enjoy watching it. When the PCs barge into the room, Borka stands her ground, preferring to strike light-armored party members and spell casters first. When Garkar'l abandons her, she tries to bargain with the PCs, and fights defensively while doing so. If the heroes are willing to parley, she reveals to them that Garkar'l plans to uncover a great magical artifact that he calls the *Crystal of Corrosion*. Borka tells them about the secret door to Location 3.8.

**Borka Redmane, Male Human Ftr 3:** CR 3; Medium humanoid (Human); HD 3d10+9; hp 28; Init +2; Spd 20 ft.; AC 16, touch 12, flat-footed 14, Base Atk +3; Grp +6; Atk +9 melee (1d8+5(19–20/x2), +1 longsword), or +5 ranged (1d8(19–20/x2), light crossbow); Full Atk +9 melee (1d8+5(19–20/x2), +1 longsword), or +5 ranged (1d8(19–20/x2), light crossbow); SA Favored weapon (longsword); SQ —; AL NE; SV Fort +6, Ref +3, Will +4; Str 17, Dex 15, Con 16, Int 13, Wis 10, Cha 17.

*Skills and Feats:* Bluff +6, Climb +8*, Jump +8*, Ride +8; Feats: Dodge, Iron Will, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (longsword).
*includes –1 Armor Check penalty

*Favored Weapon (longsword):* Redmane gains a +1 competence bonus to attack and damage rolls with the longsword.

*Possessions:* Masterwork chain shirt, +1 longsword, light crossbow, 20 bolts, potion of cure moderate wounds.

**Development:** If the PCs rescue Barrin and heal him, he immediately tells them about the gargoyle guardians in Location 3.9 and the *Crystal of Corrosion* the Nothrog is trying to recover. He believes that Sjonegaard, King of Elementals, helped the priests of Kavara secure the item ages ago. He knows that if Garkar'l had the *Crystal of Corrosion*, he might be able to defeat even the greatest warriors. Barrin reveals how to prevent the gargoyles from attacking, information that could save the PCs' lives later in the adventure: they must speak the pass phrase in Dwarven: "The stone holds the strength of Sjonegaard." He knows the phrase because he is a gargoyle artisan. He has no spells prepared.

**Barrin, Artisan, Male Dwarf Clr 4:** CR 4; Medium humanoid (Dwarf); HD 4d8+8; hp 26 (currently 2); Spd 20 ft.; Init +0; AC 10, touch 10, flat-footed 10; Base Atk +4; Grp +5; Atk + 5 unarmed (1d3+2/x2, unarmed strike); Full Atk +5 unarmed (1d3+2/x2, unarmed strike); SA Spells, turn undead 4/day; SQ Cleric domains (Good, Knowledge), Dwarf traits, spontaneous casting; AL LG; SV Fort +6, Ref +1, Will +7; Str 14, Dex 10, Con 14, Int 13, Wis 16, Cha 12.

*Skills and Feats:* Concentration +8, Craft (gargoyle construction) +10, Diplomacy +4, Heal +4, Knowledge (religion) +4, Spellcraft +2; Combat Casting, Dodge.

*Spontaneous Casting:* Barrin can "lose" a prepared spell (except for a domain spell) in order to cast any cure spell of the same level or lower.

*Turn Undead:* Barrin can attempt to turn undead 4 times per day.

*Cleric Spells Prepared (5/4+1/3+1; save DC 13 + spell level):* None prepared.

*Possessions:* Stolen and nowhere to be found.

**Development:** When the PCs arrive, Garkar'l has just extracted the information he needed, and now understands how to prevent the gargoyles in Location 3.9 from attacking him.

## Location 3.7: The Shaman's Private Sanctum (EL 2)

This room was once the private abode of the head priest of the Temple of the Undying Flame. Garkar'l made it his private sanctum.

**Read aloud:** *This small room is clearly the Nothrog shaman's private chamber. A large, comfortable-looking bed takes up most of the room. There is also a stone desk upon which lie several sheets of parchment and an ancient leathery book. A sturdy wooden chest and a colorful and beautifully woven carpet make up the rest of the room's furniture.*

In this room the PCs find the shaman's treasure (minus the items he has in his possession).

The book on the desk holds prayers from the cult of Kavara. On its first page, the PCs can read: "Kavara fears no flame." Reciting this phrase in Location 3.5 disarms both traps there.

The wooden chest is locked and Garkar'l has the only key. The PCs can try an Open Lock check (DC 20) to open it, or try to break it (hp 50, Hardness 5).

**Trap:** The shaman had a Nothrog craftsman put a trap on his chest. It triggers whether the opener uses the key or picks the lock, unless someone pushes a small plate at the back of the chest at the moment it is unlocked. This is the only way to avoid the trap; otherwise, it springs as soon as the lid is lifted. Smashing the chest to pieces might activate the trap as well (a 75% chance the trap is triggered).

*Poison Needle Trap:* CR 2; mechanical; touch trigger; repair reset; Atk +8 ranged (1 plus poison, needle); poison (spider venom, DC 14 Fortitude save resists (poison only), 1d4 Str/1d6 Str); Search DC 22; Disable Device DC 20.

*Treasure:* Garkar'l's wooden chest holds boots of the winterlands, 10 gems worth 25 gp each, and a golden rod worth 150 gp.

## Location 3.8: Sloping Passageway

This passageway is almost 2000 feet long and slopes gently downwards. The PCs can access it through the secret door in Location 3.5.

**Read aloud:** *The secret door opens into a long, wide passageway. Unlike most of the rooms of this ancient temple, the walls of this corridor are pitch black. As you move through the corridor, you realize the floor slopes slightly downward.*

This long slanting corridor has one function: to connect the secret entrance in Location 3.5 on the second level with the hidden hall in Location 3.9 on the third level of the complex.

## Location 3.9: Hall of Gargoyles (EL 3)

This great hall was originally a secret place of worship and contemplation. When the priests of the temple took it upon themselves to ensure the *Crystal of Corrosion* would not fall into the wrong hands, they opened up the corridor leading to Location 3.10, converted the hall of Location 3.9 into a hidden guard room, and secured a pact with Sjonegaard to provide the priesthood with immortal guardians that would watch over the crystal for all eternity: two sandstone gargoyles.

**Read aloud:** *As you come to the end of the long, somber corridor, you enter a great hall. Six pearly white pillars support the 50-foot high ceiling, which is simple gray stone, as are the ordinary-looking walls. At the far end of the hall, you notice a dark, 5-foot-wide opening. On each side of the opening is a small demonic statue of dark sandstone.*

*As you step into the hall, these statues come alive...*

**Creatures:** Two Sandstone gargoyles.

**Sandstone Gargoyles (2):** CR 2; Small construct (gargoyle); HD 2d10+13; hp 30; Init +0; Spd 30 ft.; AC 18, touch 10, flat-footed 18; Base Atk +1, Grp +2; Atk +2 melee (1d4+1/x2, slam); Full Atk +2 melee (1d4+1/x2, 2 slams); Space/Reach 5ft./5ft.; SA Spell-like abilities; SQ Fast healing 1, gargoyle traits, speed; AL NG; SV Fort +2, Ref +0, Will +0; Str 12, Dex 11, Con —, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 6.

*Skills and Feats:* Hide +5*, Move Silently +5*; Great Fortitude. *Sandstone gargoyles, in addition to the usual racial skill bonuses granted to gargoyles, gain a +4 racial bonus to Hide and Move Silently, but only while underground.

*Depth Sense:* Sandstone gargoyles are able to determine how far underground they are and whether a passage is rising or falling and by how much. Both of these abilities require a Survival check (DC 15) to use.

*Fast Healing 1:* A sandstone gargoyle regains 1 hit point per round. Fast healing does not allow a creature to regrow or reattach lost body parts.

*Gargoyle Traits:* A sandstone gargoyle possesses the following additional traits:

- Construct: Gargoyles are constructs, though unlike most creatures of this type, they have an Intelligence score (they still lack Constitution scores). They are therefore immune to mind influencing effects (charms, compulsions, phantasms, patterns, and morale effects) and to poison, sleep, paralysis, stunning disease, death effects, and necromantic effects.Further, they are not subject to critical hits, subdual damage, ability damage, ability drain, or energy drain. They are immune to any effect that requires a Fortitude save (unless that effect also works on objects) Gargoyles cannot die due to massive damage, but when reduced to 0 hit points or less, they immediately crumble to a loose pile of dust and rock. Gargoyles, which are never truly alive, cannot be raised or resurrected.
- *Darkvision:* Gargoyles have darkvision with a range of 60 feet.
- *Depth Sense (Ex):* Gargoyles always know how far they are beneath the surface of the world. They can detect whether a pas-sage is rising or falling, and by precisely how much. Both of these abilities require a Survival check (DC 15) to use.
- *Fast Healing:* Nearly all gargoyles have the capacity to heal at a vastly accelerated rate, as noted in their individual entries.
- *Immunity:* All gargoyles are immune to lightning, cold, fear-based effects, and poison.
- *Skills:* All gargoyles receive a +4 racial bonus to Search and Spot checks while underground, as well as a +8 racial bonus to Survival checks at all times.
- *Spell-like abilities:* At will — detect evil; 3/day — aid, magic circle against evil. Gargoyles have a spellcaster level equal to 6 or their Hit Dice, whichever is greater.

*Speed (Ex):* Sandstone gargoyles are exceptionally fast, and may move twice as swiftly as other creatures of their size. With a success-ful Will save (DC 11), they may triple their speed for a round (for a maximum of three rounds in a row).

*Spell-like Abilities:* In addition to the spell-like abilities granted by the sandstone gargoyle's gargoyle traits, it may cast passwall at will. The sandstone gargoyle is limited to moving through stone with this spell, but it otherwise operates as normal.

**Development:** Unless the PCs took the time to talk with Barrin, they have no means of preventing the gargoyle guardians from attacking them. These gargoyles fight until their targets are dead or they are themselves destroyed. They will not leave this room, even if the PCs retreat. If the PCs speak the pass phrase in Dwarven, "The stone holds the strength of Sjonegaard," the gargoyles stand down and obey the commands of the character who spoke the phrase until they are destroyed.

## Location 3.10: The Chamber of the Crystal of Corrosion (EL 3)

This chamber was hewn from the same gray rock as the great hall where the gargoyles sit. The room was carved for the sole purpose of housing the *Crystal of Corrosion*.

**Read aloud:** *Ten feet into this narrow corridor, the dark gray stone of the floor, ceiling, and walls becomes uneven. As you walk into the second length of the corridor, you realize the farther you go, the more the stone becomes twisted and jagged. Its gray color is splashed with dark brown or red spots, as if acid had eaten away the stone.*

*The short corridor brings you to a wide room that seems even more damaged. The stone is so rough it looks like a natural cavern. The rock on the floor, ceiling and walls is of deep browns and dark reds. In the center of the room, upon a badly damaged stone table, you see an oddly shaped, rust-colored rock roughly the size of a clenched Human fist.*

If Garkar'l beat the PCs to this room, they face the evil Nothrog shaman here. The heroes still see the *Crystal of Corrosion*, but Garkar'l holds the artifact.

**Development:** If the PCs have not prevented Garkar'l from recovering the *Crystal of Corrosion*, he might be here when they arrive. Garkar'l does not understand everything the *Crystal of Corrosion* can do, but by simply having it in his possession he benefits from some of its powers (see the description of the *Crystal of Corrosion* in Part 7 for further details). When the PCs face him, he is insulted and furious, especially if he learns that either Avaris or Borka has betrayed him. Unlike the mercenaries, who are willing to bargain for their lives, Garkar'l fights the PCs with all his might, using as many spells as he can and targeting the strongest looking warriors first. If cornered and heavily wounded, he might try to escape using his ring of passwall, but he never surrenders.

If Garkar'l hears the PCs coming from Locations 3.8 or 3.9 (when they battle the gargoyles or if they talk among themselves, for instance) he readies himself for battle by casting the following spells: divine favor, endurance, and protection from good.

If the PCs managed to neutralize him before he was able to reach this room, then they uncover the *Crystal of Corrosion*. Whether they discover the Crystal themselves or take it away from Garkar'l by force, the PCs have to fight the fire elemental (in Location 3.5) if they try to take the artifact away from the temple.

## Part 5: Concluding the Adventure

Once the heroes have saved Barrin and/or foiled Garkar'l's plans, they can return the Dwarf to his people, where they receive K'evan's accolades as well as the rewards he promised. The Dwarves hail the PCs as great heroes and friends of the Dwarven people, and K'evan throws a banquet in their honor. If the party had been asked to uncover the truth behind the alleged involvement of Andoveran soldiers, they also receive official thanks from an emissary, perhaps even Sir Robert the Vigilant himself. If they apprehended Borka, Avaris, or any of the mercenaries responsible for the kidnapping and delivered them to the Andoveran authorities (and thus brought proof that mercenaries were indeed involved), they receive an extra reward of 200 XP per character.

If the heroes successfully recovered the *Crystal of Corrosion*, they have to choose between two options:

- Keep it, in which case they might have a lot of trouble on their hands later from any surviving NPCs.
- Return it to the clergy of Kavara, who were, long ago, the appointed guardians of the vile artifact.

The PCs might ask the Andoveran authorities or someone in the Dwarven delegation (K'evan, for instance) to take this great burden off their hands, in which case the artifact is hidden again. On the other hand, the heroes might attempt to destroy it.

Word of the discovery of the Temple of the Undying Flame could arouse the curiosity of treasure-hunters and religious experts, especially the clerics of Kavara, who might want to reestablish the temple as an active place of worship. The heroes could even be asked to accompany a group of priests of Kavara to the Temple of the Undying Flame and ensure the surrounding area is safe from Nothrog, like those who may still be loyal to Garkar'l.

If Avaris or Borka Redmane survived, the PCs may have made unlikely allies or dire enemies of either of them. For instance, if Avaris pleaded with the PCs to spare Borka's life, but the heroes are responsible for her death, he might return at a later time in the campaign with vengeance on his mind. Similarly, Borka could hold a grudge against the PCs, and once she has established herself as leader of another mercenary band, she might come after the heroes. Of course, if either of these NPCs became allies (by helping the heroes in their fight against Garkar'l, for instance) a future encounter with them could lead to other adventures, in which they would undoubtedly have conflicting interests.

If the heroes failed to save the Dwarven artisan, K'evan nevertheless pays them half of the promised reward if they return Barrin's body. The Dwarves would prefer to conduct his burial rites.

If Garkar'l survived, he retreats to the Nothrog lands. If the PCs thwarted his plans, he wants vengeance on them and he still wants the *Crystal of Corrosion*. With the help of more troops, and perhaps even greater allies, Garkar'l could eventually storm the place where the *Crystal of Corrosion* would be held. He could also try to wage war against the isolated villages of Andover.

If Garkar'l obtained the *Crystal of Corrosion*, he returns to his homeland, assumes leadership of his legion, and tries to subjugate other Nothrog tribes before being brutally put down by the Elite Hate Guard, who confiscate the *Crystal of Corrosion*.

If Garkar'l learns the secrets of the gargoyle artisans, he quickly discovers the knowledge is only useful in destroying them. Sjonegaard's approval is necessary to create gargoyles.

## Part 6: The Stone of Fortune

If the party saved Barrin, read aloud: You grip the Stone of Fortune, and a white light appears above your hand and peels back to reveal a stone cavern. Dim light reflects off a thousand stalagmites and stalactites, and then, so slowly at first that you are not sure you see it at all, the stones move. The earth itself parts to take in the light... and then the vision ends.

If the party did not save Barrin, read aloud: You grip the Stone of Fortune, and a white light appears above your hand. Then, suddenly, darkness swallows the light, prematurely ending the vision.

This is Sjonegaard's reaction to the events of this adventure. Ever distrustful of the upworlders, the Elemental King may grant the party a boon for saving Barrin, or turn his back on them forever for failing the Dwarves. If the party saves Barrin, Sjonegaard opens a tunnel to the World Below for them, which they may use in later, otherwise unreachable adventures (*see adventures Black Forge and Abyssal Attack*).




## Part 7: New Magic Items

CRYSTAL OF CORROSION

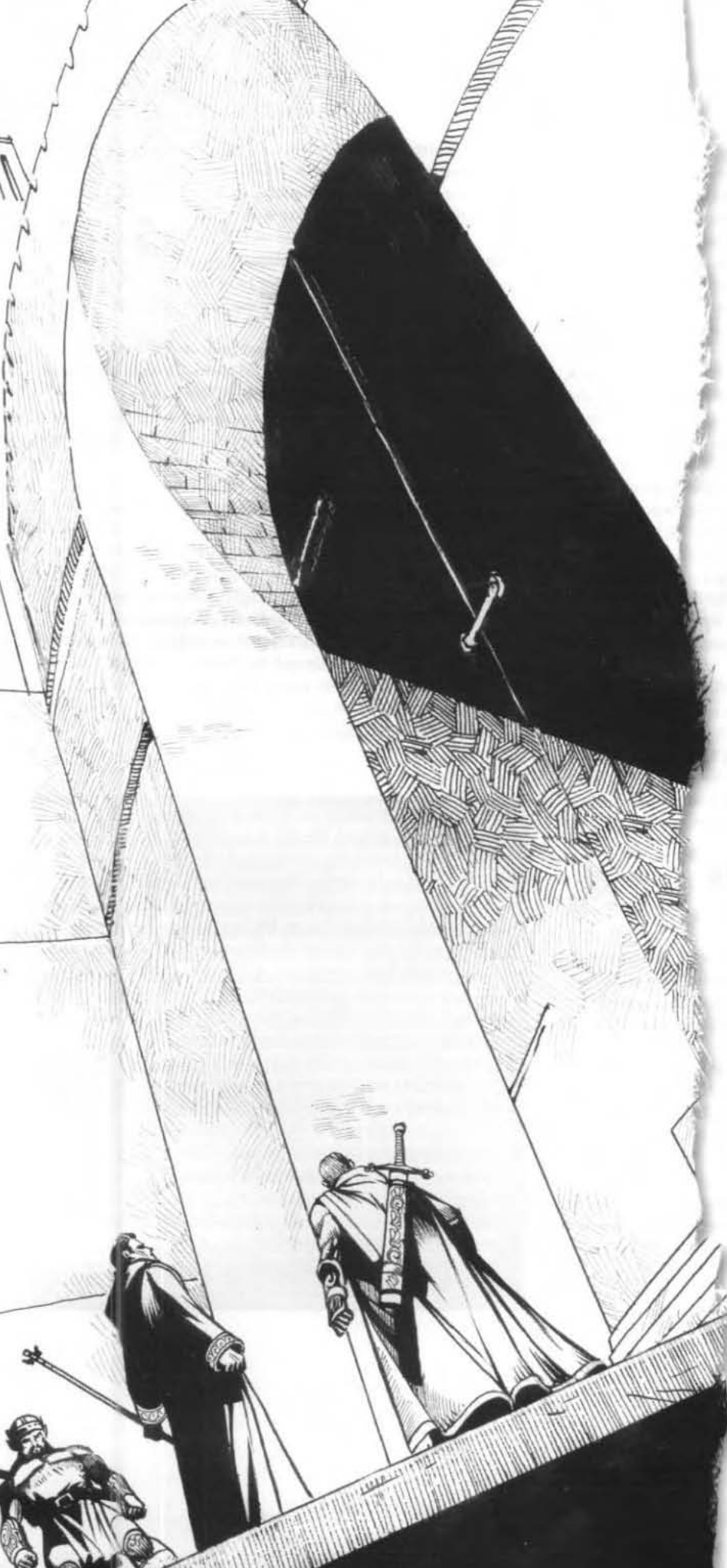
**Minor Artifact**

This artifact looks like an ordinary rust-colored rock. If either it or its wielder touches metal, the metal immediately corrodes, falling to pieces in the blink of an eye. The owner of the *Crystal of Corrosion* may attempt touch attacks against opponents to ruin their armor, weapons, or other metallic gear. For this ability to function, the *Crystal of Corrosion* must be held in the clenched fist of the wielder. If the wielder is successfully hit with a metal weapon, the weapon dissolves instantly. Weapons destroyed in such a manner deliver damage before falling apart.

The size of the metal object affected by the *Crystal of Corrosion* is immaterial, so a full suit of plate armor corrodes as quickly as a *tiny* blade. Magic armor, weapons, and other enchanted items made of metal must succeed at a Reflex save (DC 20) or be destroyed.

Additionally, the power of the *Crystal of Corrosion* eats away other mineral materials, such as sand, stone, salt, or coal. The crystal's effect on these materials is not immediate, but it effectively delivers 1 hit point of damage per hour to all mineral material it touches.

*Caster Level:* 20th; *Weight:* 8 lb.



# The Church of the Storm

## Introduction

This adventure directly involves the PCs in the Assassins' Strike as they attempt to rescue a kidnapped Deverenian Cardinal.

This is one of two adventures in Tier 2. It is meant for characters of levels 1–3.

## Adventure Background

Arkan Forss is a prominent member of the government of the Deverenian city of Haranshee. He is responsible for the current popularity of the Church of the Storm in Haranshee, and sponsored the rededication of a local place of worship. He has used political and financial influence to build a sizable congregation of Storm worshipers among the city's elite, although the working classes are quietly not as devout. Even Baron Haranshee pays his respects to the Storm on his rare visits. The Baron's headstrong daughter, Lorna, does not. She and her loyal household are secret VédoSZentek cultists, and they do not want the Church gaining power in their community.

Cardinal Ulloft of the Church of the Storm arrived in Haranshee three weeks ago with a small entourage. He was greeted with uneasy stares, sideways glances, and angry rants. An angry mob of townspeople crowded the entrance of the church, cursing the Cardinal and pelting one of his acolytes with rotten fruit. After two days of this, Captain Halifax, head of the city guard, stationed men at the church to maintain the peace.

Arkan discreetly sent out word that he wanted to hire a small mercenary band or group of adventures to provide additional protection. He assigned two of his own bodyguards to the task until he could find suitable candidates.

A week later, the guards discovered someone trying to poison the Cardinal's food, but the would-be assassin eluded capture. The Black Sun paladins berated the guards, making it clear that they would kill any man who entered the church without permission.

The night before the ceremony the Cardinal held a rehearsal. The Church of the Storm is steeped in tradition, and the Cardinal forced his entourage to perform the ritual six times. By the end, the city guards were leaning against the walls and dozing. The Black Sun paladins kept their positions faithfully, standing at the four corners of the church and watching the ritual with mild interest.

Jace Cord, a con man, thief, and one-time assassin, struck at midnight. He swung down from the rafters in the back of the church and tossed a *basilisk lily* (*t*) into the room. It burst into a thick cloud of stoneflesh spores and plunged the room into inky darkness. Flesh and steel turned to stone as the cloud passed, but when the darkness cleared the Cardinal was gone. Jace was alone but for six statues that were once proud fighting men.

Cardinal Ulloft was saved not by vigilance but through paranoia. He was so involved in the ceremony that he never saw the attack coming. Luckily, he was wearing a *robe of freedom of movement*, which protected him from the effects that petrified his entourage. He staggered out of the church, into the arms of four armed men in black cloaks. One of them sapped the Cardinal and dragged him into the night.

A drunken old beggar saw the whole thing, even wandering across the street to get a better look. He ran into Jace, who bribed him with a silver piece. The old beggar told him that the Cardinal had been kidnapped and dragged off toward Southgate, not killed.

Now, Jace is desperately trying to find his mark before word of his failure reaches Black Tom or the guild. But the guild knows, and they have sent a replacement killer to finish the job.

## Adventure Synopsis

The *Church of the Storm* adventure takes place shortly after *The Ghostwood Treaty*.

The adventure begins when the PCs arrive in Haranshee, on their own or as agents of concerned parties. Arkan initially wanted bodyguards to protect the Cardinal. Now he needs the PCs to find him and get him out of the city. He pays handsomely and helps in any way he can.

Jace, the assassin — desperate to complete the contract before his superiors find out his target is still alive — has hired a gang of local thugs to help track down the kidnappers. He has people at the gates and outside inns. They watch for signs of the old man, tail Arkan's aide, and snoop around the city guard's Captain Halifax, trying to dig up information.

Cear Adinerach, fully aware of Jace's failure, has sent another agent to Haranshee: Cynarre, the Elven assassin rescued from the prison in Ghostwood (if Cynarre died during "The Ghostwood Treaty," use another agent of similar skill).

Cynarre was a spy for the Elves (mostly in Deverenia) before becoming an assassin. He is familiar with Cardinal Ulloft, and was originally slated to assassinate him. Cynarre's capture at Corinth prevented that, so Jace went instead.

Cynarre's new mission is to kill the Cardinal and eliminate any troublemakers or witnesses, including the assassin who bungled the job. If Cynarre is successful, Cear will grant him immortality: powerful incentive for an elf with only a few months to live.

The Cardinal is being held prisoner in the Baron's manor. Lorna and her household kidnapped him to prevent the church's rededication and protect the Shrine of Deima hidden beneath it. She and her household secretly worship Deima, and are in contact with a VédoSZentek cult. They plan to hand the Cardinal to the VédoSZentek as soon as possible.

Bentry Rickard and Lorna Haranshee are lovers, but they keep their association a secret and snipe at each other in public. Bentry is also a member of Lorna's small congregation, and together they hatched a scheme to stop the rededication. Bentry hired a crazy radical to stir up trouble with the Cardinal (see sidebar "The Conspiracy of Light"), so investigators would have a chief suspect for the Cardinal's disappearance.

All of this takes place in a city whose stability is sorely tested. War with the Elves has fanned the flames of prejudice, turning the normally tolerant city into a dangerous place for foreigners and non-Humans. Refugees fill the streets and Elven forces are on the move. It is a highly volatile situation.

### The Conspiracy of Light

The Conspiracy of Light is a loose alliance of Deverenians who seek to overthrow the Emperor and the Church of the Storm. Though only the noblest ideals birthed the conspiracy, they made a grave error, improperly summoning and binding one of Deverenia's gods from the time before Signon created the Church of the Storm. This god, Teufeltiger, slew his summoners and disguised himself as the conspiracy's head, Lord Kestrel du Myerdeth. Though utterly evil, Teufeltiger nonetheless agrees with the conspiracy's aims, and his cunning has increased the conspiracy's power. Still, those who know their lord's secret wonder when the old god of treachery will use his wits against them...

It is possible that one or more members of the party may be members of the Conspiracy of Light, or at least associated with it. Fortunately, the conspirators in this adventure are an independent sect acting without Lord Kestrel's approval. PC conspirators suffer no backlash from this adventure unless they expose the conspiracy; exposing the Deima cult is fine.

## Cardinal Ulloft

Cardinal Ulloft is a dangerous man. The only child of a wealthy knight, he vowed to earn his own titles and land. He made his way to court with the exuberance of youth, a full purse, and a head full of foolish dreams.

Ulloft quickly learned that the Emperor's Court, the Knightly Orders, and the Church were rife with corruption. He studied the nature of evil men, and used the knowledge to rise quickly in their dark halls of power. He chose to embrace the teachings of the *Annales Devereniorum* and join the ranks of the Church of the Storm.

Although he has a profound pessimism about Deverenian nature, Ulloft nevertheless argued that a righteous man could achieve greatness even in the face of moral corruption; he was the youngest man to earn the title of Inquisitor and remains an icon among them.

Over the years, Ulloft has become one of the Empire's foremost clergymen, a trusted advisor to important members of Deverenian society like Cardinal Scelus, Inquisitor Mastus, and Peredur, the Royal Chiurgeon.

His contacts and skills made him a prime target for the Assassins' Strike.

**Cardinal Ulloft, Male Deverenian Clr 12:** CR 12; Medium humanoid (Deverenian); HD 12d8; 68; Spd 30 ft.; Init +5; AC 11, touch 11, flat-footed 10; Base Atk +9; Grp +10; Atk +10 melee (1d8+1/x2, heavy mace); Full Atk +10/+5 melee (1d8+1/x2, heavy mace); SA Spells, rebuke undead 6/day; SQ Cleric domains (Air, Law), Deverenian traits, spontaneous casting; AL LE; SV Fort +8, Ref +5, Will +13; Str 12, Dex 12, Con 10, Int 12, Wis 17, Cha 16.

*Skills and Feats:* Concentration +6, Diplomacy +6, Heal +7, Knowledge (arcana) +12, Knowledge (religion) +12, Listen +7, Search, +6, Spellcraft +6, Spot +8; Alertness, Improved Initiative, Improved Turning (Rebuke), Iron Will, Leadership.

*Spontaneous Casting:* Cardinal Ulloft can "lose" a prepared spell (except for a domain spell) in order to cast any *inflict* spell of the same level or lower.

*Rebuke Undead:* Cardinal Ulloft can attempt to rebuke undead 6 times per day.

*Cleric Spells Prepared (6/6+1/5+1/5+1/3+1/3+1/2+1;* save DC 13 + spell level): 0 — *inflict pain, create water, light, read magic, detect magic, detect poison;* 1st — *bane, bless, detect chaos, divine favor, doom, shield of faith, protection from chaos*;* 2nd — *bull's grace, firebombs, phantom touch, scourge of Dythanus, silent guardian, wind wall*;* 3rd — *apathy, banish the wound, divine senses, mass blessing, whirlwind, magic circle against chaos*;* 4th — *armor of faith, inferno, second wind, air walk*;* 5th — *airless breath, ethereal drain, spell resistance, dispel chaos*;* 6th — *ethereal assault, wind walk, chain lightning.* *Domain spel

*Possessions:* Heavy mace, *robe of freedom of movement.*

## The Assassin

Jace Cord is a successful con artist and career thief. He was a mid-tier member of the Corinth thieves' guild before the Elves sacked the city. He convinced Black Tom to give him a big assignment, hoping to cash in and retire somewhere far from the conflict. Jace stands close to 6 feet tall and weighs 175 pounds. He wears his shoulder-length black hair neatly pulled back. He has striking green eyes. He is usually well dressed, and carries fine weapons.

Jace relies on his quick wit, handsome looks, and charm. He is quick to smile, friendly, and a good listener. His sly humor puts his marks at ease before he robs them blind.

He wants to get rich quick and has never liked working for a living. He wants to make one big score so he can enjoy the nobleman's lifestyle he has always envied.

**Jace Cord, Male Human Rog 3:** CR 3; Medium humanoid (Human); HD 3d6+12; hp 22; Spd 30 ft.; Init +2; AC 16, touch 12, flat-footed 14; Base Atk +2; Grp +3; Atk +4 melee (1d4+2(17–20/x2), *+1 keen dagger*); Full Atk + Atk +4 melee (1d4+2(17–20/x2), *+1 keen dagger*); SA Sneak attack +1d6; SQ Evasion, hide in plain sight; AL NE; SV Fort +1, Ref +8, Will +1; Str 12, Dex 15, Con 18, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 17.

*Skills and Feats:* Appraise +3, Balance +4, Bluff +4, Climb +2, Diplomacy +4, Disguise +4, Escape Artist +4, Forgery +3, Gather Information +4, Hide +4, Intimidate +4, Jump +2, Listen +3, Move Silently +4, Sleight of Hand +4, Profession (con man) +4, Search +4, Sense Motive +4, Spot +4, Tumble +4, Use Rope +4; Alertness, Lightning Reflexes, Two-Weapon Fighting.

*Hide In Plain Sight:* Each time Jace makes a Hide check, he may reduce the total penalty (if any) to his skill check by his rogue class level (3), to a minimum of 0.

*Evasion:* If Jace makes a successful Reflex saving throw against an attack that normally deals half damage on a successful save, he instead takes no damage. Evasion can be used only if Jace is wearing light armor or no armor. A helpless Jace does not gain the benefit of evasion.

*Sneak Attack:* Anytime Jace's target is denied a Dexterity bonus to AC, or when he flanks a target, Jace deals an additional 1d6 points of damage on a successful melee attack.

*Possessions: +1 studded leather armor, +1 keen dagger.*

### The Replacement Killer

**Cynarre is a talented spy and assassin who once worked for House Syneri. Lured with promises of immortality and power, he became one of Cear Adinerach's assassins. He is intelligent, ambitious, and arrogant. His years as a spy have made him cautious, alert, and efficient.**
**Cynarre is 29 years old, and has only months to live. He is desperately looking for a way to extend his life.**

**Cynarre, Male Elf Asn 4:** CR 4; Medium humanoid (Elf); HD 4d6; hp 15; Spd 30 ft.; Init +8; AC 15, touch 14, flat-footed 11; Base Atk +3; Grp +5; Atk +5 unarmed (1d3+2/x2, unarmed strike); Full Atk +5 unarmed (1d3+2/x2, unarmed strike); SA Crippling strike, sneak attack +2d6, Spells; SQ Elf traits, poison immunity and resistance +1, poison use, skilled brewer; AL CE; SV Fort +1, Ref +10, Will +1; Str 14, Dex 18, Con 10, Int 13, Wis 10, Cha 12.

*Skills and Feats:* Hide +7, Jump +5, Listen +4, Move Silently +8, Open Lock +8, Poison +7, Search +4, Sense Motive +3, Sleight of Hand +7, Spot +4; Improved Initiative, Lightning Reflexes.

*Crippling Strike:* When Cynarre scores a critical hit in melee combat, rather than inflicting damage he may inflict normal damage (the hit point damage is not doubled as usual for a critical hit) plus his Intelligence modifier (+1) in temporary damage to the victim's Strength, Dexterity, or Constitution.

*Poison Immunity and Resistance:* Cynarre has a +1 save bonus against all poisons and is immune to quicksilver poison.

*Poison Use:* Cynarre is trained in the use of poison and never risks accidentally poisoning himself when applying poison to a blade.

*Skilled Brewer:* Cynarre is trained to brew poison and always has a +2 competence bonus to Poison skill checks.

*Sneak Attack:* Anytime Cynarre's target is denied a Dexterity bonus to AC, or when he flanks a target, Cynarre deals an additional 2d6 points of damage on a successful melee attack.

*Assassin Spells Prepared* (1; save DC 11 + spell level): 1st — *spider climb*.

*Possessions:* Padded armor.

# Area 1: The City of Haranshee (*map page 482*)

The Deverenian city of Haranshee is busy and prosperous. It grew up around an old fort on the heavily trafficked Ulfast river, in the conquered state of Laurel. The Emperor himself seized Laurel in his youth, and the Laurelians are learning to forget their former independence. Haranshee's convenient location makes it a favorite stop for merchants, traders, and craftsmen of all kinds. The city nestles in a lush valley, providing its citizens fertile land, picturesque views, and a mild climate. The river never freezes, making Haranshee an ideal locale for year-round trade.

Haranshee's folk have prospered under the rule of the local Baron and his council, but times change. Now people are uneasy, paranoid, and afraid. War with the Elves has increased racial tension to dangerous levels and the battered refugees filling the churches, inns, stables, and streets are a stark warning of dark days to come.

The city is divided into five districts. No walls or other clear divisions separate the districts, except for the warehouse district. Oldwall, a chunk of the original city wall that remains standing, separates the warehouse district (Oldtown) from the others.

The districts are briefly described below; locations important to the story are shown on the Haranshee map and detailed in the adventure text.

**Haranshee (Large City):** Conventional; AL LN and LE; 500gp limit; Assets 1,000,000; Population 4,984. *Authority Figures:* Baron Rowe, Human male, Ari 8, NE; Arkan Forss, Human male, Exp 6, LE; Detmar Halifax, Human male, Ftr 4, LN; Bentry Rickard, Human male, Exp 6, NE.

## Encounter 1: Prominent NPCs

### Encounter 1.1: The City Council

Because of his frequent absences from Haranshee, the Baron appointed a city council to govern in his stead. They work with the local business owners and merchants to maintain order and ensure that business is conducted in a professional manner. Although the Baron's daughter Lorna is titular head of the city's government in his absence, she wields no real power.

The Baron chose a balanced mix of council members, all respected and capable men: Arkan Forss, Detmar Halifax, and Bentry Rickard. Each has an equal voice in governing while the Baron is away and the city's charter prevents any one of them from gaining too much power. The system ran smoothly until refugees started pouring into the city, fleeing the Elves. Halifax wants to declare martial law and prepare for Elven hostilities. Forss and Rickard oppose the idea, but with more refugees arriving hourly, it is difficult for them maintain their position. Rickard is open to discussing options, while Arkan maintains that the Elven forces will not soon reach Haranshee.

**Creatures:** Arkan Forss, a 6th-level expert.

**Arkan Forss, Male Human Exp 6:** CR 5; Medium humanoid (Human); HD 6d6; hp 21; Spd 30 ft.; Init +2; AC 12, touch 12, flat-footed 10; Base Atk +4; Grp +4; Atk +4 unarmed (1d3/x2, unarmed strike); Full Atk +4 unarmed (1d3/x2, unarmed strike); SA —; SQ —; AL LE; SV Fort +2, Ref +4, Will +5; Str 10, Dex 14, Con 10, Int 14, Wis 10, Cha 16.

*Skills and Feats:* Appraise +12, Knowledge (local) +6, Knowledge (history) +6, Knowledge (Deverenia) +8, Listen +6, Profession (merchant) +12, Sense Motive +8, Spot +6; Alertness, Skill Focus (Appraise), Skill Focus (Profession (merchant)).

*Possessions:* None.

**Development:** Arkan Forss, the wealthiest man in Haranshee, is a self-styled merchant-prince. He personally asked Cardinal Ulloft to perform the ceremony of rededication and encourages the city's high level of obeisance to the Storm, within the city.

The Forss family has direct ties to Order Treymane, and Arkan is eager to establish a lasting relationship with Deverenian high society. Nothing would please him more than raising the city's status.

**Creatures:** Captain Halifax, a 4th-level fighter.

**Captain Halifax, Male Human Ftr 4:** CR 4; Medium humanoid (Human); HD 4d10+8; hp 38; Init +6; Spd 30 ft.; AC 21, touch 12, flat-footed 19; Base Atk +4; Grp +7; Atk +11 melee (1d8+7(17–20/x2), *+3 keen longsword*), or +6 ranged (1d6/x3, shortbow); Full Atk +11 melee (1d8+7(17–20/x2), *+3 keen longsword*), or +6 ranged (1d6/x3, shortbow); SA Favored weapon (longsword); SQ —; AL LN; SV Fort +6, Ref +3, Will +3; Str 17, Dex 14, Con 15, Int 13, Wis 11, Cha 16.

*Skills and Feats:* Climb +4, Diplomacy +6, Jump +2*, Knowledge (history) +6, Knowledge (local) +6; Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Improved Initiative, Leadership, Mobility. *includes –6 armor check penalty

*Favored Weapon (longsword):* Captain Halifax gains a +1 competence bonus to attack and damage rolls with the longsword.

*Possessions:* Chainmail, +2 heavy steel shield, *+3 keen longsword*, shortbow, 20 arrows.

**Development:** Detmar Halifax is a man of contradictions; he is a warrior-poet, a scholar, and Captain of the Guard. He was personally against the church rededication but remains professionally neutral. He is not a devout worshipper of the Storm, and Forss wants him replaced because of it. They dislike each other but maintain a courteous relationship. Captain Halifax and Bentry Rickard are old friends, but since his appointment, Captain Halifax has kept their relationship more professional than friendly.

**Creatures:** Bentry Rickard, a 6th-level expert.

**Bentry Rickard, Male Human Exp 6:** CR 5; Medium humanoid (Human); HD 6d6; hp 19; Spd 30 ft.; Init +0; AC 10, touch 10, flat-footed 10; Base Atk +4; Grp +4; Atk +4 unarmed (1d3/x2, unarmed strike); Full Atk +4 unarmed (1d3/x2, unarmed strike); SA —; SQ —; AL NE; SV Fort +2, Ref +2, Will +5; Str 10, Dex 10, Con 10, Int 14, Wis 10, Cha 14.

*Skills and Feats:* Craft (Smith) +12, Knowledge (local) +6, Knowledge (history) +6, Knowledge (metallurgy) +12, Listen +3, Profession (smith) +10, Sense Motive +4, Spot +5; Alertness, Knowledge (metallurgy), Skill Focus (Craft (smith)), Skill Focus (Profession (smith)).

*Possessions:* None.

**Development:** Bentry Rickard is a master smith. A popular man, he is notoriously ambitious, pompous, and self-important. His weapons are counted among the finest in the Accordlands, fueling his arrogance. He is against the church rededication because Forss is for it. Rickard is fiercely competitive, and he thinks the church is a too powerful a tool for his rival to control. He hired Grimes to disrupt the ceremony, and is afraid Grimes is the kidnapper. If confronted, he disavows any connection with the madman. Bentry feels that Captain Halifax has become distant since he helped him get appointed Captain of the Guard, but they are still friends.

### Encounter 1.2: The Baron's Daughter

"I can heal you... but there's a price."

**Creatures:** Lorna Haranshee, a 4th-level cleric, and Baron Rowe Haranshee's daughter.

**Lorna Haranshee, Female Human Clr 4:** CR 4; Medium humanoid (Human); HD 4d8; hp 24; Spd 30 ft.; Init +0; AC 10, touch 10, flat-footed 10; Base Atk +3; Grp +5; Atk +6 melee (1d6+2/x2, light mace); Full Atk +6 melee (1d6+2/x2, light mace); SA Spells, turn undead 4/day; SQ Cleric domains (War, Protection), Deima's touch, spontaneous casting; AL LN; SV Fort +6, Ref +1, Will +8; Str 14, Dex 10, Con 10, Int 13, Wis 15, Cha 12.

*Skills and Feats:* Diplomacy +8, Heal +9, Knowledge (religion) +8; Great Fortitude, Iron Will, Scribe Scroll, Weapon Focus (light mace).

*Deima's Touch:* This ability allows the user to magically heal a target. Healing a light wound (25% of hit point total) ages the recipient 1d6 years, a moderate wound (50%) ages 2d6 years, and a severe wound (75 %) ages 3d6 years.

*Spontaneous Casting:* Lorna can "lose" a prepared spell (except for a domain spell) in order to cast any *cure* spell of the same level or lower.

*Turn Undead:* Lorna can attempt to turn undead 4 times per day.

*Cleric Spells Prepared (5/4+1/3+1; save DC 12 + spell level):* 0 — *cure minor wounds, detect magic, detect poison, mending, read magic;* 1st — *begone, soothe pain, sanctuary(2)*, shield of faith;* 2nd — *gift from above, remove paralysis, phantom touch, spiritual weapon**. *Domain spell

*Possessions:* Light mace.

**Development:** Lorna is the only child of Baron Rowe Haranshee, and secretly a cleric of Deima. Unlike her father, she has spent most of her life at home. Her mother died during childbirth, so Ezrah the house seneschal raised her. She taught Lorna about Deima and showed her the secret shrine below the church.

Lorna is short and slender, with long black hair and green eyes. She dresses conservatively in earth tones.

Her behavior is quiet and reserved. She keeps to herself and does not speak openly about herself or her religion except with those she trusts. She is extremely clever, and uses her quiet demeanor as a tool. She is an excellent listener, and knows more than she lets on.

### Encounter 1.3: The Baron's Household

The manor employs a score of servants, but only a handful live on the premises.

**Creatures:** Ezrah, a 8th-level commoner, Gunter, a 3rd-level commoner, Otto, a 3rd level warrior, Sador, a 1st-level warrior, Uriels, a 1st-level commoner, and Umbruk, a 3rd-level fighter.

**Ezrah, Male Human Com 8:** CR 7; Medium humanoid (Human); HD 8d4–8+3; hp 22; Spd 30 ft.; Init +1; AC 11, touch 11, flat-footed 10; Base Atk +4; Grp +2; Atk +2 melee (1d4–2(19–20/x2), dagger); Full Atk +2 melee (1d4–2(19–20/x2), dagger); SA —; SQ —; AL LN; SV Fort +1, Ref +3, Will +1; Str 6, Dex 12, Con 8, Int 13, Wis 9, Cha 11.

*Skills and Feats:* Concentration +4, Diplomacy +7, Heal +3, Knowledge (local) +6, Knowledge (religion) +6, Profession (house servant) +6; Alertness, Skill Focus (diplomacy), Toughness.

*Possessions:* Dagger.

**Development:** Ezrah is the loyal house seneschal, who has served the family faithfully for nearly fifty years. She loves Lorna and would do anything for her. She is organized and efficient, and expects equal competence from her subordinates.

**Gunter, Male Human Com 3:** CR 2; Medium humanoid (Human); HD 3d4+3+3; hp 13; Spd 30 ft.; Init +2; AC 12, touch 12, flat-footed 10; Base Atk +1; Grp +3; Atk +3 melee (1d6+2/x2, club); Full Atk +3 melee (1d6+2/x2, club); SA —; SQ —; AL LN; SV Fort +2, Ref +3, Will +4; Str 14, Dex 14, Con 12, Int 15, Wis 13, Cha 10.

*Skills and Feats:* Climb +2, Handle Animal +6, Listen +5, Profession (stable master) +6, Rope Use +4, Spot +4, Swim +3; Alertness, Iron Will, Toughness.

*Possessions:* Club.

**Development:** Gunter has been the Haranshee stable master for five decades. He is a kind old man, but his poor hearing annoys the other members of the household.

**Otto, Male Human War 3:** CR 2; Medium humanoid (Human); HD 3d8+6; hp 21; Spd 20 ft.; Init +1; AC 16, touch 11, flat-footed 15; Base Atk +3; Grp +5; Atk +5 melee (1d6+2/x2, light mace); Full Atk +5 melee (1d6+2/x2, light mace); SA —; SQ —; AL LN; SV Fort +7, Ref +2, Will +3; Str 14, Dex 12, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 11, Cha 14.

*Skills and Feats:* Climb –1*, Handle Animal +5, Jump –1*, Ride +4, Swim +4*; Iron Will, Great Fortitude, Power Attack. *includes –5 armor check penalty

*Possessions:* Chainmail, light mace.

**Development:** Otto is the gatekeeper and master-at-arms. He is still capable, despite being in his sixties. He and the other household men kidnapped the Cardinal for Lorna.

**Sador, Male Human War 1:** CR 1/2; Medium humanoid (Human); HD 1d8; hp 8; Spd 20 ft.; Init +1; AC 16, touch 11, flat-footed 15; Base Atk +1; Grp +3; Atk +3 melee (1d6+2/x2, club); Full Atk +3 melee (1d6+2/x2, club); SA —; SQ —; AL NE; SV Fort +4, Ref +1, Will +0; Str 14, Dex 12, Con 10, Int 12, Wis 10, Cha 14.

*Skills and Feats:* Climb –1*, Intimidate +4, Listen +3, Spot +3; Feats: Alertness, Great Fortitude. *includes –5 armor check penalty

*Possessions:* Chainmail, club.

**Development:** Sador is Otto's son. He stands watch at the gate and works in the stables. His father has tried to teach him responsibility, but Sador prefers to drink, gamble, and brawl. He is the most easily corruptible member of the household. Arkan is offering a substantial reward for information about the Cardinal's whereabouts and owns the best gambling parlors in the city, prime incentive for a lowlife like Sador.

**Uriels, Female Human Com 1:** CR 1/2; Medium humanoid (Human); HD 1d4; hp 4; Spd 30 ft.; Init +1; AC 11, touch 11, flat-footed 10; Base Atk +0; Grp +0; Atk +0 melee (1d4(19–20/x2), dagger); Full Atk +0 melee (1d4(19–20/x2), dagger); SA —; SQ —; AL LG; SV Fort +0, Ref +1, Will +0; Str 10, Dex 12, Con 11, Int 12, Wis 10, Cha 10.

*Skills and Feats:* Craft (sewing) +4, Handle Animal +4, Listen +6, Profession (maid) +4; Feats: Alertness, Skill Focus (Listen).

*Possessions:* Dagger.

**Development:** Uriels is the head chambermaid. She loves to gossip.

**Umbruk, Male Nothrog Ftr 3:** CR 3; Medium humanoid (Nothrog); HD 3d10+3; hp 23; Init +5; Spd 30 ft.; AC 11, touch 11, flat-footed 10; Base Atk +3; Grp +6; Atk +7 melee (1d8+4(19–20/x2), longsword); Full Atk +7 melee (1d8+4(19–20/x2), longsword); SA Favored weapon (longsword); SQ Nothrog traits; AL NE; SV Fort +4, Ref +2, Will +2; Str 16, Dex 13, Con 13, Int 12, Wis 9, Cha 13.

*Skills and Feats:* Climb +7, Handle Animal +5, Intimidate +6, Profession (mess cook) +6; Cleave, Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Power Attack.

*Favored Weapon (longsword):* Umbruk gains a +1 competence bonus to attack and damage rolls with the longsword.

*Possessions:* Longsword.

**Development:** Umbruk is a Nothrog in exile and an excellent cook.

**Typical Servant, Male and Female Human Com 1:** CR 1/2; Medium humanoid (Human); HD 1d4; hp 4; Spd 30 ft.; Init +0; AC 10, touch 10, flat-footed 10; Base Atk +0; Grp +0; Atk +0 melee (1d3/x2, unarmed strike); Full Atk +0 melee (1d3/x2, unarmed strike); SA —; SQ —; AL LN; SV Fort +0, Ref +0, Will +1; Str 10, Dex 11, Con 11, Int 12, Wis 12, Cha 10.

*Skills and Feats:* Craft +4 (various), Heal +3, Listen +4, Profession (various) +6; Alertness, Skill Focus (Profession (various)).

*Possessions:* None.

## Location 1: The Docks

*Character:* Poor and rough.
*Businesses:* Fishmongers, dyers, tanners.
*Prices:* Normal.
*Gold Piece Limit:* 500 gold pieces.
*Buildings:* Freestanding warehouses, shacks, and stalls.
*Patrols:* Two guards rove the docks and two collect tariffs.

## Location 2: Oldtown

*Character:* Dangerous and seedy.
*Businesses:* Inns, taverns, brothels, and provisions.
*Prices:* Normal.
*Gold Piece Limit:* 1,000 gold pieces.
*Buildings:* Row houses, merchant warehouses, and freestanding businesses.
*Patrols:* Four rovers, two stationed on top of the wall itself with crossbows.

## Location 3: Five Points Market

*Character:* Bustling and prosperous.
*Businesses:* Merchants and traders.
*Prices:* Normal.
*Gold Piece Limit:* 3,000 gold pieces.
*Buildings:* Freestanding businesses, inns, and warehouses.
*Patrols:* Six guards patrol the market and two rove the park.

## Location 4: Riverside

*Character:* Noble, wealthy, and elite.
*Businesses:* Luxury goods, gambling parlors, and scholarly specialists.
*Prices:* 200% normal.
*Gold Piece Limit:* 5,000 gold pieces.

*Buildings:* Freestanding businesses, manors, parks, and shrines.
*Patrols:* Ten guards patrol the riverside area, eight rovers and two desk clerks.

## Location 5: Southgate

*Character:* Working class.
*Businesses:* Craftsmen, smiths, and artisans.
*Prices:* 150% normal.
*Gold Piece Limit:* 2,000 gold pieces.
*Buildings:* Row houses with houses and apartments, freestanding businesses and houses.
*Patrols:* Six guards at the gate, four rovers.

## Food and Lodging

Good food and lodging are usually abundant, particularly in Oldtown (**Location 2**), but the inns are overcrowded with refugees. Luckily for the PCs, Arkan held a suite in one of his establishments, a gambling house called The Blind Harpy. The suite has adjoining rooms and comfortably sleeps six — luxurious accommodations with the current overcrowding. The suite comes with two meals a day, one in the morning and one in the evening.

Characters seeking other arrangements must make a Diplomacy check (DC 15) to secure poor accommodations, DC 20 for common, and DC 25 for good, all at 150% normal prices.

To eat, characters must be willing to wait in line at a busy tavern, find a street vendor, or buy rations from a provisionary.

# Part 1: The Job Offer

ENCOUNTER 2: GETTING STARTED (EL 3)

As our story begins, the PCs are walking through the streets of Haranshee, most likely heading toward Riverside to meet with their prospective employer, Arkan Forss.

**Read aloud:** *Your travels have brought you to Haranshee, a small but prosperous city near the Denskan border nestled in a lush river valley. It has felt the effects of the war, as displaced Denskans loyal to Deverenia have made their way here. They seek sanctuary, but most find only a place to rest and a bit of food. Crows perch atop the walls, looking for an easy meal. Children play with wooden swords and shields as their parents erect shanty shelters against the outer walls. The sick and injured lie in huddled masses, waiting for volunteers to tend their hurts.*

*As you approach the gate, children stop playing and stare at your armor and weapons with fear in their eyes. They have seen the horrors of war first hand, and they know how dangerous a heavily armed party can be.*

*Six city guards in white tabards direct traffic and peace-bond weapons. They motion you forward after sending a battered group of mercenaries through the gate. Their faces are hard and cold as one of them asks, "What's your business in Haranshee?"*

With the increasing tension in the city, peace-bonding is now required. All weapons (except daggers) must be peace-bonded at the city gates, each of which has six guards for the purpose. Weapons with scabbards or sheaths are bound shut with leather straps. Those without sheaths are covered with bags or sacks and tied off, as are quivers, bolt cases, and similar items. Readying a peace-bonded weapon for normal use requires a full round action and makes the character vulnerable to attacks of opportunity. Attacks with peace-bonded weapons suffer a –4 penalty to attack and damage rolls.

*If a party member refuses to submit to peace-bonding, the guards deny the entire party entry. If the party attempts to gain entry by force, the guards sound the alarm and attempt to subdue the group. The city jails are overfull with the recent influx of the homeless and destitute, so the guards are simply expelling troublemakers from the city.*

**Creatures:** Six Haranshee guards.

**Haranshee Guard (6), Male Human War 1:** CR 1/2; Medium humanoid (Human); HD 1d8+2; hp 10; Spd 20 ft.; Init +5; AC 16, touch 11, flat-footed 15; Base Atk +1; Grp +3; Atk +3 melee (1d6+2/x2, club); Full Atk +3 melee (1d6+2/x2, club); SA —; SQ —; AL LG; SV Fort +4, Ref +1, Will +0; Str 14, Dex 12, Con 14, Int 12, Wis 10, Cha 14.

*Skills and Feats:* Climb –1*, Intimidate +4, Listen +3, Spot +3; Alertness, Improved Initiative. *includes –5 armor check penalty

*Possessions:* Chainmail, club.



## Location 6: An Unexpected Meeting (EL3)

**Read aloud:** *With the jingle of harness and steady cadence of hooves, a black carriage passes by. Its driver pulls over to the side of the road and slips down from the wide b ench seat. He fixes his gaze on you and approaches with a jaunty bounce to his step. He is a young man, thin and wiry, with a toothy grin and an air of confidence. As he comes closer, you see that his jacket is well made, neatly brushed, and spotlessly clean.*

*He stops in front of you and says, "Please pardon the intrusion." He bows gracefully. "My master wants a word with you." He gestures toward the black carriage and smiles.*

The carriage is beautifully crafted and well maintained. It is entirely black and bears a small stylized F on the side, noticeable with a Spot check (DC 15). Any character with a Knowledge (heraldry) check (DC 20) or a Knowledge (local) check (DC 15) recognizes Arkan Forss's mark.

If the PCs ask questions before being led to the carriage, the driver, named Cadon, explains that his master wishes to speak with them, and it would be wise to do as he asks. He is not threatening in any way; in fact, a Sense Motive check (DC 10) reveals that he seems to be enjoying the conversation. If questioned, the driver adds that he believes his master would like to commission the party for a small task. He yields no further information except his master's name, Denton Bire, and position, Arkan Forss' right-hand man.

If the PCs agree to meet with Denton, the driver leads them to the carriage and opens the door. It seats six; excess PCs have to sit on the bench with the driver. Denton waits for the PCs to be seated before he greets them.

**Read aloud:** *The inside of the black carriage is well appointed and tastefully decorated. Rich velvet cushions adorn the seats and curtains tastefully drape over the windows. Sitting comfortably inside is a serious looking young man. He has handsome features despite the thin white scar that stretches across his cheek.*

*The driver closes the door, and after a moment you feel the carriage begin to move down the cobbled street. "Well, I must admit, you look like a formidable lot," he says in a low voice. "I have been sent to collect you. There's been a.... complication. But don't worry. It's nothing you can't handle." He chuckles and sits back with an unsettling smile.*

If the PCs ask about the problem he tells them that Arkan will explain everything when they meet him. In the meantime, he grills them, asking intelligent, pertinent questions about each of their areas of expertise. PCs who exaggerate or lie about their experience must make a Bluff check opposed by a Sense Motive check. Arkan asked Denton to judge the PCs' experience, and he is simply following his superior's orders. He relents once the carriage stops at a large wrought-iron gate in front of an impressive two-story home.

**Creatures:** Cadon, a 1st-level rogue; Denton Bire, a 3rd-level rogue.

**Cadon, Male Human Rog 1:** CR 1; Medium humanoid (Human); HD 1d6+3; hp 9; Spd 30 ft.; Init +3; AC 13, touch 13, flat-footed 10; Base Atk +0; Grp +1; Atk +1 melee (1d4+1(19–20/x2), dagger); Full Atk +1 melee (1d4+1(19–20/x2), dagger); SA Sneak attack +1d6; SQ Hide in plain sight; AL CN; SV Fort +3, Ref +5, Will +0; Str 13, Dex 17, Con 17, Int 11, Wis 11, Cha 10.

*Skills and Feats:* Appraise +1, Balance +4, Bluff +2, Climb +2, Diplomacy +2, Disable Device +1, Disguise +1, Escape Artist +4, Forgery +1, Gather Information +3, Hide +4, Intimidate +1, Jump +2, Listen +3, Move Silently +4, Open Lock +4, Sleight of Hand +4, Search +1, Sense Motive +1, Spot +3, Tumble +4; Alertness, Dodge.

*Hide In Plain Sight:* Each time Cadon makes a Hide check, he may reduce the total penalty (if any) to his skill check by his rogue class level (1), to a minimum of 0.

*Sneak Attack:* Anytime Cadon's target is denied a Dexterity bonus to AC, or when he flanks a target, Cadon deals an additional 1d6 points of damage on a successful melee attack.

*Possessions:* Dagger.

**Denton Bire, Male Human Rog 3:** CR 3; Medium humanoid (Human); HD 3d6+12; hp 23; Spd 30 ft.; Init +6; AC 14, touch 12, flat-footed 12; Base Atk +2; Grp +3; Atk +4 melee (1d4+1(17–20/x2), *+1 keen dagger*); Full Atk +4 melee (1d4+1(17–20/x2), *+1 keen dagger*); SA Sneak attack +1d6; SQ Evasion, hide in plain sight; AL NE; SV Fort +5, Ref +5, Will +1; Str 12, Dex 15, Con 18, Int 11, Wis 10, Cha 11.

*Skills and Feats:* Appraise +2, Balance +4, Bluff +3, Climb +2, Diplomacy +2, Disable Device +4, Disguise +4, Escape Artist +4, Forgery +2, Gather Information +3, Hide +4, Intimidate +4, Jump +2, Listen +3, Move Silently +4, Open Lock +4, Sleight of Hand +4, Search +4, Sense Motive +4, Spot +3, Tumble +4; Alertness, Improved Initiative, Two-Weapon Fighting.

*Hide In Plain Sight:* Each time Denton makes a Hide check, he may reduce the total penalty (if any) to his skill check by his rogue class level (3), to a minimum of 0.

*Evasion:* If Denton makes a successful Reflex saving throw against an attack that normally deals half damage on a successful save, he instead takes no damage. Evasion can be used only if Denton is wearing light armor or no armor. A helpless Denton does not gain the benefit of evasion.

*Sneak Attack:* Anytime Denton's target is denied a Dexterity bonus to AC, or when he flanks a target, Denton deals an additional 1d6 points of damage on a successful melee attack.

*Possessions: +1 keen dagger, bracers of armor +2.*

**Development:** Denton is contacting the PCs sooner than originally planned. With the Cardinal's kidnapping, Arkan wanted to see the heroes as soon as they arrived. Denton has been patrolling the gates in his master's carriage most of the day, waiting for their arrival.

*Treasure:* Denton is wearing a long black coat with silver buttons (5 sp each) and a silver ring on each hand, an emerald mounted on the left (75 gp) and a ruby on the right (100 gp). At his belt is a black leather sheath worked with delicate runes, and a bone-handled dagger.

### Encounter 3: Followed (EL 2)

Two men are following the carriage. Jace hired a group of local thugs to be his eyes and ears around town. He is desperate to find out where the Cardinal is being held, knowing that the Assassin's Guild does not regard failure lightly.

The influx of refugees has slowed traffic near the gates to

a crawl, so it is easy to tail the carriage. One of the men goes to report their findings to Jace, while the other, a degenerate beggar called Old Red Eyes, tails the carriage. A character making a successful Spot check (–10 for distance of 100 feet) opposed by a Hide check (–5 for moving more than half speed) notices the man as he shuffles up the street toward the carriage. He looks like a refugee or a derelict.

If the PCs capture one of Jace's thugs and convince him to talk, refer to the "Questioning Witnesses" sidebar. All of Old Red Eyes' comrades have the same information he does.

**Creatures**: Two thugs, 1st-level rogues.

**Thug, Male Human Rog 1:** CR 1; Medium humanoid (Human); HD 1d6; hp 5; Spd 30 ft.; Init +3; AC 13, touch 13, flat-footed 10; Base Atk +0; Grp +1; Atk +1 melee (1d4+1(19–20/x2), dagger); Full Atk +1 melee (1d4+1(19–20/x2), dagger); SA Sneak attack +1d6; SQ Hide in plain sight; AL NE; SV Fort +0, Ref +5, Will +0; Str 13, Dex 17, Con 11, Int 11, Wis 11, Cha 12.

*Skills and Feats:* Appraise +1, Balance +4, Bluff +3, Climb +2, Diplomacy +3, Disable Device +1, Disguise +1, Escape Artist +4, Forgery +1, Gather Information +4, Hide +4, Intimidate +1, Jump +2, Listen +3, Move Silently +4, Open Lock +4, Sleight of Hand +4, Search +1, Sense Motive +1, Spot +3, Tumble +4; Alertness, Dodge.

*Hide In Plain Sight:* Each time a thug makes a Hide check, he may reduce the total penalty (if any) to his skill check by his rogue class level (1), to a minimum of 0.

*Sneak Attack:* Anytime a thug's target is denied a Dexterity bonus to AC, or when he flanks a target, a thug deals an additional 1d6 points of damage on a successful melee attack.

*Possessions:* Dagger.

### Encounter 4: Meeting Arkan (EL 5)

**Read aloud:** *Your prospective employer lives in a two-story house surrounded by a manicured lawn and a low stone wall. Two armed guards stand at the ornate double doors, and a groom stands ready to open the carriage door and help you down.*

Arkan Forss is a wealthy, influential man, and it shows. His house is immaculate and full of treasures from across the Accordlands. The PCs have only a few moments to glance at these marvels before Denton leads them to an exquisite reception room. He leaves them, reports his findings to Arkan, and then goes about his duties. After a brief wait, Arkan makes his appearance. See **Encounter 1.1** for statistics on Arkan.

**Read aloud:** *This room is softly lit by wall-mounted globes containing continual flames and a wide fireplace in the northern wall. A massive oak table in the center of the room is surrounded by a dozen comfortable chairs.*

*A regal, well-dressed man enters. He has that commanding yet comforting presence that puts people at ease. Your immediate impression is that this is a man accustomed to getting what he wants, and not someone to be trifled with.*

*Arkan interviews the party until he is satisfied they will be of use. Then he details the problem and asks if the PCs want to accept the commission. He is professional, straightforward, and to the point. The mission is simple: find Cardinal Ulloft and, if he is still alive, rescue him.*

# Part 2: The Investigation

There are several avenues of approach, but the PCs are likely to start at the scene of the crime: the Church of the Storm (**Location 7**).

## Location 7: The Church of the Storm (EL 6)

**Read aloud:** *The church stands proudly in the heart of the Southgate district. Its simple stone walls are covered in ivy and moss, after years of standing empty.*

The church is a 60-foot square, free-standing stone structure. The walls are made of 1-foot thick stone, the domed ceiling is 20 feet high, and the doors are stout oak.

*Wooden Doors:* 1 1/2 in. thick; hardness 5; hp 15; AC 5; Break DC 18.

This church has been empty for decades; last year, Arkan Forss refurbished its interior. He has gathered a respectable number of citizens into the fold, enough to make a rededication ceremony plausible. After several petitions, Cardinal Ulloft agreed to come to Haranshee and perform the ritual.

### Questioning Witnesses

**If the PCs ask questions around the church, let them roleplay a few encounters with the locals or refugees. Most people they meet share the following profile.**

*Initial Reaction:* Indifferent.

*Friendly (DC 15):* Small talk; share opinions; pass on rumors and gossip.

*Helpful (DC 30):* Volunteer information about Old Red Eyes; refer characters to the Last Call, a shady tavern in Oldtown.

Old Red Eyes is wiry and tough. He has been homeless for years; he begs, borrows, and steals to get by. The run-down Last Call is the tavern he frequents most often. When he has coins, he is at the bar; other times, he is begging in the street out front or sleeping in the alley out back. He has a disposition to match his stench — foul.

*Initial Reaction:* Unfriendly.

*Friendly (DC 25):* Small talk; shares opinions; passes on rumors and gossip.

*Helpful (DC 40):* Volunteers information about Jace; admits to being a witness; refers characters to the Dice Cup (**Location 10**), one of Arkan's gambling parlors in Riverside.

- Jace is posing as a nobleman refugee.
- Jace likes to gamble.
- Jace wins often.
- Jace pays well.

**That is all the beggars know.**

The church proper contains a dais, an altar, and rows of pews. A vestry and small library are accessible through a door behind the altar, as are a small dormitory for acolytes and a private bedchamber for the resident priest.

**Read aloud:** *Four statues, depicting knights in distress, stand in the corners of the church. Two have hands on the hilts of their weapons and two are crouched, swords in hand. They are eerily lifelike, as if real men had been trapped in motion.*

These statues are Cardinal Ulloft's escorts, turned to stone by a *basilisk lily*. If the PCs use *stone to flesh, break enchantment,* or similar spells to restore any of these statues, they will learn how potent *basilisk lilies* really are. Their stoneflesh spores attach themselves to a victim's flesh upon contact, turning them to stone, and lying dormant — unless exposed to flesh once more. Restored victims recover temporarily, but revert to stone in 2d4 rounds, as the spores are reactivated. A successful Knowledge (arcane) or Knowledge (poison) check (DC 35) reveals this fact, and also the cure: statues must be washed thoroughly with an antidote before being restored. The antidote costs 1000 gold pieces and one week of preparation per dose.

PCs who restore the Black Sun paladins receive no thanks from the haughty knights, who immediately begin an investigation of their own.

**Creatures:** Four Black Sun Paladins.

**Black Sun Paladin (4), Male Deverenian Pal 5:** CR 5; Medium humanoid (Deverenian); HD 5d8+15; hp 35; Init +2; Spd 20 ft.; AC 17, touch 12, flat-footed 15; Base Atk +5; Grp +8; Atk +10 melee (2d6+5/19–20, *+1 blessed* greatsword); Full Atk +10 melee (2d6+5/19–20, *+1 blessed* greatsword); SA Blessed armament (+1) (greatsword), spells, rebuke undead 6/day; SQ Aura of courage, detect alignment, Deverenian traits, divine health, lay on hands, zeal; AL LE; SV Fort +7, Ref +3, Will +2; Str 16, Dex 14, Con 16, Int 15, Wis 13, Cha 17.

*Skills and Feats:* Concentration +6, Diplomacy +7, Handle Animal +7, Heal +4, Knowledge (religion) +6, Listen +7, Ride +3, Spot +7; Alertness, Combat Reflexes, Weapon Focus (greatsword).

*Aura of Courage:* A paladin is immune to fear (magical or otherwise). Allies within 10 feet of the paladin gain a +4 morale bonus on saving throws against fear effects; this is a supernatural ability.

*Blessed Armament (greatsword):* A paladin's greatsword is invested with the might of his deity and functions as a *+1 blessed* magic weapon.

*Detect Alignment:* At will, a paladin can detect the presence of the opposite alignment as a spell-like ability *(detect good)*.

*Divine Health:* A paladin is immune to all diseases, including magical ones.

*Lay On Hands:* A paladin may cure up to 15 hit points of damage per day.

*Rebuke Undead:* A paladin may rebuke undead 6 times per day as a cleric two levels lower than his paladin level.

*Zeal:* When a paladin is reduced to 0 or fewer hit points he may make a Fortitude save (DC 10 + the number of hit points below 0) to continue fighting as if he were at one hit point. Each time the paladin suffers additional damage, he must continue to make a Fortitude save to keep fighting. When the paladin is reduced to –10 hit points, he dies as normal.

*Paladin Spells Prepared (1; save DC 11 + spell level):* 1st — *bless arms.*

*Possessions:* Breastplate, +1 *blessed* greatsword.

### The Authorities

PCs looking to Captain Halifax or the city guard for help will be disappointed, not because the guards are inept, but because they have too much to do. Captain Halifax's men are all working extra shifts because of the refugees, so he is conducting the investigation himself. With a successful opposed Diplomacy or Bluff check, he provides the PCs with the following information from his investigation:

- The kidnappers wore voluminous cloaks thatcovered their faces and clothes.
- The kidnappers had healthy horses.
- The Black Sun paladins were turned to stone.
- Halifax commissioned Emith (a local apothecary/sage) to research the incident further.

## Location 7.1: The Church of the Storm's Basement

Hidden in the church basement, behind a false wall, is the real reason for Lorna Haranshee's opposition to the rededication ceremony.

**Read aloud:** *This chamber has a low ceiling. The walls have been hewn from the underlying limestone, and the floor is composed of rough flagstones. The air is cool and damp, and a bit of moss touches the walls and ceiling.*

*In the center of the room is an ornate altar. A platinum pitcher, tray, and knife rest on its surface, tools for whatever rituals are performed here.*

*A large wardrobe stands against the south wall. A statue stands beside it on the left. As if activated by your gaze, it turns, steps down from its base, and advances.*

This secret shrine is dedicated to Deima. The statue activates if someone enters the chamber without saying the phrase, "Deima's blessing is upon you." It is a mindless golem that fights until destroyed.

**Creatures:** One stone golem.

**Stone Golem:** CR 6; Medium construct; HD 6d10+20; hp 40; Init –1 (–1 Dex); Spd 20 ft.; AC 18 (–1 Dex, +9 natural), touch 9, flat-footed 18; Base Atk +6; Grp +9; Atk +6 melee (2d6+3/x2, slam); Full Atk +6/+6 melee (2d6+3/x2, 2 slams); SA Berserk; SQ Construct traits, immunity to magic, damage reduction 10/magic; AL N; SV Fort +3, Ref –1, Will –3; Str 17, Dex 9, Con —, Int 11, Wis 10, Cha 1.

*Skills and Feats:* None.

*Berserk (Ex):* When a stone golem enters combat, there is a cumulative 1% chance each round that it will go on a rampage, attacking the nearest living creature or smashing some object smaller than itself if no creature is within reach. The golem's creator, if within 60 feet, can try to regain control by speaking firmly and persuasively to the golem, which requires a DC 19 Charisma check. It takes 1 minute of inactivity by the golem to reset the golem's berserk chance to 0%.

*Construct traits:* A construct has the following traits:

- No Constitution score.
- Low-light vision.
- Darkvision out to 60 feet.
- Immunity to all mind-affecting effects (charms, compulsions, phantasms, patterns, and morale effects).
- Immunity to poison, sleep effects, paralysis, stunning, disease, death effects, and necromancy effects.
- Cannot heal damage on their own, but often can be repaired by exposing them to a certain kind of effect or through the use of the Craft Construct feat. A construct with the fast healing special quality still benefits from that quality.
- Not subject to critical hits, non-lethal damage, ability damage, ability drain, fatigue, exhaustion, or energy drain.
- Immune to any effect that requires a Fortitude save (unless the effect also works on objects, or is harmless).
- Not at risk of death from massive damage. Immediately destroyed when reduced to 0 hit points or less.
- Since it was never alive, a construct cannot be *raised* or *resurrected*.
- Because its body is a mass of unliving matter, a construct is hard to destroy. It gains bonus hit points based on size (reflected in the stat block).
- Proficient with its natural weapons only, unless generally humanoid in form, in which case proficient with any weapon mentioned in its entry.
- Proficient with no armor.
- Constructs do not eat, sleep, or breathe.

*Immunity to Magic (Ex):* A stone golem is immune to any spell or spell-like ability that allows spell resistance. In addition, certain spells and effects function differently against the creature, as noted below.

A *transmute rock to mud* spell slows a stone golem (as the *slow* spell) for 2d6 rounds, with no saving throw, while *transmute mud to rock* heals all of its lost hit points.

A *stone to flesh* spell does not change the golem's structure, but negates its damage reduction and immunity to magic for 1 full round.

*Treasure:* The wardrobe contains the robes used by Lorna and her servants during ceremonies. A single scarlet robe inside belongs to Lorna, and has all the properties of a magical vestment. Hidden behind the robe is a scroll case that contains a rolled-up map.

There are four important clues here:

- The wardrobe was specially crafted by the local carpenter for the Baron. The craftsman's mark is carved in back, on the lower right leg.
- Fastened to Lorna's robe is a brooch with the Haranshee family crest.
- Lorna had the altar utensils made locally. They bear Bentry Rickard's mark.
- The unmarked map to the location of the Cult's of VédoSZentek's headquarters. Using this map requires an Intelligence check (DC 12).

## Location 8: Emith the Sage (EL 5)

Emith is the most second-most learned scholar in Haranshee, after Captain Halifax. He is an expert in most common topics; herbalism, nature, and geography are his specialties. He is good friends with the captain, for whom he often helps research cases. He has an extensive library in his house, as well as the materials to scribe scrolls. Business is slow, since few wizards live in the area. He has the following scrolls already prepared: sleep, identify, and magic missile. All cost 150 gp.

**Creatures:** Emith the Sage, a 6th-level adept.

**Emith the Sage, Male Human Adp 6:** CR 5; Medium humanoid (Human); HD 6d6; hp 25; Spd 30 ft.; Init +1; AC 11, touch 11, flat-footed 10; Base Atk +3; Grp +3; Atk +3 melee (1d3/x2, unarmed strike); Full Atk +3 melee (1d3/x2, unarmed strike); SA Spells; SQ —; AL LG; SV Fort +2, Ref +3, Will +8; Str 10, Dex 12, Con 10, Int 16, Wis 16, Cha 11.

*Skills and Feats:* Concentration +8, Craft (alchemy) +10, Craft (scripting) +10, Knowledge (arcana) +10, Knowledge (nature) +10, Knowledge (history) +10, Knowledge (geography) +10, Knowledge (religion) +10, Spellcraft +10; Craft Wondrous Item, Dodge, Skill Focus (Craft (alchemy)), Scribe Scroll.

*Adept Spells Prepared (3/3/2; save DC 13 + spell level):* 0 — *cure minor wounds, mending, read magic;* 1st — *bless, comprehend languages, cure light wounds;* 2nd — *cure moderate wounds, mirror image.*

*Possessions:* None.

**Development:** Initial Reaction: Friendly; Helpful if introduced by Captain Halifax.

**Helpful (DC 15):** Information:

- The attacker used a magically enhanced plant to turn the paladins to stone: a *basilisk lily.*
- The *basilisk lily* is sealed in a glass jar. When it touches the air it bursts into a cloud of stoneflesh spores.
- *Basilisk lilies* have extremely short lifespans.
- Emith knows only one person (other than himself) in the city who could make a *basilisk lily:* Veluse, a witch who lives in Oldtown (*see Location 9*).
- *Basilisk lilies* are expensive to make.

## Location 9: Veluse the Witch (EL 5)

Veluse is ugly, mean-hearted, and cruel. Her Oldtown shop sits at the end of a crowded street next door to a sleazy brothel.

Veluse makes potions and mixes poisons for Lady Uma de Gallia, a chief lieutenant of one of the Medusan Lords. Veluse helped Lady Uma make the *basilisk lily* for Jace, though she does not reveal this information unless forced.

*Initial Reaction:* Hostile.

*Friendly (DC 35):* Small talk; shares opinions; passes on rumors and gossip.

*Helpful (DC 50):* Volunteers information about Jace; admits to making a *basilisk lily*; refers characters to the Dice Cup (**Location 10**), one of Arkan's gambling parlors in Riverside.

**Creatures:** Veluse the Witch, a 6th-level adept.

**Veluse the Witch, Female Human Adp 6:** CR 5; Medium humanoid (Human); HD 6d6; hp 24; Spd 30 ft.; Init +0; AC 10, touch 10, flat-footed 10; Base Atk +3; Grp +3; Atk +3 melee (1d3/x2, unarmed strike); Full Atk +3 melee (1d3/x2, unarmed strike); SA Spells; SQ —; AL NG; SV Fort +2, Ref +2, Will +10; Str 10, Dex 10, Con 10, Int 16, Wis 17, Cha 10.

*Skills and Feats:* Concentration +12, Knowledge (arcane) +12, Knowledge (nature) +11, Knowledge (history) +11, Knowledge (the planes) +11, Knowledge (occult) +11, Profession (apothecary) +12, Spellcraft +10; Brew Potion, Craft Wondrous Item, Iron Will, Scribe Scroll.

*Adept Spells Prepared (3/3/2; save DC 13 + spell level):* 0 — *cure minor wounds, mending, read magic;* 1st — *bless, comprehend languages, cure light wounds;* 2nd — *cure moderate wounds, see invisibility.*

*Possessions:* None.

*Treasure:* At any given time, there are 1d6+2 potions here. At the start of the adventure, the following are in stock: *bull's strength* (310 gp), *cure light wounds* (65 gp), *cure moderate wounds* (340 gp), and *water breathing* (760 gp). If Veluse is available to work, assume that she replaces purchased potions. Use the listed prices plus 10 gp (her base fee) for arcane potions. Divine potions are marked up 50%, and only 1st, 2nd, or 3rd level spells are available, because she has to use an associate to make them.

## Location 10: The Dice Cup

Jace has been staying in the Dice Cup, one of Arkan's gambling parlors. He called himself Lord Jason of Corinth, and claimed his manor was razed during the Elven attack. He has been winning, and has 5,000 gp in house credit.

PCs who try to capture or interrogate Jace arrive too late, finding his bloody corpse in his bed.

Examination of the room and the corpse reveal the following clues:

- Jace was stabbed to death with poisoned daggers. His wounds are still oozing.
- His killer robbed him; there are no valuables in the suite.
- The killer used the window; there is broken glass on the floor.
- There is an empty dagger sheath under the pillow.
- Jace is carrying a soiled silk handkerchief with Baron Haranshee's coat-of-arms embroidered on one corner.

# Part 3: The Mob

Angry mobs have gathered at the church every day since the Cardinal's arrival. Usually in groups of ten or more, they hurl condemnations until the city guards send them on their way. During the day there is a mob of 10+2d6 angry townspeople in front of the church. There were formerly an equal number of supporters, but since the Cardinal's kidnapping they have stopped coming.

There are many citizens in Haranshee who think the rededication ceremony is a bad idea, but none so much as the Conspiracy of Light. It is an open secret that they would like the Storm to lose its foothold in the area — ideal candidates to have kidnapped the Cardinal. In truth, they are patsies. Bentry Rickard is using their leader Grimes as his puppet, concealing Lorna Haranshee's guilt behind the Conspiracy's obvious antipathy toward the Storm.

### Encounter 6: The Conspiracy of Light

A wizard named Nixull Grimes joined the Conspiracy of Light after a month-long stay with a Deverenian Inquisitor. His spirit was broken; now he is mad. His followers are primarily bandits, thieves, and other undesirables.

The cultists protest the rededication ceremony because Grimes had a vision. In it, the Church of the Storm loomed over him, spying on the Conspiracy of Light, and ultimately destroying it in a rain of fire.

**Creatures:** Nixull Grimes, an 8th-level wizard, Crooked Jak, an 2nd-level fighter/1st-level rogue, typical cultists.

**Nixull Grimes, Male Human Wiz 8:** CR 8; Medium humanoid (Human); HD 8d4+16; hp 40; Spd 30 ft.; Init +6; AC 16, touch 16, flat-footed 14; Base Atk +4; Grp +3; Atk +3 melee (1d3–1/x2, unarmed strike); Full Atk +3 melee (1d3–1/x2, unarmed strike); SA Spells; SQ Eidetic memory (*begone, shard storm, kiss of lethe, ice bolt*), summon familiar (rat), insanity; AL CE; SV Fort +4, Ref +4, Will +6; Str 9, Dex 15, Con 15, Int 18, Wis 10, Cha 13.

*Skills and Feats:* Bluff +6, Concentration +6, Intimidate +5, Knowledge (arcana) +6, Knowledge (the planes) +7, Sense Motive +6, Spellcraft +7; Brew Potion, Combat Casting, Craft Wand, Craft Wondrous Item, Improved Initiative, Scribe Scroll, Alertness.

*Eidetic Memory:* Grimes may spontaneously cast *begone, shard storm, kiss of lethe,* and *ice bolt and* in place of a prepared spell of equal or higher level. This loses the prepared spell to fuel the memorized spell.

*Insanity:* Grimes' mental condition makes it difficult for him to use spells effectively. He miscasts his spells 25% of the time. A miscast spell has no effect.

*Familiar (rat):* Grimes' rat familiar has the following statistics:

*Rat (Familiar):* CR —; Tiny magical beast; HD 8; hp 20; Init +2; Spd 15 ft, climb 15 ft, swim 15 ft; AC 18, touch 14, flat-footed 15; Base Atk +4; Grp –8; Atk +6 melee (1d3–4/x2, bite); Full Atk +6 melee (1d3–4/x2, bite); Space/Reach 2–1/2 ft./0 ft.; SA —; SQ low-light vision, scent, empathic link, share spells, improved evasion, deliver touch spells, speak with master, speak with animals of its kind; AL N; SV Fort +2, Ref +5, Will +7; Str 2, Dex 15, Con 10, Int 9, Wis 12, Cha 2.

*Skill and Feats:* Balance +10, Climb +12, Hide +14, Move Silently +10, Swim +10; Weapon Finesse (bite).

*Low-Light Vision (Ex):* A rat can see twice as far as a Human in starlight, moonlight, torchlight, and similar conditions of shadowy illumination. It retains the ability to distinguish color and detail under these conditions.

*Scent (Ex):* A rat can detect opponents within 30 feet by sense of smell. If the opponent is upwind, the range increases to 60 feet; if downwind, it drops to 15 feet. Strong scents, such as smoke or rotting garbage, can be detected at twice the ranges noted above. Overpowering scents, such as skunk musk or troglodyte stench, can be detected at triple normal range. When a rat detects a scent, the exact location of the source is not revealed—only its presence somewhere within range. The rat can take a

move action to note the direction of the scent.

Whenever the rat comes within 5 feet of the source, the rat pinpoints the source's location.

*Familiar Ability Descriptions:* The familiar has special abilities (or imparts abilities to its master) depending on Grimes' wizard levels. The abilities are cumulative.

*Alertness (Ex):* While his familiar is within arm's reach, Grimes gains the Alertness feat.

*Improved Evasion (Ex):* When subjected to an attack that normally allows a Reflex saving throw for half damage, a familiar takes no damage if it makes a successful saving throw and half damage even if the saving throw fails.

*Share Spells:* At Grimes' option, he may have any spell (but not any spell-like ability) he casts on himself also affect his familiar. The familiar must be within 5 feet at the time of casting to receive the benefit. If the spell or effect has a duration other than instantaneous, it stops affecting the familiar if it moves farther than 5 feet away and will not affect the familiar again even if it returns to Grimes before the duration expires. Additionally, Grimes may cast a spell with a target of "You" on his familiar (as a touch range spell) instead of on himself. Grimes and his familiar can share spells even if the spells normally do not affect creatures of the familiar's type (magical beast).

*Empathic Link (Su):* Grimes has an empathic link with his familiar out to a distance of up to 1 mile. Grimes cannot see through the familiar's eyes, but they can communicate empathically. Because of the limited nature of the link, only general emotional content can be communicated. Because of this empathic link, Grimes has the same connection to an item or place that his familiar does.

*Deliver Touch Spells (Su):* Grimes' familiar can deliver touch spells for him. If Grimes and the familiar are in contact at the time Grimes casts a touch spell, he can designate his familiar as the "toucher." The familiar can then deliver the touch spell just as Grimes could. As usual, if Grimes casts another spell before the touch is delivered, the touch spell dissipates.

*Speak with Master (Ex):* Grimes and his familiar can communicate verbally as if they were using a common language. Other creatures do not understand the communication without magical help.

*Speak with Animals of Its Kind (Ex):* Grimes' familiar can communicate with rodents of approximately the same kind as itself (including dire varieties). Such communication is limited by the intelligence of the conversing creatures.

*Wizard Spells Prepared (4/5/4/4/3; save DC 14 + spell level):* 0 — *resistance, detect magic, read magic, light;* 1st — *power spike, cone of silence, magic missile, charm person, cause fear;* 2nd — *begone, fireeyes, flame arrow, weakness;* 3rd — *cloak of fear, imperviousness, greater identify, fireball;* 4th — *phantasmal killer, primal fear, soul knife.*

*Possessions:* Spellbook.

**Crooked Jak, Male Human Ftr 2/Rog 1:** CR 3; Medium humanoid (Human); HD 2d10 plus 1d6+3; hp 25; Init +3; Spd 30 ft.; AC 12, touch 12, flat-footed 10; Base Atk +2; Grp +3; Atk +4 melee (1d4+2(19–20/x2), dagger); Full Atk +4 melee (1d4+2(19–20/x2), dagger); SA Favored weapon (dagger), sneak attack +1d6; SQ Hide in plain sight; AL CN; SV Fort +3, Ref +4, Will +0; Str 12, Dex 15, Con 11, Int 11, Wis 11, Cha 10.

*Skills and Feats:* Balance +3, Bluff +2, Climb +4, Disguise +4, Escape Artist +3, Gather Information +3, Hide +3, Intimidate +4, Jump +4, Listen +5, Move Silently +4, Open Lock +3, Sleight of Hand +3, Spot +5, Tumble +3; Alertness, Cleave, Power Attack, Toughness.

*Favored Weapon (dagger):* Crooked Jak gains a +1 competence bonus to attack and damage rolls with the dagger.

*Hide In Plain Sight:* Each time Crooked Jak makes a Hide check, he may reduce the total penalty (if any) to his skill check by his rogue class level (1), to a minimum of 0.

*Sneak Attack:* Anytime Crooked Jak's target is denied a Dexterity bonus to AC, or when he flanks a target, Crooked Jak deals an additional 1d6 points of damage on a successful melee attack.

*Possessions:* Dagger.

**Development:** A fortnight ago, Grimes sent one of his followers, an old thug called Crooked Jak, to poison the Cardinal. The guards caught him trying to sneak into the church. They recovered the weak homebrewed poison he carried, but Jak escaped into the crowd. He is hiding out in the Conspiracy of Light cult headquarters, an abandoned house in Oldtown (*see Location 11 for more details*).

**Typical Cultist, Male Human Rog 1:** CR 1; Medium humanoid (Human); HD 1d6+3; hp 9; Spd 30 ft.; Init +3; AC 12, touch 12, flat-footed 10; Base Atk +0; Grp +1; Atk +1 melee (1d4+1(19–20/x2), dagger); Full Atk +1 melee (1d4+1(19–20/x2), dagger); SA Sneak attack +1d6; SQ Hide in plain sight; AL CN; SV Fort +0, Ref +5, Will +0; Str 12, Dex 15, Con 11, Int 11, Wis 11, Cha 10.

*Skills and Feats:* Balance +3, Bluff +2, Climb +2, Disguise +4, Escape Artist +3, Gather Information +3, Hide +3, Intimidate +4, Jump +2, Listen +3, Move Silently +4, Open Lock +3, Sleight of Hand +3, Spot +3, Tumble +3; Dodge, Toughness.

*Hide In Plain Sight:* Each time a cultist makes a Hide check, he may reduce the total penalty (if any) to his skill check by his rogue class level (1), to a minimum of 0.

*Sneak Attack:* Anytime a cultist's target is denied a Dexterity bonus to AC, or when he flanks a target, a cultist deals an additional 1d6 points of damage on a successful melee attack.

*Possessions:* Dagger.

## Location 11: The Conspiracy of Light Local Headquarters (*map page 482*)

All rooms and hallways in the manor have 8-foot ceilings unless otherwise noted. The walls are masonry stone, and the doors are wooden.

**Wall:** 1 ft. thick; hardness 8; hp 90; AC 4; Break DC 25.

**Doors:** 1 1/2-in. thick; hardness 5; hp 15; AC 5; Break DC 23 (locked and nailed).

**Read aloud:** *A short walk down a quiet street leads you to an unimposing stone house at the end of the block. This neglected home is completely overgrown with moss and ivy. Even though it seems to have been abandoned, this eerie place seems to be in decent shape. A few roof slates are missing, but the interior seems to be protected from the elements. The windows are nailed shut, and the doors are boarded up.*

This house has obviously stood empty for some time. A

courtyard filled with overgrown vegetation and surrounded by a wrought iron fence encircles it. The gate hangs precariously on rusted hinges. On one side is Oldwall, and on the other is the burnt husk and foundation of an old row house, which left char marks on the adjoining buildings.

Years ago, children were playing in the abandoned row house next door when it caught fire and burned to the ground. Four of them were trapped inside and died, and naturally rumors arose that the site was haunted. Most folks stay away, making it a perfect location for Grimes' cult.

The house is a two-story affair with a slate roof. The shutters have been nailed shut and require a successful Strength check (DC 15) to break. The doors have been boarded up and require a successful Strength check (DC 18) to pry off. With a successful Climb check (DC 10), PCs can shimmy up to the rooftop.

## Location 11.1: Parlor (EL 2)

**Read aloud:** *This room has been converted into a shrine. Hundreds of candles litter the floor around a makeshift altar. A brown smear stretches across its surface beneath rat droppings, ash, and soot. A large wooden bowl and a rusty knife lie beneath the altar.*

The smear is dried blood. Grimes sacrifices rodents and other vermin here. There is nothing special about the bowl or knife.

**Creatures:** 2d4 cultists *(see Encounter 6 for stats)*.

**Cultists (2d4):** hp as rolled.

## Location 11.2: Study (EL 1)

**Read aloud:** *This room is lined with broken shelves and furnished with the remains of several chairs, tables, and writing desks. There is a hole in the floor.*

The hole leads to a crawlspace beneath the house, through which the cultists enter and exit. The crawlspace leads from the study to the back porch (**Location 11.9**).

**Creatures:** Two cultists *(see Encounter 6 for stats)*, though one is usually asleep (75% chance).

**Cultists (8):** hp 5, 6.

*Treasure:* Stuck to an interior desk frame behind a drawer is a scroll of *magic missile* (Search check DC 25). There is nothing else of value in the wreckage.

## Location 11.3: Sitting Room (EL 1)

**Read aloud:** *The cultists use this room as a privy. The stench is unbearable.*

Anyone standing inside is nauseated (Fortitude negates, DC 10) making them unable to attack, cast spells, or concentrate on spells. The only action a nauseated character can take is a single move (or move-equivalent action) per turn. The effects last as long as the person is in the room and for 1d4 rounds after he leaves.

## Location 11.4: Servant's Quarters (EL 3)

**Read aloud:** *This room is filthy. Rotten food and other refuse cover the floor. Half a dozen dirty bedrolls lie amidst the filth.*

**Creatures:** 1d4+2 cultists during day, six cultists at night (see **Encounter 6** for stats).

**Cultists (1d4+2, day):** hp as rolled.

**Cultists (6, night):** hp 9, 5, 6, 9, 6, 6.

*Treasure:* Hidden under piles of rags, bedrolls and debris (Search DC 20) is 32 cp, 3 sp, and a fancy silver ring (5 gp value).

## Location 11.5: Dining Room (EL 4)

**Read aloud:** *Debris and trash cover this room as well. Another dozen bedrolls lie in the garbage.*

**Creatures:** Eight cultists *(see Encounter 6 for stats)*.

**Cultists (8):** hp 9, 7, 4, 5, 6, 9, 6, 6.

*Treasure:* Rooting through the garbage here (Search DC 20) uncovers 44 cp, two half-full wineskins, two light crossbows, and 13 crossbow bolts.

## Location 11.6: Kitchen

**Read aloud:** *There is a large preparation table in the center of the room. Rotted wooden cupboards line the walls, and a cask of filthy water stands against the southern wall. A few rusted kitchen utensils lie on the floor.*

The cultists are not sophisticated enough for a kitchen — they beg for scraps in the streets — so this room remains in disrepair. There is nothing of value here except the preparation table (worth 10 gp), and it would take a great deal of effort to remove it from the premises.

## Location 11.7: Wine Cellar (EL 3)

**Read aloud:** *This room is dark and cool. The air is damp and rank; the aroma of rotten food and worse assaults your nostrils. A set of old, wooden stairs leads down into the darkness.*

This dark room is filled with casks and wine racks. The 1d4 bottles of wine that remain could be sold for a tidy sum (50 gp each). Most of the casks are empty as well, but two contain a bit of hearty ale.

There is a large wolf shackled to the wall here, to protect Grimes' booze. The chain allows it to reach the bottom two stairs, but no higher. The PCs can make a Spot check (DC 10) to see if they notice it.

**Creature:** One wolf.

**Wolf (1):** CR 1; Medium animal; HD 2d8+4; hp 13; Init +2; Spd 50 ft.; AC 14, touch 12, flat-footed 12; Base Atk +1, Grp +2; Atk +3 melee (1d6+1/x2, bite); Full Atk +3 melee (1d6+1/x2, bite); Space/Reach 5 ft./5 ft.; SA Trip; SQ Low-light vision, scent; AL N; SV Fort +5, Ref +5, Will +1; Str 13, Dex 15, Con 15, Int 2, Wis 12, Cha 6.

*Skills and Feats:* Hide +2, Listen +3, Move Silently +3, Spot +3, Survival +1*; Track, Weapon Focus (bite). *a wolf has a +4 racial bonus on Survival checks when tracking by scent.

*Low-Light Vision:* A wolf can see twice as far as a Human in starlight, moonlight, torchlight, and similar conditions of shadowy illumination. It retains the ability to distinguish color and detail under these conditions.

*Scent:* The wolf can detect opponents within 30 feet by sense of smell. If the opponent is upwind, the range increases to 60 feet; if downwind, it drops to 15 feet. Strong scents, such as smoke or rotting garbage, can be detected at twice the ranges noted above. Overpowering scents, such as skunk musk or troglodyte stench, can be detected at triple normal range. When a wolf detects a scent, the exact location of the source is not revealed—only its presence somewhere within range. The wolf can take a move action to note the direction of the scent.

Whenever the wolf comes within 5 feet of the source, the wolf pinpoints the source's location.

*Trip:* A wolf that hits with a bite attack can attempt to trip the opponent (+1 check modifier) as a free action without making a touch attack or provoking an attack of opportunity. If the attempt fails, the opponent cannot react to trip the wolf.

## Location 11.8: Storage

**Read aloud:** *This room has been ransacked. It is filled with refuse; broken barrels, splintered wood, and scraps of rotten food cover the floor.*

*Treasure:* Scattered among the debris are a dozen wooden torches, flint and steel, and a lantern in moderate condition.

## Location 11.9: Back Porch

**Read aloud:** *This open deck area stands three feet off the ground. It may have been an addition to the house because it is made of wood rather than stone.*

There is a crawlspace beneath the porch. Anyone searching this area (DC 15) discovers the shallow graves of the two beggars that had been sleeping inside the house when Grimes took up residence. He killed them and buried them here. The crawlspace leads to the hole in the study floor (area 2).

## Location 11.10: Master Bedroom (EL 7)

**Read aloud:** *This room is cleaner than the others. It has a sturdy desk, three chairs, and a four-poster bed. There are several straw pallets against the walls, and a few bedrolls at the foot of the bed.*

Grimes spends most of his time here. He contemplates the universe through his portal to the stars, the skylight.

*Skylight:* 1 in. thick; hardness 3; hp 10; AC 8; Break DC 10.

His followers gather here daily to listen to his nonsensical sermons; some are allowed to sleep here, so long as they are prepared to serve their master's will.

Grimes and Crooked Jak are both here, as are 1d4+2 cultists. If confronted, Grimes screams vile curses at the heroes as he hurls spells. His cultists are fiercely loyal and fight to the death to protect their master. If the PCs gain the upper hand, Grimes' survival instinct kicks in and he immediately fingers his employer, Bentry Rickard. He tells them it was all Rickard's idea, tells them where the man lives, and even tells them that Rickard is sleeping with Lorna Haranshee (something Rickard doesn't even know he knows). Grimes feels no loyalty to his employer. After Rickard hired him, he had a cultist follow the man around just in case he needed some dirt on the man later. Grimes says anything to save his own skin, so tidbits of truth will be intermixed with volumes of rambling nonsense.

**Creatures:** Nixull Grimes, Crooked Jak, 1d4+2 cultists (see **Encounter 6** for stats).

**Cultists (1d4+2):** hp as rolled.

*Treasure:* None.

## Location 11.11: Guest Bedroom

**Read aloud:** *The remains of a broken and splintered bed and a few torn sheets litter this room. Water drips from the ceiling and collects in puddles on the warped wooden floor.*

This room has lots of trash and debris. The cultists do not use it because of the weak ceiling (*see Location 11.12 for more details*).

## Location 11.12: Cistern & Water Closet

**Read aloud:** *The floor holds a small cistern that collects rainwater. This copper basin is nearly full. Pipes lead from the basin to the water closet below.*

The floor section beneath the cistern is rotten. It may collapse if someone walks on it. A PC can spot the weakened floor with a Knowledge (architecture and engineering) check (DC 15) or Craft (construction) check (DC 15). If the floor takes an additional 100 pounds of weight the cistern crashes through the floor, causing 6d6 points of damage, or half that amount if the PC makes a successful Reflex check (DC 15). The cultists know not to walk in this area.

# Part 4: Concluding the Investigation

As Grimes willingly disclosed to save his skin, Bentry Rickard hired Grimes to harass the Cardinal. He figured the cult would make the perfect patsy for the kidnapping. Grimes is crazy, after all, and Rickard is a city councilman with a excellent reputation, plenty of political influence, and a friend in the Captain of the Guard. But this sense of superiority may prove to be his downfall. Rickard doesn't know that Grimes has had him followed, and has no inkling that Grimes knows about his connection to Lady Lorna Haranshee.

### Encounter 5: Visiting Captain Halifax

If the PCs visit Captain Halifax and relate their encounter with Grimes, he greets the information with disbelief. He and Rickard are close, and he doesn't want to believe that his friend could be involved with a madman like Grimes. He has suspected Rickard's affair with Lady Lorna for a year, ever since once of his patrolmen saw Rickard sneaking from the manor grounds in the middle of the night. If the PCs ask, he'll escort them to see Rickard, and "set the matter straight." He doesn't believe his friend is guilty, but he's too professional to let the incident pass without at least a cursory query.

ENCOUNTER 6: VISITING BENTRY RICKARD

The PCs may go to Rickard directly. If they do, he gladly invites them into his home. He denies any involvement with Grimes, no matter how he's pressed, but he admits to the affair with Lady Haranshee, especially if Captain Halifax is present. In fact, he uses her as his alibi if questioned about the night of the kidnapping.

ENCOUNTER 7: VISITING LORNA HARANSHEE

It's much more difficult for the PCs to visit Lady Haranshee. She is coping with the influx of refugees and has no time to entertain visitors. Captain Halifax is loath to involve her in any kind of criminal investigation or questioning. Captain Halifax assures the PCs that he'll speak with her about Rickard's alibi, but he can't allow them to bother her.

# Part 5: Rescuing the Cardinal

The climax of the adventure comes when the PCs figure out where the Cardinal is being held and stage a rescue attempt. By this point, if the PCs have confronted Grimes, they should know about Bentry Rickard's connection to Lady Haranshee. This is not damning proof, but combined with the evidence found in the shrine, it indicates that Haranshee Manor might contain further evidence.

If the PCs have not discovered the Cardinal's whereabouts by the third night, Saldor gives in to temptation and betrays Lorna to Arkan Forss, who has Denton pass this valuable information to the PCs.

Diplomatically minded characters may wish to enlist Captain Halifax's aid or approach Lorna directly. Arkan Forss warns them off these courses of action, and instead urges them to deal with the matter as quickly and discreetly as possible.

Lorna and her household staff are not evil (except for Saldor). They are being misled. Lorna believes that the VédoSZentek are just, and she wants to be accepted into their ranks, but she is not willing to kill for them. When the Cardinal was captured, he suffered a serious blow to the head. Lorna used her gift to mend the wound, but the Cardinal is still weak and distraught. Healing the wound aged him a decade, years the old man could ill afford to lose. Lorna has locked the Cardinal in the family chapel (**Location 12.11**) while she waits for the VédoSZentek agents to take him away.

ENCOUNTER 8: BREAKING IN

Stealth and guile is preferable to brute force in this situation. If the PCs start an open battle, sheer numbers quickly overwhelm them.

With the hospital on the grounds it is fairly easy for the PCs to sneak inside. It is a simple matter to climb the wall (Climb check DC 15).

Characters who enter by stealth cannot escape attention for long, but unless they are acting suspicious or violent, they can easily blend into the crowd of refugees and volunteers.

## Location 12: Haranshee Manor (*map page 483*)

**Read aloud:** *Situated on a hill to the west and slightly north of the city, Haranshee Manor is a local example of Laurelian architecture. Several acres of luxurious grounds surround the house, warded by a sturdy wall and a wrought-iron gate. A single road winds lazily up the hill from the gate to the house.*

All rooms and hallways in the manor have 10-foot ceilings unless otherwise noted. The walls are masonry stone, and the doors are wooden.

**Wall:** 1 ft. thick; hardness 8; hp 90; AC 4; Break DC 35.

**Doors:** 1 1/2-in. thick; hardness 5; hp 15; AC 5; Break DC 18 (locked).

The Baron is not at home. He frequently spends time on luxurious tours of wealthy cities. While he is away, his household operates under the watchful eye of his daughter, Lorna. She has responded to the refugee problem with grace and dignity. The household provides for the sick and injured in a temporary hospital under the huge white tent that occupies most of the courtyard.

## Location 12.1: Courtyard

**Read aloud:** *This wide courtyard is paved in cobblestones, although weeds grow in patches. An ornate fountain in the center of the yard depicts a swan with outstretched wings. A large tent dominates the area.*

When the refugees started pouring into the city from the east, the Baron's daughter established a hospital in the manor courtyard. She recruited volunteers, purchased medical supplies, and supplied meals to the sick and injured. Now the hospital is overflowing onto the grounds, into the carriage house, and the stables. Lorna has been incredibly accessible, even tending the wounded herself. There is a rumor that she has the ability to lay on hands like a paladin or a cleric.

Lorna is here 50% of the time, tending the sick and injured.

**Creatures:** Six Volunteers, Lorna Haranshee, a 4th-level cleric (see **Encounter 1.2** for stats). Lorna is here 25% of the time..

**Lorna Haranshee, Female Human Clr 4:** hp 24.

**Volunteers, Male and Female Human Com 1:** CR 1/2; Medium humanoid (Human); HD 1d4; hp 4; Spd 30 ft.; Init +0; AC 10, touch 10, flat-footed 10; Base Atk +0; Grp +0; Atk +0 melee (1d4(19–20/x2), dagger); Full Atk +0 melee (1d4(19–20/x2), dagger); SA —; SQ —; AL LN; SV Fort +0, Ref +0, Will +1; Str 10, Dex 11, Con 11, Int 12, Wis 12, Cha 10.

*Skills and Feats:* Craft +4 (various), Heal +3, Listen +4, Profession (various) +6; Alertness, Skill Focus (Profession (various)).

*Possessions:* Dagger.

## Location 12.2: Foyer

**Read aloud:** *This roomy foyer is devoid of furniture. Boxes, barrels, and crates are stacked along the walls nearly to the ceiling.*

*Crates of food and medical supplies for the hospital occupy the large reception area. Two volunteers guard the supplies at all times.*

**Creatures:** Six Volunteers (*see Location 12.1 for stats*).

**Volunteers:** hp 4, 4.

## Location 12.3 and 15.4: Guest Rooms

**Read aloud:** *This room is amply furnished and lavishly decorated with a large, comfortable bed and beautiful antique furniture. Although homey, it does not appear to have been used recently. Lorna does not have many guests, and the Baron is rarely home.*

## Location 12.5: Trophy Room

**Read aloud:** *This room has been lavishly decorated. Hunting trophies hang from ornate wooden frames, plush rugs cushion the floor, and knickknacks and relics adorn tables and shelves.*

The Baron has acquired many oddities and trophies in his travels. All are proudly on display, from monster hides to functional Deverenian torture devices. Lorna keeps this room locked when he is away.

## Location 12.6: Library

**Read aloud:** *This is a pleasant and comfortable library. Three stuffed armchairs surround a table in the center of the room. Shelves line all four walls; many of the books here date back two hundred years or more.*

*Treasure:* There is an old tome here dedicated to Deima; it is worth 500 gp to the right collector.

## Location 12.7: Audience Chamber

**Read aloud:** *This richly appointed room seems to be an audience chamber or reception room. The polished hardwood floors gleam impressively, and the walls are covered with thick, lush tapestries depicting the glories of knightly combat. Across from the door is an ornately carved, mahogany throne on a large dais. A fine red carpet runs from the doorway to the dais.*

## Location 12.8: Grand Ballroom

**Read aloud:** *This room is spacious and sparsely furnished. Two elaborate crystal chandeliers hang from the carved ceiling, and beautiful tapestries decorate the walls. The ceiling is about 25 feet high, and the windows are close to the floor and rise up 20 feet. The drapes are made of a fine silken material that has faded but remains beautiful.*

When the Baron is home, this room sees a lot of use. He loves to throw extravagant parties and formal dinners. Lorna dislikes the parties, but loves dancing. Now the room goes unused altogether, because Lorna has no time for frivolousness.

## Location 12.9 and 12.10: Family Bedrooms

**Read aloud:** *This well-appointed bedroom fits right in with the manor's décor. The bed looks comfortable, and the furniture is finely crafted.*

Lorna used these rooms when she was a child. Now the Baron sleeps here when he is at home. The doors have been kept locked since the arrival of the refugees.

## Location 12.11: Family Chapel (EL 7)

**Read aloud:** *This small chapel is dedicated to the Storm. It is kept clean and tidy, but no one in the household worships here. They worship Deima, under Lorna's guidance. A door in the back of the room leads to the audience chamber.*

The doors to this room are locked from the inside, and one of the household members is always present (roll randomly, or choose). Cardinal Ulloft is being kept here.

The PCs may think they have succeeded now that they have found the Cardinal, but they are wrong. The Elf spy Cynarre found him too, just moments ahead of them.

**Read aloud:** *A square carved-stone dais at the center of this room bears the marks of the Storm. Rows of fine wooden pews run along the walls, and a fine red carpet runs down the wide aisle between them. Bound to a high-backed chair in the center of the room, between the pews is an old man in priestly robes. His head rests on his chest; he is asleep or unconscious.*

Cynarre (*see "The Replacement Killer" sidebar earlier in the adventure for stats*) found the Cardinal just moments before the heroes. Make an opposed Listen/Move Silently check to see if he hears them at the door. If he's successful, he hides behind the altar before they enter the room; if not, he's twenty feet from the Cardinal but in an aisle, needing two rounds to reach his target. PCs should make opposed Spot checks to see if they notice Cynarre behind the altar. If they do, begin combat normally. If they are unsuccessful, he waits and assesses the situation.

Cynarre is primarily concerned with completing his assignment. His orders are to kill the Cardinal and any witnesses, but he doesn't want to get captured in the process. He waits for all the heroes to enter the room before he makes his surprise attack. He wants to slay them without alerting the entire household. If the PCs prove too strong to kill in an open fight, Cynarre attempts to kill the Cardinal and escape. He has no problem with raising the alarm if it keeps the PCs occupied long enough for him to get away.

Industrious characters have no trouble leaving the manor once they have freed the Cardinal and stopped Cynarre. The combat with Cynarre likely causes a commotion, so climbing out the window is the most likely course, and one that presents no special obstacles except a short climb to the ground below (Climb check DC 10).

Once outside the manor, PCs who are not acting obviously suspicious or violent can lose themselves in the crowd of volunteers and refugees.

## Location 12.12: Sitting Room

**Read aloud:** *This room seems comfortable. The furniture looks lavish, but it is worn with age. There are several plush chairs, carved tables, and bookshelves in the room.*

## Location 12.13: Parlor

**Read aloud:** *Large, comfortable couches occupy the majority of this room. A few carved wooden tables and chairs are strategically placed. Hanging from the ceiling are lovely lamps of hand-blown amber-colored glass.*

This comfortable and inviting room is where Lorna usually entertains guests.

## Location 12.14: Dining Hall

**Read aloud:** *Twelve ornate chairs surround a large, finely crafted table. Additional tables and chairs line the walls in linen covered stacks.*

The tables and chairs fit together in various arrangements, depending on the number of guests, but they have not been used for a function in some time. The hall has been used less and less since the Baron took his vows; the servants use it as a shortcut to the west side of the manor.

## Location 12.15: Baron's Suite

**Read aloud:** *A huge four-poster bed dominates this suite. It is decorated with green velvet and lace, and covered with downy pillows. There are also several bookshelves, a massive wardrobe, a mahogany roll-top desk, and several plush chairs.*

Lorna convinced her father to let her have this suite several years ago. It is lavishly decorated and extremely comfortable. She rarely spends time here, except to sleep.

## Location 12.16: Study

**Read aloud:** *This well-appointed room is lined in cedar and contains a huge fireplace, an oaken desk and chair, and a splendid rug that covers most of the floor.*

Two tall windows provide ample sunlight during the day, and rows of bookshelves contain Lorna's private collection of tomes and scrolls. She has letters from a VédoSZentek cultist named Amran and a signet ring bearing his mark. Characters recognize the obscure mark with a successful Knowledge (heraldry) check (DC 25). She corresponds with Amran regularly and plans to give him the Cardinal to use against the Inquisition.

The room also serves as her vault. Beneath the rug is a locked trapdoor that conceals a locked strongbox.

*Trapdoor:* 1 1/2-in. thick; hardness 5; hp 20; AC 4; Break DC 20 (locked).

**Creatures:** Lorna Haranshee, a 4th-level cleric *(see Encounter 1.2 for stats)*. Lorna is here 25% of the time.

**Lorna Haranshee, Female Human Clr 4:** hp 24.

*Treasure:* Locked strongbox containing 1000 sp, 1000 gp, 190 pp, one emerald ring (jewelry, non-magical, 800 gp value), and one dozen pearls (gems, non-magical, 1200 gp value). It also contains a *ring of protection +2*, two potions of *cure light wounds*, and a potion of *invisibility*.

## Location 12.17 and 12.18: Pantry

**Read aloud:** *This room is filled with sacks of food, hanging haunches of salted meats, and boxes of dried fish. Shelves line the walls of this room, only leaving space for the doorway. Four large barrels occupy the southern corner. The first two have been tapped; a cup sits on the floor beneath each spigot.*

The four large barrels contain ale, wine, salt, and flour.

## Location 12.19 and 12.20: Servants' Quarters

**Read aloud:** *These rooms appear comfortable and clean, but nowhere near as grand as the rest of the house. They likely house the household servants; the space is modest, the furniture is plain, and the linens are rough.*

These rooms belong to the members of Lorna's staff. They are comfortable and clean.

## Location 12.21: Kitchen

**Read aloud:** *This room has three long preparation tables, rows of wooden cabinets, and all the accoutrements of a modern Laurelian kitchen.*

There are 1d4+4 servants working here day and night to keep the volunteers and the patients fed.

**Creatures:** Servants *(see Encounter 1.3 for stats)*.

**Servants (1d4+4):** hp as rolled.

## Location 12.22: Back Porch

**Read aloud:** *This beautiful open-air porch is stacked high with boxes and crates, just like the foyer.*

*There are crates of food and supplies stacked in long rows on the back porch.*

## Location 12.23: Carriage House

**Read aloud:** *This well-made wooden building has tall double doors in front and a single wooden door in the back. A wide path leads up to the double doors, with ruts from a carriage or wagon.*

*The purpose of this building is clear from the rows of carriages and wagons leading from its door to the road. Its tall doors are closed but unlocked.*

There are hospital volunteers living in the empty carriage bays. They work in shifts, so there are always 2d4 volunteers sleeping here.

**Creatures:** Volunteers *(see Location 12.1 for stats)*.

**Volunteers (2d4):** hp as rolled.

## Location 12.24: Stables

**Read aloud:** *This building is made of stone and wood. It appears to be as old as the manor. There are half a dozen stalls on either side of the stable, eight of which hold horses. Refugees are sleeping in the other stalls and in the loft. Tack, harness, and hay are stored in the loft. A small forge and iron working tools — hammers, nails, tongs, and a stout anvil — for light work like repairing horseshoes take up one corner of the building.*

One of the refugees, a smith's apprentice from Corinth, is helping Gunter around the stable. The boy is fiercely loyal to the old stable master; he is grateful for the work.

**Creatures:** Apprentice Blacksmith, 1st-level commoner.

**Apprentice Blacksmith, Male Human Com 1:** CR 1/2; Medium humanoid (Human); HD 1d4; hp 4; Spd 30 ft.; Init +0; AC 10, touch 10, flat-footed 10; Base Atk +0; Grp +0; Atk +0 melee (1d6/x2, club); Full Atk +0 melee (1d6/x2, club); SA —; SQ —; AL LN; SV Fort +0, Ref +0, Will +1; Str 10, Dex 11, Con 11, Int 12, Wis 12, Cha 10.

*Skills and Feats:* Craft +4 (stable hand), Heal +3, Listen +4, Profession (stable hand) +6; Alertness, Skill Focus (Profession (stable hand)).

*Possessions:* Club.

### Location 12.25: Gardens and Shed

**Read aloud:** *There are dozens of planted vegetables, flowers and spices here, spaced in even rows. In the center of the garden is a decorative marble fountain depicting a girl laughing and pouring water from a jug. The water flowing in the fountain comes from an underground stream.*

The shed holds equipment used to tend the garden and manor grounds: shovels, picks, blades for trimming the rose bushes and other miscellaneous tools.

## Part 6: Concluding the Adventure

With Cardinal Ulloft safely in their custody, the PCs reap hard-earned rewards. Arkan Forss pays them 250 gp each, and may offer them another assignment (*see Part 7*).

## Part 7: Adventure Hooks:

- If the party acted on Pariah's contract from *The Ghostwood Treaty* adventure, the Dark Horsemen pay them an additional 500 gp.
- Despite the PCs' heroics, Cardinal Ulloft collapses shortly after his rescue. His nerves, unable to cope with the events, give out. Arkan hires the PCs to escort Ulloft to Luthlarius, the capital of Deverenia. Arkan gives the PCs a writ signed by the Emperor that allows the bearer and party of four to enter and exit the capital (an item worth 10,000 gp in the Luthlarius black market), and sends them on their way in a somber black carriage that bears his family crest.
- Arkan sends the PCs into the Shattered Lands in search of an ancient relic in a ruined city (see *The Shattered Lands* adventure).

## Part 8: The Stone of Fortune

**Read aloud:** *Grasping the stone, you worry for a moment that something is wrong... but the familiar dance of light arises once again. This time, however, it never quite focuses. You simply see a stone room lit only by candles, and a humanoid creature sitting in a circle on the floor. Though the light should show his face, it does not. The vision lapses, imparting no further clues.*

The vision is of the Conspiracy's true master, the imprisoned god of treachery, Teufeltiger. Teufeltiger sensed the stone's magic, and countered it with his own divine power. Should the party meet his mortal form, disguised as Lord Kestrel du Myerdeth, he instantly recognizes them, and decides to use them to his own ends.

## Part 9: New Magic Items

### Basilisk Lily

A *basilisk lily* is a vibrant violet flower that blooms year-round in all but the coldest environments. When treated with special alchemical reagents and spells, this beautiful flower becomes a deadly weapon. Basilisk lilies are usually stored in hand-blown glass jars.

When thrown, the container shatters, unleashing a 30-foot radius cloud of stoneflesh spores into the air. Everyone within the cloud must make a Fortitude save (DC 16) or be turned to stone (as per *stone to flesh* spell).

The stoneflesh spores attach themselves to a victim's flesh upon contact, turning them to stone. The spores then become dormant until exposed to flesh once more. Restored victims recover temporarily, but revert to stone in 2d4 rounds as the spores reactivate. A successful Knowledge (arcane) or Knowledge (poison) check (DC 35) reveals this fact, and also the cure: statues must be washed thoroughly with an antidote before being restored. The antidote costs 1000 gp and one week of preparation per dose. Each time a victim is exposed to a *basilisk lily*, he comes in contact with enough spores to turn him to stone a total of 2d4 times.

*Caster Level:* 11th; Prerequisites: Brew Potion, Craft Wondrous Item, *stone to flesh;* Market Price: 7,500 gp; Weight 1 lb.

# Tier 3

Three more adventures await the party, suitable for characters of 4th–6th level. Now, however, they unwittingly face a choice: they may complete only two of these adventures, as the events of "Black Forge" and "Shattered Lands" happen simultaneously. Even heroes can only do so much in the Accordlands, and someone pays the price.

## Shadow of the Black Tower

Upon returning home from another adventure, the PC holding the *Stone of Fortune* finds a note waiting for him, sealed with the mark of one of the party's patrons, Duchess Cassandra. She commends the party's efforts, and offers a new lead: a strange mass migration of monsters towards the Shattered Lands to the east.

In actuality, Cassica is completely unaware of the cause of this migration, but frustrated by it nonetheless. Many of her own monsters have joined the movement, and Cassica hopes that the party either uncovers the reason or dies trying. She is unknowingly delivering the party to the Medusan Lords' enemy, Sorscha.

## Shattered Lands

The party enters the fearsome Shattered Lands, there discovering a lost city. Arkan, an NPC from the "Church of the Storm" adventure, might have hired them to recover an artifact from this city, or the party may have journeyed to the east after completing the "Shadow of the Black Tower" adventure.

Regardless of how or why they come to the Shattered Lands, they return too late to stop the slaughter at Black Forge, and may not pursue that adventure.

## Black Forge

An ally of K'evan of the Green, the dwarf Dirge, seeks out the party to aid in repelling an Abyssal attack on the city of Black Forge. The Abyssals have cut off all dwarven access to the city, and only Sjonegaard's new tunnel is available. Dirge implores the party to aid Black Forge.

The party only gains access to this adventure if they saved Barrin in "Temple of the Undying Flame." Even then, completing "Black Forge" means the party is too late to stop the Bascarites from recovering the *Shard of Bascaron* in "Shattered Lands."

## Campaign Notes:



# Shadow of the Black Tower

## Introduction

*Shadow of the Black Tower* invites the characters to investigate a strange migration of monsters into the Shattered Lands.

This is one of three adventures in Tier 3. It is meant for characters of levels 4–6.

## Adventure Background

In the mountains between the Shattered Lands and Nothrog territory, there is a barren, blighted region. The rain falls, and the rivers run just as they always have, but nothing grows there. A year ago, the land was green and lush, teeming with game. This was Blackrock, a village of Cyclopes who lived peacefully, content in their own lands and far from the political strife of the great civilizations, resisting the call of the Nothrog to join their legions. The only danger to them was a mysterious figure new to the region: Sorscha.

Last year, the plant life for miles around began to die: trees, crops, grassland, even moss. The game animals soon followed. Not long after, the Cyclopes had eaten all of their livestock, because there was no more food to be hunted or grown. The Blackrock Cyclopes have now fled the area, abandoning their ancestral homes, except for a few stubborn, desperate families. To make matters worse, the land now crawls with all manner of dangerous creatures. What force brought on this drastic change, no one knows. A sense of dread hangs over the land.

Five years ago, the mysterious summoner Sorscha built a formidable keep on the slope of a dormant volcano. The Cyclopes call this mountain Blackrock, like their village, and until Sorscha came,

had claimed it as part of their territory. When Sorscha came, she made it clear to the Cyclopes that the mountain now belonged to her. They grudgingly accepted her claim, knowing there was little they could do to oppose her. After that, she did not cause problems for the local inhabitants, and kept a low profile. The Blackrock Cyclopes never saw her, only her minions.

About four years ago, Sorscha acquired a strange magical device, the *Dimensional Confluence*, but could not unleash its full potential. She spent two years looking for someone who could help her unlock the item's secrets. In the depths of the Shattered Lands, she found just such a creature, going by the name of Zil. Zil's incredible intellect and comprehensive grasp of the interrelationship among the infinity of alternate dimensions helped her uncover the true nature of the magical device.

Sorscha had her monstrous minions construct a device Zil designed. This large structure, the Black Tower, focuses and amplifies the *Dimensional Confluence's* power. About a year ago, Zil and Sorscha set the Tower into operation for the first time, instigating the region's troubles.

The *Dimensional Confluence* creates a nexus point where all the infinite alternate dimensions converge. In the material plane, it makes summoning magic much more powerful. With this device, Sorscha intends to summon a horde comparable to the Nothrog legions, and attack the Medusan Lords' stronghold, the Pit, with a never-ending army of beasts.

The *Dimensional Confluence* is extremely disruptive; it has killed all the plants and is slowly killing every living being within its sphere of influence. At the same time, its power calls to the beasts that Sorscha wishes to summon. Monsters have traveled from great distances to answer the device's call, not knowing why.

Sorscha intends to summon a tremendous horde of beasts and immediately move against Cassica Moonseed. She knows the location of Cassica Moonseed's lair, and she knows the location of the Pit, Malrog's stronghold. The time of the spell grows near.

## Adventure Synopsis

The PCs notice as soon as they enter the region that something is dreadfully wrong with the land. As they travel through the region, they are likely to encounter monstrous creatures not native to the area. These creatures are half-crazed but weak from starvation.

The blighted region stretches for miles across foothills and rough, mountainous terrain. Traveling deeper into the blighted regions brings the PCs to Blackrock village, deserted except for a few Cyclopes who might be willing to tell the PCs how the land has sickened and died. They suspect Sorscha has something to do with it and may tell the PCs of the strange black tower built near Sorscha's keep over a year ago.

The PCs encounter a large band of dangerous barrowgrims that seem to be intent on traveling toward one of the tallest mountains in the region, Blackrock Mountain. The PCs can find Sorscha's stronghold by following these creatures, by questioning the Blackrock Cyclopes, or by methodically searching the countryside. Once they find Sorscha's keep and the Black Tower, they find a small army of monsters that have already answered the call of the Black Tower. These monsters are not immediately hostile to the PCs, but rather seem to be waiting for something to happen.

Fortunately for the PCs, Sorscha is not present, although they have no way to know this. She is traveling, seeking ancient lore from ruins in the Shattered Lands. Soon she will return, and at the appointed time, she intends to complete the long and complex ritual that the Black Tower has been maintaining for a year.

Inside Sorscha's keep, the PCs can find a wealth of evidence about Sorscha's plans and information about the mysterious conspiracy Medusan Lords. However, the true riddle is the Black Tower and the *Dimensional Confluence*.

The Black Tower is a massive clockwork construct of ever-changing rooms and passages inhabited by dangerous creatures. The great machine powers itself by siphoning the life force of the creatures inside. The interior of the Tower changes seemingly at random, trapping or releasing different monsters as the walls change. If the PCs reach the summit, they must still face Zil, the strange creature that designed the Tower and helped Sorscha unlock the secrets of the *Dimensional Confluence*.

Tomorrow, the long spell will be complete. In a single, reality-bending instant, the area will be filled with thousands of bloodthirsty beasts, all Sorscha's to command. If the PCs are still present when Sorscha returns to complete the ritual, they will probably be killed as the Tower instantly drains their life force. If she succeeds in summoning her horde, she will have an army that could ravage the Accordlands.

## Area 1: The Blackrock Region

The Blackrock Region is a rough, mountainous area at the edge of the Shattered Lands. Just to the east lies the wastelands of Sorscha's ruined past. Near the center of the Blackrock region sits the huge volcano, long dormant, that gives the region its name. The land around it is mountainous and rocky.

Around this volcano for a radius of 30 miles, the land is devoid of life. Gnarled dead trees and shrubs litter the rocky landscape, but there is not a blade of green grass or living foliage anywhere. The forces killing the plant life also have an effect on creatures. For each week spent in the Blackrock region, any living creature that is not a monster must make a Fortitude save (DC 12) or lose one point of temporary Constitution, to a minimum score of 1. These points of lost Constitution are regained at a rate of 1/day if the Black Tower is somehow stopped or if the creature leaves the Blackrock region.

The region was named by the tribe of Cyclopes who lived near the shores of Blackwater Lake. Blackrock Village once thrived, but it is now a shadow of its former self. See the village map for a depiction of what's left of the town.

**The Blackrock Region:** Non-standard and Monstrous; AL LN and LE; 20 gp limit; Population 36; Cyclops 100%.

**Authority Figures:** Saablan, Male Cyclops Ftr 5, LN; Magrom, Female Cyclops Sha 3, LN; Sorscha, Female Medusan Sum 13, LE.

Half of the village has been leveled by some of the ill-tempered monsters traveling down the road toward Sorscha's Tower. Some creatures just cannot ignore their instincts to destroy civilization wherever they find it. Three-fourths of the population has fled to lands that are more hospitable. Only the dedicated and stubborn remain.

These days, they try to stay out of sight in the southern portion of the village, the part that still stands. The hunters venture into the countryside looking for game, but there is none to be found for two days' travel. The Cyclopes here have only the food that they have preserved, mostly dried meat and fish. Even the fish taken from the river are strangely twisted and almost inedible.

The Blackrock Cyclopes keep a lookout for anyone or anything coming down the road. Anything that looks dangerous is given a wide berth, but the sentries do not hesitate to inform Saablan or Magrom of anything that passes.

For as long as the PCs remain in the Blackrock region, there is a chance they meet new monsters wandering in from outside. This applies any time the PCs are outside Sorscha's Keep and the Black Tower. Monsters wander through the Cyclopes' village as freely as they do the rest of the region. There is a 10% chance every hour that the PCs suffer a random encounter, see **Table 4–1.**

## Table 4-1: Blackrock Region Random Encounters

| d% | Encounter |
|---|---|
| 01–05 | Stirges (2d4)<br>(CR 1/2: see *Monster Manual, page 236*) |
| 06–25 | Sutek (2d8)<br>(CR 1/2: see *Monsters and Lairs, page 174*) |
| 26–30 | Barrowgrim (1)<br>(CR 4: see *Monsters and Lairs, page 25*) |
| 31–40 | Famine Harpy (1d3)<br>(CR 4: see *Monsters and Lairs, page 106*) |
| 41–45 | Giant Kin (2d4)<br>(CR 2: see *Monsters and Lairs, page 98*) |
| 46–55 | Ettin (1)<br>(CR 6: see *Monster Manual, page 106*) |
| 56–60 | Shade Lion (1d4)<br>(CR 3: see *Monsters and Lairs, page 164*) |
| 61–65 | Madness Harpy (1d3)<br>(CR 4: see *Monsters and Lairs, page 107*) |
| 66–75 | Gallows Fiend (2d4)<br>(CR 1: see *Monsters and Lairs, page 69*) |
| 76–85 | Darkfeast Harpy (1)<br>(CR 5: see *Monsters and Lairs, page 103*) |
| 86–90 | Undshyr (1d4)<br>(CR 3: see *Monsters and Lairs, page 198*) |
| 90–98 | Cyclops (1d4)<br>(CR 1: see *Monsters and Lairs, page 40*) |
| 99–00 | Spiritwing (1d4)<br>(CR 3: see *Monsters and Lairs, page 168*) |

### The Blackrock Cyclopes

**The Cyclopes who inhabit this village are no longer prime specimens of their race. For a year, they have been beaten down by fear and hunger. They are willing to do almost anything for food except take direct action against Sorscha and her minions. They will lend covert aid to anyone who causes them no harm. They just want to be left alone, but deep down they know that their time here is nearly over. They cannot hold out much longer.**

# Part 1: Locations and Encounters — Blackrock Region

The numbered encounters below refer to the map of the Blackrock Region, Blackrock Village, and Sorscha's Keep area. The characters begin the adventure with **Encounter 1** regardless of the direction from which they approach the area.

ENCOUNTER 1: BLACKROCK REGION — STARVING SUTEK (EL 4)

**Read aloud:** *The sun is warm and bright on the bare, rocky earth. Not so many miles ago, there were trees and grass and other foliage. Here, the black skeletons of dead shrubs and trees dot the naked ground and the rocky outcroppings of the gray landscape. There is no forage, although the land is not a desert. The air is moist and hazy. A river flows from the distant mountains. Many of the rocky outcroppings have pools of water gathered in them, as if a cloudburst passed over not so long ago. The land itself feels unhealthy. Behind you, there is a line where the greenery ends abruptly at the border of this strange land.*

A band of eight Suteks prowls the outer reaches of the Blackrock region. They are starving and desperate, on the lookout for any possible prey. They attempt to ambush anything that crosses their path, including a party of adventurers. They have no interest in parley or trade, only sustenance. If the party offers them food, there is a 50% chance they will accept it and stop their assault. Otherwise, they attempt to kill the PCs and take the food anyway. If the Suteks perceive themselves to be losing badly, they attempt to flee.

**Creatures:** Eight Sutek scavengers.

**Sutek Scavengers (8):** CR 1/2; Medium monstrous humanoid; HD 1d8+1; hp 5; Init +1; Spd 30 ft. swim 60 ft.; AC 16, touch 11, flat-footed 15; Base Atk +1; Grp +1; Atks +1 melee (1d6(19–20/x2), short sword); Full Atk +1 melee (1d6(19–20/x2), short sword); SQ Sutek traits; AL N; SV Fort +1, Ref +4, Will +3; Str 10, Dex 13, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 6.

*Skills and Feats:* Hide +5, Move Silently +5, Search +4, Spot +4, Swim +8*, Survival +4; Weapon Finesse (claw). *+8 racial bonus to Swim checks. A sutek may always choose to take 10 on a Swim check, even if rushed or threatened when swimming. Sutek can use the run action when swimming, provided they can swim in a straight line.

*Sutek Traits (Ex):* Sutek benefit from a number of racial traits.

- *Claws:* Sutek are never unarmed, as their four-fingered hands sport vicious claws. A sutek deals 1d4 unarmed damage (adjusted by Strength modifier normally). Further, a sutek does not provoke an attack of opportunity when he attacks an armed opponent while unarmed himself. Neither does the sutek get an attack of opportunity against unarmed creatures that attack him (unless the sutek is carrying a weapon).
- *Low-Light Vision:* Sutek possess low-light vision, and can see twice as far as a human in starlight, moonlight, torchlight, and similar conditions of poor illumination.

- *Water Breathing:* Ancient sutek were amphibious creatures, and their modern descendants retain a pair of gills running lengthwise down their backs, parallel to the spine. Sutek may breathe water freely, though they suffer the effects of gas and other methods of suffocation normally.

Eventually the party discovers the primitive trail leading toward the village.

**Read aloud:** *This well-traveled footpath leads west, deeper into the mountains, toward a narrow pass. Beyond the pass looms a towering, flat-topped mountain. Wispy clouds haze the mountain's peak, and its dark sides drape behind the intervening peaks.*

## Location 1: Blackrock Region — Blackrock Village *(map page 486)*

**Read aloud:** *The path rises sharply into the saddle of the mountain pass. On the south side of the pass, a waterfall spews white froth falling a hundred feet to the riverbed below the pass. On the north side of the path is a bare rocky escarpment, rising perhaps 60 feet, a natural pillar above the side of the pass. Because it begins its rise from the level of the pass, it stands almost two hundred feet above the land below the mountain pass.*

This escarpment is where the Blackrock Cyclopes keep their sentry post *(see Location 1.1)*.

The river has a rank, unpalatable smell, like rotten eggs. This is because the water contains a high concentration of minerals *(see Location 2)*. The water is potable, if foul.

## Location 1.1: Blackrock Region — Sentry Post

**Read aloud:** *About a mile beyond this crag lie the remains of a village. Most of the buildings appear to have been destroyed. The river runs swift and narrow through the center of the pass, rushing over the waterfall to the lifeless land below.*

The sentry post on the west side of the rock is a sheltered niche just large enough for two Cyclopes. It affords a tremendous view of the western approach. The village inhabitants take turns watching for any approaching creatures. Unless the PCs took extraordinary measures to remain unseen, the sentry spotted them long ago and returned to the village to inform Saablan, the village chieftain. The only way to reach this niche is to climb the escarpment. There are plenty of natural hand- and footholds on the north side, supplemented by ledges chiseled into the rock, so reaching it requires a Climb check (DC 13).

### Encounter 2: Blackrock Region — Giant Carcass

**Read aloud:** *Several of the buildings appear to be flattened as if something huge had fallen on them. Among the scattered stones and timbers are large, white timbers, strangely smooth. No, not timbers. Bones. Huge bones lie amid the shattered, scattered debris. Inside the walls of a crushed house, a huge skull lies smashed.*

Here lie the remains of a fire giant. This creature destroyed most of the village. Its massive bones lie in the rubble.

### Encounter 3: Blackrock Region — Inhabited Area (EL 6)

**Read aloud:** *Upon closer view, some of the village buildings appear to be intact. The path leads due east, forming the village's main thoroughfare, but the buildings on both sides of the road lie in ruins. They appear to have been wrecked in different ways. Some have been burned, some flattened as if by a hammer, some shredded to splinters as if by tremendous claws, some melted like wax. Toward the southern half of the village, the buildings are not destroyed, but no sign of habitation is visible. The stench of the river is thick in the air. The stony riverbanks are encrusted with white deposits.*

PCs who examine the ruined buildings find nothing of value in them. The Cyclopes scavenged them long ago.

If the PCs leave the path and explore the southern part of the village, they discover the few remaining inhabitants of the village. Most are hiding in their homes, hoping that these new strangers will pass through the village without any further molestation.

The area around the village is heated by the warm water of Blackwater Lake *(see Location 2)*.

Saablan and Magrom approach inquisitive PCs. Saablan is a massive male specimen of his race, with long, battle-scarred arms bulging with muscle, and thick, heavy shoulders. Magrom is a young female shaman.

These two are the only inhabitants willing to talk to outsiders. They want to keep any further trouble away from the village. They are extremely reluctant to oppose Sorscha openly, but they despise her presence. Their troubles began as soon as she completed her Black Tower. They want whatever killed all the plant life to be dealt with. They willingly trade for food, although they have little to offer.

**Creatures:** Saablan, a 5th-level fighter; Magrom, a 3rd-level shaman.

**Saablan, Chieftain of Blackrock Village, Cyclops Ftr 5:** CR 7; Large Male giant (Cyclops); HD 5d10+20+4d8+16; hp 109; Init +5; Spd 30 ft.; AC 19, touch 10, flat-footed 19; Base Atk +8; Grp +17; Atk +14 melee (1d10+9/x2, greatclub) or +7 ranged (2d6/x3; large composite longbow); Full Atk +14 melee (1d10+9/x2, greatclub) or +9 ranged (2d6/x3; large composite longbow); SA Favored weapon (greatclub, warhammer), improved damage (greatclub); SQ Giant traits; AL NG; SV Fort +12, Ref +3, Will +4; Str 22, Dex 12, Con 18, Int 10, Wis 14, Cha 8.

*Skills and Feats:* Climb +11, Jump +11, Survival +4, Swim +10; Alertness, Armor Proficiency (light, medium, and heavy), Improved Damage (greatclub), Improved Initiative, Favored Weapon (greatclub, mighty composite longbow), Point Blank Shot, Power Attack.

*Favored Weapon (battleaxe, greatclub):* Saablan gains a +1 competence bonus to attack and damage rolls with the battleaxe and greatclub.

*Improved Damage (greatclub):* Saablan does an additional +2 (+3 total) damage with the battleaxe.

**Giant traits:** A giant has the following traits:

- *Bellow (Ex):* All giants have the ability to bellow, causing great windy gusts to burst forth from their lungs. Anyone caught within the 20-ft. cone of this bellow must make a Reflex save (DC 12) or fall back onto the ground, and be hurled 1d4 × 10 ft. away from the giant. Giants frequently send opponents careening off a cliff with a well-timed shout.
- *Earth Bond (Su):* Giants are inextricably bound to the earth. So long as a giant is in direct contact with the earth, be it with dirt or with stone, he gains the Regenerate 1 special quality.
- *Rock Catching (Ex):* A giant can catch Small, Medium, or Large rocks (or projectiles of similar shape). Once per round, a giant that would otherwise be struck by such a rock can attempt a Reflex save to catch it as a free action. The DC is 15 for a Small rock, 20 for a Medium rock, and 25 for a Large rock. If the projectile has a magical bonus to the attack roll, the DC of the Reflex save is increased by an equal amount. A giant who is flat-footed (or otherwise denied his Dexterity bonus to AC) may not attempt this action, nor may a giant who is unaware of the attack.
- *Rock Throwing (Ex):* Adult giants are accomplished rock and caber throwers, and can hurl boulders or trees long distances. A full-grown giant can hurl rocks weighing 40 to 50 pounds each with ease. Such projectiles have a range increment of 10 feet and a maximum range of 50 feet, and inflict 3d6 damage (plus the giant's Strength modifier) on opponents. Most giants carry one or two such boulders with them while traveling, and often refresh their supplies from the side of a road.

**Magrom, Healer of Blackrock Village, Cyclops Sha 3:** CR 5; Large female giant (Cyclops); HD 3d4+9+4d8+12; hp 37; Init +0; Spd 40 ft.; AC 19, touch 10, flat-footed 15; Base Atk +4; Grp +13; Atk +9 melee (1d10+5/x2, greatclub), or +4 ranged (1d6+5/x2; large sling); Full Atk +9 melee (1d10+5/x2, greatclub), or +4 ranged (1d6+5/x2; large sling); SA Spells; SQ giant traits; AL NG; SV Fort +9, Ref +3, Will +6; Str 20, Dex 10, Con 16, Int 16, Wis 14, Cha 12.

*Skills and Feats:* Concentration +9, Craft (charms) +5, Listen +6, Search +2, Spellcraft +6, Spot +2, Survival +9; Craft Wondrous Item, Point Blank Shot.

**Giant traits:** A giant has the following traits:

- *Bellow (Ex):* All giants have the ability to bellow, causing great windy gusts to burst forth from their lungs. Anyone caught within the 20-ft. cone of this bellow must make a Reflex save (DC 12) or fall back onto the ground, and be hurled 1d4 × 10 ft. away from the giant. Giants frequently send opponents careening off a cliff with a well-timed shout.
- *Earth Bond (Su):* Giants are inextricably bound to the earth. So long as a giant is in direct contact with the earth, be it with dirt or with stone, he gains the Regenerate 1 special quality.
- *Rock Catching (Ex):* A giant can catch Small, Medium, or Large rocks (or projectiles of similar shape). Once per round, a giant that would otherwise be struck by such a rock can attempt a Reflex save to catch it as a free action. The DC is 15 for a Small rock, 20 for a Medium rock, and 25 for a Large rock. If the projectile has a magical bonus to the attack roll, the DC of the Reflex save is increased by an equal amount. A giant who is flat-footed (or otherwise denied his Dexterity bonus to AC) may not attempt this action, nor may a giant who is unaware of the attack.
- *Rock Throwing (Ex):* Adult giants are accomplished rock and caber throwers, and can hurl boulders or trees long distances. A full-grown giant can hurl rocks weighing 40 to 50 pounds each with ease. Such projectiles have a range increment of 10 feet and a maximum range of 50 feet, and inflict 3d6 damage (plus the giant's Strength modifier) on opponents. Most giants carry one or two such boulders with them while traveling, and often refresh their supplies from the side of a road.

**Shaman Spells Prepared** (5/3; save DC 13 + spell level)**:** 0 — *detect poison, mending, detect magic, read magic, light,* 1st — *endure elements, expeditious journey, identify.*

Saablan and Magrom can give the PCs the following information (some of this information is conjecture, rumor, or simply incorrect).

- Sorscha moved into the area and built her keep about five years ago.
- They know practically nothing about Sorscha, just that she is a powerful wizard. She communicates with the Cyclopes through her Sutek servants. They have never seen her.
- About a year ago, Sorscha completed the construction of the Black Tower. The Cyclopes are convinced that is when the troubles began.
- Monsters are coming to the area because of the Black Tower.
- The plant life began to die soon after construction was completed on the Black Tower. Fish from the river gained a strange, bitter taste. In spite of this, the Cyclopes still eat the fish because it is their only food source.
- They tried hunting the monsters for food, but it was too dangerous.
- Magrom and some of the other villagers have had nightmares about the tower. All they can remember of their dreams are feelings of sickness and impending doom, and the Black Tower at the center of a great, sucking vortex.
- For the last year or so, the area has been crawling with strange monsters, in increasing numbers as time has gone by.
- Some of the villagers have grown ill. They believe it to be because of the Black Tower.

- The fire giant came about six months ago, when the Blackrock villagers were beginning to starve but before many of them had left. It simply strode into the village one night swinging its massive club, leveling houses and killing the stunned inhabitants. Thanks to Saablan's quick leadership, the Cyclopes banded together and fought the creature. Dozens of the Cyclopes were slain before they could kill the giant. The creature's meat fed the entire village for almost two months. A few dried strips of meat still hang in Saablan's hut.
- Sorscha feeds monsters to the Black Tower. They have seen dozens of monsters pass through the village. They gather on the slopes of Blackrock mountain, but the group never seems to get any larger.
- Much of village was wrecked by a band of mountain trolls. They do not normally band together, do they?
- A gigantic wyrm has moved into Blackwater Lake. The lake has become hotter, and they have seen it thrash the water into a scalding, steaming froth. (There is no wyrm. The lake has become much warmer and sometimes releases great noxious clouds of gas because of increased volcanic activity from Blackrock Mountain.)

## Location 1b: Blackrock Region — Saablan's House

The largest house in the village belongs to Saablan. It is located at the south end of the village, near the dock. He has nothing of value except his weapons. Everything else has been traded for food. He shares his home with Magrom. They began a relationship not long after the troubles began.

## Location 2: Blackrock Region — Blackwater Lake

**Read aloud:** *A sickly-sweet stench, like death, permeates the air around the lake. The air is warm and moist, and wisps of steam rise from several points across the water's glassy surface. The dark blue waters ripple with sub-surface currents. The stony earth of the lakeshore is crusted with stratified lines of white deposits. No water plants wave in the underwater currents, no moss, no lichen. Perhaps a hundred yards from shore, the surface of the water suddenly seethes and bubbles, followed by a great belch of gas and steam.*

Another unforeseen side effect of the *Dimensional Confluence*'s power is the increased volcanic activity in Blackrock Mountain A year ago, this lake was cold, fed by snowmelt runoff, and teemed with fish. The center of the lake is deeper than 200 feet. The bottom drops off sharply away from the shore. The lake is still fed by the runoff from higher elevations, but today it is a mineral-rich cauldron, heated by volcanic vents in the lake's depths. The waters near the shore are tolerably warm, but some areas away from shore, above the volcanic vents, are scalding hot. These areas are identifiable by the patches of steam rising from the surface. These patches are not stationary; they shift with the invisible currents below the surface. In civilized areas, these waters would be prized for their medicinal or recreational uses, but the locals just see the lake as dangerous.

Anyone who attempts to swim or boat across the lake risks being caught in a scalding area. Any character that swims more than 50 feet from the shore has a 25% chance of being caught in one of these super-hot areas. The areas are circular, 4d20 feet in diameter. Swimmers caught in one of these areas must make a Fortitude save (DC 20 for half) every round or take 3d6 points of fire damage. There is also a 5% chance that a swimmer is engulfed in a sudden blast of volcanic gas erupting from a vent below. This superheated gas is likely to boil most living creatures instantly. If this happens, the character must make a Fortitude save (DC 30 for half) or take 10d6 points of fire damage.

## Location 3: Blackrock Region — Blackrock Mountain

**Read aloud:** *The mountain is the largest terrain feature visible. Its sides are devoid of living plants, but there are thousands of dull-gray, gnarled skeletons of once-majestic trees. Hunched among the rocks are black, twisted briars. The mountain's flat, lofty summit is wreathed in puffy clouds, and the dusting of snow is just visible in a break in the clouds.*

Characters who wish to explore the slopes of Blackrock Mountain are in for an arduous climb. The summit rises 10,000 feet above the lowlands. There is little to be found except wandering monsters. The top of the mountain is covered with snow, and there is a small lake of snowmelt in the center of the crater. The crater is about 500 feet deep, 2,000 feet across. The lake in the crater is unknown to everyone in the area. No one has explored the summit of the mountain in living memory. Treat this lake as identical to Blackwater Lake.

## Location 4: Blackrock Region — Sorscha's Keep

**Read aloud:** *The massive shape of Blackrock Mountain towers above, its naked basalt heights reaching into the hazy sky. The rocky path leads straight toward two striking structures. The first is a fortified stone keep, perhaps fifty feet tall, sixty feet square at the base, tapering slightly toward the top. There is only one visible opening, a formidable-looking iron door. Looming behind the keep, perhaps a hundred paces up the rocky slope, is an ominous thing that appears to be made from a solid chunk of obsidian. It is shaped like a squat black cylinder, standing upright, perhaps eighty feet tall and a hundred feet in diameter. However, more immediate than either of these things are the monsters gathered on the slope below the keep.*

Sitting placidly on the rocky mountain slope are numerous types of creatures of various types. Each creature is gathered with its own kind. All of them are standing or sitting, facing the Black Tower, looking up at it with half-lidded eyes. They appear to be entranced. They do nothing to harm the PCs; in fact, they pay no attention to the PCs and do not attack unless provoked. See **Table 4–2** for descriptions.

None of these creatures has any treasure.

## Table 4–2: Entranced Creatures Table

| Encounter Number | Description |
|---|---|
| 4a | Fire Giant (1) (CR 10, *Monsters and Lairs, page* 90). |
| 4b. | Thunic Wyverns (2) (CR 8, *Monsters and Lairs, page* 188). |
| 4c. | Thunic Hydra (1) (CR 14, *Monsters and Lairs, page* 183). |
| 4d. | Kcarrn Fal (1) (CR 16, *Monsters and Lairs, page* 116). |
| 4e. | Shade Harpies (5) (CR 5, *Monsters and Lairs, page* 108). |
| 4f. | Mountain Trolls (4) (CR 7, *Monsters and Lairs, page* 194). |

**Creatures:** See entries in **Table 4–1** and descriptions below.

**Giant, Firefall (1):** CR 10; Gargantuan giant (fire); HD 15d8+90; hp 157; Init –1; Spd 30 ft.; AC 18, touch 5, flat-footed 17; Base Atk +9; Grp +31; Atk +19 melee (2d8+15(19–20/x2), huge greatsword), or +10 ranged (2d6+10 plus 2d6 fire/x2, rock); Full Atk +19/+14/+9 melee (2d8+15(19–20/x2), huge greatsword), or +10 ranged (2d6+10 plus 2d6 fire/x3, rock); Space/Reach 20 ft./20 ft.; SA Animate fire; SQ Giant traits, fire subtype; AL LE; SV Fort +14, Ref +4, Will +5; Str 31, Dex 9, Con 22, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 11.

*Skills and Feats:* Climb +11, Jump +11, Spot +7; Cleave, Great Cleave, Power Attack, Sunder.

*Animate Fire (Su):* A fire giant may control flame within 100 ft., commanding it to rise into a great torrent, or to extinguish itself completely. The giant may cause the fire to spread across open terrain so long as there is some source of food for its flame, thereby increasing the size of the fire by twice its current square footage per round. This ability does not grant the giant any special attacks, though characters caught within the newly expanded flames suffer fire damage as normal.

**Giant traits:** A giant has the following traits:

- *Bellow (Ex):* All giants have the ability to bellow, causing great windy gusts to burst forth from their lungs. Anyone caught within the 20-ft. cone of this bellow must make a Reflex save (DC 12) or fall back onto the ground, and be hurled 1d4 × 10 ft. away from the giant. Giants frequently send opponents careening off a cliff with a well-timed shout.
- *Earth Bond (Su):* Giants are inextricably bound to the earth. So long as a giant is in direct contact with the earth, be it with dirt or with stone, he gains the Regenerate 1 special quality.
- *Rock Catching (Ex):* A giant can catch Small, Medium, or Large rocks (or projectiles of similar shape). Once per round, a giant that would otherwise be struck by such a rock can attempt a Reflex save to catch it as a free action. The DC is 15 for a Small rock, 20 for a Medium rock, and 25 for a Large rock. If the projectile has a magical bonus to the attack roll, the DC of the Reflex save is increased by an equal amount. A giant who is flat-footed (or otherwise denied his Dexterity bonus to AC) may not attempt this action, nor may a giant who is unaware of the attack.
- *Rock Throwing (Ex):* Adult giants are accomplished rock and caber throwers, and can hurl boulders or trees long distances. A full-grown giant can hurl rocks weighing 40 to 50 pounds each with ease. Such projectiles have a range increment of 10 feet and a maximum range of 50 feet, and inflict 3d6 damage (plus the giant's Strength modifier) on opponents. Most giants carry one or two such boulders with them while traveling, and often refresh their supplies from the side of a road.

*Fire Subtype:* A creature with the fire subtype has immunity to fire. It has vulnerability to cold, which means it takes half again as much (+50%) damage as normal from cold, regardless of whether a saving throw is allowed, or if the save is a success or failure.

**Thunic Wyverns (2):** CR 8; Huge dragon; HD 9d12+18; hp 86; Init +1; Spd 20 ft., fly 60 ft. (poor); AC 20 touch 9, flat-footed 19; Base Atk +9; Grp +21; Atk +11 melee (1d8+4/x2, claw); Full Atk +6 melee (1d6+4 plus poison/x2, sting), or +6 melee (2d6+2/x2, bite), or +6 melee (1d8+6/x2, 2 wings); or +11 melee (1d8+4/x2, 2 claws); Space/Reach 15 ft./10 ft.; SA Poison, improved grab; SQ Scent; AL LE; SV Fort +8, Ref +7, Will +8; Str 18, Dex 13, Con 14, Int 12, Wis 14, Cha 13.

*Skills and Feats:* Bluff +13, Decipher Script +17, Hide +5, Intimidate +13, Knowledge (nature) +17, Knowledge (any one) +17, Listen +14, Move Silently +13, Search +17, Spot +14*, Survival +14; Flyby Attack, Hover, Power Attack, Snatch. *The Thunic wyvern receives a +4 racial bonus to Spot checks when flying during daylight hours.

*Poison (Ex):* Sting, Fortitude DC 16; initial and secondary damage 1d6 Constitution. The save DC is Constitution-based.

*Improved Grab (Ex):* If a Thunic wyvern hits with a melee weapon (usually a claw or bite attack), it deals normal damage and attempts to start a grapple as a free action without provoking an attack of opportunity. No initial touch attack is required.

*Scent:* A Thunic wyvern can detect opponents within 30 feet by sense of smell. If the opponent is upwind, the range increases to 60 feet; if downwind, it drops to 15 feet. Strong scents, such as smoke or rotting garbage, can be detected at twice the ranges noted above. Overpowering scents, such as skunk musk or troglodyte stench, can be detected at triple normal range. When a Thunic wyvern detects a scent, the exact location of the source is not revealed—only its presence somewhere within range. The Thunic wyvern can take a move action to note the direction of the scent.

Whenever the Thunic wyvern comes within 5 feet of the source, the Thunic wyvern pinpoints the source's location.

**Thunic Hydra (1):** CR 9; Huge magical beast; HD 10d10+35; hp 90; Init +1; Spd 20 ft., swim 10 ft.; AC 24 touch 9, flat-footed 23; Base Attack +10; Grp +26; Atk +16 melee (2d6+8/x2, bite); Full Atk +11 melee (2d6+8/x2, 7 bites); Space/Reach 15 ft./10 ft.; SA Breath Weapon; SQ Fast Healing 16; AL CE; SV Fort +12, Ref +8, Will +1; Str 26, Dex 13, Con 20, Int 6, Wis 6, Cha 10.

*Skills and Feats:* Listen +4, Spot +5; Great Cleave, Improved Sunder, Power Attack.

*Breath Weapon (Su):* Each head has a unique breath weapon.

- *Black Head:* 30-ft. line, gout of caustic flame, free action once every 1d4+1 rounds; 4d8 acid and 4d8 fire, Reflex DC 20 half. The save DC is Constitution-based.
- *Blue Head:* 60-ft. line, bolt of lightning, free action once every 1d4+1 rounds; 6d8 electricity, Reflex DC 20 half. The save DC is Constitution-based.
- *Green Head:* 10-ft. cloud of poisonous gas, free action once every 1d4+1 rounds; initial damage 1d4 Strength, secondary damage 1d4 Dexterity, Foritude DC 20 negates. The save DC is Constitution-based.
- *Horned Head:* 60-ft. cone, gout of flame, free action once every 1d6+1 rounds; 12d8 fire, Reflex DC 20 half. The save DC is Constitution-based.
- *Purple Head:* 30-ft. cone, cone of misdirection, free action once every 1d4+1 rounds; *confusion*, Will DC 20 negates. Caster level 12th. The save DC is Constitution-based.
- *Red Head:* 60-ft. line, line of acid, free action once every 1d4+1 rounds; 6d8 acid, Reflex DC 20 half. The save DC is Constitution-based.
- *Yellow Head:* 30-ft. line, line of decay, free action once every 4d4+4 rounds; *horrid wilting*. Caster level 12th. The save DC is Constitution-based.

*Fast Healing 16 (Ex):* A Thunic hydra regains hit points at 16 hp per round. Fast healing does not restore hit points lost from starvation, thirst, or suffocation and it does not allow a creature to regrow lost body parts. Unless otherwise stated, it does not allow lost body parts to be reattached.

**Kcarrn Fal (1):** CR 12; Huge magical beast; HD 14d10+101; hp 175; Init +5; Spd 50 ft.; AC 31, touch 9, flat-footed 30; Base Atk +14, Grp +30; Atk +20 melee (2d4+8/x2, pincers); Full Atk +20/+20 melee (2d4+8/x2, 2 pincers); Space/Reach 15 ft./10 ft.; SA Constrict, improved grab, soul leech, spell-like abilities; SQ Damage reduction 15/adamantine or magic, spell resistance 24; AL N; SV Fort +16, Ref +10, Will +7; Str 27, Dex 12, Con 24, Int 8, Wis 16, Cha 10.

*Skills and Feats:* Climb +12, Jump +11, Listen +10, Spot +10; Cleave, Improved Initiative, Power Attack, Toughness.

*Spell-like Abilities:* 3/day — *scare* (DC 12); 1/day — *phantasmal killer* (DC 14). The save DCs are Charisma-based. Caster level 15th.

*Improved Grab (Ex):* To use this ability, the kcarrn fal must hit with a pincer attack. It can then attempt to start a grapple as a free action without provoking an attack of opportunity. If it wins the grapple check, it establishes a hold and can constrict. Alternately, it can use its sting attack each round to inject its poison or to soul leech its prey.

*Constrict (Ex):* A kcarrn fal deals pincer damage with a successful grapple check.

*Poison (Ex):* Sting, Fortitude DC 24, initial damage 1d3 Dexterity, secondary damage 1d3 Constitution. The save DC is Constitution-based.

*Soul Leech (Sp):* Sting, Will DC 17, initial damage 1d4 Charisma, secondary damage 1 Charisma drain. If this ability score loss reduces the opponent's Charisma to 0, the victim must make an additional DC 17 Will save or remain in a coma for 2d4 weeks, regardless of whether or not this damage is cured. The kcarrn fal can change this damage at will to affect Wisdom instead of Charisma. The save DC is Charisma-based.

The kcarrn fal is sated only when its victim suffers ability score drain. After draining 2d8 points of Wisdom or Charisma, it retreats from combat to digest its meal in private.

**Shade Harpies (5):** CR 4; Medium monstrous humanoid; HD 8d8; hp 32; Init +2; Spd 20 ft., fly 80 ft. (average); AC 17, touch 12, flat-footed 15; Base Atk +8; Grp +8; Atk +8 melee (1d4 plus berserk/x2, claw); Full Atk +8 melee (1d4 plus berserk/x2, 2 claws); Space/Reach 5 ft./5 ft.; SA Berserk, mourning song; SQ Damage reduction 2/-, harpy murder, immunities; AL CE; SV Fort +2, Ref +8, Will +6; Str 10, Dex 15, Con 10, Int 7, Wis 10, Cha 15.

*Skills and Feats:* Bluff +4, Listen +3, Perform (song) +9, Spot +3; Dodge, Flyby Attack.

*Berserk (Su):* Creatures struck by a shade harpy's claws must succeed at a DC 16 Fortitude save or suffer the effects of *feeblemind* and *rage* for 1d4+4 rounds. Berserk victims attack the nearest creature, friend or foe, while the shade harpy flies away to safety. This tactic works best during a flyby attack. The harpy targets the largest 'food source' and lets the victim turn on his own comrades. Later, the shade harpy can feed on the remains of the battle or terrorize the party, attacking the weakest PC in the melee. The save DC is Charisma-based.

*Harpy Murder (Ex):* Harpies travel in murders. While in a murder an individual harpy gains a morale bonus to her attacks, weapon damage, ability checks, skill checks and saving throws equal to the number of other harpies in the murder (i.e. a harpy in a murder with six other harpies would gain a +6 morale bonus to her attacks, weapon damage, checks and saves while in that murder). As members of the murder are dispatched or separated from the murder (by a distance of at least 250 ft.), the bonus reduces immediately. This bonus extends to all darkfeast, famine, madness, and shade harpies in the murder.

*Immunities (Ex):* Shade harpies are particularly resilient. They are immune to all diseases, mundane and magical, including mummy rot and lycanthropy.

*Mourning Song (Su):* Unlike other harpies, shade harpies constantly sing their mourning song. More of a murmur than a song, every creature within 60 ft. of the shade harpy that hears this song becomes fatigued and shaken. There is no save. Much like a bard's song, the shade harpy can continue singing while performing other tasks. All harpies are immune to the effect of the mourning song.

**Mountain Trolls (4):** CR 7; Large giant; HD 9d8+63; hp 99; Init +0; Spd 30 ft.; AC 21, touch 9, flat-footed 21; Base Atk +6; Grp +18; Atk +13 melee (1d6+8/x2, claw); Full Atk +13 melee (1d6+8/x2, 2 claws), +8 melee (1d8+4/x2, bite); Space/Reach 10 ft./10 ft.; SA Rend; SQ Darkvision 90 ft., regeneration 5, scent; AL LE; SV Fort +13, Ref +3, Will +6; Str 26, Dex 11, Con 25, Int 8, Wis 12, Cha 8.

*Skills and Feats:* Listen +9, Spot +9; Alertness, Iron Will.

*Rend:* After 2 successful claw attacks, 2d6+12 automatic additional damage.

*Darkvision, 90 ft.:* A troll can see in the dark with no light source at all, out to a range of 90 feet. Darkvision is black and white only (colors cannot be discerned). It does not allow the troll to see anything that it could not see otherwise—invisible objects are still invisible, and illusions are still visible as what they seem to be. Likewise, darkvision subjects the troll to gaze attacks normally. The presence of light does not spoil darkvision.

*Regeneration 5 (Ex):* Fire and acid deal normal damage to a troll, while all other damage is converted to subdual damage. If a troll loses a limb or body part, the missing limb or chunk of flesh regenerates in 3d6 minutes. The troll can reattach the severed member instantly by holding it flush against the stump. If a troll's head is severed, its body continues to function for 4d4 rounds, during which time the troll desperately attempts to reattach its head in the above fashion. If it fails to do so in the allotted time, the troll dies.

As usual, the troll is vulnerable to attacks that do not deal hit point damage, such as most poisons and disintegration; similarly, it is affected normally by starvation, thirst, and suffocation. A troll can be killed by massive damage normally; the massive trauma simply shuts down the troll's nervous system, preventing it from regenerating the damage.

*Rend (Ex):* If a troll hits with both claw attacks in a single turn, it latches onto its opponent's body and rends its flesh. This attack automatically deals an additional 2d6+9 points of damage.

*Scent:* A troll can detect opponents within 30 feet by sense of smell. If the opponent is upwind, the range increases to 60 feet; if downwind, it drops to 15 feet. Strong scents, such as smoke or rotting garbage, can be detected at twice the ranges noted above. Overpowering scents, such as skunk musk or troglodyte stench, can be detected at triple normal range. When a troll detects a scent, the exact location of the source is not revealed—only its presence somewhere within range. The troll can take a move action to note the direction of the scent.

Whenever the troll comes within 5 feet of the source, the troll pinpoints the source's location.

# Part 2: Locations and Encounters — Sorsha's Keep

The numbered encounters below refer to the map of Sorscha's Keep.

## Location 4.1: Sorscha's Keep — The Front Gate *(map page 486)*

**Read aloud:** *The only opening visible in the stone keep is the front gate. Its thick iron is covered in rust, but with strength and integrity intact. A massive circular knocker hangs from the mouth of a dragon's head cast in brass.*

If the characters knock on the door, they summon one of Sorscha's house servants to answer the door, a male Sutek named Gliss-saal. These creatures are exceptionally dim-witted and weak-willed. Their belief in Sorscha's omnipotence is so complete that they cannot conceive of anyone who is not invited attempting to enter her keep.

The servant asks, "You are here to see the Mistress?" If the PCs say, "Yes," the servant tells them the Mistress is away, but they can wait for her if they desire. If not, the servant tells them to go away, and it shuts the gate. They can bring the servant back by knocking on the door again. Now convincing the servant to admit them requires a Bluff check opposed by the servant's Sense Motive check.

If they convince the servant to admit them, he agrees to let them wait for the Mistress, taking them to the dining hall on the second floor (*see Location 4.5*) and leaves them there. They are not to leave the room until the Mistress comes. While the servant is taking them to the dining room, he asks them if they have come to see the Mistress's Great Triumph.

### Getting into Sorscha's Keep

The easiest way for the PCs to get in is to talk their way in. When the PCs get into the keep, they should be thinking: maybe this was a bit too simple. This is a *keep*, right? Why would it be so easy to get into a keep? The PCs should be a little uneasy that maybe they are walking into a trap. They are correct. There is little in the Keep that Sorscha cannot easily replace. Her most valuable assets, such as treasure and magic items, are in the Tower. To reach those, the PCs have to go *through* the tower, and she feels that the Black Tower is all the security she needs.

If, on the other hand, the PCs take the brute force approach and attack the gate, the servants are capable of locking the entrance and making the intruders pay for every inch of progress. In that event, Sorscha is likely to return before the PCs gain entrance. When she learns of someone attempting to enter her home by force, she captures them and throws them in the Tower minus all their weapons and equipment, all but assuring their deaths.

The PCs can gain the following bits of information from their escort with successful Bluff or Gather Information checks (DC 10).

- Sorscha is due to return in a day or two.
- When she returns, she intends to complete her Great Triumph. The servant does not know what this is, just that it is important and involves the Black Tower.

PCs who take the brute force approach and attempt to enter the keep by force are in for a tussle. The gate is sturdy. Attacking the gate alerts the servants inside the keep, who are smart enough to know when their Mistress's home is under attack. They immediately lower the portcullises and man the murder holes (*see Location 4.2*). They wait in this defensive posture until Sorscha returns.

**Front Gate:** 3 in. thick; hardness 10; hp 90; Break DC 30.

**Creatures:** Four Sutek servants.

**Sutek servants (4):** CR 1/2; Medium Male monstrous humanoid; HD 1d8+1; hp 5; Init +1; Spd 30 ft. swim 60 ft.; AC 13, touch 11, flat-footed 12; Base Atk +1; Grp +1; Atk +2 melee (1d4/x2, claw); Full Atk +2 melee (1d4/x2, claw); Space/Reach 5 ft./5 ft.; SQ Sutek traits, low-light vision; AL N; SV Fort +1, Ref +4, Will +2; Str 10, Dex 13, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 8, Cha 6.

*Skills and Feats:* Hide +5, Move Silently +5, Search +4, Spot +4, Swim +8*, Survival +4; Weapon Finesse (claw). *+8 racial bonus to Swim checks. A sutek may always choose to take 10 on a Swim check, even if rushed or threatened when swimming. Sutek can use the run action when swimming, provided they can swim in a straight line.

*Sutek Traits (Ex):* Sutek benefit from a number of racial traits.

- *Claws:* Sutek are never unarmed, as their four-fingered hands sport vicious claws. A sutek deals 1d4 unarmed damage (adjusted by Strength modifier normally). Further, a sutek does not provoke an attack of opportunity when he attacks an armed opponent while unarmed himself. Neither does the sutek get an attack of opportunity against unarmed creatures that attack him (unless the sutek is carrying a weapon).
- *Low-Light Vision:* Sutek possess low-light vision, and can see twice as far as a human in starlight, moonlight, torchlight, and similar conditions of poor illumination.
- *Water Breathing:* Ancient sutek were amphibious creatures, and their modern descendants retain a pair of gills running lengthwise down their backs, parallel to the spine. Sutek may breathe water freely, though they suffer the effects of gas and other methods of suffocation normally.

*Possessions:* None.

## Location 4.2: Sorscha's Keep — The Entryway

**Read aloud:** *This entranceway is as fortified and deadly as any castle's. Each stone wall and the ceiling is lined with narrow slits, perfect for firing arrows through from the other side, or dropping things. Each end of the short passage is guarded by a portcullis. At the far end lies another door much like the front gate.*

Unless the PCs have shown themselves to be hostile, the portcullises are both raised when they enter, and the far door is open. Otherwise, the portcullises are down and the far door is securely locked and bolted. The far door is identical to the front gate.

**Portcullises:** 2 in. thick; hardness 10; hp 60; Break/Lift DC 25.

Sorscha's servants and guards are able to fire arrows through the murder holes at anyone trapped in the entryway. Firing arrows through the holes from inside the entryway is subject to a –10 circumstance penalty to hit. Only slashing and piercing weapons can be used to attempt melee attacks through the murder holes, and they are subject to the same –10 circumstance penalty to hit.

Meanwhile, defenders on the second floor pour boiling oil down through the holes in the ceiling. The boiling oil has a 5 foot burst radius. Anyone caught in the burst radius is hit and takes 4d6 fire damage from the tremendous heat, which can be reduced to half by a successful Reflex save (DC 15). If the oil is set alight, a firestorm erupts that lasts for 2d6 rounds. Any creature caught in the burning oil takes 4d6 fire damage per round. The entryway of the castle is built completely from stone; it is not harmed by use of burning oil in the entryway. The castle is stocked with enough oil for four applications.

If the oil is depleted, the defenders turn to boiling water. Scalding hot water and steam causes horrible burns to anyone caught in the area of effect, resulting in 2d6 fire damage in the round the water is dropped.

### Inside Sorscha's Keep

**Once the PCs are inside, the servants do not allow them to wander the house freely. They are ordered to remain in the dining hall until the Mistress returns, even though this event could be days away. The servants are not concerned with giving the PCs comfortable lodging, but if they obey the rules and stay in the dining room, the servants offer them excellent food and drink. The servants check on them about every 6d6 minutes to make sure they have not left the dining hall. If one or more of the PCs is discovered to have left the dining hall, the servants assume the "visitors" are really intruders and try to apprehend them. They have no compunctions about killing enemies of the Mistress.**

## Location 4.3: Sorscha's Keep — The Foyer (EL 6)

**Read aloud:** *This room looks much like the entryway, with another portcullis and heavy iron door on the far side, but there are no murder holes in the walls. The walls, floor, and arched ceiling are bare stone.*

Unless the PCs have shown themselves to be hostile, the portcullises are both raised and the door is open. Otherwise, the portcullis is down and the door is securely locked and bolted. The door is identical to the front gate.

**Foyer Door:** 3 in. thick; hardness 10; hp 90; Break DC 30.

Four Sutek guards are stationed here.

**Creatures:** Four Sutek guards, 2nd-level fighters.

**Sutek Guards (4), Ftr 2:** CR 2; Medium Male monstrous humanoid, Sutek; HD 2d10+5; hp 16; Init +5; Spd 30 ft., swim 60 ft.; AC 18, touch 12, flat-footed 16; Base Atk +2; Grp +4; Atk +5 melee (1d6+2(19–20/x2), short sword); Full Atk Short sword +5 melee (1d6+2(19–20/x2), short sword) or +4 melee (1d4+2/x2, 2 claws); Space/Reach 5 ft./5 ft.; SA —; SQ Sutek traits, low-light vision; AL N; SV Fort +4, Ref +1, Will –1; Str 14, Dex 13, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 8, Cha 6.

*Skills and Feats:* Hide +5, Move Silently +5, Jump +4, Search +4, Spot +4, Swim +8*, Survival +4; Favored Weapon (short sword), Improved Initiative, Toughness, Weapon Finesse (claw). *+8 racial bonus to Swim checks. A sutek may always choose to take 10 on a Swim check, even if rushed or threatened when swimming. Sutek can use the run action when swimming, provided they can swim in a straight line.

*Sutek Traits (Ex):* Sutek benefit from a number of racial traits.

- *Claws:* Sutek are never unarmed, as their four-fingered hands sport vicious claws. A sutek deals 1d4 unarmed damage (adjusted by Strength modifier normally). Further, a sutek does not provoke an attack of opportunity when he attacks an armed opponent while unarmed himself. Neither does the sutek get an attack of opportunity against unarmed creatures that attack him (unless the sutek is carrying a weapon).
- *Low-Light Vision:* Sutek possess low-light vision, and can see twice as far as a human in starlight, moonlight, torchlight, and similar conditions of poor illumination.
- *Water Breathing:* Ancient sutek were amphibious creatures, and their modern descendants retain a pair of gills running lengthwise down their backs, parallel to the spine. Sutek may breathe water freely, though they suffer the effects of gas and other methods of suffocation normally.

*Possessions:* Short sword.

**Read aloud:** *On the other side of the heavy iron door, on the wall, is a heavy winch. The walls, floor, and arched ceiling of the hallway are bare, dark stone.*

The winch operates the portcullis on the other side of the door.

## Location 4.4: Sorscha's Keep — Guard Rooms (EL 4)

**Read aloud:** *This room is the living quarters of the guards in the other room. It smells of reptiles. In the corner on the wall is a heavy winch.*

These two rooms are identical. The winch operates the portcullis on the other side of the wall from its location. The room contains sleeping spaces for four Sutek guards. Two Sutek guards are off duty here and asleep 90% of the time, unless the alarm is raised. In that case, they are awake and ready to fight.

**Creatures:** Two Sutek guards, 2nd-level fighters (*see Location 4.3* for stats). They are asleep 90% of the time.

**Sutek Guards (4):** hp 13, 14, 16, 16.

## Location 4.5: Sorscha's Keep — Dining Room

**Read aloud:** *This room is richly appointed, with a great wooden dining table surrounded by richly padded chairs. The walls are covered with frescoes depicting a strange race with tentacles or snakes in place of hair. This strange race is shown in dominion over and in commerce with other recognizable races, including humans and Nothrogs. In the center of one fresco is a stylized depiction of Bascaron looming above a ravaged land and ruined cities. The floor is covered with a luxurious, brightly colored carpet.*

Under the dining table, under the carpet, are holes in the floor used to attack intruders trapped in the entryway (*see Location 4.2* above). Through these holes, the defenders would pour boiling oil or fire arrows.

Those who study the frescoes can make Knowledge (history) checks (DC 15) to learn some of the history of the Medusan race. They can learn the following bits of information with each check.

- These frescoes are about an ancient race known as the Medusans.
- The Medusan civilization was extensive and advanced, covering large areas of what are now the Shattered Lands.
- The Medusan civilization was ravaged by the coming of Bascaron.
- The Medusans rebuilt as best they could, but their society was not what it once was.
- Finally, the Medusans were destroyed by an invasion of knights, Nothrogs, and strange hunched humanoid shapes.

## Location 4.6: Sorscha's Keep — Artifact Room

**Read aloud:** *Much like the dining room in its décor, this room is dominated by a table along the wall that holds several statues. These statues vary wildly in design and materials, but share stylistic details. One is a polished statue of alabaster that depicts a noble, majestic female humanoid figure, her arms raised in supplication or benediction. She appears to be of the tentacle-haired race shown in the dining room frescoes. Another statue depicts the same female figure, this time*

*in polished rose quartz, standing over a terrified Nothrog; strangely, the Nothrog in this depiction is half limestone, and the sculptor has masterfully merged the two different materials. The third statue appears to be cast from solid iron, and is covered with a film of rust. It shows a male figure with a slight build wielding a long hooked spear, the tentacles on his head extended like spikes.*

*Treasure:* These statues are some of the last artifacts of the Medusan civilization. Sorscha prizes them, and displays them proudly. Each statue weighs 50 pounds. If they are stolen, she hunts the thief relentlessly. Because of their rarity, beauty, and quality, each of them would bring 2,000 gp. Any merchant who bought them, however, would soon meet an unpleasant end.

## Location 4.7: Sorscha's Keep — Kitchen

**Read aloud:** *The air is hot, smoky, and moist, heated by the crackling fireplace in one corner. The tables in the center of the room and laden with haunches of half-carved meat. There is a sick stench of decay. In the corner opposite the fireplace is a pile of stripped bones and skulls, some of which appear to be from sentient races. Hanging in the fireplace is a large black cauldron, its contents steaming fiercely. Hanging from the walls and ceiling throughout the room are pots, pans, knives, cleavers, and other kitchen utensils.*

During daylight hours, there are 2d4 Sutek servants here preparing meals for the other servants. When Sorscha is present, they prepare meals for her as well.

**Creatures:** 2d4 Sutek servants *(see Location 4.1 for stats)*. They are only here during daylight hours.

**Sutek Guards (2d4):** hp as rolled.

## Location 4.8: Sorscha's Keep — Servants' Room

**Read aloud:** *This is where the Sutek servants sleep. The room is dark, dirty and unkempt, thick with reptilian stench. One wall is lined with crude sleeping pallets.*

This room holds nothing of interest to the PCs.

## Location 4.9: Sorscha's Keep — Storage

**Read aloud:** *This room is dark and cramped. The walls are lined with narrow, dusty shelves laden with jars. Stacked under the shelves are sacks of grain, barrels of pickled fish and meat, and bundles of dried herbs.*

The amount of food stored here could feed fifty individuals for at least two months. Sorscha's household has not suffered the effects of the famine like the rest of the region.

## Location 4.10: Sorscha's Keep — Guard Room (EL 7)

**Read aloud:** *This room is kept clean and free from debris, but the air is thick with reptilian smell. Four heavily worn cloth pallets are positioned together for the guards to sit on. There is a rack with four spears on the wall beside the entrance.*

Four Sutek guards are stationed here. If the alarm is raised, their orders are to remain here until the nature of the threat is determined. If there is an attack at the gate, they go to join the defense.

These are the toughest of Sorscha's Sutek servants. They are led by a seasoned veteran fighter named Ss'Sithus. The others are identical to the other Sutek guards.

**Creatures:** Four Sutek guards, 2nd-level fighters *(see Location 4.3* for stats); Ss'Sithus, a 5th-level fighter.

**Sutek Guards (4):** hp 20, 22, 25, 24.

**Ss'Sithus, Ftr5:** CR 5; Medium Male monstrous humanoid, Sutek; HD 5d10+10; hp 41; Init +5; Spd 30 ft. swim 60 ft.; AC 18, touch 11, flat-footed 17; Base Atk +5; Grp +8; Atk +9 melee (1d6+6(19–20/x2), short sword); Full Atk +9 melee (1d6+5(19–20/x2), short sword) or +6 ranged (1d6+4/x2, javelin); SA —; SQ Sutek traits, low-light vision; AL LE; SV Fort +6, Ref +2, Will +2, Str 16, Dex 13, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 6.

*Skills and Feats:* Climb +8, Jump +8, Swim +8*, Survival +4; Favored Weapon (short sword, javelin), Improved Damage (short sword), Improved Initiative, Power Attack, Toughness, Weapon Finesse (claw). *+8 racial bonus to Swim checks. A sutek may always choose to take 10 on a Swim check, even if rushed or threatened when swimming. Sutek can use the run action when swimming, provided they can swim in a straight line.

*Sutek Traits (Ex):* Sutek benefit from a number of racial traits.

- *Claws:* Sutek are never unarmed, as their four-fingered hands sport vicious claws. A sutek deals 1d4 unarmed damage (adjusted by Strength modifier normally). Further, a sutek does not provoke an attack of opportunity when he attacks an armed opponent while unarmed himself. Neither does the sutek get an attack of opportunity against unarmed creatures that attack him (unless the sutek is carrying a weapon).
- *Low-Light Vision:* Sutek possess low-light vision, and can see twice as far as a human in starlight, moonlight, torchlight, and similar conditions of poor illumination.
- *Water Breathing:* Ancient sutek were amphibious creatures, and their modern descendants retain a pair of gills running lengthwise down their backs, parallel to the spine. Sutek may breathe water freely, though they suffer the effects of gas and other methods of suffocation normally.

*Possessions:* Short sword.

## Location 4.11: Sorscha's Keep — Sorscha's Spell Chamber

**Read aloud:** *This large room is divided slightly off-center by a back-to-back row of bookshelves. On the right side of the division is a large magic circle inscribed in the stone floor. Parts of the circle are spattered with dark stains. Opposite the door is a wide, full-length mirror. On the other side of the bookshelves is a large, wrought-iron staircase climbing upward. The walls are covered with parchments bearing strange drawings and arcane diagrams.*

Characters who make a Knowledge (arcana) check (DC 15) learn that the arcane diagrams describe convergence of extra-dimensional planes and that such a convergence is impossible in the natural universe. Nevertheless, most of the diagrams appear to depend on just such an occurrence. If the character makes another skill check (DC 25), he can determine that these diagrams are incomplete somehow, as if the artist had reached the limits of his knowledge. Characters can also make a Knowledge (architecture and engineering) check (DC 15) to reveal that the drawings appear to be plans or conceptual sketches of strange clockwork devices. None of the drawings shows a complete machine, only parts. If a character makes a Knowledge (architecture and engineering) check (DC 25), however, he learns that all the separate pieces make up one large machine with numerous chambers, and that these drawings are developmental, early thoughts and designs. All the annotations on the drawings and diagrams are written in the common language, in a graceful, flowing script.

The books in the bookcases are mostly written in the Medusan language and contain an extensive history of the Medusan race. However, there are many other arcane tomes on the subject of extra-dimensional theory, mathematics, and history.

*Treasure:* A successful Search check (DC 20) reveals a small cache of the following magical scrolls: *fly, gaseous form, lightning bolt, nondetection,* and *summon monster III.* Sorscha uses the mirror for *scrying.*

## Location 4.12: Sorscha's Keep — Holding Cells

**Read aloud:** *When the door to this hallway is opened, the smell of death rolls out. On either side of the corridor are small, iron-bound wooden doors. The doors are only 5 feet tall. They have a stout bar in the middle and a slot near the bottom.*

The cells are small, cramped, and pitch-dark. A sparse scattering of straw on the stone floor gives the air a dusty odor below the overriding stench of decay. The ceiling is no higher than the five-foot door.

These cells are where Sorscha keeps prisoners for whom she has immediate plans. All the cells are identical. Toward the southern end of the hallway, the smell of death is strongest. The cell in the southwest corner holds the remains of a dwarf explorer who crossed Sorscha's path. She was unfamiliar with this strange subterranean race, so she took him prisoner as a specimen for study and interrogation. When she was finished with him, she simply let him die of thirst and starvation to test his hardiness.

## Location 4.13: Sorscha's Keep — Sorscha's Chamber

**Read aloud:** *As richly decorated as the chambers of any noblewoman, this room is dominated by the canopied bed on the far wall. The fireplace is cold and dark, and the large wooden bathtub beside the fireplace is empty. One wall is lined with bookshelves, a beautiful wooden wardrobe, and a luxurious divan upholstered in silk. Beside the divan stands a seven-foot statue of white marble shot with blood-red veins depicting a tentacle-haired female figure which gazes down into the terrified face of a kneeling woman whose head she holds in both hands. The other walls are dominated by beautiful tapestries of idyllic woodland scenes.*



This is Sorscha's home. She considers herself a noblewoman, the last of the Medusan race, and decorates appropriately. Offering the services of her pets to the highest bidder has gained her tremendous wealth. She used some of this wealth for her home's rich appointments, but she is not grossly hedonistic. To protect her wealth, she keeps little of it here. The total amount is unknown, kept in numerous secret locations known only to Sorscha herself. However, a small chest beside her bed contains the wealth necessary to maintain her Keep. The chest is protected by a poison needle trap.

**Poison Needle Trap:** CR 3; mechanical; touch trigger; automatic reset; Atk +8 ranged (1, plus baby wyvern venom poison, Fort save (DC 14), 2d4 Con initial damage, 2d4 Con secondary damage); Search (DC 22); Disable Device (DC 20).

*Treasure:* small chest containing: 5,500 gp, 1,500 sp, 3 gems worth 1000 gp each, and 5 gems worth 500 gp each.

## Location 4.14: Sorscha's Keep — Secret Study

**Read aloud:** *This room is as plainly furnished as the previous chamber was luxurious. It contains only a writing desk, chair, and another set of bookshelves. The walls are covered with parchments scrawled with strange diagrams and drawings. On the floor on the south end of the room is a magical circle about eight feet in diameter. The air above it shifts like heat waves on a desert rock.*

The magic circle is the *teleportation circle* by which Sorscha enters the Black Tower. Aside from the entrance on the top of the Black Tower (*see Location 5.9*), this is the only way into the tower. Any creature that crosses the circle's boundary is immediately *teleported* to **Location 5.1** in the Black Tower. The *teleportation* is one-way only. If the proper command word is spoken before stepping into the circle, however, the subject is *teleported* to **Location 5.9**. Only Sorscha knows this command word, which is not written anywhere. The *teleportation circle* in **Location 5.9** is two-way, bringing the subject from there to this location. Characters who stand near this circle may make Listen checks (DC 15) to hear the sounds coming through from the tower: strange mechanical noises from the sounds of the clockwork mechanism.

Characters who make a Knowledge (arcana) check (DC 20) learn that the arcane diagrams here further describe the convergence of extra-dimensional planes at a single point, and that this single point is artificial, a construct. If the character makes another skill check (DC 25), he can determine that these diagrams, although incomplete, are more advanced than any the Accordlands have ever seen. Characters can make Knowledge (architecture and engineering) checks (DC 20) to discover that the drawings of the strange clockwork device are much more detailed here. There are also lists of building and mechanical materials necessary to build some large clockwork device. If a character makes a Knowledge (architecture and engineering) check (DC 25), he realizes these drawings are nearly complete. The design calculations are much more precise and profound. On these papers, some of the drawings and diagrams are written in the familiar graceful, flowing script of the others, but mixed with a tiny, crabbed handwriting. The language is Common interspersed with two others, Medusan and Zil, in a linguistic mishmash that is difficult to decipher.

## Location 4.15: Sorscha's Keep — The Well

**Read aloud:** *Empty except for a large pool of water, the air here has is warm and wet, filled with a strange stench, akin to rotten eggs. The pool is surrounded by a three-foot high stone wall. The wall is encrusted with whitish deposits.*

This is the keep's water supply. It flows from underground, forced by subterranean volcanic pressures. The water is warm and drinkable even though rich in minerals that make it aromatic. The pool itself is only 4 feet deep, fed through a small fissure in the floor.

## Location 4.16: Sorscha's Keep — Torture Chamber

**Read aloud:** *Directly across the room from the door is a torture rack, complete with a winch on each end. In the center of the room is a large brazier filled with ash-gray coals and several nightmarish tools. The left wall holds a large, pegged rack with dozens of bladed instruments, whips, hammers, and tongs.*

This torture chamber is well maintained but not currently in use. The coals in the brazier are cold. When Sorscha has a prisoner to question, Ss'Sithus usually performs the interrogation.

## Location 4.17: Sorscha's Keep — Monster Cells

**Read aloud:** *The floor of the cell is littered with straw, strewn with splintered and gnawed bones. The walls are spattered with disgusting stains.*

These four cells are identical. They are reserved for large, dangerous monsters. There are no monsters here, because any spare creatures were used inside the Black Tower. The portcullises are controlled by small winches beside the doors. The winch handles can be removed to prevent smart captives from opening their cells.

**Portcullises:** 2 in. thick; hardness 10; hp 60; Break/Lift DC 30.

### Location 4.18: Sorscha's Keep — Prisoner Cells

These cells are all identical. These cells are where Sorscha keeps prisoners for interrogation. All of them are empty, because any spare creatures were used inside the Black Tower.

## Part 3: Locations and Encounters — The Black Tower

The numbered encounters below refer to the map of the Black Tower.

### Location 5: The Black Tower

See sidebars "**The Black Tower**" and "**Inside the Black Tower**" for information about this location.

### Location 5.1: Black Tower — Entry and Outermost Ring

**Read aloud:** *Have you stepped into a nightmare? The air reeks of death and decay, and something else, something mechanical, like oil. You stand bathed in a sickly green light that comes from no visible source. The walls are pitch black but glossy, polished to a mirrored sheen. Close inspection of the strange walls reveals them to be shot through with thousands of coppery filaments. The floor clanks underfoot like a slab of dull gray metal, littered with dust and detritus. All around are the sounds of things moving, like sliding doors and winches, a metallic clattering, clanging, ticking sound that pries at your ears. The ceiling thirty feet above is shot with countless luminous pinpricks of shifting colors in a field of pitch blackness.*

Because of the ambient noise, all Listen checks are made at a –4 penalty everywhere inside the tower. The green light makes it more difficult to see, so unless the PCs use their own light source or means of sight other than normal vision, Spot checks are made at a –4 penalty as well.

### The Black Tower

The interior of the Black Tower is an immense clockwork mechanism that is constantly in motion. The interior is a nightmare of glassy black walls, dull steel floors, and danger around every corner in an ever-changing maze. The movement of the tower's machine is powered by the life-force of the creatures trapped inside.

Each floor moves in a different way. Random die rolls determine the movement of the walls on both floors. The walls move quickly. Any creature standing in the path of one of the walls when it moves must make a Reflex save (DC 17) or be crushed by the unyielding wall, taking 3d6 bludgeoning damage.

#### The First Floor

Numbers from 1–12 encircle the map of the first floor. These correspond to the radial walls extending from the center of the tower. These walls alternate as open or closed as they slide. The red portions of those walls indicate they are closed. When a given radial wall moves, the red portions slide into the green portions, opening the closed spaces they previously occupied, and closing the previously open green spaces. Therefore, each given radial wall, numbered from 1–12, has two positions.

Every five minutes of game time, one of these walls moves randomly. Roll 1d12 to determine which wall moves. That wall moves to the opposite position.

Because the machine is powered by the life-force of living creatures, if any creature dies while in the confines of the first floor, it sends a spike of energy through the system. Whenever a creature is killed on this floor, one of the walls on the first floor immediately moves.

#### The Second Floor

The second floor has eight radial walls, labeled 1–6. Each radial wall has a black box at the point farthest from the center of the tower. Each of the three outermost concentric rings is labeled 1–3. The position of a given wall is determined by rolling 1d3. The wall moves so that the black box takes the location of the die roll. For example, if a 2 is rolled on the 1d3, the given radial wall moves so that the black spot is at the #2 concentric wall, opening the passageway in the outermost ring, Encounter 16, but closing Encounters 14 and 15. If the die roll had been 1, Encounters 15 and 16 would be closed off.

Every five minutes of game time, one of these walls moves randomly. Roll 1d6 to determine which wall moves. Then roll 1d3 to determine which position the wall assumes. If the die roll is the same as the wall's current position, roll again.

Like the first floor, whenever a creature is killed on the second floor, one of the walls here immediately moves.

### Inside the Black Tower

Each concentric ring inside the Black Tower's lower two floors traps its own type of creature. The doors that open between rings are not locked. The creatures in the different rings are not allowed contact, however, because all of them have a *geas* not to touch the doors.

Many of the creatures trapped here are quite powerful and dangerous normally, but they have been weakened by their long captivity inside the tower. Their statistics differ from their normal brethren.

Every creature trapped inside the tower is practically insane with thirst, hunger, and impending doom. Perhaps they have been driven mad by the effects of the *dimensional confluence*. Whatever the case, the prisoners of the Black Tower attack intruders on sight with no regard for their own lives.

When the PCs enter a new ring, the GM should determine the location of the creatures within that ring. To do this, roll a die, 1d12 for the first floor, 1d6 for the second floor. The entire group of creatures is centered on the radial equal to the die roll. If the radial wall is closed at this location, half of the creatures are on either side of the closed wall. As soon as any creature dies, one wall on its floor shifts location; it might be this one.

None of the creatures on the lower two floors of the Black Tower have any treasure.

## Table 4–3: The Black Tower Encounters Table — First Floor

| Encounter Number | Description |
|---|---|
| 6. | Crypt Gaunts (2) (CR 3, *Monsters and Lairs, page* 84). |
| 7. | Stirges (6) (CR 1/2, *Monster Manual, page* 236). |
| 8. | Keteks (9) (CR 1/2, *Monsters and Lairs, page* 119). |
| 9. | Markappal Basilysks (5) (CR 1, *Monsters and Lairs, page* 128). |
| 10. | Fiendlings (6) (CR 1, *Monsters and Lairs, page* 13). |
| 11. | Spiritwings (2) (CR 3, *Monsters and Lairs, page* 168). |
| 12. | Gallows Fiend (5) (CR 1, *Monsters and Lairs, page* 69). |

The GM can determine the exact location of the creatures in **Table** 4–3 in the Black Tower by rolling 1d12 as described in the sidebar *Inside the Black Tower*.

**Creatures:** See entries in **Table 4–3** and descriptions below.

**Crypt Gaunts (2):** CR 3; Medium undead; HD 6d12+3; hp 39; Init –1; Spd 20 ft.; AC 17, touch 9, flat-footed 17; Base Atk +3, Grp +6; Atk +7 melee (1d4+3/x2, slam); Full Atk +7 melee (1d4+3/x2, 2 slams); Space/Reach 5 ft./5 ft.; SA Despair, poison cloud; SQ damage reduction 5/magic, vulnerability to fire, resistant to blows, undead traits; AL LE; SV Fort +2, Ref +1, Will +7; Str 17, Dex 8, Con —, Int 6, Wis 14, Cha 15.

*Skills and Feats:* Hide +6, Listen +6, Move Silently +6, Spot +6; Toughness, Weapon Focus (slam).

*Despair (Su):* At the mere sight of a gaunt, the viewer must make a Will save (DC 15) or be paralyzed with fear for 1d4 rounds. Regardless of whether the save is successful, that opponent cannot be affected by the gaunt's despair ability for one day. The save DC is Charisma-based.

*Vulnerability to Fire (Ex):* A crypt gaunt takes half again as much (+50%) damage as normal from fire, unless a save is allowed for half damage. In these cases, a successful save halves damage and a failure doubles it. Further, fire damage bypasses the gaunt's usual damage reduction.

*Poison Cloud (Ex):* Each time a crypt gaunt is struck, a cloud of noxious gas erupts from its rotting funeral garb. Any character adjacent to the gaunt when it suffers damage from a physical attack must make a Fortitude save (DC 15) or be affected as by the *stinking cloud* spell. The save DC is Charisma-based.

*Resistant to Blows (Ex):* Physical attacks of all types deal only half damage to gaunts. Apply this effect before damage reduction.

**Undead Traits:** A crypt gaunt has the following traits:

- No Constitution score.
- Darkvision out to 60 feet.
- Immunity to all mind-affecting effects (charms, compulsions, phantasms, patterns, and morale effects).
- Immunity to poison, sleep effects, paralysis, stunning, disease, death effects, and necromancy effects.
- Cannot heal damage on their own if it has no Intelligence score, although it can be healed. Negative energy (such as an *inflict* spell) can heal undead creatures. The fast healing quality works regardless of the creature's Intelligence score.
- Not subject to critical hits, non-lethal damage, ability damage, ability drain, fatigue, exhaustion, or energy drain. Immune to damage to its physical ability scores (Strength, Dexterity, Constitution), as well as to fatigue and exhaustion effects.
- Immunity to any effect that requires a Fortitude save (unless the effect also works on objects, or is harmless).
- Uses its Charisma modifier for Concentration checks.
- Not at risk of death from massive damage. Immediately destroyed when reduced to 0 hit points or less.
- Not affected by *raise dead* and *reincarnate* spells or abilities. *Resurrection* and *true resurrection* can affect undead creatures. These spells turn undead creatures back into the living creatures they were before becoming undead.

- Proficient with its natural weapons, all simple weapons, and any weapon mentioned in its entry.
- Proficient with whatever type of armor (light, medium, and heavy) it is described as wearing, as well as all lighter types.
- Undead do not eat, sleep, or breathe.

**Stirges (6)**: CR 1/2; Tiny magical beast; HD 1d10; hp 5; Init +4; Spd 10 ft., fly 40 ft. (average); AC 16, touch 16, flat-footed 12; Base Atk +1, Grp –11 (+1 when attached); Atk +7 melee (attach, touch); Full Atk +7 melee (attach, touch); Space/Reach 2–1/2 ft./0 ft.; SA Attach, blood drain; SQ Darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; AL N; SV Fort +2, Ref +6, Will +1; Str 3, Dex 19, Con 10, Int 1, Wis 12, Cha 6.

*Skills and Feats:* Hide+14, Listen +4, Spot +4; Alertness, Weapon Finesse (pincers).

*Attach:* If a stirge hits with a touch attack, it uses its eight pincers to latch onto the opponent's body. An attached stirge is effectively grappling its prey. The stirge loses its Dexterity bonus to AC and has an AC of 12, but holds on with great tenacity. Stirges have a +12 racial bonus on grapple checks (already figured into the Base Attack/Grapple entry above). An attached stirge can be struck with a weapon or grappled itself. To remove an attached stirge through grappling, the opponent must achieve a pin against the stirge.

*Blood Drain:* A stirge drains blood, dealing 1d4 points of Constitution damage in any round when it begins its turn attached to a victim. Once it has dealt 4 points of Constitution damage, it detaches and flies off to digest the meal. If its victim dies before the stirge's appetite has been sated, the stirge detaches and seeks a new target.

*Darkvision, 60 ft.:* A stirge can see in the dark with no light source at all, out to a range of 60 feet. Darkvision is black and white only (colors cannot be discerned). It does not allow the stirge to see anything that it could not see otherwise—invisible objects are still invisible, and illusions are still visible as what they seem to be. Likewise, darkvision subjects the stirge to gaze attacks normally. The presence of light does not spoil darkvision.

*Low-Light Vision:* A stirge can see twice as far as a human in starlight, moonlight, torchlight, and similar conditions of shadowy illumination. It retains the ability to distinguish color and detail under these conditions.

**Keteks (9):** CR 1; Small monstrous humanoid; HD 1d6; hp 3; Init +6; Spd 20 ft.; AC 16, touch 13, flat-footed 14; Base Atk +0; Grp –4; Atk +2 melee (1d4(18–20/x2), rapier), +4 ranged (1d4/x2, composite shortbow); Full Atk +2 melee (1d4(18–20/x2), rapier), or +4 ranged (1d4/x2, composite shortbow); Space/Reach 5 ft./5 ft.; SA Sneak attack +1d6; SQ Ketek traits, darkvision 60 ft.; AL N; SV Fort +0, Ref +4, Will –1; Str 10, Dex 15, Con 11, Int 10, Wis 9, Cha 6.

*Skills and Feats:* Appraise +3, Disable Device +4, Hide +10, Listen +2, Move Silently +6, Open Lock +5, Search +4, Spot +2, Use Magic Device +2; Improved Initiative.

*Sneak Attack:* Anytime a ketek's target is denied a Dexterity bonus to AC, or when the aide flanks a target, the ketek deals an additional 1d6 points of damage on a successful attack.

*Darkvision (Ex):* Thanks to their subterranean heritage, ketek have darkvision up to 60 feet.

*Prehensile Tail (Ex):* The ketek tail is prehensile and fairly strong. A ketek can carry and use most items normally with its tail. Further, ketek can wield a second (or third) weapon also with their tails. A ketek may wield only a light weapon in this fashion. A ketek wielding a second weapon in its tail suffers the same

## Spells and the Black Tower

**Inside the Black Tower, some types of magic function in unexpected, usually dangerous ways.**

The floors inside the Black Tower are sheets of steel. For this reason, any attempt to use magic that involves electricity is likely to go horribly awry. The Black Tower is made to leech the life energy from living beings trapped within. Necromancy spells function much the same way; therefore, any necromancy spells cast inside the Black Tower interact in unexpected ways with the other magical forces at work. Because the *dimensional confluence*'s presence distorts nearby dimensions, Conjuration spells are also unpredictable. Teleportation spells are also rendered more difficult because of the nature of the *dimensional confluence*, with the special exception of the *teleportation circles*.

If any Conjuration (except for Summoning; see below), Necromancy, Teleportation, or Electricity spell is cast inside the tower, the GM should roll on the following table.

### Table 4-2: Conjuration, Electrical, Teleportation, and Necromancy Spell Results

| 1d20 Roll | Result |
|---|---|
| 1–3 | The spell goes off as normal. |
| 4–10 | The spell fizzles, having no effect, although it is still considered to have been cast. |
| 11–18 | The spell effects are redirected to the caster, who is affected as if he was the target of the spell. Teleportation spells fizzle. |
| 19 | The spell affects the intended target, but the area of effect, damage, and duration are all doubled, and any saving throw DC is increased by 5. |
| 20 | The spell effects are redirected to the caster, but the area of effect, damage, and duration are all doubled, and any saving throw DC is increased by 5. |

**Summoning spells, a type of Conjuration, are a special case. When any summoning spell is cast within the Black Tower, the GM rolls a die. If the result is odd, the spell is cast as if with the metamagic feat Maximize Spell. If the result is even, the spell fizzles and is lost.**

two-weapon fighting penalties as any other character, while a ketek wielding a third weapon in this fashion suffers increases all two-weapon fighting penalties by –2 (so a ketek wielding three weapons suffers a –8 to the primary attack roll, –12 to the secondary, and –12 to the tertiary). Feats (such as Multiattack) reduce these penalties as normal.

**Markappal Basilysks (5):** CR 1; Small magical beast; HD 1d10+4; hp 9; Init +3; Spd 20 ft., fly 60 ft. (average); AC 19, touch 14, flat-footed 16; Base Atk +1; Grp –5; Atk +5 melee (1d3–2/x2, claw); Full Atk +5 melee (1d3–2/x2, 2 claws); Space/Reach 5 ft./5 ft.; SA Petrifying gaze, spell-like abilities; SQ Fire resistance 5; AL N; SV Fort +6, Ref +5, Will +1; Str 7, Dex 16, Con 19, Int 1, Wis 12, Cha 6.

*Skills and Feats:* Hide +9*, Listen +4, Spot +4; Alertness, Weapon Finesse (claws). *The Markappal basilysk's natural coloration allows it a +8 racial bonus to Hide Checks in outdoor settings.

*Petrifying Gaze (Su):* Turn to stone 1d4 weeks, range 30 ft.; Fortitude DC 8 negates. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Unlike normal petrification, the creature's body continues to operate within the stone shell created from their own bodies. Inside this 'shell,' the opponent may very well starve before the effects of the gaze wear off. Each day, the victim is allowed a DC 13 Fortitude save, gaining a +1 circumstance bonus for each day spent trapped inside the shell.

*A remove curse, break enchantment,* or similar spell restores the creature, as does *stone to flesh. Stone shape* has a 25% chance of turning the creature back to normal; otherwise it reduces the duration of the petrification by 1 day.

*Spell-Like Abilities:* 1/day—*jump, magic fang, obscuring mist.* Caster level 5th.

**Fiendlings (6):** CR 1; Small aberration (Lesser Abyssal); HD 2d8; hp 8; Init +3; Spd 20 ft.; AC 17, touch 15, flat-footed 14; Base Atk +1; Grp –3; Atk +2 melee (1d3/x2, claw); Full Atk +2 melee (1d3/x2, 2 claws); Space/Reach 5 ft./5 ft.; SA Improved Grab, overwhelm; SQ Abyssal traits, darkvision 120 ft.; AL CE; SV Fort +0, Ref +3, Will +2; Str 10, Dex 16, Con 10, Int 8, Wis 8, Cha 8.

*Skills and Feats:* Hide +8, Listen +2, Move Silently +4, Spot +2, Tumble +4; Alertness.

*Improved Grab (Ex):* To use this ability, a fiendling must hit with its claw attack. It can then attempt to start a grapple as a free action without provoking an attack of opportunity. If it wins the grapple check, it may overwhelm.

*Overwhelm (Ex):* Fiendlings' preferred tactic is to attack *en masse* and drag their prey to the ground. For every additional fiendling adjacent to the target, the fiendling gains a +2 competence bonus to its grapple check. If successful, the target suffers claw damage and becomes prone. While their opponent is prone, fiendlings increase the critical threat range and multiplier of their claw attacks to 19–20/x3.

**Abyssal Traits:**

- *Astral (Ex):* Abyssals are astral creatures. They exist simultaneously both on the prime material plane and in the Abyss, a tiny plane surrounding the Dragon's corpse. As such, any melee or ranged attack that targets an Abyssal has a 50% miss chance, unless the attack is made with a +1 or better magical weapon (in the case of ranged attacks, only the projectile must bear the enchantment, not necessarily the weapon itself). This is in all ways like incorporeality.
- *Darkvision (Ex):* Range of 120 feet.
- *Immunities (Ex):* Abyssals are immune to all mind-affecting effects, including spells and spell-like abilities, paralysis, poison, sleep, stunning, disease and death effects. Abyssals are also immune to fire, ability drain, and energy drain.
- *Resistances (Ex):* Abyssals have cold, poison and electricity resistance 20.
- *Spell-like Abilities:* All Abyssals have the following spell-like abilities: 3/day — *chaos hammer, darkness, doom,* and *scorching ray.* In addition, greater Abyssals may cast *unholy aura* at will.
- *Telepathy (Ex):* Greater Abyssals have the ability to communicate telepathically with any creature within 100 ft. The target of this ability must be able to speak (or at least clearly understand) at least one language. The Abyssal's telepathy automatically translates its thoughts into the language best understood by the recipient. The Abyssal may only communicate with one non-Abyssal in this fashion at a time. A greater Abyssal may telepathically communicate with any number of Abyssals at once, provided they are in range.

**Spiritwings (2):** CR 3; Large magical beast; HD 3d10+9; hp 24; Init +1; Spd fly 60 ft. (average); AC 16, touch 10, flat-footed 15; Base Atk +3; Grp +11; Atk +6 melee (1d6+6 plus poison/x2, bite); Full Atk +6 melee (1d6+6 plus poison/x2, bite); Space/Reach 10 ft./5 ft.; SA Frightful presence, improved grab, poison, spell-like abilities; SQ —; AL N; SV Fort +6, Ref +4, Will +3; Str 18, Dex 13, Con 16, Int 2, Wis 10, Cha 10.

*Skills and Feats:* Listen +3, Spot +3; Flyby Attack, Iron Will.

*Frightful Presence (Ex):* Opponents who hear the spiritwing's cry (often uttered before entering combat) must make a DC 11 Will save or become shaken for 2d6 rounds. The save DC is Charisma-based.

*Improved Grab (Ex):* To use this ability, a spiritwing must hit a creature of any size with its bite attack. It can then attempt to start a grapple as a free action without provoking an attack of opportunity.

*Poison (Ex):* Bite—Fortitude DC 14, initial damage 1d6 Strength, secondary damage 1d6 Strength. The save DC is Constitution-based.

*Spell-like Abilities:* 1/hour — *magic missile;* 3/day — *minor illusion;* 1/day — *dimension door.* Caster level 4th. The save DC is Charisma-based.

**Gallows Fiend (5):** CR 1; Small monstrous humanoid; HD 1d8+1; hp 5; Init +3; Spd 20 ft.; AC 20, touch 14, flat-footed 17; Base Atk +1; Grp –2; Atk +5 melee (1d3+1 plus pain touch/x2, claw); Full Atk +5 melee (1d3+1plus pain touch/x2, 2 claws), –1 melee (1d3/x2, bite), +4 ranged (2d4 + Fort save (DC 11) or be blinded for 1d4 rounds/x2, acid spew); Space/Reach 5 ft./5 ft.; SA Acid spew (2d4), pain touch; SQ Bone armor; AL LE; SV Fort +1, Ref +5, Will +3; Str 12, Dex 16, Con 12, Int 6, Wis 12, Cha 12.

*Skills and Feats:* Hide +8, Listen +3, Move Silently +4, Spot +5*; Weapon Finesse (claws). *Gallows fiends have a +4 racial bonus to Spot checks.

*Acid Spew (Ex):* A gallows fiend can spew organic acid, blinding enemies. This is a ranged attack with a +4 attack bonus, a 5 foot range increment, and a maximum range of 25 feet. It inflicts 2d4 damage, and those struck must make a Fort save (DC 11) or be blinded for 1d4 rounds.

*Bone Armor (Ex):* A gallows fiend has sharp spikes of bone protruding from its spine. These bone spikes are so thick that any slashing weapon that strikes a gallows fiend has a 30% chance of shattering against the creature's bony hide. Masterwork weapons and magical weapons are not subject to this effect.

*Pain Touch (Su):* The touch of a gallows fiend is excruciating, and they love to use this ability on the condemned. Those touched by the gallows fiend must make a Will save (DC 11) or suffer 1 point of temporary Constitution damage. This ability takes effect every time the gallows fiend strikes its opponent with one of its natural weapons, and any time an opponent strikes the creature with its own natural weapons (e.g. fists, claws, a bite). Any attempt to grapple the gallows fiend automatically fails due to the creature's painful touch, unless the attacker makes a Will save (DC 11) after the initial touch attack. Regardless of whether this save is successful, the grappling creature suffers the temporary Constitution damage noted above. Further, each round an opponent grapples with the gallows fiend (regardless of who initiates the grapple), the opponent suffers an additional point of temporary Constitution damage at the beginning of the round. The save DC is Constitution-based.

## Location 5.2: Black Tower — Stairway Up to the Second Floor

**Read aloud:** *In the center of this circular chamber is a spiral staircase leading upward. The staircase appears to be made of the same dull metal as the floor.*

PCs who approach the staircase suddenly feel themselves growing heavy. This is an effect of the reality distortion created by the Dimensional Confluence. Anyone wishing to climb the stairs must make a Strength check (DC 15) or make no upward progress, pressed painfully against the metal steps. The gravity distortion is so great it could cause injury. Anyone who fails his Strength check by 5 or more must make a Fortitude save (DC 15) or take 1d3 bludgeoning damage from falling onto the stairs. Two Strength checks are required to reach the second floor.

### Effects of the Black Tower

**Creatures inside the Black Tower suffer the life-leeching effects of its machinery. Each day a creature spends in the lower two floors of the tower, it must make a Fortitude save (DC 10 + number of days) or suffer one negative level. If its level is reduced to 0, it gives up the last of its life force to the machine, and dies. This effect does not function on the third floor.**

**Any creature in the blighted region outside also suffers ill effects from the tower's operation. Once per week, the creature must make a Fort save (DC 5 + number of weeks within tower's influence) or suffer one negative level. If its level is reduced to 0, it sickens and dies.**

## Location 5.3: Black Tower — Stairway Down to the First Floor

The effects of the gravity distortion decrease rapidly as one moves away from the stairwell. PCs standing against the wall of this chamber feel no adverse effects, even though the increased weight is still noticeable. Anyone who attempts to descend the stairs suddenly feels himself growing heavy, and must make a Strength check (DC 15) or collapse under his own increased weight. Anyone who fails his Strength check by 5 or more must make a Fortitude save (DC 20) or take 1d3 bludgeoning damage from falling onto the stairs. Two Strength checks are required to reach the first floor 30 feet below without falling down.

ENCOUNTERS 13–16: BLACK TOWER — ENCOUNTERS IN THE BLACK TOWER — SECOND FLOOR

## Table 4-4: The Black Tower Encounters Table — Second Floor

| Encounter Number | Description |
|---|---|
| 13. | Brine Fiends (4) (CR 2, *Monsters and Lairs, page* 35). |
| 14. | Fiendlings (7) (CR 1, *Monsters and Lairs, page* 13). |
| 15. | Demons of Kvar (3) (CR 3, *Monsters and Lairs, page* 10). |
| 16. | Mountain Troll (1) (CR 7, *Monsters and Lairs, page* 194). |

The GM can determine the exact location of the creatures in **Table** 4–4 by rolling 1d6 as described in the sidebar *"Inside the Black Tower."*

**Creatures:** See entries in **Table 4–4** and descriptions below.

**Brine Fiends (4):** CR 2; Medium monstrous humanoid; HD 3d8+15; hp 27; Init +2; Spd 30 ft.; AC 16, touch 12, flat-footed 14; Base Atk +3; Grp +6; Atk +6 melee (1d4+3/x2, claw) or +6 melee (1d4+1/x2, bite); Full Atk +6 melee (1d4+3/x2, 2 claws) or +6 melee (1d4+1/x2, bite); Space/Reach 5 ft./5 ft.; SA Howl; SQ —; AL N; SV Fort +5, Ref +5, Will +3; Str 16, Dex 14, Con 18, Int 8, Wis 10, Cha 8.

*Skills and Feats:* Listen +5, Spot +5; Alertness, Toughness.

*Howl (Ex):* Once per day, a brine fiend can howl as a standard action. The howl sounds like the gurgling of a drowning man, and is disquieting at best. Any creature within a 30-ft. cone must succeed at a DC 15 Will save or become confused for 1d4 rounds. This is a sonic mind-affecting effect. The save DC is Constitution-based.

*Skills:* A brine fiend's slimy hide grants it a +6 racial bonus to Hide checks while in swamps or bogs.

**Fiendlings (7):** CR 1; Small aberration (Lesser Abyssal); HD 2d8; hp 8; Init +3; Spd 20 ft.; AC 17, touch 15, flat-footed 14; Base Atk +1; Grp –3; Atk +2 melee (1d3/x2, claw); Full Atk +2 melee (1d3/x2, 2 claws); Space/Reach 5 ft./5 ft.; SA Improved Grab, overwhelm; SQ Abyssal traits, darkvision 120 ft.; AL CE; SV Fort +0, Ref +3, Will +2; Str 10, Dex 16, Con 10, Int 8, Wis 8, Cha 8.

*Skills and Feats:* Hide +8, Listen +2, Move Silently +4, Spot +2, Tumble +4; Alertness.

*Improved Grab (Ex):* To use this ability, a fiendling must hit with its claw attack. It can then attempt to start a grapple as a free action without provoking an attack of opportunity. If it wins the grapple check, it may overwhelm.

*Overwhelm (Ex):* Fiendlings' preferred tactic is to attack *en masse* and drag their prey to the ground. For every additional fiendling adjacent to the target, the fiendling gains a +2 competence bonus to its grapple check. If successful, the target suffers claw damage and becomes prone. While their opponent is prone, fiendlings increase the critical threat range and multiplier of their claw attacks to 19–20/x3.

**Abyssal Traits:**

- *Astral (Ex):* Abyssals are astral creatures. They exist simultaneously both on the prime material plane and in the Abyss, a tiny plane surrounding the Dragon's corpse. As such, any melee or ranged attack that targets an Abyssal has a 50% miss chance, unless the attack is made with a +1 or better magical weapon (in the case of ranged attacks, only the projectile must bear the enchantment, not necessarily the weapon itself). This is in all ways like incorporeality.
- *Darkvision (Ex):* Range of 120 feet.
- *Immunities (Ex):* Abyssals are immune to all mind-affecting effects, including spells and spell-like abilities, paralysis, poison, sleep, stunning, disease and death effects. Abyssals are also immune to fire, ability drain, and energy drain.
- *Resistances (Ex):* Abyssals have cold, poison and electricity resistance 20.
- *Spell-like Abilities:* All Abyssals have the following spell-like abilities: 3/day — *chaos hammer, darkness, doom,* and *scorching ray.* In addition, greater Abyssals may cast *unholy aura* at will.
- *Telepathy (Ex):* Greater Abyssals have the ability to communicate telepathically with any creature within 100 ft. The target of this ability must be able to speak (or at least clearly understand) at least one language. The Abyssal's telepathy automatically translates its thoughts into the language best understood by the recipient. The Abyssal may only communicate with one non-Abyssal in this fashion at a time. A greater Abyssal may telepathically communicate with any number of Abyssals at once, provided they are in range.

**Demons of Kvar (3):** CR 3; Medium monstrous humanoid (Lesser Abyssal); HD 6d8+6; hp 30; Init +3; Spd 30 ft.; AC 17, touch 13, flat-footed 14; Base Atk +6, Grp +8; Atk +6 melee (1d6+2, claw) or +7 ranged (1d6+2/x2, javelin); Full Atk +8 melee (1d6+2, 2 claws), +3 melee (1d8+1/x2, bite), or +7 ranged (1d6+2/x2, javelin); Space/Reach 5 ft./5 ft.; SA Spell-like abilities, stun; SQ Abyssal traits, metamorphosis, spell resistance 14, darkvision 120 ft.; AL CE; SV Fort +3, Ref +5, Will +7; Str 14, Dex 16, Con 12, Int 14, Wis 14, Cha 8.

*Skills and Feats:* Balance +8, Climb +6, Hide +8, Intimidate +6, Jump +6, Move Silently +8, Spot +6, Tumble +7; Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Mobility.

*Spell-like Abilities:* 3/day — *bane, color spray, emotion.* The save DC is 10 + the spell level and is Intelligence-based.

*Stun (Su):* A demon of Kvar can emit a stunning howl akin to the sound of a battle-horn. Those within the cone (originating at the demon's mouth and extending out in a 50-ft. cone) suffer 2d6 points of damage and must make succeed at a DC 15 Fortitude save or be stunned for 1d4 rounds.

*Metamorphosis (Su):* A demon of Kvar gives off an unmistakable, intoxicating musk odor. Those within 15 ft. who smell it must succeed at a DC 14 Fortitude save or become shaken. 2d4 rounds later, victims become sickened, and 1d6 minutes later they become paralyzed and unconscious. The demon can plant 2d6 eggs inside a paralyzed host; these take anywhere from 5 to 8 days to gestate. Infested prisoners are considered helpless. Any *cure* spell can save an infected host before the eggs hatch. Otherwise, the larval fiendlings consume the host from within.

**Abyssal Traits:**

- *Astral (Ex):* Abyssals are astral creatures. They exist simultaneously both on the prime material plane and in the Abyss, a tiny plane surrounding the Dragon's corpse. As such, any melee or ranged attack that targets an Abyssal has a 50% miss chance, unless the attack is made with a +1 or better magical weapon (in the case of ranged attacks, only the projectile must bear the enchantment, not necessarily the weapon itself). This is in all ways like incorporeality.
- *Darkvision (Ex):* Range of 120 feet.
- *Immunities (Ex):* Abyssals are immune to all mind-affecting effects, including spells and spell-like abilities, paralysis, poison, sleep, stunning, disease and death effects. Abyssals are also immune to fire, ability drain, and energy drain.

- *Resistances (Ex):* Abyssals have cold, poison and electricity resistance 20.
- *Spell-like Abilities:* All Abyssals have the following spell-like abilities: 3/day — *chaos hammer, darkness, doom,* and *scorching ray.* In addition, greater Abyssals may cast *unholy aura* at will.
- *Telepathy (Ex):* Greater Abyssals have the ability to communicate telepathically with any creature within 100 ft. The target of this ability must be able to speak (or at least clearly understand) at least one language. The Abyssal's telepathy automatically translates its thoughts into the language best understood by the recipient. The Abyssal may only communicate with one non-Abyssal in this fashion at a time. A greater Abyssal may telepathically communicate with any number of Abyssals at once, provided they are in range.

**Mountain Troll (1):** CR 7; Large giant; HD 9d8+63; hp 99; Init +0; Spd 30 ft.; AC 21, touch 9, flat-footed 21; Base Atk +6; Grp +18; Atk +13 melee (1d6+8/x2, claw); Full Atk +13 melee (1d6+8/x2, 2 claws), +8 melee (1d8+4/x2, bite); Space/Reach 10 ft./10 ft.; SA Rend; SQ Darkvision 90 ft., regeneration 5, scent; AL LE; SV Fort +13, Ref +3, Will +6; Str 26, Dex 11, Con 25, Int 8, Wis 12, Cha 8.

*Skills and Feats:* Listen +9, Spot +9; Alertness, Iron Will.

*Rend:* After 2 successful claw attacks, 2d6+12 automatic additional damage.

*Darkvision, 90 ft.:* A troll can see in the dark with no light source at all, out to a range of 90 feet. Darkvision is black and white only (colors cannot be discerned). It does not allow the troll to see anything that it could not see otherwise—invisible objects are still invisible, and illusions are still visible as what they seem to be. Likewise, darkvision subjects the troll to gaze attacks normally. The presence of light does not spoil darkvision.

*Regeneration 5 (Ex):* Fire and acid deal normal damage to a troll, while all other damage is converted to subdual damage. If a troll loses a limb or body part, the missing limb or chunk of flesh regenerates in 3d6 minutes. The troll can reattach the severed member instantly by holding it flush against the stump. If a troll's head is severed, its body continues to function for 4d4 rounds, during which time the troll desperately attempts to reattach its head in the above fashion. If it fails to do so in the allotted time, the troll dies.

As usual, the troll is vulnerable to attacks that do not deal hit point damage, such as most poisons and disintegration; similarly, it is affected normally by starvation, thirst, and suffocation. A troll can be killed by massive damage normally; the massive trauma simply shuts down the troll's nervous system, preventing it from regenerating the damage.

*Rend (Ex):* If a troll hits with both claw attacks in a single turn, it latches onto its opponent's body and rends its flesh. This attack automatically deals an additional 2d6+9 points of damage.

*Scent:* A troll can detect opponents within 30 feet by sense of smell. If the opponent is upwind, the range increases to 60 feet; if downwind, it drops to 15 feet. Strong scents, such as smoke or rotting garbage, can be detected at twice the ranges noted above. Overpowering scents, such as skunk musk or troglodyte stench, can be detected at triple normal range. When a troll detects a scent, the exact location of the source is not revealed—only its presence somewhere within range. The troll can take a move action to note the direction of the scent.

Whenever the troll comes within 5 feet of the source, the troll pinpoints the source's location.

## Location 5.4: Black Tower — Empty Room

This room has been set aside for storage, but nothing has been stored here yet. It is a good location for the PCs to hole up and lick their wounds, should that be necessary.

## Location 5.5: Black Tower — Guard Room (EL 6)

Sitting on a perch about 20 ft. above the floor is an ill-tempered darkfeast harpy. Like the invisible stalker of **Location 5.4**, Sorscha captured it and placed it here to guard the entrance to the inner workings of the Black Tower. It attacks anyone who is not Zil or Sorscha.

**Creature:** One darkfeast harpy.

**Darkfeast Harpy (1):** CR 6; Medium monstrous humanoid; HD 10d8; hp 40; Init +6; Spd 20 ft., fly 80 ft. (good); AC 20, touch 12, flat-footed 18; Base Atk +10; Grp +10; Atk +10 melee (1d4 plus energy drain/x2); Full Atk +10 melee (1d4 plus energy drain/x2, 2 claws); ); Space/Reach 5 ft./5 ft.; SA Energy drain, horror song, spells, spell-like abilities; SQ Fast healing 5, harpy murder, create spawn; AL LE; SV Fort +3, Ref +9, Will +7; Str 10, Dex 15, Con 10, Int 17, Wis 10, Cha 15.

*Skills and Feats:* Bluff +15, Hide +8, Listen +13, Perform (oratory) +9, Perform (sing) +15, Spot +13; Dodge, Flyby Attack, Improved Initiative, Mobility.

*Create Spawn (Su):* Any humanoid slain by a darkfeast harpy becomes a wight in 1d4 rounds. Spawn are under the command of the darkfeast harpy that created them and remain enslaved until the harpy's death. They possess none of the abilities they had in life.

*Energy Drain (Su):* Living creatures hit by a darkfeast harpy's claw attack gain one negative level. The DC is 17 for the Fortitude save to remove a negative level. The save DC is Charisma-based. For each such negative level bestowed, the darkfeast harpy gains 5 temporary hit points.

*Fast Healing 5 (Su):* The darkfeast harpy's fast healing ability is slightly unusual, as it siphons the life energy from nearby living creatures. Any time the darkfeast harpy regains hit points, the nearest living creature — friend or foe — suffers a like amount of damage, unless it makes a DC 17 Fortitude save. Success on this save does not prevent the harpy from healing, but does prevent the victim from losing hit points. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Darkfeast harpies are immune to this siphon.

**Brine Fiends (4):** CR 2; Medium monstrous humanoid; HD 3d8+15; hp 27; Init +2; Spd 30 ft.; AC 16, touch 12, flat-footed 14; Base Atk +3; Grp +6; Atk +6 melee (1d4+3/x2, claw) or +6 melee (1d4+1/x2, bite); Full Atk +6 melee (1d4+3/x2, 2 claws) or +6 melee (1d4+1/x2, bite); Space/Reach 5 ft./5 ft.; SA Howl; SQ —; AL N; SV Fort +5, Ref +5, Will +3; Str 16, Dex 14, Con 18, Int 8, Wis 10, Cha 8.

*Skills and Feats:* Listen +5, Spot +5; Alertness, Toughness.

*Howl (Ex):* Once per day, a brine fiend can howl as a standard action. The howl sounds like the gurgling of a drowning man, and is disquieting at best. Any creature within a 30-ft. cone must succeed at a DC 15 Will save or become confused for 1d4 rounds. This is a sonic mind-affecting effect. The save DC is Constitution-based.

*Skills:* A brine fiend's slimy hide grants it a +6 racial bonus to Hide checks while in swamps or bogs.

**Fiendlings (7):** CR 1; Small aberration (Lesser Abyssal); HD 2d8; hp 8; Init +3; Spd 20 ft.; AC 17, touch 15, flat-footed 14; Base Atk +1; Grp –3; Atk +2 melee (1d3/x2, claw); Full Atk +2 melee (1d3/x2, 2 claws); Space/Reach 5 ft./5 ft.; SA Improved Grab, overwhelm; SQ Abyssal traits, darkvision 120 ft.; AL CE; SV Fort +0, Ref +3, Will +2; Str 10, Dex 16, Con 10, Int 8, Wis 8, Cha 8.

*Skills and Feats:* Hide +8, Listen +2, Move Silently +4, Spot +2, Tumble +4; Alertness.

*Improved Grab (Ex):* To use this ability, a fiendling must hit with its claw attack. It can then attempt to start a grapple as a free action without provoking an attack of opportunity. If it wins the grapple check, it may overwhelm.

*Overwhelm (Ex):* Fiendlings' preferred tactic is to attack *en masse* and drag their prey to the ground. For every additional fiendling adjacent to the target, the fiendling gains a +2 competence bonus to its grapple check. If successful, the target suffers claw damage and becomes prone. While their opponent is prone, fiendlings increase the critical threat range and multiplier of their claw attacks to 19–20/x3.

**Abyssal Traits:**

- *Astral (Ex):* Abyssals are astral creatures. They exist simultaneously both on the prime material plane and in the Abyss, a tiny plane surrounding the Dragon's corpse. As such, any melee or ranged attack that targets an Abyssal has a 50% miss chance, unless the attack is made with a +1 or better magical weapon (in the case of ranged attacks, only the projectile must bear the enchantment, not necessarily the weapon itself). This is in all ways like incorporeality.
- *Darkvision (Ex):* Range of 120 feet.
- *Immunities (Ex):* Abyssals are immune to all mind-affecting effects, including spells and spell-like abilities, paralysis, poison, sleep, stunning, disease and death effects. Abyssals are also immune to fire, ability drain, and energy drain.
- *Resistances (Ex):* Abyssals have cold, poison and electricity resistance 20.
- *Spell-like Abilities:* All Abyssals have the following spell-like abilities: 3/day — *chaos hammer, darkness, doom,* and *scorching ray.* In addition, greater Abyssals may cast *unholy aura* at will.
- *Telepathy (Ex):* Greater Abyssals have the ability to communicate telepathically with any creature within 100 ft. The target of this ability must be able to speak (or at least clearly understand) at least one language. The Abyssal's telepathy automatically translates its thoughts into the language best understood by the recipient. The Abyssal may only communicate with one non-Abyssal in this fashion at a time. A greater Abyssal may telepathically communicate with any number of Abyssals at once, provided they are in range.

**Demons of Kvar (3):** CR 3; Medium monstrous humanoid (Lesser Abyssal); HD 6d8+6; hp 30; Init +3; Spd 30 ft.; AC 17, touch 13, flat-footed 14; Base Atk +6, Grp +8; Atk +6 melee (1d6+2, claw) or +7 ranged (1d6+2/x2, javelin). Full Atk +8 melee (1d6+2, 2 claws), +3 melee (1d8+1/x2, bite), or +7 ranged (1d6+2/x2, javelin); Space/Reach 5 ft./5 ft.; SA Spell-like abilities, stun; SQ Abyssal traits, metamorphosis, spell resistance 14, darkvision 120 ft.; AL CE; SV Fort +3, Ref +5, Will +7; Str 14, Dex 16, Con 12, Int 14, Wis 14, Cha 8.

*Skills and Feats:* Balance +8, Climb +6, Hide +8, Intimidate +6, Jump +6, Move Silently +8, Spot +6, Tumble +7; Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Mobility.

*Spell-like Abilities:* 3/day — *bane, color spray, emotion.* The save DC is 10 + the spell level and is Intelligence-based.

*Stun (Su):* A demon of Kvar can emit a stunning howl akin to the sound of a battle-horn. Those within the cone (originating at the demon's mouth and extending out in a 50-ft. cone) suffer 2d6 points of damage and must make succeed at a DC 15 Fortitude save or be stunned for 1d4 rounds.

*Metamorphosis (Su):* A demon of Kvar gives off an unmistakable, intoxicating musk odor. Those within 15 ft. who smell it must succeed at a DC 14 Fortitude save or become shaken. 2d4 rounds later, victims become sickened, and 1d6 minutes later they become paralyzed and unconscious. The demon can plant 2d6 eggs inside a paralyzed host; these take anywhere from 5 to 8 days to gestate. Infested prisoners are considered helpless. Any *cure* spell can save an infected host before the eggs hatch. Otherwise, the larval fiendlings consume the host from within.

**Abyssal Traits:**

- *Astral (Ex):* Abyssals are astral creatures. They exist simultaneously both on the prime material plane and in the Abyss, a tiny plane surrounding the Dragon's corpse. As such, any melee or ranged attack that targets an Abyssal has a 50% miss chance, unless the attack is made with a +1 or better magical weapon (in the case of ranged attacks, only the projectile must bear the enchantment, not necessarily the weapon itself). This is in all ways like incorporeality.
- *Darkvision (Ex):* Range of 120 feet.
- *Immunities (Ex):* Abyssals are immune to all mind-affecting effects, including spells and spell-like abilities, paralysis, poison, sleep, stunning, disease and death effects. Abyssals are also immune to fire, ability drain, and energy drain.

## Sorscha's Return

Sorscha is a mid-level summoner with significant racial abilities, so the PCs are unlikely to be ready for her at this point. The best they can hope for when she returns is to escape with their lives. The exact time of Sorscha's return has been left intentionally vague, but it should not exceed 48 hours. The GM should use this event as a way to heighten the tension, especially if they manage to steal or destroy the *Dimensional Confluence*. Perhaps they are happily patting themselves on the back, thinking they are going to get away, when the Mistress comes home. Her return is not meant to provide the GM with the means to kill the party instantly, but if they dally, it should be a real and looming threat. She may attempt to deal with the party, or bargain with them, or convince them to work for her. She is evil, ambitious, and vengeful, but she is not a bloodthirsty slaughterer.

**Creature:** Sorscha, a 13th-level summoner.

**Sorscha, Mercenary Warlord Sum 13:** CR 15; Medium female monstrous humanoid, medusan; HD 13d4+13; hp 46; Init +6; Spd 30 ft.; AC 16, touch 12, flat-footed 14; Base Atk +6; Grp +6; Atk +8 melee (1d4+2/x2, *+2 dagger*); Full Atk +8/+3 melee (1d4+2/x2, *+2 dagger*); SA Spells, charm, Medusan gaze; SQ Darkvision 60 ft., spontaneous casting, summon familiar (cat), tame, bond, beast friend; AL LE; SV Fort +5, Ref +6, Will +11; Str 11, Dex 15, Con 12, Int 18, Wis 15, Cha 18.

*Skills and Feats:* Alchemy +9, Concentration +16, Diplomacy +14, Intimidate +17, Knowledge (arcana) +19, Knowledge (Medusan Lords) +11, Knowledge (Shattered Lands) +14, Spellcraft +20; Bascaron Descending, Blind Fight, Craft Ring, Craft Staff, Craft Wondrous Item, Improved Initiative, Leadership (Leadership Score: 19 (+1 special power, +2 stronghold, –1 aloofness), Scribe Scroll, Alertness.

*Charm (Sp):* At will, a Medusan can attempt to *charm* another creature as a standard action. The target creature must make a Will save (DC 17 + Charisma modifier) or else be affected as by the *charm person* spell. This ability has a range of 30 feet. If a Medusan attempts to use a *charm* spell, the power of the spell is augmented by the Medusan's tentacles, granting a +3 enhancement bonus to the DC of the Will save.

*Medusan Gaze (Sp):* The victim of the Medusan's gaze attack must make a Will save (DC 8 + Medusan's character level) or be affected as by the spell *finger of death*. Caster level 15th.

*Darkvision, 60 ft.:* Sorscha can see in the dark with no light source at all, out to a range of 60 feet. Darkvision is black and white only (colors cannot be discerned). It does not allow Sorscha to see anything that she could not see otherwise—invisible objects are still invisible, and illusions are still visible as what they seem to be. Likewise, darkvision subjects Sorscha to gaze attacks normally. The presence of light does not spoil darkvision.

**Summoner Abilities:**

*Tame:* Sorscha may exert mental control over a number of summoned creatures equal to her Charisma modifier, minimum one. Each creature so affected by this ability receives an automatic Will save to resist (DC 23). Creatures controlled by Sorscha are totally subverted by her will, and have no minds of their own. Their statistics remain unchanged, but their actions are decided by Sorscha. At 8th level, Sorscha may control a number of summoned creatures equal to twice her Charisma modifier, and at 16th, three times her Charisma modifier. Sorscha may only use this ability on creatures she summons herself. This is a spell-like mind-affecting ability.

*Bond:* At 2nd level, Sorscha may bond a summoned creature to accomplish a specific task, which extends the duration of the summoning spell as long as is required to accomplish the goal (up to a number of hours equal to Sorscha's class level). The task in question must be stated in a single simple sentence. For instance, "Guard our camp until morning," is fine, but "Guard our camp until morning, and make sure to put the fire out when we're asleep," is not, for example. Sorscha may not use the tame ability on bonded creatures. Sorscha may not use the bond ability to force a creature to remain in combat, though a command to "guard" may result in combat.

*Beast Friend:* At 6th level, Sorscha may communicate freely with any living being. Sorscha uses her magical energies to engage in a form of telepathy which allows her to communicate verbally in the target's own "language." Sorscha may converse normally with creatures of above animal intelligence, but when speaking to creatures of animal intelligence, Sorscha only receives a sense of the target's emotional state and immediate goal, rather than holding a true conversation. Sorscha may only use this ability to communicate with creatures within one step of her own alignment. At 12th level, Sorscha may communicate with any creature within two steps of his own alignment.

*Spontaneous Casting:* Sorscha may "lose" any memorized spell to cast a different spell with "summon" in its name, provided the spell cast is equal to or lower spell level than the expended spell. Further, Sorscha may cast such spells without the use of a focus or material components, even if they are normally required. The summon spell that Sorscha wishes to spontaneously cast must be in her spellbook for this ability to function. Sorscha knows *summon monster I–VI* and *summon swarm*, and may cast them spontaneously.

**Familiar (cat):** Sorscha's cat familiar has the following statistics:

**Cat (Familiar):** CR -; Tiny magical beast; HD 13; hp 23; Init +2; Spd 30 ft; AC 21, touch 17, flat-footed 19; Base Atk +6; Grp –6; Atk +8 melee (1d2–4/x2, claw); Full Atk +8 melee (1d2–4/x2, 2 claws), +3 melee (1d3–4/x2, bite); Space/Reach 2–1/2 ft./0 ft.; SA —; SQ low-light vision, scent, empathic link, share spells, improved evasion, deliver touch spells, speak with master, speak with animals of its kind, spell resistance 18; AL N; SV Fort +8, Ref +6, Will +7; Str 3, Dex 15, Con 10, Int 12, Wis 12, Cha 7.

*Continued on the following page.*

*Skill and Feats:* Balance +10*, Climb +6*, Hide +14*, Jump +10*, Listen +3, Move Silently +6*, Spot +3; Weapon Finesse (claws, bite). *Cats have a +4 racial bonus on Climb, Hide, and Move Silently checks and a +8 racial bonus on Jump checks. Cats have a +8 racial bonus on Balance checks. They use their Dexterity modifier instead of their Strength modifier for Climb and Jump checks. In areas of tall grass or heavy undergrowth, the Hide bonus rises to +8.

*Low-Light Vision:* A cat can see twice as far as a Human in starlight, moonlight, torchlight, and similar conditions of shadowy illumination. It retains the ability to distinguish color and detail under these conditions.

*Scent:* A cat can detect opponents within 30 feet by sense of smell. If the opponent is upwind, the range increases to 60 feet; if downwind, it drops to 15 feet. Strong scents, such as smoke or rotting garbage, can be detected at twice the ranges noted above. Overpowering scents, such as skunk musk or troglodyte stench, can be detected at triple normal range. When a cat detects a scent, the exact location of the source is not revealed—only its presence somewhere within range. The cat can take a move action to note the direction of the scent. Whenever the cat comes within 5 feet of the source, the cat pinpoints the source's location.

*Familiar Ability Descriptions:* All familiars have special abilities (or impart abilities to their masters) depending on Sorscha's combined level in classes that grant familiars. The abilities are cumulative.

*Alertness (Ex):* While her familiar is within arm's reach, Sorscha gains the Alertness feat.

*Improved Evasion (Ex):* When subjected to an attack that normally allows a Reflex saving throw for half damage, a familiar takes no damage if it makes a successful saving throw and half damage even if the saving throw fails.

*Share Spells:* At Sorscha's option, she may have any spell (but not any spell-like ability) she casts on herself also affect her familiar. The familiar must be within 5 feet at the time of casting to receive the benefit. If the spell or effect has a duration other than instantaneous, it stops affecting the familiar if it moves farther than 5 feet away and will not affect the familiar again even if it returns to Sorscha before the duration expires. Additionally, Sorscha may cast a spell with a target of "You" on her familiar (as a touch range spell) instead of on herself. Sorscha and her familiar can share spells even if the spells normally do not affect creatures of the familiar's type (magical beast).

*Empathic Link (Su):* Sorscha has an empathic link with her familiar out to a distance of up to 1 mile. Sorscha cannot see through the familiar's eyes, but they can communicate empathically. Because of the limited nature of the link, only general emotional content can be communicated. Because of this empathic link, Sorscha has the same connection to an item or place that her familiar does.

*Deliver Touch Spells (Su):* Sorscha's familiar can deliver touch spells for her. If Sorscha and the familiar are in contact at the time Sorscha casts a touch spell, she can designate her familiar as the "toucher." The familiar can then deliver the touch spell just as Sorscha could. As usual, if Sorscha casts another spell before the touch is delivered, the touch spell dissipates.

*Speak with Master (Ex):* Sorscha and her familiar can communicate verbally as if they were using a common language. Other creatures do not understand the communication without magical help.

*Speak with Animals of Its Kind (Ex):* Sorscha's familiar can communicate with felines. Such communication is limited by the intelligence of the conversing creatures.

*Scry on Familiar (Sp):* Sorscha may scry on her familiar (as if casting the *scrying* spell) once per day.

*Summoner Spells Prepared* (8/8/6/6/6/6/6/1; save DC 14 + spell level): 0 — *ray of frost (8);* 1st — *change self, mage armor, magic missile, mount, obscuring mist, sleep, summon object, unseen servant;* 2nd — *acid arrow, alter self, bull's strength, concentrate, fog cloud, glitterdust, quickening, spectral touch;* 3rd — *conjuration, flame arrow, floralight, hold person, phantom steed, sleet storm, spectral advisor, stinking cloud;* 4th — *charm monster, claws of ash, ethereal drain, black tentacles, minor creation, lesser geas;* 5th — *animal growth, clinging miasma, cloudkill, faithful hound, hold monster, lesser planar binding, permanency;* 6th — *chain lightning, choking cloud, geas/quest, greater dispelling, mass suggestion, planar binding;* 7th — *greater teleport.*

*Possessions: Sorscha's Cloak, Staff of Secrets*

*Spider Climb (Ex):* Zil can climb and travel on walls and ceilings like a spider. It climbs at half normal speed, and can cling to a surface with an effective Strength of 19.

*Vast Intellect (Ex):* Zil's tremendous brainpower makes it immune to outside influences on its mental function. It is immune to all mind-affecting spells and effects.

*Darkvision, 60 ft.:* Zil can see in the dark with no light source at all, out to a range of 60 feet. Darkvision is black and white only (colors cannot be discerned). It does not allow Zil to see anything that it could not see otherwise — invisible objects are still invisible, and illusions are still visible as what they seem to be. Likewise, darkvision subjects Zil to gaze attacks normally. The presence of light does not spoil darkvision.

## Location 5.9: Black Tower — Sorscha's Tower Chamber

**Read aloud:** *The walls of this room are draped with thick, heavy tapestries, greatly reducing the machine noise so prevalent throughout the tower. In the sickly green light, their true color is difficult to determine. Scrolls and parchments cover the work table. There are bookcases along the far wall, beside a spiral staircase leading up to a heavy-looking iron door in the ceiling. Near the foot of the spiral staircase, a magical circle has been scribed into the metal floor. The air above the magical circle ripples like a heat effect.*

The scrolls and parchments on the table are notes and diagrams written in Sorscha's graceful hand about the operation of the great machine. One describes the procedures to start and stop the machine, and can be found with a successful Search check (DC 15). The levers must be thrown and the wheel turned in a precise order. This procedure is written in the Common language.

The door to **Location 5.10** is hidden behind one of the heavy tapestries, and can only be found by an active search (Search check (DC 15)).

Stepping into the magical circle immediately *teleports* the character to the magical circle in **Location 4.14** in Sorscha's Keep.

The iron door in the ceiling leads to the roof of the tower. It is locked at all times, and Sorscha has the only key. Even when unlocked, the door is so heavy it requires a Strength check (DC 15) to open. The lock is complex; Open Locks checks have DC 30.

**Iron Door:** 1 in. thick, hardness 10, hp 30, Break DC 25.

In the bookcases among several dozen books written in the Medusan language are the following items:

- *potion of alter self*
- *potion of cure moderate wounds* (2)
- *arcane scroll — summon monster III*
- *arcane scroll — summon monster IV*
- *arcane scroll — fireball*
- *arcane scroll — dimension door*

There are other documents here as well:

- Map of the Shattered Lands with the locations of the cities of Mourn and Medusa, the location of a place called simply The Pit, and the location of a cave with the notation "CM."
- Sorscha's personal journals describing her flight from the city of Medusa, when it was attacked by a combined force of Nothrogs, Deverenian knights, and ghouls. She recounts how her parents were killed in their beds by Elven assassins. She is the last of her race. (See *The History of the Medusan Lords* for more information about the destruction of Medusa.)
- An unsigned letter stating that an item referred to as "Cassica's trinket" was successfully filched, and that he is bringing it to her personally.

## Location 5.10: Black Tower — Gears of the Black Tower

**Read aloud:** *As soon as the door is opened, a humming clamor and blast of warm air roll out of the chamber beyond. The smell of lubricants is stronger than ever. The room is filled, wall-to-wall, floor to ceiling, with spinning, whirring, churning gears and rods and pistons and levers. Ahead is the small cylindrical wall of black glass that must enclose the core of the uppermost tower floor. The spinning gears and machinery look incredibly dangerous. Being caught in them would mean certain death.*

The mechanical heart of the Black Tower, this great clockwork forms the material component of Sorscha's spell. If the PCs did not find Zil in **Location 5.8**, he is here. Zil spends most of his time tending the mechanism to make sure it operates smoothly, applying lubricants, and fixing any parts in danger of breaking.

Zil's intelligence is alien, but his attachment to his creation is understandable. He assumes anyone who is here means to cause harm, and attacks anyone who is not Sorscha. His favorite tactic is a stealthy approach by crawling along the ceiling.

There is an open space about 5 feet wide between the spinning machinery and the inner wall. Areas occupied by the machinery are impassable. The floor is covered in layers of lubricant used to keep the machine running; the entire floor of the room is as if affected by the spell *grease*.

Any character that comes too close to the moving gears must make a Reflex save (DC 15), or be jerked into the mechanism and killed instantly.

## Location 5.11: Black Tower — The Dimensional Confluence

**Read aloud:** *Blazing green light pours out of this chamber, swirling with iridescence. Resting on a coppery pedestal in the center of the room is a strange, crystalline object enmeshed in fine silvery filaments. Green energy pulses through the filaments. The object on the pedestal resembles an enormous emerald, faceted at queer angles and looking as if parts of it could move, like a miniature version of the machinery in the previous room. The energy from the filaments pulses through the facets into the crystalline structure like jets of blood. A wave of nausea washes over you.*

Anyone within 10 feet of the *Dimensional Confluence* is gripped by a surge of nausea and vertigo from the reality distortion. PCs must make a Fortitude save (DC 20) or become nauseated as if affected by the spell *stinking cloud*. This save must be made every round, and lasts for as long as the PCs remain in range. If the *Dimensional Confluence* is removed from its place, this effect ends, the great machine begins to wind down, and Sorscha's spell is broken. Removing the *Dimensional Confluence* from its pedestal with the great machine still in operation causes a potent backlash of energy. The character that removes or destroys the device must make a Fortitude save (DC 20) or take 4d6 points of electrical damage. If the machine has been shut down by setting the levers, this backlash does not happen. The *Dimensional Confluence* has a hardness of 5 and 20 hp.

## Location 5.12: Black Tower — The Roof

**Read aloud:** *The top of this massive black cylinder is as stark, black, and shiny as the walls. The only break in the featureless expanse is the stout iron door, flush with the roof.*

The iron door in the roof lead to a spiral staircase down into tower, into **Location 5.9**. It is locked at all times, and Sorscha has the only key. Even when unlocked, the door is so heavy it requires a Strength check (DC 15) to open. The lock is complex; Open Locks checks have DC 30.

**Iron Door:** 1 in. thick; hardness 10; hp 30; Break DC 25.

The handle of the door is the only place where a rope could be secured to climb up or down, and the drop to the rock slope below is 100 feet.

# Part 4: Concluding the Adventure

This adventure could end in several different ways, but these are the most likely outcomes.

- If the PCs stop Sorscha's spell by stealing or destroying the *Dimensional Confluence*, or shutting down the machine, she is enraged. The PCs gain a powerful enemy. She uses every means at her disposal to regain possession of the *Dimensional Confluence*. After the PCs begin attacking Medusan Lords, however, Sorscha surreptitiously aids them against their mutual enemies, by using (for instance) the *Staff of Secrets* to blind Nassiral Hate during the "Lord of Baraxton" adventure. The destructive influence of the Black Tower is nevertheless ended. In a few years, the plants will grow back, and the land will be inhabitable again. The Blackrock Cyclopes will eventually return to their home village.
- If Zil is dead and the *Dimensional Confluence* is stolen or destroyed, Sorscha will never be able to restart the working of the Black Tower. If Zil is alive, and the *Dimensional Confluence* remains, or is recovered, she can restart the machine and spell from the beginning.
- If Sorscha's great spell is completed, she becomes extremely powerful. Blackrock village will be quickly obliterated, and the blight on the landscape will continue indefinitely. The Black Tower summons 100 hit dice worth of monsters per day of operation. This summoning is permanent, and the creatures are completely subservient to Sorscha the moment they arrive. The creatures materialize at the foot of the Black Tower. At this rate, Sorscha has a tremendous army of monsters at her command in little time. With this army, she plans to attack Cassica Moonseed's lair, then Malrog's stronghold the Pit, crushing anyone that gets in her way.

# Part 5: The Stone of Fortune

**If the party stole or destroyed the** *Dimensional Confluence*, **read aloud:** This time, the *Stone of Fortune* shows you a shapely woman, her face hidden by her hooded blue robes, standing over the Black Tower's familiar peak. She raises her gnarled staff, and suddenly the stone burns white-hot. You reflexively drop it, and the vision ends.

Sorscha uses the *Staff of Secrets* to block the party's vision of her, but wants them to know she is angry with them.

**If the party failed to destroy the** *Dimensional Confluence*, **read aloud:** *A wide window opens before you, showing you the dark tower you so recently left. All about it stand countless monsters, each more terrible than the last, all bowing in supplication to the Black Tower and its mistress. Then, as one, the horde rises and marches to the west.*

The monstrous army is largely unopposed, and eventually corners and overpowers Cassica. The party may not complete the adventure *The Traitor* as Sorscha's legions beat them to killing Cassica, and Sir Robert dies futilely trying to defend his wife.

# Part 6: New Monsters

MEDUSAN

**Medium Monstrous Humanoid**
**Hit Dice:** 1d8 (5 hp)
**Initiative:** +5
**Speed:** 30 ft. (6 squares)
**AC:** 11 (+1 Dex), touch 11, flat-footed 10
**Base Attack/Grapple:** +1/+0
**Attack:** +0 melee (damage by weapon type)
**Full Attack:** +0 melee (damage by weapon type)
**Space/Reach:** 5 ft./5 ft.
**Special Attacks:** Charm, Medusan Gaze
**Special Qualities:** Darkvision 60 ft.
**Saves:** Fort +0, Ref +2, Will +2
**Abilities:** Str 9, Dex 11, Con 9, Int 14, Wis 11, Cha 14
**Skills:** Appraise +7, Bluff +6, Diplomacy +6, Knowledge (Shattered Lands) +3, Spellcraft +4
**Feats:** Blind Fight, Improved Initiative
**Climate/Terrain:** Any hills, mountains and under ground
**Organization:** Special (see below)
**Challenge Rating:** 3
**Treasure:** Standard
**Alignment:** Usually lawful neutral
**Advancement:** By character class
**Level Adjustment:** +2

Long ago, before the coming of the Banshee Moon, the Medusans were a proud and prolific race of humans, with an empire spanning large portions of what are now the Shattered Lands. The mountain range that divided their lands from the Deverenians blunted attacks, restricting their clashes to sporadic border skirmishes.

Five centuries ago, Bascaron came, obliterating everything the Medusan race had spent centuries building and changing the Medusans into something other than human. The survivors regrouped and rebuilt in the torturous wastelands that were their ancestral home. Most of their ancient culture was destroyed in the cataclysm, but a few precious bits remained. With their preserved fragments of knowledge, the Medusans rebuilt their oldest, proudest city, Medusa. Their prestige was never fully restored, but they recovered, trading with the other races of the Accordlands for centuries.

Fifty years ago, that ended as well. They were attacked and destroyed by a conspiracy of powerful individuals who commanded vast armies and sought the ancient Medusan knowledge. A massive army of Nothrogs, undead, and Storm Knights assaulted Medusa. The Medusans fought desperately, but to no avail. Medusa was conquered, razed, her people slaughtered.

The conspirators hunted down the last Medusans, and now call themselves the Medusan Lords. They stole a name that inspired awe and respect, and now it symbolizes terror and subjugation. The Medusans are gone, except for Sorscha.

Medusans were once human, but the passage of the Banshee Moon changed them forever. They gained a luminous beauty possessed by no other race in the Accordlands. From the neck down, a typical medusan looks human, with skin slightly paler than a normal human's. She has the same height and weight, but her head is swathed in blue-green light emanating from the luminous tentacles that cover her scalp in place of hair. Six to 18 inches in length, these tentacles are sensitive and prehensile, capable of grasping. Their main purposes are sensory perception and to exert their powerful charm ability over the minds of other creatures. Medusans have no external ears; the tentacles serve that function. When a Medusan exerts the charm ability, the tentacles extend stiffly and ripple with shimmering light.

The Medusans were a physically weak, but long-lived, race with life spans exceeding 150 years.

Medusans spoke Common and their own language, Medusan.

### Combat

Medusans were not a warlike race, but their charm ability, coupled with the ability to kill with a simple gaze, made them feared and respected. They preferred to charm their enemies rather than fight them, but if they were angered, they would not hesitate to use their gaze attack. Their summoners were legendary. They were canny, cunning opponents, preferring subversion and attrition to a headlong fight.

*Charm (Sp):* At will, a Medusan can attempt to *charm* another creature as a standard action. The target creature must make a Will save (DC 17 + Charisma modifier) or else be affected as by the *charm person* spell. This ability has a range of 30 feet. If a Medusan attempts to use a *charm* spell, the power of the spell is augmented by the Medusan's tentacles, granting a +3 enhancement bonus to the DC of the Will save.

*Medusan Gaze (Sp):* The victim of the Medusan's gaze attack must make a Will save (DC 8 + Medusan's character level) or be affected as by the spell *finger of death*.

### Medusan Society

At the height of its power, the Medusan empire rivaled that of Deverenia. Even the Medusan Lords believe that there were no survivors, while Sorscha herself has yet to find any sign of others. Only a few (Sorscha, the Medusan Lords, perhaps a sage or two) hold any knowledge of their society, and they hold the information tightly.

A Medusan's favored class is summoner.

## Zil

**Large Aberration**
**Hit Dice:** 4d8+12 (30 hp)
**Initiative:** +5
**Speed:** 40 ft. (8 squares)
**AC:** 14 (−1 size, +1 Dex, +4 natural), touch 10, flat-footed 14
**Base Attack/Grapple:** +2/+10
**Attack:** Slam +6 melee (1d6+4)
**Full Attack:** Slam +6 melee (1d6+4) or bite +1 melee (1d8+2)
**Space/Reach:** 10 ft./5 ft.
**Special Attacks:** Mental abilities, mind control
**Special Qualities:** Damage reduction 10/—, darkvision 60 ft., spider climb, vast intellect
**Saves:** Fort +4, Ref +2, Will +7
**Abilities:** Str 19, Dex 13, Con 16, Int 25, Wis 13, Cha 6
**Skills:** Alchemy +11, Concentration +8, Decipher Script +14, Disable Device +14, Knowledge (architecture and engineering) +15, Knowledge (the planes) +14, Listen +10, Move Silently +8, Sense Motive +8, Spot +7, Use Magic Device +7
**Feats:** Improved Initiative, Iron Will
**Environment:** Any hills, mountains and under ground
**Organization:** Special (see below)
**Challenge Rating:** 5
**Treasure:** Standard
**Alignment:** Neutral
**Advancement:** Huge (5–8 HD)
**Level Adjustment:** —

Many unusual beings have wandered out of the Shattered Lands, and the being called Zil is strange even among those. Only one of these creatures is known to exist, and it is employed by the warlord known as Sorscha.

Zil looks like an enormous brain-shaped sac riding atop an undercarriage of insect-like legs. It stands 6 feet tall at the crown of its bulbous body, and 8 feet long from its strange face to the distended rear end. Its twelve spindly, chitinous legs are dark reddish brown. The monstrous body that rests on the legs looks like a flesh-colored tumor. Its face consists of three foot-long, sickly-pink eyestalks and a sucking, circular mouth. The mouth is lined by rows of 1-inch teeth and is capable of swallowing its food whole. Just below its face are four small insectoid arms it uses as hands. The tips of these arms have small four-way pincers used for grasping and manipulating.

The huge sac of its body is soft and supple, easily squashed and molded, but its skin is extremely resistant to puncture or cutting. Inside the sac is a rudimentary digestive tract and an enormous brain. In fact, the brain constitutes roughly three-fourths of the creature's body. This great brain gives the creature a vast intelligence, but its incredible intellect is alien to humanoid races. It has had no education of any kind, but in its unknown wanderings, it gained a deep insight into the forces that make up the fabric of reality. It is an engineer and architect unmatched in the Accordlands. It has a tremendous capacity for calculation and

abstract thought, but its brain seems to be geared for that purpose alone. It has little long-term memory of non-mathematical events, thus it cannot remember where it came from or if there are any more like it. Its intellect is so alien and so advanced many of its actions seem strange or incomprehensible to a normal humanoid, like a dog watching his master write a book.

COMBAT

Zil does not like to fight, defending itself if necessary. If fighting a lone opponent, it first attempts to mind control its enemy, and then approach to administer a powerful bite. For multiple opponents, it attempts to mind control enemies into attacking their friends. If hard-pressed in combat, Zil attempts to escape. If it knows an attack is imminent, it can set a cunning ambush. It likes to cling to ceilings and walls out of reach or unseen by its enemies.

*Mind Control (Sp):* Such is the power of its vast intellect that Zil can exert its will over other beings. The target must succeed at a Will save or be affected as by the spell *dominate person* cast by a 12th level wizard. This ability has a range of 30 feet and can be used up to three times a day.

*Mental Abilities (Sp):* At will — *detect thoughts, suggestion;* 1/day — *confusion, feeblemind.* Caster level 9th.

*Spider Climb (Ex):* Zil can climb and travel on walls and ceilings like a spider. It climbs at half normal speed, and can cling to a surface with an effective Strength of 19.

*Vast Intellect (Ex):* Zil's tremendous brainpower makes it immune to outside influences on its mental function. It is immune to all mind-affecting spells and effects.

*Skills:* Zil has deep insight into the nature of complex mathematics, engineering, architecture, and dimensional theory. It receives a +5 racial bonus to all Knowledge (architecture and engineering) and Knowledge (the planes) checks.

# Part 7: New Magic Items

SORSCHA'S CLOAK

**Wondrous Item**

Sorscha created this item; if others exist, she is unaware of them. It is a beautiful hooded velvet cloak of midnight blue. It sometimes moves as if in a breeze, even if there is no wind.

*Sorscha's cloak* has several useful properties. When the wearer is attacked, it swirls and undulates its deep blue folds around the wearer, confounding the attacker, turning aside the blow or missile. This grants a +4 armor bonus to AC.

Furthermore, up to three times per day, the wearer can *greater teleport* as per the spell.

Lastly, if the hood is worn, the wearer can choose to activate the cloak's special disguise ability. For as long as the hood is up, the wearer can change her appearance as if she is affected by the spell *alter self.* This ability has unlimited duration.

*Caster level:* 15th; *Prerequisites:* Craft Wondrous Item, *alter self, mage armor, greater teleport; Price:* 180,000 gp; *Weight:* 2 lb.

STAFF OF SECRETS

**Major Artifact**

This ancient device is in Sorscha's possession. More of them may exist, but have not been discovered. It appears as a gnarled wooden staff, worn smooth by countless hands. At the tip is a large green crystal, over a foot in length, lashed to the wood with stout leather thongs.

The *Staff of Secrets* was a favored weapon of the Medusan people, and a means of humbling an enemy. Merely carried upon the wielder's person, the staff renders them immune to *scry* and location attempts, as though the wielder were under a constant *nondetection* spell, cast by a 20th level wizard. Moreover, the crystal flashes whenever someone attempts such a means to spy upon the staff's wielder. Gazing into the crystal, the wielder may himself *scry* the person who had described him, as though the wielder were a wizard of equivalent character level. The wielder could then either *message* the person scrying him, or make a *suggestion* to the other person, again in both cases as though the wielder were a wizard of equivalent level.

Should the wielder so wish, he may wield the staff more generally, an act Sorscha herself has used against the Medusan Lord, Nassiral Hate. Instead of passively waiting for someone to *scry* him, the wielder may choose to warp someone else's divination abilities. While scrying on someone (either with the staff itself, or with another spell or magical item), the wielder of the *Staff of Secrets* may choose to interfere with all of the target's divination spells and seer class features, automatically canceling them and replacing them with *suggestions* from the wielder instead.

Should Sorscha survive this adventure, and the party later encounters Nassiral Hate (*see the adventure, Lord of Baraxton*), Sorscha uses the staff's effects against him during the encounter.

*Caster level:* 20th; *Weight:* 4 lb.

DIMENSIONAL CONFLUENCE

**Major Artifact**

This strange object looks like an enormous pale emerald, covered in hundreds of facets at queer angles and looking as if parts of it could move. When properly powered, it creates a nexus of extra-dimensional planes, concentrating every infinity on a single point in space. The efforts required to provide this power have been lost. Only the strange creature Zil has been able to unlock the item's full potential.

Nevertheless, it is still a powerful magic item in the hands of a wizard or a summoner. If the person who possesses the item casts a *summon* spell, the spell is cast as if with the metamagic feat Maximize Spell. If the user casts a Conjuration spell, the spell is cast as if with the metamagic feat Empower Spell.

The *Dimensional Confluence* has a hardness of 5 and 20 hp.

*Caster level:* 20th; *Weight:* 4 lb.



# The Shattered Lands

## Introduction

*Shattered Lands* takes the PCs into the blighted wilderness east of the Accordlands where strange monsters, crazed cultists and at least one powerful artifact dwell.

This is one of three adventures in Tier 3. It is meant for characters of levels 4–6. If the PCs take this adventure, they cannot take *Black Forge*.

## Adventure Background

The surest sign things have gone terribly wrong in the Accordlands is that a trip to the Shattered Lands seems like a reasonable option. Devastated by Bascaron, the Banshee Moon, the Shattered Lands are no place for the sane.

The Shattered Lands are an open wound on the world's face, a twisted mass of scarred rock, jagged canyons, and harsh winds. It is a land where the disembodied moans of the wind pierce the barren stillness, but other noises come from creatures that are, thankfully, rarely seen outside of the Shattered Lands.

There were cities, once, in the Shattered Lands. The largest of these, Mourn, is now a hive of indescribable beasts, the twisted remains of the former inhabitants. There are stories of other, smaller cities; in one, it is said, the rich and powerful of Mourn stored great treasures. Like Mourn, Bascaron devastated this city, but some of its wealth may yet survive.

Of the brave people who have journeyed deep into the Shattered Lands, a few have emerged as more powerful. Others were terribly scarred, physically and mentally. Most never returned.

# Adventure Synopsis

As the adventure begins, the PCs know there is a powerful artifact in a lost city in the Shattered Lands. The city is not completely lost, but the few who know where it is, like Sorscha and the Bascaron cultists, are not talking.

In the first stage of the adventure, the PCs must locate the lost city of Corothusa. It is not possible to simply stumble across the city, as powerful spells hide it. The information and materials the PCs need are spread throughout the section of the Shattered Lands shown on the region map.

Once they have discovered Corothusa, the PCs must find the *Shard of Bascaron* hidden inside. Corothusa is built into the side of a cliff, so it is a large building rather than a traditional city.

Throughout the adventure the PCs must deal with the effects of the Shattered Lands. The twisted shape of the land, the nightmarish creatures that dwell there, and the general atmosphere all disturb the mind. The description of the Shattered Lands contains tables describing the potential effect of prolonged exposure. At night, the GM must be aware of which moons are in the sky, since the shadow of Bascaron strengthens the area's effects on the PCs.

## Area 1: The Shattered Lands

The Shattered Lands are the alien landscapes just next door. The Broken Plains of Sarakia are bad, but the Shattered Lands are *wrong*.

Few parts of the Shattered Lands are level. The area is a series of pits, canyons, rock spires, columns, hills and mountains. Rock formations are twisted by forces more powerful than normal erosion, and imbued with lurid colors. Most rocks are a dark gray with occasional blood-red streaks. Mud brown and a sickly yellow occur as well, as do iridescent pink and nauseating purple.

**Plant life:** Water is scarce in the Shattered Lands and plants are extremely rare. Plant life resembles that of the desert, but the Shattered Lands have made many plants hostile and unapproachable. Descriptions of these plants can be included as PCs travel to give them the feel of the land, and some of them may play a factor in random encounters. Plants include:

- Spikeweed: Related to sagebrush, but with black branches, sharp thorns, no leaves and blood-red berries. The berries are poisonous (Ingested poison, DC 13, initial damage: 1 Con, secondary damage 1d4 Con).
- Missile cactus: These sickly green plants have a single, unevenly formed column covered with long, barbed thorns. Any contact with the plant — either by a living being or by an inanimate object like a sword or arrow — causes the plant to launch a third of its needles. Any living being within 10 feet of the cactus takes 2d8 damage (Reflex save for half damage, DC 15). A second touch makes it launch another third of its needles, and after a third touch it loses all remaining needles. After that, the cactus is defenseless for two weeks while it grows new needles. In any random encounter, there is a 5% chance a missile cactus is within 50 feet of the PCs when the encounter occurs.
- Livid cactus: Normally this squat, round plant is gray-green in color, but as creatures other than Humans approach it, it turns the shade of an old bruise, then bloody red. The first change occurs when creatures are within a mile of the cactus. When they are within half a mile, the bruise color peaks, and when creatures are within a quarter mile the red is well defined. In any random encounter, there is a 5% chance the PCs are near a livid cactus as the creature approached and they see the plant turn colors. If the PCs know what the color change means, they may prepare for battle and try to surprise whatever is approaching. If the encounter is with Humans (such as shattered men), the livid cactus provides no warning.

Other plants are similar to commonplace cacti, but with twisted trunks and longer thorns. There is a 5% chance any cactus touched is poisonous.

**Cactus:** contact poison, DC 16, initial damage: 1d6 hp, secondary damage 1d6 Con.

**Wildlife:** Due to the hostile nature of the Shattered Lands, most of the creatures living in the Shattered Lands are always ravenous. Their prime sources of food are, in order of preference: unwitting wanderers in to the area, other creatures, and plant life. Thus, any wildlife the PCs encounter must be considered hostile.

There is a 5% chance of an encounter every hour *(see Table 5–1 to determine what creatures are met)*.

## Table 5-1: Shattered Lands Wilderness Encounters

| d% day | d% night | Encounter | # | CR | At EL |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1–7 | 1–3 | Mercenary Scouts | 2 | 2 | 3 |
| 8–14 | 4–7 | Centaurs | 2 | 3 | 5 |
| 15–16 | 8–9 | Demon of Kvar | 1 | 6 | 6 |
| 17–18 | 10–11 | Jackals of Mourn | 1 | 2 | 2 |
| 19–27 | 12–19 | Sanguicorn | 1 | 4 | 4 |
| 28–38 | 20–28 | Nothrog fighters | 3 | 2 | 5 |
| 39–48 | 29–39 | Mercenary rogues | 2 | 3 | 5 |
| 49–50 | 40–42 | Barrowgrims | 1 | 4 | 4 |
| 51–55 | 43–46 | Stirges | 4 | 1 | 4 |
| 56–60 | 47–49 | Trogid | 5 | 1 | 5 |
| 61–64 | 50–52 | Fireridge cyclops | 2 | 2 | 4 |
| 65–66 | 53–54 | Eyeaters | 1 | 3 | 3 |
| 67 | 55 | Carrick (hill giants) | 1 | 7 | 7 |
| 68 | 56–57 | Undead hags | 1 | 6 | 6 |
| 69 | 58–61 | Shade harpies | 1 | 5 | 5 |
| 70–71 | 62–63 | Famine harpies | 2 | 4 | 6 |
| 72–73 | 64–65 | Makusog | 1 | 13 | 13 |
| 74–81 | 66–73 | Spirit Wing | 1 | 3 | 1 |
| 82–83 | 74–77 | Teratorn | 3 | 4 | 7 |
| 84–93 | 78–88 | Bascaron cultists (clerics) | 3 | 3 | 5 |
| 94–98 | 89–97 | Shattered men | 2 | 4 | 6 |
| 99–100 | 98–100 | Caxycal | 1 | 9 | 9 |

## Movement in the Shattered Lands

**The Shattered Lands are difficult to traverse, as everything is jagged spikes and edges. At best, the Shattered Lands present moderately hampered movement (3/4 movement penalty). Most of the slopes shown on the map are steep, raising the movement penalty to 1/2 any time the PCs are within 1,000 ft. of any peak.**

**Development:** Jackals of Mourn do not approach the PCs; instead, they are seen at a distance. They do not run if the PCs approach them and are initially friendly toward the PCs. If the Jackals become helpful (DC 20) they accompany the PCs for 1d4 hours, assisting them against any attackers. Diplomacy can be used with the Jackals; they do not speak a language the PCs can understand, but they comprehend Human speech. When the time comes for them to leave, the Jackals simply disappear into thin air.

**Jackals of Mourn:** CR 3; Medium magical beast (Bascaron, Extraplanar); HD 4d10+4; hp 26; Init +2; Spd 40 ft.; AC 19, touch 12, flat-footed 17; Base Atk +4, Grp +4; Atk +4 melee (1d4/x2, claw); Full Atk –1 melee (1d6 plus fever/x2, bite), +4 melee (1d4/x2, 2 claws); Space/Reach 5ft./5ft.; SA Spell-like abilities, fever bite, spells; SQ Blink, dimension door, ethereal jaunt, teleport; AL NG; SV Fort +5, Ref +6, Will +4; Str 11, Dex 14, Con 12, Int 12, Wis 16, Cha 12.|

*Skills and Feats:* Listen +9, Move Silently+8, Spot+9, Survival+10; Alertness, Track.

*Blink (Su):* A Jackal of Mourn can use *blink* as the spell (caster level 10th), and can evoke or end the effect as a free action.

*Dimension Door (Su):* A Jackal of Mourn can teleport, as *dimension door* (caster level 10th), once per round as a free action. The ability affects only the Jackal of Mourn, which never appears within a solid object and can act immediately after teleporting.

*Ethereal Jaunt (Ex):* Jackals of Mourn can shift from the Ethereal Plane to the Material Plane as a free action, and shift back again as a move action. The ability is otherwise identical with the *ethereal jaunt* spell (caster level 18th).

*Fever Bite (Su):* Injury, Fortitude DC 13, incubation 1 day, damage 1d3 Constitution. The victim must make three successful Fortitude saving throws in a row to recover from the Jackal's fever bite. The save DC is Constitution-based.

*Teleport (Su):* A pack of Jackals numbering no less than three may initiate a group *teleport*, taking their entire pack far from their current location. This ability requires one round, during which time the pack can take no other action. As long as the destination is a location where at least three members of the pack have been before, there is no chance of failure with this ability, nor will the Jackals appear in solid material. If fewer than three Jackals have been to the location, then the percent chance of failure exists as per the spell as if cast by an 18th-level wizard.

*Spells-Like Abilities:* 3/day—*shield other*; 1/day—*repulsion* (evil creatures only) (DC 17). The save DCs are Charisma-based. Caster level 10th.

**Mercenary Scout, Male Human Sct 1:** CR 1; Medium humanoid (Human); HD 1d8+1; hp 6; Spd 30 ft.; Init +3; AC 14, touch 13, flat-footed 11; Base Atk +0; Grp +1; Atk +1 melee (1d4+1(19–20/x2), dagger); Full Atk +1 melee (1d4+1(19–20/x2), dagger); SA Sneak Attack +1d6; SQ -; AL NE; SV Fort +3, Ref +5, Will +2; Str 12, Dex 17, Con 13, Int 15, Wis 11, Cha 12.

*Skills and Feats:* Climb +4, Handle Animal +4, Hide +5, Listen +4, Move Silently +6, Speak Language (Nothrog), Spot +3, Survival +4, Use Rope +7; Alertness, Iron Will.

*Sneak Attack:* Anytime a scout's target is denied a Dexterity bonus to AC, or when the scout flanks a target, the scout deals an additional 1d6 points of damage on a successful attack.

*Possessions:* Padded armor, dagger, 8 gp.

**Nothrog Fighter, Male Nothrog Ftr 2:** CR 2; Medium humanoid (Nothrog); HD 2d10+2; hp 13; Spd 20 ft.; Init +0; AC 15, touch 10, flat-footed 15; Base Atk +2; Grp +5; Atk +6 melee (1d10+4(19–20/x2), Nothrog longblade); Full Atk +6 melee (1d10+4(19–20/x2), Nothrog longblade); SA Favored weapon (Nothrog longblade); SQ Nothrog traits; AL NE; SV Fort +4, Ref +0, Will +2; Str 17, Dex 11, Con 13, Int 12, Wis 10, Cha 9.

*Skills and Feats:* Climb +1*, Handle Animal +1, Intimidate +2, Jump +1*, Profession (hunter) +3, Ride +2; Iron Will, Power Attack. *includes –5 armor check penalty

*Favored Weapon (Nothrog longblade):* A Nothrog fighter gains a +1 competence bonus to attack and damage rolls with the Nothrog longblade.

*Possessions:* Chainmail, Nothrog longblade, 12 gp.

**Mercenary, Male Human Rog 3:** CR 3; Medium humanoid (Human); HD 3d6+3; hp 13; Spd 30 ft.; Init +7; AC 16, touch 13, flat-footed 13; Base Atk +2; Grp +3; Atk +3 melee (1d6+1(19–20/x2), short sword); Full Atk +3 melee (1d6+1(19–20/x2), short sword); SA Sneak attack +1d6; SQ Evasion, hide in plain sight; AL N; SV Fort +2, Ref +6, Will +3; Str 13, Dex 16, Con 13, Int 12, Wis 10, Cha 11.

*Skills and Feats:* Appraise +4, Balance +6*, Bluff +4, Decipher Script +3, Diplomacy +3, Disable Device +4, Disguise +3, Escape Artist +7, Forgery +5, Hide +6*, Listen +4, Move Silently +6*, Open Lock +7, Search +5, Sense Motive +2, Sleight of Hand +6*, Survival +2; Dodge, Improved Initiative, Iron Will. *includes –1 armor check penalty

*Evasion:* If the Mercenary makes a successful Reflex saving throw against an attack that normally deals half damage on a successful save, he instead takes no damage. Evasion can be used only if the Mercenary is wearing light armor or no armor. A helpless Mercenary does not gain the benefit of evasion.

*Hide In Plain Sight:* Each time the Mercenary makes a Hide check, he may reduce the total penalty (if any) to his skill check by his rogue class level (3), to a minimum of 0.

*Sneak Attack:* Anytime the Mercenary's target is denied a Dexterity bonus to AC, or when he flanks a target, the Mercenary deals an additional 1d6 points of damage on a successful melee attack.

*Possessions:* Studded leather armor, shortsword.

## The Shattered Mind

**The barren landscape, the odd noises of wind rushing through rock hollows, the bizarre creatures, and an indefinable corruption in the air combine to strain the minds of those that linger in the Shattered Lands. The longer the PCs dally in their quest, the more insanity weighs on them.**

**For the first three days, there is no effect on the PCs' minds. Every day thereafter, PCs must make a Will save (see Table 5–2) or suffer *confusion* for that day (see Table 2 for DC). If they make a successful Will save the following day, they function normally. If the PCs fail their Will save five days in a row, their *confusion* becomes permanent *insanity* until removed by a *greater restoration, limited wish, miracle,* or *wish*.**

**Bascaron Cultist, Male Human Clr 3:** CR 3; Medium humanoid (Human); HD 3d8+3; hp 16; Spd 30 ft.; Init +0; AC 13, touch 10, flat-footed 13; Base Atk +2; Grp +2; Atk +2 melee (1d6/x2, light mace), or +2 ranged (1d6/x3, shortbow); Full Atk +2 melee (1d6/x2, light mace), or +2 ranged (1d6/x3, shortbow); SA Spells, rebuke undead 4/day; SQ Cleric domains (Chaos, Evil), spontaneous casting; AL CE; SV Fort +6, Ref +1, Will +6; Str 10, Dex 11, Con 12, Int 13, Wis 16, Cha 13.

*Skills and Feats:* Concentration +5, Diplomacy +3, Heal +9, Knowledge (history) +5, Knowledge (religion) +5, Spellcraft +4; Combat Casting, Enlarge Spell, Great Fortitude.

*Rebuke Undead:* A cultist can attempt to rebuke undead 4 times per day.

*Spontaneous Casting:* A cultist can "lose" a prepared spell (except for a domain spell) in order to cast any *inflict* spell of the same level or lower.

*Cleric Spells Prepared* (4/3+1/2+1; save DC 13 + spell level): 0 — *cure minor wounds, detect magic, guidance, resistance;* 1st — *bane, cause fear, inflict light wounds, protection from good*;* 2nd — *hold person, shatter*, silence.* *Domain spell

*Possessions:* Studded leather armor, light mace, shortbow, 20 arrows, 10 gp.

**Shattered Men†:** CR 4; Medium humanoid (Human); HD 4d12+4; hp 30; Init +1; Spd 40 ft.; AC 14, touch 11, flat-footed 13; Base Atk +4; Grp +7; Atk +7 melee (1d6+3/x2, club); Full Atk +7 melee (1d6+3/x2, club); SA Barbarian rage 2/day; SQ Resist magic +1; AL CN; SV Fort +7, Ref +4, Will +3; Str 16, Dex 12, Con 13, Int 11, Wis 10, Cha 11.

*Skills and Feats:* Climb +4*, Intimidate +7, Jump +4*, Listen +7, Ride +6, Survival +8, Great Fortitude, Iron Will, Lightning Reflexes. *includes –3 armor check penalty

*Resist Magic (Ex):* Shattered men live in a land that has been broken by magic, and their continued exposure to the worst side of magic makes them somewhat resistant to its effects. They have a +1 morale bonus to all saves against effects generated by spells, spell-like abilities, and magic items.

*Barbarian Rage (Ex):* Shattered men can fly into a rage twice per day, giving them +4 Str, +4 Con, +2 morale bonus on Will Saves and –2 to AC. The rage lasts 20 rounds, after which the shattered man has –2 Str and –2 Dex for the remainder of the encounter.

**Caxycal†:** CR 9; Huge animal; HD 10d8+30; hp 75; Init +2; Spd 60 ft.; AC 13, touch 11, flat-footed 13; Base Atk +7; Grp +18; Atk +17 melee (2d6+4/x2, bite); Full Atk +17 melee (2d6+4/x2, bite), +12 melee (2d4/x2, 2 claws), +12 melee (1d12+12/x2, tail whip); AL N; Space/Reach: 15 ft./10 ft.; SA Trip; SQ Scent; SV Fort +10, Ref +9, Will +4; Str 28, Dex 15, Con 16, Int 4, Wis 12, Cha 6.

*Skills and Feats:* Move Silently +7, Jump +14, Climb +12; Power Attack, Weapon Focus (bite, claw, tail whip).

*Trip (Ex):* A caxycal that hits with any attack can attempt to trip an opponent as a free action. The attempt does not provoke an attack of opportunity.

*Scent (Ex):* A caxycal can detect opponents within 30 feet by sense of smell. If the opponent is upwind, the range increases to 60 feet; if downwind, it drops to 15 feet. Strong scents, such as smoke or rotting garbage, can be detected at twice the ranges noted above. Overpowering scents, such as skunk musk or troglodyte stench, can be detected at triple normal range. When a caxycal detects a scent, the exact location of the source is not revealed—only its presence somewhere within range. The caxycal can take a move action to note the direction of the scent.

Whenever the caxycal comes within 5 feet of the source, the caxycal pinpoints the source's location.

† See **Part 6** for additional details.

### Table 5–2: Shattered Lands Confusion Difficulty Checks

| Number of days in Shattered Lands | Difficulty Class of Will save* |
|---|---|
| 1–3 | No save needed |
| 4–7 | DC 10 |
| 8–11 | DC 12 |
| 12–15 | DC 14 |
| 16–19 | DC 16 |
| 20–23 | DC 18 |
| 24–27 | DC 20 |
| 28–31 | DC 22 |
| 32–35 | DC 24 |

*These DCs increase by 3 any time Bascaron's shadow is in the sky.

# Area 2: Corothusa

The artifact the PCs seek is in the lost city of Corothusa.

**Corothusa in the past:** When Corothusa was a functioning town, each of its four levels had its own purpose. The bottom level was public space, with shops, a grand plaza, and a few small residences. The second level was general residences, the third was for research and studies, and the fourth was for the town's ruler and his staff.

The town never had a self-supporting economy, but rather was designed to be an escape for upper-class citizens of Mourn. It was not solely geared toward relaxation, as the intellectual elite often came to Corothusa for a quiet place to pursue their studies.

The homes in Corothusa were often temporary residences, smaller than the ones their owners kept in Mourn. They were shared by a number of people who took turns living in them. While there were generally no more than 150 people in Corothusa at a time, many more residents of Mourn — at least 500 — lived in the town during part of the year.

**Corothusa in the present:** As with Mourn, the citizens of Corothusa have been transformed into beings no longer Human. Most of the former citizens of Corothusa left the city long ago, but a few still lurk in its halls. After the transformation, they no longer had use for the money and objects spread throughout the city. Corothusa has become an attractive destination for looters, and while much of the riches hidden there have been removed, many people believe the most powerful artifacts in the city were the ones that were the best hidden.

Looting has slowed in recent years because of the efforts of the Cult of Bascaron. They see the city as a holy shrine and have a halo to the ethereal plane within its walls. They do not want anyone else removing treasure from Corothusa, and have set up a number of protections to seal off the city. They have not successfully driven away all of the former residents.

Most creatures in Corothusa are content to stay in their lairs, but Bascaron cultists occasionally wander through the city. Every hour the PCs are in Corothusa, they have a 7% chance of running into a group of 2–4 Bascaron cultists (see Wandering Monsters for statistics). The cultists immediately recognize the PCs as trespassers and attack them on sight.

## Part 1: Finding Corothusa

ENCOUNTER 1:
NOTHROG HUNTING PARTY (EL 9)

Read the first description when the PCs are within 250 feet of the marked spot.

**Read aloud:** *The peaks and spires here spread apart, turning into a rare open space, and the ground becomes nearly level. The near-constant howl of the wind dies down, only to be replaced by guttural howls and drum beats ahead. The source of the noise is out of sight, but whoever they are, they are not concerned about being heard.*

**Development**: The sounds come from a group of Nothrog hunters conducting a ritual to begin their hunt. Two Nothrog stand outside the central group, keeping watch. Generally, they are looking for larger-than-Human creatures, giving them –5 on Spot checks for Human-sized creatures.

**If the guards Spot the PCs, read aloud:** *A tall creature stands on a rock outcropping, yelling and shaking his spear. "This is our hunt!" he calls. "You must hunt some place else!"*

**Development**: The Nothrog guards are initially unfriendly toward anyone but another Nothrog, to whom they are indifferent (they would be friendly but are focused on the hunt and not happy about being disturbed). If the guards are indifferent, friendly, or helpful, they allow the PCs to speak with T'kath, the leader of the hunting party. If the PCs attempt to pass the guards while they are unfriendly or hostile, the guards and all other members of the party attack.

**If the PCs are able to approach the hunting party peacefully, read aloud:** *Four Nothrog sit in rapt attention at the feet of a fifth, a barrel-chested hunter wearing a patchwork mail shirt of scales, teeth, and other creature parts.*

*"You kill for the legion," the large Nothrog says. "Without the death we bring, our legion will not have the strength to fight. You provide the muscle of the legion."*

**Development**: The speaker is T'kath of the Red Falcon Legion, survivor of many hunting expeditions into the Shattered Lands. He is friendly toward Nothrog from the Red Falcon Legion, indifferent toward any other Nothrog, and unfriendly to all other creatures. T'kath and his group are beginning a hunt, looking mainly for caxycals, but willing to settle for anything edible. The hunting party knows they must bring home a few hundred pounds of meat or not bother returning.

The PCs may not join the hunt, but they may sell T'kath any meat they have for 4 sp per pound (estimated weight). T'kath is proud but reasonable; he knows game in the Shattered Lands is scarce and he should take what is available. PCs receive +2 on Diplomacy checks after selling T'kath meat.

T'kath knows nothing about the artifact the PCs seek, but he knows the Shattered Lands well, and can provide information if he is either friendly or helpful. He must be asked the right questions, though; no matter what his attitude, he does not volunteer information.

*Friendly (DC 10 for Red Falcon Legion Nothrog, 15 for other Nothrog, 25 for all others)* There is a long, narrow canyon just to the northwest that T'kath avoids during the hunt. The canyon seems infested by Bascaron cultists who tend to kill or spook any wildlife, so hunting there is poor.

*Helpful (DC 20 for Red Wolf Legion Nothrog, 30 for other Nothrog, 40 for all others)*: T'kath prides himself on being able to go anywhere in the Shattered Lands, but there are two places not far away that he has not penetrated. One is a pass northeast of the current encampment with a strange woman who has powerful protection. The other is a narrow canyon far to the northwest that is sealed by a barrier T'kath has been unable to breach.

**Creatures:** Six Nothrog fighters, 2nd-level fighters (two guarding the site, four sitting with T'kath – *see Area 1* for stats); T'kath, a 7th-level fighter.

**Nothrog Fighter (2):** hp 16, 14.

**T'kath, Male Nothrog Ftr 7:** CR 7; Medium humanoid (Nothrog); HD 7d10+7; hp 52; Init +1; Spd 20 ft.; AC 16, touch 11, flat-footed 15; Base Atk +7; Grp +10; Atk +11 melee (1d10+7/x3, halberd); Full Atk +11/+6 melee (1d10+7/x3, halberd); SA Favored weapon (halberd, Nothrog longblade), improved damage (halberd); SQ Nothrog traits; AL NE; SV Fort +6, Ref +5, Will +4; Str 17, Dex 12, Con 13, Int 12, Wis 10, Cha 9.

*Skills and Feats:* Climb +4*, Handle Animal +2, Intimidate +4, Jump +4*, Listen +3, Ride +5; Cleave, Endurance, Iron Will, Leadership, Lightning Reflexes, Power Attack. *includes –5 armor check penalty

*Favored Weapon (halberd, Nothrog longblade):* T'kath gains a +1 competence bonus to attack and damage rolls with the halberd and the Nothrog longblade.

*Improved Damage (halberd):* T'kath does an additional +2 (+3 total) damage with the halberd.

*Possessions:* Chainmail, halberd, Nothrog longblade.

*Treasure:* The Nothrog's equipment is divided into two large packs. Their contents are as follows:

- Pack one: two healer's kits, dagger, five torches, flint and steel, 200 ft. of rope.
- Pack two: dagger, whetstone, two common lamps, two *potions of cure light wounds*, and 12 pitons.

## Location 1: Mercenary camp (EL 7)

**Read aloud:** *Rain from recent storms has run down three nearby peaks, forming a rare sight in the Shattered Lands — a small pool of water. Two mules stand near the pool, and their masters are sprawled on the ground nearby. All five of them appear to be sleeping, but each of them has a weapon in hand.*

These are Mercenaries, and they are merely resting their eyes. The first sign of a threat — a shouted challenge or a rush by the PCs — brings them to their feet.

The Mercenaries are indifferent to all PCs. They are members of the Dark Horsemen and are searching for the same artifact as the PCs. However, they are in the early stages of their search and have little information.

The Mercenaries are three Humans (Bendafil, Jovar and Karlenn), a Nothrog (Trund) and a Dwarf (Slip). Karlenn is the leader, but the Mercenaries do not stand on ceremony; the PCs can talk to any member of the group. The Mercenaries react to the PCs individually, so if the PCs fail to improve the attitude of one, they can move on to another. They all know the same information.

*Friendly (DC 15):* Kerebrus, leader of the Dark Horsemen, has sent them to find this artifact. Rumors about the artifacts in the Shattered Lands are vague, but they included enough information to make Kerebrus take the initiative to send Mercenaries on his own. Kerebrus plans to recover the artifact for his own personal use or, if it is a creation of chaos, to destroy.

*Helpful (DC 30):* At first the Mercenaries thought about looking through the ruins of Mourn. Recently, though, they interrogated a captured Bascaron cultist and got a few answers before the cultist committed suicide. The cultist believed there is a second city called Corothusa, smaller than Mourn, which holds artifacts and riches removed from the larger city.

**Creatures:** Bendafil, a 2nd-level fighter; Jovar, a 3rd-level barbarian; Karlenn, a 5th-level fighter; Trund, a 2nd-level rogue; Slip, a 3rd-level fighter.

**Bendafil, Male Human Ftr 2:** CR 2; Medium humanoid (Human); HD 2d10+2; hp 15; Spd 30 ft.; Init +1; AC 15, touch 11, flat-footed 14; Base Atk +2; Grp +5; Atk +6 melee (1d8+4/x3, warhammer); Full Atk +6 melee (1d8+4/x3, warhammer); SA Favored weapon (warhammer); SQ -; AL N; SV Fort +4, Ref +1, Will +2; Str 17, Dex 12, Con 13, Int 12, Wis 10, Cha 9.

*Skills and Feats:* Climb +3*, Handle Animal +3, Intimidate +3, Jump +3, Ride +5; Iron Will, Power Attack, Run. *includes –4 armor check penalty

*Favored Weapon (warhammer):* Bendafil gains a +1 competence bonus to attack and damage rolls with the warhammer.

*Possessions:* Scale mail, warhammer.

**Jovar, Male Human Bar 3:** CR 3; Medium humanoid (Human); HD 3d12+3; hp 26; Spd 30 ft.; Init +1; AC 14, touch 11, flat-footed 13; Base Atk +3; Grp +6; Atk +6 melee (1d8+3/x3, heavy mace); Full Atk +6 melee (1d8+3/x3, heavy mace); SA Barbarian rage 1/day; SQ Fast movement, illiteracy, resist magic +1, totem animal (boar); AL CN; SV Fort +6, Ref +4, Will +3; Str 16, Dex 12, Con 12, Int 11, Wis 10, Cha 11.

*Skills and Feats:* Climb +5*, Handle Animal +2, Intimidate +5, Jump +5*, Listen +4, Ride +5, Survival +5, Great Fortitude, Iron Will, Lightning Reflexes. *includes –3 armor check penalty

*Barbarian Rage (1/day):* While Jovar rages, his statistics change as follows: HD 3d12+9; hp 32; AC 12, touch 9, flat-footed 11; Grp +8; Atk +8 melee (1d8+5/x3, heavy mace); Full Atk +8 melee (1d8+5/x3, heavy mace); SV Fort +8, Will +5; Str 20, Con 16. His fit of rage lasts for 6 rounds. At the end of the rage Jovar is fatigued (–2 to Strength, –2 to Dexterity, can't charge or run).

*Fast Movement (Ex):* Jovar has a speed faster than the norm for his race by +10 feet when wearing no armor, light armor, or medium armor (and not carrying a heavy load).

*Illiteracy:* Jovar cannot read nor write.

*Resist Magic (Ex):* Jovar gains a +1 morale bonus to saves against effects generated by spells, spell-like abilities and magic items. Jovar also reduces additional damage inflicted against him/her by enhancement bonuses by the same amount.

*Totem Animal (boar):* Bonus Ability — Raging Charge: Jovar can harness the power and ferocity of the wild boar, making his charges more powerful than normal. When charging, Jovar gains a +3 bonus to attack and a +1 bonus to damage. These bonuses do not stack with the normal charge bonuses.

*Possessions:* Hide armor, heavy mace.

**Karlenn, Male Human Ftr 5:** CR 5; Medium humanoid (Human); HD 5d10+5; hp 35; Spd 20 ft.; Init +0; AC 15, touch 10, flat-footed 15; Base Atk +5; Grp +8; Atk +9 melee (1d8+6(19–20/x2), longsword), or +6 ranged (1d8+1/x3, longbow); Full Atk +9 melee (1d8+6(19–20/x2), longsword), or +6 ranged (1d8+1/x3, longbow); SA Favored weapon (longsword, longbow), improved damage (longsword); SQ -; AL LN; SV Fort +5, Ref +1, Will +3; Str 17, Dex 11, Con 13, Int 12, Wis 10, Cha 9.

*Skills and Feats:* Climb +4*, Handle Animal +3, Intimidate +4, Jump +4*, Ride +5, Spot +2; Cleave, Endurance, Iron Will, Power Attack, Toughness. *includes –5 armor check penalty

*Favored Weapon (longsword, longbow):* Karlenn gains a +1 competence bonus to attack and damage rolls with the longsword and the longbow.

*Improved Damage (longsword):* Karlenn does an additional +2 (+3 total) damage with the longsword.

*Possessions:* Chainmail, longsword, longbow, 20 arrows.

**Slip, Female Dwarf Ftr 3:** CR 3; Medium humanoid (Dwarf); HD 3d10+6; hp 22; Init +0; Spd 20 ft.; AC 15, touch 10, flat-footed 15, Base Atk +3; Grp +6; Atk +8 melee (1d8+4/x3, battleaxe); Full Atk +8 melee (1d8+4/x3, battleaxe); SA Favored weapon (battleaxe); SQ Dwarf traits; AL NE; SV Fort +5, Ref +1, Will +1; Str 17, Dex 10, Con 14, Int 12, Wis 10, Cha 9.

*Skills and Feats:* Climb +4*, Jump +3*, Ride +3, Swim +1†; Exiled, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (battleaxe). *includes –4 armor check penalty †includes doubled armor check penalty (–8)

*Favored Weapon (battleaxe):* Slip gains a +1 competence bonus to attack and damage rolls with the battleaxe.

*Possessions:* Breastplate, battleaxe.

**Trund, Male Nothrog Rog 2:** CR 2; Medium humanoid (Nothrog); HD 2d6+2; hp 6; Spd 30 ft.; Init +2; AC 15, touch 12, flat-footed 13; Base Atk +1; Grp +2; Atk +2 melee (1d6+1(19–20/x2), short sword); Full Atk +2 melee (1d6+1(19–20/x2), short sword); SA Sneak attack +1d6; SQ Evasion, hide in plain sight, Nothrog traits; AL N; SV Fort +1, Ref +5, Will +2; Str 13, Dex 15, Con 13, Int 12, Wis 10, Cha 11.

*Skills and Feats:* Appraise +3, Balance +6, Bluff +4, Diplomacy +2, Disable Device +4, Disguise +3, Escape Artist +4*, Hide +5*, Listen

+4, Move Silently +5*, Open Lock +6, Search +3, Sense Motive +2, Sleight of Hand +5; Iron Will. *includes –1 armor check penalty

*Evasion:* If Trund makes a successful Reflex saving throw against an attack that normally deals half damage on a successful save, he instead takes no damage. Evasion can be used only if Trund is wearing light armor or no armor. A helpless Trund does not gain the benefit of evasion.

*Hide In Plain Sight:* Each time Trund makes a Hide check, he may reduce the total penalty (if any) to his skill check by his rogue class level (2), to a minimum of 0.

*Sneak Attack:* Anytime Trund's target is denied a Dexterity bonus to AC, or when he flanks a target, Trund deals an additional 1d6 points of damage on a successful melee attack.

*Treasure:* Each Mercenary has a pack with the following contents:

- Bendafil: 12 sp, 2 gp, flint and steel, six pitons, 100 ft. of rope.
- Jovar: 18 gp, healer's kit.
- Karlenn: 14 gp, 18 sp, 5 sheets of paper, one book (Karlenn's journal; one page contains an account of the interrogation of the Bascaron cultist that provides the same information the Mercenaries give if they are helpful).
- Trund: 2 gp, map case (empty), flint and steel, 100 ft. of rope.
- Slip: 15 gp, ten pitons, 100 ft. of rope.

## Location 2: Shrine to Bascaron (EL 9)

Read the first description as the PCs enter the canyon containing the shrine.

**Read aloud:** *This canyon is narrow and dark, with high mountain ridges on either side blocking most of the light that might attempt to creep down. The howls of the wind are more pronounced here, and sometimes it sounds nearly Human.*

**Development:** The canyon holds two traps, each 100 feet away from the Location 2 on the map.

**Daylight Trap:** CR 2; magic device; visual trigger (clairvoyance); automatic reset; spell effect (daylight, 5th-level cleric, bright light in 60-foot radius); Search DC 28; Disable Device DC 28.

**Read aloud:** *Light flares from within the rocks themselves. After the shadows of the canyon, the light is almost blinding.*

Nothing else happens. No alarms sound, no people approach. If anyone is ahead, though, they know they are not alone in the canyon.

**Development:** The shrine is not visible from either trap, as it is nestled in a small cove in the west wall.

**Read aloud:** *To the west is a small cove in the canyon wall, and inside that cove is a pure, bright green rock that emits a faint glow. A simple archway has been carved into the canyon wall above the rock.*

*A tall woman wearing tattered leather armor stands by the rock. Her face is twisted and scarred, and one of her arms ends in a hideous stump with writhing tendrils trailing from it. Nonetheless, she looks at you, fevor shining in her eyes.*

*"This rock is power," she says. "This rock is why you are here."*

**Development:** The woman is Yellene Durn, a priest in the Cult of Bascaron. She stands by the rock whether or not the PCs set off the *daylight trap*.

### The Shrine's Story

**The green rock in the shrine began as a plain piece of limestone. Bascaron cultists took it through a portal to the ethereal plane, placed it on a high mountain peak as the moon was passing directly overhead, and left it for a single night.**

**To the cultists, the rock is a prime example of why Bascaron should be worshiped. First, its power to bend and transform any environment or material is awe-inspiring and worthy of emulation. Second, it transfers power without ever diminishing its own, as the power put into the plain rock shows.**

**The PCs do not learn the specifics of the rock's power unless they fight the cultists. Durn is content to say it is powerful and leave it at that.**

Other cultists prepare defenses if the traps were triggered. Two cultists sit on the canyon wall about 25 feet above the shrine. One of them casts *bless*, the other casts *bane*. Two additional cultists are hidden in the walls on either side of the rock, about 15 feet away, armed and ready with longbows.

If the trap is not triggered, the cultists to the side need one round to pick up their bows. The cultists above the shrine do not cast their spells for fear of being detected.

Durn is anxious to tell anyone about the rock, and given a chance she details its history and the reasons she thinks it is important (*see sidebar*).

Durn does not know of the existence of the Shard of Bascaron (and if she did, she would not share the information with unworthy infidels). Her remark about the rock being what the PCs were looking for does not reflect any actual knowledge of the PCs' quest; rather, she thinks everyone should know of the power of Bascaron, and anyone who arrives at her shrine was brought there to learn what she has to teach them. Or, if they are not willing to learn, they must be killed as a demonstration of the power of Bascaron.

**Development:** Durn knows crucial information about getting into Corothusa that PCs may obtain through several methods. Diplomacy, Bluff, or Intimidate might work; killing her and finding the letter she carries is another option.

Durn's initial attitude is indifferent. She wants to win converts to the cult, but she knows how most people view the cult, so she treats non-cultists warily.

*Helpful (DC 30):* If Durn is helpful, it is because she believes the PCs want to learn more about Bascaron and join the cult. Corothusa presents an excellent opportunity to learn about Bascaron's power, which is why the cultists have sealed it off from outsiders.

Durn cannot tell the PCs how to get to Corothusa, but she can tell them how to get to someone who knows the way. She tells the PCs that if they exit the canyon and head west, they will see the tallest spire in this part of the lands. The base of the spire rises relatively slowly for about 1,100 ft., then becomes a narrow needle ascending another 500 ft. Somewhere near the base of the needle is a man named Pylowix. If the PCs tell Pylowix they were sent by Durn and wish to travel to Corothusa, he will help them.

She believes Corothusa is somewhere to the northwest, but she has not been allowed to go there herself, so she does not know its exact location.

**Creatures:** Four Bascaron cultists, 3rd-level clerics *(see Area 1 for stats)*; Yellene Durn, a 6th-level cleric.

**Bascaron Cultists (4):** hp 14, 19, 24, 14.

**Yellene Durn, Female Human Clr 6:** CR 6; Medium humanoid (Human); HD 6d8+12; hp 40; Spd 30 ft.; Init +0; AC 12, touch 10, flat-footed 12; Base Atk +4; Grp +5; Atk +5 melee (1d6+1/x2, light mace); Full Atk +5 melee (1d6+1/x2, light mace); SA Spells, rebuke undead 3/day; SQ Cleric domains (Chaos, Evil), spontaneous casting; AL CE; SV Fort +9, Ref +2, Will +8; Str 12, Dex 10, Con 14, Int 13, Wis 17, Cha 10.

*Skills and Feats:* Concentration +10, Diplomacy +4, Heal +12, Knowledge (religion) +4, Sense Motive +7, Spellcraft +5; Great Fortitude, Leadership, Maximize Spell, Silent Spell.

*Rebuke Undead:* Yellene can attempt to rebuke undead 3 times per day.

*Spontaneous Casting:* Yellene can "lose" a prepared spell (except for a domain spell) in order to cast any *inflict* spell of the same level or lower.

*Cleric Spells Prepared* (5/4+1/4+1/3+1; save DC 13 + spell level): 0 — *cure minor wounds, detect magic, guidance, inflict minor wounds, resistance;* 1st — *bane, cause fear, doom, inflict light wounds, protection from good*;* 2nd — *augury, hold person, lesser restoration, shatter*, silence;* 3rd — *bestow curse, magic circle against good*, summon monster II, wind wall.* *Domain spell

*Possessions:* Leather armor, light mace, *scroll of death knell, potion of hiding,* letter, 9 gp.

**Development:** If combat breaks out, Durn invokes the one power of the green rock she knows how to use — it casts *circle of doom* as if by a 8th-level cleric. The cultists on the side fire arrows, but they rush to help Durn if she becomes involved in melee combat. Once the cultists above the Shrine run out of effective spells, they climb down and engage in melee combat.

*Treasure:* The four hidden cultists only have the weapons they carry. Durn has 9 gp, a *scroll of death knell, a potion of hiding* and a letter *(see sidebar Durn's Letter)*.

The green stone weighs 2,000 pounds, a hardness of 8, and 15 hp/inch of thickness. It can be chipped, but any piece removed from the stone loses its glow and becomes powerless. If more than 50% of the stone is chipped away, the glow disappears and the stone's powers vanish. Spells of the Law domain, or weapons with the *lawful* enchantment, shatter the stone instantly if the stone takes more than 15 points of damage in a single attack from such a source.

### Durn's Letter

**The language and scripting of this letter is unusual, as the author's communication skills are rusty. Anyone attempting to read the letter must make a Decipher Script check (DC 20) in order to see the meaning behind the apparent gibberish.**

**If the check is successful, the reader understands someone is waiting at the base of a tall, needle-like spire to the west for people sent by Durn. The letter does not contain any information about who Durn is supposed to send or why.**

## Location 3: Caxycal den

**Read aloud:** *A broad canyon between a series of jagged peaks ends in a wide-mouthed, tall cave. No light or sound comes from the cave entrance, but it clearly has been used, as the ground is unusually smooth at the cave's entrance.*

PCs can make a Spot check (DC 15) outside the cave to attempt to see the caxycal lurking just inside *(see Part 6 for full details)*.

**Below is the description if the PCs enter the cave without spotting the caxycal, read aloud:** *The cave is shallow, the lair for some beast. Unfortunately, the beast is home and hungry. A low growl, more felt than heard, rumbles through the cave, and something large pounces.*

**Creature:** One caxycal *(see Area 1 for stats)*.

**Caxycal (1):** hp 75.

*Treasure:* The caxycal is only interested in things it can eat, so it does not have any possessions. However, the cat weighs about 1,500 pounds, meaning there is about 700 pounds of meat on its body. A PC can cut off 300 pounds of meat without a skill check; PCs making a successful Profession (butcher) check of DC 18 get 400 pounds; DC 20 gets 500 pounds. The remaining meat is too difficult to carve with the time and tools available to the PCs. A caxycal hide can be sold for 5,000 gp in the Accordlands.

## Location 4: Excavation

When walking past the entrance to the canyon where the excavation is located, a PC making a successful Survival check (DC 15) notices the canyon looks more heavily traveled than other areas.

PCs hear the excavation long before they see anything. When they are within 250 ft. of the end of the canyon, digging noise and yells of the workers reach their ears.

When the PCs are within sight of the excavation, turning a corner in the canyon about 100 feet away from the end, read aloud: All the noise and shouting echoing through the canyon comes from only four workers. Three of them dangle from ropes fastened high in the canyon wall, swinging wildly with picks. The strikes are random and weak, but they have still managed to dig about 5 feet into the wall. They constantly seem in danger of hitting their fellow workers in the head.

A fourth person stalks back and forth below the diggers, waving his arms furiously, shouting directions and ineptly trying to snap a whip. The hair on the right side of his head is cut down to his scalp, while the hair on the left side is nearly shoulder length. His directions and exhortations are cast in urgent tones, but the great majority of what he is saying makes no sense.

"Arf the lines!" he cries. "Boonwalla! Swing up, swing UP!"

**Development:** The speaker is Shoe, the name he has used ever since he forgot his real name. He is excited whenever anyone new shows up, because he assumes they have been sent to help his important excavation. It is unclear whom he expects to send aid — he only refers to "them."

Shoe and his partners (he calls them by a number of different names until it becomes clear he has no idea what their names are) believe there is a magic item buried in the rock. In a rare moment of lucidity, he tells the PCs he heard about someone who knew a person who found a strange floating stone in this canyon.

Shoe has no idea what powers the stone had besides floating, but he is knows "they" believe the stones to be of utmost importance, so he has been asked to find any other stones buried in the rock.

The other diggers are intent on their work and do not immediately respond to anything the PCs say to them. If they ever attempt to respond, Shoe screams at them until they return to their digging.

**Creatures:** Three shattered men (*see Area 1 for stats*); Shoe, a 4th-level barbarian. All four are Mildly Deranged (*see Part 6 for full details*).

**Shattered men (4):** hp 40, 38, 26.

**Shoe, Male Human Bar 4:** CR 4; Medium humanoid (Human); HD 4d12+4; hp 30; Spd 35 ft.; Init +1; AC 15, touch 11, flat-footed 14; Base Atk +4; Grp +7; Atk +8 melee (1d3+3/x2, whip); Full Atk +8 melee (1d3+3/x2, whip); SA Barbarian rage 2/day; SQ Fast movement, illiteracy, non-magical bonus +1, resist magic +1, totem animal (lion); AL CN; SV Fort +7, Ref +2, Will +3; Str 16, Dex 12, Con 13, Int 11, Wis 10, Cha 11.

*Skills and Feats:* Climb +5*, Handle Animal +4, Intimidate +5, Jump +4*, Listen +4, Spot +2, Survival +5, Great Fortitude, Iron Will, Exotic Weapon Proficiency (whip). *includes –3 armor check penalty

*Barbarian Rage (2/day):* While Shoe rages, his statistics change as follows: HD 4d12+12; hp 38; AC 13, touch 9, flat-footed 12; Grp +9; Atk +10 melee (1d3+5/x2, whip); Full Atk +10 melee (1d3+5/x2, whip); SV Fort +9, Will +5; Str 20, Con 17. His fit of rage lasts for 6 rounds. At the end of the rage Shoe is fatigued (–2 to Strength, –2 to Dexterity, can't charge or run).

*Fast Movement (Ex):* Shoe has a speed faster than the norm for his race by +10 feet when wearing no armor, light armor, or medium armor (and not carrying a heavy load).

*Illiteracy:* Shoe cannot read nor write.

*Non-Magical Bonus:* Shoe receives a +1 bonus to his/her attack and damage rolls when not using a magical weapon and Armor Class when not wearing magical armor or carrying an enchanted shield. Attacks made by Shoe ignore damage reduction as if his weapon were enchanted with an enhancement bonus of the same amount.

*Resist Magic (Ex):* Shoe gains a +1 morale bonus to saves against effects generated by spells, spell-like abilities and magic items. Shoe also reduces additional damage inflicted against him by enhancement bonuses by the same amount.

*Totem Animal (lion):* Bonus Ability — Speed of the Lion: Shoe's base speed increases by +5 ft.

*Possessions:* Hide armor, whip.

*Treasure:* There *are* magic stones buried in the rock wall — the trick is getting them out.

The bad news is the shattered men do not have any extra climbing equipment for the PCs to use. The good news is the equipment is not really necessary, since the hole the shattered men are excavating is only 6 feet off the ground.

The rock wall has a hardness of 8 and any PC with a reasonably sharp, durable object can dig through it at a rate of about 1/4 a foot per hour per person. There are two sets of *ioun stones* buried in the wall; a set of pale blue stones is 3 feet deep in the wall, while a set of pearly white stones is 7 feet in. Each time the PCs dig far enough to reach the stones, they must make a Profession (mining) check (DC 15) to avoid inadvertently destroying the stones before they see them. Another Profession (mining) check (DC 12) must be made for the PCs to successfully remove the stones from the rock without breaking them.

Shoe very much wants the stones to impress his imagined superiors, but he also is mentally feeble and easily fooled. The PCs may attempt to Bluff Shoe into letting them take the stones, and Shoe has no modifier on his Sense Motive check.

Shoe and the shattered men attack the PCs if they take the stones away without a convincing Bluff. Shoe attacks immediately, while the shattered men need 20 rounds to get down from their perches.

## Location 5: The Spire

**Read aloud:** *This spot is higher than most of the surrounding area, and a needle of rock rises hundreds of feet higher still. The spire is nearly vertical and peppered with sharp edges and spikes. It looks unscalable.*

*A tall cactus, one of the few plants in the Shattered Lands, sits at the base of the spire.*

The spire has a Climb DC of 28. A successful Search check (DC 23) reveals a handhold about 6 feet off the ground near the cactus, with a narrow spiral of steps rising above it (the steps, especially at this level, are carved to be camouflaged to anyone standing below). If the PCs discover the stairs, Pylowix, a Bascaron cultist who doubles as a shattered man, suddenly appears from the other side of the spire. If the PCs do not find the stairs, Pylowix jumps out to meet them after they have been at the base of the spire for an hour.

**Read aloud:** *A man jumps into view, whose sooty skin and charred, stiff hair make him look as if he has recently been in an explosion. He hops back and forth from one foot to the other while screaming.*

*"Who? Who? Who? Who? Who?" he yells.*

Pylowix is saner than he at first appears. He has not been around people, however, so his communication skills are lacking *(see sidebar Speaking with Pylowix)*.

Pylowix wants to know who sent the PCs (if anyone), who the PCs are, and what they want. The key words the PCs need to say are "Corothusa" and "Yellene Durn." Those words are the only way to get on his good side; his mental process is not susceptible to Bluffing or Diplomacy. Once he hears the key words, Pylowix happily shows the PCs the hidden stairs and tells them "Key rock red match" (which means "The key rock for you to get is the red rock on top of the spire, which matches one at the barrier to Corothusa").

Once the PCs start climbing, Pylowix has a final warning for the PCs: "Use back! Move away! Use back!" (which means "When you use the rock, move back and away from it").

Pylowix uses every weapon at his disposal to stop the PCs if they attempt to climb the stairs without his approval. He quickly moves away from the cactus (it is a missile cactus) and, if the PCs wander too close to the plant, throws a rock at it to make it shoot its needles.

**Creature:** Pylowix, a 7th-level monk.

**Pylowix, Male Human Monk 7:** CR 7; Medium humanoid (Human); HD 7d8; hp 31; Spd 50 ft.; Init +6; AC 14, touch 14, flat-footed 14; Base Atk +7; Grp +10; Atk +11 melee (1d6+3/x2, *+1 nunchaku*); Full Atk +11/+6 melee (1d6+3/x2, *+1 nunchaku*); SA Energy strike (+1), flurry of blows, reflexive blow, unarmed strike, wind punch; SQ AC bonus (+1), energy sense (flanking), fasting, wisdom bonus (+1); AL LN; SV Fort +7, Ref +6, Will +5; Str 16, Dex 14, Con 11, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 11.

*Skills and Feats:* Balance +10, Climb +10, Concentration +4, Escape Artist +7, Hide +10, Jump +10, Knowledge (religion) +5, Move Silently +7; Great Fortitude, Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Lightning Reflexes.

*AC Bonus:* Pylowix gains a +1 AC bonus due to his level. This bonus represents a preternatural awareness of danger and Pylowix does not lose it even in situations when he loses his Dexterity modifier due to being unprepared, ambushed, stunned, etc.

*Energy sense:* Pylowix gains +7 to Spot and Listen checks to avoid being surprised. He may not be flanked unless the attacker is four levels (or hit dice) higher than he is.

*Energy strike:* Pylowix's unarmed strike can deal damage to a creature with damage reduction as though the attack were made by a weapon with a +1 enhancement bonus.

*Fasting:* Pylowix may go for seven days without food and water without incurring any penalty. At the end of this period Pylowix begins to suffer from deprivation as if he had last consumed food and drink at the moment this benefit lapsed.

*Flurry of blows:* When unarmored, Pylowix may make one extra unarmed attack in a round at his highest base attack bonus. He takes a –1 penalty to all attacks made that round, including attacks of opportunity.

*Reflexive blow:* Once per day Pylowix may make an attack of opportunity against an opponent that successfully attacked him in melee combat. The Pylowix's attack occurs after the opponent's attack. This does not increase the total number of attacks of opportunity he is allowed per round.

*Unarmed strike:* Pylowix fights unarmed as if he had the Improved Unarmed Strike feat and does not provoke attacks of opportunity from armed opponents.

*Wind punch:* Pylowix may treat his unarmed attacks as if they had the reach quality. He may target opponents up to 10 feet away with his unarmed attacks. He still only threatens opponents within 5 feet of himself.

*Wisdom Bonus:* Pylowix gains a +1 AC bonus due to his Wisdom modifier. This bonus represents a preternatural awareness of danger and Pylowix does not lose it even in situations when he loses his Dexterity modifier due to being unprepared, ambushed, stunned, etc.

*Possessions: +1 nunchaku, ring of evasion, boots of levitation, potion of cure moderate wounds.*

*Treasure:* Pylowix carries a *ring of evasion, a potion of cure moderate wounds* and *boots of levitation*.

### Speaking with Pylowix

Pylowix reduces all sentences to keywords, mostly nouns. Thus, "Who are you? Who sent you?" becomes "Who? Who?" "What are you doing here?" becomes "You here?" "My face looks this way because I haven't cleaned it in seven years" becomes "Face no clean years!"

If PCs make a successful Intelligence check (DC 15), they are able to discern most of the meaning behind Pylowix's condensed shouts, and the GM can provide both the actual words Pylowix speaks and a translation.

Pylowix thinks the same way he speaks, so *detect thoughts* does not make anything he says more clear; however, the spell may help the PCs learn what they need to say to get his approval.

## Location 5.1: Top of the spire

**Read aloud:** *The long stairway ends in a small flat peak of no more than 100 square feet. In most places, a view from the highest peak is awe-inspiring and beautiful. Here, the view is indeed awe-inspiring, but only a Bascaron cultist would call it beautiful. The full extent of the Banshee Moon's devastation is on view, miles and miles of barren, twisted rock without water or green plant life.*

The rocks here look no different from the rocks everywhere else in the Shattered Lands. Most are gray, some with blue or green hues. Only one rock, near the northwest end of this tabletop mesa, is red. A detect magic spell makes it glow, but its only magic property is to open the gate at the canyon barrier.

## Location 6: Pathway to Mourn

**Read aloud:** *Something is wrong.*

*At this spot, the base of the canyon looks so well traveled it almost resembles a road. The absolute quiet of the Lands has faded and faint animal noises echo here and there.*

*It feels as if something powerful waits ahead.*

If the PCs travel beyond this point, they turn a corner of the canyon and see a shattered woman waiting about 200 feet ahead.

**Read aloud:** *A woman stands here, possibly the most well-groomed being in all the Shattered Lands. Her hair is long, dark and straight, her skin is clean, and her smile is alluring, even friendly.*

*"Hello!" she says brightly. "Welcome! Now turn and go back the way you came!"*

The woman's name is Essila, and she is saner than most other residents of the Shattered Lands because she has a regular job. Some large dogs (as she calls the Jackals of Mourn) have asked her to stand in this canyon and tell anyone trying to pass to turn around. In return, they provide her with food, shelter, and protection from the more aggressive local animals.

She does not know much about the dogs. Communication with them is difficult, and she can spend an entire day trying to understand a simple message from them like, "We want you to guard this pass." However, over time she has learned this much: the dogs do not want to hurt anyone, so they brought her to the pass to politely ask travelers to turn back. She also knows the dogs' home city lies beyond the pass, and that is why they discourage travelers from progressing onward.

If travelers decide to ignore this request, the dogs themselves appear. Six Jackals of Mourn materialize to further dissuade the PCs. If this is not enough persuasion and the PCs continue on, the Jackals and Essila attack.

This group of Jackals is only the first line of defense in protecting Mourn. Eight more wait 1,000 feet away, and another ten are about half a mile away. This should keep the PCs from journeying to Mourn, but if the PCs manage to kill all the Jackals and travel on, the current adventure ends (see the World Atlas for more on Mourn). Should the PCs attempt to return to Corothusa after journeying to Mourn, the *Shard of Bascaron* is gone.

**Creatures:** Essila, a shattered woman (*see Area 1 for stats*); six Jackals of Mourn (*see Area 1 for stats*).

**Essilisa:** hp 32.

**Jackals of Mourn (6):** hp 20, 23, 24, 30, 30, 32.

**Development:** Tactics — The Jackals of Mourn do not want to kill anyone, but they also do not want anyone going to Mourn. Their initial attacks focus on intimidating or subduing the PCs, using their *blink* ability to appear next to the PCs, then lightly biting or clawing the PCs and *blinking* away again. If the PCs are not intimidated or if they do significant damage to one of the Jackals of Mourn, the Jackals of Mourn attack with their full force.

## Location 7: Shattered Men Larder

**Read aloud:** *A large hole in the ground holds a thin scum of water, all that remains from the most recent rainfall. By the hole rests the rib cage of a large creature, covered by a patchwork blanket of hides. Something lies beneath the blanket.*

PCs may make a Spot check here to detect the shattered men crouching in the nearby rocks. Whether they are detected or not, the shattered men attack as soon as the PCs move closer to the hole.

**Read aloud:** *Suddenly the air is filled with hoots, shouts, and whistles. Men and women with matted hair and crazy eyes, some wearing fur hides, others wearing the scales of large lizards, jump up from behind many rocks.*

*They drool with hunger as they attack.*

There are seven shattered men altogether. They were just on the verge of having to kill and eat the weakest member of their group, so they welcome the appearance of the PCs.

**Creatures:** Seven shattered men (*see Area 1 for stats*).

**Shattered Men (7):** hp 22, 40, 42, 29, 26, 20.

*Treasure:* Besides their weapons and armor, the shattered men carry nothing of worth. Tucked inside the rib cage by the hole are a few dried, rotted entrails. Buried in the entrails is a polished red and green *stone of good luck*.

## Location 8: Teratorn Nest

**Read aloud:** *This short, wide canyon ends in a sheer rock wall. The only interruption in the smooth vertical surface is an outcropping about 40 feet off the ground. A pile of large sticks sits on the outcropping, arranged like a nest.*

The rock wall here is smoother than most in the Shattered Lands, smooth enough to be treated as a hewn stone wall (hardness 8; Climb (DC 22)).

Below is a description if the PCs make it to the nest:

**Read aloud:** *The nest is over 15 feet in diameter. Two eggs with blue-black shells lie at the bottom.*

*A loud screech from above lets you know the owner of the nest has returned to protect her young. A large bird stretches its red neck toward you as it plunges from the sky.*

The teratorn has returned to protect her children. Approaching the eggs is the only way for the PCs to convince the teratorn to overcome her native shyness; if they stay away from the nest, she stays away from them.

**Creature:** One teratorn.

**Teratorn (1):** CR 4; Huge magical beast; HD 4d10+20; hp 40; Init +1; Spd 10 ft., fly 40 ft. (poor); AC 15, touch 9, flat-footed 14; Base Atk +4, Grp +20; Atk +10 melee (1d8+8/x2, claw); Full +10 melee (1d8+8/x2, 2 claws); Space/Reach 15ft./10ft.; SA Swoop; SQ Mount; AL N; SV Fort +9, Ref +5, Will +1; Str 26, Dex 13, Con 20, Int 2, Wis 10, Cha 10.

*Skills and Feats:* Listen +3, Spot +4; Flyby Attack, Hover.
*Teratorns have a +2 racial bonus to Listen and Spot checks.

*Mount (Ex):* Any rider the teratorn carries must be Medium or smaller. This is an exception to the usual size allowance for mounts, due largely to the teratorn's poor flight capabilities. The creature can always fight while carrying a rider, but the rider must make a Ride check (DC 10) to be able to attack as well. For every size category less than Medium the rider is, the DC of any Ride checks required are increased by +5. Further, the teratorn's clumsy landings require the rider to make a Ride check (at the usual DC) or be thrown from the saddle, suffering 2d6 falling damage (which may be reduced as normal by a Tumble check).

*Swoop (Ex):* As a full action, the teratorn can plummet from the air in a powerful controlled dive. While in this dive it can reach up to x4 its normal speed. The teratorn can attack an opponent at any point in the dive, then continue flying its remaining move distance. This does not provoke an attack of opportunity. Any rider must make a Ride check at the usual DC or be thrown from the saddle. Fallen riders suffer 2d6 damage, +1d6 for every 40 ft. faster than its usual movement the teratorn is moving (rounded up) in addition to the distance of the fall.

*Treasure:* The eggs are the only treasure, but in the right markets they are valuable. The eggs are about three weeks away from hatching. Each week, PCs carrying the eggs (or, after three weeks, the young teratorns) must make a Profession (animal husbandry) check (DC 13) to ensure the continued survival of the birds. Any Profession that has elements of animal husbandry in it (e.g., herdsman or stable hand) may contribute to the animal husbandry check: half the bonuses from these Professions may be used for the check.

## Location 9: Canyon barrier

**Read aloud:** *The canyon has been getting narrower and narrower as it ascends, and now is scarcely 8 feet wide. Without warning, the air ahead becomes hard and impassable. Nothing looks different and the canyon ahead is still clearly visible, but there is some sort of barrier in the air.*

The barrier is a *wall of force* made magically *permanent*. The *wall of force* is 8 feet wide and 25 feet tall. Additionally, each wall of the canyon has a 30-foot x 100-foot coating of *grease* on this side of the *wall of force*. Climbing on the *greased* areas is not possible. PCs can attempt to start climbing on an ungreased section of the wall, ascend to 100 feet, and then move sideways to pass over the barrier. The canyon wall is unworked stone (hardness 8, Climb (DC 20)).

A red rock sits just in front of the wall on the left side where the canyon wall and floor meet. The rock is not hidden, so any PC who takes the time to look at the area by the wall sees it. A dab of *sovereign glue* has been applied to the bottom of the rock, so it does not move unless the PCs have some *universal solvent*.

Across the canyon, where the other wall meets the floor, is a small, smooth hole about the same size as the red rock. This hole precisely fits the red rock from area 7. Placing the second rock in the carved hole causes a green beam to leap from one rock to another. The beam grows in strength for three rounds, then a second beam shoots from the middle of it to the wall, causing the bottom section of the wall to *disintegrate*.

Any PCs standing in the path of the green beam (that is, between the red rocks) when the second beam emerges must make a Fortitude save (DC 18) or be *disintegrated*. If the save is successful, the PC takes 5d6 damage. If an unfortunate PC absorbed the beam, the *wall of force* remains in place. Removing the rock, then replacing it in the hole, causes the beam to fire again.

## Location 10: Entrance to Corothusa

**Read aloud:** *The canyon ends at the entrance to Corothusa.*

*At one time, a magnificent façade was carved into the canyon wall. Now, only traces of splendor remain. Shattered columns rise as high as 50 feet, and traces of polished red stone remain in the midst of gray rock. Crumbling remains of windows and balconies dot the canyon wall. A large doorway, 20 feet wide, sits in the middle of the wall. One iron door, half melted, hangs in the doorway, while its twin on the other side is gone.*

*On either side of the doorway, a face is carved into the rock. It is difficult to tell, but the face looks wise and kind. Now, though, chips, scratches and scars mar the carving, as if everyone entering the city in recent years has swung a sword or club in the man's face. On the right, next to the man's face, is a simple carving of a circle with rough pits and jagged edges — a crude representation of the Banshee Moon.*

*To the left, part of the canyon wall is entirely broken, opening a second entrance into the city.*

All the carving makes this wall as easily climbed as a masonry wall (hardness 8, Climb (DC 15)). There are a total of ten windows in the wall, one on the first level, six on the second level, and three on the third. The map of Corothusa shows the location of all windows. The southernmost window on the second level still has its glass intact, but is unlocked.

# Part 2: Corothusa

## Location 11: The City of Corothusa *(map page 487)*

Any rooms on the map of Corothusa that are not numbered have been stripped bare. A few elements (a broken chair, a scrap of fabric) might indicate the room's original purpose, but nothing substantial can be found in these rooms.

## Location 11.1: Grand Entryway to Corothusa

**Read aloud:** *This grand entryway was once filled with sculptures and ornate pillars. It looks as if there was a marble fountain in the middle of the room.*

*Now everything is in ruin. Spikes of gray stone thrust through the floor, shattering the fountain and destroying the pillars. Tiles from the floor were thrown up with such force that some of them remain embedded in the walls and ceiling. Of all the sculptures that used to decorate the room, the largest single piece is half of a head, lying sideways on the floor, its remaining eye gazing longingly at the way out.*

*The room contains no creatures and no items of interest.*

## Location 11.2: Plaza of delights

**Read aloud:** *A few scattered twigs on the ground show that plants grew here once. White tiles, long since dry, still adhere to portions of a large rectangular hole in the floor. The gaping hole in the wall was probably a window, letting in a few minutes of sunlight each day.*

*This must have been a wonderful room, with a pool, a garden and other splendors. Now it is a ruin.*

*A cold breeze blows through the room.*

A lone sanguicorn lurks behind the column in the northeast section of the plaza. If any of the PCs are of good alignment, the sanguicorn attacks them as soon as they enter the plaza. Otherwise, it sits peacefully behind the column. Its only treasure is its horn.

**Creature:** One sanguicorn.

**Sanguicorn (1):** CR 4; Large magical beast (cold); HD 4d10+12; hp 32; Init +1; Spd 40 ft.; AC 18, touch 10, flat-footed 17; Base Atk +4, Grp +12; Atk +7 melee (1d6+4/x2, hoof); Full Atk +7 melee (1d6–4/x2, 2 hooves), +7 melee (1d8+4/x2, gore), or +2 melee (1d8–2/x2, bite); Space/Reach 10ft./5ft.; SA Spell-like abilities, charge (4d8+8), control ghost, create spawn; SQ Cold subtype, immunities, magic circle against good, fast healing 3, vulnerability to fire; AL NE; SV Fort +7, Ref +5, Will +2; Str 19, Dex 13, Con 17, Int 6, Wis 12, Cha 12.

*Skills and Feats:* Listen +3, Spot +3, Survival +3*; Dodge, Run. *A sanguicorn receives a +4 circumstance bonus to all Survival checks made in its home forest.

*Control Ghost (Su):* A sanguicorn can control any severed undead with fewer hit dice than it has, within 15 ft. If the spirit was originally killed by the sanguicorn, it has no choice and must obey. All other ghosts must make a DC 13 Will save to resist the creature's commands. The save DC is Charisma-based.

*Create Spawn (Su):* Any humanoid slain by a sanguicorn becomes a severed wraith in 1d4 days. Spawn are not automati-

cally under the command of the sanguicorn, but cannot harm the sanguicorn in any way. Spawn do not possess any of the abilities they had in life.

*Magic Circle against Good (Su):* This ability continuously duplicates the effects of the spell. The sanguicorn cannot suppress this ability.

*Vulnerability to Fire:* Sanguicorns are vulnerable to fire-based attacks, and takes an additional 50% damage as normal from fire, regardless of whether or no a saving throw is allowed, or if the save is a success or failure.

*Spell-like Abilities:* At will—*detect good;* 1/day—*inflict moderate wounds* (DC 13), *teleport without error;* 3/day—*inflict light wounds* (DC 15); 1/week—*horrid wilting* (DC 19). Caster level 7th. The save DC is Charisma-based.

*Immunities (Ex):* Sanguicorns are immune to all poisons, cold-based, *charm* and *hold* spells or abilities.

*Skills:* A sanguicorn receives a +4 circumstance bonus to all Survival checks made in its home forest.

## Location 11.3: The Open Market

**Read aloud:** *Broken and splintered boards lie throughout this room. Almost everything is in ruins. To the east, a single booth remains intact. The lucky merchant — the only person whose property survived the upheaval of Bascaron — is nowhere to be seen.*

The booth to the east was ruined with the rest of the city, but the Bascaron cultists put it back together as a fortification in their efforts to control all of the staircases in the city. Two cultists are behind it now, and attack on sight.

**Creatures:** Two Bascaron cultists, 3rd-level clerics (*see Area 1 for stats*).

**Bascaron cultists (2):** hp 13, 18.

*Treasure:* Between them, the cultists have 22 gp and a small gem-encrusted wooden sculpture of a teratorn worth 700 gp.

## Location 11.4: Oddity shop

**Read aloud:** *This used to be an oddity shop. Its long-dead owner had a sign made out of metal instead of the customary wood, so it is the only sign to survive. It sits, dented and battered, at the base of the doorway, its strange letters long since rusted away.*

Whatever oddities were on sale appear to be long gone.

**Development:** One item has not been found because it looks so commonplace. A successful Search (DC 12) uncovers a *sunrod* in one corner of the room. The secret door is harder to find (Search (DC 20)).

Two Bascaron cultists wait on the other side of the secret door. One of them has affixed a *stone of alarm* to a broken vase by the staircase. Once the PCs enter, he attempts to set off the alarm, then attacks the PCs.

If the alarm is triggered, all the cultists in the hidden spire (but not the spirit walker on the fourth level; see area 13 and area 17 for details) hear it and come running down. No other cultists or creatures respond to the alarm.

The cultists are under strict orders to protect the spire and will not leave it. PCs fleeing the secret room are not pursued, and any cultists that came down from higher levels return to their posts.

The GM must keep track of how many cultists from each level are killed. If the PCs leave the room, then return later without sounding the alarm, the cultists are back on their assigned floors, less any cultists killed in the initial fighting.

The alarm triggers if the PCs touch the vase without saying the key word ("banshee").

**Creatures:** Two Bascaron cultists, 3rd-level clerics (*see Area 1 for stats*).

**Bascaron cultists (2):** hp 17, 19.

*Treasure:* Between them, the cultists have 14 gp.

## Location 11.5: The Wounded Reaver

**Read aloud:** *Something is here.*

*It lurks in the northeast corner, a large purple sphere with several eyes, all of them closed. It reeks of power. But it does not move.*

*Then a huge central eyeball flies open.*

This is a reaver, and luckily for the PCs it is in bad shape. It came to Corothusa seeking a place to recover where it would not be disturbed.

**Creature:** One wounded reaver.

**Wounded Reaver (1):** CR 8; Large aberration (Bascaron); HD 13d8+39; hp 104 max, 43 currently; Init +5; Spd 5 ft., fly 20 ft. (good), swim 15 ft.; AC 21, touch 8, flat-footed 21; AC 21, touch 9, flat-footed 21; Base Atk +9; Grp +17; Atk +13 melee (1d8+4/x2, tentacle); +13 melee (1d8+4/x2, 4 tentacles); Space/Reach 15 ft./10 ft.; SA Devour, disgorge magic, maddening presence; SQ Blindsense, enhanced advancement, telepathy, tremorsense 120 ft.; AL LE; SV Fort +7, Ref +5, Will +12; Str 19, Dex 13, Con 17, Int 20, Wis 15, Cha 15.

*Skills and Feats:* Knowledge (arcana) +23, Knowledge (any two) +23, Listen +21, Search +23, Spot +21; Cleave, Flyby Attack, Follow Through, Hover, Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Power Attack.

*Devour (Ex):* Reavers are voracious, their fiendish appetites limited only by their narrow feeding tendrils. They can drain a body of its fluids and smaller organs with surprising ease (1 round for Fine creatures, 2 for Diminutive creatures, doubling again for each size category thereafter). Reavers may devour only helpless victims, but once finished, nothing short of a *wish* or *miracle* can raise their prey from the dead.

*Disgorge Magic (Su):* While reavers' efficient biologies digest most substances completely, inherent magical energies remain behind. Reavers may spew out these energies, duplicating any supernatural or spell-like ability of any creature they have eaten (including spellcasters' spells). Each time a reaver uses this ability, roll 1d20 and compare it to the reaver's HD. If the result is less than the reaver's HD, the reaver loses 1 HD and the ability to duplicate that specific ability until the reaver regains it through a feeding. Reavers may not be reduced below their base HD in this manner.

*Enhanced Advancement (Su):* Unlike most creatures, reavers' advancement is not limited to steady growth. By glutting themselves on magical power, reavers may rapidly grow in size and power. This is a painful process, but one reavers indulge in for the associated benefits. Whenever a reaver devours a creature with one or more supernatural or spell-like abilities (including spellcasters), it advances one HD.

*Maddening Presence (Su):* The reaver's most basic defense is its unsettling effect on lesser minds. Reavers are the very essence of Bascaron's corruption, and the taint of their species' creation lingers still. Any other creature that looks upon a reaver for the first time must make a Will save (DC equal to the reaver's HD) or become a slavering minion of that reaver. Creatures may attempt another save each day they are not in the reaver's presence. While enthralled, creatures believe the reaver to be something other than what it truly is, such as a Nothrog totem or a powerful stormborn.

*Telepathy (Su):* A reaver can initiate telepathy with any sentient being, allowing it to give orders to dominated servants without interrupting its spellcraft. The reaver must have the target individual in sight in order to initiate contact for the first time; once it 'knows the mind' of a target in this manner, the range on its telepathy is one mile. While a reaver has at least three of its servants nearby, it may not be flanked.

*Blindsense (Ex):* Using nonvisual senses, a reaver maneuvers and fights as well as a sighted creature. The reaver usually does not need to make Spot or Listen checks to pinpoint the location of a creature within range of its blindsense ability, provided that it has line of effect to that creature. Any opponent the reaver cannot see still has total concealment against the reaver, and the reaver still has the normal miss chance when attacking foes that have concealment. A reaver is still denied its Dexterity bonus to Armor Class against attacks from creatures it cannot see. A reaver's blindsense has a range of 120 feet.

*Tremorsense (Ex):* A reaver is sensitive to vibrations in the ground and can automatically pinpoint the location of anything that is contact with the ground. A reaver's tremorsense has a range of 120 feet.

*Development:* Tactics — The reaver fights for ten rounds or until it has fewer than 20 hp, whichever comes first, then it uses its *teleport* eye stalk and gets out. In normal circumstances it would love to kill a hapless party of adventurers, but in this battle its highest priority is staying alive.

*Treasure:* The reaver keeps its treasure in its lair, but it has found a jade carving of Corothusa in the days before the passage of Bascaron (worth 2,000 gp). It leaves the carving behind when it dematerializes.

## Location 11.6: Harpies' Perch

Read the description below when the PCs either enter the room on the map with the number "11.6" or the adjacent room with the crumbled wall.

**Read aloud:** *This room smells terrible. Even though fresh air blows in through the broken windows at the west end, the stench of droppings and other unnamable odors is almost overpowering.*

*A horrible screech reveals the creatures responsible for the smells.*

The creatures are two Famine Harpies. They have a foul nest near the next-to-the-northernmost window.

**Creatures:** Two Famine Harpies.

**Famine Harpies (2):** CR 4; Medium monstrous humanoid; HD 8d8; hp 32; Init +3; Spd 20 ft., fly 80 ft. (average); AC 17, touch 13, flat-footed 14; Base Atk +8; Grp +8; Atk: +8 melee (1d4/x2 plus disease, claw); Full Atk: +8 melee (1d4/x2 plus disease, 2 claws); SA Disease, feasting song, feats of strength, spell-like abilities; SQ Harpy murder, pain threshold; AL CE; SV Fort +2, Ref +9, Will +6; Str 10, Dex 17, Con 10, Int 8, Wis 10, Cha 15.

*Skills and Feats:* Listen +3, Perform (sing) +7, Spot +3; Dodge, Flyby Attack, Iron Will.

*Disease (Su):* A famine harpy's claws and teeth are covered with unspeakable ichor. When a famine harpy damages an opponent, the opponent must make a DC 16 Fortitude save or suffer the effects of a terrible wasting disease. The victim's speed is reduced by half, and each day thereafter the afflicted must make a DC 16 Fortitude save or suffer 1d3 points of Constitution drain. If the victim makes three successful saving throws in a row, he recovers from the disease, and regains any lost Constitution at the rate of 1 point per day. No sufferer is ever completely restored, and one point of Constitution lost in this fashion is permanent. A fasting victim receives a +1 bonus to these saves for every day he denies himself food (though water is acceptable). Such characters suffer the effects of starvation normally. The save DC is Charisma-based.

*Feasting Song (Su):* As per *emotion*, cast by an 8th-level bard. The famine harpy can only use a unique effect known as 'hunger.' Creatures affected suffer from overwhelming pangs of hunger. Creatures who fail their Will saves suffer a –3 morale penalty to their AC and must make a further DC 16 Will save every round, or else they may not act aggressively, but must instead seek out the nearest source of food. Creatures who fail three successive saves must attack the nearest living creature — friend or foe — in an attempt to consume its flesh (whether this is possible or not). At the beginning of each round of this artificial feeding frenzy, the creature receives a DC 12 Will save to restrain himself, and if he makes three successive saves, he shakes off the song's effect. Otherwise, the ensorcelled creature continues attacking until the victim is killed (at which point the creature begins to feed) or he is restrained. The save DC is Charisma-based.

*Feats of Strength (Ex):* Twice per day, a famine harpy can turn hit points into Strength. By draining its reserve energy as a free action, the famine harpy can turn 6 hit points into a +6 bonus to Strength. This effect is instantaneous and lasts for 5 minutes.

*Harpy Murder (Ex):* Harpies travel in murders. While in a murder an individual harpy gains a morale bonus to her attacks, weapon damage, ability checks, skill checks and saving throws equal to the number of other harpies in the murder (i.e. a harpy in a murder with six other harpies would gain a +6 morale bonus to her attacks, weapon damage, checks and saves while in that murder). As members of the murder are dispatched or separated from the murder (by a distance of at least 250 ft.), the bonus reduces immediately. This bonus extends to all darkfeast, famine, madness, and shade harpies in the murder.

*Pain Threshold (Ex):* Famine harpies are extremely resilient and can ignore the effects of pain, as their all-consuming hunger powers their impossible feats of strength. They are immune to

ability drain, cold, negative energy, paralysis, poison, and *sleep*. In addition, they cannot die as a result of massive damage and never cry out unless they suffer at least 50% of their total hit points in damage in a single attack.

*Spell-like Abilities:* 3/day—*crushing despair* (DC 16), *stinking cloud* (DC 15). The save DC is Charisma-based.

*Development:* Tactics — One harpy tries to engage the smallest PC in melee combat while the other sings the *feasting song*. All PCs must make a Will save (DC 13) or suffer from extreme hunger, suffering a –3 penalty to their AC, and affected PCs must make an additional Will save (DC 12) each round. If they fail the save, their hunger becomes so extreme they cannot fight and instead go running for the nearest source of food. If they fail to make a Will save three rounds in a row, they attempt to eat the nearest creature, whatever or whoever that may be.

*Treasure:* The harpies buried their treasure in the heap of droppings and dirty feathers that is their nest. The same poison that makes the harpies' claws and teeth cause disease is present in the nest. PCs searching through the nest must make a Fortitude save (DC 10) or contract a disease. An afflicted PC's speed is reduced by half, and his Constitution drops one point a day until either he is cured or his Constitution reaches zero and he dies.

The nest contains 8 gp, 3 sp, a gold necklace set with a black pearl (worth 850 gp) and a *ring of counterspells*.

## Location 11.7: The Well-preserved Quarters

**Read aloud:** *The years of disaster, decay, and ruin somehow bypassed this room. Books are intact, sitting neatly on shelves. The velvet canopy on the large bed is intact and plush. A polished wood desk by the intact window holds a neat stack of papers. The room looks luxurious, orderly, and comfortable.*

Many groundbreaking studies were conducted in Corothusa, and the advances affected magical thought across the world. Some spells invented here, however, had limited appeal and were quickly forgotten after the Banshee Moon passed.

One such spell was cast on this room. The spell has two effects: preserving all books and papers in mint condition and keeping everything in the room in order. If a paper is ripped in two, it mends itself within half an hour. If burned, it reconstitutes within a day. Books left unused for more than an hour fly back to their shelves. The bed even makes itself.

Besides the papers, books, and furniture, one other thing is preserved here: the spirit of its former owner. Unfortunately, his spell did not help his mind stay ordered, and his spirit is malevolent.

The papers on the desk are miscellaneous correspondence from the golden days of Corothusa. It is of little interest, mostly gossip about people long dead. The other books are not much use. Most of them are novels, and though some of them are good they are of little value now.

**Creature:** One nekrast.

**Nekrast (1):** CR 5; Medium undead; HD 5d12; hp 30; Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; AC 22, touch 11, flat-footed 21; Base Atk +2; Grp +3; Atk +4 melee (1d6+1 plus energy drain/x2, slam); Full Atk +3 melee (1d6+1 plus energy drain/x2, 2 slams); SA Energy drain , spell-like abilities; SQ Undead traits, aura of fear, fire immunity, *death plate*, damage reduction 10/good, spell resistance 16; AL NE; SV Fort +1, Ref +2, Will +6; Str 12, Dex 13, Con —, Int 21, Wis 14, Cha 24.

*Skills and Feats:* Concentration +8, Craft (alchemy) +10, Decipher Script +13, Diplomacy +12, Intimidate +13, Knowledge (arcana) +13, Knowledge (any two) +13, Spellcraft +13, Search +13; Dodge, Weapon Focus (Slam).

*Aura of Fear (Su):* All living creatures within 30 ft. of the nekrast must succeed at a DC 21 Will save or be overcome with *fear*. A save is required each round a living creature spends within 30 ft. of the nekrast. Shaken creatures suffer a –4 on Bluff, Diplomacy, and Intimidate checks while interacting with the nekrast. This effect is always active, and if it is somehow dispelled the nekrast can reactivate it as a free action. Caster level 18th. The save DC is Charisma-based.

*Fire Immunity (Su):* Nekrasts are immune to all fire, magical or mundane.

*Death Plate (Su):* Nekrasts wear a type of armor known as *death plate*. This armor is made from alchemically hardened humanoid flesh, bones, and tendons, with the bones and tendons facing out. The nekrast suffers no armor check penalty or arcane spell failure while wearing it. It is considered *unholy* and therefore deadly to good PCs.

*Energy Drain (Su):* Living creatures hit by a nekrast's slam attack gain one negative level. The DC is 19 for the Fortitude save to remove a negative level. The save DC is Charisma-based. For each such negative level bestowed, the nekrast gains 5 temporary hit points.

*Undead Traits:* The nekrast has the following traits:

- No Constitution score.
- Darkvision out to 60 feet.
- Immunity to all mind-affecting effects (charms, compulsions, phantasms, patterns, and morale effects).
- Immunity to poison, sleep effects, paralysis, stunning, disease, death effects, and necromancy effects.
- Negative energy (such as an *inflict* spell) can heal undead creatures. The fast healing quality works regardless of the creature's Intelligence score.
- Not subject to critical hits, non-lethal damage, ability damage, ability drain, fatigue, exhaustion, or energy drain. Immune to damage to its physical ability scores (Strength, Dexterity, Constitution), as well as to fatigue and exhaustion effects.
- Immunity to any effect that requires a Fortitude save (unless the effect also works on objects, or is harmless).
- Uses its Charisma modifier for Concentration checks.
- Not at risk of death from massive damage. Immediately destroyed when reduced to 0 hit points or less.

- Not affected by *raise dead* and *reincarnate* spells or abilities. *Resurrection* and *true resurrection* can be affect undead creatures. These spells turn undead creatures back into the living creatures they were before becoming undead.
- Proficient with its natural weapons and all simple weapons.
- Proficient with whatever type of armor (light, medium, and heavy) it is described as wearing, as well as all lighter types.
- Undead do not eat, sleep, or breathe.

*Spell-like Abilities:* At will—*burning hands* (DC 18), *continual flame, detect magic, faerie fire, mage hand, pyrotechnics, tongues;* 3/day —*change self, fireball* (DC 20), *flame arrow* (DC 20), *flaming sphere* (DC 19), *shield, wall of fire* (DC 21); 1/day — *fire shield* (heat only), *haste, improved invisibility, teleport without error.* Caster level 11th. The save DCs are Charisma-based.

## Locations 11.8 and 11.9: The Concubine's Quarters and the Duke's Quarters

These rooms have no initial description because at first sight there is nothing remarkable about them.

In the old days, a duke in Mourn who thought he was subtle and clever had a secret passage built between these two rooms, so he could shuttle his mistresses from their room to his.

Neither royalty nor courtesans have visited the city in many years, but the passage between the rooms still exists. Two Ogre zombies, stranded in Corothusa when their master was killed centuries ago, have taken up residence in the secret passage. They attack when the PCs are within 10 feet of either secret door. Both secret doors have a Search DC of 20.

**Read aloud:** *A section of wall flies open and two pale, decrepit shapes shamble out. Their eyes glow with anticipation of fresh meat.*

**Creatures:** Two large Ogre zombies.

**Ogre Zombie (2):** CR 2; Large undead; HD 8d12+3; hp 55; Init –2; Spd 40 ft (can't run); AC 15, touch 7, flat-footed 15; Base Atk +4, Grp +14; Atk +9 melee (1d8+9/x2, slam); Full Atk +9 melee (1d8+9/x2, slam); Space/Reach 10ft./10ft.; SA —; SQ Damage reduction 5/slashing, darkvision 60 ft., single actions only, undead traits; AL N; SV Fort +2, Ref +0, Will +6; Str 23, Dex 6, Con —, Int —, Wis 10, Cha 1.

*Skills and Feats:* Toughness.

*Darkvision, 60 ft.:* A zombie can see in the dark with no light source at all, out to a range of 60 feet. Darkvision is black and white only (colors cannot be discerned). It does not allow the zombie to see anything that it could not see otherwise—invisible objects are still invisible, and illusions are still visible as what they seem to be. Likewise, darkvision subjects the zombie to gaze attacks normally. The presence of light does not spoil darkvision.

*Single Actions Only:* A zombie has poor reflexes and can perform only a single move action or attack action each round. A zombie can move up to its speed and attack in the same round, but only if it attempts a charge.

*Undead Traits:* The Ogre Zombie has the following traits:

- No Constitution score.
- Darkvision out to 60 feet.
- Immunity to all mind-affecting effects (charms, compulsions, phantasms, patterns, and morale effects).
- Immunity to poison, sleep effects, paralysis, stunning, disease, death effects, and necromancy effects.
- Negative energy (such as an *inflict* spell) can heal undead creatures. The fast healing quality works regardless of the creature's Intelligence score.
- Not subject to critical hits, non-lethal damage, ability damage, ability drain, fatigue, exhaustion, or energy drain. Immune to damage to its physical ability scores (Strength, Dexterity, Constitution), as well as to fatigue and exhaustion effects.
- Immunity to any effect that requires a Fortitude save (unless the effect also works on objects, or is harmless).
- Uses its Charisma modifier for Concentration checks.
- Not at risk of death from massive damage. Immediately destroyed when reduced to 0 hit points or less.
- Not affected by *raise dead* and *reincarnate* spells or abilities. *Resurrection* and *true resurrection* can be affect undead creatures. These spells turn undead creatures back into the living creatures they were before becoming undead.
- Proficient with its natural weapons and all simple weapons.
- Proficient with whatever type of armor (light, medium, and heavy) it is described as wearing, as well as all lighter types.
- Undead do not eat, sleep, or breathe.

*Treasure:* The secret passage holds a small pile of objects left by previous zombie victims over the year. Much of it is garbage — bones, scraps of cloth — but there are also 28 gp, a *+2 dagger,* and a *potion of cure light wounds.*

## Location 11.10: The Shattered Man

This room appears to be empty; however, a successful Search check (DC 20) uncovers a secret door on the east wall. Inside the room is a shattered man, more shattered than most. His Strength is higher than other shattered men, while his Dexterity and Wisdom are lower. He attacks as soon as the door to his chamber is opened.

**Read aloud:** *A shrill, ululating scream from behind the door is followed by a man naked except for a long beard and several coatings of dirt. He waves a stick threateningly.*

The stick is actually a *wand of burning hands* (32 charges). The shattered man is not aware of its powers, and wields it as a club. It does damage as an unarmed strike (subdual damage). However, each time he swings the wand, there is a 50 percent chance the wand inadvertently fires in a random direction (*see Table 5–3*). The closest PC or other creature in the line of fire is hit, but can make a Reflex save (DC 11) for half damage.

## Table 5-3: Random direction of wand firing

| 1d8 | Direction of fire |
|---|---|
| 1 | North |
| 2 | Northeast |
| 3 | East |
| 4 | Southeast |
| 5 | South |
| 6 | Southwest |
| 7 | West |
| 8 | Northwest |

**Creature:** One very shattered man.

**Very Shattered Man (1):** CR 4; Medium humanoid (Human); HD 4d12+4; hp 30; Init +1; Spd 40 ft.; AC 13, touch 10, flat-footed 13; Base Atk +4; Grp +8; Atk +7 melee (1d6+4/x2, club); Full Atk +7 melee (1d6+4/x2, club); SA Rage 2/day; SQ Resist magic +1; AL CN; SV Fort +7, Ref +4, Will +2; Str 18, Dex 10, Con 13, Int 11, Wis 8, Cha 11.

*Skills and Feats:* Climb +5*, Intimidate +7, Jump +5*, Listen +7, Ride +6, Survival +7, Great Fortitude, Iron Will, Lightning Reflexes. *includes –3 armor check penalty

*Resist Magic (Ex):* Shattered men live in a land that has been broken by magic, and their continued exposure to the worst side of magic makes them somewhat resistant to its effects. They have a +1 morale bonus to all saves against effects generated by spells, spell-like abilities, and magic items.

*Barbarian Rage (Ex):* Shattered men can fly into a rage twice per day, giving them +4 Str, +4 Con, +2 morale bonus on Will Saves and –2 to AC. The rage lasts 20 rounds, after which the shattered man has –2 Str and –2 Dex for the remainder of the encounter.

*Treasure:* The *wand of burning hands* is the only item the shattered man possesses.

## Location 11.11: The Jackal

**Read aloud:** *A ragged tapestry, torn from the wall, lies bunched in a corner of the room. A large dog sits patiently on it. He does not loll his tongue or wag his tail or demonstrate any other typical dog behavior. He simply cocks his head and waits. He seems to give off a soft glow, and is the tapestry can be seen through its body.*

This is a Jackal of Mourn. He has used his teleportation abilities to slip into the city undetected, but knows the creatures of Corothusa are too strong for him to fight alone. With the help of the PCs, though, he has a chance, and he follows any party of good or neutral PCs that show him the least bit of kindness (scratching his head, throwing him food, speaking to him kindly).

Parties made of some evil PCs and some good/neutral PCs must work harder to convince the Jackal to help them. Though the Jackal of Mourn does not speak, he understands what the PCs say, so they may attempt to persuade him orally. The Jackal of Mourn is initially friendly and needs to be made helpful (DC 20).

The Jackal of Mourn cannot be persuaded to accompany parties without a good PC. The Jackal of Mourn does not accompany PCs, regardless of alignment, who act threatening toward him, no matter how they try to make up for it. If they attack him, he *blinks* away and leaves Corothusa.

If he accompanies them, the Jackal of Mourn helps the PCs by joining them in combat and whimpering when they approach a room with a living creature inside. His whimpers turn to growls of hatred outside the room with the reaver, if the reaver is still present.

**Creature:** One Jackal of Mourn (*see Area 1 for stats*).

**Jackal of Mourn (1):** hp 35.

## Location 11.12: Checkpoint

**Read aloud:** Four Bascaron cultists run toward the door, weapons drawn, as soon as it opens.

This room was formerly a checkpoint to keep unauthorized people from the upper levels, and the cultists have it serving the same purpose today.

**Creatures:** Four Bascaron cultists, 3rd-level clerics (*see Area 1 for stats*).

**Bascaron cultists (4):** hp 16, 10, 9, 16.

## Location 11.13: Hidden Spire — Level Two

This room is empty except for three Bascaron cultists. If the cultists responded to the alarm below and were killed, the room is empty.

**Creatures:** Three Bascaron cultists, 3rd-level clerics (*see Area 1 for stats*).

**Bascaron cultists (3):** hp 16, 18, 11.

*Treasure:* One of the Bascaron cultists has a *potion of cure light wounds.*

## Location 11.14: Wizard's Range

**Read aloud:** *This long room was a target range for things more powerful than arrows. Three small rooms overlook a longer room whose far wall is charred, pockmarked and scarred. The damage done by Bascaron was much more severe, cracking all the walls and shooting a rock column through one of the small rooms.*

The natural rock almost completely fills one of the rooms, but a particularly agile individual might be able to squirm through. A PC making a successful Escape Artist check (DC 30) can wiggle to the south wall of the room. A necklace rests at the base of the column.

*Treasure:* The necklace is a *necklace of fireballs, type I.*

## Location 11.15: Supply Room

*Read aloud: This room has more rubble than most on this level. Along with the customary broken tiles and rocks are small pieces of metal and a few snapped sword blades.*

A successful Search (DC 18) uncovers a single intact item, a *ring of clumsiness*.

*Treasure:* The necklace is a *ring of clumsiness*.

## Location 11.16: Reception room

**Read aloud:** *The four green marble pillars in this room are practically intact, with only a few chips and gouges. The room still gives a faint impression of majesty, but the dark gray rock breaking through the east wall is a clear reminder of the Shattered Lands' devastation.*

*The cultists emerging from behind the pillars, weapons drawn, are another reminder.*

Six cultists are in the room — one behind each pillar, two flanking the staircase.

**Creatures:** Six Bascaron cultists, 3rd-level clerics (*see Area 1 for stats*).

**Bascaron cultists (6):** hp 14, 12, 15, 13, 18, 14.

*Treasure:* One behind a rear pillar has a *potion of cure moderate wounds*. The guard to the right of the staircase has a *wand of web* (22 charges) and the guard to the left of the staircase has a *wand of magic missile* (caster level 7th level wizard, 8 charges).

## Location 11.17: Hidden Spire — Level Three

This room is empty except for four Bascaron cultists. If the cultists responded to the alarm below and were killed, the room is empty.

**Creatures:** Four Bascaron cultists, 3rd-level clerics (*see Area 1 for stats*).

**Bascaron cultists (4):** hp 13, 14, 14, 18.

*Treasure:* One has a *wand of shocking grasp* (14 charges); another has a *potion of cure moderate wounds*.

## Location 11.18: Hidden spire — Level Four

**Read aloud:** *In the middle of the room is a small pillar with a nondescript rock perched atop it. It does not appear to be special, but someone thinks it is worth protecting. An empty, rusted black suit of plate mail sits in a corner.*

Lurking within the plate mail is a spectre. The Bascaron cultists cannot control it, but they have confined it to this room.

**Creatures:** One spectre.

**Spectre (1):** CR 7; Medium undead (incorporeal); HD 7d12; hp 45; Init +7; Spd 30 ft., fly 80 ft. (perfect); AC 15, touch 15, flat-footed 13; Base Atk + 3, Grp —; Atk +6 melee (1d8 plus energy drain/x2, incorporeal touch); Full Atk +6 melee (1d8 plus energy drain/x2, incorporeal touch); Space/Reach 5 ft./ 5 ft.; SA Energy drain, create spawn; SQ Darkvision 60 ft., incorporeal subtype, +2 turn resistance, sunlight powerlessness, undead traits, unnatural aura; AL LE; SV Fort +2, Ref +5, Will +7; Str —, Dex 16, Con —, Int 14, Wis 14, Cha 15.

*Skills and Feats:* Hide +13, Intimidate +12, Knowledge (religion) +12, Listen +14, Search +12, Spot +14, Survival +2 (+4 following tracks); Alertness, Blind-Fight, Improved Initiative.

*Energy Drain (Su):* Living creatures hit by a spectre's incorporeal touch attack gain two negative levels. The DC is 15 for the Fortitude save to remove a negative level. The save DC is Charisma-based. For each such negative level bestowed, the spectre gains 5 temporary hit points.

*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.

*Unnatural Aura (Su):* Animals, whether wild or domesticated, 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.

*Sunlight Powerlessness (Ex):* Spectres are powerless in natural sunlight (not merely a *daylight* spell) and flee from it. A spectre caught in sunlight cannot attack and can take only a single move or attack action in a round.

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

*Incorporeal Subtype:* Due to its incorporeal nature, a spectre has the following traits:

- An incorporeal creature has no physical body. It can be harmed only by other incorporeal creatures, magic weapons or creatures that strike as magic weapons, and spells, spell-like abilities, or supernatural abilities.
- It is immune to all nonmagical attack forms. Even when hit by spells or magic weapons, it has a 50% chance to ignore any damage from a corporeal source (except for positive energy, negative energy, force effects such as *magic missile*, or attacks made with *ghost touch* weapons). Although it is not a magical attack, holy water can affect incorporeal undead, but a hit with holy water has a 50% chance of not affecting an incorporeal creature.
- An incorporeal creature has no natural armor bonus but has a deflection bonus equal to its Charisma bonus (always at least +1, even if the creature's Charisma score does not normally provide a bonus).
- An incorporeal creature can enter or pass through solid objects, but must remain adjacent to the object's exterior, and so cannot pass entirely through an object whose space is larger than its own. It can sense the presence of creatures or objects within a square adjacent to its current location, but enemies have total concealment (50% miss chance) from an incorporeal creature that is inside an object. In order to see farther from the object it is in and attack normally, the incorporeal creature must emerge. An incorporeal creature inside an object has total cover, but when it attacks a creature outside the object it only has cover, so a creature outside with a readied action could strike at it as it attacks. An incorporeal creature cannot pass through a force effect.

- An incorporeal creature's attacks pass through (ignore) natural armor, armor, and shields, although deflection bonuses and force effects (such as *mage armor*) work normally against it.
- Incorporeal creatures pass through and operate in water as easily as they do in air.
- Incorporeal creatures cannot fall or take falling damage.
- Incorporeal creatures cannot make trip or grapple attacks, nor can they be tripped or grappled. In fact, they cannot take any physical action that would move or manipulate an opponent or its equipment, nor are they subject to such actions.
- Incorporeal creatures have no weight and do not set off traps that are triggered by weight.
- An incorporeal creature moves silently and cannot be heard with Listen checks if it doesn't wish to be. It has no Strength score, so its Dexterity modifier applies to both its melee attacks and its ranged attacks. Nonvisual senses, such as scent and blindsight, are either ineffective or only partly effective with regard to incorporeal creatures.
- Incorporeal creatures have an innate sense of direction and can move at full speed even when they cannot see.

*Undead Traits:* The spectre has the following traits:

- No Constitution score.
- Darkvision out to 60 feet.
- Immunity to all mind-affecting effects (charms, compulsions, phantasms, patterns, and morale effects).
- Immunity to poison, sleep effects, paralysis, stunning, disease, death effects, and necromancy effects.
- Negative energy (such as an *inflict* spell) can heal undead creatures. The fast healing quality works regardless of the creature's Intelligence score.
- Not subject to critical hits, non-lethal damage, ability damage, ability drain, fatigue, exhaustion, or energy drain. Immune to damage to its physical ability scores (Strength, Dexterity, Constitution), as well as to fatigue and exhaustion effects.
- Immunity to any effect that requires a Fortitude save (unless the effect also works on objects, or is harmless).
- Uses its Charisma modifier for Concentration checks.
- Not at risk of death from massive damage. Immediately destroyed when reduced to 0 hit points or less.
- Not affected by *raise dead* and *reincarnate* spells or abilities. *Resurrection* and *true resurrection* can be affect undead creatures. These spells turn undead creatures back into the living creatures they were before becoming undead.
- Proficient with its natural weapons and all simple weapons.
- Proficient with whatever type of armor (light, medium, and heavy) it is described as wearing, as well as all lighter types.
- Undead do not eat, sleep, or breathe.

*Treasure:* The only treasure in the room is the light gray stone on the pillar (the plate mail is too rusted to be usable). It shows no evidence of magical powers and *detect magic* does not show an aura. Its only use is as the key to turn off the traps in **Location 11.21**.

## Location 11.19: Public meeting room

**Read aloud:** *This room actually has furniture. A crude, low wooden table sits in the middle, and four cultists sit on the floor at one end.*

*The cultist at the head of the table raises a hand in a gesture of greeting.*

*"It is enough," she says. "Sit with us now."*

**Development:** The cultist at the head of the table is Erlin Stansill, the second-highest ranked cultist in Corothusa. She recognizes the PCs must be formidable to have reached the top level, and is willing to talk to them before attacking. She wants one of two outcomes for the conversation: either the PCs recognize the worth of the cult's teachings and decide to join, or she lulls them into letting their guard down so she and the other cultists can attack. For more details on the Bascarite cult, see the World Atlas.

Stansill cannot be affected by Diplomacy but the PCs may be able to Bluff her into thinking they have joined her cause. She is not easily Bluffed, and receives +10 on her Sense Motive check unless the PCs come up with a spectacular Bluff. If she has any doubts about the PCs' sincerity, she casts *zone of truth*.

Stansill speaks to the PCs for ten minutes without attacking. If, after that time, the PCs have not shown any willingness to budge to her cause, she attacks as soon as the PCs appear to be off their guard. If the PCs seem to be moving in the right direction, she gives the conversation another five minutes. After fifteen minutes, she attacks any PCs that have not agreed to assist her.

**Creatures:** Three Bascaron cultists, 3rd-level clerics *(see Area 1 for stats)*; Erlin Stansill, a 6th-level cleric.

**Bascaron cultists (3):** hp 17, 22, 15.

**Erlin Stansill, Female Human Clr 6:** CR 6; Medium humanoid (Human); HD 6d8+6; hp 27; Spd 30 ft.; Init +1; AC 18, touch 11, flat-footed 17; Base Atk +4; Grp +4; Atk +6 melee (1d6+2/x2, *+2 light mace*); Full Atk +6 melee (1d6+2/x2, *+2 light mace*); SA Spells, rebuke undead 5/day; SQ Cleric domains (Chaos, Evil), spontaneous casting; AL CE; SV Fort +8, Ref +3, Will +8; Str 10, Dex 12, Con 12, Int 13, Wis 16, Cha 14

*Skills and Feats:* Concentration +6, Diplomacy +5, Heal +10, Knowledge (religion) +5, Listen +7, Move Silently –3*, Spellcraft +5; Combat Casting, Great Fortitude, Maximize Spell, Silent Spell. *includes –6 armor check penalty

*Rebuke Undead:* Stansill can attempt to rebuke undead 5 times per day.

*Spontaneous Casting:* Stansill can "lose" a prepared spell (except for a domain spell) in order to cast any *inflict* spell of the same level or lower.

*Cleric Spells Prepared* (5/4+1/4+1/3+1; save DC 13 + spell level): 0 — *cure minor wounds, detect magic, guidance, inflict minor wounds, resistance;* 1st — *bane, cause fear, inflict light wounds, protection from good*, shield of faith;* 2nd — *bull's strength, hold person, shatter*, silence, zone of truth;* 3rd — *blindness/deafness, inflict serious wounds, invisibility purge, magic circle against law**. *Domain spell

*Possessions:* Breastplate, heavy steel shield, *+2 light mace.*

*Treasure:* Besides the items listed, Stansill carries a jewel-encrusted onyx comb (worth 750 gp) she recovered from the ruins.

## Location 11.20: Mayor's Quarters

**Read aloud:** *This room has a few simple cots and chairs against the walls. An arcane symbol dominates the center of the floor. It is covered with scratches, pockmarks and odd discolorations.*

*There is no time to study it in detail. The cots' residents are stirring from their rest.*

The public meeting room is supposed to be the final line of defense before the hallway leading to the shard; the cultists here are expecting to rest rather than fight, and are therefore ill-prepared for battle. None of them wear armor, and they need one round to get up from bed and pick up a weapon.

*The symbol is where the halo to the ethereal plane opens. No cultist powerful enough to invoke the halo is present.*

**Creatures:** Six Bascaron cultists, 3rd-level clerics (*see Area 1 for stats*)

**Bascaron cultists (6):** hp 16, 13, 13, 19, 20, 19.

*Treasure:* Beneath one cot is a pouch with 18 gp. Beneath another cot is a loose flagstone (Search DC 22). Under the flagstone is a *ring of clear thought* (*see Part 7*).

## Location 11.21: The Gauntlet

**Read aloud:** *No natural light, no torches or anything else illuminate this hallway. It is dark, unadorned, and silent.*

*On the wall across from the door is a small, crudely carved sign. It simply says "key." A small notch is below the sign.*

The notch is the same size as the rock from Location 11.18. Putting the rock in the notch deactivates the first three traps in the hallway.

As shown on the map, the hallway contains four traps:

**Trap #1: Poison Needle Trap:** CR 2; mechanical; touch trigger (tripwire); notch bypass, manual reset; Atk +12 ranged (2d4/x2); Search DC 22; Disable Device DC 22.

**Trap #2: Guillotine Trap:** CR 1; mechanical; touch trigger (pressure plate); notch bypass, automatic reset; Atk +8 melee (2d6/x3); Search DC 21; Disable Device DC 20.

**Trap #3: Acid Spray Trap:** CR 2; mechanical; touch trigger (pressure plate); notch bypass; automatic reset; Atk +12 ranged (1d6/x2, 1 point splash damage to all within 5 feet radius); Search DC 22; Disable Device DC 22.

**Trap #4: Summon Monster Trap:** CR 8; magic device; touch trigger (*glyph of warding*); automatic reset; spell effect (*summon monster VII*, caster level 15th level cleric); Search DC 27; Disable Device DC 27.

## Location 11.22: The Location of the Shard

**Read aloud:** *Five Bascaron cultists stand at attention near the base of the stairs. Between them hovers a dark torso of a man with one eye and long, powerful arms, balanced atop swirling black mist. A sixth cultist wearily leans against a podium with a small greenish rock resting on a dark pillow.*

*"You have come a long way to defile what is holy," says the cultist at the podium. "You are disrespectful infidels. The avenging power of Bascaron will be the last thing you feel."*

Sadly, these cultists possess and revere the *Shard of Bascaron*, but they do not understand it. The leader of this group, Stollmar Grikke, leaves the *Shard of Bascaron* alone for fear of using it incorrectly.

**Creatures:** Five Bascaron cultists, 3rd-level clerics (*see Area 1 for stats*); Stollmar Grikke, a 7th-level cleric; one eye eater.

**Bascaron cultists (5):** hp 18, 13, 18, 16, 15.

**Stollmar Grikke, Male Human Clr 7:** CR 7; Medium humanoid (Human); HD 7d8+7; hp 34; Spd 30 ft.; Init +1; AC 18, touch 11, flat-footed 17; Base Atk +5; Grp +5; Atk +6 melee (1d8+1/x2, *+1 heavy mace*); Atk +6 melee (1d8+1/x2, *+1 heavy mace*); SA Spells, rebuke undead 4/day; SQ Cleric domains (Chaos, Evil), spontaneous casting; AL CE; SV Fort +8, Ref +3, Will +8; Str 10, Dex 12, Con 12, Int 13, Wis 16, Cha 13.

*Skills and Feats:* Concentration +6, Diplomacy +5, Heal +10, Knowledge (religion) +5, Listen +7, Move Silently –2*, Sense Motive +5, Spellcraft +5; Great Fortitude, Maximize Spell, Quicken Spell, Silent Spell. *includes –5 armor check penalty

*Rebuke Undead:* Stollmar can attempt to rebuke undead 4 times per day.

*Spontaneous Casting:* Stollmar can "lose" a prepared spell (except for a domain spell) in order to cast any *inflict* spell of the same level or lower.

*Cleric Spells Prepared* (6/5+1/5+1/3+1/1+1; save DC 13 + spell level): 0 — *cure minor wounds, detect magic, guidance, inflict minor wounds (x2), resistance;* 1st — *bane, cause fear, divine favor, obscuring mist, protection from good*, shield of faith;* 2nd — *bull's strength, hold person, shatter*, silence, zone of truth;* 3rd-*inflict serious wounds, invisibility purge, magic circle against law*, magic vestment;* 4th — *greater magic weapon, unholy blight**. *Domain spell

*Possessions:* Chainmail, *+1 light steel shield, +1 heavy mace, a potion of cure moderate wounds,* a *wand of slowness* (18 charges).

**Eye eater (1):** CR 3; Medium outsider; HD 6d12+6; hp 42; Init +2; Spd 30 ft., fly 30 ft. (perfect); AC 18, touch 12, flat-footed 16; Base Atk +6; Grp +9; Atk +9 melee (2d4+3/x2, tentacle); Full Atk +9 melee (2d4+3/x2, 2 tentacles); Space/Reach 5 ft./5 ft.; SA Tentacle tongues; SQ Darkvision 120, levitation; AL LE; SV Fort +6, Ref +7, Will +8; Str 16, Dex 14, Con 12, Int 14, Wis 16, Cha 10.

*Skills and Feats:* Balance +11, Concentration +10, Decipher Script +11, Hide +8, Intimidate +9, Knowledge (any two) +11, Listen +5, Move Silently +8, Sense Motive +12, Spellcraft +11, Spot +10; Alertness, Combat Reflexes, Exploit Weakness, Flyby Attack, Hover.

*Levitation (Ex):* The eye eater has no lower torso or legs, but is constantly kept aloft by a swirl of energy that radiates from its skin. This magical whirlwind does not disturb the area around the eye eater, leaving no tracks of any kind (Track checks automatically fail). The levitation cannot be dispelled, and ends abruptly when the creature dies.

An eye eater gains the benefit of the Flyby Attack and Hover feats as a result of this ability.

*Tentacle Tongues (Ex):* These tentacles can reach more than 15 ft. beyond the ordinary grasp of the creature's arms. When the eye eater rolls a critical hit with a tentacle, the attacked creature must make a DC 14 Reflex save or be blinded. Sight can be restored only through a *limited wish, miracle, regenerate, restoration,* or *wish* spell. The save DC is Constitution-based.

*Treasure:* The greenish stone is the *Shard of Bascaron* (*see New Magic Items for details*).

# Part 3: Leaving the Shattered Lands

Most of the encounters are the same as **Area 1**, with two exceptions: the Shrine to Bascaron and the Mercenary camp.

## Location 1: Mercenary camp

The only change in this area occurs if the PCs show the Mercenaries the *Shard of Bascaron*. The Mercenaries, upon seeing the *Shard*, offer to accompany the PCs to Kerebrus himself. As long as they are traveling with the PCs, the Mercenaries assist in any combat.

If at any time the PCs attempt to separate from the Mercenaries without giving them the *Shard of Bascaron*, the Mercenaries warn them once, then attack. Should they decide to stay with the Mercenaries all the way to visit Kerebrus, he offers them 40,000 gp for the *Shard of Bascaron*. If they do not sell, Kerebrus warns them he would prefer not to take the artifact from their corpses.

If the party still has Pariah's contract from the adventure *The Ghostwood Treaty* and saved Cardinal Ulloft, Kerebrus can pay them now as well.

## Location 2: Shrine to Bascaron

The approach, including the light traps, is identical. The description for the shrine itself is different if Yellene Durn was not killed previously. If she was killed, the Shrine remains empty.

**If she still lives, and the party did not enter from this side, read aloud:** *To the west is a small cove in the canyon wall, and inside that cove is a rock. This rock is not gray, or even blood red, like most of the rocks in the Shattered Lands. It is a pure, bright green and emits a faint glow. A simple archway has been carved into the canyon wall above the rock.*

*A tall woman wearing clerical robes stands by the rock. She scowls in hatred.*

*"Have you not defiled enough? Your heresies find their punishment here."*

Durn and her companions attack immediately.

**Creatures:** Four Bascaron cultists, 3rd-level clerics (*see Area 1 for stats*); Yellene Durn, a 6th-level cleric (*see Part 1: Location 2 for stats*).

**Bascaron cultists (4):** hp 14, 19, 24, 14.

*Treasure:* See **Part 1: Location 2** for treasure.

ENCOUNTER 2: FINAL STAND

The cultists make one final stand before the PCs escape. The following encounter takes place when the PCs attempt to leave the area shown on the map if they have the *Shard of Bascaron*. If they attempt to leave without the *Shard of Bascaron*, they are free to go.

If the party has the Shard of Bascaron, **Read aloud:** Ten men and women in black robes approach. One of them cups a hand to his mouth. "You have offended against the power of Bascaron! You will feel its might!"

The cultists attack.

**Creatures:** Nine Bascaron cultists, 3rd-level clerics *(see Area 1 for stats);* the cult leader, a 6th-level cleric.

**Bascaron cultists (9):** hp 19, 19, 17, 21, 18, 17, 17, 18, 14.

**Cult Leader, Male Human Clr 6:** CR 6; Medium humanoid (Human); HD 6d8+6; hp 27; Spd 30 ft.; Init +1; AC 18, touch 11, flat-footed 17; Base Atk +4; Grp +4; Atk +6 melee (1d6+2/x2, *+2 light mace*); Full Atk +6 melee (1d6+2/x2, *+2 light mace*); SA Spells, rebuke undead 4/day; SQ Cleric domains (Chaos, Trickery), spontaneous casting; AL CE; SV Fort +8, Ref +3, Will +8; Str 10, Dex 12, Con 12, Int 13, Wis 16, Cha 13.

*Skills and Feats:* Concentration +6, Heal +10, Intimidate +5, Knowledge (religion) +5, Listen +7, Spellcraft +5; Combat Casting, Great Fortitude, Maximize Spell, Silent Spell.

*Rebuke Undead:* The cult leader can attempt to rebuke undead 4 times per day

*Spontaneous Casting:* The cult leader can "lose" a prepared spell (except for a domain spell) in order to cast any *inflict* spell of the same level or lower.

*Cleric Spells Prepared* (5/4+1/4+1/3+1; save DC 13 + spell level): 0 — *cure minor wounds, detect magic, guidance, inflict minor wounds, resistance;* 1st — *bane, cause fear, inflict light wounds, protection from law*, shield of faith;* 2nd — *bull's strength, hold person, shatter*, silence, zone of truth;* 3rd — *blindness/deafness, inflict serious wounds, invisibility purge, magic circle against law**. *Domain spell

*Possessions:* Breastplate, heavy steel shield, *+2 light mace*.

*Treasure:* The leader has an envelope with a small black pearl (worth 400 gp).

## Part 4: Concluding the Adventure

The adventure ends as the PCs leave the area shown on the map (if they are sensible, they leave to the west, back to the Accordlands).

**Read aloud:** *In the fight for power, keeping artifacts like the Shard of Bascaron away from those who are wreaking havoc on the Accordlands is a victory in itself.*

## Part 5: The Stone of Fortune

**If the party retrieved or destroyed the Shard of Bascaron, read aloud:** *Once again, the Stone of Fortune glows and parts the mists of fate, but this time something is different. You see the barren earth slowly rising to reclaim Corothusa, but the vision quickly changes focus. Now you see a fiery pit in a volcanic cavern, and dozens, perhaps hundreds of demonic creatures spilling up out of the earth.*

**If the party failed to recover the Shard of Bascaron, read aloud:** *The Stone of Fortune rolls in your hand, emitting a beam of red light to the sky. Within, you see a foul, black creature with a dragon's head and a man's body. He now holds the Shard of Bascaron, and raises it above his head in triumph as legions of misshapen men bow before him. The vision quickly changes focus. Now you see a fiery pit in a volcanic cavern, and dozens, perhaps hundreds of demonic creatures spilling up out of the earth.*

Due to the party's journey to the Shattered Lands, they missed the opportunity to save Black Forge, and may not take the adventure *Black Forge* nor the related adventure *Abyssal Attack*. There is nothing left for them to save.

## Part 6: New Monsters

SHATTERED MAN

**Medium-size humanoid**
**Hit Dice:** 4d12+4 (30 hp)
**Initiative:** +1 (+1 Dex)
**Speed:** 40 ft.
**Armor Class:** 14 (+1Dex, +3 hides)
**Base Attack/Grapple:** +4/+7
**Attack:** Club +7 melee (1d6+3/x2)
**Full Attack:** Club +7 melee (1d6+3/x2)
**Space/Reach:** 5 ft./5 ft.
**Special Attacks:** Barbarian rage 2/day
**Special Qualities:** Resist Magic +1
**Saves:** Fort +7, Ref +4, Will +3
**Abilities:** Str 16, Dex 12, Con 13, Int 11, Wis 10, Cha 11
**Skills:** Climb +4*, Intimidate +7, Jump +4*, Listen +7, Ride +6, Survival +8; *includes –3 armor check penalty
**Feats:** Great Fortitude, Iron Will, Lightning Reflexes
**Organization:** solitary or gang (2–4)
**Environment:** Shattered Lands
**Challenge Rating:** 4
**Treasure:** One-half standard
**Alignment:** Generally chaotic neutral
**Advancement:** 5–7 HD (Large)
**Level Adjustment:** —

Very few Humans make a permanent home in the Shattered Lands, and those who do seldom remain fully Human for long. Sometimes, though, people who enter the Lands on a temporary journey end up never leaving. The Lands play tricks on the mind, and some minds find those tricks insanely alluring.

There is no real society among shattered men. By staying in the Lands, they broke all ties with their former lives, civilizations, and moral codes. Shattered men are rational enough to form alliances with others who might help them hunt, but such alliances are always temporary — as soon as food runs short, the members of the alliance start looking to each other for the next meal (shattered men become cannibals soon after they take up permanent residence in the Lands).

Shattered men are usually hostile to everything they meet. However, their hunger is always more powerful than their hatred, so if they are offered some form of food, they might be persuaded to listen. Determine the lucidity of a wandering group of shattered men with **Table 5–4** below.

### Table 5-4: Shattered Men Rationality

| d% roll | Shattered Men rationality level |
|---|---|
| 1–10 | Completely deranged — Diplomacy is not possible, and the attitude of these shattered men cannot be improved. |
| 11–40 | Mildly deranged — Difficult to reason with, but Diplomacy is possible. PCs take –5 on any Diplomacy checks. |
| 41–90 | Off-balance — The shattered men are merely eccentric, by the Lands' standards. PCs take –2 on any Diplomacy checks. |
| 91–00 | Rational — These shattered men either have exceptional mental strength or have not been in the Shattered Lands long. No adjustment to Diplomacy checks. |

Additional factors, such as the PCs waving fragrant food under the shattered men's noses, may also affect Diplomacy checks.

COMBAT

Shattered men fight without coordination. They almost always attack the closest enemy, so a weakened PC can easily drop out of the melee if necessary.

*Barbarian Rage (Ex):* Shattered men can fly into a rage twice per day, giving them +4 Str, +4 Con, +2 morale bonus on Will Saves and –2 to AC. The rage lasts 20 rounds, after which the shattered man has –2 Str and –2 Dex for the remainder of the encounter.

*Resist Magic (Ex):* Shattered men live in a land that has been broken by magic, and their continued exposure to the worst side of magic makes them somewhat resistant to its effects. They have a +1 morale bonus to all saves against effects generated by spells, spell-like abilities, and magic items.

CAXYCAL

**Huge Animal**
**Hit Dice:** 10d8+30 (75 hp)
**Initiative:** +2 (+2 Dex)
**Speed:** 60 ft.
**Armor Class:** 13 (–2 size, +2 Dex, +3 natural)
**Base Attack/Grapple:** +7/+18
**Attack:** Bite +17 melee (2d6+9/x2) or claw +12 melee (2d4+4/x2) or tail whip* +12 melee (1d12+4/x2)
**Full Attack:** Bite +17 melee (2d6+9/x2) and 2 claws +12 melee (2d4+4/x2) and tail whip* +12 melee (1d12+4/x2)
**Space/Reach:** 5 ft./5 ft.
**Special Attacks:** Trip
**Special Qualities:** Scent
**Saves:** Fort +10, Ref +9, Will +4
**Abilities:** Str 28, Dex 15, Con 16, Int 2, Wis 12, Cha 6
**Skills:** Move Silently +7; Jump +14; Climb +12
**Feats:** Power Attack, Weapon Focus (bite, claw, tail whip)
**Organization:** Solitary
**Environment:** Shattered Lands
**Challenge Rating:** 9
**Treasure:** Hide
**Alignment:** Always neutral
**Advancement:** 12–22 HD (Gargantuan)
**Level Adjustment:** —

*may only be used on creatures behind or to the side of the caxycal.

A caxycal is a large cat with high, pointed ears and long curved front fangs. Caxycal hides are dark, occasionally with light spots or light gray stripes. They are 15–20 feet long and 6 feet tall, though there are rumors of even larger specimens.

Caxycal hides are rare and quite warm, and an entire hide is worth 5,000 gp.

COMBAT

Well-fed caxycals avoid combat except to hunt. However, most caxycals dwell in the barren Shattered Lands, so they are perpetually on the prowl, attacking nearly any edible being they encounter. Aside from the standard clawing/biting attacks, the caxycal can use its tail as a whip. Its tail can only be used on creatures behind or to the side of the caxycal.

*Trip (Ex):* A caxycal that hits with any attack can attempt to trip an opponent as a free action. The attempt does not provoke an attack of opportunity.

*Scent (Ex):* Caxycals smell any creature within 30 ft. (60 ft. if the creature is downwind, 15 ft. if the creature is upwind). They can follow a fresh scent with a successful Wisdom check (DC 10 for a fresh trail, +2 to the DC for every hour since the quarry has passed).

Caxycals are solitary creatures, since if they were not they would most likely attempt to eat each other. They live in caves and large mountain crags, because they have trouble hiding any place else. Though they have no natural predators, caxycals prefer to stay out of sight.

Some people believe a well-fed caxycal might be tamed and even ridden. No one has yet sated a caxycal for long enough to break it.

## Part 7: New Magic Items

RING OF CLEAR THOUGHT

**Ring**

Such rings are usually simple and plain, more often made of silver than gold. The wearer is immune to *confusion* and *insanity* effects and receives a +5 bonus on Will saves versus *emotion* and *fear* spells.

**Caster level:** 7th; Prerequisites: Forge Ring, *greater restoration*; Market price: 25,000 gp.

SHARD OF BASCARON

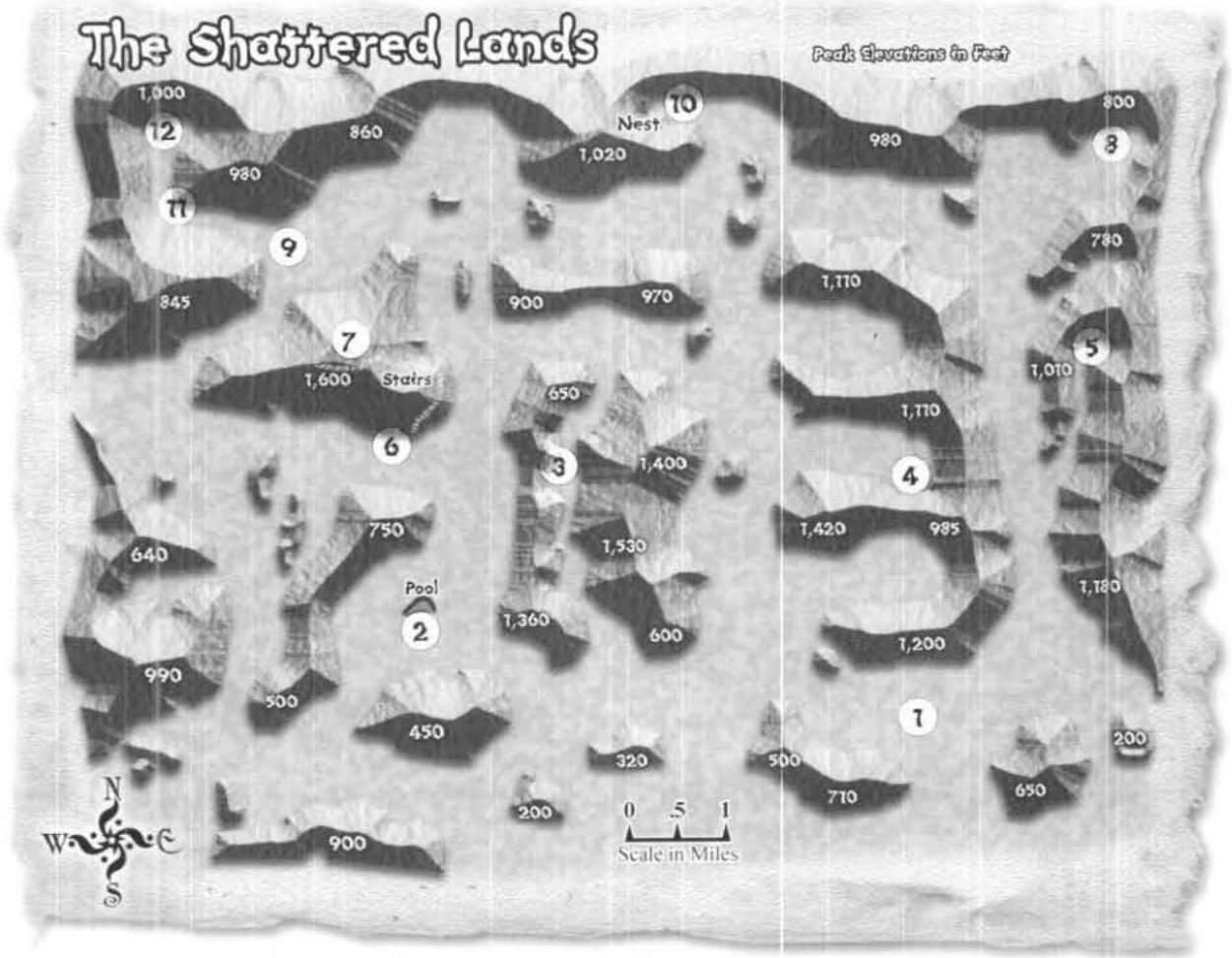
**Major Artifact**

A piece of the one of the most destructive forces in the Accordlands, the *Shard of Bascaron* is a small greenish stone not much bigger than a pebble. As a Bascarite item, it is potentially deadly. GMs should carefully consider whether to allow the artifact's use, and at what price. Bascaron's touch warps men into monsters and lunatics, and any player using the *Shard of Bascaron* should expect nothing less. Its powers vary with its use:

- Weapon enchantment: Requires Craft Magic Arms and Armor Feat and a successful Craft (weaponsmith) check (DC 18) to mount the *Shard* into a weapon. A weapon with a successfully mounted *Shard* is a *+4 chaotic weapon*.

- Ring gemstone: Requires Forge Ring feat and a successful Craft (jeweler) check (DC 18) to put the *Shard* into a ring. The ring then gives the wearer the following benefits: *blink* 3/day, *displacement* 3/day, *sending* 1/day, *greater dispelling* 1/day. Each time it is used, the wearer must make a Will save (DC 12 for *blink* and *displacement*, 15 for *sending*, 18 for *greater dispelling*) or suffer *confusion* as cast by a 15th-level wizard.
- Mounted on wand: Requires Craft Wand feat and a successful Craft (jeweler) check (DC 18) to put the *Shard* on the end of a wand. Once added, the shard adds a new beam each time the wand is used. This beam casts one of the following spells at random (roll d6): *ice storm, fear, rainbow pattern, bestow curse, wall of fire,* or *confusion*. All spells are cast as if by a 15th-level wizard. Once the wand runs out of charges, the *shard* no longer casts spells. It can, however, be removed and remounted to another wand.
- The *Shard* may be mounted on rods and staves (requiring the Craft Rod and Craft Staff Feats; each also requires a Craft (jeweler) check (DC 18). The effect on rods and staves is identical to the effect on wands.

**Caster level 20th; Market price:** priceless.





# Black Forge

## Introduction

In *Black Forge*, the PCs must assist a Dwarven outpost deep underground against an incursion of Abyssals.

This is one of three adventures in Tier 3. It is meant for characters of levels 4–6. If the PCs take this adventure, they cannot take *Shattered Lands*.

## Adventure Background

This adventure is set up as a primer on Dwarven society and customs. At this point the Dwarves are not well known in the Accordlands and few have had direct contact with them. While the PCs may have met Dwarves, or even have one in the party, this adventure *immerses them* in Dwarven culture. The main challenge comes from gaining the Dwarves' trust, as well as helping the Dwarven outpost repel an attack by the Abyssals. However, a deeper mystery also begins to reveal itself; who is helping the ambitious Zhul, Gar-Magog?

## Adventure Synopsis

The PCs come across a dwarven emissary, Dirge, who is seeking allies on the surface. Dirge explains that the dwarven mining town of Black Forge is under siege by Abyssals, and will soon fall without help. Dirge entreats the PCs to assist him in driving back the Abyssal invasion. They travel to the underground village of Black Forge and must assist its people in fending off the incursion.

# Area 1: The Outpost of Black Forge

Black Forge is a small settlement by Dwarven standards, consisting entirely of blacksmiths and their families, for a total of about 200. It is roughly 3 days' travel from the nearest city, Steel Forge, and until recently has had no part in the war beyond its regular shipments of weapons, armor, and raw ore to Steel Forge.

A few weeks ago, Black Forge's shipments were disrupted. The few scouts and travelers that returned to the mining town brought back disturbing news; the Abyssals have decided to weaken Steel Forge by destroying its supply lines. A significant force of Abyssals is closing in on the town. The Abyssals have cut off the lower tunnels from Steel Forge, blocking calls for assistance, and the larger city is unaware of the impending invasion.

Black Forge is led by Harth Anvilfist (Dwarven Ftr 8), a veteran content to spend his later years overseeing a quiet blacksmithing town, contributing to the war effort, even if not on the front lines. Harth lost a leg during a battle with the Abyssals six years ago. Since then he has used his knowledge and experience as Black Forge's magistrate.

The largest cavern, in the town center, contains the forge and other equipment. Branching out from it are several caves used as living areas and storage.

At the moment, the town is worried about the impending invasion. They still have a job to do and refuse to allow their fears to interfere with their duty. The smiths forge weapons as they always have, and the townspeople go about their normal business.

**Black Forge (hamlet)**: Conventional; AL LG; 100 gp limit (masterwork weapons are crafted in the hamlet but are not for sale); Assets 750 gp; Current population: 150; Isolated (100% Dwarven)

**Authority Figure:** Harth Anvilfist, Town Magistrate, Ftr 8.

### Encounter 1: Dirge

**Read aloud**: *While traveling, you see a figure standing about twenty yards ahead of you. He is short and stocky, dressed in travel-stained leathers. He wields an axe, and calls to you by name.*

**Development:** The dwarf is Dirge, a friend of K'evan of the Green (*see Temple of the Undying Flame, page 36*) to seek allies for the dwarves. He is wary of 'uplanders', but pleasant and non-confrontational. He details a recent fight against several Abyssals that escaped to the surface. If the PCs do not know about Abyssals, he describes them as vile monsters unleashed by the corpse of the Dragon, deep under the earth. His people have recently come to the surface to seek allies, as the war below grows increasingly desperate. As long as the PCs are friendly and respectful, Dirge tells them of his people and their history (*see the World Atlas* for dwarven history).

Dirge informs the PCs that a small mining town, Black Forge, is in imminent danger from the Abyssals. Instead of attacking the dwarven front lines head on, as is usually the case, the Abyssals have dug tunnels to circumvent the great city of Steel Forge. They plan to cut off Steel Forge's supply lines, slowly robbing the city of its defenses. The people of Black Forge cannot send word to Steel Forge, so Dirge came to the surface to seek K'evan's aid and advice. Along the way, Dirge discovered an unfamiliar passage (the new tunnel, created by Sjonegaard). Dirge asks the PCs to accompany him to the dwarven tunnels. News must reach Lord Heartbeard, city lord of Steel Forge. If the PCs were interested in Dirge's tales of his race, he uses their interest and offers to show them what the dwarves are truly like.

Dirge carries a letter (in Dwarven) on his person that outlines the above information, and mentions the possibility of reward. The letter contains a hastily-scribbled map of the route Dirge used, but the path is easily retraced.

There is a passageway to the dwarven tunnels in a cave roughly 35 miles away (in whatever direction the GM chooses; it should, however, be in appropriately rocky or mountainous terrain), and can be reached in three days of hard travel. Unless the GM prefers otherwise, the journey to the cave is uneventful.

**Creatures:** Dirge, a 3rd-level cleric.

**Dirge, Dwarf Emissary, Male Dwarf Clr 3:** CR 3; Medium humanoid (Dwarf); HD 3d8+6; hp19; Spd 20 ft.; Init +1; AC 13, touch 11, flat-footed 12; Base Atk +2; Grp +3; Atk +3 melee (1d12+1/x3, greataxe); Full Atk +3 melee (1d12+1/x3, greataxe); SA Spells, turn undead 4/day; SQ Cleric domains (Healing, Protection), Dwarf traits, spontaneous casting; AL LG; SV Fort +5, Ref +2, Will +3; Str 13, Dex 12, Con 15, Int 14, Wis 10, Cha 13.

*Skills and Feats:* Concentration +3, Diplomacy +9, Heal +6, Knowledge (Abyssals) +5, Sense Motive +4, Spellcraft +4; Amazing Luck, Power Attack.

*Spontaneous Casting:* Dirge can "lose" a prepared spell (except for a domain spell) in order to cast any *cure* spell of the same level or lower.

*Turn Undead:* Dirge can attempt to turn undead 4 times per day.

*Cleric Spells Prepared* (4/2+1/1+1; save DC 10 + spell level): 0 — *create water, guidance, purify food and drink, virtue*; 1st — *bless, endure elements, sanctuary, magic stone**; 2nd — *make whole, soften earth and stone**. *Domain spell

*Possessions:* Leather armor, greataxe.

# Part 1: Journey to Steel Forge

The following encounters can be run in any order or bypassed entirely. Dirge aids the PCs in any way he can.

### Encounter 2: Ettin at the Cave-In

**Read aloud:** *With the silent darkness pressing in all around you, the sounds ahead are magnified. Echoing from the stone surrounding you are two distinct voices, apparently arguing with each other. They are low, guttural, and decidedly unpleasant. As you approach, you can make out two faces engaged in a boisterous quarrel. Upon closer investigation, it appears that both heads belong to the same body!*

The heads are Zharl and Kretch, an ettin who is trying to return to his lair after an unsuccessful hunt. However, a portion of the tunnel has collapsed, and Zharl and Kretch are now vigorously arguing about their next move. Zharl believes that they can fit through the small opening that remains, but Kretch fears they will get stuck, and wants to find an alternate route. Both heads are frustrated by the failed hunt, and overjoyed when the PCs fall into their laps.

**Creatures:** One ettin.

**Ettin (1):** CR 6; Large giant; HD 10d8+20; hp 65; Init +3; Spd 30 ft.; AC 18, touch 8, flat-footed 18; Base Atk +7, Grp +17; Atk +12 melee (2d6+6, morningstar); Full Atk +12/+7 melee (2d6+6, 2 morningstars); Space/Reach 10 ft./10 ft.; SA —; SQ Low-light vision, superior two-weapon fighting; AL CE; SV Fort +9, Ref +2, Will +5; Str 23, Dex 8, Con 15, Int 6, Wis 10, Cha 11.

*Skills and Feats:* Listen +10*, Search +1*, Spot +10*; Alertness, Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Power Attack. *An ettin's two heads give it a +2 racial bonus on Listen, Spot, and Search checks

*Low-Light Vision:* An ettin can see twice as far as a human in starlight, moonlight, torchlight, and similar conditions of shadowy illumination. It retains the ability to distinguish color and detail under these conditions.

*Superior Two-Weapon Fighting:* An ettin fights with a morningstar in each hand. Because each of its two heads controls an arm, the ettin does not take a penalty on attack or damage rolls for attacking with two weapons.

**Development:** The cave-in has only partially blocked the passage, and Small characters can get through with little difficulty. Larger characters need an Escape Artist check (DC 10 for Medium characters, +5 per each size increment beyond). Those who fail must move some of the rubble, which is time-consuming and potentially hazardous. Every 1d6 minutes spent clearing the passage the PCs must make a Reflex save (DC 15) to avoid being hit by falling rubble. PCs who fail the save are hit by 1d3 rocks (1d4 damage each).

### Encounter 3: Mistaken Identity (EL 3)

**Read aloud:** *The passage is very tight and cramped, and travel is hard. It takes many days before the tunnel widens and becomes easier to navigate. As you turn a corner, descending deeper into the twisting tunnels, a Dwarf in battered armor steps out of the darkness and hails you. Both he and his equipment have seen better days. He staggers towards you, hands open in a sign of friendship.*

The Dwarf introduces himself as Spotter, the sole survivor of a scouting party that ran afoul of some Abyssals. He was knocked unconscious, and when he awoke, he found that the Abyssals had dragged him off to some unfamiliar location. He managed to sneak away, but he was lost. He is anxious to return home to report. Fortunately, the PCs arrived just in time, and he hopes to accompany them to the city. He is friendly, outgoing, and helpful. Dirge seems uneasy around Spotter. Dirge realizes that not all dwarves are as pure as he is, and senses Spotter's evil. Unless Spotter acts suspiciously, however, Dirge does not voice any concerns.

Spotter is, in fact, a doppelganger sent by Lord Blackthorn, a Medusan Lord. He is to infiltrate Dwarven society, spy, and cause as much disruption as possible. While he looks and acts very much like a real Dwarf, he does have several idiosyncrasies that smart PCs might pick up on.

First, he is unaware of current events. Spotter's current form was taken from an actual Dwarf who was taken prisoner and interrogated several months ago by his master. The doppelganger has had no contact with Dwarves since then and is unaware of the death of Queen Argeyth, the fall of Goldenaxe, or any other recent happenings.

Second, he is woefully ignorant of many things a real Dwarf would take for granted: culture, military structure, social etiquette, etc. Furthermore, his sense of direction underground is abysmal, as he lacks the innate Dwarven affinity for stone and tunneling.

As a result, Spotter is surly and standoffish towards Dirge and any other Dwarves in the party. He offers no explanations for his attitude, and if pressed, simply clams up and sulks. If his ruse is uncovered, he attempts to escape and surrenders only if there is no other option. He has no idea who his masters are, only that they are powerful.

**Creature:** Spotter, a doppelganger.

**Spotter, Doppelganger:** CR 3; Medium monstrous humanoid (shapechanger); HD 4d8+4; hp 22; Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; AC 15, touch 11, flat-footed 14; Base Atk +4, Grp +5; Atk +5 melee (1d6+1/x2, slam); Full Atk +5 melee (1d6+1/x2, slam); Space/Reach 5 ft./5 ft.; SA Detect thoughts; SQ Change shape, immunity to *sleep* and *charm* effects; AL CE; SV Fort +4, Ref +5, Will +6; Str 12, Dex 13, Con 12, Int 13, Wis 14, Cha 13.

*Skills and Feats:* Bluff +10*, Diplomacy +3, Disguise +9* (+11 acting), Intimidate +3, Listen +6, Sense Motive +6, Spot +6; Dodge, Great Fortitude. *When using its change shape ability, a doppelganger gets an additional +10 circumstance bonus on Disguise checks. If it can read an opponent's mind, it gets a further +4 circumstance bonus on Bluff and Disguise checks.

A doppelganger has a +4 racial bonus on Bluff and Disguise checks.

*Change Shape:* A doppelganger can assume the shape of any Small or Medium humanoid. In humanoid form, the doppelganger loses its natural attacks. A doppelganger can remain in its humanoid form until it chooses to assume a new one. A change in form cannot be dispelled, but a doppelganger reverts to its natural form when killed. A *true seeing* spell or ability reveals its natural form.

*Detect Thoughts:* A doppelganger can continuously use detect thoughts as the spell (caster level 18th; Will DC 13 negates). It can suppress or resume this ability as a free action. The save DC is Charisma-based.

*Immunity To Sleep And Charm Effects:* A doppelganger is immune to *sleep* and *charm* effects.

## Area 2: Steel Forge

**Read aloud when the PCs are within sight of Steel Forge:** *A great, fortified city fills the space of this great cavern. In front of the outer walls hordes of monsters, the Abyssals Dirge had described, lay siege to the fort. From the tops of the walls and towers, dwarves hurl rocks and hammers at their attackers. The battle looks like it has raged for eternity, and there is no sign of it stopping.*

Dirge knows how to get around the Abyssal forces, and leads the PCs to a small tunnel used by scouts to circumvent the Abyssals. This should take the party to Steel Forge with little incident. Stopper does not offer to lead, which is strange since he is the only dwarf with the party who is actually from Steel Forge.

**Development:** As soon as they reach the city, Dirge wastes no time in taking the PCs to Lord Heartbeard. If Spotter (from Encounter #2) is with the party, he does his best to slip away

unobtrusively as soon as they enter Steel Forge. Dirge shares the news that Black Forge is under threat of imminent invasion. Non-dwarf PCs are treated with awe and suspicion. Only the word of Dirge and any dwarf PCs stops a violent confrontation.

**Read aloud when the PCs enter Lord Heartbeard's audience chamber:** *The Dwarven lord's advanced age does not detract from his aura of majesty, and it is easy to see why a city is willing to carry out this man's slightest command. He bears a palpable burden of responsibility, and were he any weaker, the weight would kill him.*

*His tired voice captures your attention. "I would welcome you to our city, uplanders, but I am not sure you are deserving of welcome just yet. For centuries we have toiled alone. Unlike High Vicar Yaw, I am not sure those above can be trusted to aid us in our plight. I must thank you, however reluctantly, though. Doubtless, without your aid we would not have heard the news of Black Forge's peril. If you truly wish to earn the trust of the dwarven people, you would assist us further. As you saw, Steel Forge is under constant siege itself. I cannot spare troops to help Black Forge, however dire the need. You must go and save our city for us. Do that, and you will truly have the thanks, and trust, of the dwarves."*

**Development:** If the PCs bring up the topic of reward, Heartbeard tactfully reminds them that they are in his city, surrounded by his people, many miles from the surface. They do not need to help Black Forge, and he does not need to help them return to the surface. In truth, the PCs need Heartbeard as much as Heartbeard needs them.

He asks the PCs to journey to Black Forge and save it, if they can. They are to leave immediately, with two weeks' worth of supplies. As Black Forge is only 3 days' journey away from Steel Forge, this should be adequate.

# Part 2: Journey to Black Forge

### Encounter 4: Fiendling Ambush (EL 5)

By the second day of travel, the PCs are in Abyssal-occupied territory where packs of Fiendlings roam aimlessly, searching for food.

**Read aloud:** *It is the second day of your journey, and there is still no indication of what has happened to the town of Black Forge. The tunnels are quiet, dark, and unchanging. A faint chitter echoes from farther down the tunnel, and you breathe a sigh of relief when it ceases. Suddenly, it begins again, much closer. As it grows louder and nearer, several small figures approach at blazing speed. You can make out skin the color of bone and eyes that burn white, but by the time you notice the long claws and teeth, the creatures are already upon you!*

The fiendlings fight to the death, and use no strategy or tactical thinking. If a character falls, they immediately swarm him, ignoring everything but the scent of blood.

**Creatures:** Eight fiendlings.

**Fiendlings (8):** CR 1; Small aberration (Lesser Abyssal); HD 2d8; hp 8; Init +3; Spd 20 ft.; AC 17, touch 15, flat-footed 14; Base Atk +1; Grp –3; Atk +2 melee (1d3/x2, claw); Full Atk +2 melee (1d3/x2, 2 claws); Space/Reach 5 ft./5 ft.; SA Improved Grab, overwhelm; SQ Abyssal traits, darkvision 120 ft.; AL CE; SV Fort +0, Ref +3, Will +2; Str 10, Dex 16, Con 10, Int 8, Wis 8, Cha 8.

*Skills and Feats:* Hide +8, Listen +2, Move Silently +4, Spot +2, Tumble +4; Alertness.

*Improved Grab (Ex):* To use this ability, a fiendling must hit with its claw attack. It can then attempt to start a grapple as a free action without provoking an attack of opportunity. If it wins the grapple check, it may overwhelm.

*Overwhelm (Ex):* Fiendlings' preferred tactic is to attack *en masse* and drag their prey to the ground. For every additional fiendling adjacent to the target, the fiendling gains a +2 competence bonus to its grapple check. If successful, the target suffers claw damage and becomes prone. While their opponent is prone, fiendlings increase the critical threat range and multiplier of their claw attacks to 19–20/x3.

**Abyssal Traits:**

*Astral (Ex):* Abyssals are astral creatures. They exist simultaneously both on the prime material plane and in the Abyss, a tiny plane surrounding the Dragon's corpse. As such, any melee or ranged attack that targets an Abyssal has a 50% miss chance, unless the attack is made with a +1 or better magical weapon (in the case of ranged attacks, only the projectile must bear the enchantment, not necessarily the weapon itself). This is in all ways like incorporeality.

*Darkvision (Ex):* Range of 120 feet.

*Immunities (Ex):* Abyssals are immune to all mind-affecting effects, including spells and spell-like abilities, paralysis, poison, sleep, stunning, disease and death effects. Abyssals are also immune to fire, ability drain, and energy drain.

*Resistances (Ex):* Abyssals have cold, poison and electricity resistance 20.

*Spell-like Abilities:* All Abyssals have the following spell-like abilities: 3/day — *chaos hammer, darkness, doom,* and *scorching ray.*

### Encounter 5: Dwarven Patrol (EL 6)

Roughly a day's journey from the town, a few guards patrol the area. They are wounded, and have been fighting off hordes of fiendlings for nearly two weeks. Their supplies are low, as is their morale. None have ever seen uplanders before and they are very distrusting, even with dwarves in the party. Though they are not in the best fighting shape, they do not allow the PCs to pass unless they can prove they mean no harm to Black Forge.

**Read aloud:** *The thumping of mail-shod boots alerts you to the approach of others, and as they round the corner, you can make out several Dwarves, heavily armed and armored. Most have seen better days. They immediately fall into well-trained combat position, regardless of their wounds, as the leader speaks to you gruffly. "Who are you? We will not permit you to harm Black Forge!"*

**Development:** The leader is Mail, named for his skills as an armorer, and he is quite serious about the PCs' answers. If they claim Lord Heartbeard sent them, he demands proof, but listens to Dirge and dwarf PCs. A successful Diplomacy check (DC 20 for non-dwarves) convinces Mail that the party is here to help Black Forge repel the invaders. If the check fails, Mail orders them to leave, not allowing them to continue their journey to the city.

If the PCs manage to subdue, but not kill, Mail and his troops, they realize that the party is not allied with the Abyssals. Mail and his troops accompany the PCs to Black Forge to make their introductions easier. Any dwarves they kill in this encounter could greatly jeopardize the trust they plan to earn.

**Creatures:** Mail, a 3rd-level fighter; four Dwarf troops, 1st-level fighters.

**Mail, Male Dwarf Ftr 3:** CR 3; Medium humanoid (Dwarf); HD 3d10+9; hp 33; Init +4; Spd 20 ft.; AC 16, touch 10, flat-footed 16; Base Atk +3; Grp +3; Atk +7 melee (1d8+4/x3, battleaxe); Full Atk +7 melee (1d8+4/x3, battleaxe); SA Favored weapon (battleaxe); SQ Dwarf traits; AL LN; SV Fort +6, Ref +1, Will +2; Str 17, Dex 10, Con 16, Int 13, Wis 12, Cha 10.

*Skills and Feats:* Craft (armorsmithing) +7, Jump +1*, Spot +3, Sense Motive +3; Cleave, Improved Initiative, Power Attack.
*includes –6 armor check penalty

*Favored Weapon (battleaxe):* Mail gains a +1 competence bonus to attack and damage rolls with the battleaxe.

*Possessions:* Banded mail, battleaxe.

**Dwarf Troops (4), Male Dwarf Ftr 1:** CR 1; Medium humanoid (Dwarf); HD 1d10+2; hp 9; Init +0; Spd 20 ft.; AC 15, touch 10, flat-footed 15; Base Atk +1; Grp +2; Atk +3 melee (1d8+2/x3, battleaxe); Full Atk +3 melee (1d8+2/x3, battleaxe); SA Favored weapon (battleaxe); SQ Dwarf traits; AL LN; SV Fort +3, Ref +0, Will +0; Str 12, Dex 10, Con 14, Int 9, Wis 10, Cha 8.

*Skills and Feats:* Climb –3*, Spot +1, Listen +1; Alertness.
*includes –5 armor check penalty

*Favored Weapon (battleaxe):* This Dwarf gains a +1 competence bonus to attack and damage rolls with his battleaxe.

*Possessions:* Chain mail, battleaxe.

# Area 3: Black Forge

The town of Black Forge is small by Dwarven standards: 200 Dwarves, only a few trained warriors. They have increased production of arms and armor, and all dwarves that are capable of fighting have been training under the town's few warriors. The town realizes, grimly, that Steel Forge cannot help them without weakening itself. They are preparing to drive back the Abyssals themselves, though they are not confident that they will succeed.

When the PCs arrive they are immediately questioned, and two dozen dwarves with spears rush towards them. If Mail and is troops are with the party, he orders the guards to stand down and explains the situation. If Mail is not with the party, it is up to the PCs and Dirge to convince Black Forge of their intent. A Diplomacy check (DC 20), is enough to convince the guards to trust them, but failure means the party must surrender their weapons pending a meeting with Anvilfist.

# Part 3: Black Forge Encounters

### Encounter 6: Meeting the Magistrate

Upon entering the town, the PCs are immediately brought to Harth Anvilfist, the community's leader and most experienced warrior. Anvilfist blames himself for the current situation. He should have expected a tactic like this eventually, and his town is woefully unprepared to deal with it. Anvilfist takes any help the PCs offer, and is especially interested in uplanders' tactics. While his town may not be ready to confront this assault with conventional means, the PCs offer an opportunity to attempt new strategies that could repel the Abyssal invaders.

Anvilfist is far more trusting and open than other dwarves the PCs have encountered, save Dirge. He is desperate, and willing to try anything to save his town. If anyone in the party can speak Dwarven, read the following passage. Otherwise, Dirge translates.

**Read aloud when the PCs meet Harth Anvilfist:** *The Dwarf in front of you is apparently the leader of this town. His axe is sharp and polished, his armor gleaming. Though he stands armed and armored, his missing right leg obviously forces him to take a passive role in the war. "I welcome you to Black Forge. I understand you have been sent by Lord Heartbeard. Things must be desperate if he sends uplanders to aid us. The situation is simple. For the past three weeks, the Abyssals have been cutting us off from our supply routes and our nearby cities. It is now apparent they mean to tighten the noose. If we fall, Steel Forge will be ill-equipped to deal with the main assault. If Steel Forge falls, this entire area will be in the hands of the Abyssals, and we cannot allow that to happen. I am not ashamed to admit I am at my wit's end. Without a clever stratagem, this city will be lost."*

**Development:** Anvilfist gives the PCs full access to Black Forge. From what he can determine, the Abyssal attack is no more than two days away... if they're lucky. Anvilfist and the PCs need to enact a plan to save the city. He is open to strategizing as long as it takes, but does not tolerate laziness.

Dirge leaves the party at this point for the local temple, there to help the clerics prepare for the eventual battle.

**Creature:** Harth Anvilfist, an 8th-level fighter.

**Harth Anvilfist, Leader of Black Forge, Male Dwarf Ftr 8:** CR 8; Medium humanoid (Dwarf); HD 8d10+16; hp 78; Init +5; Spd 20 ft.; AC 19, touch 11, flat-footed 18; Base Atk +8; Grp +11; Atk +14 melee (1d8+7/x3, +1 battleaxe); Full Atk +14/+9 melee (1d8+7/x3, +1 battleaxe); SA Favored weapon (battleaxe, longsword), improved damage (battleaxe); SQ Dwarf traits; AL NG; SV Fort +8, Ref +3, Will +4; Str 17, Dex 12, Con 15, Int 11, Wis 14, Cha 10.

*Skills and Feats:* Climb +0*, Craft (Armorsmithing) +10, Jump +0*; Alertness, Blind-Fight, Cleave, Combat Reflexes, Fatalistic Warrior, Great Cleave, Weapon Focus (battleaxe), Power Attack.
*includes –6 armor check penalty.

*Favored Weapon (battleaxe, longsword):* Anvilfist gains a +1 competence bonus to attack and damage rolls with the battleaxe and longsword.

*Improved Damage (battleaxe):* Anvilfist does an additional +2 (+3 total) damage with the battleaxe.

*Possessions:* Full plate armor, +1 battleaxe.

## Location 1: Storehouse

**Read aloud:** *What passes for a storehouse in this tiny village is a small tent made from some unidentifiable hide. A middle-aged Dwarf and his wife look at you with a strange mixture of interest and suspicion.*

**Development:** The owner is Keeper, his wife Pestle. Once the PCs explain they are here to help the town repel the impending attack, and are in need of any help the owners can supply, Keeper and Pestle welcome them openly. They are a very trusting couple, and are glad at the news that assistance has finally arrived, in whatever form. They allow the PCs full run of their storehouse, refusing to accept payment. Their inventory is *very* limited (they are out of anything the GM wants unavailable), but they do have one thing to offer the PCs.

**As they are leaving, read aloud (assuming Keeper knows their goal):** *As you start to leave, the couple converses in whispers. Pestle asks you to wait a moment while Keeper fetches a wrapped package from a shadowed corner. He hands it to you: an axe of surpassing beauty and quality.*

*"This was my master's axe," he says, "and his master's before him. He was one of the original settlers of Black Forge, and this was the first weapon forged here. I was saving it to give to my own apprentice, but I can't do that if this city falls. To me, it is but an heirloom. To you, it could be a tool for victory."*

*Treasure:* Keeper's axe is a *+2 battleaxe*.

## Location 2: Chapel

**Read aloud:** *A small alcove carved out of the rock serves as the chapel for this village, consisting entirely of an altar to Kor with a few tiny pews and a tiny living space for the resident priest. She is in prayer as you arrive, her hands folded as she kneels before the altar. She rises when you approach, a beatific smile on her face. "The blessings of Kor on each of you, my children. What can he or I do for you today?"*

**Development:** Search, the priestess, is a patient young woman who serves as the town's chief religious counsel. The other priests in this small temple are merely acolytes, not yet finished with their training.

Unfortunately, there is very little she can do to help the PCs directly. While she is as devout and kind as the village could ask for, Search has had little formal training or experience. She knows nothing of gargoyle crafting, and only the most rudimentary healing spells. What she has she happily shares.

Dirge can also be found here. While he would rather be fighting when the battle comes, he knows his abilities in healing will be more important. He is teaching the acolytes the basics of combat medicine. He gladly discusses any topic with the PCs, believing the smallest kernel of truth might be of use.

**Creature:** Search, a 4th-level cleric.

**Search, Priestess of Kor, Female Dwarf Clr 4:** CR 4; Medium humanoid (Dwarf); HD 4d8+4; 23; Spd 20 ft.; Init +1; AC 16, touch 11, flat-footed 15; Base Atk +3; Grp +3; Atk +3 melee (1d6/x2, light mace); Full Atk +3 melee (1d6/x2, light mace); SA Spells, turn undead 5/day; SQ Cleric domains (Healing, Protection), Dwarf traits, spontaneous casting; AL LG; SV Fort +5, Ref +2, Will +7; Str 10, Dex 12, Con 13, Int 14, Wis 17, Cha 15.

*Skills and Feats:* Concentration +7, Diplomacy +7, Heal +7, Knowledge (religion) +7; Alertness, Dodge.

*Spontaneous Casting:* Search can "lose" a prepared spell (except for a domain spell) in order to cast any cure spell of the same level or lower.

*Turn Undead:* Search can attempt to turn undead 5 times per day.

*Cleric Spells Prepared* (5/4+1/3+1; save DC 13 + spell level): 0 — mending, cure minor wounds, detect poison, resistance, virtue; 1st — cure light wounds x4*, comprehend languages; 2nd — cure moderate wounds x2, augury, shield other*. *Domain spell

*Possessions:* Chain shirt, light mace.

# Area 3: The Abyssal Base

The PCs may decide to take a proactive approach to dealing with the Abyssals. If they scout the surrounding area a Search check (DC 20) uncovers a path to the Abyssals' lair. The party may wish to take the fight to the Abyssals. Anvilfist applauds such a bold plan, but he realizes that his town cannot undertake the endeavor as they have neither the skills nor the experience. He offers the PCs anything within his power if they insist on assaulting the Abyssals head on. If the PCs instead decide to stay and fortify the town against the attack, proceed to **The Battle of Black Forge**.

Encounter numbers match areas on the map.

## Location 4: Entrance Cavern (EL 4)

**Read aloud:** *Despite the lack of change in the rock, you are sure that you have reached the lair of the Abyssals. The decor leaves much to be desired, but every indication is that this cavern has had heavy traffic recently. Pools of tar ooze along the edges, bones litter the floor, and a distinctly rancid smell pervades the air. Suddenly, the tar begins to coalesce, pulling itself out of the ground into shapes. A moaning snarl escapes what could be construed as a mouth, and the figures immediately move to flank you.*

**Development:** The creatures are tarpit gargoyles, creations of the Dwarves like other gargoyles, but twisted and dark. These two have fallen under the control of the Abyssal leader. Any dwarves in the party should be very surprised to be confronted by gargoyles of any type, even if tarpit gargoyles have a typically evil reputation. The gargoyles especially hate dwarves, who once commanded them, and attack any dwarves immediately.

**Creatures:** Two tarpit gargoyles.

**Tarpit Gargoyles (2):** CR 2; Small construct (gargoyle); HD 2d10+10; hp 20; Init +0; Speed 20 ft.; AC 19, touch 10, flat-footed 19; Base Atk +1; Grp –2; Atk +3 melee (1d3+1/x2, slam); Full Atk +3 melee (1d3+1/x2, 4 slams); Space/Reach 5 ft./5 ft.; SA Constrict, improved grab, multiple limbs; SQ Blindsight 40 ft., fire vulnerability, gargoyle traits, immunities; AL LE; SV Fort +0, Ref +0, Will +0; Str 13, Dex 11, Con —, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 6.

*Skills and Feats:* Hide +9, Listen +5; Multiattack.

*Gargoyle Traits:* A tarpit gargoyle possesses the following additional traits:

- *Construct:* Gargoyles are constructs, though unlike most creatures of this type, they have an Intelligence score (they still lack Constitution scores). They are therefore immune to mind-influencing effects (charms, compulsions, phantasms,

patterns, and morale effects) and to poison, sleep, paralysis, stunning disease, death effects, and necromantic effects. Further, they are not subject to critical hits, subdual damage, ability damage, ability drain, or energy drain. They are immune to any effect that requires a Fortitude save (unless that effect also works on objects). Gargoyles cannot die due to massive damage, but when reduced to 0 hit points or less, they immediately crumble to a loose pile of dust and rock. Gargoyles, which are never truly alive, cannot be raised or resurrected.

- *Darkvision:* Gargoyles have darkvision with a range of 60 feet.
- *Depth Sense (Ex):* Gargoyles always know how far they are beneath the surface of the world. They can detect whether a passage is rising or falling, and by precisely how much. Both of these abilities require a Survival check (DC 15) to use.
- *Immunity:* All gargoyles are immune to lightning, cold, fear-based effects, and poison.
- *Skills:* All gargoyles receive a +4 racial bonus to Search and Spot checks while underground, as well as a +8 racial bonus to Survival checks at all times.
- *Spell-like abilities:* At will — detect evil; 3/day — aid, magic circle against evil. Gargoyles have a spellcaster level equal to 6 or their Hit Dice, whichever is greater.

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

*Constrict (Ex):* A tarpit gargoyle deals automatic slam damage with a successful grapple check.

*Multiple Limbs (Ex):* Tarpit gargoyles can create extra limbs, and may take up to four slam attacks per round. If a tarpit gargoyle takes more than two slam attacks in a round, each attack suffers a –2 penalty to the attack roll.

*Blindsight (Ex):* A tarpit gargoyle's entire body is a primitive sensory organ. It can see without eyes, and hear without forming ears. The tarpit gargoyle's blindsight extends for 40 feet.

*Fire Vulnerability (Ex):* Tarpit gargoyles are extremely vulnerable to fire. They take double damage from any fire attacks, and full damage if they save versus the fire's effect (if a save is normally allowed).

*Immunities:* Tarpit gargoyles are immune to polymorphing and paralysis effects.

## Location 5: Trap room (EL 6)

The Abyssals have rigged this room to discourage pursuers. The most obvious of these traps is the stone column swinging from the ceiling, which he triggers from inside as the PCs enter. The column is almost exactly as long as the passage is wide, so the PCs need to go over or under it; around is not an option.

**Falling Stone Trap:** CR 2; mechanical; touch trigger; repair reset; Atk +12 melee (4d6, swinging log); multiple targets (all targets in two adjacent 5-ft. squares); Search DC 10; Disable Device DC 10.

A more insidious trap is the *globe of cold*. Anybody who enters the room from either side has 3 rounds to disarm the trap (by stepping on a particular plate in the floor near the door), or the room is enveloped in a *globe of cold*. Once disarmed, the trap stays inactive for 10 rounds, at which point it must be disarmed again. Bhorial uses this trap both as security and to guard against any escape plans.

**Globe of Cold Trap:** CR 4; 40 ft. radius (4d6); Reflex save (DC 20) avoids; Search DC 15; Disable Device DC 10.

## Location 6: Storeroom (EL 5)

This cavern stores the weapons the Black Forge dwarves have made. The Abyssals have collected them from fallen dwarves on the outskirts of Black Forge. The room is guarded by five fiendlings.

**Read aloud:** *As you enter this cavern, your first reaction is fear: fear of an army so large it takes this many weapons to outfit it. The entire room is filled with weapons of every conceivable type and size. Axes, swords, scimitars, knives and other blades spill out of crates filled to capacity. Thousands of weapons, crying out for blood, wait for wielders. Before you can fully assess the situation, you notice you are not alone. Several small, chitinous, insectoid creatures chitter among themselves, and draw swords identical to those in the crates. Suddenly, you are quite certain you know what army will wield these weapons.*

**Creatures:** Five fiendlings.

**Fiendlings (5):** CR 1; Small aberration (Lesser Abyssal); HD 2d8; hp 8; Init +3; Spd 20 ft.; AC 17, touch 15, flat-footed 14; Base Atk +1; Grp –3; Atk +2 melee (1d3/x2, claw); Full Atk +2 melee (1d3/x2, 2 claws); Space/Reach 5 ft./5 ft.; SA Improved Grab, overwhelm; SQ Abyssal traits, darkvision 120 ft.; AL CE; SV Fort +0, Ref +3, Will +2; Str 10, Dex 16, Con 10, Int 8, Wis 8, Cha 8.

*Skills and Feats:* Hide +8, Listen +2, Move Silently +4, Spot +2, Tumble +4; Alertness.

*Improved Grab (Ex):* To use this ability, a fiendling must hit with its claw attack. It can then attempt to start a grapple as a free action without provoking an attack of opportunity. If it wins the grapple check, it may overwhelm.

*Overwhelm (Ex):* Fiendlings' preferred tactic is to attack en masse and drag their prey to the ground. For every additional fiendling adjacent to the target, the fiendling gains a +2 competence bonus to its grapple check. If successful, the target suffers claw damage and becomes prone. While their opponent is prone, fiendlings increase the critical threat range and multiplier of their claw attacks to 19–20/x3.

**Abyssal Traits:**

*Astral (Ex):* Abyssals are astral creatures. They exist simultaneously both on the prime material plane and in the Abyss, a tiny plane surrounding the Dragon's corpse. As such, any melee or ranged attack that targets an Abyssal has a 50% miss chance, unless the attack is made with a +1 or better magical weapon (in the case of ranged attacks, only the projectile must bear the enchantment, not necessarily the weapon itself). This is in all ways like incorporeality.

*Darkvision (Ex):* Range of 120 feet.

*Immunities (Ex):* Abyssals are immune to all mind-affecting effects, including spells and spell-like abilities, paralysis, poison, sleep, stunning, disease and death effects. Abyssals are also immune to fire, ability drain, and energy drain.

*Resistances (Ex):* Abyssals have cold, poison and electricity resistance 20.

*Spell-like Abilities:* All Abyssals have the following spell-like abilities: 3/day — *chaos hammer, darkness, doom,* and *scorching ray.*

## Location 7: Gar-Magog's chambers (EL 5)

This room is where the leader of the Abyssal forces spends the bulk of his time planning his assault. Gar-Magog is a young zhul, and has the potential to become a great menace to the dwarves. This assault on Black Forge is the first major campaign of his life. His quest has received an unlikely source of aid. The Medusan Lord, Blackthorn has provided Gar-Magog with some magical support, for Blackthorn's own reasons.

The room itself is spartan, containing a brazier, chest, chair, and small desk. The chest is not locked, but it is trapped. If it is opened before the command word ("Victory", in the Abyssal tongue) is spoken, the *glyph of warding* inside triggers a *fireball*.

**Fireball Trap:** CR 5; magic device; touch trigger; automatic reset; spell effect (*fireball*, 5th-level wizard, 5d6 fire, DC 14 Reflex save half damage); Search DC 28; Disable Device DC 28.

*Treasure:* The chest contains a *+2 dagger* and 350 gp (in Deverenian coin). The desk has a recent, unsigned letter on it.

**The letter reads:** *"I greet thee, Gar-Magog, in the name of the Storm. Thy work goes well, I presume? While thy work is but a small part of my plan, it is yet vital to it. Should thy loyalty and ability be proven with this task, I have a more important one for thee, with commensurate rewards. A fortunate turn of events hath enabled me to speed my plans considerably: rumor hath reached me that the dragon Gordoran hast gone to join his revered ancestor. Truly the Storm doth smile upon us! When thou completest thy business with our new allies, turn thy attention to the village of Stony Vale, near the kingdom of Denska. Investigate the truth of these rumors, and shouldst thy findings confirm them, thou shalt be rewarded with a portion of the dragon's hoard. In the name of the Storm, thy Revered Lord."*

**Development:** When the PCs enter the room, they set off the *alarm* spell on the door, notifying Gar-Magog of the intrusion. He *teleports* there in 2d6 rounds, and arrives furious.

**Read aloud:** *A spot of light in the back of the cavern catches your eye. It grows in brilliance and size to a height of eight feet, and from it steps a giant demon-creature.*

**Development:** Gar-Magog is an immature zhul, but even without an adult's strength he can defeat the PCs. The party has one advantage: Gar-Magog has never contemplated a direct assault on his lair. He is surprised at the PCs' arrogance, and only lashes out physically. It takes Gar-Magog 1d3 rounds to gather his wits to attack the PCs with more thought.

**If at any time, the PCs manage to reduce Gar-Magog to 36 or fewer hp, read aloud:** *You have held off the great Abyssal, who cackles, begins to glow, and fades away. As he disappears, his final words echo in your minds: "You have prevented nothing. We come for your town now, and your world next."*

**Creature:** Gar-Magog, a zhul.

**Gar-Magog, Zhul:** CR 8; Medium aberration (Greater Abyssal); HD 11d8+33; hp 73; Init +4; Speed 30 ft.; AC 21, touch 15, flat-footed 18; Base Atk +7; Grp +3; Atk +10 melee (1d8+5 plus poison (19–20/x2), longsword); Full Atk +10/+5 (1d8+5 plus poison (19–20/x2), 2 longswords); Space/Reach 5 ft./5 ft.; AL CE; SA Fear aura, poison, spell-like abilities; SQ Abyssal traits, regeneration 2, spell turning, spell immunity, spell resistance 16, damage reduction 5/good; SV Fort +6, Ref +5, Will +8; Str 18, Dex 18, Con 18, Int 16, Wis 16, Cha 14.

*Skills and Feats:* Concentration +16, Diplomacy +12, Intimidate +12, Knowledge (great abyss) +13, Sense Motive +13; Dodge, Mobility, Spring Attack, Two Weapon Fighting, Improved Two Weapon Fighting.

**Abyssal Traits:**

*Astral (Ex):* Abyssals are astral creatures. They exist simultaneously both on the prime material plane and in the Abyss, a tiny plane surrounding the Dragon's corpse. As such, any melee or ranged attack that targets an Abyssal has a 50% miss chance, unless the attack is made with a +1 or better magical weapon (in the case of ranged attacks, only the projectile must bear the enchantment, not necessarily the weapon itself). This is in all ways like incorporeality.

*Darkvision (Ex):* Range of 120 feet.

*Immunities (Ex):* Abyssals are immune to all mind-affecting effects, including spells and spell-like abilities, paralysis, poison, sleep, stunning, disease and death effects. Abyssals are also immune to fire, ability drain, and energy drain.

*Resistances (Ex):* Abyssals have cold, poison and electricity resistance 20.

*Spell-like Abilities:* All Abyssals have the following spell-like abilities: 3/day — chaos hammer, darkness, doom, and scorching ray. In addition, greater Abyssals may cast unholy aura at will.

*Telepathy (Ex):* Greater Abyssals have the ability to communicate telepathically with any creature within 100 ft. The target of this ability must be able to speak (or at least clearly understand) at least one language. The Abyssal's telepathy automatically translates its thoughts into the language best understood by the recipient. The Abyssal may only communicate with one non-Abyssal in this fashion at a time. A greater Abyssal may telepathically communicate with any number of Abyssals at once, provided they are in range.

*Fear Aura (Su):* A zhul is constantly surrounded by a 60-ft. radius aura of fear. Anyone within range must succeed at a DC 19 Will save or become panicked for 2d6 rounds. Even those who save successfully are considered shaken so long as they remain within range. Creatures that successfully save cannot be affected by the same aura of fear for 24 hours, but remain shaken, even if they leave the aura and return later.

*Poison (Ex):* Injury, Fortitude DC 22, initial damage 1d8 Dexterity, secondary damage 1d8 Constitution.

*Spell-like Abilities:* 3/day—animate dead, blasphemy, create undead, desecrate, detect good, detect magic, dispel magic, fly, improved invisibility, lightning bolt, magic circle against good, polymorph self, pyrotechnics, suggestion, shout, teleport without error (self plus 100 lbs. only), unholy aura, unhallowed, wall of stone; 1/day—finger of death, symbol (any). Save DC = 12 + spell level.

*Spell Immunity (Su):* Gar-Magog is permanently immune to magic missile, fireball, and web.

*Spell Turning (Su):* Spells cast at a zhul have a chance of being reflected back at their caster per spell turning. This ability is inherent, and requires no action on behalf of the zhul. Any level of spell can be turned. Whenever a zhul succeeds at a save against a spell by more than +5, the spell is automatically redirected back to the target as if the zhul had cast the spell itself. The same is true of any spell resistance that succeeds in protecting the zhul. Such spells are automatically redirected back at the caster. Spells that have no save DC or ignore spell resistance still have a 25% chance of failing when the zhul is hit. If the zhul rolls a natural 20 or succeeds at the save by +10 or more, that spell becomes usable by the zhul once per day as an innate ability. If

the zhul gains this benefit against a spell already in its repertoire, it gains an additional use of that spell per day. If the zhul succeeds at the save by +15 or more, it gains the above listed abilities, plus permanent immunity from that spell.

*Regeneration (Ex):* Fire and acid deal normal damage to a zhul, while all other damage is converted to subdual damage. If a zhul loses a limb or body part, the missing limb or chunk of flesh regenerates in 3d6 minutes. The zuhl can reattach the severed member instantly by holding it flush against the stump. If a zhul's head is severed, its body continues to function for 4d4 rounds, during which time the zhul desperately attempts to reattach its head in the above fashion. If it fails to do so in the allotted time, the zhul dies.

As usual, the zhul is vulnerable to attacks that do not deal hit point damage, such as most poisons and disintegration; similarly, it is affected normally by starvation, thirst, and suffocation. A zhul can be killed by massive damage normally; the massive trauma simply shuts down the zhul's nervous system, preventing it from regenerating the damage.

### Encounter 8: Battle at Black Forge

If the PCs return to Black Forge following their encounter with Gar-Magog to warn Anvilfist of the imminent abyssal attack, **read aloud:** *As you are speaking, a rumble begins to echo through the caverns. You would swear that it was thunder, but that is impossible this far underground. The sound grows louder by the second, and you begin to have an ominous feeling. Harth knows the sound only too well. "Sound the alarm! The abyssals are here! For Black Forge, Xod and Kor!"*

**Development:** Harth Anvilfist, with the assistance of an acolyte of Kor, heads to the entrance to the city. This represents the first time in six years he has had the chance to take the fight to the Abyssals, and he does not intend sit idly by. The acolyte serves as his shieldman and helps the one-legged warrior move about.

The passage is 10 feet wide at the point where Harth Anvilfist intends to make his stand. He needs at least one PC to stand beside him, and probably wants several to help cover him. The Abyssals intend to overrun him with sheer numbers. The Abyssals have not taken into account any defensive strategies the PCs may have implemented. The townspeople will do their part, but their impact on the battle is up to the GM's discretion. Just before the attack, Harth pulls aside an especially noble or brave upworlder PC, and asks the PC to take his ironcloth should he fall. While the PC can readily tell that ironcloth is the metallic fabric that Harth and other dwarves wear, there is no time to ask about its importance or symbolism. The Abyssals have come.

Unbeknownst to the PCs and the residents of Black Forge, Lord Heartbeard has concluded that Black Forge is too important to be left in the hands of the PCs. He simply does not trust uplanders enough, and has contemplated what failure would mean for Steel Forge. He has sent a regiment of warriors, who left shortly after the PCs did.

The regiment does not arrive at the beginning of the battle, and the PCs and Harth Anvilfist must survive on their own for some time. The first wave of the attack is fiendlings, followed by golgoths, and then Gar-Magog himself. In a straight fight, the PCs would be horribly outnumbered, but the Abyssals must come two or three at a time. The numbers below represent the number of Abyssals attacking from the front. The numbers remaining are left to the GM. They are meant purely as a dramatic storytelling point, and to engage the citizens of the town. GMs are encouraged to alter the numbers according to the difficulty they wish to set for the PCs.

**Creatures:** Gar-Magog, a Zhul *(see Location 7 for stats)*; twenty fiendlings *(see Location 6 for stats)*; three golgoths.

**Golgoth (3):** CR 5; Medium aberration (Lesser Abyssal); HD 8d8+24; hp56; Init +2 (Dex); Speed 30 ft., fly 60 ft. (poor); AC 22, touch 14, flat-footed 20; Base Atk +6; Grp +11; Atk +11 melee (2d4+5/x2, claw); Full Atk +11 melee (2d4+5/x2, 2 claws), +6 melee (2d6+2 plus poison/x2, bite); Space/Reach 5 ft./5 ft.; AL CE; SA Frightful presence, poison; SQ Abyssal traits, damage reduction 5/blacksteel, spell-like abilities; SV Fort +5, Ref +4, Will +8; Str 20, Dex 14, Con 16, Int 10, Wis 14, Cha 14.

*Skills and Feats:* Concentration +9, Intimidate +8, Listen +7, Spot +7; Dodge, Flyby Attack, Hover.

**Abyssal Traits:**

*Astral (Ex):* Abyssals are astral creatures. They exist simultaneously both on the prime material plane and in the Abyss, a tiny plane surrounding the Dragon's corpse. As such, any melee or ranged attack that targets an Abyssal has a 50% miss chance, unless the attack is made with a +1 or better magical weapon (in the case of ranged attacks, only the projectile must bear the enchantment, not necessarily the weapon itself). This is in all ways like incorporeality.

*Darkvision (Ex):* Range of 120 feet.

*Immunities (Ex):* Abyssals are immune to all mind-affecting effects, including spells and spell-like abilities, paralysis, poison, sleep, stunning, disease and death effects. Abyssals are also immune to fire, ability drain, and energy drain.

*Resistances (Ex):* Abyssals have cold, poison and electricity resistance 20.

*Spell-like Abilities:* All Abyssals have the following spell-like abilities: 3/day — *chaos hammer, darkness, doom,* and *scorching ray*.

*Frightful Presence (Ex):* A golgoth can terrify a creature with a glance. This terror is purely instinctive, a result of the golgoth's single-minded dedication to destruction. Anyone that can see a golgoth within 60 ft. must make a DC 16 Will save or become panicked for 3d6 rounds. Creatures that successfully save cannot be affected by the same golgoth's frightful presence for 24 hours.

*Poison (Ex):* Injury, Fortitude DC 17, initial damage 1d6 Dexterity, secondary damage 1d6 Strength. The save DC is Constitution-based.*Spell-like abilities:* At will—blur, burning hands (DC 13), color spray (DC 13), confusion (DC 16), endure elements, hypnotic pattern (DC 14), invisibility (self only), mage armor, magic circle against good (self only), see invisibility, sleep (DC 13), web (DC 14). 3/day—false life, lesser globe of invulnerability, magic missile, true strike. 1/day—arcane eye, break enchantment, bull's strength (self only), chain lightning (DC 18), feeblemind (DC 17), reverse gravity, unholy aura. Caster level 9th.

**1d6+4 rounds after the battle starts, read aloud:** *The battle is not going well. You are weary and wounded. While the townspeople are doing their part, the fact they are not properly trained warriors is weighing heavily on them. Many have fallen, and the Abyssals are pouring into the city through the tunnels. There is no strategy now, only the will to survive. Wearily, you raise your arms for one more blow before the end, and your mind begins to play tricks on you. You could swear you just heard a horn sounding behind you... could that be a battle cry? Yes! In the distance, you hear calls of, "Steel Forge!" and "For Lord Heartbeard and Black Forge!" Reinforcements have arrived!*

**Development:** The Steel Forge contingent (50 Dwarves in all) help the PCs drive off the Abyssal horde. Despite any efforts the PCs make, Harth Anvilfist refuses to withdraw, and fights until the Abyssals are all dead, or he is. Gar-Magog, restored to full health after he left the PCs earlier (unless he was killed), fights until he is at 50% hp, then *teleports* out. Assuming the PCs lasted long enough for the Steel Forge forces to arrive, Black Forge has been saved.

# Part 5: Concluding the Adventure

**Read aloud:** *You have saved the village and stopped the Abyssals, for now. However, while you have rescued the hostages, the victory is bittersweet. The great demon you fought is still out there, along with the weapons he extorted from these villagers. You still know nothing about the mysterious force behind this attack, or what its plans truly are. While you have known for a while now that there are forces at work in the Accordlands whose identities, goals, and resources are shrouded in mystery, the events in Black Forge prove to you once again that they must be stopped.*

**Development:** The survivors of the Steel Forge forces are to permanently garrison Black Forge, forestalling further attacks. If Harth Anvilfist is dead, one of the dwarves from Steel Forge assumes the position of town magistrate. If the PC he spoke to earlier had taken Harth's ironcloth during battle (a standard action), the dwarves thank the PC and tell him to keep it, for he has now inherited Harth's destiny and spirit.

If Harth Anvilfist survives the battle, he feels better than he has in years, no matter how wounded he may be. Kor has allowed him one last chance to face his ancient enemy. If Keeper gave the PCs his axe, he agrees that it is theirs now, as long as they use it in defense of the dwarven people.

# Part 6: Adventure Hooks

- Spotter the doppelganger may still be at large, and his plotting could, in the long run, do as much damage as Blackthorn and Gar-Magog.
- There are, of course, the Abyssals to deal with. They are obviously planning something massive, and they may now have enough weapons to begin their assault. Gar-Magog is still alive and active, and bears a grudge against the PCs.

STONE OF FORTUNE

**If the PCs saved Black Forge, read aloud:** *The Stone of Fortune's latest vision shows you exactly what you had hoped to see: the demonic Abyssals retreating into the deep cracks of the earth. A moment later, you see a gauntleted fist, and wonder at the image, before still another overtakes it: a foul, black creature with a dragon's head and a man's body. He now holds a green-blue stone, and raises it above his head in triumph as legions of misshapen men bow before him.*

**If the party failed to save Black Forge, read aloud:** *The Stone of Fortune conjures a new image, one you had dreaded seeing: a fiery pit in a volcanic cavern, and dozens, hundreds of demonic creatures spilling up out of the earth, through the very cavern you took to reach the city. A moment later, you see a gauntleted fist, and wonder at the image, before still another overtakes it: a foul, black creature with a dragon's head and a man's body. He now holds a green-blue stone, and raises it above his head in triumph as legions of misshapen men bow before him.*

While the party has journeyed to Black Forge, the Bascarite cult has claimed the Shard of Bascaron for its own. If the party failed to save Black Forge, they may not participate in the Abyssal Attack adventure, as their failure at Black Forge has made it irrelevant: the Abyssals have all but won the World Below.

# Part 7: New Monster

**Gar-Magog, Zhul (Greater Abyssal)**
**Medium Aberration**
**Hit Dice:** 11d8+33 (73 hp)
**Initiative:** +4
**Speed:** 30 ft. (6 squares)
**AC:** 21 (+2 deflection, +3 Dex, +6 natural), touch 15, flat-footed 18
**Base Attack/Grapple:** +7/+3
**Attacks:** 2 longswords +10 melee (1d8+5 plus poison (19–20/x2))
**Space/Reach:** 5 ft./5 ft.
**Special Attacks:** Fear aura, poison, spell-like abilities
**Special Qualities:** Abyssal traits, regeneration 2, spell turning, spell immunity, spell resistance 16, damage reduction 5/good
**Saves:** Fort +6, Ref +5, Will +8
**Abilities:** Str 16, Dex 14, Con 17, Int 16, Wis 16, Cha 14
**Skills:** Concentration +16, Diplomacy +12, Intimidate +12, Knowledge (great abyss) +13, Sense Motive +13
**Feats:** Dodge, Mobility, Spring Attack, Two Weapon Fighting, Improved Two Weapon Fighting
**Climate/Terrain:** Underground
**Organization:** Unique (leads Abyssals)
**Challenge Rating:** 8
**Treasure:** None
**Alignment:** Chaotic Evil
**Advancement:** See *Abyssal Attack* adventure

Gar-Magog is a fledgling zhul whose eventual goal is to gain a footing on the surface world. To this end, he has made a contact on the surface, Lord Blackthorn. Blackthorn's agent, Bhorial, has been working with Gar-Magog to further both villains' goals. After making contact, Bhorial instituted Blackthorn's plan to outfit the Abyssal forces with Dwarven weaponry by holding

Dwarven children hostage. In exchange, Gar-Magog has agreed to provide Blackthorn with rituals and equipment to further his plans on the surface.

Once Gar-Magog's forces have been fully outfitted by the Dwarves of Black Forge, he plans to lead them on an attack on the surface, but it will be some time before his army is ready to mobilize. When they finally do, however, very little could stand in their way.

His face and body are covered with the hooks and spines characteristic of a zhul, but he is blue-black instead of scarlet in color and he is a bit smaller. However, being recently transformed into his current incarnation, he is also less powerful than a normal Zhul,. He is rarely alone, and is usually found with several Nightclaws and Skincrawlers, at the least.

COMBAT

In combat, Gar-Magog prefers to lead his forces from the rear, using his spell-like abilities to augment his Abyssals. He has no qualms about entering a melee if he believes he is assured of victory. In either case, he never enters a fight from which he cannot get away, either by his innate abilities or mundane means.

Gar-Magog carries a token from Bhorial, a *rod of passage* with 10 charges left. He uses the rod to surprise the PCs and if necessary, flee from them during the course of the adventure. By the time the PCs meet him again (in the *Abyssal Attack* adventure), he will have exhausted the device, but his increased powers by that time will have more than made up for the loss.

**Abyssal Traits:**

*Astral (Ex):* Abyssals are astral creatures. They exist simultaneously both on the prime material plane and in the Abyss, a tiny plane surrounding the Dragon's corpse. As such, any melee or ranged attack that targets an Abyssal has a 50% miss chance, unless the attack is made with a +1 or better magical weapon (in the case of ranged attacks, only the projectile must bear the enchantment, not necessarily the weapon itself). This is in all ways like incorporeality.

*Darkvision (Ex):* Range of 120 feet.

*Immunities (Ex):* Abyssals are immune to all mind-affecting effects, including spells and spell-like abilities, paralysis, poison, sleep, stunning, disease and death effects. Abyssals are also immune to fire, ability drain, and energy drain.

*Resistances (Ex):* Abyssals have cold, poison and electricity resistance 20.

*Spell-like Abilities:* All Abyssals have the following spell-like abilities: 3/day — *chaos hammer, darkness, doom,* and *scorching ray*. In addition, greater Abyssals may cast *unholy aura* at will.

*Telepathy (Ex):* Greater Abyssals have the ability to communicate telepathically with any creature within 100 ft. The target of this ability must be able to speak (or at least clearly understand) at least one language. The Abyssal's telepathy automatically translates its thoughts into the language best understood by the recipient. The Abyssal may only communicate with one non-Abyssal in this fashion at a time. A greater Abyssal may telepathically communicate with any number of Abyssals at once, provided they are in range.

*Fear Aura (Su):* A zhul is constantly surrounded by a 60-ft. radius *aura of fear*. Anyone within range must succeed at a DC 19 Will save or become panicked for 2d6 rounds. Even those who save successfully are considered shaken so long as they remain within range. Creatures that successfully save cannot be affected by the same aura of fear for 24 hours, but remain shaken, even if they leave the aura and return later.

*Poison (Ex):* Injury, Fortitude DC 22, initial damage 1d8 Dexterity, secondary damage 1d8 Constitution.

*Spell-like Abilities:* 3/day—animate dead, blasphemy, create undead, desecrate, detect good, detect magic, dispel magic, fly, improved invisibility, lightning bolt, magic circle against good, polymorph self, pyrotechnics, suggestion, shout, teleport without error (self plus 100 lbs. only), unholy aura, unhallowed, wall of stone; 1/day—finger of death, symbol (any). Save DC = 12 + spell level.

*Spell Immunity (Su):* Each zhul has different immunities. Choose three arcane spells, totaling no more levels than it has Hit Dice. Gar-Magog is permanently immune to *magic missile, fireball,* and *web*.

*Spell Turning (Su):* Spells cast at a zhul have a chance of being reflected back at their caster per *spell turning*. This ability is inherent, and requires no action on behalf of the zhul. Any level of spell can be turned. Whenever a zhul succeeds at a save against a spell by more than +5, the spell is automatically redirected back to the target as if the zhul had cast the spell itself. The same is true of any spell resistance that succeeds in protecting the zhul. Such spells are automatically redirected back at the caster. Spells that have no save DC or ignore spell resistance still have a 25% chance of failing when the zhul is hit. If the zhul rolls a natural 20 or succeeds at the save by +10 or more, that spell becomes usable by the zhul once per day as an innate ability. If the zhul gains this benefit against a spell already in its repertoire, it gains an additional use of that spell per day. If the zhul succeeds at the save by +15 or more, it gains the above listed abilities, plus permanent immunity from that spell.

*Regeneration (Ex):* Fire and acid deal normal damage to a zhul, while all other damage is converted to subdual damage. If a zhul loses a limb or body part, the missing limb or chunk of flesh regenerates in 3d6 minutes. The zuhl can reattach the severed member instantly by holding it flush against the stump. If a zhul's head is severed, its body continues to function for 4d4 rounds, during which time the zhul desperately attempts to reattach its head in the above fashion. If it fails to do so in the allotted time, the zhul dies.

As usual, the zhul is vulnerable to attacks that do not deal hit point damage, such as most poisons and disintegration; similarly, it is affected normally by starvation, thirst, and suffocation. A zhul can be killed by massive damage normally; the massive trauma simply shuts down the zhul's nervous system, preventing it from regenerating the damage.

# Tier 4

This tier consists of one adventure: *"The Dragon's Lair,"* featuring the return of the near-mythical dragons. The party alone stands between a town of innocents and the depraved forces that threaten them. Behind it all lurk the Medusan Lords, their plans ever closer to completion.

## The Dragon's Lair

There are many impulses that could lead the characters to Stony Vale.

- The PCs might have heard dark tales of the shadowy creature that now haunts the region and come to Stony Vale to investigate, offer their help, or seek fame and fortune of their own (the PCs might not know the creature is a dragon).
- The adventurers might respond to a plea for help from the good people of Stony Vale. The town and mayor, with the help of Jaraba Stronghand (who agreed to pay the reward), are offering a reward of 1000 gp to each man and woman brave enough to rid the region of its unusual threat.
- The heroes could be on the road from a previous adventure, in which case they could seek the comforts of a soft bed and a warm meal before moving on to their next enterprise.
- One of the adventurers could have family in Stony Vale, and since the heroes' adventures brought them close to the hamlet, he invited his comrades to visit the town and enjoy a little rest.
- The PCs might have business with Jaraba Stronghand, one of the richest merchants in the area and the most influential woman in Stony Vale. Perhaps they are bringing Jaraba a rare item she ordered from another merchant; perhaps they are trying to sell some of the loot they acquired during their last adventure and heard Jaraba would be the best person to trade with; or perhaps they are looking for employment and hope the merchant hires them.
- Cassica Moonseed could once again take on the identity of Duchess Cassandra, and suggest that the mysterious deaths in the area mirror the Assassins' Strike. In truth, the dragon terrorizing the town is of her own creation, and she wishes to see how it performs against the party.

## Campaign Notes:



# The Dragon's Lair

## Introduction

*The Dragon's Lair* introduces dragons, creatures formerly thought to be mythical or extinct.

This is the only adventure in Tier 4. It is meant for characters of levels 6–8.

## Adventure Background

For a century, the people who lived near the mountains separating Tyraniel and Denska had nothing to fear from the hill giant clans or the Nothrog war bands that occasionally invaded the region. Unbeknownst to the townfolk, the good dragon Gordoran had made the mountains her home, and had become a dedicated protector of the territory and its inhabitants.

Six months ago, under the command of Al'drich von Grossynkiir, the powerful dragon Varanir attacked Gordoran's lair. With the help of a contingent of veteran warriors from Sceth Hellbringer's army, Varanir cornered the noble dragon and slew her, depriving the region of its centuries-old protector. Hellbringer asked his unusual ally to guard Gordoran's former lair, and the dragon was unable to refuse while controlled by Al'drich. Varanir agreed to protect the dragon's lair with his life, and the men who helped him defeat Gordoran stayed to help him.

As the weeks passed, Varanir became more and more adventurous, leaving his new lair two or three times every week. He also became bolder, especially after tasting the sweet fear of his first Human victims. Now, preying on isolated villages during the darkest hours of the night has become Varanir's only true passion. In the last week alone, the dragon has killed dozens of innocent villagers.

To make matters worse, the hill giants and other inhabitants of the area soon learned that whatever had been hunting them had disappeared. Although these creatures do not know of Varanir, the dragon has thus far not intervened in their affairs, preferring instead to prey on the people who live below the mountains. With Gordoran no longer secretly protecting the land, the giants, Nothrog, and other creatures of the mountains now roam the land unfettered.

Over the last three months, two groups of heroes journeyed to the dragon's lair in the hopes defeating the fiend that now preys upon the isolated hamlets of the area. The first expedition was a group of dwarves who tunneled up from below, believing they could access an ancient Dwarven mausoleum they thought would be found in the lower levels of caves in the area. Unfortunately, none of the dwarves lived to find out — or, at least, none have checked in with their superiors in the World Below. From the second expedition, only one man escaped. He now hides in Stony Vale, half mad.

It is up to the heroes to rout out the dragon that now plagues the region. But first they must brave the dangers of the mountains...

### Nassiral Hate and the Blade of Syneri

**In truth, Sceth Hellbringer's initial motive for sending Varanir and a contingent from his army to the dragon's lair was to recover a potent artifact, the famed *Blade of Syneri*. Gordoran, who made it her duty to protect the folks of the region, also guarded the fabled *Blade*. The good dragon made certain the lethal relic would not fall into the wrong hands. Using divinatory magic, the powerful Medusan Lord Nassiral Hate learned about Gordoran and his quest, and sent Sceth Hellbringer to recover the magical blade for him. With the help of Varanir, the warlord not only destroyed the good dragon and established a base of operations in its lair (for reasons of his own), he also recovered the artifact for his master. Now the *Blade of Syneri* is in Nassiral Hate's possession.**

## Adventure Synopsis

The adventure opens while the PCs arrive in the small hamlet of Stony Vale, a Human community preyed upon by Varanir. Shortly after their arrival in Stony Vale, the PCs meet the only survivor of the last expedition, and the man rants to them about the eerie and powerful dragon. They also hear rumors about hill giants and Nothrog gathering in the hills at the foot of the mountains, a fact that will make travel difficult. Shortly after their arrival in Stony Vale, the PCs meet the only survivor of the last expedition, and the man rants to them about the eerie and powerful dragon. The good folks of Stony Vale offer the heroes a great reward if they dare to drive the hidden evil away.

Before they leave town, Varanir attacks Stony Vale, and the heroes see for themselves how powerful and destructive he can be. Varanir had not expected much opposition in Stony Vale, and because of the heroes' involvement, the dragon soon breaks off his attack. Now regarded as great heroes, the PCs investigate the dragon's lair and confront the monster that has taken residence there. During their trek to the mountains, they see the countryside is ravaged, farmsteads are destroyed, and the whole region is now a desolate wasteland.

If the heroes are successful, they thwart the plans of Sceth Hellbringer (who, from now on, might take a personal interest in the PCs).

If they fail to defeat Varanir, the shadow dragon continues to lay waste to the land, causing poverty, misery, and death.

Whatever their motivations, there are many rewards to be gained in this adventure: the gratitude and accolades of the people of Stony Vale and all the folks of the region; monetary and magical treasures, which the warlord has not yet taken from Gordoran's lairs; enough experience points to go up at least one level. One of the chambers of the dragon's lair leads to other levels of the dungeon complex. Once they have the right key (found in possession of the Terror of Condor Pass; see the adventure Condor Pass for more information.), the PCs might return to the dragon's lair to explore this part of the dungeon (see the Dragon Keep Festival adventure for further details).

## Area 1: Stony Vale

The hamlet of Stony Vale is in a remote area some distance from its nearest neighbor. Although isolated, Stony Vale is known for its sweet apple wine, its fine-quality animal pelts, and the craftsmanship of its woodcutters. As such, it is a proudly independent community — and one that would not normally ask for the help of outsiders. These are not normal times, and the town is vulnerable.

Twice in the last month, Stony Vale has fallen prey to Varanir's attacks, and many inhabitants were killed. Traders from other villages and other travelers reported similar incidents, "where shadowy death soared from above." None in Stony Vale has figured out what is behind the attacks, since the dragon strikes at night. Nevertheless, all agree that a supernatural being is behind the brutal murders. Stony Vale is afraid.

**Stony Vale (hamlet):** Conventional; AL NG; 100 gp limit; Assets 3,600 gp; Population 361; Isolated (Human 96%; elf exiles 1%; half-elf 3%). Authority Figures: Mayor Brodin Heartfelt, male Human Rog 3. Important Characters: Jaraba Stronghand, female Human Wiz 7 (merchant); Thormantir, male Human Sct 4 (constable); Zoras, Dristol, and Kremvar, female Human, male half-elf, male Human Ftr 3 (deputies); Christos, male Human Ftr 3 (proprietor of the Hapless Hare alehouse); Sabine, female Human Cle 5 (temple priest); Bocco, male Human Sct 2 (proprietor of Bocco's Goods General Store); Crazy Tilli, female Human Rog 2 (hostler). Others: Rog 1 (5), Rog 3 (3), Ftr 1 (7), Ftr 0 (336).

### Location 1: Stony Vale (Map Key)

### Location 1.1: Main road

The only easy way to enter Stony Vale is by the main road that cuts at a sharp angle and climbs the rocky cliff upon which it perches. Two members of the constabulary always guard the road into the hamlet.

### Location 1.2: Natural Ridge

Characters trying to sneak into Stony Vale by avoiding the main road have to climb the sheer 30-foot cliff on which the town sits (Climb check, DC 18).

### Location 1.3 Constabulary and Stable

This small stone building was built near the entrance into town and includes two small jail cells. Two to four guards, as well as either the constable or one of his deputies, can be found here at all times. Beside the constabulary is the town's stable, where the horses of the Stony Vale militia and those of most visitors are kept. The town hostler, Crazy Tilli — who has a reputation for recklessness in the saddle — takes good care of the beasts.

### Location 1.4: Town Center

The center of this small village was built around the first (and main) town well. All the commercial establishments of Stony Vale were built around that well, thus making this part of the town the "heart" of the community and the place where there is the most traffic. The town center is also where the populace of Stony Vale meets to discuss important matters during the summer months (in colder temperatures or when it rains, the people meet in the temple).

### Location 1.5: Bocco's Goods General Store

The only store in town, Bocco's place offers most things adventurers might need. The friendly Bocco, a burly man in his early fifties, enjoys dealing with outsiders, whom he considers braver than most (since he has never ventured outside of Stony Vale). If the heroes ask for something Bocco does not have, the merchant does his best to order the item and have it delivered to him within a reasonable time — for a price.

### Location 1.6: The Hapless Hare Alehouse

The only establishment offering food and bedding, the Hapless Hare is the place to meet people, hear the latest rumors, and have a good time. With the current crisis, business has slowed and most patrons are either glum and worried or sullenly silent. Christos, the proprietor, does his best to elevate the mood of his customers (local artisans, woodcutters, and farmers), but his efforts have been for the most part in vain.

### Location 1.7: Woodcutter's House

This sturdy log cabin serves as a meeting place for the many woodcutters (and the few carpenters) who reside in the hamlet. Aside from farming, woodcutting is the most common profession in the region. The men who practice this trade are esteemed in Stony Vale, since the town's economy depends on exporting wood and wooden products.

### Location 1.8: Temple of Neus

This elegant stone building was erected in honor of Neus, in his aspect as a hunter, the principal deity worshiped in Stony Vale. Sabine, the woman in charge of all things religious and medicinal, can be found here at all times.

### Location 1.9: Mayor's House

This large log cottage, said to have belonged to the founders of Stony Vale, is where the elected town mayor conducts his business. The mayor's private chambers, inhabited by his family of ten, are on the upper level.

### Location 1.10: Stronghand Manor

The largest and most elaborate building in town, Stronghand Manor was built from dark red bricks by a regionally famous architect eighty years ago. The Stronghand family, now led by Jaraba, is the richest in town and one of the most influential in the region.

## Part 1: A Town in Distress

This adventure throws the characters into the heart of the trouble plaguing Stony Vale. Early on, the heroes learn about the mysterious attacks and hear stories of the recent rise in problems and monster attacks in the region.

ENCOUNTER 1: TROUBLE IN STONY VALE

As the PCs make their way to Stony Vale, **read aloud:** *Pillars of gray drifting smoke rising from many chimneys form eerie shadows upon the darkening horizon. They herald a settlement, something you have not seen in a while. As you continue down the road through the green rolling moors, you soon pass by a large boulder upon which is carved: "Stony Vale: 2 miles." Looking up at the emerging moon, you estimate you should be able to reach the place sometime before darkness falls, and the possibility of sleeping in a feathered bed warms your hardened adventurers' hearts. A short time thereafter, you see the small hamlet.*

*Before you stands a natural rock formation some 30 feet high and hundreds of feet wide. Upon the sheer rocky hill, which forms a natural protection against invaders, stands a small community, wooden houses with thatched roofs. As you approach Stony Vale, you notice many folks outside the town's perimeter, standing on the mesa upon which the town sits. These people are standing guard over the unfortified hamlet, walking the cliff's edge, most of them armed with sickles, forks, axes, and other peasants' tools.*

*Continuing down the road, you notice one of the guards pointing towards you. You also notice a throng of Humans is gathered where the road leads into town, cutting at a sharp angle into the steep hill. "Who goes there?" asks a Human male dressed in leather armor and wearing a sword at his hip. "State your names and your business in Stony Vale," he adds, his loud voice quivering a little.*

These townsfolk are obviously terrified.

The man who so suspiciously greeted the PCs is Thormantir, Stony Vale's constable. Although not usually so cross, he has been under a lot of stress lately. There are a dozen other residents in the crowd, including the rich merchant Jaraba Stronghand and a few town guards.

**Development:** While Thormantir is suspicious of the party, he still shows them respect. After all, they look like hardy adventurers. Though far from being a diplomat, Thormantir is a smart man dedicated to the safety of the hamlet of his birth. He also suspects whatever is responsible for the recent attacks upon the town would not come strolling into Stony Vale. Although

he regards the PCs as a potential threat, he secretly hopes these newcomers might agree to help the town.

Jaraba, on the other hand, is friendly and diplomatic. Depending on the PCs' attitude, however, it is possible that her first impression might be a bit harsher than her otherwise mild manners would suggest. If so, Jaraba quickly changes her attitude, becoming friendly and welcoming towards the PCs as soon as they prove to her their intentions are good. Jaraba apologizes for Thormantir's abrupt welcome and invites the PCs to "enjoy the humble hospitality our small community has to offer." That is, unless the PCs give her good reason to distrust them, in which case she does not hesitate to tell the constable to ask them to leave town, or have them arrested and jailed. (Imprisoned PCs should have a chance to win their freedom by accepting the dangerous mission to the dragon's lair.) Considering Jaraba's friendly attitude, however, the heroes should accept her gracious invitation. If they do, Jaraba herself escorts them to the Hapless Hare Alehouse — the only commercial establishment in town offering food and bedding to strangers.

If the PCs talk to the villagers here, at the Hapless Hare, or at the town center, or if they talk to the mayor, the constable, or to Jaraba, they might learn the following information:

- Stony Vale is a small but independent hamlet that, like most towns in the region, relies on farming and trade to survive.
- For resources, the hamlet harvests food and timber from the great forest to the west, and grows corn on the surrounding fertile land.
- Stony Vale's economy is based on fur and timber, which the people of the hamlet export through westbound caravans each year in the spring. In the other villages and cities, they sell or trade these goods for other commodities that would otherwise be unavailable in the isolated hamlet.
- The hamlet is in distress, and everyone is lending a hand to help the constable and his 'men' secure the town's perimeter.
- Many inhabitants recently died brutal and mysterious deaths. These victims were marked by bloody gashes, and all their faces were frozen in masks of fear. No one saw what attacked the villagers.
- There has been a great increase in attacks from giants, monsters, and Nothrog raiders of late.
- Shortly after the unknown terror's first attack upon the town, respected local hero Jarold the Bold led a second expedition to the east, seeking to uncover the truth behind the attack. Jarold was the only member of his party to return. The poor man has since gone completely mad
- Last night, the town fell victim to a second attack. A funeral service in honor of the deceased will be held tomorrow.
- The town needs to find someone brave enough to journey to the east, and rout out the evil that has taken residence there.

The amount of information depends on the players' interaction with the townspeople. Most of the information can be easily obtained through simple role-playing. Allow PCs to use their Diplomacy skill to interact with the locals. A Gather Information check (DC 10) or a Bardic Knowledge check (DC 15) also reveals most of the above information.

## Location 2: The Hapless Hare Alehouse

**Read aloud:** *As you enter Stony Vale, the small crowd disperses. The inhabitants who greeted you return to patrolling the hamlet's outskirts. Jaraba Stronghand leads you on the main road that cuts through the hamlet to a large, two-story log cabin. Its sign depicts a white rabbit about to be hanged, a thick length of rope tied about its neck.*

*"Here we are: the Hapless Hare!" Jaraba exclaims, smiling politely. "You must try Christos' cooking. He makes a mighty good hare stew!"*

*Jaraba opens the bulky door and bids you enter. The first thing you notice inside the poorly lit common room is the glowing fire in the hearth on the other side of the alehouse. The smell of the spicy stew simmering over the fire invades your nostrils, and you begin to think Jaraba may be right about the tavern's fare.*

As the PCs enter the Hapless Hare, Christos, the balding and emaciated proprietor, greets the heroes and directs them to a table close to the fireplace. Aside from Jaraba and the PCs, there are three other patrons in the alehouse (all commoners). Unless the PCs invite her to join them, Jaraba bids the heroes good night and retires to her home. If the adventurers ask her to stay for dinner, she not only insists on paying but also talks freely about Stony Vale's troubles and the many facts and rumors mentioned above. Alternatively, Christos or some of the other patrons might fill the PCs in.

Christos wastes no time selling the merits of his cooking, and he offers the PCs a taste of his specialty: spicy hare stew. He also recommends fine goat cheese, mashed carrots, freshly baked rye bread, sweet apple wine (a specialty of the region) as well as the hot and heavy mead he brews himself. The proprietor is friendly and easy to talk to, and he is a veritable rumor mill.

### Encounter 2: Sole Survivor

Shortly after the heroes have entered the Hapless Hare, when they are in the middle of their tasty dinner, **read aloud:** *The door flies open, banging upon the wooden wall. "I saw it!" a tall man dressed in dirty buckskins announces as he enters the alehouse, his disheveled, curly hair dancing upon his bearded and freckled face. "I saw it!" He takes a few stumbling steps inside, as if drunk. Then, the man's eyes open wide as he looks upon you. "I..." he murmurs, as if confused now. "I was the only one to survive... the... the shadow! It was horrible! The shadow... it... it destroyed the others!" The man drops to his knees and begins to sob, as if years of accumulated sorrow were pouring out of him. "The shadow will destroy this town!"*

This is Jarold the Bold, the only survivor of the second expedition that unknowingly sought out the dragon's lair. Jarold returned to town ten days ago a broken man. He has been under the care of Sabine, the temple's acolyte. Following Varanir's attack yesterday (which Jarold witnessed), the man became agitated and

is convinced that the deadly shadow that slaughtered his comrades has come to destroy Stony Vale. He is also convinced he saw the "great darkness" swooping above town a few minutes ago, but he seems to have momentarily forgotten that.

The heroes have a chance to learn a few things about the dragon. If they talk to Jarold, they learn about his disastrous expedition to the east and Varanir's attack of the previous evening. Jarold talks to the PCs in a confused, gibbering, and uneven voice, but his mad speech nevertheless reveals clues to the heroes as to what to expect at the dragon's lair. Jarold is enigmatic, and to describe the dragon he uses phrases like "great evil," "death from above," "invisible terror," and "the shadow of the unseen stalker." Like most people who witnessed a dragon attack and lived to tell about it, Jarold does not understand what his opponent was. He never got a good look at it; he only saw a great shadow swooping down from the darkening sky before it unleashed its terrible destruction. However, Jarold is convinced only "the light of purity" and the "powers of the sun" can take down the fiend, which is partly true (a *daylight* spell cast upon the creature negates one of the dragon's greatest abilities).

If interrogated about the location of the dragon's lair, Jarold might prove useful. He remembers exactly where the lair is, and knows how to get to it. He can even draw a rough map if asked. The mad adventurer never actually made it into the dragon's lair; his party was attacked just outside of it. But he did see the entrance to the grotto on the face of the mountainous peak, and he saw the thing come out of the den. The information Jarold provides is accurate, but he has no clue what the inside of the lair looks like.

Jarold does not mention the bony carcass outside the lair (the remains of Gordoran, although he does not know it.). He knows nothing about the warriors that now inhabit the lair, nor is he aware of Sceth Hellbringer's involvement in the affair.

Although willing to help the party, Jarold never agrees to accompany them to the den; he is too terrified.

**Development:** If Jaraba dined with the PCs, she is with them when Jarold enters the Hapless Hare. She promises a reward to any person brave enough to destroy the thing that has attacked the village. If the PCs are ill-equipped or if their gear is in obvious need of repair, Jaraba also offers to provide them with (standard) armor, weapons, and other equipment the adventurers might need. If she feels the party is too weak or believes they carry no enchanted weapons, she might even offer to lend them two magical items (a *+1 longsword* and a *+1 handaxe*). Jaraba's initial offer is 1,000 gp per adventurer upon the party's safe return to Stony Vale. She will *not* pay the PCs in advance, because it might just be throwing money away. If the heroes insist on more money, she mentions the great treasures undoubtedly to be found at the dragon's lair, and tells the heroes that they may keep anything they find. If pressed, she might be convinced to give a little more to each party member but she will not pay until the job is done.

If the PCs have not yet talked to the townspeople and did not get much information out of Jarold, Sabine (the temple acolyte) or Brodin Heartfelt (the mayor) might come to the alehouse. Sabine comes to the Hapless Hare to take Jarold back to the temple, where she wants him to rest, but this gives the PCs a chance to interact with Jarold again, and Sabine. Mayor Brodin Heartfelt, on the other hand, comes to the alehouse to beg the PCs for help. Brodin is desperate to stop the madness plaguing his town, and he sorely needs the heroes' aid. If Jaraba did not stay with the PCs for dinner, she accompanies the mayor with the intent of offering a reward, if she must.

### Encounter 3: Shadowy Threat (EL 8)

Late that evening, Varanir attacks Stony Vale, destroying everything in his path. He relished the previous day's slaughter and is hungry for more.

**Development:** If the PCs are outside at during the evening or night (if they leave the Hapless Hare, or if they have volunteered for guard duty, for instance), they might see Varanir before the battle begins, when the dragon approaches. Allow them to roll Spot checks (DC 20) to notice the dragon. Varanir does not bother using his shadow blend ability (which effectively gives him nine-tenths concealment) at this point. Instead, he flies in his true form, appearing to any observer as a great shadowy cloud-like mass with a large pair of powerful wings. Once he realizes someone in town has spotted him and/or before he actually swoops down upon Stony Vale, Varanir blends into the shadows of the night, effectively making him much harder to spot and identify.

If the PCs notice the dragon's approach, read aloud: It is eerily silent in Stony Vale tonight. Although some torches have been lit, the light of their flame does little to keep the darkness at bay. As you inhale the fresh air of night, you see what looks like a large bird flying above town. Then, as your eyes focus upon the thing, which is darker than a starless night, you notice it is much too large to be a bird. A wide pair of wings propels the form at tremendous speed, and you realize whatever it is flying above is fast approaching.

If the heroes stayed at the Hapless Hare, read aloud: A scream, followed by an unearthly terrifying shriek, catches your attention. It sounds as if the whole town is awake and screaming.

**Creature:** Varanir, a Darkness dragon (*see sidebar Varanir, Darkness Dragon for stats*).

**Development:** Even if the PCs spot the dragon prior to the attack, they have little time to ready themselves. Varanir activates his shadow blend ability as soon as the PCs spot him. The dragon also uses his breath weapon against the heroes as soon as he is within range. During the battle, Varanir attacks the strongest looking warrior first, but prefers to attack anyone who displays magical abilities.

Varanir attacks without warning or mercy, spitting magical darkness to sow confusion among the party and the townspeople caught in the battle. The young dragon, using darkness and his shadow blend ability, does not expect much resistance from the folks of Stony Vale so he underestimates the PCs. When hurt for the first time, Varanir utters a loud shriek of anger, as if he had not expected to be wounded in battle. The dragon continues to fight, but as soon as he suffers more than 50 hp of damage, Varanir escapes and returns to his lair to nurture his wounded pride.

This first encounter with the shadowy beast gives clues of what to expect at the dragon's lair. During this face-to-face encounter, the heroes should begin to grasp what they are up against. Varanir, who never met much resistance in these parts before, prefers to escape to his lair for now, but his pride has been deeply wounded. Wary of the heroes' capabilities, he also holds a grudge against them.

### Varanir, the Darkness Dragon

**Varanir is a relatively young creature, but with the help of Sceth Hellbringer's men it killed the good dragon Gordoran. It is now flush with its own power, enjoying the terror it spreads.**

**Varanir, Darkness Dragon:** CR 10; Large dragon (young adult); HD 18d12+72; hp 189; Init +0; Spd 60 ft., fly 200 ft. (poor), swim 60 ft., burrow 30 ft.; AC 26, touch 10, flat-footed 26; Space/Reach: 10 ft./5 ft. (bite 10 ft.); Base Atk +19; Grp +29; Atk: +23 melee (2d6+6, bite); Full Atk: +23 melee (2d6+6, bite), +18 melee (1d8+6, 2 claws), +13 melee (1d6+6, 2 wings), +8 melee (1d8+6; tail slap); AL CE; SA Breath weapon, frightful presence, spell-like abilities; SQ Blindsight 120 ft., damage reduction 5/magic, darkvision 120 ft., keen senses, immunities, shadow blend, spell resistance 18; SV Fort +15, Ref +11, Will +11; Str 23, Dex 10, Con 19, Int 10, Wis 11, Cha 10.

*Skills and Feats:* Bluff +9, Climb +10, Diplomacy +10, Hide +8, Intimidate +16, Listen +21, Move Silently +10, Search +21, Spot +21; Alertness, Cleave, Improved Natural Armor, Power Attack, Quicken Spell-like Ability, Snatch, Wingover.

*Breath Weapon (Su):* 40-ft. cone, damage 1d6 Constitution plus permanent blindness, Reflex DC 20 for half damage. Using a breath weapon is a standard action. Once Varanir breathes, he can't breathe again until 1d4 rounds later.

*Blindsight (Ex):* Using nonvisual senses, Varanir maneuvers and fights as well as a sighted creature. Invisibility, darkness, and most kinds of concealment are irrelevant, though Varanir must have line of effect to a creature or object to discern that creature or object. Varanir's blindsight has a range of 120 feet.

*Keen Senses (Ex):* A dragon sees four times as well a Human in shadowy illumination and twice as well in normal light. It also has darkvision out to 120 feet.

*Frightful Presence (Ex):* 150-ft. radius, HD 15 or less, Will DC 19 negates. A young adult or older dragon can unsettle foes with its mere presence. The ability takes effect automatically whenever the dragon attacks, charges, or flies overhead. Creatures within a radius of 30 feet x the dragon's age category are subject to the effect if they have fewer HD than the dragon. A potentially affected creature that succeeds on a Will save (DC 10 + 1/2 dragon's HD + dragon's Cha modifier) remains immune to that dragon's frightful presence for 24 hours. On a failure, creatures with 4 or less HD become panicked for 4d6 rounds and those with 5 or more HD become shaken for 4d6 rounds. Dragons ignore the frightful presence of other dragons.

*Immunities:* Varanir is immune to level drain, Constitution damage, sleep, or paralysis.

Shadow Blend (Su): During any condition other than full daylight, Varanir can disappear into the shadows, giving it a degree of concealment such that there is a 40% miss chance for any melee attacks against Varanir. Artificial illumination, even a light or continual flame spell, does not negate this ability. A daylight spell, however, will.

*Spell-like Abilities:* At will — darkness (50-ft. radius); 3/day — deeper darkness, gaseous form (self only). Caster level 5th.

Varanir is technically a black dragon (and ages as one), but Cassica's magic has modified him as above. He is unique.

ENCOUNTER 4: FUNERAL FAREWELLS

If the PCs somehow managed to avoid the information provided above (prior to the dragon's attack), this encounter is especially important.

**If the party is still in Stony Vale in the afternoon of the day following the dragon's attack upon the hamlet, read aloud:** *Shortly after midday, you hear the commotion of a throng of people assembling outside. The sounds of women wailing and children crying immediately draw your attention.*

In the central square of Stony Vale, the people have gathered to pay their final respects to the thirteen victims of the second and third attacks on the town. A procession carries the white pine coffins of the victims through Stony Vale before they are laid in their final resting places.

**Development:** This procession brings the bodies of the victims to the temple, where Sabine performs a short and austere ceremony, after which the corpses are interred with great reverence in the cemetery. Thus is the tradition in this small hamlet.

If the heroes have not acquired enough information on the task at hand, here is a good place to have them meet Jaraba and/or Jarold again. If they are not still convinced to embark on the journey to the lair, Mayor Brodin, who leads the procession, is eager to beg the PCs for their help — and so are a hundred other mourners!

ENCOUNTER 5: DEPARTURE

If the PCs agree to seek out the lair and rout out the evil within, they are immediately regarded as brave heroes. The townspeople perform no ceremonies when the heroes depart, but many villagers bid them farewell and proudly watch them leave town.

Also, since most of the adventure takes place in a mountainous area, it is suggested to the heroes they leave their mounts in town (if they have any), since neither horse nor mule will be able to make it all the way to the den of the dragon. If the PCs agree to leave their horses in Stony Vale, the mounts are placed in the stables near the constabulary and left in the capable care of Crazy Tilli, the town's hostler, until the PCs return.

# Area 2: The High Moors

## Part 2: Beginning the Journey

**Read aloud:** *The terrain north of Stony Vale is high rolling moors of dark green grass with occasional clusters of stout evergreens. Along the old dirt road that leads to the mountains to the north are several farmsteads where peasants grow corn, wheat, and an assortment of vegetables. Many of these farmers also herd goats.*

As the PCs make their way across the moors, several different things might happen. Refer Table 7–1 for further details:

## Wilderness Random Encounters

**While the PCs are journeying through the high moors around Stony Vale and the mountains to the east, roll for encounters three times during the day and twice at night. Day encounters occur on a roll of 1 on a d6, while night encounters occur on a roll of 1 or 2 on a d6.**

TABLE 7–1: STONY VALE WILDERNESS ENCOUNTERS

**For Encounters in the High Moors: roll 1d6 during the day and 1d6+2 at night;**
**For Encounters in the Mountains: roll 1d10+2, during the day or the night.**

1. Broken Wheel: (Three Peasants, Com1: hp 2 each.) While traveling the old dirt road east of Stony Vale, the PCs encounter Maur and his two teenage sons, Bauri and Mirti. They stand on the side of the road alongside an oversized wagon pulled by two large oxen. The wagon contains crates of small fruits (wild berries, apples, pears, etc.) that the family has been growing on their land and gathering in the nearby woods. They were on their way to Stony Vale when one of the wagon wheels broke. They are busily tending to it. If the PCs do not look threatening, Maur asks for their help; otherwise, the farmer and his sons cower in fear behind the wagon, hoping the heroes will let them be (they can be easily persuaded the heroes mean them no harm).
2. Old Man Tokar: An old man sits on a tired looking mule in the middle of the dirt path. He stops the PCs and begs them for scraps of food. If the PCs are kind to him, he tells them he saw a band of Nothrog in the area a couple of days ago. If the heroes are generous and offer him good food or money, he blesses them. Tokar's blessing gives the PCs a +1 luck bonus on their attack and damage rolls as well as on all their saving throws. Its effects expire after 48 hours.
3. Angry Dire Boar (1): While traveling east, the heroes encounter a large and angry looking boar, which grunts loudly and charges as soon as it sees the PCs. (CR 4, *Monster Manual*™, page 63).
4. Cockatrice (2) (CR 6, *Monsters and Lairs*, page 38).
5. Dire Bear (1) (CR 3, *Monster Manual*™, page 58).
6. Nothrog Band (12) (CR 1, 1st-level fighters).
7. Dire Wolves (1d4+2) (CR 3, *Monster Manual*™, page 57).
8. Dire Bats (1d6+2) (CR 2, *Monster Manual*™, page 57).
9. Giant, hill (1) (CR 7, *Monsters and Lairs*, page 96).
10. Shade Harpies (2) (CR 5, *Monsters and Lairs*, page 108).
11. Forest Trolls (2) (CR 5, *Monsters and Lairs*, page 193).
12. Condor, Denskan (1) (CR 8, see the adventure *Condor*

ENCOUNTER 6: NOTHROG WAR PARTY (EL 7)

On their second day in the moors, the PCs are ambushed by a Nothrog war party. Now that the good dragon is gone, these Nothrog have come down from the hills looking for prey to rob and torment. They mistake the party for an easy target.

**Read aloud:** *This morning you passed the ruins of many once-productive farmsteads. The closer you get to the mountains, the more desolate and inhospitable the land appears. By late afternoon, your journey brings you to a part of the high moors where there are more trees, with thick patches of pines and spruces on either side of the road. Ahead of you, the beaten-earth path winds northward. The sun is almost down now.*

**Development:** Two Nothrog archers hide in the forest 80 feet from the road. They wait until the PCs either come within bow range or notice them. Allow the PCs Spot checks to notice the hiding Nothrog (opposed rolls against the Nothrog archers' Hide skill). If the PCs see the Nothrog or come within bow range (100 feet), the archers fire and yell a battle cry to alert the rest of their companions, who are resting in the tiny wood 50 feet away from the archers. Five of these Nothrog hurry to attack as soon as the archers alert them.

The two archers continue to fire missiles until forced into melee. Meanwhile, five of their companions charge the PCs. The Nothrog fight savagely until two-thirds of their number have fallen. The remaining two Nothrog stay behind to guard the small treasure they carry. They are the first to retreat should they witness the death of too many of their comrades. If the PCs pursue, however, they turn to face them and make a brave last stand.

**Creatures:** Nine Nothrog scouts, 1st-level barbarians.

**Nothrog Scouts (9), Male Nothrog Bar 1:** CR 1; Medium humanoid (Nothrog); HD 1d12+2; hp 9; Spd 30 ft.; Init +2; AC 15, touch 12, flat-footed 13; Base Atk +1; Grp +5; Atk +6 melee (1d8+4/x3, battleaxe); Full Atk +6 melee (1d8+4/x3, battleaxe); SA Barbarian rage 1/day; SQ Illiteracy, Nothrog traits, totem animal (wolverine); AL CE; SV Fort +4, Ref +2, Will +0; Str 18, Dex 14, Con 14, Int 8, Wis 10, Cha 6.

*Skills and Feats:* Climb +5*, Listen +2; Weapon Focus (battleaxe). * Includes –1 armor check penalty.

*Barbarian Rage (1/day):* When a barbarian rages, his statistics change as follows: HD 1d12+4; hp 11; AC 13, touch 10, flat-footed 11; Grp +7; Atk +8 melee (1d8+6/x3, battleaxe); Full Atk +8 melee (1d8+6/x3, battleaxe); SV Fort +6, Will +2; Str 22, Con 18. His fit of rage lasts for 7 rounds. At the end of the rage a barbarian is fatigued (–2 to Strength, –2 to Dexterity, can't charge or run).

*Illiteracy:* A barbarian cannot read nor write.

*Totem Animal (wolverine):* Rage — Once per day the barbarian can whip himself into a rage as a full-round action. He gains a +2 bonus to Strength, +2 bonus to Constitution, and a –2 to Armor Class. The rage lasts for three rounds. After the rage ends the barbarian suffers a –2 to Strength and –2 to Dexterity until the end of the combat, and can't charge or run until after receiving at least half an hour of rest. These bonuses stack with the existing rage ability and the duration is increased to the barbarian's normal rage duration.

*Possessions:* Studded leather armor, battleaxe, 2d4 sp.

*Treasure:* The Nothrog carry a battered leather backpack they looted from the last man they murdered. It contains what remains of the loot of almost a month of scavenging. It includes the following items: a glass vial with three doses of a *potion of cure moderate wounds*, two untouched bottles of a fine red wine, a large hunk of goat cheese, half a loaf of stale bread, a masterwork throwing axe, a silvered dagger, two winter blankets, a 1-pint flask of oil, two clay tankards, an empty sack, a piece of chalk, four wax candles, two torches, flint and steel, 34 cp, 102 sp, and 74 gp.

Additionally, each Nothrog carries 4d4 sp.

ENCOUNTER 7: THE DOUBT OF A SHADOW

Late on the evening of the fifth day of the journey through the high moors, shortly before reaching the bottom of the mountains, the party spots the dragon flying above the high peaks.

**Read aloud:** *Now that the sun has gone down, the evening sky has turned a deep purple. A mass of dark clouds gathers on the horizon above the great mountains to the east. Pushed by the strong, cool wind that caresses your skin, these clouds move slowly toward you. One of them seems to move at a particularly fast pace.*

The thick, dark, shadowy form is not part of the cloud formation. It is also much closer to your encampment than you thought. The cloud-like thing moves swiftly through the purplish sky. As it approaches, you discern what appears to be a pair of large wings. But it veers away, heading back instead towards the mountains.

## Part 3 — The Path Through the Mountains

On their sixth day of travel, the PCs arrive at the foot of the mountains.

**Read aloud:** *Before you the mountains stand tall and proud, their peaks reaching into the cloudy heavens. At the foot of these mountains, clusters of evergreens grow upon rocky soil, where lichens and mosses thrive. You easily find the path that cuts across the promontory. If your information is correct, this trail should lead directly to the dragon's lair.*

**Development:** It should take the PCs four days of travel into the mountains to reach the dragon's lair. The easiest way to travel is on the path that crosses the mountains, but there are alternate routes. If the PCs prefer, they might cut across the wilderness, but this makes their journey more hazardous; they have to climb sheer-angled rock surfaces, face more wild beasts than they would while traveling upon the trail, and risk getting lost — and dead ends could make their journey longer than anticipated.

Refer to the Table 7–1 to determine what the PCs encounter during their trek through the mountains. If they cut across the wilderness (rather than journey upon the trail), chances of Random Encounters increase: 1–2 on 1d6 during the day, and 1–3 on 1d6 at night. If the heroes do not travel the path, they might avoid the Avalanche encounter (**Encounter 8**), but if you roll the same encounter twice on Table 7–1, you might replace the second result with the Avalanche encounter (**Encounter 8**).

ENCOUNTER 8:
AVALANCHE (HILL GIANT AMBUSH) (EL 7)

Early in the morning of their third day through the mountains, Carota the hill giant tries to surprise them. Carota, lying in wait upon a ledge 100 feet above the path, prepares to throw boulders at the heroes. Allow the PCs to roll opposed Spot checks.

**Read aloud:** *It is mid-morning, and you continue your trek upon the ever-rising mountain path. Many shrubs grow on either side of the trail in this area, and the aroma of the fresh greenery is pleasant. There is a massive outcropping on the side of the mountains to your left, jutting almost above the road 100 feet into the air.*

**If the adventurers spot Carota before he has a chance to act, read aloud:** *You notice a large pile of boulders there, close to the edge. Behind it, you spot movement. As your eyes focus upon the motion, you see a large shape creeping behind the heap of rocks.*

**If the PCs do not see Carota, the hill giant catches them flatfooted. Read aloud:** *Suddenly, a large boulder comes crashing down upon you, quickly followed by another.*

**Development:** Like the shadow dragon, Carota does not expect the PCs to pose much of a threat. The hill giant is, however, careful to avoid a direct confrontation with a party of more than three heroes, preferring instead to throw rocks from the safety of his perch. He has a perfect view of the path below.

Although Carota ambushes them from the safety of a high ledge, the PCs can attack him with ranged weapons (from a range of 120–140 feet). The hill giant benefits from 50% cover from both the edge of the outcropping and the pile of rocks (giving him an effective +4 bonus to AC as well as a +2 Reflex save bonus). The heroes might find some cover of their own on either side of the road; the terrain is uneven, rocky, and filled with clusters of shrubs, short trees, and broken boulders. If the PCs take one round to find a place to cover themselves, they too can benefit from 50% cover.

If the adventurers want to reach their attacker, they might find the side trail leading to him. If they are actively looking for a way to reach the ledge, allow them to roll a Search check (DC 18) or Survival check (DC 15). Success means they find a narrow, rocky trail leading up to the outcropping. This trail is 160 feet long (from the main path), winds in places, and rises sharply until it reaches the ledge, 100 feet above. This trail is the only path that leads to the outcropping, and Carota knows it well. If the PCs take the trail, Carota automatically spots them unless he takes damage during the round the PCs move towards it. Allow him to roll a Spot check (DC 10 + amount of damage received that round). While moving up the trail, the PCs meet no resistance from Carota unless all targets have moved out of the giant's visual range.

If Carota did not notice the PCs moving towards the trail, and the heroes try to sneak up on him, allow the giant a Spot or Listen check (opposed rolls against the PCs' Hide or Move Silently checks). Once the heroes force him into melee, the giant fights with his huge greatclub, targeting the PC wielding the largest weapons first, if possible.

Carota fights until either he has disabled all the PCs or they capture or kill him.

**Creature:** Carota, a hill giant.

**Carota, Hill Giant:** CR 7; Large male giant; HD 12d8+48; hp 102; Init –1; Spd 30 ft.; AC 20, touch 8, flat-footed 20; Base Atk +9, Grp +20; Atk +16 melee (2d8+10/x2, greatclub), or +8 ranged (2d6+7/x2, rock); Full Atk +16/+11 melee (2d8+10/x2, greatclub), or +8 ranged (2d6+7/x2, rock); Space/Reach 10ft./10ft.; SA Rock throwing; SQ Low-light vision, rock catching; AL CE; SV Fort +12, Ref +3, Will +4; Str 25, Dex 8, Con 19, Int 6, Wis 10, Cha 7.

*Skills and Feats:* Climb +7*, Jump +7*, Listen +3, Spot +6; Cleave, Improved Bull Rush, Power Attack, Improved Sunder Weapon. *includes –3 armor check penalty

*Low-Light Vision (Ex):* Carota can see twice as far as a Human in starlight, moonlight, torchlight, and similar conditions of shadowy illumination. He retains the ability to distinguish color and detail under these conditions.

*Rock Throwing (Ex):* Carota receives a +1 racial bonus on attack rolls when throwing rocks. Carota can hurl rocks weighing 40 to 50 pounds each (Small objects) up to five range increments (120 feet).

*Rock Catching (Ex):* Catora can catch Small, Medium, or Large rocks (or projectiles of similar shape).

Once per round, when he would normally be hit by a rock, Carota can make a Reflex save to catch it as a free action. The DC is 15 for a Small rock, 20 for a Medium one, and 25 for a Large one (if the projectile provides a magical bonus on attack rolls, the DC increases by that amount). Carota must be ready for and aware of the attack in order to make a rock catching attempt.

*Possessions:* Hide armor, greatclub, 11 rocks.

## Location 3: Carota's Lair

If the PCs explore the ledge from which Carota ambushed them, they find a narrow trail leading to the hill giant's lair about half a mile away from the main path. This road cuts through the side of the mountains, where stout pine trees grow, and is easy to follow since Carota himself used it on a daily basis.

Carota's home is an almost circular cave that opens along the side of the mountains. The opening that leads to it is fifteen feet high by seven wide. Inside the dark cave, the PCs find Carota's possessions, loot from his victims.

**Read aloud:** *A putrid stench pervades this small, dark cave. Your torchlight reveals the rotting carcass of a Nothrog hanging like drying meat in the middle of the round lair, which is 30 feet in diameter. The Nothrog's ankles are bound to one of the many stalactites hanging some 20 feet above ground, but the head of the dead body hovers 5 feet over the rocky floor, which is covered with evergreen branches that fail to mask the horrible smell.*

In a corner, you notice a large pile of broken bones, torn pieces of faded clothes, crushed stone, and dirt. On the other side of the cave is a large and flat rock upon which are various jars, bags, and pouches. Directly opposite the entrance, upon the wall of the cave, is another pile, this one made of broken tree limbs and bushy evergreens that served as the hill giant's bed.

*Treasure:* If the PCs search the pile of debris, a successful Search check (DC 15) reveals a cloak of elvenkind; a dried leather scroll case containing the following divine spells: cure serious wounds, endurance, light, and silence; and 167 gp. Upon the oversized table, the PCs find three large bags filled with round rocks the size of a Human's head; four pouches containing a ring of feather fall and the following gear: handaxe, masterwork short sword, two daggers, buckler shield, 5 torches, 50 ft. rope, sewing kit, and a small ink vial; and three jars, two empty and one containing 5 doses of restorative ointment.

### Encounter 9: Dragon Bones

**Read aloud:** *Late in the afternoon of your fifth day into the mountains, the stretch of road grows steeper. After a short yet strenuous effort you reach a wide plateau that stretches on either side of the high and lonely mountain peak.*

*A cloudy white mist hangs all around you, and through it you notice an oversized cage-like structure. A closer look reveals this is no manmade item, but indeed the silvery-white bones of a huge creature, complete with spine, rib cage, tail, and a huge skull.*

A Knowledge (nature) or Knowledge (arcana) check (DC 18) confirms the remains are specifically those of a silver dragon (anyone should be able to guess that it is a dragon) — and an ancient specimen at that. Whatever destroyed the dragon must have been powerful. Parts of the skeleton appear blackened, but not by fire. Some of the massive rib bones also have been gouged or pierced by multiple sharp objects.

## Location 4: The Entrance to the Cave

The mouth of the dragon's lair is 2000 feet from Gordoran's bones.

**Read aloud:** *As you move past the dragon bones toward the towering peak that disappears into the thick clouds above, you notice the mouth of a cavern in the distance along the mountainside.*

*This is the sole entrance to the dragon's lair, which is now inhabited by Varanir and a contingent of Sceth Hellbringer's men.*

# Part 4: The Dragon's Lair

The lair in which Gordoran made her home is a natural cave formation that served as the tomb of an ancient king. This great king was buried with great artifacts, but his tomb is not accessible in this adventure (see the adventure Dragon Keep Festival for further details). For the moment, however, the adventurers have more than their match in the dragon and the Nothrog inhabiting the caves.

**Walls and Ceilings:** The rooms and corridors forming this cavern complex are part of a natural formation. Ceilings are 20 feet high unless otherwise noted. In the temple area, where the dwarves hewed the chambers from the mountain, ceilings are 15 feet high everywhere except **Location 5.10** and **Location 5.10.4**.

Although ancient, Gordoran's lair is still solid. A successful Knowledge (engineering) or Craft (masonry) check (DC 20) reveals the walls and ceilings are sound and present no immediate danger. A Dwarven PC can assess the situation without the need to roll for a check.

*Illumination:* It is important to note, unless otherwise mentioned, there are no lights anywhere in the lair. PCs without darkvision have to provide their own light source in order to explore, which could make them visible to the inhabitants.

**Random Encounters**: As the characters explore the complex, there is a 20% chance per hour of encountering a random creature: either 1d2+1 of Sceth Hellbringer's soldiers (75% chance — see **Location 5.3** for stats)) or the phase spider from **Location 5.6** (25% chance).

The warlord's men are to help Varanir secure the complex and protect it against invaders. Although they seldom patrol the lair, relying instead on the dragon's abilities, all guards encountered here are fully armed and armored. Their first reaction towards the PCs is one of stark surprise, as they have not anticipated visitors. They are professional soldiers, however, and are ready to fight in an instant.

**Creatures:** (1d2+1) Sceth Hellbringer's soldiers, 4th-level fighters (see Location 5.3 for stats); one phase spider *(see Location 5.6 for stats)*.

**Sceth Hellbringer's Soldiers (1d2+1)**: hp as rolled.

**Phase Spider (1):** If this creature is encountered, its den is empty when the PCs search it.

As the PCs progress into the dragon's lair, it should become obvious to them that taking on Varanir and all the other creatures of this place in a single day might be an impossible task. In fact, the heroes might have to think through and plan out their attack on the dragon, for he is more powerful than they can handle. After the first encounter with the dragon, the PCs should realize a direct assault against Varanir would never work. Nevertheless, the heroes have several options open. If they cleanse **Location 5.4, Location 5.5, and Location 5.6**, they might get a respite there, as Sceth Hellbringer's men would never dare to search these areas, and Varanir is too large. If they make their way into the Shrine of Kor (**Location 5.10**) and the chambers beyond, they might also discover several ways to help them defeat the dragon.

Originally, the dragon's lair was an isolated place of ancient Dwarven worship. In the natural cavern complex is a shrine dedicated to Kor. Deep within the bowels of the earth, one of the greatest Dwarven kings lies buried with a great treasure.

Originally a natural cavern complex where the dwarves carved chambers from the rock of the mountain, the place now serves as both the dragon's den and a base for the warlord's men. These troops have been ordered to secure the caverns, but they do not know what they were asked to protect (this fact is discovered by the PCs in the adventure, Dragon Keep Festival).

## Location 5: The Dragon's Cave

### Location 5.1: Entrance Corridor

**Read aloud:** *The cave's mouth opens into a gloomy natural corridor 20 feet high by 20 feet wide.*

None of Sceth Hellbringer's men guard the entrance of the cave, but PCs making loud noises here and in **Location 5.2** might alert the warriors standing watch in **Location 5.3**.

There are faint prints upon the floor's dust, which is composed of crushed stone and pieces of broken rocks. A thin crust of similar dust covers **Locations 5.1 — 5.7**. Tracks lead to **Locations 5.2 — 5.7**. PCs observing the dusty floor who succeed at a Search check (DC 18) might notice the prints of booted Human-sized feet. Alternately, a successful Survival check (DC 15) from a PC with the Track feat reveals the same information. The tracks here lead to **Location 5.2.** Observant characters also discern evidence of a huge creature that passed through here, as the dust toward the middle of the area has been wiped almost clean.

### Location 5.2: First Antechamber

This hall, like **Location 5.4** and the passages leading to **Location 5.8**, appears to be empty, as none of the lair's inhabitants want to get in the dragon's way. Although Varanir sometimes uses an alternate exit out of the lair (through the underground river in **Location 5.8**), he regularly passes here. Both Sceth Hellbringer's soldiers and the other inhabitants of the place know this and avoid **Location 5.1, Location 5.2, Location 5.4,** and **Location 5.8**.

**Read aloud:** *The entrance corridor opens into a wide chamber where the ceiling hangs 50 feet above the floor. An opening on the northern wall suggests the continuation of the passageway that led you here. On the eastern wall of this cavern is a round opening some 12 feet in diameter, through which you notice a soft, shimmering light.*

The pale light comes from the lantern in **Location 5.3,** and the men standing guard there probably notice the PCs' presence *(see* **Location 5.3** *for details)*.

### Location 5.3: Side Cave (EL 8)

This was once a small room reserved for visitors of the Shrines who wished to wash themselves in the pure water basins before entering the sacred place. Now it is a guard post for Sceth Hellbringer's men.

**Read aloud:** *This small cavern is furnished with a rough wooden table and stools cut from large logs. There is a lantern upon the table, illuminating most of the room. Beside it are cards laid on the table as well as three small piles of silver coins.*

**Development:** Men from Sceth Hellbringer's army occupy this chamber. They were ordered to guard the entrance of the lair, but because they do not wish to get in Varanir's way, they established their guard post in this small and out-of-the-way cave. These soldiers are bored but wary — after all, a weird plant-like creature killed two of their comrades when they tried to explore the lair (**Location 5.6**), and they don't know what other horrors lurk in this complex.

When the PCs make their way through **Location 5.1** and **Location 5.2**, allow the soldiers here to roll opposed Listen checks (DC varies according to how much noise the PCs make). If they hear the heroes approach, the soldiers take one round to ready themselves and then charge the PCs. If the adventurers parley with Sceth Hellbringer's men, they might be willing to listen but insist the heroes drop their weapons first. These men are veteran soldiers; they are thorough, courageous, distrustful, and perhaps a little overconfident now that they have Varanir on their side (even though they do not trust the temperamental dragon).

If they do not hear the PCs enter **Location 5.2,** the soldiers are sitting on stools around the table and playing cards.

**Creatures:** Four Sceth Hellbringer's Soldiers, 4th-level fighters.

**Sceth Hellbringer's Soldiers (4), Male Nothrog Ftr 4:** CR 4; Medium humanoid (Nothrog); HD 4d10+12; hp 34; Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; AC 16, touch 11, flat-footed 15; Base Atk +4; Grp +7; Atk

+9 melee (1d6+4(19–20/x2), shortsword), or +5 ranged (1d6/x3, shortbow); Full Atk +9 melee (1d6+4(19–20/x2), shortsword), or +5 ranged (1d6/x3, shortbow); SA Favored weapon (shortsword); SQ Nothrog traits; AL LE; SV Fort +7, Ref +2, Will +1; Str 17, Dex 12, Con 16, Int 11, Wis 10, Cha 7.

*Skills and Feats:* Climb +5*, Jump +5*, Ride +5; Cleave, Dodge, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (short sword). * Includes –3 armor check penalty.

*Favored Weapon (shortsword):* A soldier gains a +1 competence bonus to attack and damage rolls with the shortsword.

*Possessions:* Chain shirt, light steel shield, shortsword, shortbow, 20 arrows, 4d4 sp.

*Treasure:* Aside from the few possessions the soldiers carry, the only treasure is the lantern with six flasks filled with oil, a deck of playing cards, and 103 sp. Most of it is upon the table, but the oil flasks are piled underneath it.

## Location 5.4: Second Antechamber (EL 3)

**Read aloud:** *Parts of the walls of this small grotto are covered with phosphorescent moss that illuminates the room. Before you, on the other side of the chamber, a wide corridor leads north. Two narrow hallways open to the east.*

The same kind of tracks found in **Location 5.1** might be noticed here, leading to **Location 5.7**. The two narrow corridors leading east also show Human-sized footprints. The tracks going to **Location 5.7** are easily followed, but the one leading to **Location 5.5** stops short in the middle of the passageway, as Sceth Hellbringer's men did not dare explore further when they heard their comrades murdered in **Location 5.7** (*see* **Location 5.3** *for further details*).

**Creature:** The moss covering the walls is a sentient life form. Although it poses no immediate threat to the PCs, the moss glows brighter as the heroes approach. The closer they stand to the wall, the brighter this portion of the moss glows. The moss is poisonous to the touch, so any PCs grazing it need to succeed at a Fortitude save (DC 15) or lose 1d6 points of temporary Constitution.

## Location 5.5: Whispers in the Dark (EL 5)

**Read aloud:** *The narrow tunnel leads into a wide cave where the waters of an underground river run. The natural chamber is oddly shaped, and the stream courses through it.*

**Development:** A gibbering mouther hides in the river. It jumps out and attacks as soon as anyone steps within reach. Once it has revealed itself, the creature fights ferociously until it kills all the PCs or it is itself defeated. Its mouths whisper eerie moans, groans, and incomprehensible prattle. These loud whispers might alert the other inhabitants of the place.

**Creature:** One gibbering mouther.

**Gibbering Mouther:** CR 5; Medium aberration; HD 4d8+24; hp 42; Init +1; Spd 10 ft., swim 20 ft.; AC 19, touch 11, flat-footed 18; Base Atk +3, Grp +3; Atk +4 melee (1, bite), or +4 ranged (1d4 acid plus blindness/x2, spittle); Full Atk +4 melee (1, 6 bites) and +4 ranged (1d4 acid plus blindness/x2, spittle); Space/Reach 5ft./5ft.; SA Blood drain, engulf, gibbering, ground manipulation, improved grab, spittle; SQ Amorphous, damage reduction 5/bludgeoning, darkvision 60 ft.; AL N; SV Fort +7, Ref +4, Will +5; Str 10, Dex 13, Con 22, Int 4, Wis 13, Cha 13.

*Skills and Feats:* Listen +4, Spot +9*, Swim +8; Lightning Reflexes, Weapon Finesse. *Thanks to their multiple eyes, gibbering mouthers have a +4 racial bonus on Spot checks. A gibbering mouther has a +8 racial bonus on any Swim check to perform some special action or avoid a hazard. It always can choose to take 10 on a Swim check, even if distracted or endangered. It can use the run action while swimming, provided it swims in a straight line.

*Amorphous:* A gibbering mouther is not subject to critical hits. It cannot be flanked.

*Blood Drain (Ex):* On a successful grapple check after grabbing, that mouth attaches to the opponent. It automatically deals bite damage and drains blood, dealing 1 point of Constitution damage each round. A mouth can be ripped off (dealing 1 point of damage) with a DC 12 Strength check or severed by a successful sunder attempt (the mouth has 2 hit points). A severed mouth continues to bite and drain blood for 1d4 rounds after such an attack. A creature whose Constitution is reduced to 0 is killed.

*Damage Reduction (Ex):* A gibbering mouther ignores the first 5 points of damage from any weapons except bludgeoning weapons.

*Darkvision, 60 ft. (Ex):* A gibbering mouther can see in the dark with no light source at all, out to a range of 60 feet. Darkvision is black and white only (colors cannot be discerned). It does not allow the gibbering mouther to see anything that it could not see otherwise—invisible objects are still invisible, and illusions are still visible as what they seem to be. Likewise, darkvision subjects the gibbering mouther to gaze attacks normally. The presence of light does not spoil darkvision.

*Engulf (Ex):* A gibbering mouther can try to engulf a Medium or smaller opponent grabbed by three or more mouths. The opponent must succeed on a DC 14 Reflex save or fall and be engulfed. In the next round, the mouther makes twelve bite attacks instead of six (each with a +4 attack bonus). An engulfed creature cannot attack the mouther from within. The previously attached mouths are now free to attack others. The save DC is Strength-based and includes a +2 racial bonus.

*Gibbering (Su):* As soon as a mouther spots something edible, it begins a constant gibbering as a free action. All creatures (other than mouthers) within a 60-foot spread must succeed on a DC 13 Will save or be affected as though by a confusion spell for 1d2 rounds. This is a sonic mind-affecting compulsion effect. A creature that successfully saves cannot be affected by the same gibbering mouther's gibbering for 24 hours. The save DC is Charisma-based.

*Ground Manipulation (Su):* At will, as a standard action, a gibbering mouther can cause stone and earth in all adjacent squares to become a morass akin to quicksand. Softening earth, sand, or the like takes 1 round, while stone takes 2 rounds. Anyone other than the mouther in that area must take a move-equivalent action to avoid becoming mired (treat as being pinned).

*Improved Grab (Ex):* To use this ability, a gibbering mouther must hit with a bite attack. It can then attempt to start a grapple as a free action without provoking an attack of opportunity.

*Spittle (Ex):* As a free action every round, a gibbering mouther fires a stream of spittle at one opponent within 30 feet. The mouther makes a ranged touch attack; if it hits, it deals 1d4 points of acid damage, and the target must succeed on a DC 18 Fortitude save or be blinded for 1d4 rounds. Eyeless creatures are immune to the blinding effect, but are still subject to the acid damage. The save DC is Constitution-based.

## Location 5.6: Ambushing Arachnid (EL 5)

**Read aloud:** *The passageway opens into a dead end. Part of the underground river flows in the western portion of this grotto. Its waters splash upon the rock surface as it courses northward. Upon the ground, beside a leather scabbard in bad shape, is a fine-looking silvery blade.*

**Development:** This area appears to be empty, but a phase spider lives here. The spider is aware of the gibbering mouther in **Location 5.5** and carefully avoids it. When it hears the chatters of the mouther, it phases away and lies in wait. When the PCs enter its cave, it waits until the heroes have their backs turned, then attacks.

**Creature:** One phase spider.

**Phase Spider (1):** CR 5; Large magical beast; HD 5d10+15; hp 42; Init +7; Spd40 ft., climb 20 ft.; AC 15, touch 12, flat-footed 12; Base Atk +5 Grp +12; Atk +7 melee (1d6+4 plus poison/x2, bite); Full Atk +7 melee (1d6+4 plus poison/x2, bite); Space/Reach 10ft./5ft.; SA Poison; SQ Darkvision 60 ft., ethereal jaunt, low-light vision; AL N; SV Fort +7, Ref +7, Will +2; Str 17, Dex 17, Con 16, Int 7, Wis 13, Cha 10.

*Skills and Feats:* Climb +11*, Move Silently +11, Spot +4; Ability Focus (poison), Improved Initiative. *A phase spider has a +8 racial bonus on Climb checks and can always choose to take 10 on a Climb check, even if rushed or threatened.

*Darkvision, 60 ft. (Ex):* A phase spider can see in the dark with no light source at all, out to a range of 60 feet. Darkvision is black and white only (colors cannot be discerned). It does not allow the phase spider to see anything that it could not see otherwise—invisible objects are still invisible, and illusions are still visible as what they seem to be. Likewise, darkvision subjects the phase spider to gaze attacks normally. The presence of light does not spoil darkvision.

*Ethereal Jaunt (Su):* A phase spider can shift from the Ethereal Plane to the Material Plane as a free action, and shift back again as a move action (or during a move action). The ability is otherwise identical with ethereal jaunt (caster level 15th).

*Poison (Ex):* Injury, Fortitude DC 17, initial and secondary damage 1d8 Con. The save DC is Constitution-based.

*Low-Light Vision (Ex):* A phase spider can see twice as far as a Human in starlight, moonlight, torchlight, and similar conditions of shadowy illumination. It retains the ability to distinguish color and detail under these conditions.

*Treasure:* The silver blade and scabbard are the only things that remain of a long-ago adventuring party. The scabbard is rotten and unusable, but the weapon is a +2 keen short sword.

## Location 5.7: Tendriculos' Lair (EL 6)

**Read aloud:** *As you make your way in this narrow and uneven corridor, you hear the faint sound of running water. The sound gets louder as you approach and, when the passageway opens into a wide grotto, the first thing you notice is the stream coursing through the room. To your right a massive mound of vegetation dangles thick vines in the water. What strikes you, however, are the large blotches of wet blood upon the floor.*

**Development:** A closer investigation also reveals a masterwork battleaxe, a chainmail gauntlet, and two helmets near the mass of vegetation. These items are in good condition. They are what remain of the two men who explored this cavern. If the PCs encountered the soldiers in **Location 5.3**, they should recognize the helmets found here are of the same design.

The huge plant in this room is the tendriculos. The creature usually feeds on what the river provides, but more recently it surprised a pair of unfortunate guards from Sceth Hellbringer's contingent. The tendriculos attacks after the PCs enter the cave.

**Creature:** One tendriculos.

**Tendriculos (1):** CR 6; Huge plant; HD 9d8+54; hp 94; Init –1; Spd 20 ft.; AC 16, touch 7, flat-footed 16; Base Atk +6, Grp +23; Atk +13 melee (2d8+9/x2, bite), or +8 melee (1d6+4/x2, tendril); Full Atk +13 melee (2d8+9/x2, bite) and +8 melee (1d6+4/x2, 2 tendrils); Space/Reach 15 ft./15 ft.; SA Improved grab, paralysis, swallow whole; SQ Low-light vision, plant traits, regeneration 10; AL N; SV Fort +12, Ref +2, Will +4; Str 28, Dex 9, Con 22, Int 3, Wis 8, Cha 3.

*Skills and Feats:* Hide +9, Listen +1, Move Silently +1, Spot +1; Alertness, Iron Will, Power Attack, Stealthy.

*Improved Grab (Ex):* To use this ability, a tendriculos must hit a creature at least one size smaller than itself with its bite attack. It can then attempt to start a grapple as a free action without provoking an attack of opportunity. If it wins the grapple check, it establishes a hold and can try to swallow the opponent in the following round. A tendriculos can also use its improved grab ability on a tendril attack. If it wins the grapple check, it establishes a hold, picks up the opponent, and transfers it to the mouth as a free action, automatically dealing bite damage.

*Low-Light Vision (Ex):* A tendriculos can see twice as far as a Human in starlight, moonlight, torchlight, and similar conditions of shadowy illumination. It retains the ability to distinguish color and detail under these conditions.

**Plant Traits:** A tendriculos possesses the following traits:

- Immunity to all mind-affecting effects (charms, compulsions, phantasms, patterns, and morale effects).
- Immunity to poison, sleep effects, paralysis, polymorph, and stunning.
- Not subject to critical hits.
- Plants breathe and eat, but do not sleep.

*Regeneration (Ex):* Bludgeoning weapons and acid deal normal damage to a tendriculos. A tendriculos that loses part of its body mass can regrow it in 1d6 minutes. Holding the severed portion against the mass enables it to reattach instantly.

*Swallow Whole/Paralysis (Ex):* A tendriculos can try to swallow a grabbed opponent by making a successful grapple check. Once inside the plant's mass, the opponent must succeed on a DC 20 Fortitude save or be paralyzed for 3d6 rounds by the tendriculos's digestive juices, taking 2d6 points of acid damage per round. A new save is required each round inside the plant. The save DC is Constitution-based. A swallowed creature that avoids paralysis can climb out of the mass with a successful grapple check. This returns it to the plant's maw, where another successful grapple check is needed to get free. A swallowed creature can also cut its way out by using a light slashing or piercing weapon to deal 25 points of damage to the tendriculos's interior (AC 14). Once the creature exits, the plant's regenerative capacity closes the hole; another swallowed opponent must cut its own way out. A Huge tendriculos's interior can hold 2 Large, 8 Medium, 32 Small, 128 Tiny, or 512 Diminutive or smaller opponents.

*Treasure:* Aside from the items described above, PCs searching the remains of the tendriculos also find an immovable rod and a glass vial containing 2 doses of a potion of neutralize poison.

## Location 5.8: Natural Lake (EL 8)

The main chamber of the dragon's lair contains a small lake, which is connected to the underground river coursing through **Locations 5.5 — 5.7.** The river runs through an opening on the northwest side of the lake, 15 feet deep, and continues for a mile before exiting the mountainside into an impressive waterfall. Varanir sometimes uses this tunnel to exit the lair.

**Read aloud:** *In the middle of this wide chamber is a small lake where the waters are calm. On the northern wall, opposite the pool of water, is a thick square arch lined with many Dwarven runes. Two massive bronze doors complete the archway. One of the doors is closed, but the other stands ajar, revealing a pale light on the other side of the opening.*

*To the east, a wide natural tunnel opens into a dark grotto beyond. As you enter the cave, you notice the floor is covered with tiny mushroom-like plants of various hues: dark purples, sharp yellows, olive greens, bright oranges, and deep blues.*

The domed ceiling is 110 feet high in the middle of the room and 80 feet high toward the walls of the cave. The ancient runes upon the arch read: "May Kor, our blessed father, watch over us" in old Narawati (Decipher Script DC 25 to read, DC 20 if the character has Narawati as a language).

A secret passage on the south wall opens into a narrow corridor leading to **Location 5.10.9.** In order to spot the hidden door, which was carved to appear as the cave's rough natural wall, PCs must succeed at a Search check (DC 25). If they find it, the door is unlocked, un-trapped, and opens easily, even though it has not been used in centuries.

Upon the west wall are three small fissures, 60 feet above the floor. These are the ends of crawlways carved by the dwarves long ago. The goal was to create tunnels from **Location 5.10.4** and build balconies overlooking the lake in this room, but the work was never completed. PCs notice them on a successful Spot check (DC 22).

**Creature:** Small, mushroom-like, sentient plants line the floor of this room. They screech loudly when touched, automatically alerting the dragon in Location 5.9.

**Screeching Fungus:** CR 1/3; Small plant; HD 1d8+1; hp 6; Init –5; Spd 0 ft.; AC 9, touch 8, flat-footed 9; Base Atk —, Grp —; Atk —; Full Atk —; Space/Reach 5ft./0ft.; SA Shriek; SQ Low-light vision, plant traits; AL N; SV Fort +4, Ref -, Will –4; Str —, Dex —, Con 13, Int —, Wis 2, Cha 1.

*Skills and Feats:* —; —.

*Low-Light Vision (Ex):* A screeching fungus can see twice as far as a Human in starlight, moonlight, torchlight, and similar conditions of shadowy illumination. It retains the ability to distinguish color and detail under these conditions.

**Plant Traits:** A screeching fungus possesses the following traits:

- Immunity to all mind-affecting effects (charms, compulsions, phantasms, patterns, and morale effects).
- Immunity to poison, sleep effects, paralysis, polymorph, and stunning.
- Not subject to critical hits.
- Plants breathe and eat, but do not sleep.

*Shriek (Ex):* Touching a screeching fungus causes the fungus to emit a piercing sound that lasts for 1d3 rounds.

**Development:** PCs wishing to avoid the plants have their movement reduced by half. If any of them touches one of these mushrooms, it shrieks, alerting Varanir. If the PCs avoid the plants, allow the shadow dragon (**Location 5.9**) an opposed Listen check to hear the heroes as they move through this chamber.

If Varanir is alerted by the plants or hears the PCs, he uses his shadow blend ability and moves stealthily towards **Location 5.8.** There he waits patiently until all members of the party are inside the cave. Varanir tries to surprise the PCs. His goal is to block their access to the hallway leading to **Location 5.4,** so he quickly moves there to block the heroes' escape before attacking.

Assuming Varanir is successful in blocking the PCs' access to **Location 5.4,** they have other means of avoiding the wrath of the dragon. They might take refuge in **Location 5.10,** open the secret doorway on the southern wall, or fly towards the fissures to the east. The lake is also an option, but one that could ensure their deaths.

An aboleth lives at the bottom of the lake, which is 40 feet deep. It guards the dragon's treasure, which it considers its own. The aboleth fears Varanir and makes sure to avoid the dragon when it uses the lake. PCs who want to reach the dragon's hoard must deal with this lethal creature first.

**Creature:** One aboleth.

**Aboleth:** CR 7; Huge aberration; HD 8d8+40; hp 76; Init +1; Spd 10 ft., swim 60 ft.; AC 16, touch 9, flat-footed 15; Base Atk +6, Grp +22; Atk +12 melee (1d6+8 plus slime, tentacle); Full Atk +12/+12/+12/+12 melee (1d6+8 plus slime, 4 tentacles); Space/Reach 15ft./10ft.; SA Enslave, psionics, slime; SQ Aquatic subtype, darkvision 60 ft., mucus cloud; AL LE; SV Fort +7, Ref +3, Will +11; Str 26, Dex 12, Con 20, Int 15, Wis 17, Cha 17.

*Skills and Feats:* Concentration +16, Knowledge (arcana) +13, Listen +16, Spot +16, Swim +8*; Alertness, Combat Casting, Iron Will. *An aboleth has a +8 racial bonus on any Swim check to perform some special action or avoid a hazard. It can always choose to take 10 on a Swim check, even if distracted or endangered. It can use the run action while swimming, provided it swims in a straight line.

*Aquatic Subtype:* An aboleth can move in water without making Swim checks. It can breathe underwater but cannot also breathe air.

*Darkvision, 60 ft. (Ex):* An aboleth can see in the dark with no light source at all, out to a range of 60 feet. Darkvision is black and white only (colors cannot be discerned). It does not allow the aboleth to see anything that it could not see otherwise—invisible objects are still invisible, and illusions are still visible as what they seem to be. Likewise, darkvision subjects the aboleth to gaze attacks normally. The presence of light does not spoil darkvision.

*Enslave (Su):* Three times per day, an aboleth can attempt to enslave any one living creature within 30 feet. The target must succeed on a DC 17 Will save or be affected as though by a dominate person spell (caster level 16th). An enslaved creature obeys the aboleth's telepathic commands until freed by remove curse, and can attempt a new Will save every 24 hours to break free. The control is also broken if the aboleth dies or travels more than 1 mile from its slave. The save DC is Charisma-based.

*Mucus Cloud (Ex):* An aboleth underwater surrounds itself with a viscous cloud of mucus roughly 1 foot thick. Any creature coming into contact with and inhaling this substance must succeed on a DC 19 Fortitude save or lose the ability to breathe air for the next 3 hours. An affected creature suffocates in 2d6 minutes if removed from the water. Renewed contact with the mucus cloud and failing another Fortitude save continues the effect for another 3 hours. The save DC is Constitution-based.

*Psionics (Sp):* At will—hypnotic pattern (DC 15), illusory wall (DC 17), mirage arcana (DC 18), persistent image (DC 18), programmed image (DC 19), project image (DC 20), veil (DC 19). Effective caster level 16th. The save DCs are Charisma-based.

*Slime (Ex):* A blow from an aboleth's tentacle can cause a terrible affliction. A creature hit by a tentacle must succeed on a DC 19 Fortitude save or begin to transform over the next 1d4+1 minutes, the skin gradually becoming a clear, slimy membrane. An afflicted creature must remain moistened with cool, fresh water or take 1d12 points of damage every 10 minutes. The slime reduces the creature's natural armor bonus by 1 (but never to less than 0). The save DC is Constitution-based. A remove disease spell cast before the transformation is complete will restore an afflicted creature to normal. Afterward, however, only a heal or mass heal spell can reverse the affliction.

*Treasure:* Gordoran's hoard lies at the bottom of the lake. The treasure includes:

- 32,000 gp
- 5,000 pp
- 8 gems worth 50 gp each
- 1 large emerald worth 5,000 gp
- 1 jeweled golden crown worth 7,500 gp
- 1 *wand of fear*
- 1 *pearl of power* (6th level spell)
- 1 *ring of evasion*
- 1 *ring of counterspells*
- 1 *heavy mace +3*
- 1 *bracers of armor (+5)*

## Location 5.9: Dragon's Nest (EL 8)

**Read aloud:** *The floor of this dark chamber is littered with debris: crushed stone, broken tree limbs, and branches make up a large nest, taking up most of the room.*

The ceiling of this chamber is 50 feet high. This is Varanir's private abode. If the dragon does not notice the PCs enter Location 5.8, they find him resting here.

**Creature:** Varanir, a Darkness dragon *(see sidebar Varanir, Darkness Dragon for stats).*

**Development:** Varanir is under the command of Al'drich von Grossynkiir, who has ordered him to work with Sceth Hellbringer, to help the warlord defeat the ancient silver dragon Gordoran and take over the den. In so doing, Varanir not only found a decent home for himself, but he also gained a great treasure. However, Al'drich is forcing him to share the lair with a contingent of veteran soldiers — a fact that upsets the dragon. Varanir, however, tolerates these men because he knows Al'drich is powerful — and not lightly crossed.

Once he realizes the PCs have entered his home, he makes sure they do not come out of it alive. If the PCs escape his wrath by moving to the Shrine of Kor (**Location 5.10**) and the chambers beyond, he uses his shadow blend ability and waits until they return to **Location 5.8.** He does not trust or respect Gavnor and his men.

## Location 5.10: The Shrine of Kor

Pilgrims of olden days traveled great distances to come here and pay homage to the Dwarven deity. The bronze doors that lead into this area are difficult to move. The closed door is wedged in place and impossible to budge; the other requires a Strength check (DC 30) to move. Because one of the doors stands ajar, PCs might enter the area, but Varanir cannot.

**Read aloud:** *As you enter the temple, you see a massive statue carved from black stone: a stout Human holding a large warhammer. At the base of the 30-foot high statue is a stone altar covered with burning candles. Their flames illuminate the room, which was long ago carved out of the mountain. Beside the candles upon the altar is an opened book bound in thick brown leather.*

**Development:** Long ago, this room was a Shrine of Kor, where clergy worshiped their god.

There are twelve candles on the altar. All are enchanted by a permanent *continual flame* (cast by a 15th level cleric), which can only be cancelled by a *dispel magic*. The book is an ancient version of the *Book of Kor* and contains prayers and rituals dedicated to the deity, all written in ancient Narawati runes (Decipher Script DC 25 to read, DC 20 if the character knows the Narawati language). It is priceless to any faithful of Kor.

It is important to note that because of the wedged doors, the entrance of this chamber is not large enough for Varanir to pass through. If the PCs take refuge from the shadow dragon here, he tries to break the doors down and uses his breath weapon against them.

**Secret Door:** Sceth Hellbringer's men recently opened the secret door in this room. Because they were not careful, the door is only half closed and easy to notice. A successful Spot check (DC 12) reveals the secret passage (leads to **Location 5.10.1**).

## Location 5.10.1: Preparation Chamber

**Read aloud:** *The secret corridor opens into an empty square room. There is a closed stone door upon the western wall.*

The high priest of Kor once used this chamber to meditate before performing important religious rites at the Shrine. Now the area is empty and unused.

## Location 5.10.2: Inner Temple (EL 6)

**Read aloud:** *Bas-reliefs depicting a noble Dwarf in various scenes line the walls of this chamber. The carvings are delicate, well made, and apparently unaffected by the passage of time.*

*This large chamber was a private temple where the priests of Kor paid tribute to their god. Because the Shrine customarily received pilgrims, this inner temple was an important room for the members of the clergy.*

A successful Knowledge (Religion) check (DC 15) or Bardic Knowledge check (DC 18) reveals that the story upon the walls is the history of Kor, the Dwarven deity. The sculpted walls demonstrate, in rich detail, the god's greatest deeds.

A pair of guards from Sceth Hellbringer's contingent now inhabits this room. These men are responsible for their comrades in **Location 5.10.4**, but like the warriors from Location 5.3, they are bored and overly confident the dragon will protect them. Stealthy PCs can surprise them (opposed Move Silently checks).

**Creatures:** Two Sceth Hellbringer's Soldiers, 4th-level fighters *(see Location 5.3 for stats)*.

**Sceth Hellbringer's Soldiers (2):** hp 32, 30.

## Location 5.10.3: Decorated Hallway (EL 4)

**Read aloud:** *Eight life-size statues of Dwarven warriors line this corridor. Each is splendidly crafted, but time has cracked or chipped away some of their details — noses, fingers, and fine markings upon the armors have deteriorated. The sculpted dwarves are fully armored and each holds a different weapon. The statues to the east wield, from north to south, a battleaxe, a warhammer, a pick, and a halberd; the ones on the western wall carry a mace, a crossbow, a waraxe, and a longspear.*

Aside from the stone statues described above, this hallway is empty.

The statues are constructs but were deactivated long ago. If the PCs solve the riddle on the scroll found in **Location 5.10.8** and initiate the required ritual here, they might be able to reanimate the statues and use them against the dragon.

**Creature:** Eight Dwarven statues.

**Dwarven Statues (8):** CR 2; Medium construct; HD 2d10; hp 11; Init +0; Spd 40 ft.; AC 14, touch 10, flat-footed 14; Base Atk +1, Grp +2; Atk +2 melee (1d4+1/x2, slam); Full Atk +2 melee (1d4+1/x2, 2 slams); Space/Reach 5 ft./5 ft.; SA —; SQ Construct traits, speed; AL N; SV Fort +0, Ref +0, Will –5; Str 13, Dex 10, Con —, Int —, Wis 1, Cha 1.

*Skills and Feats:* —; —.

*Construct Traits:* A Dwarven Statue possesses the following additional traits:

- Dwarven Statues are constructs, and they lack Intelligence and Constitution scores.
- Dwarven Statues are immune to mind-influencing effects (charms, compulsions, phantasms, patterns, and morale effects) and to poison, sleep, paralysis, stunning disease, death effects, and necromantic effects
- Dwarven Statues are not subject to critical hits, subdual damage, ability damage, ability drain, or energy drain.
- Dwarven Statues are immune to any effect that requires a Fortitude save (unless that effect also works on objects).
- Dwarven Statues cannot die due to massive damage, but when reduced to 0 hit points or less, they immediately crumble to a loose pile of dust and rock.
- Dwarven Statues, which are never truly alive, cannot be raised or resurrected.
- Darkvision 60 ft.: Dwarven Statues have darkvision with a range of 60 feet.

*Speed (Ex):* Sandstone gargoyles are exceptionally fast, and may move twice as swiftly as other creatures of their size. With a successful Will save (DC 11), they may triple their speed for a round (for a maximum of three rounds in a row).

## Location 5.10.4: Common Room and Crawlways (EL 8)

**Read aloud:** *This great hall contains two crude wooden tables and stools made from large logs. Twelve bedrolls are lined up on the floor against the western wall. Three wide holes are visible upon the eastern wall, just below the high ceiling some 60 feet above ground.*

The holes are the entrances of crawlways leading to **Location 5.8**. If the PCs decide to explore these tunnels, only one Medium-size character fits into each of them. Small characters maneuver more easily, but the crawlways are so narrow only one at a time can reach the fissure openings in **Location 5.8**. PCs hiding here benefit from three-quarter cover if they attack the dragon in **Location 5.8**, giving them a +7 cover AC bonus and +3 cover Reflex save bonus.

Soldiers from the contingent use this room as a training facility, dining room, and sleeping quarters. There are five guards. If the PCs are careful, they might catch these men unawares.

**Creatures:** Five Sceth Hellbringer's Soldiers, 4th-level fighters *(see* **Location 5.3** *for stats)*.

**Sceth Hellbringer's Soldiers (5):** hp 32, 30, 26, 34, 30.

## Location 5.10.5: Kitchen / Store (EL 4)

**Read aloud:** *The smell of roasted boar invades your nostrils as you enter this small room. The smoke from the fire in the hearth stings your eyes a little, reminding you of the Hapless Hare inn in Stony Vale. Crates and barrels take up most of the space here. A table on the south wall, east of the fireplace, has on it a bowl of sliced tomatoes.*

**Development:** The hearth in this room is a natural formation, its chimney running out of the mountains hundreds of feet above. The chimney is too narrow to accommodate any creature of Small size or larger.

The roasting meat and vegetables are fresh and good to eat.

Brak, the man in charge of the cooking, is working on his next dish. Unless the soldiers from **Location 5.10.4** alerted him, he might be surprised by the PCs (roll opposed Listen check).

If caught unaware, Brak tries to avoid a fight with the heroes and readily begs for mercy. If, however, he has heard a commotion in the other room or is conscious of the PCs' menace, he dons his armor and readies himself for battle.

**Creature:** Brak, a 4th-level fighter.

**Brak:** Brak is a soldier from Sceth Hellbringer's army (see **Location 5.3** for stats), but he does not wear his armor (it's under the table with his weapons). He is deathly afraid of the beast in **Location 5.10.6** (which only the Lieutenant can control). If interrogated, Brak reveals that the man in charge of the troops has an office on the other side of the door leading to **Location 5.10.6.** If forced by the PCs, he opens the door for them but quickly tumbles away, hoping his commander's pet takes care of his problem.

*Treasure:* The crates and barrels here contain provisions for Sceth Hellbringer's men. Three large barrels are filled with ale, one with water, and a smaller one with fine wine (for the Lieutenant); three of the crates hold salted meats, one is full of carrots, and another has potatoes in it. Upon the table are various cooking utensils and a heavy black iron pot.

## Location 5.10.6: Wolf Pen (EL 3)

**Read aloud:** *The first thing you notice when you enter this simple square chamber is the large growling wolf standing in the middle of it.*

The area is bare of furniture. Only the wolf, a large water bowl, and animal dung are found therein.

This animal is a large dire wolf, Gavnor's pet. It is loyal to Gavnor (*see* **Location 5.10.9**) and would do anything to prevent the PCs from venturing any further.

**Creature:** One dire wolf.

**Dire Wolf (1):** CR 3; Large animal; HD 6d8+18; hp 45; Init +2; Spd 50 ft.; AC 14, touch 11, flat-footed 12; Base Atk +4, Grp +15; Atk +11 melee (1d8+10/x2, bite); Full Atk +11 melee (1d8+10/x2, bite); Space/Reach 10 ft./5 ft.; SA Trip; SQ Low-light vision, scent; AL N; SV Fort +8, Ref +7, Will +6; Str 25, Dex 15, Con 17, Int 2, Wis 12, Cha 10.

*Skills and Feats:* Hide +0*, Listen +7*, Move Silently +4*, Spot +7*, Survival +2; Alertness, Run, Track, Weapon Focus (bite). *A dire wolf has a +2 racial bonus on Hide, Listen, Move Silently, and Spot checks. It also has a +4 racial bonus on Survival checks when tracking by scent.

*Low-Light Vision (Ex):* A dire wolf can see twice as far as a Human in starlight, moonlight, torchlight, and similar conditions of shadowy illumination. It retains the ability to distinguish color and detail under these conditions.

*Scent (Ex):* A dire wolf can detect opponents within 30 feet by sense of smell. If the opponent is upwind, the range increases to 60 feet; if downwind, it drops to 15 feet. Strong scents, such as smoke or rotting garbage, can be detected at twice the ranges noted above. Overpowering scents, such as skunk musk or troglodyte stench, can be detected at triple normal range. When a dire wolf detects a scent, the exact location of the source is not revealed—only its presence somewhere within range. A dire wolf can take a move action to note the direction of the scent. Whenever a dire wolf comes within 5 feet of the source, the dire wolf pinpoints the source's location.

*Trip (Ex):* A dire wolf that hits with a bite attack can attempt to trip its opponent (+11 check modifier) as a free action without making a touch attack or provoking an attack of opportunity. If the attempt fails, the opponent cannot react to trip the dire wolf.

## Location 5.10.7: Sleeping Quarters

**Read aloud:** *Crushed stone and fallen rock cover the floor of these small cells.*

These chambers are filled with the debris of small cave-ins that occurred over the years. This is where Kor's clerics once slept. There is little of interest in these chambers, but PCs searching the debris in the easternmost room may discover a ring of faerie fire (Search check (DC 20)).

*Treasure:* ring of faerie fire.

## Location 5.10.8: Prison

**Read aloud:** *When you open the door of this small cell, you hear movement: a battered Dwarven prisoner is incarcerated here. The Dwarf, who is bound and gagged, squirms away from you. Bloody wounds are evident under his soiled white robes.*

**Development:** This cell was converted into a prison. It holds Almus Homeguard, the only survivor of the Dwarven party that explored the lair over a month ago. He is starving and feverish, and cannot concentrate long enough to properly prepare spells.

Almus is a cleric of Kor and the only remaining member of the band that first explored the dragon's lair. He is weak and in dire need of healing. Almus' goal is to reclaim the temple in the name of Kor and reopen it to pilgrims.

If the PCs help him accomplish his goal, he is forever grateful to them. He also invites them to join the celebrations once the clergy of Kor has reinstated the shrine's former glory (see the adventure Dragon Keep Festival for further details).

**Creature:** Almus Homeguard, a 10th-level cleric.

**Almus Homeguard, Male Dwarf Clr 10:** CR 10; Medium humanoid (Dwarf); HD 10d8+50; hp 98 (currently 35); Spd 20 ft.; Init +1; AC 11, touch 11, flat-footed 10; Base Atk +7; Grp +10; Atk +10 melee (1d3+3/x2, unarmed strike); Full Atk +10/+5 melee (1d3+3/x2, unarmed strike); SA Spells, turn undead 6/day; SQ Cleric domains (Healing, War), Dwarf traits, spontaneous casting; AL LC; SV Fort +12, Ref +4, Will +11; Str 17, Dex 12, Con 20, Int 13, Wis 19, Cha 16.

*Skills and Feats:* Concentration +12, Diplomacy +11, Heal +12, Knowledge (religion) +13, Spellcraft +5; Brew Potion, Combat Casting, Extra Turning (2), Weapon Focus (warhammer).

*Spontaneous Casting:* Almus can "lose" a prepared spell (except for a domain spell) in order to cast any cure spell of the same level or lower.

*Turn Undead:* Almus can attempt to turn undead 6 times per day.

*Cleric Spells Prepared* (6/5+1/5+1/4+1/2+1; save DC 14 + spell level): None prepared.

*Possessions:* Almus has been stripped of all his possessions, which are not to be found anywhere in the compound.

## Location 5.10.9: Gavnor's Chamber / Office (EL 7)

**Read aloud:** *Four burning torches, set in black iron sconces in the walls, illuminate the room, revealing a small but well furnished cell. A thick pelt covers the floor in front of a well-made oaken desk filled with parchment pieces, two quills, and an inkpot. The Nothrog sitting at the desk glares and half-rises as you enter*

**Development:** This room was converted into the lieutenant's office and sleeping quarters.

Some of the scrolls on the table are described in the **Treasure** below, but PCs taking time to look through the papers find one important note — one that reveals the statues in **Location 5.10.3** are constructs and might be reanimated.

This yellowed scroll reads: "Three is the magic number, but aloud and clearly you must speak for the eight to come alive and obey their new master." A complicated formula (which sounds like gibberish) follows. If one of the PCs read this text three times in **Location 5.10.3** and sacrifices 100 XP, he reanimates the constructs there. These living statues obey the person who completed the ritual and might be sent out to attack or distract Varanir. The constructs may move outside **Location 5.8** but can never leave the dungeon complex. If ordered to do so, they move to the farthest point they can (**Location 5.8**, at the entrance of the passageway leading south) and stop.

There is a secret door on the northern wall leading to **Location 5.8**. Gavnor is not aware of it.

Gavnor failed his master during an important mission and, as a result, found himself responsible for securing this forsaken place. All he knows is he was ordered to clean and guard the place and then await further instructions. He knows that in the dragon's horde there was a powerful magical weapon, the *Blade of Syneri*, that was taken away immediately.

Gavnor is furious to see the PCs enter his private chamber. If they parley with him, he asks them how they managed to bypass his guards and pet wolf. If the PCs refuse to answer or say they killed the animal, Gavnor screams and attacks. If his beloved wolf is dead, Gavnar fights to the death; otherwise, he might be willing to negotiate for his freedom, since he fears but is not committed to the warlord he serves.

**Creature:** Gavnor, a 7th-level ranger.

**Gavnor, Male Nothrog Rgr 7:** CR 7; Medium humanoid (Nothrog); HD 7d8+21; hp 57; Init +6; Spd 30 ft.; AC 18, touch 12, flat-footed 16; Base Atk +7; Grp +11; Atk +15 melee (1d8+7(19–20/x2), +3 longsword), or +9 ranged (1d8(19–20/x2), light crossbow); Full Atk +15/+10 melee (1d8+7(19–20/x2), +3 longsword), or +9 ranged (1d8(19–20/x2), light crossbow); SA —; SQ Favored terrain (hill, marsh), Nothrog traits; AL CE; SV Fort +8, Ref +4, Will +6; Str 19, Dex 15, Con 17, Int 11, Wis 15, Cha 11.

*Skills and Feats:* Climb +7*, Handle Animal +7, Hide +10*, Knowledge (nature) +10, Listen +9, Move Silently +10*, Spot +9, Survival +12; Alertness, Blind-Fight, Improved Initiative, Improved Track, Iron Will, Track, Weapon Focus (longsword). *includes –2 armor check penalty

*Favored terrain (hill, marsh):* Gavnor gains a +3 circumstance bonus to Climb, Hide, Listen, Knowledge (nature), Move Silently, Ride, Search, Spot, Swim, Use Rope, and Survival checks as well as a +2 circumstance bonus to all attack rolls in hills and marsh terrain.

*Ranger Spells Prepared* (0/2; save DC 13 + spell level): 1st — pass without trace, summon nature's ally.

*Possessions:* Masterwork chain shirt, masterwork heavy steel shield, +3 longsword, light crossbow, 20 bolts, potion of heroism.

# Part 5: Concluding the Adventure

Once the PCs defeat Varanir and the warlord's men, either by routing them out of the lair or by killing them, they can return to Stony Vale to receive the mayor's accolades and the reward Jaraba promised them. In Stony Vale, the PCs are hailed as heroes.

Word of the heroes' accomplishments travels fast through the region, and, if they are recognized, the PCs are well received and cheered almost everywhere they go after that. But the heroes have now thwarted Sceth Hellbringer, who wanted to prevent access to the tomb of the ancient king and the legendary artifact therein (as described in the adventure *Dragon Keep Festival*). Sceth might take a personal interest in their affairs — one day, the warlord might even get his revenge.

If the heroes failed to defeat the dragon, Varanir attacks Stony Vale one last time and destroys the town.

There are many ways to build on the events following this adventure. Here are a few suggestions:

- If the PCs cleansed the lair but Varanir survived, the dragon retreats into a nearby hideaway until his wounds are healed. Then he begins to hunt the PCs to get his revenge.
- If the heroes rescued Almus, the cleric might invite or hire them to accompany him to his home.
- Almus might inform the PCs about the king's hidden mausoleum, and the great artifact said to lie within.
- If any of Sceth Hellbringer's men survived, they alert him, in which case Sceth plots his revenge and tells the Medusan Lord, Nassiral Hate, of the PCs' growing power.

# Part 6: The Stone of Fortune

**Read aloud:** *The Stone of Fortune lights up the air once again, and this time you see two images, side by side. One is a perfect, crystalline sphere tainted by only the tiniest wisp of smoke within it. The other is a spear, or perhaps a pike or halberd, of impossibly exact forging. Then, the view pulls back, revealing the two relics are on a table, surrounded by familiar, shadowy figures.*

These items are the *Blade of Syneri* and a *Dragon Orb*, artifacts key to the Medusan Lords' ritual that will awaken and then slay the Dragon.

# Tier 5

At last the heroes have come of age, and soon all the Accordlands will praise or curse their names. Such fame comes at a heavy price, and the Medusan Lords are no longer content to allow the party to move unopposed. The PCs have raised too many hopes and attracted too much support. The Medusan Lords begin to take action directly against the party. These adventures are suitable for characters of levels 8–10.

## Condor Pass

Denska and Deverenia have warred for centuries, with the fortress at Condor Pass being Denska's primary defense. Now a new threat has entered the pass, a monstrous creature of Bascaron's making, bent on playing both sides for its own gain.

If the party encountered the Jackals of Mourn during the "Shattered Lands" adventure, the Jackals may seek to lead the party here. If the party has already completed "The Terror of Sharn Keep," information in that adventure leads to the reaver in this one.

Of course, as Condor Pass is a major trade route, those visiting Denska or Deverenia from Baraxton or further south could simply find themselves swept up in these events.

## Dythanus' Disciple

Centuries ago, Morghen Dythanus and the elf Xioz warred over the favor of the elder Dythanus, until Morghen betrayed and imprisoned his rival. Now an expedition of archaeologists backed by the Deverenian Church seek a lost artifact near Xioz' prison, and the protective wards fade away. With a Medusan Lord agent on hand, the time is ripe for an elder foe to return.

As vigilant as her husband, Duchess Cassandra again calls upon the heroes to investigate strange happenings. This time a Deverenian digging crew is investigating Myreth while Deverenia openly wars on the Elves. Alternately, if the party saved Cardinal Ulloft during the "Church of the Storm" adventure, he may call upon the party to watch over the dig.

## Abyssal Attack

Following Black Forge, the party has another opportunity to face off against the Abyssals, including an elder, stronger Gar-Magog. This time, however, the party faces a greater number of foes, perhaps including a traitor from within the dwarven ranks.

"Abyssal Attack" is available only to parties who successfully completed "Black Forge."

## The Terror of Sharn Keep

A few years ago, a Nothrog tribe ventured too far into the Shattered Lands and awoke a powerful reaver, which slew the tribe's totem and ensnared the Nothrog's minds. Realizing that Nassiral Hate would certainly oppose it, the Terror led its legion of slaves to neighboring Deverenia, seizing Sharn Keep. As Hate's power grew, other tribes flocked to Sharn, hoping to join a legion of free Nothrog, only to likewise fall under the spell of the Terror of Sharn Keep. Even a handful of dwarves, lost from Gnorrow Yaw's expedition, have become its slaves. Now the Terror of Sharn Keep and its child, the Terror of Condor Pass, seek to expand their power.

The easiest way for the party to discover the Terror of Sharn Keep is through the results of the "Terror of Condor Pass" adventure. If, however, the party has aided Deverenia before (such as during the "Church of the Storm" or "Dythanus' Disciple" adventures), Lord Anguisant may approach to ask for their aid. He is Sharn Keep's former lord, shamed by his mad claims that an alien force has conquered his home. In truth, Anguisant is as much a slave to the Terror as any at the keep, and his sole purpose is to trick people into going to Sharn. Anguisant is a man with a well-trimmed black beard and fine clothing, all the more remarkable since his right hand is that of a marble statue — a small lure from the Terror, to lend credence to Anguisant's wild claims.

## Campaign Notes:



# Condor Pass

## Introduction

In *Condor Pass,* the party finds that the problems along the Deverenia-Denska border go deeper than the ancient rivalry between the Empire and its breakaway province.

This is one of four adventures in Tier 5. It is meant for characters of levels 8–10.

## Adventure Background

Centuries ago, the Kingdom of Denska freed itself from the tyranny of the Deverenian Empire. Ever since, the Deverenians have labored to bring their erstwhile province back into the imperial fold. The impetus for attack shifts with ebb and flow of politics, power, and wealth, but the result is always the same: Deverenia declares war on Denska. Fortunately for the Denskans, a great mountain range divides them from the Deverenian Empire. The only route through these mountains is Condor Pass, a priceless strategic target. Named after the great birds found in these mountains, the pass has been controlled by the Denskans for hundreds of years. It is their only defense against Deverenian conquest. Should the Deverenians ever take Condor Pass, they would have a clear path into the heart of Denska.

Despite the perpetual tension between Denska and Deverenia, substantial trade goes through Condor Pass. Potential control of this trade makes the pass an even juicier target for the Deverenians.

A massive fortress known as the Aerie guards Condor Pass, heavily garrisoned and bolstered by magical wards. Denskan mages specialize in maintaining these wards and constructing new ones. The combination of natural features, fortification design, troop strength, and magic makes the Aerie one of the most secure fortresses in the Accordlands.

In the midst of the underlying hostility between the two nations, there is another force plotting to use them against each other and seize Condor Pass for itself. A terrible reaver, the Terror of Condor Pass, has been secretly gathering a force of Denskan bandits, subverted Nothrog legionnaires, monsters, and mercenaries in the mountains. The Terror has been using its Denskan followers to foment trouble in Deverenian territory. This has angered many of the local Deverenian landholders, who have gone to the sorceress Ygraine demanding that she put an end to the bandit attacks. She has sent an ultimatum to the Denskans demanding that they deal with the bandits taking refuge in their territory, or face dire consequences. The Denskans have no power to stop these bandits, which are controlled by the reaver. They say it is a Deverenian trick, a trumped-up justification for another war. A Deverenian attack on Condor Pass is almost inevitable. This is exactly what the reaver wants.

The reaver plans to attack the main fortress at Condor Pass from within while the defenders are distracted by the Deverenian assault. It has found and used its maddening presence ability on an earth elemental; this creature has tunneled for months through the rock upon which the Aerie rests. When the defenders are most desperate, the reaver and its minions will burst into the fortress from within.

The Terror wants the Aerie for itself. It wants a wealthy, powerful, and defensible location to begin building its own power. It is working in collusion with its parent, the reaver that recently subverted and seized Sharn Keep.

## Adventure Synopsis

When the PCs arrive in the region, they hear rumors about trouble brewing in Condor Pass. The Deverenians may be preparing another attack, and hideous creatures are said to be living in the mountains. The PCs are attacked by a group of bandits, and discover evidence that these bandits may be working for someone who is not the Denskans. Canny PCs will immediately wonder what is really going on. The more the PCs investigate, the more it becomes apparent that both sides are being deceived.

The PCs discover a hidden trail leading deep into the mountains, away from Condor Pass. If the trail were less traveled, they might ignore it. This secret trail leads to more encounters with the Terror's minions, and more evidence about those behind the plot.

Meanwhile, the Deverenians are incensed by a brutal raid on one of their villages by the Terror's bandits. Sorceress Ygraine leads her troops to attack Condor Pass at the command of the formidable Lord Gahid Rellion. The Deverenians fight their way through the magical wards protecting Condor Pass, and lay siege to the Aerie.

There several ways the PCs could choose to deal with the situation, but their actions have grave consequences no matter how they choose. They could attempt to stop the impending battle by convincing both parties to parley. This may or may not be successful, depending on the quality of their efforts. If the battle joins, the reaver could seize control of the fortress. The PCs could also choose to attempt to destroy the reaver before the battle begins or otherwise thwart its plans, but while they are doing this, thousands are dying.

This adventure is loosely structured. The PCs may come and go as they please, but once they begin the adventure, a series of events begins. Some of these events take place regardless of what the PCs do. The Deverenians probably attack the Aerie, but this is not inevitable. If the PCs stop or redirect the chain of events, anything can happen. Therefore the adventure is organized differently than many others in this book. Encounter locations and descriptions are listed separately from events. Many of the events are necessary to advance the plot of the adventure, spurring the PCs along. The major locations of this adventure are described in their own sections. The major events are provided in a timeline in **Part 3**.

## Area 1: The Condor Pass Region

Condor Pass is like a giant saddle draped across the towering peaks of the Darklith Mountains. The floor of the pass rises steadily, more than 2000 feet above the lands to the east and west. Immediately to the east of Condor Pass lies the Deverenian Empire. Condor Pass is several miles wide at its extremities, but narrows to a few hundred yards at its highest point.

The Free Kingdom of Denska claims most of Condor Pass. The mountains are a formidable natural barrier holding Deverenia at bay, and Condor Pass is the only access. It has been the flash point for wars, rebellions, attacks, and counterattacks for centuries. The mountains stretch for hundreds of miles to the north and south, dividing the northern Accordlands down the middle, with the Deverenian Empire in the east, and Denska and the other Free Kingdoms to the west.

Near the center of Condor Pass is the ancient fortress called the Aerie. This massive structure has been taken a handful of times, but the Denskans have improved its defenses over the centuries, and have not lost it for over 150 years. The Aerie is not only a military fortress, but also the center of commerce for the region. Even some Deverenian subjects are bold enough to trade here, although it is forbidden. When tensions were low, Deverenian nobles traded with the Denskan kingdom through the pass. Commerce is fostered by a thriving Merchants' Quarter within the Aerie itself, and a refugee tent city on the Denskan side of the fortress has become semi-permanent, with its own merchants.

Condor Pass is not an easy road. Even though it is a mountain pass, its highest point, where the Aerie is located, is still a long, steep climb. The Denskans have constructed several watchtowers atop minor peaks on the Deverenian side of the pass, with another watchtower guarding the fortress' rear. These watchtowers magically communicate with each other and with the Aerie, so attacking the pass by surprise is all but impossible. The troops and Wardens, the specialized wizards who bolster the Denskan defenses, are ever on the lookout for any sign of Deverenian aggression.

# Part 7: Condor Pass Locations

The numbered locations below refer to the map of the Condor Pass Region (*see page 489*).

## Location 1: Bandit Attack (EL 8)

**Read aloud:** *The day is cool, gray, and wet. Mists shroud the mountain peaks looming around you, softening the points of the evergreen forest draped around the mountains' skirts. The long climb seems to have brought the clouds lower, until walking into one was inevitable. Before long, all that can be seen is the rocky, reddish earth underfoot. The ground here has been beaten into a path by countless feet.*

**Development:** The cloud the PCs have entered limits normal visibility to 40 feet.

As the PCs travel up the pass, they are ambushed by a group of bandits. The bandits are aware of the PCs' presence, and have been watching them for a while. Fortunately for the PCs, the unexpected fog blunts the effectiveness of the ambush. The bandits are a rag-tag group of creatures that would not normally work together. If hard-pressed, the bandits attempt to flee.

If the bandits believe they can subdue a few strong or talented individuals, they attempt to take them prisoner. Captives are taken to the reaver's lair, where it attempts to *dominate* them into service. Their leader is a Human ruffian with one eye covered by a patch.

After this event, there is a 25% chance per day the PCs spend in the pass they will encounter another such group of bandits. The bandits may have chosen the PCs as their target, or they may simply be lurking to assault hapless travelers.

**Creatures:** Two Nothrog bandits, 3rd-level rogues; one Dwarf bandit, a 3rd-level fighter; one bandit leader, a 5th-level rogue.

**Bandit Leader, Male Human Rog 5:** CR 5; Medium humanoid (Human); HD 5d6+5; hp 23; Spd 30 ft.; Init +3; AC 16, touch 13, flat-footed 13; Base Atk +3; Grp +5; Atk +5 melee (1d6+2(18–20x2), rapier) or +5 ranged (1d6 /x3, shortbow); Full Atk +5 melee (1d6+2(18–20/x2), rapier) or +5 ranged (1d6 /x3, shortbow); SA Sneak attack +2d6; SQ Evasion, hide in plain sight, improved nightsight; AL NE; SV Fort +2, Ref +7, Will +0; Str 14, Dex 16, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 9, Cha 8.

*Skills and Feats:* Appraise +1, Balance +10*, Bluff +1, Climb +8*, Disable Device +6, Disguise +1, Escape Artist +10*, Hide +11*, Intimidate +1, Jump +6*, Listen +1, Move Silently +8*, Search +1, Sense Motive +1, Sleight of Hand +7*, Spot +1, Use Rope +5; Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Weapon Finesse (rapier). *includes –1 armor check penalty

*Evasion:* If the bandit leader makes a successful Reflex saving throw against an attack that normally deals half damage on a successful save, he instead takes no damage. Evasion can be used only if the bandit leader is wearing light armor or no armor. A helpless bandit leader does not gain the benefit of evasion.

*Hide In Plain Sight:* Each time the bandit leader makes a Hide check, he may reduce the total penalty (if any) to his skill check by his rogue class level (5), to a minimum of 0.

*Improved Nightsight:* The bandit leader can see half again as far as normal in conditions of low light.

*Sneak Attack:* Anytime the bandit leader's target is denied a Dexterity bonus to AC, or when he flanks a target, the bandit leader deals an additional 2d6 points of damage on a successful melee attack.

*Possessions:* Studded leather armor, rapier, shortbow, 20 arrows.

**Nothrog Bandits (2), Male Nothrog Rog 3:** CR 3; Medium humanoid (Nothrog); HD 3d6+12; hp 25; Spd 30 ft.; Init +2; AC 15, touch 12, flat-footed 13; Base Atk +2; Grp +4; Atk +4 melee (1d10+2(19–20/x2), bastard sword) or +4 ranged (1d6/x3, shortbow); Full Atk +5 melee (1d10+2(19–20x2), bastard sword) or +5 ranged (1d6/x3, shortbow); SA Sneak attack +1d6; SQ Evasion, hide in plain sight, Nothrog traits; AL NE; SV Fort +3, Ref +5, Will +0; Str 15, Dex 16, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 9, Cha 7.

*Skills and Feats:* Balance +5*, Climb +5*, Disable Device +5, Escape Artist +5*, Hide +5*, Open Lock +5, Swim +5*, Tumble +5*; Exotic Weapon Proficiency (bastard sword), Toughness. *includes –1 Armor Check penalty

*Evasion:* If a Nothrog bandit makes a successful Reflex saving throw against an attack that normally deals half damage on a successful save, he instead takes no damage. Evasion can be used only if a Nothrog bandit is wearing light armor or no armor. A helpless Nothrog bandit does not gain the benefit of evasion.

*Hide In Plain Sight:* Each time a Nothrog bandit makes a Hide check, he may reduce the total penalty (if any) to his skill check by his rogue class level (3), to a minimum of 0.

*Sneak Attack:* Anytime the Nothrog bandit's target is denied a Dexterity bonus to AC, or when he flanks a target, the Nothrog bandit deals an additional 1d6 points of damage on a successful melee attack.

*Possessions:* Studded leather armor, bastard sword, shortbow, 20 arrows.

**Dwarf Fighter, Male Dwarf Ftr 3:** CR 3; Medium humanoid (Dwarf); HD 3d10+9; hp 30; Init +4; Spd 20 ft.; AC 16, touch 10, flat-footed 16; Base Atk +3; Grp +6; Atk +7 melee (1d8+4/x3, battleaxe); Full Atk +7 melee (1d8+4/x3, battleaxe); SA Favored weapon (battleaxe); SQ Dwarf traits; AL LN; SV Fort +6, Ref +1, Will +1; Str 17, Dex 10, Con 16, Int 8, Wis 10, Cha 10.

*Skills and Feats:* Climb +0*, Jump +0*; Cleave, Improved Initiative, Power Attack. *includes –6 Armor Check penalty

*Favored Weapon (battleaxe):* The Dwarf fighter gains a +1 competence bonus to attack and damage rolls with the battleaxe.

*Possessions:* Chainmail, light steel shield, battleaxe.

## Location 2: Denskan Watchtower

**Read aloud:** *Standing high and aloof on the slope above the pass is a single stone tower. It is difficult to tell the tower's height because of the steep slope, but it looks to be about 30 feet high. Crowned with battlements and clothed in arrow slits, the tower scowls down upon the pass. The slopes below and above it are rough and rocky. A narrow path corkscrews from the pass to a narrow, wooden door in the face of the watchtower.*

**Development:** Refer to the Watchtower Map for the layout. There are five of these essentially identical watchtowers in Condor Pass, four on the Deverenian side, one on the Denskan side. Each is positioned roughly four hundred feet above the floor of the pass on the slope of a minor peak.

The tower guards never allow exterior lights such as fires, lanterns, or torches in a tower. Only when a tower is under attack or issuing a warning are lights visible from outside it. For this reason, and to keep out the cold, all watchtower arrow slits are tightly shuttered most of the time.

The guards stationed at these towers are suspicious. Nothing passes without their scrutiny. Any group of more than twenty travelers that passes by is considered a potential threat. The Silver Guard commander leads ten guards to ride out from the watchtower and intercept the group. The Silver Guard questions the travelers about their origins and purpose, and the guards may even search the travelers' belongings if the answers to the questions are not satisfactory.

Each tower is manned by 25 troops, a Silver Guard, and a Warden.

**Creatures:** Twenty-five Silver Guard, 2nd-level fighters; one Silver Guard Captain, a 9th-level fighter; a Warden, a 10th-level wizard.

**Silver Guard (25), Male Human Ftr 2:** CR 2; Medium humanoid (Human); HD 2d10+4; hp 15; Init +1; Spd 20 ft.; AC 18, touch 11, flat-footed 17; Base Atk +2; Grp +4; Atk +6 melee (1d8+3(19–20/x2), longsword) or +3 ranged (1d10(19–20/x2), heavy crossbow); Full Atk +6 melee (1d8+3(19–20/x2), longsword) or +3 ranged (1d10(19–20/x2), heavy crossbow); SA Favored weapon (longsword); SQ —; AL LG; SV Fort +5, Ref +1, Will +0; Str 14, Dex 12, Con 14, Int 11, Wis 10, Cha 10.

*Skills and Feats:* Climb –4*, Jump –4*, Listen +0, Spot +0; Cleave, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (longsword). *includes –6 Armor Check penalty

*Favored Weapon (longsword):* A silver guard gains a +1 competence bonus to attack and damage rolls with the longsword.

*Possessions:* Chainmail, light steel shield, longsword.

**Silver Guard Captain, Male Human Ftr 9:** CR 9; Medium humanoid (Human); HD 9d10+21; hp 74; Init +1; Spd 20 ft.; AC 20, touch 10, flat-footed 20; Base Atk +9; Grp +12; Atk +14 melee (1d8+7(19–20/x2), *+1 longsword*) or +11 ranged (1d10(19–20/x2), heavy crossbow); Full Atk +14/+9 melee (1d8+7(19–20/x2), *+1 longsword*) or +11 ranged (1d10+1(19–20/x2), heavy crossbow); SA Favored weapon (longsword, heavy crossbow), improved damage (longsword, heavy crossbow); SQ —; AL LG; SV Fort +8, Ref +4, Will +4; Str 16, Dex 12, Con 14, Int 13, Wis 12, Cha 12.

*Skills and Feats:* Climb +2*, Jump +2*, Handle Animal +6, Listen +4, Ride +5, Spot +2; Alertness, Cleave, Combat Reflexes, Critical Strike, Improved Initiative, Leadership, Power Attack, Toughness. *includes –8 armor check penalty

*Favored Weapon (longsword, heavy crossbow):* The captain gains a +1 competence bonus to attack and damage rolls with the longsword and heavy crossbow.

*Improved Damage (longsword):* The captain does an additional +2 (+3 total) damage with the longsword.

*Possessions: +1 half plate*, heavy steel shield, *+1 longsword*, heavy crossbow.

**Warden, Male Human Wiz 10:** CR 10; Medium humanoid (Human); HD 10d4; hp 25; Spd 30 ft.; Init +2; AC 13, touch 13, flat-footed 13; Base Atk +5; Grp +5; Atk +5 melee (1d6/x2, quarterstaff); Full Atk +5 melee (1d6/x2, quarterstaff); SA Spells; SQ Eidetic Memory (*charm monster, fireball, lesser geas, magic missile, protection from arrows*), summon familiar (toad); AL LG; SV Fort +3, Ref +3, Will +10; Str 10, Dex 11, Con 11, Int 17, Wis 16, Cha 12.

*Skills and Feats:* Concentration +14, Craft (alchemy) +8, Knowledge (arcana) +8, Knowledge (religion) +8, Scry +14, Spellcraft +17; Combat Casting, Craft Magical Ward, Empower Spell, Extend Spell, Enlarge Spell, Maximize Spell, Scribe Scroll, Alertness.

*Eidetic Memory:* The warden may spontaneously cast *charm monster, fireball, lesser geas, magic missile,* and *protection from arrows* in place of a prepared spell of equal or higher level. This loses the prepared spell to fuel the memorized spell.

*Wizard Spells Prepared* (4/5/5/4/3/2; save DC 13 + spell level): 0 — *arcane artistry, detect magic, read magic, light*; 1st — *power spike, unnerve, charm person, magic missile, mage armor*; 2nd — *shard storm, acid blood, bull's grace, protection from arrows, web*; 3rd — *fireball, imperviousness, martial arcane, haste*; 4th — *soul knife, charm monster, lesser geas*; 5th — *ball lightning, magical disruption.*

*Possessions:* Quarterstaff, *ring of protection +3*, spellbook.

**Familiar (toad):** The Warden's toad familiar has the following statistics:

**Familiar (toad):** CR —; Diminutive magical beast; HD 10; hp 12; Init +1; Spd 5 ft; AC 20, touch 20, flat-footed 19; Base Atk +7; Grp –10; Atk —; Full Atk —; Space/Reach 1 ft./0 ft. SA —; SQ low-light vision, amphibious, empathic link, share spells, improved evasion, deliver touch spells, speak with master, speak with animals of its kind; AL N; SV Fort +3, Ref +4, Will +9; Str 1, Dex 12, Con 11, Int10, Wis 14, Cha 4.

*Skill and Feats:* Hide +21*, Listen +4, Spot +4; Alertness. *A toad's coloration gives it a +4 racial bonus on Hide checks.

*Low-Light Vision:* A toad can see twice as far as a Human in starlight, moonlight, torchlight, and similar conditions of shadowy illumination. It retains the ability to distinguish color and detail under these conditions.

*Familiar Ability Descriptions:* All familiars have special abilities (or impart abilities to their masters) depending on the Warden's combined level in classes that grant familiars. The abilities are cumulative.

*Alertness (Ex):* While his familiar is within arm's reach, the Warden gains the Alertness feat.

*Improved Evasion (Ex):* When subjected to an attack that normally allows a Reflex saving throw for half damage, a familiar takes no damage if it makes a successful saving throw and half damage even if the saving throw fails.

*Share Spells:* At the Warden's option, he may have any spell (but not any spell-like ability) he casts on himself also affect his familiar. The familiar must be within 5 feet at the time of casting to receive the benefit. If the spell or effect has a duration other than instantaneous, it stops affecting the familiar if it moves farther than 5 feet away and will not affect the familiar again even if it returns to the Warden before the duration expires. Additionally, the Warden may cast a spell with a target of "You" on his familiar

(as a touch range spell) instead of on himself. The Warden and his familiar can share spells even if the spells normally do not affect creatures of the familiar's type (magical beast).

*Empathic Link (Su):* The Warden has an empathic link with his familiar out to a distance of up to 1 mile. The Warden cannot see through the familiar's eyes, but they can communicate empathically. Because of the limited nature of the link, only general emotional content can be communicated. Because of this empathic link, the Warden has the same connection to an item or place that his familiar does.

*Deliver Touch Spells (Su):* The Warden's familiar can deliver touch spells for him. If the Warden and the familiar are in contact at the time the Warden casts a touch spell, he can designate his familiar as the "toucher." The familiar can then deliver the touch spell just as the Warden could. As usual, if the Warden casts another spell before the touch is delivered, the touch spell dissipates.

*Speak with Master (Ex):* The Warden and his familiar can communicate verbally as if they were using a common language. Other creatures do not understand the communication without magical help.

*Speak with Animals of Its Kind (Ex):* The warden's familiar can communicate with amphibians (including dire varieties). Such communication is limited by the intelligence of the conversing creatures.

**Development:** The troops stationed at the towers are willing to talk to travelers, especially if they have valuable information to offer. Any Deverenians are immediately met with outright suspicion. A Deverenian PC might quickly find himself imprisoned for interrogation if his motives are questionable or his demeanor less than deferential.

PCs who make successful Gather Information checks (DC 15) while talking to the watchtower troops discover the following.

- Bandits have plagued the area in recent weeks.
- Whether these bandit groups are working together or independently is unknown.
- The Denskan troops think the Deverenians are instigating the bandit raids.
- A lone huntsman has told the tale of the carcass of a condor that he found on a mountainside north of the pass. The condor looked to have been fed upon by something with a mouth at least four feet across. This was about 10 days ago.
- Over a year ago, people said they'd seen a hideous spherical creature in the area, a creature that floated above the ground. One of the witnesses was a Warden. Not long after the sighting, the Warden disappeared, and neither the Warden nor the creature has been seen since.
- A group of travelers reported seeing a dragon a few miles to the north of the easternmost watchtower. (This is true, but the dragon has nothing to do with what is happening and has since left the area.)
- A group of Nothrog mercenaries entered the region about two weeks ago, saying they were headed for the Aerie, seeking employment. (These Nothrog are spies for Nassiral Hate, wanting to survey the defenses of the Aerie. They have since left.)

### Watchtower Wards

**The area around the watchtower is set with 15 magical *fireball* wards. They are set 300–400 feet away from the tower, so the tower's occupants do not set them off. They discharge when there are more than 30 Medium or larger creatures within 100 feet of the ward's placement. They are spaced evenly along the approach to the watchtower, so the wards do not discharge all at the same time. These wards inflict damage as a *fireball* cast by a 10th level wizard.**

## Location 2.1: Watchtower — Stable (map page 491)

**Read aloud:** *Opening the narrow wooden door in the stone face of the tower releases a powerful waft of warm air, heavy with smell of horses. The lower floor of the tower is a stable, with stalls lining three of the four walls.*

Sheltered here are 1d6+10 horses, with sufficient food and water for two weeks.

The front door of the tower is the only way into or out of the tower from the ground. It is made from thick hardwood planks strapped with iron bars

**Front Door:** 2 in. thick, hardness 8, hp 40, Break DC 22.

## Location 2.2: Watchtower — Guard Room

This room is where the ground floor guards stand their shift. Their duties consist of guarding the front door and doing stable work.

## Location 2.3: Watchtower — Troop Quarters

This large room is where all twenty-five Denskan troops stationed here sleep, eat, and prepare their meals. At any time, 4d6 guards can be found in here. During daylight hours, 25% of those are asleep in their bunks; at night 75% are asleep.

**Creatures:** (4d6) Silver Guard, 2nd-level fighters *(see Location 2 for stats).*

**Silver Guard (4d6):** hp as rolled.

## Location 2.4: Watchtower — Armory and Storage

Here is where the tower supplies and extra weapons are kept. There are the following items and quantities: longswords (20), battle axes (5), heavy crossbows (15), crossbow bolts (2500), spears (30), lantern oil (50 pints), provisions (1 month for 27 troops), cask of ale (1), rope (200 ft.), pots and pans, carpentry and masonry tools, candles (200), manacles (5 sets), whetstones (10).

## Location 2.5: Watchtower — Captain's Quarters

There is a simple writing desk, a comfortable chair, a bed, and a wardrobe, along with weapons and armor racks. This room is where the watchtower's commanding officer, a Captain in the Silver Guard, has his office and his quarters. If any visitors wish to speak to him privately, this is where he meets with them. During daylight hours, the commander is here 50% of the time; during the night, 90% of the time.

**Creature:** Possibly the Silver Guard Captain, a 9th-level fighter *(see Location 2 for stats)*.

**Silver Guard Captain (1):** hp 74.

## Location 2.6: Watchtower — Warden's Quarters

This room has a writing desk, a comfortable chair, a bookshelf laden with books and spell components, a bed, and a wardrobe. This is where the Warden assigned to this tower prepares his spells, rests, and receives visitors. If any visitors wish to speak to him privately, this is where he meets with them. During daylight hours, the Warden is here 50% of the time; during the night, 90% of the time.

**Creature:** Possibly the Warden, a 10th-level wizard *(see Location 2 for stats)*.

**Warden (1):** hp 25.

## Location 2.7: Watchtower — The Roof

**Read aloud:** *The wind at this height blows strong and chill, whistling over the naked stone battlements and the taciturn guards standing behind them. The roof is dominated by the siege engines resting quietly, unloaded, but aimed at the pass far below. A neatly stacked pile of stones rests beside the catapult. The two ballistae stand on either side of the catapult, each with its own stack of javelins. Reaching above the wall facing the pass, on a wrought-iron stand seven feet tall, is a large brazier, over five feet in diameter.*

The brazier is used to light a large signal fire to alert the other watchtowers. This method is only used if the tower Warden cannot contact the Wardens in the other towers. This signal fire is clearly visible for miles, especially at night.

There is one medium catapult and two ballistae positioned to fire upon the pass below if the Deverenians invade.

Guards are always present here (1d4+4 guards), keeping their sharp eyes on the pass. There is a 30% chance each for the commander or the Warden to be here as well.

**Creatures:** (1d4+4) Silver Guard, 2nd-level fighters *(see Location 2 for stats)*; possibly the Silver Guard Captain, a 9th-level fighter or the Warden, a 10th-level wizard *(see Location 2 for stats)*.

**Silver Guard (1d4+4):** hp as rolled.

## Location 3: Condor Pass Region — Bandit Trail

There are several rugged mountain trails along the length of Condor Pass that the bandits use to travel unseen by Denskan watchtowers or patrols. These trails all lead back to the Terror's lair *(see Area 14 below)*.

The areas where the trails connect with Condor Pass are carefully concealed. The Terror does not want his minions followed or discovered. If the PCs successfully track fleeing bandits back to one of these areas, they can make Search checks (DC 25) to find the trailhead, carefully camouflaged with rocks and bushes. If the PCs openly pursue the bandits, they scatter in all directions and wait at least a day before attempting to return to the lair.

If the PCs thoroughly search the pass for hidden trails, they can make Search checks (DC 25) every six hours to uncover one of the camouflaged trailheads.

The mountain trails are rough and sometimes dangerous, climbing along the sides of rugged peaks, down through treacherous clefts, along narrow cliff trails above yawning chasms. Any character traveling these trails must make a Reflex save (DC 20) or suffer some sort of injury, like falling down a rocky embankment or off a narrow crossing log, taking 1d6 damage. Characters who have traversed the path before gain a +5 circumstance bonus to this save.

The Terror's minions patrol these trails. For every 4 hours spent on them, there is a 25% chance that the travelers meet one of the Terror's patrols. A patrol consists of roughly the same creatures as the bandit band of **Location 1**, modified as the GM desires.

# Area 2: The Aerie *(map page 491)*

The approach to the Aerie has several natural features that make it all but impregnable. Refer to the map of the Defenses of Condor Pass, page 492. First, the approach is flanked on the north and south sides by sheer 500-foot cliffs. Only near the spring and fall equinoxes does the light of the sun ever reach the floor of the pass. These cliffs funnel the approach from both directions toward the crest of the pass, where the fortress is situated. On the eastern side of the fortress, the Deverenian side, are two terraced levels, each 100 feet above the other, forming 100-foot tall stone walls that must be climbed to reach the next terrace. An army approaching the first of these is faced with a defensive fortification 100 feet tall. If this formidable barrier is somehow passed, reaching the terrace 100 feet above, the invader faces another barrier much like the first. Two keeps situated at the edge of each wall make any assault against these 100-foot natural walls even more difficult. The keeps overlook every approach and can rain fire and death down upon attackers who attempt to assault the cliffs.

The merchants who come through the pass do not have to rappel up and down the cliffs. A single broad tunnel leads from terrace to terrace, forty feet across, wide enough for two merchant trains to pass each other. This is the only way to reach each terrace, aside from climbing the cliffs. These tunnels can be sealed quickly against impending assault.

Besides these physical defenses, magical wards and detection spells protect against magical attack or deception.

**Aerie (large town):** Conventional; AL LN; 3,000 gp limit; Assets 1,480,000 gp; Population 4,936; Mixed (Human 98%, Nothrog 1%). *Authority Figures:* General Gondorus, male Human Ftr 13, LN; Lord Dalimus, male Human Ari 8/Ftr 3, LN; Nicodemus male Human Wiz 12, LG.

The town is divided into four sections, each independently defensible. All financial transactions take place in the Merchants' Quarter. Approximately half of the inhabitants of the Aerie are soldiers garrisoned there as part of the standing defenses. If the fortress is ever hard-pressed by an invading army, the Aerie can call up reserves from the nearest Denskan provinces within a couple of days.

## Quarters of the Aerie

Each quarter of the Aerie is surrounded by its own wall, with its own gates and defenses, so if one portion of the fortress falls the other quarters can still be defended. The gates between these sections are open during times of peace, but if the fortress is attacked, they remain shut tight until the Silver Guard gives the word that they may reopen.

Because of the walls and gates between them, each section of the fortress operates largely independently. Each quarter has its own water supply and food stores, and constitutes its own neighborhood.

The percentage of Denskan troops present in the population here means there are potentially several thousand "town guards" available at a moment's notice. The Aerie is such a sensitive location that they do not tolerate problems caused by outsiders.

The men responsible for overseeing the fortress are the hundred veteran fighters known as the Silver Guard, led by General Gondorus. The fortress is ostensibly a holding of a Denskan nobleman named Lord Dalimus. He oversees all non-military aspects of life in the Aerie, and the two men work in close partnership. Both men listen to Nicodemus, the Master Warden, any time he has something to say.

### Holy Quarter

**Character:** Religious quarter shared with military barracks.

**Businesses:** Temple of Albrecht, holy symbols, good-luck charms.

**Prices:** 125% of normal.

**Gold Piece Limit:** 1000 gp.

**Buildings:** Huge Temple of Albrecht, military barracks, pilgrim tent-settlement.

**Guard Detail:** Four guards at each gate. Ten guards on top of the outer wall. Two guards patrol during night-time hours.

### Merchant Quarter

**Character:** Close-packed shops and alleys with second-story dwellings.

**Businesses:** Inns, taverns, moneychanger, clothing, general goods, miscellaneous shops and traders.

**Prices:** Normal.

**Gold Piece Limit:** 3000 gp.

**Buildings:** Several two-story buildings with shops on ground floor, dwellings on second floor.

**Guard Detail:** Four guards at each gate. Five guards on top of the outer wall. Four guards patrol during night-time hours.

### Noble Quarter

**Character:** Wealthy, elite.

**Businesses:** House of the Wardens.

**Prices:** 150% of normal.

**Gold Piece Limit:** 3000 gp.

**Buildings:** Lord Dalimus' Mansion, General Gondorus' house, House of the Wardens, Silver Guard quarters.

**Guard Detail:** Four guards at each gate. Two guards at the entrance of each building. Two guards on patrol during night-time hours.

### Tent Village

**Character:** Poor, down-trodden, desperate.

**Businesses:** Food vendors, tinkers, undesirables (tanners, mule-skinners, renderers).

**Prices:** Normal.

**Gold Piece Limit:** 100 gp.

**Buildings:** No permanent structures. Tents only.

**Guard Detail:** Two guards on patrol during night-time hours.

### Troop Quarter

**Character:** Military installation.

**Businesses:** Stables, weaponsmiths, armorers.

**Prices:** 125% of normal.

**Gold Piece Limit:** 2000 gp.

**Buildings:** Stables, troop quarters, condor aerie.

**Guard Detail:** Four guards at each gate. Ten guards on top of the outer wall. Two guards patrol during night-time hours.

### Laws of the Aerie

Because of its sensitive status and location, the Aerie has many regulations for visitors and inhabitants alike, but there are two of major concern to PCs.

1. All weapons except daggers must be peacebonded. When visitors enter the fortress, the gate guards tie bladed weapons to their sheaths with bright red leather straps. Likewise, they tie leather sacks over quivers, bolt cases, and bludgeoning weapons. Peacebonded weapons can be readied with a full round action, provoking attacks of opportunity.
2. Use of magic anywhere within the fortress is strictly forbidden. Only priests of Albrecht and the Wardens may cast spells inside the fortress.

Anyone caught breaking these rules is arrested and interrogated under suspicion of being a Deverenian spy.

### The Silver Guard

The Silver Guard are the elite fighters of the Aerie, chosen for their competence, prowess, and intelligence. The Silver Guard is a prestigious organization, and its members tend to condescend to everybody else. But they have a right to be proud. The chosen must undergo a year-long training regimen and initiation. The training is rigorous, the initiation brutal. Its most dreaded event is the Condor's Talon Ritual, during which the candidate has the claws of a condor embedded in the flesh of his chest. Leather straps are tied to the talons, and he is lifted by them and suspended for one minute. Those who cry out to be let down are drummed out of the Silver Guard.

A member of the Silver Guard is recognizable by silver bracers he wears on his wrists and by the black surcoat embroidered in silver thread with the shape of a great condor.

### The Wardens

The Wardens are a specialized order of Denskan mages who defend the Aerie. They specialize in protective and warding magic, and train the keep's fighting condors. Once upon a time, they tried to ride the enormous birds, but found the condors difficult to train and ill-tempered. Too many Wardens were simply plucked off their steeds' backs and eaten. These days the Wardens simply control the condors with telepathic commands.

During battle, the Wardens form telepathic links with the condors and direct their attacks from the fortress or the terrace keeps.

Wardens are recognizable by their mahogany brown robes embroidered in golden thread with the image of a great condor.

## Location 4: Defenses of Condor Pass — Guardhouse and Tunnel (map page 492)

**Read aloud:** *A hundred feet of solid rock rises up from the earth in a sheer, towering curtain, flanked on both sides by endless upswept cliffs. Gigantic birds circle between the lofty cliff crests, 500 feet above you, that dwarf even the formidable wall across your path. Resting at the edge of the wall, looking down upon the floor of the pass far below, are three grim structures, two large and blockish and one low and long, pierced with arrow slits. The lip of the 100-foot cliff has been shaped into battlements, and dozens of guards patrol the heights. The floor of the pass has been beaten into a well-packed road leading directly toward the gaping black mouth at the cliff foot. A steady stream of travelers plods into this dark cave.*

**Development:** The cave mouth is 40 feet across; the tunnel leads to the terrace 100 feet above. The opening is guarded by ten Denskan troops who demand to peacebond all weapons (see sidebar *Laws of the Aerie*). They allow no exceptions. These guards question only those who appear to be overtly hostile, with the exception of Deverenians. Any Deverenian is taken into a small guardhouse nearby and thoroughly interrogated. The guards' job is mainly to keep the peace among the travelers and watch for suspicious behavior.

**When the PCs stand at the cave opening, read aloud:** *A long tunnel reaches up into blackness relieved only by a tiny spot of light in the distance. The silhouettes of other travelers sometimes eclipse this illumination, blotting it out entirely.*

**Development:** The floor of the tunnel slopes upward at an uncomfortable 9 degrees. The stone underfoot is rough enough for purchase, but smooth enough for wagon wheels. The tunnel opens into the center of the terrace above.

This tunnel opening has two major defenses. The first is a simple portcullis that is closed at night. No one is allowed to pass through the tunnel after dark. After dark when the portcullis is closed, there is a 50% chance that other travelers are camped at the base of the cliff until morning.

The more important defensive feature of the tunnel opening is a pair of tremendous stone blocks that, in the event of an attack, can be lowered from their housings inside the cliff to completely seal the tunnel. These stone blocks are truly massive: 20 feet wide, 30 feet tall, and 10 feet thick. Each block weighs about 500 tons. Lowering these blocks into place takes 1 minute, and opening them again takes 30 minutes.

### Tunnel Wards

The areas around the tunnel mouth and the base of the wall are set with 50 magical *ice storm* wards. They discharge when there are more than 100 Medium or larger creatures within 100 feet of the ward's placement. They are spaced evenly along the approach to the wall and the tunnel, so the wards do not discharge all at the same time. The peacebonding guards regulate the flow of travelers so that there are never more than fifty in the danger zone at one time.

Both the portcullis and the stone blocks are controlled from the gatehouse at the top of the cliff.

The guardhouse that stands nearby is a simple wooden structure of little interest.

## Location 5: Defenses of Condor Pass — Terrace Keep

**Read aloud:** *These two imposing structures look out over the land below like dark, threatening fists, standing 50 feet tall, 150 feet long and 100 feet wide, Dwarfing the troops patrolling the battlements. Their sides are pierced with unusually large arrow slits. The only entrance appears to be a stout wooden door on the side opposite the cliff.*

**Development:** Each of these keeps houses 250 troops trained in the use of siege engines. These troops are led by a Silver Guard Captain, each of whom leads a battalion of 125 men (*see* **Location 2** *for stats*). The Captains answer to a Silver Guard Commander (*see* **Location 5.4** *for stats*), who is in charge of the keep as a whole. Each keep also has three Wardens.

### Terrace Keep Wards

**The areas around the gatehouses are set with 50 magical *fireball* wards. They discharge when there are more than 100 Medium or larger creatures within 100 feet of the ward's placement. They are spaced evenly along the approach to the gatehouse, so the wards do not discharge all at the same time. These wards are discharged as the spell cast by a 10th level wizard. There is no need for travelers to visit the gatehouse in numbers, and small parties are discouraged from approaching by shouts from the guards on duty so that innocent merchants are not accidentally incinerated.**

The large arrow slits in the sides of the building are for the ballistae on each floor. Several catapults are positioned on the roof. These siege engines rain death upon any invading army on the terrace below, and can turn that firepower onto the keep's own level if an invader reaches the terrace.

## Location 5.1: Terrace Keep — Entrance

The only entrance to the keep is a door made from hardwood planks reinforced with iron straps (2 in. thick, hardness 8, 40 hp, Break DC 22). The door opens on a long hallway, at the far end of which is an iron portcullis.

**Iron portcullis:** 2 in. thick, hardness 10, hp 30, Break DC 25.

**Development:** This portcullis is always open except during an assault. The walls and ceiling of the hallway are peppered with murder holes for defenders to attack anyone in the hallway. Firing ranged weapons through the holes from inside the hallway is subject to a –10 circumstance penalty to hit. Only slashing and piercing weapons can be used to attempt melee attacks through the murder holes, and melee attacks are subject to the same –10 circumstance penalty to hit.

Defenders on the second floor can pour boiling oil down through the holes in the ceiling. The boiling oil has a 5 ft. burst radius. Anyone caught in the burst radius is hit and takes 4d6 fire damage from the tremendous heat, which can be reduced to half by a successful Reflex save (DC 15). If the oil is set alight, a firestorm erupts that lasts for 2d6 rounds. Any creature caught in the burning oil takes 4d6 fire damage per round. The hallway is solid stone; it is not harmed by use of burning oil. The keep is stocked with enough oil for six applications of boiling oil.

If the defenders run out of oil, they begin boiling water. Hot water scalds those caught in the area of effect, resulting in 2d6 fire damage in the round the water is dropped.

## Location 5.2: Terrace Keep — Troop Quarters

This cramped room houses 12 Denskan siege troops. They sleep in bunks, with their clothing, money, and other worldly possessions kept in individual footlockers. Each group of men in a room forms a unit, and each unit is responsible for keeping its quarters clean.

All of the soldiers stationed in the keep are trained to operate the siege engines.

**Creatures:** Twelve Denskan siege troops, 2nd-level fighters.

**Denskan Siege Troops, Male Human Ftr 2:** CR 2; Medium humanoid (Human); HD 2d10+4; hp 15; Init +1; Spd 20 ft.; AC 18, touch 11, flat-footed 17; Base Atk +2; Grp +4; Atk +6 melee (1d8+3(19–20/x2), longsword) or +3 ranged (1d10(19–20/x2), heavy crossbow); Full Atk +6 melee (1d8+3(19–20x2), longsword) or +3 ranged (1d10(19–20x2), heavy crossbow); SA Favored weapon (longsword); SQ —; AL LG; SV Fort +5, Ref +1, Will +0; Str 14, Dex 12, Con 14, Int 11, Wis 10, Cha 10.

*Skills and Feats:* Climb –3*, Jump –3*, Listen +1, Profession (siege engineer) +4, Spot +1; Cleave, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (longsword). *includes –6 Armor Check penalty

*Favored Weapon (longsword):* A siege trooper gains a +1 competence bonus to attack and damage rolls with the longsword.

*Possessions:* Chainmail, light steel shield, longsword.

## Location 5.3: Terrace Keep — Captains' Quarters.

These rooms house the Captains of the Silver Guard. The statistics for the NPCs and the room are identical to **Location 2** above.

## Location 5.4: Terrace Keep — Commander's Quarters

Décor includes an expensive writing desk, an overstuffed chair, a bed, a large wardrobe, and weapons and armor in racks. This area is the Silver Guard Commander's office and quarters. If any visitors wish to speak to him privately, this is where he meets with them. During daylight hours, the commander is here 50% of the time; during nighttime hours, 90% of the time.

**Creatures:** Possibly the Silver Guard Commander, a 10th-level fighter.

**Silver Guard Commander (1), Male Human Ftr 10:** CR 10; Medium humanoid (Human); HD 10d10+23; hp 80; Init +1; Spd 20 ft.; AC 20, touch 10, flat-footed 20; Base Atk +10; Grp +13; Atk +15 melee (1d8+7(17–20/x2), *+1 longsword*) or +13 ranged (1d10+3(19–20/x2), heavy crossbow); Full Atk +15/+10 melee (1d8+7(17–20/x2), *+1 longsword*) or +13 ranged (1d10+3(19–20/x2), heavy crossbow); SA Favored weapon (longsword, heavy crossbow, battleaxe), improved critical threat (longsword), improved damage (longsword, heavy crossbow); SQ —; AL LG; SV Fort +9, Ref +5, Will +4; Str 16, Dex 14, Con 14, Int 13, Wis 12, Cha 12.

*Skills and Feats:* Climb +3*, Jump +3*, Handle Animal +6, Listen +5, Ride +6, Spot +3; Alertness, Cleave, Combat Reflexes, Critical Strike, Great Cleave, Improved Initiative, Leadership, Power Attack, Toughness. *includes –8 armor check penalty

*Favored Weapon (longsword, heavy crossbow, battleaxe):* The commander gains a +1 competence bonus to attack and damage rolls with the longsword, heavy crossbow and battleaxe.

*Improved Critical Threat (longsword):* The commander's critical threat range is increased by +2 (to 17–20) with the longsword.

*Improved Damage (longsword, heavy crossbow):* The commander does an additional +2 (+3 total) damage with the longsword and heavy crossbow.

*Possessions: +1 half plate*, heavy steel shield, *+1 longsword*, heavy crossbow.

## Location 5.5: Terrace Keep — Kitchen

This hot and busy room is kept busy preparing meals for half the keep's troops. It contains everything necessary to prepare large meals, and is occupied by 3–12 Denskan cooks during all daylight hours.

## Location 5.6: Terrace Keep — Mess Hall

Three times a day, the long tables and benches are crammed with troops.

## Location 5.7: Terrace Keep — Fire Floor

**Read aloud:** *Lanterns hang from the many wooden pillars in this cavernous space. Stacked among the pillars are thousands of javelins, neatly bundled ammunition for the numerous ballistae position around three of the outside walls. The ballistae wait behind closed fire ports.*

All the ballistae and ammunition are well maintained. The fire ports, seen from the outside as large arrow slots, are tightly shuttered unless the fortress is under attack.

There are 200 ballista javelins for each siege engine on this floor.

The 2nd, 3rd, and 4th floors of the keep are all identical.

During daylight hours 2d10 troops can be found here maintaining their equipment.

**Creatures:** (2d10) Denskan siege troops, 2nd-level fighters *(see* **Location 5.2** *for stats).*

**Denskan siege troops (2d10):** hp as rolled.

## Location 5.8: Terrace Keep — Warden's Quarters

This is the study and quarters for this floor's Warden. It is identical to the Warden's Quarters in the watchtowers *(see* **Location 2.6** *above).*

## Location 5.9: Terrace Keep — Roof

Up here are several catapults with two different types of ammunition. Each catapult has 100 stones and 50 pitch barrels stacked beside it. Each catapult has a clear field of fire to any target within range in any direction.

### Gatehouse Wards

**The areas around the gatehouses are set with 50 magical *cloudkill* wards. They discharge when there are more than 100 Medium or larger creatures within 100 feet of the ward's placement. They are spaced evenly along the approach to the gatehouse, so the wards do not discharge all at the same time. These wards discharge as the spell cast by a 10th level wizard.**

## Location 6: Defenses of Condor Pass — Terrace Gatehouse *(map page 491)*

**Read aloud:** *This long, low building is less imposing than the massive keeps standing guard on either side. It is just over 100 feet long and half as wide, 20 feet tall, almost at the edge of the cliff.*

Inside this gatehouse is the winch machinery that controls the massive stone blocks which seal the tunnel directly below. The installation is manned by 40 troops and led by a Silver Guard Captain. The Warden stationed here protects the gatehouse from magical attack.

In the event of an impending attack, the stone blocks 100 feet below are lowered into place, completely sealing the tunnel. Because of the tremendous mechanical advantage required to move such large stones, the tunnel is relatively easy to seal (gravity does most of the work) but difficult and time consuming to open again.

Two men can lower the stone barrier in less than a minute, but 20 men need 30 minutes to open the barrier. If the troops in the gatehouse were hard-pressed and about to be overrun, the Silver Guard Captain would order the winch mechanism to be permanently disabled. Disabling the mechanism requires four full-round actions by someone who knows the device, or four Disable Device checks (DC 25) taken as full round actions. Disabling the mechanism immediately drops the stone barrier into place, sealing the tunnel. Someone who is unfamiliar with the mechanism who wishes to fix it must make a Knowledge (engineering) check (DC 25) to determine which parts need to be replaced; this check requires a full hour of examination of the mechanism. After that, a Craft (blacksmithing) check (DC 25) must be made to recreate the necessary parts; this check requires a fully equipped smithy, 300 gp worth of raw materials, and two days labor.

## Location 6.1: Terrace Gatehouse — Entrance

The entrances to the gatehouse are stout wooden doors.

**Wooden doors:** 2 in. thick, hardness 8, hp 40, Break DC 22.

Inside the door is room with a portcullis on the opposite side.

**Portcullis:** 2 in. thick, hardness 10, 30 hp, Break DC 25.

This portcullis is always open except during an attack on the fortress. The walls of the room are peppered with murder holes for defenders to attack anyone in the hallway. Use the rules for murder holes found in the entry for **location 5.1**.

## Location 6.2: Terrace Gatehouse — Troop Quarters

This room houses 10 Denskan siege troops. The troops and the rooms are identical to **Location 5.2** above.

## Location 6.3: Terrace Gatehouse — Captains' Quarters.

These rooms house the Captains of the Silver Guard. The statistics for the NPCs and the room are identical to **Location 5.3** above.

## Location 6.4: Terrace Gatehouse — Warden's Quarters

This is the room where the Warden has his study and quarters. It is identical to the Warden's Quarters in the watchtowers (see **Location 5.8** above).

## Location 6.5: Terrace Gatehouse — The Mechanism

**Read aloud:** *This large room is dominated by the huge mechanism in the center. Its huge gears and levers reach almost to the ceiling 20 feet above, and stand suspended over a yawning black hole in the floor. The hole is a stone chimney dropping into unknown depths, surrounded by a 3-foot wrought iron railing. Hanging taut from the monstrous gears are eight massive chains, stretching down into the blackness. At each corner of the great mechanism is a large iron windlass and a lever. The entire mechanism is supported on each end by huge iron structures.*

The chains run from the winches to the barrier stones 100 feet below. The walls of chimney are roughly carved stone. The levers at all four windlasses must be thrown to drop the stones into place. The windlasses spin as the force of gravity pulls the stones into place. As long as opposite-corner levers are released at the same time, the chains will not snap under the weight, but a single chain might well fail if it had to hold up the entire stone for more than a few seconds. Raising the barrier stones requires five men on each windlass, all working at the same time; this process takes 30 minutes.

## Location 6.6: Terrace Gatehouse — Roof

Up here are several catapults; each has 100 stones and 50 pitch barrels stacked beside it. Every catapult has a clear field of fire to any target within range in any direction.

## Location 7: The Aerie — Main Gate

**Read aloud:** *The great fortress called the Aerie spans Condor Pass, stoppering it like a giant stone cork in the neck of a bottle. The 40-foot stone walls of the fortress, flanked by the towering 50-foot cliffs, cast the ground into deep shadow. There is only one entrance to the gigantic fortress, a 50-foot-wide yawning maw, with the spikes of the massive portcullis hanging 15 feet above the ground like blackened fangs. The grim, gray walls are featureless but for dozens of arrow slits and the slotted crenellations. Just as with all the previous fortifications, guards watch vigilantly from the battlements. Guards stand on either side of the main gate as well, two on each side, collecting money from everyone who enters.*

The portcullis that guards the main gate is a huge construction of wood and iron, 50 feet long and 15 feet tall.

## Portcullis: 6 in. thick, hardness 8, hp 120, Lift/Break DC 35.

The guards here collect the entry toll, which finances the Aerie (see sidebar *Aerie Entry Toll*). Even visitors who are not cowed by the Aerie's sheer impregnability should feel the watchful eye of Denskan troops at all times.

## Location 7.1: The Aerie — Throughway

**Read aloud:** *Just beyond the great portcullis is a broad passageway that passes straight through the center of the fortress and out of the other side. The ceiling, about 30 feet up, is lined with murder holes, as are the walls. Another portcullis just like the first divides this passageway in the halfway point. Positioned on each side of a passage are the massive wooden gates, two on this side of the central portcullis, two on the other side. Guards stand by each of these gates.*

### Aerie Entry Toll

**At both main gates of the fortress are guards who collect the entry toll. The toll based on the following criteria:**

- **1 gp per Small weapon.**
- **5 gp per Medium weapon.**
- **10 gp per Large weapon.**
- **1 gp per 20 arrows and/or crossbow bolts.**
- **5% of the total value of all trade goods.**
- **Minimum toll of 1 sp per person (this includes children and infants).**

**Denskan soldiers are exempt from this toll.**

During daylight hours, all portcullises are open so that travelers can pass through the fortress. The side gates open into the various quarters of the fortress, and these are all open during daylight hours as well. After dark, all gates and portcullises are shut tight. The side gates are comparable to the portcullises in strength.

**Side Gates:** 6 in. thick, hardness 8, hp 120, Lift/Break DC 35.

## Location 7.2: The Aerie — Throughway Roof

Atop the throughway is a long open space fortified with 15 catapults. The only way to reach this space is through General Gondorus' house or the Silver Guard quarters in the Noble Quarter. Refer to the maps of the Aerie. Each catapult has a stack of ammunition: 200 stone projectiles and 100 barrels of pitch.

## Location 8: The Aerie — Holy Quarter

**Read aloud:** *The massive Temple of Albrecht dominates this compound. Its facade stands over 60 feet tall and wide; a stylized white charger in carved alabaster is mounted on the dark stone wall above the tall, arched double doors. The temple's width expands toward the wall of the fortress. A group of tattered tents is clustered near one corner of temple. Along the outer wall of the fortress is a stacked terrace of military barracks, with Denskan soldiers everywhere going about their business. A second glance at the great temple gives the impression as being lifeless and empty, like a place that was once vibrant and alive with the spark of faith but now the spark has been extinguished.*

**Development:** This quarter is devoted to the clergy of Albrecht. Not so long ago, there also lived here some few paladins of Aroch. The paladins here devoted their lives to defending Denska from Deverenian invasion. Now they are all gone, and their loss hangs over the lives those who remain. Not long after all the paladins were destroyed, the Denskan authorities reinforced their troop strength with fresh Denskan regulars, but their presence here inspired the Aerie's soldiers beyond the effect of their small numbers. The temple was once wealthy and prestigious, practically aglow with the light of faith, but no longer. The priests who remain now oversee it, and the temple that housed the paladins now seems empty, like a tomb.

## Location 8.1: Holy Quarter — Troop Barracks

These cramped, dark, and smelly rooms all house 100–125 Denskan troops. They sleep in rows of bunks.

## Location 8.2: Holy Quarter — Winch Room

In this room is one of the winches that controls the corresponding portcullis. This winch requires two men to operate, and must be turned concurrently with the winch on the opposite side of the Throughway (*see* **Location 9.1**). Otherwise four men can use the winch in this room to control the portcullis. Four men stand guard in this room at all times

There are murder holes in the wall facing the Throughway.

**Creatures:** Four Denskan siege troops, 2nd-level fighters *(see* **Location 5.2** *for stats)*.

**Denskan siege troops (4):** hp 12, 14, 15, 15.

## Location 8.3: Holy Quarter — Temple of Albrecht Priest's Quarters

The only clergy remaining in the temple are head priest Adolphus and his acolyte, Sperius. Both men have become sullen and morose, although they try to perform their clerical duties in the proper spirit. Their faith has been shaken by the total destruction of the Aroch. The loss of so many good and valiant servants of Albrecht has led them to question the power of their deity, and to fear the future, although neither would ever admit it.

**Creatures:** Adolphus, an 8th-level cleric; Sperius, a 5th-level cleric.

**Adolphus, Priest of Albrecht, Male Human Clr 8:** CR 8; Medium humanoid (Human); HD 8d8+16; 52; Spd 20 ft.; Init +0; AC 20, touch 10, flat-footed 20; Base Atk +6; Grp +7; Atk +7 melee (1d8+1/x2, heavy mace); Full Atk +7/+2 melee (1d8+1/x2, heavy mace); SA Spells, turn undead 3/day; SQ Cleric domains (Good, Law), spontaneous casting; AL LG; SV Fort +8, Ref +2, Will +9; Str 12, Dex 11, Con 14, Int 13, Wis 16, Cha 10.

*Skills and Feats:* Concentration +8, Craft (armorsmith) +4, Diplomacy +5, Heal +9, Knowledge (religion) +6, Knowledge (history) +5, Spellcraft +5; Combat Casting, Combat Reflexes, Empower Spell, Extend Spell.

*Spontaneous Casting:* Adolphus can "lose" a prepared spell (except for a domain spell) in order to cast any *cure* spell of the same level or lower.

*Turn Undead:* Adolphus can attempt to turn undead 3 times per day.

*Cleric Spells Prepared* (6/5+1/4+1/4+1/2+1; save DC 13 + spell level): 0 — *strangled steel, cure minor wounds, detect magic, light, mending, read magic*; 1st — *bless, command, cure light wounds, detect evil, sanctuary, protection from evil**; 2nd — *gift from above, silent guardian, darkness, cure moderate wounds, aid**; 3rd — *banish the wound, divine protection, mass blessing, holy energy, magic circle against chaos**; 4th — *greater bull's strength, battle cry, holy smite**. *Domain spell

*Possessions: +1 half plate*, heavy steel shield, heavy mace.

**Sperius, Acolyte of Albrecht, Male Human Clr 5:** CR 5; Medium humanoid (Human); HD 5d8+10; 38; Spd 20 ft.; Init +0; AC 20, touch 10, flat-footed 20; Base Atk +3; Grp +5; Atk +5 melee (1d8+2/x2, heavy mace); Full Atk +5 melee (1d8+2/x2, heavy mace); SA Spells, turn undead 3/day; SQ Cleric domains (Good, Law), spontaneous casting; AL LG; SV Fort +6, Ref +2, Will +7; Str 14, Dex 12, Con 14, Int 11, Wis 16, Cha 10.

*Skills and Feats:* Concentration +5, Craft (armorsmith) +1, Diplomacy +1, Heal +5, Knowledge (religion) +2, Spellcraft +2; Combat Casting, Combat Reflexes, Empower Spell.

*Spontaneous Casting:* Sperius can "lose" a prepared spell (except for a domain spell) in order to cast any *cure* spell of the same level or lower.

*Turn Undead:* Sperius can attempt to turn undead 3 times per day.

*Cleric Spells Prepared* (5/4+1/3+1/2+1; save DC 13 + spell level): 0 — *strangled steel, cure minor wounds, detect magic, light, read magic*; 1st — *bless, cure light wounds, detect evil, sanctuary, protection from evil**; 2nd — *gift from above, silent guardian, cure moderate wounds, aid**; 3rd — *banish the wound, mass blessing, magic circle against chaos**. *Domain spell

*Possessions:* Half plate, heavy steel shield, heavy mace.

## Location 8.4: Holy Quarter — Empty Rooms

The paladins of Aroch once occupied these rooms. Now they stand cold and empty. No one has yet dared to move into them.

## Location 8.5: Holy Quarter — Albrecht's Worship Chamber

**Read aloud:** *This chamber is huge, its majesty unparalleled. The candles and lanterns still burn brightly, and the air is redolent with spicy incense, but the room seems lifeless, as if the god has turned his back on his faithful.*

## Location 8.6: Holy Quarter — The Pilgrims

**Development:** When news of the destruction of the Aroch paladins spread, Albrecht's Denskan faithful began to journey to the Aerie to pay their respects at a place known once to house such great men. Some of the pilgrims were kin to the paladins who died, some just so stricken by the loss that they traveled here for solace, fearing the death of the whole world was upon them.

The pilgrims refuse to shelter inside the venerated temple, even though Adolphus issues a daily invitation. They remain outside in their fragile tents, exposed to the elements, demonstrating their faith and grief. They sustain themselves by carving wooden trinkets in Albrecht's image and peddling them to passersby (1 sp each). These pilgrims often frequent the gatehouses to sell their wares to the people clustered there.

## Location 8.7: Holy Quarter — Officers' Quarters

These rooms house the mid-level and commanding officers of the troops in this quarter.

## Location 8.8: Holy Quarter — Walkway

This is the battlement walk for the northeastern wall. There are many catapults here; their ammunition is stored in **Location** 8.9.

## Location 8.9: Holy Quarter — Ammunition and Armory

This room stores all the ammunition for the catapults in **Location** 8.8, as well as arrows, bows, and melee weapons.

## Location 8.10: Holy Quarter — Open Roof

## Location 9: The Aerie — Troop Quarter

**Read aloud:** *This area looks like a busy military installation, with troops hurrying about their duties, drilling in formation near the stables, practicing with weapons, and cleaning stables. The southern wall of this area features four roughly symmetrical caves, two at ground level and two more directly above them.*

*Half of the Denskan regulars in the Aerie are stationed in this quarter. All troops report here for duty assignments, training, and pay.*

## Location 9.1: Troop Quarter — Troop Barracks

These rooms all house 80–100 Denskan troops, but are otherwise identical to area **Location** 8.1.

## Location 9.2: Troop Quarter — Winch Room

This room is the counterpart to **Location** 8.2, and is functionally identical.

## Location 9.3: Troop Quarter — Smithy

## Location 9.4: Troop Quarter — Officers' Quarters

These rooms house the mid-level and commanding officers of the troops in this quarter.

## Location 9.5: Troop Quarter — Stables

These long buildings house the horses for the military garrison. Each building holds 75–150 horses and their tack and saddles. The stablemaster is a Silver Guard named Tracus.

## Location 9.6: Troop Quarter — Jail Cell

This is where the Silver Guard keeps its prisoners. There is a 50% chance for each cell to be occupied.

## Location 9.7: Troop Quarter — Guard Room

This room holds four guards at all hours. Their job is to oversee the prisoners in the cells on this floor.

**Creatures:** Four Denskan siege troops, 2nd-level fighters *(see Location 5.2 for stats)*.

**Denskan siege troops (4):** hp 12, 14, 15, 15.

## Location 9.8: Troop Quarter — Open Roof

## Location 9.9: Troop Quarter — Walkway

This is the battlement walk for the southeastern wall. There are many catapults here; their ammunition is stored in **Location 9.10**.

## Location 9.10: Troop Quarter — Ammunition and Armory

This room stores all the ammunition for the catapults in **Location 9.9**, as well as arrows, bows, and melee weapons.

## Location 10: The Aerie — Merchant Quarter

**Read aloud:** *This area bustles like the commerce district of every large town in the Accordlands. People stroll or hurry to and fro. Shopkeepers hawk their wares from open doors. Vendors push their carts through the milling throngs, peddling treats and drinks. The streets and alley are narrow, the buildings all two-stories high. Shadows of the cliffs and fortress walls darken everything.*

**Development:** Except for the inns and taverns, businesses here close at dusk. The GM can detail the businesses as necessary, following the rules for large towns and the Merchants' Quarter above.

All the buildings in this quarter are two-story wooden structures. The ground floor is always the storefront; merchants and tradesmen live upstairs.

There are no troops stationed here, but there are always two guards patrolling on foot and four sentries on the western wall.

**Creatures:** Six Denskan siege troops, 2nd-level fighters *(see Location 5.2 for stats)*.

**Denskan siege troops (6):** hp 12, 14, 15, 15, 12, 14.

## Location 10.1: Merchant Quarter — Winch Room

This room is the counterpart to **Location 11.7**, and is functionally identical to **Location 8.2**.

### Rumors in the Merchant Quarter

PCs can hear the following rumors with Gather Information checks (DC 15).

- The tensions between Denska and Deverenia have been very high lately, with the Deverenians accusing the Denskans of supporting bandit raids on Deverenian soil.
- A lonely beggar, Jimlek, prowls the Merchant Quarter at night. Lately he has been babbling about scratching noises along the north wall of the Merchant Quarter. He is mad, so no one believes him.
- Lord Dalimus is disliked among many of the Denskans because he is "soft on the Devs." Some even grumble that he might betray Denska and turn the Pass over to the enemy.
- General Gondorus hates Deverenia with a white-hot passion.
- There have been too many Deverenian merchants coming through the pass lately. They must be spies.
- There are Deverenian spies hiding among the Andoverian refugees in the tent city.
- There are occasional reports of Nothrogs in the area. People cannot imagine that Nothrogs are trying to take Condor Pass. The Deverenians would not let a Nothrog legion pass through their lands; they want Condor Pass for themselves.
- Someone found a dead condor in the mountains, apparently killed and eaten by something very large.

## Location 11: The Aerie — Noble Quarter

**Read aloud:** *This enclosure carries an air of quiet dignity and repose. The water in the central fountain gushes placidly from the mouth of a pegasus that spreads its wings over the courtyard. The din of the throughway is all but gone here.*

**Development:** Unlike the other quarters of the Aerie, the Noble Quarter is closed at all times. Anyone who wishes entrance without military escort or prior invitation must convince the guards that his business is important. In some cases, the guard goes to his superiors to check with them before opening the gate to strangers. Everyone admitted to the Noble Quarter has his name and purpose entered into a log.

Bribery is a tried and true method of entering by which some rich merchants regularly gain access to Lord Dalimus or General Gondorus. The minimum bribe is 50 gp; smaller sums may land the stingy character in jail on charges of attempted bribery.

The Noble Quarter is guarded exclusively by the Silver Guard. Except for the gate guards, regular troops are not normally allowed in here.

## Location 11.1: Noble Quarter — Silver Guard Barracks

This room houses most of the members of the Silver Guard, 75 of whom live here. During daylight hours, 10–40 of them are present. After dark, there are 50–60.

**Creatures:** 10–40 Silver Guard (day) or 50–60 Silver Guard (night), 2nd-level fighters *(see* **Location 5.2** *for stats).*

**Silver Guard (10–40 day; 50–60 night):** hp as rolled.

## Location 11.2: Noble Quarter — Silver Guard Mess Hall

Three times per day, meals are made available to any member of the Silver Guard who chooses to eat here. They are often performing duties in other areas, so usually only those stationed here partake.

## Location 11.3: Noble Quarter — Silver Guard Kitchen

A large kitchen with enough supplies and utensils to feed large numbers of men three times per day. 4–8 cooks are always present during daylight hours.

## Location 11.4: Noble Quarter — General Gondorus' House Entrance

General Gondorus is the commander of all the Denskan troops in the Aerie. He is not nearly as wealthy as Lord Dalimus. His decor is utilitarian, not extravagant, and appropriate for a professional soldier. Whenever the General is in the house (30% of the time during daylight hours), two Silver Guards are present at the front door.

## Location 11.5: Noble Quarter — General Gondorus' Personal Guards

The General keeps a personal contingent of 15 Silver Guards, all of whom are housed here.

## Location 11.6: Noble Quarter — General Gondorus' Dining Hall

This richly appointed room is where General Gondorus entertains guests and holds banquets. In times of the trouble, it is where he meets with his commanders.

## Location 11.7: Noble Quarter — Winch Room

This room is the counterpart to **Location 10.1**. Two Silver Guards are here at all times.

**Creatures:** Two Silver Guard, 2nd-level fighters *(see* **Location 2** *for stats).*

**Silver Guard (2):** hp 13, 15.

## Location 11.8: Noble Quarter — General Gondorus' Office

**Development:** General Gondorus' private office is decorated with the memorabilia of a life of conflict, enshrined on dark wooden wall-mounted plaques. The heads of beasts, elven weapons, and the cleft helm of a Deverenian knight, all hang in silent testimony to the general's violent life. "Old Iron Jaw's" dark eyes peer out from under bushy salt and pepper eyebrows, and his hair is pulled back into a thick gray ponytail. He is a hard, no-nonsense man, with little time for niceties. He hates the Deverenians with a white-hot fury. He is the last of his family; his father, brothers, and sons all fell to Deverenian blades, and his wife died of a fever several years ago. He fears that he will die before he finds a suitable wife to give him an heir, as he is too old for most Denskan noble maidens and widows.

Since the destruction of the Aroch paladins, the General has felt his fortress is particularly vulnerable. The Denskan regulars housed here are good men, but they lack the heartening presence of the paladins. He grieves for them, and fears that if the Deverenians attack, the great condors will not be enough to fend off the Knights of the Storm and their verdatha.

**Creature:** General Gondorus, 13h-level fighter.

**General Gondorus, Commander of the Aerie, Male Human Ftr 13:** CR 13; Medium humanoid (Human); HD 13d10+26; hp 98; Init +7; Spd 20 ft.; AC 24, touch 11, flat-footed 23; Base Atk +13; Grp +16; Atk +19 melee (1d8+8(17–20/x2), *+2 longsword*); Atk +19/+14/+9 (1d8+8(17–20/x2), *+2 longsword*); SA Favored weapon (longsword, heavy crossbow, battleaxe), improved critical threat (longsword), improved damage (longsword, heavy crossbow); SQ —; AL LN; SV Fort +10, Ref +7, Will +4; Str 17, Dex 16, Con 15, Int 12, Wis 11, Cha 13.

*Skills and Feats:* Climb +2*, Diplomacy +5, Handle Animal +7, Jump +2*, Listen +3, Ride +9, Sense Motive +4, Spot +2; Cleave, Combat Reflexes, Great Cleave, Improved Bull Rush, Improved Initiative, Improved Sunder, Leadership, Mounted Combat, Power Attack, Two-Weapon Fighting. *includes –6 armor check penalty

*Favored Weapon (longsword, heavy crossbow, battleaxe):* General Gondorus gains a +1 competence bonus to attack and damage rolls with the longsword, heavy crossbow and battleaxe.

*Improved Critical Threat (longsword):* General Gondorus' critical threat range is increased by +2 (to 17–20) with the longsword.

*Improved Damage (longsword, heavy crossbow):* General Gondorus does an additional +2 (+3 total) damage with the longsword and heavy crossbow.

*Possessions: +2 full plate, +1 heavy steel shield, +2 longsword.*

## Location 11.9: Noble Quarter — General Gondorus' Chambers

The General's private chambers, where he takes his meals and rests.

## Location 11.10: Noble Quarter — Warden Academy Entrance

**Read aloud:** *Open to the sky, this high-walled enclosure is quiet and tranquil, with a burbling fountain in the center of the enclosure. Engraved in the stone wall above the gilded door are the words, "From above they watch, from below we listen; from above they attack, from below we command. From without they come, from within we spurn; from without they destroy, from within we rebuild."*

**Development:** In this secretive corner of the fortress is the magic school where Wardens learn their art. The school will accept any Denskan with magical potential, but not after 1st level. Their abilities are specialized. After a three-year apprenticeship, Wardens are inducted into the order at 1st rank. There are eight ranks, with the only 8th rank Warden being the Master of the School. Current officeholder Nicodemus is also Master Warden.

Nicodemus is not interested in political power, although by virtue of his station he holds a great deal. He reveres and respects the great condors and he treats his underlings well. They, in turn, hold him in high esteem. There are currently 30 Wardens of various ranks and 4 apprentices.

**Creature:** Nicodemus, Master Warden, 12th-level wizard.

**Nicodemus, Master Warden, Male Human Wiz 12:** CR 12; Medium humanoid (Human); HD 12d4+24; hp 54; Spd 30 ft.; Init +0; AC 13, touch 13, flat-footed 13; Base Atk +6; Grp +6; Atk +6 melee (1d6/x2, quarterstaff); Full Atk +6/+1 melee (1d6/x2, quarterstaff); SA Spells; SQ Eidetic memory (*charm person, begone, hold monster, soul knife, magic missile, greater identify*), summon familiar (weasel); AL LG; SV Fort +6, Ref +4, Will +11; Str 10, Dex 11, Con 14, Int 18, Wis 16, Cha 12.

*Skills and Feats:* Alchemy +16, Concentration +15, Knowledge (Arcana) +16, Knowledge (Religion) +16, Scry +16, Spellcraft +16; Combat Casting, Craft Magical Ward, Empower Spell, Extend Spell, Enlarge Spell, Maximize Spell, Scribe Scroll, Silent Spell, Still Spell.

*Eidetic Memory:* The Master Warden may spontaneously cast *charm person, begone, hold monster, soul knife, magic missile,* and *greater identify* in place of a prepared spell of equal or higher level. This loses the prepared spell to fuel the memorized spell.

*Wizard Spells Prepared* (4/5/5/5/4/3/2; save DC 14 + spell level): 0 — *mage hand, detect magic, read magic, light*; 1st — *power spike, cone of silence, magic missile, charm person, cause fear*; 2nd — *acid arrow, begone, fireeyes, flame arrow, weakness*; 3rd — *cloak of fear, arcane archery, greater identify, fireball, daylight*; 4th — *phantasmal killer, ice bolt, soul knife, poison blood*; 5th — *acid storm, greater bull's strength, speed of the gods*; 6th — *exposure, disintegrate*.

*Possessions:* Quarterstaff, *ring of protection +3*, spellbook.

**Familiar (weasel):** Nicodemus' weasel familiar has the following statistics:

**Weasel (Familiar):** CR —; Tiny magical beast; HD 12; hp 26; Init +2; Spd 20 ft., climb 20 ft.; AC 20, touch 16, flat-footed 18; Base Atk +6; Grp –6; Atk +8 melee (1d3–4/x2, bite); Full Atk +8 melee (1d3–4/x2, bite); Space/Reach 2–1/2 ft./0 ft.; SA —; SQ low-light vision, scent, attach, empathic link, share spells, improved evasion, deliver touch spells, speak with master, speak with animals of its kind, spell resistance 17; AL N; SV Fort +4, Ref +6, Will +9; Str 3, Dex 15, Con 10, Int 11, Wis 12, Cha 5.

*Skill and Feats:* Balance +10*, Climb +10*, Hide +11, Move Silently +8*, Spot +3; Weapon Finesse (bite). *Weasels have a +4 racial bonus on Move Silently checks and a +8 racial bonus on Balance and Climb checks. They use their Dexterity modifier for Climb checks. A weasel can always choose to take 10 on a Climb check, even if rushed or threatened.

*Low-Light Vision:* A weasel can see twice as far as a Human in starlight, moonlight, torchlight, and similar conditions of shadowy illumination. It retains the ability to distinguish color and detail under these conditions.

*Scent:* A weasel can detect opponents within 30 feet by sense of smell. If the opponent is upwind, the range increases to 60 feet; if downwind, it drops to 15 feet. Strong scents, such as smoke or rotting garbage, can be detected at twice the ranges noted above. Overpowering scents, such as skunk musk or troglodyte stench, can be detected at triple normal range. When a weasel detects a scent, the exact location of the source is not revealed—only its presence somewhere within range. The weasel can take a move action to note the direction of the scent.

Whenever the weasel comes within 5 feet of the source, it pinpoints the source's location.

*Attach (Ex):* If a weasel hits with a bite attack, it uses its powerful jaws to latch onto the opponent's body and automatically deals bite damage each round it remains attached. The attached weasel loses its Dexterity bonus to Armor Class and has an AC of 18. An attached weasel can be struck with a weapon or grappled itself. To remove an attached weasel through grappling, the opponent must achieve a pin against the creature.

*Familiar Ability Descriptions:* Nicodemus's familiar has special abilities (or imparts abilities to its masters) depending on his combined level in classes that grant familiars. The abilities are cumulative.

*Alertness (Ex):* While his familiar is within arm's reach, Nicodemus gains the Alertness feat.

*Improved Evasion (Ex):* When subjected to an attack that normally allows a Reflex saving throw for half damage, a familiar takes no damage if it makes a successful saving throw and half damage even if the saving throw fails.

*Share Spells:* At Nicodemus's option, he may have any spell (but not any spell-like ability) he casts on himself also affect her familiar. The familiar must be within 5 feet at the time of casting to receive the benefit. If the spell or effect has a duration other than instantaneous, it stops affecting the familiar if it moves farther than 5 feet away and will not affect the familiar again even if it returns to Nicodemus before the duration expires. Additionally, Nicodemus may cast a spell with a target of "You" on his familiar (as a touch range spell) instead of on himself. Nicodemus and his familiar can share spells even if the spells normally do not affect creatures of the familiar's type (magical beast).

*Empathic Link (Su):* Nicodemus has an empathic link with his familiar out to a distance of up to 1 mile. Nicodemus cannot see through the familiar's eyes, but they can communicate empathically. Because of the limited nature of the link, only general emotional content can be communicated. Because of this empathic link, Nicodemus has the same connection to an item or place that his familiar does.

*Deliver Touch Spells (Su):* Nicodemus's familiar can deliver touch spells for him. If Nicodemus and the familiar are in contact at the time Nicodemus casts a touch spell, he can designate his familiar as the "toucher." The familiar can then deliver the touch spell just as Nicodemus could. As usual, if Nicodemus casts another spell before the touch is delivered, the touch spell dissipates.

*Speak with Master (Ex):* Nicodemus and his familiar can communicate verbally as if they were using a common language. Other creatures do not understand the communication without magical help.

*Speak with Animals of Its Kind (Ex):* Nicodemus's familiar can communicate with similar creatures (weasels, minks, polecats, ermines, skunks, wolverines, and badgers), including dire varieties. Such communication is limited by the intelligence of the conversing creatures.

## Location 11.11: Noble Quarter — Warden Apprentice Quarters

The apprentice Wardens live and study in these rooms. For the length of their apprenticeship, they seldom leave the school.

## Location 11.12: Noble Quarter — Warden Teacher Quarters

Wardens who are not currently assigned to duties elsewhere live here.

## Location 11.13:Noble Quarter — Warden Ritual Chamber

Most instruction takes place in this room, which has a large magical circle permanently inscribed on the floor. The more experienced Wardens perform some of their most potent magic here.

## Location 11.14: Noble Quarter — Lord Dalimus' Manor House Entrance

**Read aloud:** *The heavy, beautifully carved double doors open on a luxuriously appointed foyer with a wide, sweeping staircase. The foyer floor is a incredible mosaic depicting the fall of the Dragon. The walls are covered with religious artworks, from depictions of the Storm, to the trials of Albrecht, to Old Deverenian statues of their many gods and goddesses. The fragrant air hints of sandalwood and expensive incense.*

**Development:** This is the home of Lord Dalimus, the Denskan nobleman who holds the lands of Condor Pass. He often hosts visiting nobles who brave the journey through the pass. In times of relative peace, he has even put up a few Deverenian nobles wishing to negotiate trade deals with the Denskan nobility.

Lord Dalimus is fascinated by religion. He is a devout adherent of Albrecht, but pragmatic enough to know that he cannot live up to those lofty ideals. The destruction of the Aroch pains him both spiritually and personally, as he lost his long-time friend who commanded the Aerie's paladins. Dalimus will do whatever is necessary to protect Condor Pass from Deverenian attack. He knows they will always have designs on the Aerie, but he views this as simple politics and Human nature. Nations naturally wish to expand their borders, and Deverenia's only avenue for expansion is through Condor Pass. He does not hold this fact against them, but he will never allow it while he breathes. He does not share General Gondorus' naked hatred of the Deverenians; in fact he is distantly related to some Deverenian noble families.

Lord Dalimus has a wife, Lady Calpurnia, four sons, and three daughters. Eldest son Senimus is nearing adulthood and plans to join the Silver Guard.

**Creature:** Lord Dalimus, an 8th-level aristocrat/3rd-level fighter.

**Lord Dalimus, Male Human Ari 8/Ftr 3:** CR 10; Medium humanoid (Human); HD 8d8+8 plus 3d10+3; hp 60; Init +6; Spd 20 ft.; AC 19, touch 10, flat-footed 19; Base Atk +9; Grp +10; Atk +13 melee (1d6+4 plus 1 Con/18–20, *+2 wounding rapier*); Full Atk +13/+8 melee (1d6+4 plus 1 Con/18–20, *+2 wounding rapier*); SA Favored weapon (rapier); SQ —; AL LN; SV Fort +6, Ref +7, Will +11; Str 12, Dex 15, Con 12, Int 12, Wis 14, Cha 16.

*Skills and Feats:* Appraise +5, Bluff +11, Climb –1*, Diplomacy +11, Gather Information +7, Handle Animal +7, Intimidate +7, Knowledge (history) +5, Listen +6, Perform +7, Ride +6, Sense Motive +10, Spot +6; Blind Fight, Grace of the Gods, Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Lightning Reflexes.

*includes –6 Armor Check penalty

*Favored Weapon (rapier):* Lord Dalimus gains a +1 competence bonus to attack and damage rolls with the rapier.

*Possessions: +2 half-plate, +2 wounding rapier.*

## Location 11.15: Noble Quarter — Dalimus' Dining Hall

This is a grand, richly decorated dining hall where Dalimus throws extravagant banquets for visiting nobility and other eminent guests.

## Location 11.15: Noble Quarter — Guard Quarters

Lord Dalimus' personal retinue of 10 Silver Guard who live in these rooms. There are always 2 sleeping here because they are on duty around the clock.

**Creatures:** Two Silver Guard, 2nd-level fighters *(see* **Location 5.2** *for stats).*

**Silver Guard (2):** hp 13, 15.

## Location 11.15: Noble Quarter — Kitchen

This large kitchen filled with food and equipment sufficient to serve a noble household. There are 4–8 cooks here throughout daylight hours.

## Location 11.15: Noble Quarter — Servant Quarters

Five of Lord Dalimus' servants live in each these rooms.

## Location 11.15: Noble Quarter — Guest Rooms

These rooms are richly decorated, but not extravagant. Each room has a piece of religious art, like statues, paintings, and frescoes.

## Location 11.15: Noble Quarter — Lord Dalimus' Chambers

Lord Dalimus and his family live in these rooms. All are decorated in the same style as the rest of the house.

## Location 11.15: Noble Quarter — Lord Dalimus' Study

Lord Dalimus meets privately with visitors in this room. The study is cozy and comfortable, with a large fireplace and shelves of ancient books. Most of the books are about the history of various religions, cosmology, and history.

## Location 11.15: Noble Quarter — Open Roof

## Location 12: The Aerie — Condor Cave

**Read aloud:** *Hollowed from the rock of the cliff face are four large cave mouths, two at ground level, two about 30 feet above them. The gaping cave mouths open into a much larger space. The sour, dusty smell of feathers and birds permeates the air around the entrance and grows denser inside. Inside the caves are the sounds of... movement. The movement of very large things. You can feel the glare of large yellow eyes upon you from the cavernous darkness.*

**Development:** All four of these caves open into a single large cavern where the Denskans keep their fighting condors. The uppermost ceiling of the cave is over 80 feet high, but even this large space is cramped by the presence of the huge condors. There are 20 of them here at any given time, along with 4 Wardens.

Condors are ill-tempered, territorial birds and have been known to attack strangers wandering into the cave. The Wardens can control the condors *most* of the time.

If the Aerie is attacked, the Wardens send these birds out to attack the enemy.

**Creatures:** Twenty Denskan condors; four Wardens, 10th-level wizards *(see* **Location 5.2** *for stats)*.

**Wardens (4):** hp 25, 28, 24, 24.

**Denskan Condor (20):** CR 8; Huge beast; HD 10d10+50; hp 105; Init +1; Spd 20 ft., fly 80 ft. (average); AC 15, touch 9, flat-footed 14; Base Atk +7; Grp +23; Atk +15 melee (2d4+8/x2, talon); Full Atk +15 melee (2d4+8/x2, talon), +10 melee (2d6+4/x2, bite); Space/Reach 15 ft./15 ft.; AL N; SA —; SQ —; SV Fort +12, Ref +4, Will +8; Str 26, Dex 13, Con 21, Int 2, Wis 13, Cha 8.

*Skills and Feats:* Listen +4, Spot +4*; Snatch. * Denskan condors have a +4 racial bonus on Spot checks.

## Location 13: The Aerie — Tent City

**Read aloud:** *Clustered around the outside of the western gate are dozens of ragged tents, haphazardly placed. The air reeks of refuse and unwashed bodies. People stare with hollow, emotionless expressions. Their faces are sometimes filthy, their clothes torn and stained. A wailing infant's cries echo mournfully from the uncaring cliff sides.*

**Development:** Many refugees from Andover have clustered here for shelter and mutual comfort. There is no room for them inside the fortress. The Denskan authorities have offered the refugees shelter and protection, but the local troops have made it clear that they are not welcome here, even though they are not hostile. These refugees were all victims of the recent Elf attacks, and they have seen blood and slaughter enough to last them the rest of their days. They despise all Elves, and any Elf who looks vulnerable or alone has a 75% chance of being attacked by 2–8 vengeful refugees.

Vendors and craftsmen still sell their wares to travelers and inhabitants of this destitute neighborhood.

This is also the area where the fortress has located its unpleasant but necessary jobs. Occasionally a nauseating stench washes over this area as muleskinners, renderers, and tanners do their malodorous work.

# Part 2: Lair of the Terror

## Location 14: Lair of the Terror *(map page 492)*

**Development:** The Terror of Condor Pass has been planning its attack on the Aerie for over a year, steadily gathering a large group of followers for its assault on the fortress. The reaver has brought most of its followers into the large staging area near the Aerie (see **Location 15** below), leaving only a few in the outer cave to guard the rear and to continue forays against the Deverenians. Any sound of combat alerts every bandit in the cavern within 2d6 rounds to run toward the fight. Because all of its followers are under the reaver's *domination* it knows immediately if any of them are attacked. It cannot see or hear through its minions' senses, but it knows what they are experiencing.

## Location 14.1: Lair of the Terror — Sentry Post

**Read aloud:** *The trail leads along the side of a jagged mountain peak. To one side is a precipitous drop to a rocky death, to the other side a sheer cliff wall. In places, the path is less than 5 feet wide, in others it spreads to 10 feet, but it is always treacherous.*

Hidden in clefts in the rocks, with an excellent view of the path, are two sentry posts, each manned by two Nothrogs. If the sentries spot any strangers coming down the path, one of them runs to alert his superiors inside the cavern, while the other stays to monitor the intruders. Once the sentries have alerted the reaver's other followers, they wait in ambush to attack once the PCs enter the larger cavern (area 14c).

PCs can make Spot checks (DC 25) to see the sentries.

**Creatures:** Four Nothrog bandits, 3rd-level rogues.

**Nothrog Bandits Sentry (4), Male Nothrog Rog 3:** CR 3; Medium humanoid (Nothrog); HD 3d6+9; hp 22; Spd 30 ft.; Init +2; AC 15, touch 12, flat-footed 13; Base Atk +2; Grp +4; Atk +4 melee (1d10+2(19–20/x2), bastard sword) or +4 ranged (1d6/x3, shortbow); Full Atk +4 melee (1d10+2(19–20/x2), bastard sword) or +4 ranged (1d6/x3, shortbow); SA Sneak attack +1d6; SQ Evasion, hide in plain sight, Nothrog traits; AL NE; SV Fort +3, Ref +5, Will +0; Str 15, Dex 16, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 9, Cha 7.

*Skills and Feats:* Balance +5*, Climb +5*, Disable Device +5, Escape Artist +5*, Hide +5*, Open Lock +5, Swim +5*, Tumble +5*; Exotic Weapon Proficiency (bastard sword), Toughness. *includes –1 Armor Check penalty

*Evasion:* If a Nothrog bandit makes a successful Reflex saving throw against an attack that normally deals half damage on a successful save, he instead takes no damage. Evasion can be used only if a Nothrog bandit is wearing light armor or no armor. A helpless Nothrog bandit does not gain the benefit of evasion.

*Hide In Plain Sight:* Each time a Nothrog bandit makes a Hide check, he may reduce the total penalty (if any) to his skill check by his rogue class level (3), to a minimum of 0.

*Sneak Attack:* Anytime the Nothrog bandit's target is denied a Dexterity bonus to AC, or when he flanks a target, the Nothrog bandit deals an additional 1d6 points of damage on a successful melee attack.

*Possessions:* Studded leather armor, bastard sword, shortbow, 20 arrows.

## Location 14.2: Lair of the Terror — Entrance

**Read aloud:** *The narrow trail splits to lead behind a large fallen boulder. The boulder is 30 feet tall, leaning against the cliffside with its base amidst a pile of loose rocks.*

Behind the fallen rock is a hidden cave entrance. The cave leads back into the mountainside.

**When the PCs enter the cave, read aloud:** *The passage opens into a large natural cavern. The moist, cool cavern air carries the scents of habitation, like smoke, straw, and refuse. The walls are cold, dark, and wet, and water drips somewhere in the distance.*

## Location 14.3: Lair of the Terror — Stolen Goods

**Read aloud:** *Stacked haphazardly beside a large rock formation are dozens of sacks and crates. Gold glints on the cave floor around the stack.*

*Treasure:* This pile contains most the goods stolen during the bandits' forays. There is a wide variety of items, from bolts of fine Deverenian velvet, to small art objects, to finely made weapons (some of them masterwork), to coffers of gold, silver, and jewels. The total value of the hoard is about 15,000 gp. There is also a large quantity of food here, such as sacks of grain, bread, barrels of pickled meat, and great slabs of cheese. Most of the food appears to have been sampled.

The reaver is not concerned about any of its followers stealing the treasure, because all of them are completely subject to its *domination*. Therefore, the treasure is left unguarded. However, there is a 50% chance that 1d6 Denskan bandits are in or moving through this area from **Location 14.4** or **Location 14.7**.

**Creatures:** Two Denskan bandits, 5th-level rogues.

**Denskan Bandits (2), Male Human Rog 5:** CR 5; Medium humanoid (Human); HD 5d6+5; hp 23; Spd 30 ft.; Init +3; AC 15, touch 13, flat-footed 13; Base Atk +3; Grp +5; Atk +6 melee (1d6+2(18–20/x2), rapier) or +6 ranged (1d6/x3, shortbow); Full Atk +6 melee (1d6+2(18–20/x2), rapier) or +6 ranged (1d6/x3, shortbow); SA Sneak attack +2d6; SQ Evasion, hide in plain sight, improved nightsight; AL NE; SV Fort +2, Ref +7, Will +0; Str 14, Dex 16, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 9, Cha 8.

*Skills and Feats:* Appraise +1, Balance +9*, Bluff +1, Climb +7*, Disable Device +6, Disguise +1, Escape Artist +10*, Hide +11*, Intimidate +1, Jump +6*, Listen +1, Move Silently +8*, Search +1, Sense Motive +1, Spot +1, Sleight of Hand +7*, Use Rope +5; Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Weapon Finesse (rapier). *includes –1 armor check penalty

*Evasion:* If a Denskan bandit makes a successful Reflex saving throw against an attack that normally deals half damage on a successful save, he instead takes no damage. Evasion can be used only if a Denskan bandit is wearing light armor or no armor. A helpless Denskan bandit does not gain the benefit of evasion

*Hide In Plain Sight:* Each time a Denskan bandit makes a Hide check, he may reduce the total penalty (if any) to his skill check by his rogue class level (5), to a minimum of 0.

*Improved Nightsight:* A Denskan bandit can see half again as far as normal in conditions of low light.

*Sneak Attack:* Anytime the Denskan bandit's target is denied a Dexterity bonus to AC, or when he flanks a target, the Denskan bandit deals an additional 2d6 points of damage on a successful melee attack.

*Possessions:* Studded leather armor, rapier, shortbow, 20 arrows.

## Location 14.4: Lair of the Terror — Guard Post

**Read aloud:** *The cavern appears to branch. The air here reeks of rotting garbage, filth, and worse. The stench emanates from a black opening on the right side of the passageway. Standing guard on the left side of the passageway are two very unhappy-looking Nothrog warriors.*

This is the price of failure in the Terror's organization: standing guard over prisoners beside the garbage pile (see **Location 14.5** and **Location 14.6**). The two Nothrog guards on guard duty here have been sickened by the overpowering stench. They suffer a –1 penalty to all attack and damage rolls, saves, and checks for as long as they remain in this area and for 10 minutes after leaving the area.

## Location 14.5: Lair of the Terror — Garbage Pile (EL 8)

**Read aloud:** *The right branch of cavern opens into a deep black hole. The cave floor falls away sharply at the edge of the passageway. The stench roiling out of this opening is all but unbearable. In the darkness below is a disgusting heap of refuse over 5 feet high. Beyond the garbage pile, the cavern stretches off into blackness.*

**Development** The bandits dump everything here: rotten food, garbage, even corpses. The pile is putrid beyond belief. Anyone within 5 feet of the opening to this tunnel must make a Fortitude save (DC 20) or be nauseated.

There is nothing of value inside the pile. It fills the passageway to depth of about 5 feet, and extends 20 feet into the lower cavern. Beyond the pile of refuse, the passage goes off into the depths of unknown natural caverns. The details are left up to the GM.

Living in the garbage pile is a swarm of bombardier beetles.

**Creatures:** Six giant bombardier beetles.

**Giant Bombardier Beetles (6):** CR 2; Medium vermin; HD 2d8+4; hp 13; Init +0; Spd 30 ft.; AC 16, touch 10, flat-footed 16; Base Atk +1, Grp +2; Atk +2 melee (1d4+1/x2, bite); Full Atk +2 melee (1d4+1/x2, bite); Space/Reach 5 ft./5 ft.; SA Acid spray; SQ Darkvision 60 ft., vermin traits; AL N; SV Fort +5, Ref +0, Will +0; Str 13, Dex 10, Con 14, Int —, Wis 10, Cha 9.

*Skills and Feats:* Jump +18, Listen +9, Spot +3; Alertness, Iron Will, Track, Weapon Focus (bite).

*Acid Spray:* When attacked or disturbed, the creature can release a 10-foot cone of acidic vapor once per round. Those within the cone must succeed on a DC 13 Fortitude save or take 1d4+2 points of acid damage. The save DC is Constitution-based

*Darkvision, 60 ft.:* A giant bombardier beetle can see in the dark with no light source at all, out to a range of 60 feet. Darkvision is black and white only (colors cannot be discerned). It does not allow the giant bombardier beetle to see anything that it could not see otherwise—invisible objects are still invisible, and illusions are still visible as what they seem to be. Likewise, darkvision subjects the giant bombardier beetle to gaze attacks normally. The presence of light does not spoil darkvision.

**Vermin Traits:** Giant bombardier beetles possess the following traits:

- Mindless: No Intelligence score, and immunity to all mind-affecting effects (charms, compulsions, phantasms, patterns, and morale effects).
- Vermin breathe, eat, and sleep.

## Location 14.6: Lair of the Terror — Prisoners

**Read aloud:** *Several humanoids huddle in the dark recesses of this large cavern, their clothing stained and torn. They glance furtively at you, terror evident in their eyes. One man, lying on a pile of rags along the rear wall, is dressed in the ruined velvet and silk of a Deverenian noble. A wounded shoulder has soaked half his upper body with blood, and his face is pale. Sitting beside him is a young Deverenian woman, perhaps sixteen years old, dressed in the same colors as the wounded man. Her gaze is vigilant but defiant.*

**Development:** There are ten prisoners here, including Deverenian nobleman Lord Traxus and his daughter Portia. The two Deverenians are sitting alone, because the other prisoners are Denskan men and do not trust them.

The prisoners are the unfortunate victims of the bandit raids who have been brought back to the reaver's lair to be *dominated.* The reaver has not yet attended to this detail so the prisoners wait here under guard.

Lord Traxus was wounded in the raid, and his wound has become infected. He will die within a week unless he is cured, but he can still speak. His normal Deverenian noble arrogance is tempered by the desperate situation. He does anything to save himself and his precious daughter, even helping those he would normally consider enemies.

Portia is a beautiful, haughty, selfish brat. She refuses to speak to anyone who does not treat her and her father with proper deference. She fears for her own life much more than her father's. She would leave him behind in an instant if it meant saving her own skin. If one of the PCs happens to be an attractive Deverenian male of proper social standing, she immediately begins ingratiating herself. Any Human who is not Deverenian is nothing more than a mongrel to be kicked aside, although she does not hesitate to use such a person to save herself.

**Creatures:** Lord Traxus, a 6th-level aristocrat/4th-level fighter; Portia, a 2nd-level aristocrat; 8 Denskan prisoners, 2nd-level fighters.

**Lord Traxus, Male Deverenian Ari 6/Ftr 4:** CR 9 Medium humanoid (Deverenian); HD 6d8 plus 4d10; hp 49 (currently 5); Init +5; Spd 30 ft.; AC 11, touch 11, flat-footed 10; Base Atk +8; Grp +10; Atk +10 melee (1d3+2, unarmed strike); Full Atk +10 melee (1d3+2, unarmed strike); SA Favored weapon (longsword); SQ Deverenian traits; AL LE; SV Fort +6, Ref +4, Will +7; Str 15, Dex 12, Con 11, Int 14, Wis 13, Cha 14.

*Skills and Feats:* Appraise +5, Bluff +5, Climb +3, Diplomacy +11, Handle Animal +4, Intimidation +10, Jump +5, Knowledge (history) +5, Listen +3, Ride +7, Search +3, Sense Motive +8, Spot +4; Cleave, Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Leadership, Lightning Reflexes, Power Attack.

*Favored Weapon (longsword):* Lord Traxus gains a +1 competence bonus to attack and damage rolls with the longsword.

*Possessions:* None.

**Portia, Deverenian Noble Maiden, Female Deverenian Ari 2:** CR 1; Medium humanoid (Deverenian); HD 2d8+2; hp 12; Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; AC 11, touch 11, flat-footed 10; Base Atk +1; Grp +1; Atk +1 melee (1d4(19–20/x2), dagger); Full Atk +1 melee (1d4(19–20/x2), dagger); SA —; SQ Deverenian traits; AL LE; SV Fort +6, Ref +4, Will +7; Str 15, Dex 12, Con 11, Int 14, Wis 13, Cha 14.

*Skills and Feats:* Appraise +4, Bluff +7, Diplomacy +8, Intimidate +9, Knowledge (history) +2, Listen +2, Sense Motive +7; Lightning Reflexes.

*Possessions:* Dagger.

**Denskan Prisoners (8), Male Human Ftr 2:** CR 2; Medium humanoid (Human); HD 2d10+4; hp 15; Init +1; Spd 20 ft.; AC 18, touch 11, flat-footed 17; Base Atk +2; Grp +4; Atk +4 melee (1d3+2, unarmed strike); Full Atk +4 melee (1d3+2, unarmed strike); SA Favored weapon (longsword); SQ —; AL LG; SV Fort +5, Ref +1, Will +0; Str 14, Dex 12, Con 14, Int 11, Wis 10, Cha 10.

*Skills and Feats:* Climb –3*, Jump –3*, Listen +1, Profession (siege engineer) +4, Spot +1; Cleave, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (longsword). *includes –6 Armor Check penalty

*Favored Weapon (longsword):* A Denskan prisoner gains a +1 competence bonus to attack and damage rolls with the longsword.

*Possessions:* None.

Lord Traxus and Portia can reveal the following information.

- They were attacked by Denskan bandits and captured a few days ago (they cannot be more precise, as the cave admits no daylight and they are fed irregularly).
- Traxus believes that the bandits are being led by something much more powerful, something big. They heard its voice perhaps a couple of days ago, booming through the cavern like an avalanche, commanding its followers to attack a Deverenian farming village within Ygraine's holdings. They have never seen the creature, and do not know what it could be.
- They have seen men who are tall enough to be Deverenians dressed in Denska-style clothes.
- In Deverenia, these attacks are blamed on Denska, and the nearby nobles are furious. Ygraine is the ranking general, and her patience is said to be growing short. While Deverenia and Denska are at war, Deverenia has no tolerance for dishonorable attacks.
- Ygraine is said to have the support of Lord Gahid Rellion, the Emperor's Champion.

The Denskan prisoners can offer the following information.

- Lord Dalimus of the Aerie wishes to make peace with Deverenia, but will never give up Condor Pass.
- The Deverenians have been trying to take Condor Pass for centuries. They look for any excuse to attack.
- One of the prisoners, a young man of about sixteen, saw the shadow of the thing that leads the bandits. It was huge, but he could not see its shape. He is terrified of what could happen.
- All the bandits seem to know what their leader wants without having to be told. They sometimes nod and appear to be acting on orders unheard by anyone else.
- The bandits are planning to attack the Aerie. One of the prisoners overheard two guards talking about "attacking the fortress."

If the raid of Splintercross (see **Part 3**) has already taken place, the prisoners from the village are here as well and able to recount their experience.

## Location 14.7: Lair of the Terror — Living Area

**Read aloud:** *Scattered around this large cavern are scores of sleeping mats and cold ash piles. Two fires are burning in one area, casting the only light in the chamber.*

The reaver's followers live in this area. There is nothing of value here, because anything the followers have is taken by the reaver. Several Nothrog bandits (2d6) are here unless they have been drawn to a melee elsewhere.

**Creatures:** 2d6 Nothrog bandits, 3rd-level rogues.

**Nothrog Bandits (2d6), Male Nothrog Rog 3:** CR 3; Medium humanoid (Nothrog); HD 3d6+12; hp 25; Spd 30 ft.; Init +2; AC 15, touch 12, flat-footed 13; Base Atk +2; Grp +4; Atk +4 melee (1d10+2(19–20/x2), bastard sword) or +4 ranged (1d6/x3, shortbow); Full Atk +5 melee (1d10+2(19–20x2), bastard sword) or +5 ranged (1d6/x3, shortbow); SA Sneak attack +1d6; SQ Evasion, hide in plain sight, Nothrog traits; AL NE; SV Fort +3, Ref +5, Will +0; Str 15, Dex 16, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 9, Cha 7.

*Skills and Feats:* Balance +5*, Climb +5*, Disable Device +5, Escape Artist +5*, Hide +5*, Open Lock +5, Swim +5*, Tumble +5*; Exotic Weapon Proficiency (bastard sword), Toughness. *includes –1 Armor Check penalty

*Evasion:* If a Nothrog bandit makes a successful Reflex saving throw against an attack that normally deals half damage on a successful save, he instead takes no damage. Evasion can be used only if a Nothrog bandit is wearing light armor or no armor. A helpless Nothrog bandit does not gain the benefit of evasion.

*Hide In Plain Sight:* Each time a Nothrog bandit makes a Hide check, he may reduce the total penalty (if any) to his skill check by his rogue class level (3), to a minimum of 0.

*Sneak Attack:* Anytime the Nothrog bandit's target is denied a Dexterity bonus to AC, or when he flanks a target, the Nothrog bandit deals an additional 1d6 points of damage on a successful melee attack.

*Possessions:* Studded leather armor, bastard sword, shortbow, 20 arrows.

## Location 14.8: Lair of the Terror — Tunnel

**Read aloud:** *In the center of this large cavern is a yawning hole in the floor, at least 40 feet across. The hole slopes gradually down through the floor, as if it had been scooped out of the existing cavern. The smooth but uneven hole appears to have somehow been melted in the stone.*

**Development:** The hole slopes into a long tunnel leading down through solid rock toward the Aerie. It opens into the staging area for the reaver's assault (see **Location 15**). The reaver subjugated a strange creature called a delver and forced it to dig this long tunnel.

The angle of the tunnel is steep but manageable with a Climb check (DC 13). Failing the check results in sliding uncontrollably down the bumpy stone surface and taking 1d3 damage. After about 50 feet the incline decreases and movement is possible without difficulty.

The tunnel is 10–15 feet in diameter, vaguely cylindrical, and leads down into the rock and back up again for about 5 miles. Reaching the staging area for the reaver's attack from here takes just under 2 hours at normal speed, and vice versa.

## Location 15: Assault Staging Area

**Development:** From this immense cavern, laboriously hollowed out by the delver, the Terror of Condor Pass has orchestrated its plans for assault on the fortress. Most of its followers are here, patiently awaiting the order to attack.

If the PCs discover the reaver's plans, it will do everything in its power to prevent their escape. The only way out of the area is back the way they came, unless the assault has already commenced, in which case the tunnels into the fortress have been opened.

## Location 15.1: Assault Staging Area — The Greater Earth Elemental

**Development:** The greater earth elemental is resting immobile at this location. It is waiting for further orders from the reaver. When the reaver initiates its assault, it intends to use the greater earth elemental to burst through the north wall of the Aerie, taking the fortress by surprise. If anything happens to the greater earth elemental, the reaver's plans are greatly disrupted, because it has to find some other means of tunneling quickly through solid rock.

**Creature:** One greater earth elemental.

**Greater Earth Elemental (1):** CR 9; Huge Elemental (Earth, Extraplanar); 21d8+105; hp 199; Init –1; Spd 30 ft.; AC 20, touch 7, flat-footed 20; Base Atk +15; Grp +33; Atk +23 melee (2d10+10/x2, slam); Full Atk +23 melee (2d10+10/x2, 2 slams); Space/Reach 15 ft./15 ft.; AL N; SA Earth mastery, push; SQ Damage reduction 10/–, earth glide, darkvision 60 ft., elemental traits; SV Fort +17, Ref +6, Will +9; Str 31, Dex 8, Con 21, Int 8, Wis 11, Cha 11.

*Skills and Feats:* Listen +14, Spot +14; Alertness, Awesome Blow, Cleave, Great Cleave, Improved Bull Rush, Improved Sunder, Iron Will, Power Attack.

*Earth Mastery (Ex):* An earth elemental gains a +1 bonus on attack and damage rolls if both it and its foe are touching the ground. If an opponent is airborne or waterborne, the elemental takes a –4 penalty on attack and damage rolls. (These modifiers are not included in the statistics block.)

*Push (Ex):* An earth elemental can start a bull rush maneuver without provoking an attack of opportunity. The combat modifiers given in Earth Mastery, above, also apply to the elemental's opposed Strength checks.

*Earth Glide (Ex):* An earth elemental can glide through stone, dirt, or almost any other sort of earth except metal as easily as a fish swims through water. Its burrowing leaves behind no tunnel or hole, nor does it create any ripple or other signs of its presence. A *move earth* spell cast on an area containing a burrowing earth elemental flings the elemental back 30 feet, stunning the creature for 1 round unless it succeeds on a DC 15 Fortitude save.

*Damage Reduction (Su):* A greater earth elemental ignores the first 10 points of damage from any attack, natural or with a weapon. The greater earth elemental takes normal damage from energy attacks (even nonmagical ones), spells, spell-like abilities, and supernatural abilities (see Immunity to Magic).

*Darkvision, 60 ft.:* A greater earth elemental can see in the dark with no light source at all, out to a range of 60 feet. Darkvision is black and white only (colors cannot be discerned). It does not allow the greater earth elemental to see anything that it could not see otherwise—invisible objects are still invisible, and illusions are still visible as what they seem to be. Likewise, darkvision subjects the greater earth elemental to gaze attacks normally. The presence of light does not spoil darkvision.

**Elemental Traits:** A greater earth elemental has the following traits:

- Immunity to poison, sleep effects, paralysis, and stunning.
- Not subject to critical hits or flanking.
- Unlike most other living creatures, an elemental does not have a dual nature—its soul and body form one unit. When an elemental is slain, no soul is set loose. Spells that restore souls to their bodies, such as *raise dead, reincarnate,* and *resurrection,* don't work on an elemental. It takes a different magical effect, such as *limited wish, wish, miracle,* or *true resurrection,* to restore it to life.
- Elementals do not eat, sleep, or breathe

## Location 15.2: Assault Staging Area — Assault Force

**Development:** In the center of this great chamber are the reaver's assembled minions. There are almost certainly too many for the PCs to defeat all at once. They will need help to defeat them all, or fight them piecemeal, or find a way around them to attack the reaver directly. If the Denskans learned of this force's existence, they would attack it immediately. The Denskans present in this force were captured and subverted over the last several months.

**Creatures:** Twenty Denskan fighters, 2nd-level fighters; twenty Dwarf fighters, 3rd-level fighters; thirty-five common bandits, 3rd-level rogues; two Nothrog bandits, 3rd-level rogues; two Silver Guard Captains, 9th-level fighters; fifteen Toneuth fighters, 1st-level fighters.

**Denskan Fighters (20), Male Human Ftr 2:** CR 2; Medium humanoid (Human); HD 2d10+4; hp 15; Init +1; Spd 20 ft.; AC 18, touch 11, flat-footed 17; Base Atk +2; Grp +4; Atk +6 melee (1d8+3(19–20/x2), longsword), or +3 ranged (1d10(19–20/x2), heavy crossbow); Full Atk +6 melee (1d8+3(19–20/x2), longsword), or +3 ranged (1d10(19–20/x2), heavy crossbow); SA Favored weapon (longsword); SQ —; AL LC; SV Fort +5, Ref +1, Will +0; Str 14, Dex 12, Con 14, Int 11, Wis 10, Cha 10.

*Skills and Feats:* Climb –4*, Jump –4*, Listen +0, Spot +0; Cleave, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (longsword). *includes –6 Armor Check penalty

*Favored Weapon (longsword):* A Denskan fighter gains a +1 competence bonus to attack and damage rolls with the longsword.

*Possessions:* Chainmail, light steel shield, longsword, heavy crossbow, 10 bolts.

**Dwarf Fighters (20), Male Dwarf Ftr 3:** CR 3; Medium humanoid (Dwarf); HD 3d10+9; hp 30; Init +4; Spd 20 ft.; AC 16, touch 10, flat-footed 16; Base Atk +3; Grp +6; Atk +7 melee (1d8+4/x3, battleaxe); Full Atk +7 melee (1d8+4/x3, battleaxe); SA Favored weapon (battleaxe); SQ Dwarf traits; AL LN; SV Fort +6, Ref +1, Will +1; Str 17, Dex 10, Con 16, Int 8, Wis 10, Cha 10.

*Skills and Feats:* Climb +3*, Jump +3*; Cleave, Improved Initiative, Power Attack. *includes –6 Armor Check penalty

*Favored Weapon (battleaxe):* A Dwarf fighter gains a +1 competence bonus to attack and damage rolls with the battleaxe.

*Possessions:* Chainmail, light steel shield, battleaxe.

**Common Bandits (35), Male Human Rog 3:** CR 3; Medium humanoid (Human); HD 3d6+3; hp 13; Spd 30 ft.; Init +2; AC 16, touch 13, flat-footed 13; Base Atk +2; Grp +4; Atk +5 melee (1d6+2(19–20/x2), short sword), or +5 ranged (1d6/x3, shortbow); Full Atk +5 melee (1d6+2(19–20/x2), short sword), or +5 ranged (1d6/x3, shortbow); SA Sneak attack +1d6; SQ Evasion, hide in plain sight; AL NE; SV Fort +3, Ref +5, Will +0; Str 15, Dex 16, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 9, Cha 7.

*Skills and Feats:* Appraise +1, Balance +4*, Bluff +1, Climb +4*, Disable Device +6, Disguise +1, Escape Artist +10*, Hide +8*, Intimidate +1, Jump +3*, Listen +1, Move Silently +8*, Search +1, Sense Motive +1, Sleight of Hand +7*, Spot +1, Use Rope +5; Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Weapon Finesse (short sword). *includes –1 armor check penalty

*Evasion:* If a bandit makes a successful Reflex saving throw against an attack that normally deals half damage on a successful save, he instead takes no damage. Evasion can be used only if a bandit is wearing light armor or no armor. A helpless bandit does not gain the benefit of evasion.

*Hide In Plain Sight:* Each time a bandit makes a Hide check, he may reduce the total penalty (if any) to his skill check by his rogue class level (3), to a minimum of 0.

*Sneak Attack:* Anytime the bandit's target is denied a Dexterity bonus to AC, or when he flanks a target, the bandit deals an additional 1d6 points of damage on a successful melee attack.

*Possessions:* Studded leather armor, short sword, shortbow, 20 arrows.

**Nothrog Bandits (2), Male Nothrog Rog 3:** CR 3; Medium humanoid (Nothrog); HD 3d6+12; hp 25; Spd 30 ft.; Init +2; AC 15, touch 12, flat-footed 13; Base Atk +2; Grp +4; Atk +4 melee (1d10+2/19–20, bastard sword), or +5 ranged (1d6/x3, shortbow); Full Atk +4 melee (1d10+2/19–20, bastard sword), or +5 ranged (1d6/x3, shortbow); SA Sneak attack +1d6; SQ Evasion, hide in plain sight, Nothrog traits; AL NE; SV Fort +3, Ref +5, Will +0; Str 15, Dex 16, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 9, Cha 7.

*Skills and Feats:* Balance +5*, Climb +5*, Disable Device +5, Escape Artist +5*, Hide +5*, Open Lock +5, Swim +5*, Tumble +5*; Exotic Weapon Proficiency (bastard sword), Toughness. *includes –1 Armor Check penalty

*Evasion:* If a Nothrog bandit makes a successful Reflex saving throw against an attack that normally deals half damage on a successful save, he instead takes no damage. Evasion can be used only if a Nothrog bandit is wearing light armor or no armor. A helpless Nothrog bandit does not gain the benefit of evasion.

*Hide In Plain Sight:* Each time a Nothrog bandit makes a Hide check, he may reduce the total penalty (if any) to his skill check by his rogue class level (3), to a minimum of 0.

*Sneak Attack:* Anytime the Nothrog bandit's target is denied a Dexterity bonus to AC, or when he flanks a target, the Nothrog bandit deals an additional 1d6 points of damage on a successful melee attack.

*Possessions:* Studded leather armor, bastard sword, shortbow, 20 arrows.

**Silver Guard Captains (2), Male Human Ftr 9:** CR 9; Medium humanoid (Human); HD 9d10+21; hp 74; Init +1; Spd 20 ft.; AC 20, touch 10, flat-footed 20; Base Atk +9; Grp +12; Atk +14 melee (1d8+7/19–20, *+1 longsword*), or +11 ranged (1d10+1/19–20, heavy crossbow); Full Atk +14/+9 melee (1d8+7/19–20, *+1 longsword*), or +11 ranged (1d10+1/19–20, heavy crossbow); SA Favored weapon (longsword, heavy crossbow), improved damage (longsword, heavy crossbow); SQ —; AL LG; SV Fort +8, Ref +4, Will +4; Str 16, Dex 12, Con 14, Int 13, Wis 12, Cha 12.

*Skills and Feats:* Climb +2*, Jump +2*, Handle Animal +6, Listen +4, Ride +5, Spot +2; Alertness, Cleave, Combat Reflexes, Critical Strike, Improved Initiative, Leadership, Power Attack, Toughness. *includes –8 armor check penalty

*Favored Weapon (longsword, heavy crossbow):* A captain gains a +1 competence bonus to attack and damage rolls with the longsword and heavy crossbow.

*Improved Damage (longsword):* A captain does an additional +2 (+3 total) damage with the longsword.

*Possessions: +1 half plate*, heavy steel shield, *+1 longsword*, heavy crossbow.

**Toheuth Fighters (15), Male Human Ftr 1:** CR 1; Medium humanoid (Human); HD 1d10+1; hp 6; Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; AC 14, touch 11, flat-footed 13; Base Atk +1; Grp +3; Atk +4 melee (1d6+3(19-20/x2), shortsword) or +2 ranged (1d6/x3, shortbow); Full Atk +4 melee (1d6+3(19-20/x2), shortsword) or +2 ranged (1d6/x3, shortbow); SA Favored weapon (shortsword); SQ Human traits, race/class abilities; AL NE; SV Fort +3, Ref +1, Will +0; Str 14, Dex 12, Con 13, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 8.

*Skills and Feats:* Climb +5*, Handle Animal +4, Ride +5; Cleave, Power Attack. * includes –1 armor check penalty

*Favored Weapon (shortsword):* A Toheuth fighter gains a +1 competence bonus to attack and damage rolls with the shortsword.

*Possessions:* Studded leather armor, shortsword, shortbow, 20 arrows.

## Location 15.3: Assault Staging Area — The Terror of Condor Pass

**Development:** This is the reaver's location. If it becomes aware of any unwanted visitors, it sends its minions from **Location 15.2** to attack immediately, and it follows them, attacking only if necessary. It tries to use its maddening presence ability to subvert the wills of the PCs before engaging in combat itself.

**Creature:** Terror of Condor Pass, a reaver.

**Terror of Condor Pass, Reaver:** CR 14; Large aberration (Bascaron); HD 18d8+54 (126 hp); Init +5; Spd 5 ft., fly 30 ft. (good), swim 15 ft.; AC 37, touch 9, flat-footed36; Base Atk +13; Grp +25; Atk +15 melee (1d8+4/x2, tentacle); +15 melee (1d8+4/x2, 4 tentacles); Space/Reach 15 ft./10 ft.; SA Devour, disgorge magic, maddening presence; SQ Blindsense, enhanced advancement, telepathy, tremorsense 120 ft.; AL LE; SV Fort +9, Ref +7, Will +15; Str 19, Dex 13, Con 17, Int 20, Wis 15, Cha 15.

*Skills and Feats:* Knowledge (arcana) +25, Knowledge (any two) +25, Listen +23, Search +25, Spot +23; Cleave, Flyby Attack, Follow Through, Hover, Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Power Attack.

*Devour (Ex):* Reavers are voracious, their fiendish appetites limited only by their narrow feeding tendrils. They can drain a body of its fluids and smaller organs with surprising ease (1 round for Fine creatures, 2 for Diminutive creatures, doubling again for each size category thereafter). Reavers may devour only helpless victims, but once finished, nothing short of a *wish* or *miracle* can raise their prey from the dead.

*Disgorge Magic (Su):* While reavers' efficient biologies digest most substances completely, inherent magical energies remain behind. Reavers may spew out these energies, duplicating any supernatural or spell-like ability of any creature they have eaten (including spellcasters' spells). Each time a reaver uses this ability, roll 1d20 and compare it to the reaver's HD. If the result is less than the reaver's HD, the reaver loses 1 HD and the ability to duplicate that specific ability until the reaver regains it through a feeding. Reavers may not be reduced below their base HD in this manner.

*Enhanced Advancement (Su):* Unlike most creatures, reavers' advancement is not limited to steady growth. By glutting themselves on magical power, reavers may rapidly grow in size and power. This is a painful process, but one reavers indulge in for the associated benefits. Whenever a reaver devours a creature with one or more supernatural or spell-like abilities (including spellcasters), it advances one HD.

*Maddening Presence (Su):* The reaver's most basic defense is its unsettling effect on lesser minds. Reavers are the very essence of Bascaron's corruption, and the taint of their species' creation lingers still. Any other creature that looks upon a reaver for the first time must make a Will save (DC equal to the reaver's HD) or become a slavering minion of that reaver. Creatures may attempt another save each day they are not in the reaver's presence. While enthralled, creatures believe the reaver to be something other than what it truly is, such as a Nothrog totem or a powerful stormborn.

*Telepathy (Su):* A reaver can initiate telepathy with any sentient being, allowing it to give orders to dominated servants without interrupting its spellcraft. The reaver must have the target individual in sight in order to initiate contact for the first time; once it 'knows the mind' of a target in this manner, the range on its telepathy is one mile. While a reaver has at least three of its servants nearby, it may not be flanked.

*Blindsense (Ex):* Using nonvisual senses, a reaver maneuvers and fights as well as a sighted creature. The reaver usually does not need to make Spot or Listen checks to pinpoint the location of a creature within range of its blindsense ability, provided that it has line of effect to that creature. Any opponent the reaver cannot see still has total concealment against the reaver, and the reaver still has the normal miss chance when attacking foes that have concealment. A reaver is still denied its Dexterity bonus to Armor Class against attacks from creatures it cannot see. A reaver's blindsense has a range of 120 feet.

*Tremorsense (Ex):* A reaver is sensitive to vibrations in the ground and can automatically pinpoint the location of anything that is contact with the ground. A reaver's tremorsense has a range of 120 feet.

# Part 3: Event Timeline

This adventure is loosely structured. The encounters the PCs face depend on where they are when events occur. The following is a list of events set in motion when the adventure begins. Whether some or all of them take place depends largely on the PCs' actions.

The timeline is set up so that as more events occur, the PCs should experience an increasing sense of inevitability. They can change the course of these events, however, possibly in unforeseen ways. There are powerful forces at work, but the PCs should be equipped to handle them. They may be in a position to view these events and affect them as they happen. Unless the PCs interfere, however, they occur as described.

*Day 0* — The characters begin the adventure with **Location 1**, regardless of the direction from which they approach the area. This encounter sets the timeline in motion.

*Day 1* — At dusk, a large gang of the reaver's bandits leaves the lair and travels into Deverenian territory. They are dressed as Denskan soldiers led by a Silver Guard — which, in fact, they *are*. The reaver captured this group about six months ago, *dominated* them, and has been saving them for the occasion. Their destination is a Deverenian village called Splintercross about twenty miles east of Condor Pass, which they will reach by dawn. Their plan is to wait until nightfall after they reach the village.

*Day 2, Morning* — The large bandit gang arrives in the vicinity of Splintercross. During the day, four of them disguise themselves as traveling mercenaries and travel through the village, casing its defenses and richest targets.

*Day 2, Dusk* — The bandit gang attacks the village of Splintercross. The village has few defenses, and the bandits have their way with it. The raid is meant to outrage the Deverenians. The bandits burn the village to the ground, slaughter 80% of the village's inhabitants, men and women, young and old, and take as prisoner 15 young women.

*Day 3, Midday* — The bandit gang returns to the reaver's lair with their prisoners in tow.

*Day 3, Evening* — Ygraine learns of the raid; Splintercross is only a day's ride from her stronghold. She contacts Lord Gahid Rellion and informs him of the bandits' atrocity. Lord Gahid relays this information to the Emperor, who confirms Ygraine's previous request to attack Denska with more reinforcements, ordering Lord Gahid to support her with troops and materiél.

*Day 4, Morning* — Lord Gahid informs the Ygraine of the Emperor's decision. He sends a complement of knights and several hundred troops to help her. Ygraine begins gathering her own army.

*Day 5, Midday* — Rumors of the Splintercross massacre reach the Aerie. Lord Dalimus, tremendously concerned, immediately dispatches a letter to Ygraine telling her that neither the Kingdom of Denska nor his own troops had anything to do with the terrible raid. General Gondorus believes that the massacre is the last straw for the angry Deverenians, and that they will attack very soon. He orders battle drills for all Aerie troops.

*Day 6, Evening* — Nicodemus reports to Lord Dalimus and General Gondorus that the fortress has been *scried* repeatedly throughout the day. He has tried to ward off these attempts, but he does not know how successful he was. The Deverenians usually attempt to *scry* the fortress once or twice a week.

*Day 7, Morning* — Lord Gahid's Rellion knights arrive at Ygraine's stronghold, ready for battle. The regular troops will arrive in two days. Her preparations are being made quickly; she will march within days.

*Day 7, Midday* — General Gondorus orders a search of the entire fortress for any Deverenian spies. Any Deverenians or people with ties to Deverenia are locked in the jail until the current crisis ends. Detainees are thoroughly interrogated, but not tortured.

*Day 9, Afternoon* — Five thousand of Rellion's finest troops arrive at Ygraine's stronghold. Her own preparations are complete. A total force of ten thousand Deverenian troops, with a hundred Rellion knights, is now ready to march on Condor Pass.

*Day 10, Dawn* — Ygraine's army marches. It should arrive at the mouth of the pass within 3 days.

*Day 10, Nightfall* — News of the Deverenian force reaches the Aerie. Lord Dalimus hurriedly dispatches another message to Ygraine begging her to reconsider, for the sake of her own men, many of whom will die in an assault on the Aerie. General Gondorus declares the fortress to be under attack. Civilians who wish to leave must do so by noon tomorrow.

*Day 11, Noon* — The terrace tunnels are sealed. Anyone who wishes to leave the Aerie must now head westward or climb down the cliffs on rope ladders.

*Day 11, Afternoon* — Lord Dalimus' second message reaches Ygraine. She blasts the messenger into ashes, which she sweeps into a sack that she intends to present to Lord Dalimus at his surrender.

*Day 13, Afternoon* — The Deverenian army enters Condor Pass. The troops in the watchtowers lock themselves in and prepare to the weather the storm. The first watchtower is obliterated by the combined power of Ygraine's magic and the Rellion charge.

## Sorceress Ygraine

**As haughty and ruthless as she is beautiful, Sorceress Ygraine is a major figure in Deverenia's military. She counts Lord Gahid Rellion as her patron and most powerful ally. She stops at nothing to get what she wants, and she is spiteful and tenacious to those who oppose her.**

**Sorceress Ygraine, Deverenian Warlord, Female Deverenian Ftr 7/Wiz 7:** CR 14; Medium humanoid (Deverenian); HD 7d10+14 plus 7d4+14; 87; Init +5; Spd 20 ft.; AC 22, touch 15, flat-footed 21; Base Atk +10; Grp +13; Atk +16 melee (2d6+8(19–20/x2) *+1 vorpal greatsword*) or +15 ranged (1d10+4(19–20/x2), *+3 heavy crossbow*); Full Atk +16/+11 melee (2d6+8(19–20/x2) *+1 vorpal greatsword*) or +15 ranged (1d10+3(19–20/x2), *+3 heavy crossbow*); SA Favored weapon (greatsword, heavy crossbow), improved damage (greatsword), spells; SQ Deverenian traits, eidetic memory (*detect thoughts, lightning bolt, magic missile*), summon familiar (cat), race/class abilities; AL LE; SV Fort +9, Ref +5, Will +9; Str 17, Dex 13, Con 13, Int 18, Wis 15, Cha 16.

*Skills and Feats:* Bluff +10, Concentration +12, Craft (alchemy) +11, Diplomacy +10, Hide +10*, Knowledge (arcana) +12, Knowledge (architecture and engineering) +8, Knowledge (history) +16, Knowledge (heraldry) +7, Move Silently +10, Ride +6, Search +4, Sense Motive +5, Speak Language (Deverenian, Draconic, Nothrog), Spellcraft +13, Spot +5; Alertness, Combat Casting, Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Enlarge Spell, Improved Initiative, Maximize Spell, Power Attack, Quicken Spell, Scribe Scroll. *includes –3 armor check penalty; 25% arcane spell failure chance for spells with somatic components.

*Race/Class Abilities: Fighter:* Luxury Training (greatsword), military history; *Wizard:* Sacrifice vitality (+4).

*Eidetic Memory:* Ygraine may spontaneously cast *detect thoughts, lightning bolt,* and *magic missile* in place of a prepared spell of equal or higher level. This loses the prepared spell to fuel the memorized spell.

*Favored Weapon (greatsword, heavy crossbow):* Ygraine gains a +1 competence bonus to attack and damage rolls with the greatsword and heavy crossbow.

*Improved Damage (greatsword):* Ygraine does an additional +2 (+3 total) damage with the greatsword.

*Wizard Spells Prepared* (4/5/4/3/2; save DC 14 + spell level): 0 — *resistance, detect magic, read magic, light*; 1st — *power spike, cone of silence, magic missile, charm person, cause fear*; 2nd — *begone, fireeyes, flame arrow, weakness*; 3rd — *cloak of fear, greater identify, fireball*; 4th –*primal fear, soul knife.*

*Possessions: +2 breastplate, +1 vorpal greatsword, +3 heavy crossbow,* 20 bolts, *ring of protection* +4, spellbook.

*continued next page*

**Familiar (cat):** Ygraine's cat familiar has the following statistics:

**Cat (Familiar):** CR —; Tiny magical beast; HD 14; hp 43; Init +2; Spd 30 ft; AC 18, touch 14, flat-footed 16; Base Atk +10; Grp –2; Atk +12 melee (1d2–4/x2, claw); Full Atk +12 melee (1d2–4/x2, 2 claws), +7 melee (1d3–4/x2, bite); Space/Reach 2–1/2 ft./0 ft.; SA —; SQ low-light vision, scent, empathic link, share spells, improved evasion, deliver touch spells, speak with master, speak with animals of its kind; AL N; SV Fort +8, Ref +6, Will +7; Str 3, Dex 15, Con 10, Int 9, Wis 12, Cha 7.

*Skill and Feats:* Balance +10*, Climb +6*, Hide +14*, Jump +10*, Listen +3, Move Silently +11*, Spot +3; Weapon Finesse (bite). *Cats have a +4 racial bonus on Climb, Hide, and Move Silently checks and a +8 racial bonus on Jump checks. Cats have a +8 racial bonus on Balance checks. They use their Dexterity modifier instead of their Strength modifier for Climb and Jump checks. In areas of tall grass or heavy undergrowth, the Hide bonus rises to +8.

*Low-Light Vision:* A cat can see twice as far as a Human in starlight, moonlight, torchlight, and similar conditions of shadowy illumination. It retains the ability to distinguish color and detail under these conditions.

*Scent:* A cat can detect opponents within 30 feet by sense of smell. If the opponent is upwind, the range increases to 60 feet; if downwind, it drops to 15 feet. Strong scents, such as smoke or rotting garbage, can be detected at twice the ranges noted above. Overpowering scents, such as skunk musk or troglodyte stench, can be detected at triple normal range. When a cat detects a scent, the exact location of the source is not revealed—only its presence somewhere within range. The cat can take a move action to note the direction of the scent.

Whenever the cat comes within 5 feet of the source, the cat pinpoints the source's location.

*Familiar Ability Descriptions:* Ygraine's familiar has special abilities (or imparts abilities to its masters) depending on her combined level in classes that grant familiars. The abilities are cumulative.

*Alertness (Ex):* While her familiar is within arm's reach, Ygraine gains the Alertness feat.

*Improved Evasion (Ex):* When subjected to an attack that normally allows a Reflex saving throw for half damage, a familiar takes no damage if it makes a successful saving throw and half damage even if the saving throw fails.

*Share Spells:* At Ygraine's option, she may have any spell (but not any spell-like ability) she casts on herself also affect her familiar. The familiar must be within 5 feet at the time of casting to receive the benefit. If the spell or effect has a duration other than instantaneous, it stops affecting the familiar if it moves farther than 5 feet away and will not affect the familiar again even if it returns to Ygraine before the duration expires. Additionally, Ygraine may cast a spell with a target of "You" on her familiar (as a touch range spell) instead of on herself. Ygraine and her familiar can share spells even if the spells normally do not affect creatures of the familiar's type (magical beast).

*Empathic Link (Su):* Ygraine has an empathic link with her familiar out to a distance of up to 1 mile. Ygraine cannot see through the familiar's eyes, but they can communicate empathically. Because of the limited nature of the link, only general emotional content can be communicated. Because of this empathic link, Ygraine has the same connection to an item or place that her familiar does.

*Deliver Touch Spells (Su):* Ygraine's familiar can deliver touch spells for her. If Ygraine and the familiar are in contact at the time Ygraine casts a touch spell, she can designate his familiar as the "toucher." The familiar can then deliver the touch spell just as Ygraine could. As usual, if Ygraine casts another spell before the touch is delivered, the touch spell dissipates.

*Speak with Master (Ex):* Ygraine and her familiar can communicate verbally as if they were using a common language. Other creatures do not understand the communication without magical help.

*Speak with Animals of Its Kind (Ex):* Ygraine's familiar can communicate with felines (including dire varieties). Such communication is limited by the intelligence of the conversing creatures.

*Day 13, Evening* — The second Denskan watchtower is razed. The movement of the army triggers the magical wards. Hundreds of Deverenians die fiery deaths.

*Day 14, Noon* — The third watchtower is destroyed. The watchtower troops are dragged out and strung up on poles to be paraded before the Denskan defenders when the army reaches the foot of the Aerie.

*Day 14, Afternoon* — The Pass' magical wards rain death upon the Deverenian army. Hundreds more perish in the defensive onslaught.

*Day 14, Evening* — The fourth and final watchtower is destroyed. Captured Denskan defenders are once again lashed to poles, which are tied to the sides of supply wagons.

*Day 15, Morning* — Ygraine's army arrives at the foot of the first terrace, out of the range of the siege engines. She makes no attempt to parley, but she does not immediately commence the assault. She spends the rest of the day with her commanders planning the assault, letting the defenders see her power.

*Day 15, Nightfall* — Just after dusk, the Rellion knights, on their verdatha mounts, attack one of the Terrace Keeps. They destroy all the siege catapults on the roof of one of the keeps before the Wardens counter by sending out the condors, repelling the assault.

*Day 16, Morning* — The first major assault commences on the first terrace. More magical wards, coupled with the tremendous firepower of the Terrace Keeps, tear into the Deverenians, but the invaders are undaunted. The Rellion knights attack the

gatehouse, attempting to seize control and open the tunnel. They take it temporarily, but the defenders have already destroyed the machinery for moving the barrier stones. The Denskans launch a counterattack of crossbowmen and condors to drive the knights away. The day ends with both sides having bloody noses.

*Day 17, Morning* — The assault continues on the first terrace. The magical wards have been spent. The Deverenians begin scaling the cliffs en masse with magical climbing tools. By midmorning, they have gained a foothold on the first terrace, and throw down ropes to the men below. The Denskan attack this beachhead, and send more men from the fortress to reinforce the second terrace.

*Day 17, Afternoon* — Once most of the troops from the fortress have reinforced the second terrace, the Terror attacks. It bursts into the Holy Quarter and the Merchants' Quarter with its troops, rampaging through the fortress. The startled Denskans cannot put up more than a token defense. By nightfall, the fortress is under the control of the Terror of Condor Pass. Lord Dalimus, General Gondorus, and Nicodemus are under the reaver's control. The Deverenians are unaware that any of this has occurred.

*After Day 17* — The Deverenian assault is doomed to stalemate. The defenses of the Aerie are too strong. Sorceress Ygraine is too stubborn and vengeful, and refuses to withdraw her forces even in the face of defeat. Unless something happens to break the siege, or unless Ygraine is ordered to withdraw by Lord Gahid or the Emperor, the Aerie remains under siege indefinitely.

# Part 4: Concluding the Adventure

The PCs can break the chain of events described in **Part 3** at several points.

The Terror covets the fortress' defensibility, and it wants to capture it as a base for its own power. If the Terror is successful, it will shut down all traffic through Condor Pass, severing a major avenue of east-west transportation, and building for itself a nearly unassailable position from which to dominate the region.

There are several ways for the PCs to prevent this.

- They may be able to stop the Deverenian attack altogether by offering proof to Ygraine that the Denskans were not behind the attacks and the Splintercross massacre. She demands conclusive proof before she changes her course. The word of Lord Traxus would be more than sufficient to convince her. If she does not attack, or ceases her attack before the Terror enters the fortress, the staunch Denskan defenders destroy all the reaver's minions and drive the reaver back into its burrow.
- If the PCs somehow prevent the reaver's attack on the fortress, or otherwise disrupt its plans, the Denskans defeat it, as above. For example, killing the delver would prevent the reaver's minions from entering the fortress by surprise. The reaver would be forced to resort to digging through the rest of the rock with pickaxes. This noise would alert the defenders immediately to the impending attack.
- It is possible the PCs could kill the reaver themselves, but this would be extremely difficult.
- If the PCs fight with the Denskan defenders, they could turn the tide of battle in any number of ways, from fighting on the terrace to defending the fortress when the reaver attacks.

# Part 5: The Stone of Fortune

If the party has not yet faced **The Terror of Sharn Keep, read aloud:** *The stone flashes bright in your grip, revealing a magnificent keep in the mountains. Up, up, up the vision takes you, to the highest room in the keep. There another creature lies in wait, its many eyes whirling about it.*

This is the Terror of Sharn Keep.

If the party has already faced **The Terror of Sharn Keep, read aloud:** *You see the Aerie once again, though battered by the Deverenian assault. Sorceress Ygraine's forces remain at hand, even as the Denskans struggle to rebuild. The war is far from over.*

# Part 6: New Monsters

DENSKAN CONDOR

**Huge Beast**
**Hit Dice:** 10d10+50 (105 hp)
**Initiative:** +1
Speed: 20 ft. (4 squares), fly 80 ft. (average) (16 squares)
**AC:** 15 (–2 size, +1 Dex, +6 natural), touch 9, flat-footed 14
**Base Attack/Grapple:** +7/+23
**Attack:** Talon +15 melee (2d4+8)
**Full Attack:** 2 talons +15 melee (2d4+8) and bite +10 melee (2d6+4)
**Space/Reach:** 15 ft./15 ft.
**Special Attacks:** —
**Special Qualities:** —
**Saves:** Fort +12, Ref +4, Will +8
**Abilities:** Str 26, Dex 13, Con 21, Int 2, Wis 13, Cha 8
**Skills:** Listen +4, Spot +4*
**Feats:** Snatch
**Environment:** Darklith Mountains
**Organization:** Solitary, pair, or flock 3–24
**Challenge Rating:** 8
**Treasure:** None
**Alignment:** Always neutral
**Advancement:** Huge (11–15 HD)
**Level Adjustment:** —

These enormous birds are relatively scarce in the wild. Because of their great size, the territory required for a sufficient food supply is quite large. They exist in much larger numbers in the aeries of Denskan trainers. They can be found only among the towering peaks of the Darklith Mountains between Deverenian

and Denska, although the Denskan people sometimes transport eggs and hatchlings to other training grounds outside of the mountains.

In the wild, they dwell in flocks, communal groups with several nests in close proximity. The nests are positioned on rock ledges at altitudes of several thousand feet. Each mated pair produces two eggs every three years. Their young mature slowly, and cannot fly for almost a year and a half after hatching. All the members of a flock take part in providing for the flock as a whole, including bringing food back to the nests for young condors. Condors sometimes attack living prey, but they usually feed on carrion. Battle-trained condors feast after a battle, swooping down upon the battlefield to gorge themselves upon the dead.

Unlike other birds, condors do not have a voice box. They make no noise other than unpleasant hissing sounds.

The body of a Denskan condor is dark brown or black, with a collar of white feathers circling its neck. Its forewings range from dark to light gray in color. Its head and neck are naked of feathers, exposing the bird's dark gray skin. A male condor has a fleshy wattle growing from his forehead and throat.

Many Denskans believe that the bones and organs of Denskan condors have medicinal or magical powers. As a result, the body of a slain condor is just as precious as a live one. Hunting condors is strictly illegal, and punishable by death. The Denskan people prize these condors like no other animal. The Denskan condor is an object of reverence and a source of protection from the airborne knights of Deverenia.

COMBAT

Denskan condors are ill-tempered, dangerous creatures. They are also highly territorial. The Denskans have been able to exploit this territorial instinct and enlist the help of these birds in combat. A condor attacks from the air. Its favorite tactic is to choose a victim, snatch it off the ground in its monstrous talons, carry it to a great height, and drop it. Failing that, it has a formidable bite and tremendous talons. Against airborne, mounted opponents, it attempts to snatch a rider from the saddle of his flying mount and drop him.

*Skills:* *Denskan condors receive a +4 racial bonus to all Spot checks.

# Part 7: New Feats

CRAFT MAGICAL WARD (GENERAL)

You can imbue normal items with invisible magical wards.

**Prerequisite:** Spellcaster level 5+.

**Benefit:** You can create a permanent magical ward of any spell of 5th level or lower that you know. Crafting a magical ward takes one day for each 1,000 gp in its base price. The base price of a ward is its caster level multiplied by the spell level multiplied by 50. To craft a ward, you must spend 1/25 of this base price in XP and use raw materials costing half this base price.

A newly created ward has a single charge. The creator designates what condition causes the ward to discharge. It can be anything that could happen within range of the spell attached to the ward, from any creature passing, to a given number of people, or type of creature (such as humanoid, giant, aberration, etc.). This cannot distinguish between sub-types like Humans, Dwarves, Deverenians, hill giants, etc. The creator of the ward can specify the effective range of the ward to expand or contract to any range within the spell's maximum.

The ward can be placed upon any mundane object.

Any ward that stores a spell with costly material components also carries a commensurate cost.

Once these wards are created, their presence is undetectable, except through *detect magic*.



# Dythanus' Disciple

## Introduction

In this adventure, the PCs confront an imprisoned Elven lich, a long-forgotten student of ancient Dythanus, when searching for a Deverenian artifact in a ruin deep in the Myreth forest — but many factions are interested in uncovering the secrets of the site.

This is one of four adventures in Tier 5. It is meant for characters of levels 8–10.

## Adventure Synopsis

The PCs are sent to investigate the ruin of a necromancer's tower. They must deal with deadly traps, monstrous inhabitants, and long-dead minions, while they search for a powerful Deverenian artifact said to have been lost there nearly eight centuries ago.

Eventually, the heroes discover the dungeon vault and a special inner sanctum. There, they learn the truth about the fortress and the fate of its owner. A *summoning circle* is keeping the lich trapped, but its magic is fading away, and soon he will be free. They must defeat the lich (before the magic fades completely, and he is set free at full strength) if they want to recover the artifact and escape with their lives.

# Myreth Forest

**Read aloud:** *In the Myreth, shadows writhe with unholy purpose. Skeletons rise from mossy graves, and wraiths scream pleasure and pain through the branches of the deepest groves. These are the lands of the Elves — dark, terrifying, and filled with the spirits of the dead.*

*The canopy, high above your heads, is woven tight. The moss-covered ground has not felt the touch of sunlight in millennia. Gnarled black trees loom overhead, demon-gods from some long-forgotten age. Phosphorescent mosses cast an eerie glow, and mist clings to twisted black roots that bite into the forest floor. The wind moans and wails through the trees, hinting at the torments that lie within.*

*You have marched deep into the forest. Each step brings you closer to its cold, dark heart, and farther from the warmth and the light. Even the trees creak and groan, loathing your presence.*

*This is Myreth, as inhospitable a place as you will find in the lands of the Accord.*

Elves haunt the wood. Their bone cities hang in petrified trees, entangled by frosted ivy. Their failed necromantic experiments prowl the darkness in search of prey. This land is their sovereign territory, their unholy domain, and they fight to keep it so.

There are no random encounters, as the magic surrounding Xioz's prison has kept the area clear of both life and unlife until quite recently.

# Part 1: Exploring the Chasm

## Location 1: Deverenian Encampment

**Development:** Modred of Carcius has deployed a crew to excavate a ruin. His wizards detected the location while scrying the area for Elven troops, and research revealed the site's history. Modred knows Lord Sigard fell in a battle here; he is using the crew to find the *Talisman of the Storm*. The camp is in a small mossy clearing less than a quarter mile from the southeast corner of the chasm.

The camp consists of a dozen tents, a fire pit, a corral, and three wagons containing building materials. The Deverenians were ordered to salvage as much of the site as possible. The group consists primarily of standard Deverenian troops (see below). Their leader, a 9th-level knight named Sir Eduas, is desperate to impress Modred. Talbot, an 8th-level wizard who works primarily as a historian, is in charge of locating the *Talisman of the Storm*. This is his first field mission, and he is nervous about it.

PCs encountering the Deverenians do not find them automatically hostile. If the PCs are diplomatic, they can avoid conflict. In fact, if they are working for Arkan Forbes or Cardinal Ulloft, the Deverenians may become allies.

**Creatures:** Sir Eduas, a 9th-level fighter; Talbot, a 4th-level expert/4th-level wizard; 10 Deverenian troops, 4th-level fighters.

**Sir Eduas, Male Deverenian Ftr 9:** CR 9; Medium humanoid (Deverenian); HD 9d10; hp 58; Init +0; Spd 20 ft.; AC 18, touch 10, flat-footed 18; Base Atk +9; Grp +11; Atk +12 melee (1d8+5(19–20/x2), longsword) or +10 ranged (1d8+1(19–20/x2), light crossbow); Full Atk +12/+7 melee (1d8+5(19–20/x2), longsword) or +10 ranged (1d8(19–20/x2), light crossbow); SA Favored weapon (longsword, light crossbow), improved damage (longsword); SQ Deverenian traits; AL LE; SV Fort +12, Ref +4, Will +3; Str 14, Dex 10, Con 16, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 14.

*Skills and Feats:* Climb –2*, Handle Animal +4, Intimidate +6, Knowledge (warfare) +6, Ride +8, Swim –2*; Cleave, Great Cleave, Mounted Combat, Power Attack, Ride-by Attack. *includes –6 armor check penalty

*Favored Weapon (longsword, light crossbow):* Sir Eduas gains a +1 competence bonus to attack and damage rolls with the longsword and light crossbow.

*Improved Damage (longsword):* Sir Eduas does an additional +2 (+3 total) damage with the longsword.

*Possessions:* Full plate, longsword, light crossbow, 20 bolts.

**Talbot, Male Deverenian Exp 4/Wiz 4:** CR 7; Medium humanoid (Deverenian); HD 4d6 plus 4d4; hp 26; Spd 30 ft.; Init +4; AC 14, touch 14, flat-footed 10; Base Atk +5; Grp +5; Atk +5 melee (1d4/19–20, dagger); Full Atk +5 melee (1d4/19–20, dagger); SA Spells; SQ Deverenian traits, eidetic Memory (*light, magic missile*), summon familiar (viper); AL LE; SV Fort +2, Ref +1, Will +12; Str 10, Dex 18, Con 10, Int 15, Wis 14, Cha 12.

*Skills and Feats:* Alchemy +9, Concentration +8, Decipher Script +6, Gather Information +4, Knowledge (local) +10, Knowledge (arcana) +11, Knowledge (ancient history) +6, Profession (sage) +11, Ride +2, Search +5, Spellcraft +11, Spot +5; Craft Wand, Craft Wondrous Item, Iron Will, Scribe Scroll, Alertness.

*Eidetic Memory:* Talbot may spontaneously cast *light* and *magic missile* in place of a prepared spell of equal or higher level. This loses the prepared spell to fuel the memorized spell.

*Wizard Spells Prepared* (4/4/3; save DC 12 + spell level): 0-*light, ray of frost* x2, *resistance*; 1st — *color spray, magic missile, power spike*; 2nd — *acid arrow, web.*

*Possessions: Wand of magic missiles* (10 charges), spellbook.

**Familiar (viper):** Talbot's viper familiar has the following statistics:

**Viper (Familiar):** CR —; Tiny magical beast; HD 4; HP 13; Spd 15 ft. (3 squares), climb 15 ft., swim 15 ft.; Init +3; AC 19, touch 17, flat-footed 17; Base Atk +2; Grp +2; Atk +5 melee (1 plus poison, bite); Full Atk +5 melee (1 plus poison); SA poison; SQ scent, natural armor adjustment, alertness, improved evasion, share spells, empathic link, deliver touch spells; AL N; SV Fort +3, Ref +3, Will +5; Str 4, Dex 17, Con 11, Int 8, Wis 12, Cha 2.

*Skills and Feats:* Balance +11, Climb +11, Hide +15, Listen +6, Spot +6; Swim +5; Weapon Finesse (bite).

*Familiar Ability Descriptions:* All familiars have special abilities (or impart abilities to their masters) depending on the master's combined level in classes that grant familiars. The abilities are cumulative.

*Alertness (Ex):* While his familiar is within arm's reach, Talbot gains the Alertness feat.

*Scent:* A viper can detect opponents within 30 feet by sense of smell. If the opponent is upwind, the range increases to 60 feet; if downwind, it drops to 15 feet. Strong scents, such as smoke or rotting garbage, can be detected at twice the ranges noted above. Overpowering scents, such as skunk musk or troglodyte stench, can be detected at triple normal range. When a viper detects a scent, the exact location of the source is not revealed—only its presence somewhere within range. The viper can take a move action to note the direction of the scent.

Whenever the viper comes within 5 feet of the source, the viper pinpoints the source's location.

*Improved Evasion (Ex):* When subjected to an attack that normally allows a Reflex saving throw for half damage, a familiar takes no damage if it makes a successful saving throw and half damage even if the saving throw fails.

*Share Spells:* At Talbot's option, he may have any spell (but not any spell-like ability) he casts on himself also affect his familiar. The familiar must be within 5 feet at the time of casting to receive the benefit. If the spell or effect has a duration other than instantaneous, it stops affecting the familiar if it moves farther than 5 feet away and will not affect the familiar again even if it returns to the master before the duration expires. Additionally, Talbot may cast a spell with a target of "You" on his familiar (as a touch range spell) instead of on himself. Talbot and his familiar can share spells even if the spells normally do not affect creatures of the familiar's type (magical beast).

*Empathic Link (Su):* Talbot has an empathic link with his familiar out to a distance of up to 1 mile. Talbot cannot see through the familiar's eyes, but they can communicate empathically. Because of the limited nature of the link, only general emotional content can be communicated. Because of this empathic link, Talbot has the same connection to an item or place that his familiar does.

*Deliver Touch Spells (Su):* Talbot's familiar can deliver touch spells for him. If Talbot and the familiar are in contact at the time Talbot casts a touch spell, he can designate his familiar as the "toucher." The familiar can then deliver the touch spell just as Talbot could. As usual, if Talbot casts another spell before the touch is delivered, the touch spell dissipates.

**Deverenian Troops (10), Male Deverenian Ftr 4:** CR 4; Medium humanoid (Deverenian); HD 4d10; hp 29; Init +6; Spd 20 ft.; AC 17, touch 12, flat-footed 15; Base Atk +4; Grp +6; Atk +7 melee (1d8+3 (19–20/x2), longsword); Full Atk +7 melee (1d8+3 (19–20/x2), longsword); SA Favored weapon (longsword); SQ Deverenian traits; AL LE; SV Fort +6, Ref +5, Will +2; Str 15, Dex 15, Con 14, Int 12, Wis 10, Cha 14.

*Skills and Feats:* Intimidate +4, Jump –1*, Profession (Soldier) +3, Spot +2; Improved Initiative, Power Attack, Quick Draw.
*includes –5 armor check penalty

*Favored Weapon (longsword):* A troop gains a +1 competence bonus to attack and damage rolls with the longsword.

*Possessions:* Chainmail, longsword.

## Location 2: Elven Encampment

**Development:** The Elves of the Myreth forest are angered to find Deverenians in their territory. Their nations are at war, and there are no thoughts of peace between them. It is unheard of for knights to wander into the Elven homeland.

The Elves have been tracking the Deverenians since they entered the forest three days ago. Eight of them occupy the camp. Most are standard Elven troops (see below). Elohin is an 8th-level ranger and serves as their leader. He leads by example, and is respected. Tethroh, his second-in-command, is an 8th-level wizard. Clever, but reckless, she relies heavily on her magic, intimidating friends and foes alike.

The camp boasts two crypt gaunts and two wraiths. They are primarily used to bolster the troops in large battles and perform special tasks (like standing watch and reconnaissance).

PCs encountering these Elves find them openly hostile (unless the party contains Elves). If engaged, they fight mercilessly.

**Creatures:** Elohin, a 8th-level ranger; Tethroh, a 8th-level wizard; twelve Elven troops, 3rd-level fighters; two crypt gaunts; two wraiths.

**Elohin, Male Elf Rgr 8:** CR 8; Medium humanoid (Elf); HD 8d8+24; hp 74; Init +6; Spd 30 ft.; AC 16, touch 12, flat-footed 14; Base Atk +8; Grp +11; Atk +12 melee (1d8+4 plus 1d6 fire (19–20/x2), *+1 flaming longsword*); Full Atk +10/+5 melee (1d8+4 plus 1d6 fire (19–20/x2), *+1 flaming longsword*) and +10 melee (1d6+2 (19–20/x2), *+1 short sword*); SA —; SQ Elf traits, favored terrain (forest, hills); AL NE; SV Fort +9, Ref +4, Will +3; Str 16, Dex 14, Con 16, Int 13, Wis 12, Cha 16.

*Skills and Feats:* Concentration +9, Handle Animal +6, Heal +5, Hide +7*, Jump +7*, Knowledge (Nature) +6, Listen +6, Languages (Elven, Orc), Move Silently +6*, Ride +6, Search +7, Spot +6, Survival +4, Swim +4*; Cleave, Improved Initiative, Improved Track, Power Attack, Track, Two-Weapon Fighting.
*includes –1 armor check penalty

*Favored terrain (forest, hill):* Elohin gains a +3 circumstance bonus to Climb, Hide, Listen, Knowledge (nature), Move Silently, Ride, Search, Spot, Swim, Use Rope, and Survival checks as well as a +2 circumstance bonus to all attack rolls in forest and hills terrain.

*Possessions:* Studded leather armor, *+1 flaming longsword*, *+1 short sword*.

*Ranger Spells Prepared* (0/2; save DC 11 + spell level): 1st — *summon nature's ally I*.

**Tethroh, Male Elf Wiz 8:** CR 8; Medium humanoid (Elf); HD 8d4; hp 31; Spd 30 ft.; Init +1; AC 11, touch 11, flat-footed 10; Base Atk +4; Grp +4; Atk +4 melee (1d4/19–20, dagger); Full Atk +4 melee (1d4/19–20, dagger); SA Spells; SQ Eidetic Memory (*arcane arrow, magic missile, ghoul touch, ray of enfeeblement*); AL NE; SV Fort +2, Ref +3, Will +6; Str 10, Dex 13, Con 10, Int 15, Wis 11, Cha 16.

*Skills and Feats:* Concentration +10, Diplomacy +10, Knowledge (brewing) +10, Knowledge (politics) +12, Spellcraft +12; Brew Potion, Dodge, Maximize Spell, Scribe Scroll.

*Eidetic Memory:* Tethroh may spontaneously cast *arcane arrow, magic missile, ghoul touch,* and *ray of enfeeblement* in place of a prepared spell of equal or higher level. This loses the prepared spell to fuel the memorized spell.

*Wizard Spells Prepared* (4/5/4/3/2; save DC 12 + spell level): 0 — *daze, detect poison, light, resistance*; 1st — *chill touch, magic missile, ray of enfeeblement* x2; 2nd — *ghoul touch* x2, *spectral hand*; 3rd — *dispel magic* x2, *vampiric touch*; 4th — *contagion, enervation.*

*Possessions:* Dagger, spellbook.

**Familiar (rat):** Tethroh's rat familiar has the following statistics:

**Rat (Familiar):** CR —; Tiny magical beast; HD 8; hp 15; Init +2; Spd 15 ft, climb 15 ft, swim 15 ft; AC 18, touch 14, flat-footed 15; Base Atk +4; Grp –8; Atk +6 melee (1d3–4/x2, bite); Full Atk +6 melee (1d3–4/x2, bite); Space/Reach 2–1/2 ft./0 ft.; SA —; SQ low-light vision, scent, empathic link, share spells, improved evasion, deliver touch spells, speak with master, speak with animals of its kind; AL N; SV Fort +2, Ref +5, Will +7; Str 2, Dex 15, Con 10, Int 9, Wis 12, Cha 2.

*Skill and Feats:* Balance +10, Climb +12, Hide +14, Move Silently +10, Swim +10; Weapon Finesse (bite).

*Low-Light Vision:* A rat can see twice as far as a Human in starlight, moonlight, torchlight, and similar conditions of shadowy illumination. It retains the ability to distinguish color and detail under these conditions.

*Scent:* A rat can detect opponents within 30 feet by sense of smell. If the opponent is upwind, the range increases to 60 feet; if downwind, it drops to 15 feet. Strong scents, such as smoke or rotting garbage, can be detected at twice the ranges noted above. Overpowering scents, such as skunk musk or troglodyte stench, can be detected at triple normal range. When a rat detects a scent, the exact location of the source is not revealed—only its presence somewhere within range. The rat can take a move action to note the direction of the scent.

Whenever the rat comes within 5 feet of the source, the rat pinpoints the source's location.

*Familiar Ability Descriptions:* All familiars have special abilities (or impart abilities to their masters) depending on Tethroh's combined level in classes that grant familiars. The abilities are cumulative.

*Alertness (Ex):* While a familiar is within arm's reach, Tethroh gains the Alertness feat.

*Improved Evasion (Ex):* When subjected to an attack that normally allows a Reflex saving throw for half damage, a familiar takes no damage if it makes a successful saving throw and half damage even if the saving throw fails.

*Share Spells:* At Tethroh's option, he may have any spell (but not any spell-like ability) he casts on himself also affect his familiar. The familiar must be within 5 feet at the time of casting to receive the benefit. If the spell or effect has a duration other than instantaneous, it stops affecting the familiar if it moves farther than 5 feet away and will not affect the familiar again even if it returns to Tethroh before the duration expires. Additionally, Tethroh may cast a spell with a target of "You" on his familiar (as a touch range spell) instead of on himself. Tethroh and his familiar can share spells even if the spells normally do not affect creatures of the familiar's type (magical beast).

*Empathic Link (Su):* Tethroh has an empathic link with his familiar out to a distance of up to 1 mile. Tethroh cannot see through the familiar's eyes, but they can communicate empathically. Because of the limited nature of the link, only general emotional content can be communicated. Because of this empathic link, Tethroh has the same connection to an item or place that his familiar does.

*Deliver Touch Spells (Su):* Tethroh's familiar can deliver touch spells for him. If Tethroh and the familiar are in contact at the time Tethroh casts a touch spell, he can designate his familiar as the "toucher." The familiar can then deliver the touch spell just as Tethroh could. As usual, if Tethroh casts another spell before the touch is delivered, the touch spell dissipates.

*Speak with Master (Ex):* Tethroh and his familiar can communicate verbally as if they were using a common language. Other creatures do not understand the communication without magical help.

*Speak with Animals of Its Kind (Ex):* Tethroh's familiar can communicate with rodents (including dire varieties). Such communication is limited by the intelligence of the conversing creatures.

**Elven Troops (12), Male Elf Ftr 3:** CR 3; Medium humanoid (Elf); HD 3d10; hp 22; Init +7; Spd 20 ft.; AC 17, touch 12, flat-footed 15; Base Atk +3; Grp +6; Atk +7 melee (1d8+4(19–20/x2), longsword); Full Atk +7 melee (1d8+4(19–20/x2), longsword); SA Favored weapon (longsword); SQ Elf traits; AL CG; SV Fort +6, Ref +5, Will +4; Str 16, Dex 17, Con 13, Int 12, Wis 9, Cha 13.

*Skills and Feats:* Intimidate +5, Jump –2*, Profession (Mercenary) +3, Spot +1; Cleave, Improved Initiative, Power Attack. *includes –5 armor check penalty

*Favored Weapon (longsword):* A troop gains a +1 competence bonus to attack and damage rolls with the longsword.

*Possessions:* Bonemail (banded mail equivalent), longsword.

**Crypt Gaunts (2):** CR 3; Medium undead; HD 6d12+3; hp 39; Init –1; Spd 20 ft.; AC 17, touch 9, flat-footed 17; Base Atk +3, Grp +6; Atk +7 melee (1d4+3/x2, slam); Full Atk +7 melee (1d4+3/x2, 2 slams); Space/Reach 5 ft./5 ft.; SA Despair, poison cloud; SQ damage reduction 5/magic, vulnerability to fire, resistant to blows, undead traits; AL LE; SV Fort +2, Ref +1, Will +7; Str 17, Dex 8, Con —, Int 6, Wis 14, Cha 15.

*Skills and Feats:* Hide +6, Listen +6, Move Silently +6, Spot +6; Toughness, Weapon Focus (slam).

*Despair (Su):* At the mere sight of a gaunt of either type, the viewer must make a Will save (DC 15 for crypt gaunts, 14 for swamp gaunts) or be paralyzed with fear for 1d4 rounds. Regardless of whether the save is successful, that opponent cannot be affected by the gaunt's despair ability for one day. The save DC is Charisma-based.

*Vulnerability to Fire (Ex):* A crypt gaunt takes half again as much (+50%) damage as normal from fire, unless a save is allowed for half damage. In these cases, a successful save halves damage and a failure doubles it. Further, fire damage bypasses the gaunt's usual damage reduction.

*Poison Cloud (Ex):* Each time a crypt gaunt is struck, a cloud of noxious gas erupts from its rotting funeral garb. Any character adjacent to the gaunt when it suffers damage from a physical attack must make a Fortitude save (DC 15) or be affected as by the *stinking cloud* spell. The save DC is Charisma-based.

*Resistant to Blows (Ex):* Physical attacks of all types deal only half damage to gaunts. Apply this effect before damage reduction.

*Swamp Rot (Su):* Supernatural disease — slam, Fortitude save (DC 14), incubation period 1 day, damage 1d6 temporary Constitution. Opponents killed by the effects of swamp rot become swamp gaunts themselves. After death, the opponent rises 1d4+1 days later, and immediately walks toward the swamp in which it was infected, regardless of distance. Once it arrives, it joins the creature that infected it. The save DC is Charisma-based.

**Undead Traits:** A crypt gaunt has the following traits:

- No Constitution score.
- Darkvision out to 60 feet.
- Immunity to all mind-affecting effects (charms, compulsions, phantasms, patterns, and morale effects).
- Immunity to poison, sleep effects, paralysis, stunning, disease, death effects, and necromancy effects.
- Negative energy (such as an *inflict* spell) can heal undead creatures. The fast healing quality works regardless of the creature's Intelligence score.
- Not subject to critical hits, non-lethal damage, ability damage, ability drain, fatigue, exhaustion, or energy drain. Immune to damage to its physical ability scores (Strength, Dexterity, Constitution), as well as to fatigue and exhaustion effects.
- Immunity to any effect that requires a Fortitude save (unless the effect also works on objects, or is harmless).
- Uses its Charisma modifier for Concentration checks.
- Not at risk of death from massive damage. Immediately destroyed when reduced to 0 hit points or less.
- Not affected by *raise dead* and *reincarnate* spells or abilities. *Resurrection* and *true resurrection* can affect undead creatures. These spells turn undead creatures back into the living creatures they were before becoming undead.
- Proficient with its natural weapons, all simple weapons, and any weapon mentioned in its entry.
- Proficient with whatever type of armor (light, medium, and heavy) it is described as wearing, as well as all lighter types.
- Undead do not eat, sleep, or breathe.

**Wraiths (2):** CR 5; Medium undead (incorporeal); HD 5d12; hp 32; Init +7; Spd fly 60 ft. (good); AC 15, touch 15, flat-footed 12; Base Atk +2, Grp —; Atk +5 melee (1d4 plus 1d6 Constitution drain, incorporeal touch); Full Atk +5 melee (1d4 plus 1d6 Constitution drain, incorporeal touch); Space/Reach 5 ft./5 ft.; SA Constitution drain, create spawn; SQ Darkvision 60 ft., daylight powerlessness, incorporeal subtype, +2 turn resistance, undead traits, unnatural aura; AL N; SV Fort +1, Ref +4, Will +6; Str —, Dex 16, Con —, Int 14, Wis 14, Cha 15.

*Skills and Feats:* Diplomacy +6, Hide +11, Intimidate +10, Listen +12, Search +10, Sense Motive +8, Spot +12, Survival +2 (+4 following tracks); Alertness, Blind-Fight, Combat Reflexes, Improved Initiative.

*Constitution Drain:* Living creatures hit by a wraith's incorporeal touch attack must succeed on a DC 14 Fortitude save or take 1d6 points of Constitution drain. The save DC is Charisma-based. On each such successful attack, the wraith gains 5 temporary hit points.

*Create Spawn:* Any humanoid slain by a wraith becomes a wraith in 1d4 rounds. Its body remains intact and inanimate, but its spirit is torn free from its corpse and transformed. Spawn are under the command of the wraith that created them and remain enslaved until its death. They do not possess any of the abilities they had in life.

*Darkvision, 60 ft.:* A wraith can see in the dark with no light source at all, out to a range of 60 feet. Darkvision is black and white only (colors cannot be discerned). It does not allow the wraith to see anything that it could not see otherwise—invisible objects are still invisible, and illusions are still visible as what they seem to be. Likewise, darkvision subjects the wraith to gaze attacks normally. The presence of light does not spoil darkvision.

*Daylight Powerlessness:* Wraiths are utterly powerless in natural sunlight (not merely a *daylight* spell) and flee from it.

**Incorporeal Subtype:** Due to its incorporeal nature, a wraith has the following traits:

- An incorporeal creature has no physical body. It can be harmed only by other incorporeal creatures, magic weapons or creatures that strike as magic weapons, and spells, spell-like abilities, or supernatural abilities.
- It is immune to all nonmagical attack forms. Even when hit by spells or magic weapons, it has a 50% chance to ignore any damage from a corporeal source (except for positive energy, negative energy, force effects such as *magic missile*, or attacks made with *ghost touch* weapons). Although it is not a magical attack, holy water can affect incorporeal undead, but a hit with holy water has a 50% chance of not affecting an incorporeal creature.

## Medusan Lord Agent

**Ashun is a highly skilled half-Elven rogue. He was born to a Human mother after her brief dalliance with an exiled elf, and grew up poor in the back alleys of Baraxton. After several impressive heists, he was invited to join Black Tom and the guild. After years of faithful service to the Assassins' Guild, Ashun was approached by Cear Adinerach with a better offer. He started working for the Medusan Lords directly, both as a thief, and recently, an assassin.**

**Ashun inherited the best of both his parents' traits. He has the vibrant youth of his father and his mother's size and features. He keeps his bone ridges filed down, so he easily passes for a slightly built Human. Ashun is smart, charismatic, and discreet.**

**Like many of the Medusan Lords' agents, Ashun wants wealth, power, and privilege. As long as the Medusan Lords pay him well, he is their man.**

**Ashun Voll, Male Halfbreed Rog 10:** CR 10; Medium humanoid (halfbreed); HD 10d6; hp 40; Spd 30 ft.; Init +4; AC 14, touch 14, flat-footed 10; Base Atk +7; Grp +6; Atk +6 melee (1d4(19–20/x2), dagger); Full Atk +4/–1 melee (1d4(19–20/x2), dagger) and +4 melee (1d4(19–20/x2), dagger); SA Sneak attack +4d6; SQ Catfall, evasion, hide in plain sight, halfbreed traits (Human and elf), improved nightsight, opportunist, whisperstep; AL LE; SV Fort +3, Ref +10, Will +3; Str 9, Dex 16, Con 10, Int 11, Wis 10, Cha 9.

*Skills and Feats:* Appraise +5, Balance +9, Bluff +12, Climb +9, Disable Device +9, Diplomacy +5, Disguise +5, Escape Artist +11, Forgery +9, Gather Information +5, Hide +5, Intimidate+ 5, Jump +5, Listen +5, Move Silently +12, Open Locks +12, Rope Use +9, Search +5, Sense Motive +5, Sleight of Hand +11, Spot +10, Survival +5, Use Magic Device +5; Dodge, Mobility, Great Fortitude, Quick Draw, Two-Weapon Fighting.

*Catfall:* On a successful Reflex save (DC 10 + 1 for every 10 feet fallen), Ashun Voll takes only half normal damage from a fall.

*Hide In Plain Sight:* Each time Ashun Voll makes a Hide check, he may reduce the total penalty (if any) to his skill check by his rogue class level (10), to a minimum of 0.

*Improved Nightsight:* Ashun Voll can see half again as far as normal in conditions of low light.

*Opportunist:* Once per round Ashun Voll can make an attack of opportunity against an opponent who has just been struck for damage in melee combat by another character. This attack counts against Voll's attacks of opportunity for that round.

*Sneak Attack:* Anytime Ashun Voll's target is denied a Dexterity bonus to AC, or when he flanks a target, Voll deals an additional 4d6 points of damage on a successful melee attack.

*Whisperstep:* Ashun Voll may move his full speed while attempting to Move Silently with no penalty. If Voll is running, he suffers only half the normal penalty (–10) to his Move Silently check.

*Possessions:* 2 daggers.

- An incorporeal creature has no natural armor bonus but has a deflection bonus equal to its Charisma bonus (always at least +1, even if the creature's Charisma score does not normally provide a bonus).
- An incorporeal creature can enter or pass through solid objects, but must remain adjacent to the object's exterior, and so cannot pass entirely through an object whose space is larger than its own. It can sense the presence of creatures or objects within a square adjacent to its current location, but enemies have total concealment (50% miss chance) from an incorporeal creature that is inside an object. In order to see farther from the object it is in and attack normally, the incorporeal creature must emerge. An incorporeal creature inside an object has total cover, but when it attacks a creature outside the object it only has cover, so a creature outside with a readied action could strike at it as it attacks. An incorporeal creature cannot pass through a force effect.
- An incorporeal creature's attacks pass through (ignore) natural armor, armor, and shields, although deflection bonuses and force effects (such as *mage armor*) work normally against it.
- Incorporeal creatures pass through and operate in water as easily as they do in air.
- Incorporeal creatures cannot fall or take falling damage.
- Incorporeal creatures cannot make trip or grapple attacks, nor can they be tripped or grappled. In fact, they cannot take any physical action that would move or manipulate an opponent or its equipment, nor are they subject to such actions.
- Incorporeal creatures have no weight and do not set off traps that are triggered by weight.
- An incorporeal creature moves silently and cannot be heard with Listen checks if it doesn't wish to be. It has no Strength score, so its Dexterity modifier applies to both its melee attacks and its ranged attacks. Nonvisual senses, such as scent and blindsight, are either ineffective or only partly effective with regard to incorporeal creatures.
- Incorporeal creatures have an innate sense of direction and can move at full speed even when they cannot see.

*Turn Resistance:* When resolving a turn, rebuke, command, or bolster attempt, add +2 to the wraith's Hit Dice total.

**Undead Traits:** A wraith has the following traits:

- No Constitution score.
- Darkvision out to 60 feet.
- Immunity to all mind-affecting effects (charms, compulsions, phantasms, patterns, and morale effects).
- Immunity to poison, sleep effects, paralysis, stunning, disease, death effects, and necromancy effects.

- Negative energy (such as an *inflict* spell) can heal undead creatures. The fast healing quality works regardless of the creature's Intelligence score.
- Not subject to critical hits, non-lethal damage, ability damage, ability drain, fatigue, exhaustion, or energy drain. Immune to damage to its physical ability scores (Strength, Dexterity, Constitution), as well as to fatigue and exhaustion effects.
- Immunity to any effect that requires a Fortitude save (unless the effect also works on objects, or is harmless).
- Uses its Charisma modifier for Concentration checks.
- Not at risk of death from massive damage. Immediately destroyed when reduced to 0 hit points or less.
- Not affected by *raise dead* and *reincarnate* spells or abilities. *Resurrection* and *true resurrection* can affect undead creatures. These spells turn undead creatures back into the living creatures they were before becoming undead.
- Proficient with its natural weapons, all simple weapons, and any weapon mentioned in its entry.
- Proficient with whatever type of armor (light, medium, and heavy) it is described as wearing, as well as all lighter types.
- Undead do not eat, sleep, or breathe.

*Unnatural Aura:* Animals, whether wild or domesticated, can sense the unnatural presence of a wraith at a distance of 30 feet. They will not willingly approach nearer than that and panic if forced to do so; they remain panicked as long as they are within that range.

## Location 3: The Chasm

Refer to the map. As the player characters enter each numbered area, consult the entry listed here and read aloud the boxed text.

The chasm is a 300-foot long rift in the forest floor, 100 feet deep and riddled with caves. It was created during the siege, when Xioz summoned a greater abyssal to combat his attackers. The tower is at the **bottom** of the chasm, covered in debris and moss. Enormous spider webs extend across the chasm; two hapless victims hang tangled in them. On several occasions curious Elves or other explorers have discovered this area, but the abyssals quickly consumed them.

A puppeteer spider queen (see and her minions live here. A community of terr org worships them. They live in the caves along the walls of the chasm. The spider queen uses them to herd victims into the clearing. The spider queen and her servitors rarely leave their lair in **Location 5**. They are bound to the chasm and cannot venture more than 50 feet beyond the tree line.

## Location 3.1: Giant Web

**Read aloud:** *Massive strands of webbing stretch across the chasm at its narrowest point. Two bundles write near the center; it looks as if something (or someone) caught in the webbing is still alive.*

Two victims are caught in the web: Abernath, a Human wizard from Toris Kelt, and his guide, a Human druid, Wilwind. They chanced upon the chasm while passing through the area in search of **Dythanus' capital** (*see the World Atlas*) and were driven into the web by the terr org.

If they are befriended or helped to escape, they are quite willing to help the PCs any way they can, except for throwing themselves into combat. Right now, they are so terrified they just want to go home.

**Abernath, Male Human Wiz 3:** CR 3; Medium humanoid (Human); HD 3d4; hp 8; Spd 30 ft.; Init +0; AC 10, touch 10, flat-footed 10; Base Atk +1; Grp +1; Atk +1 melee (1d4+1(19–20/x2), dagger); Full Atk +1 melee (1d4+1(19–20/x2), dagger); SA Spells; SQ Eidetic Memory (*magic weapon*), summon familiar (bat); AL NE; SV Fort +1, Ref +1, Will +3; Str 11 Dex 11, Con 10, Int 15, Wis 10, Cha 10.

*Skills and Feats:* Concentration +8, Craft (brewing) +8, Knowledge (nature) +8, Listen +3, Spellcraft +6; Brew Potion, Dodge, Improved Initiative, Scribe Scroll, Alertness.

*Eidetic Memory:* Abernath may spontaneously cast *magic weapon* in place of a prepared spell of equal or higher level. This loses the prepared spell to fuel the memorized spell.

*Wizard Spells Prepared* (4/3/2; save DC 12 + spell level): 0 — *detect poison x3, light*; 1st — *jump, magic missile x2*; 2nd — *blur, weakness.*

*Possessions:* Dagger, spellbook.

**Familiar (bat):** Abernath's bat familiar has the following statistics:

**Bat (Familiar):** CR 1; Diminutive magical beast; HD 3; hp 4; Init +2; Spd 5 ft., fly 40 ft. (good); AC 18, touch 16, flat-footed 12; Base Atk +1, Grp –16; Atk-; Full Atk-; Space/Reach 1ft./0ft.; SA —; SQ Blindsense 20 ft., low-light vision; AL CE; SV Fort +2, Ref +5, Will +5; Str 1, Dex 15, Con 10, Int 7, Wis 14, Cha 4.

*Skills and Feats:* Hide +14, Listen +8*, Move Silently +6, Spot +8*; Alertness. * A bat has a +4 racial bonus on Spot and Listen checks. These bonuses are lost if its blindsense is negated.

*Familiar Ability Descriptions:* All familiars have special abilities (or impart abilities to their masters) depending on Abernath's combined level in classes that grant familiars. The abilities are cumulative.

*Alertness (Ex):* While his bat is within arm's reach, Abernath gains the Alertness feat.

*Blindsense:* A bat notices and locates creatures within 20 feet. Opponents still have 100% concealment against a creature with blindsense.

*Improved Evasion (Ex):* When subjected to an attack that normally allows a Reflex saving throw for half damage, a familiar takes no damage if it makes a successful saving throw and half damage even if the saving throw fails.

*Share Spells:* At Abernath's option, he may have any spell (but not any spell-like ability) he casts on himself also affect his familiar. The familiar must be within 5 feet at the time of casting to receive the benefit. If the spell or effect has a duration other than instantaneous, it stops affecting the familiar if it moves farther than 5 feet away and will not affect the familiar again even if it returns to the master before the duration expires. Additionally, Abernath may cast a spell with a target of "You" on his familiar (as a touch range spell) instead of on himself. Abernath and his familiar can share spells even if the spells normally do not affect creatures of the familiar's type (magical beast).

*Empathic Link (Su):* Abernath has an empathic link with his familiar out to a distance of up to 1 mile. Abernath cannot see through the familiar's eyes, but they can communicate empathically. Because of the limited nature of the link, only general emotional content can be communicated. Because of this empathic link, Abernath has the same connection to an item or place that his familiar does.

*Deliver Touch Spells (Su):* Abernath's familiar can deliver touch spells for him. If Abernath and the familiar are in contact at the time Abernath casts a touch spell, he can designate his familiar as the "toucher." The familiar can then deliver the touch spell just as Abernath could. As usual, if Abernath casts another spell before the touch is delivered, the touch spell dissipates.

**Wilwind, Male Human Drd 3:** CR 3; Medium humanoid (Human); HD 3d8; 18; Spd 20 ft.; Init +1; AC 14, touch 11, flat-footed 13; Base Atk +2; Grp +2; Atk +2 melee (1d6/x2, quarterstaff); Full Atk +2 melee (1d6/x2, quarterstaff); SA —; SQ Animal speech, nature sense, spells, totem animal (boar), trackless step, woodland stride; AL NG; SV Fort +2, Ref +1, Will +4; Str 10, Dex 13, Con 10, Int 11, Wis 14, Cha 14.

*Skills and Feats:* Concentration +2, Heal +6, Knowledge (Nature) +6, Survival +8; Dodge, Mobility.

*Animal Speech:* Wilwind may communicate vocally with his totem animals (boars).

*Nature Sense:* Wilwind can identify plants and animals and can determine whether water is safe to drink with perfect accuracy.

**Totem Animal (boar):** *Bonus Ability:* Raging Charge. Wilwind can harness the power and ferocity of the wild boar, making his charges more powerful than normal. When charging, Wilwind gains a +3 bonus to attack and a +1 bonus to damage. These bonuses do not stack with the normal charge bonuses.

Wilwind's boar totem animal has the following statistics:

**Boar (totem animal):** CR 2; Medium animal; HD 3d8+12; hp 25; Init +0; Spd 40 ft.; AC 16, touch 10, flat-footed 16; Base Atk +2, Grp +4; Atk +4 melee (1d8+3/x2, gore); Full Atk +4 melee (1d8+3/x2, gore); Space/Reach 5 ft./5 ft.; SA ferocity; SQ Scent, low-light vision; AL N; SV Fort +6, Ref +3, Will +2; Str 15, Dex 10, Con 17, Int 2, Wis 13, Cha 4.

*Skills and Feats:* Listen +7, Spot +5; Alertness, Toughness.

*Low-Light Vision:* A boar can see twice as far as a Human in starlight, moonlight, torchlight, and similar conditions of shadowy illumination. It retains the ability to distinguish color and detail under these conditions.

*Scent:* A boar can detect opponents within 30 feet by sense of smell. If the opponent is upwind, the range increases to 60 feet; if downwind, it drops to 15 feet. Strong scents, such as smoke or rotting garbage, can be detected at twice the ranges noted above. Overpowering scents, such as skunk musk or troglodyte stench, can be detected at triple normal range. When a boar detects a scent, the exact location of the source is not revealed—only its presence somewhere within range. The boar can take a move action to note the direction of the scent.

Whenever the boar comes within 5 feet of the source, it pinpoints the source's location.

*Ferocity (Ex):* A boar is such a tenacious combatant that it continues to fight without penalty even while disabled or dying.

*Trackless Step:* Wilwind leaves no trail in natural surroundings and cannot be tracked.

*Woodland Stride:* Wilwind may move through natural thorns, briars, overgrown areas and other similar terrain without suffering damage or impairment.

*Druid Spells Prepared* (4/3/2; save DC 12 + spell level): 0 — *create water, cure minor wounds* x3; 1st — *curse of the lady, foxfire, goodberry*; 2nd — *barkskin, heat metal.*

*Possessions:* Hide armor, quarterstaff.

## Location 3.2: Terr Org Caves

Years ago, a number of terr org colonies banded together to create the extended colony that dwells here now. They worship the Spider Queen, and she protects them. It is an unlikely alliance to be sure, but a mutually beneficial relationship. They inhabit the caves in the chasm walls and the surrounding forest. There are 5d10+200 in the area at all times.

The caves are natural. Stalactites and stalagmites, uneven surfaces, loose rock, and abundant moss are the rule. The caves are damp, cold, and slick. They share the following properties, unless otherwise noted.

**Ceilings:** The ceiling heights of the rough caves and connecting passages are half the width of the cavern or tunnel (to a minimum of five feet). They are not hewn. They are rough, uneven, and dotted with small stalactites.

**Floors:** The caves have natural stone floors sprinkled with stalagmites. The floors are relatively smooth but can be treacherous to run across. A PC attempting to run or charge across these floors must make a successful Balance check (DC 10) or fall prone, halting all movement.

**Walls:** The walls of the caves are natural, unworked stone. Their rough surface makes them relatively easy to climb.

**Unworked Stone Walls:** Minimum 5 ft. thick; hardness 8; hp 900 (per 5 feet of thickness); AC 3; break DC 65; Climb DC 15.

**Light:** The caves are lightless unless specifically noted otherwise. A light source is required for PCs to see without darkvision.

**Ventilation:** The caves contain an adequate air supply, unless otherwise noted. There are many small cracks and fissures which lead to fresh air.

## Location 3.2.1: Terr Org Shaman (EL 7)

**Read aloud:** *Strings of bones dangle across the entrance of this cave like ghostly wind chimes. The passage beyond glows with phosphorescent moss. It twists and turns, deep into the earth.*

**Development:** This cave is only 10 feet from the bottom of the chasm. The terr org shaman, a creature called Bekik, resides here. He keeps the others in line and controls the Spider Queen tribute. He serves her blindly, and has in fact been transformed by her magic (*see Creating Servitors sidebar*). If engaged, he fights to defend himself and tries to escape combat at the earliest opportunity. He is wearing a carved horn around his neck which he can blow to call 3d6+6 terr org males within 1d4+1 rounds. He also carries a medicine bag full of fetishes and other trinkets.

**Creature:** Bekik, a 5th-level Terr Org shaman.

**Bekik, Male Terr Org Sha 5:** CR 5; Small magical beast; HD 5d4; hp 15; Spd 20 ft., fly 40 ft. (poor); Init +10; AC 19, touch 17, flat-footed 14; Base Atk +2; Grp –1; Atk +4 melee (1d2+1/x2, slam) or +9 (1d4+1/x2, rock); Full Atk +4 melee (1d2+1/x2, slam) or +9 (1d4+1/x2, rock); SA Spells; SQ Beast bond, familiar (baboon), favored terrain (forest); AL NE; SV Fort +1, Ref +7, Will +4; Str 12, Dex 22, Con 10, Int 16, Wis 10, Cha 4.

*Skills and Feats:* Listen +10*, Spot+10*; Improved Initiative, Silent Spell, Alertness. *Terr orgs receive a +4 racial modifier to Listen and Spot checks.

**Familiar (baboon):** *Bonus Ability:* Brachiation. Bekik can swing through wooded areas on vines. While in a wooded area, you gain an additional movement type and speed: Swing 20 feet. This ability can be used in conjunction with the Climb and Jump skills. When used with the Climb skill, Bekik gets a competence bonus equal to his Dexterity bonus on Climb checks. When used with the Jump skill, his jumping distance is not bounded by his height. *Familiar/Animal Companion Special Abilities:* Bekik gains +1 to Strength (already reflected in his statistics).

Bekik's baboon familiar has the following statistics:

**Baboon (Familiar):** CR 1; Medium animal; HD 5; hp 7; Init +2; Spd 40 ft., climb 30 ft.; AC 16, touch 12, flat-footed 15; Base Atk +4, Grp +4; Atk +4 melee (1d6+3/x2, bite); Full Atk +4 melee (1d6+3/x2, bite); Space/Reach 5 ft./5 ft.; SA —; SQ low-light vision, scent; AL N; SV Fort +4, Ref +6, Will +5; Str 15, Dex 14, Con 12, Int 8, Wis 12, Cha 4.

*Skills and Feats:* Climb +10*, Listen +5, Spot +5; Alertness. *Baboons have a +8 racial bonus on Climb checks and can always choose to take 10 on Climb checks, even if rushed or threatened.

*Familiar Ability Descriptions:* All familiars have special abilities (or impart abilities to their masters) depending on Bekik's combined level in classes that grant familiars. The abilities are cumulative.

*Alertness (Ex):* While his baboon is within arm's reach, Bekik gains the Alertness feat.

*Low-Light Vision (Ex):* A baboon can see twice as far as a Human in starlight, moonlight, torchlight, and similar conditions of shadowy illumination. It retains the ability to distinguish color and detail under these conditions.

*Scent (Ex):* A baboon can detect opponents within 30 feet by sense of smell. If the opponent is upwind, the range increases to 60 feet; if downwind, it drops to 15 feet. Strong scents, such as smoke or rotting garbage, can be detected at twice the ranges noted above. Overpowering scents, such as skunk musk or troglodyte stench, can be detected at triple normal range. When a baboon detects a scent, the exact location of the source is not revealed—only its presence somewhere within range. The baboon can take a move action to note the direction of the scent.

Whenever the baboon comes within 5 feet of the source, the rat pinpoints the source's location.

*Improved Evasion (Ex):* When subjected to an attack that normally allows a Reflex saving throw for half damage, a familiar takes no damage if it makes a successful saving throw and half damage even if the saving throw fails.

*Share Spells:* At Bekik's option, he may have any spell (but not any spell-like ability) he casts on himself also affect his familiar. The familiar must be within 5 feet at the time of casting to receive the benefit. If the spell or effect has a duration other than instantaneous, it stops affecting the familiar if it moves farther than 5 feet away and will not affect the familiar again even if it returns to the master before the duration expires. Additionally, Bekik may cast a spell with a target of "You" on his familiar (as a touch range spell) instead of on himself. Bekik and his familiar can share spells even if the spells normally do not affect creatures of the familiar's type (magical beast).

*Empathic Link (Su):* Bekik has an empathic link with his familiar out to a distance of up to 1 mile. Bekik cannot see through the familiar's eyes, but they can communicate empathically. Because of the limited nature of the link, only general emotional content can be communicated. Because of this empathic link, Bekik has the same connection to an item or place that his familiar does.

*Deliver Touch Spells (Su):* Bekik's familiar can deliver touch spells for him. If Bekik and the familiar are in contact at the time Bekik casts a touch spell, he can designate his familiar as the "toucher." The familiar can then deliver the touch spell just as Bekik could. As usual, if Bekik casts another spell before the touch is delivered, the touch spell dissipates.

*Favored Terrain (forest):* While in hill terrain, Bekik's shaman caster level is 6th and he does not need to have access to his medicine bag to prepare fetishes.

*Beast Bond:* Bekik may share his consciousness with his familiar, allowing him to share his familiar's perceptions and be in full control of his familiar's actions. While using this ability Bekik is unaware of himself and is considered helpless; he may not move, speak, or act in any way.

*Shaman Spells Known* (4/4/3/2; save DC 13 + spell level): 0 — *resistance, daze, flare, ghost sound*; 1st — *curse of the lady, expeditious journey, magic missile, stone hands*; 2nd — *nature provides, shard storm, tail strike*; 3rd — *hail of thorns, lose the path.*

*Possessions:* Dagger, *bracers of armor +2, ring of passwall,* platinum necklace (worth 350 gp), and 22 gp.

## Location 3.2.2: Terr Org Band

**Read aloud:** *Leaves, moss, and dry pine needles make dozens of beds in this natural cave. Dozens of small, ape-like bipeds with deep brown wings are gathered here.*

This wide cave is 20 ft. below the edge of the chasm. Many terr org females sleep here; twoscore are here day or night.

**Creatures:** Forty terr org.

**Terr Org (40):** CR 1/2; Small magical beast; HD 1d10; hp 5; Spd 20 ft., fly 40 ft. (poor); Init +3; AC 16, touch 14, flat-footed 13; Base Atk +1; Grp –5; Atk +0 melee (1d3–2/x2, slam) or +5 ranged (1d4–2/x2, rock); Full Atk +0 melee (1d3–2/x2, 2 slams) or +5 ranged (1d4–2/x2, rock); SA —; SQ —; AL N; SV Fort +2, Ref +5, Will +0; Str 7, Dex 16, Con 10, Int 2, Wis 10, Cha 10.

*Skills and Feats:* Listen +8*, Spot+8*; Alertness. *Terr orgs receive a +4 racial modifier to Listen and Spot checks.

## Location 3.2.3: The Boneyard

**Read aloud:** *Like a scene from some ancient battlefield, the interior of the chasm is a ravaged graveyard, littered with skeletons, rocks, and debris. A fetid stench fills the air, burning your lungs with every breath. A thick mist clings to the ground. At the center of this area, jutting out from between huge chunks of rock and earth, stands the ruin of a white and black tower. It is windowless; only a single door breaks its smooth surface.*

This area is 100 feet below the edge of the chasm. The entire area is littered with the bones of the army that attacked Xioz. Signs of a siege can be found in the rubble — splintered siege engines, monster skeletons, and broken weaponry abound.

The entire area has been permanently affected by the following spells: *unhallow, obscuring mist,* and *desecrate.*

The terr org know to stay away from the base of the chasm, though the occasional brave (and stupid) youngster sometimes races to the bottom to steal a trinket for the Spider Queen.

Undead occupy the boneyard and surrounding caves: skeletons, zombies, ghouls, wights, shadows, and ghosts, and many actively prowl the area looking for invaders. The uneven terrain and ample darkness provide plenty of potential ambush sites. Roving groups are composed of different mixes of undead types, left up to the GM.

The wights are the most aggressive of the boneyard's inhabitants; they are the most likely to note the PCs' presence and attack. If they engage the PCs, the sound of combat draws other undead to the scene in 1d4+1 rounds. They arrive in ever-growing waves, until the hated presence of life is snuffed out.

**Creatures:** Various numbers of: skeletons, zombies, ghouls, wights, shadows, and ghosts (GM's judgment).

## Location 4: The Bonespire

The Bonespire is sun-bleached bone reinforced with obsidian so that it could better withstand direct assault. The walls and floors have hardness 15, 300 hp, and SR 25 (for spells used to bypass or directly affect them). The Bonespire is immune to fire, lightning, acid, extreme heat, and extreme cold. Xioz had many enemies and he built his sanctuary to hedge them out.

The tower has six levels, three underground. They share the following features, unless noted otherwise in a specific area description.

**Doors:** Two types of doors are found inside the tower and dungeon: wooden and stone. Unless otherwise noted, normal doors have the following qualities:

**Wooden Doors:** 1 in. thick; hardness 5; hp 10; AC 5; break DC 28.

**Stone Doors:** 2 in. thick; hardness 8; hp 30; AC 5; break DC 26.

**Walls:** Walls in the tower and dungeon are a mix of bone and stone. They have the same attributes as superior masonry walls.

**Walls:** 1 ft. thick; hardness 8; hp 90; AC 3; break DC 35; Climb DC 20.

**Floors:** The floors are smooth marble flagstones. PCs have no difficulty running or charging across them.

**Ceilings:** The ceilings are 12 feet high and as smooth as the walls.

**Light:** The tower rooms are lightless, unless specifically noted otherwise. A light source is required for PCs to see without darkvision.

**Ventilation:** The dungeon halls, passages, and rooms are not well-ventilated, and most have not seen fresh air in centuries. Although the stale air reeks of sulfur, it is sufficient to keep the PCs alive for as long as they are likely to be in the complex.

The door is *arcane locked* (DC 36 to open) and barred from the inside.

**Bone Door:** 2 in. thick; hardness 8; hp 50; AC 5; break DC 26.

Many of Xioz's undead servants remain inside the tower. They have been performing their duties by rote for the last eight centuries. The tower has changed little since Xioz was imprisoned.

## Location 4.1: Entry Hall

**Read aloud:** *This simple room is devoid of furniture but the walls are covered with delicate Elven tapestries and other finery. There are four doors in the room, one on each wall.*

This is the entry hall. When Xioz received visitors it was customary for them to remain here until he sent for them. This is the only room safe from the house guardians and other undead residents; it is warded to prevent entry by undead creatures (except Xioz). The wards are not easy to recognize, but a successful Spellcraft check (DC 30) reveals that the tapestries are the ward spells' foci. They have been treated with an elixir that masks magic auras, though they are indeed magical.

## Location 4.2: Waiting Room

**Read aloud:** *This tastefully decorated room contains comfortable-looking furniture — four wide chairs and two cushioned benches. Everything is covered in a thick layer of dust and grime. There is a wooden door on the north wall.*

Xioz often made visitors wait before seeing them; sometimes they waited a long time. This room was built for such occasions. The door leads to the parlor (**Location 4.4**). It is locked, and Xioz has the only key, so the undead servants have not been able to clean the room. The wooden door is a standard door.

## Location 4.3: Dining Room

**Read aloud:** *This room contains an ornate dining table, ten high-backed chairs, and a crystal chandelier. The place is spotlessly clean.*

Xioz entertained living guests here. Undead servants keep the place tidy. They are still performing their designated duties as instructed.

## Location 4.4: Parlor

**Read aloud:** *"Utterly comfortable" is the only way to describe this room. It is full of plush furniture, fine art, and a full fireplace.*

Xioz brought living guests here when he wanted them to feel relaxed. He believed in treating his guests well, and this room is a testament to that. The art decorating the room is easily worth 10,000 gp, perhaps even more, to the right collector.

## Location 4.5: Kitchen

**Read aloud:** *This room has a large fireplace, preparation tables, cabinets of dishes, and other kitchenware. It is well appointed and clean. Standing at attention at the back of this room are four Human-sized skeletons which do not acknowledge your presence.*

All of the perishable items have long since deteriorated, but the rest of the kitchen remains in fine repair. These skeletons were animated to perform household duties, and they continue to perform that function. They fight only if attacked, otherwise simply performing their duties and ignoring the PCs. If the PCs do anything that causes a mess, the skeletons jump to clean up.

## Location 4.6 Storage/Hall

**Read aloud:** *This large hall doubles as a storage room. Boxes, barrels, and extra furniture are stacked against the walls. Stairs run up and down along the outside wall.*

The containers once held all sorts of mundane items used by the household. They have all rotted to dust.

## Location 4.7: Hall

Aside from the stairs that lead down to Area 4.6 or up to Area 4.13, this room is completely empty.

## Location 4.8: Audience Chamber (EL 10)

**Read aloud:** *This room is dominated by an ornate throne of bone. A red carpet runs up to its base. Precious tapestries line the walls and a small, crystal chandelier hangs overhead. There are four doors here, one on each wall. Standing on pedestals in each corner are two large gargoyles, sculpted from bone.*

*This room was Xioz's audience chamber. The bone gargoyles are more than simple sculptures; they are tower guardians. They attack anyone entering the room without an escort (Xioz or one of his servants). They are mindless and fight to the death.*

**Creatures:** Eight bone guardians.

**Bone Guardians (8):** CR 2; Large construct (gargoyle); HD 8d10; hp 44; Init +1; Speed 40 ft.; AC 22, touch 10, flat-footed 21; Base Atk +5; Grp +14; Atk: +10 melee (2d6+7/x2, slam); Full Atk +3 melee (2d6+7/x2, 2 slams); Space/Reach: 10 ft./10 ft.; SA Trample; SQ construct traits; AL N; SV Fort +2, Ref +3, Will +2; Str 20, Dex 13, Con —, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 5.

*Skills and Feats:* Search +6, Spot +6; Improved Natural Attack, Power Attack.

*Trample (Ex):* As a full-round action, a bone guardian can move up to twice its speed and literally run over any opponents at least one size category smaller than itself. Reflex save DC 19 for half damage.

**Construct traits:** A construct has the following traits:

- No Constitution score.
- Low-light vision.
- Darkvision out to 60 feet.
- Immunity to all mind-affecting effects (charms, compulsions, phantasms, patterns, and morale effects).
- Immunity to poison, sleep effects, paralysis, stunning, disease, death effects, and necromancy effects.
- Cannot heal damage on its own, but often can be repaired by exposing it to a certain kind of effect or through the use of the Craft Construct feat. A construct with the fast healing special quality still benefits from that quality.
- Not subject to critical hits, non-lethal damage, ability damage, ability drain, fatigue, exhaustion, or energy drain.
- Immunity to any effect that requires a Fortitude save (unless the effect also works on objects, or is harmless).
- Not at risk of death from massive damage. Immediately destroyed when reduced to 0 hit points or less.
- Since it was never alive, a construct cannot be raised or resurrected.

- Because its body is a mass of unliving matter, a construct is hard to destroy. It gains bonus hit points based on size, as shown in the Table on page 307 of the *Monster Manual*.
- Proficient with its natural weapons only, unless generally humanoid in form, in which case proficient with any weapon mentioned in its entry.
- Proficient with no armor.
- Constructs do not eat, sleep, or breathe.

## Location 4.9: Study

**Read aloud:** *The chamber is filled with books, a sturdy desk, and a high-backed chair. A crystal globe hanging above the desk gives off a pale green light.*

The door to Xioz's study is always *arcane locked* (DC 36 to open). The study is filled with books about necromancy, death, and occult practices.

The crystal is a phonstone, and the pixie inside is quite mad. She simply lies inside, her mind and body numb from inactivity.

*Treasure:* A secret compartment in the back of the desk (Search check DC 25 to find) holds a bag containing 100 pp and a *lens of detection* wrapped in silk.

## Location 4.10: Laboratory

**Read aloud:** *Cabinets line the outside wall of the chamber and worktables fill the room. The entire area smells of sulfur and chemicals. Elaborate equipment covers the tables in this room — beakers, vials, tubes, and the like.*

The cabinets are packed with spell components, chemicals, reagents, and arcane tools. Many of the chemicals and reagents have gone bad, some (at the GM's discretion) dangerously so.

## Location 4.11: Library

**Read aloud:** *The walls of this library are lined with bookcases that touch the ceiling. Three sets of tables and chairs fill the room.*

The bookcases hold hundreds of tomes covering an assortment of topics including politics, history, geography, cartography, and myth.

A secret door in the south wall is *arcane locked* and requires a successful Search check (DC 25) to locate (DC 36 to open). It can be opened by pulling on a book titled *The Legends of Toris Kelt* or by casting a *knock* spell.

**Stone Door:** 2 in. thick; hardness 8; hp 30; AC 5; break DC 26.

## Location 4.12: Secret Library

This room is also filled with bookcases, but it contains Xioz's prized tomes. The subjects include alchemy, necromancy, and other arcane topics. The entire collection is worth roughly 10,000 gp.

## Location 4.13: Gallery

**Read aloud:** *At the top of the stairs, the bone and plaster walls have been painted with murals of Elves enacting necromantic rituals, conducting Human sacrifices, and binding demons. These disturbing scenes cover the walls, floor, and ceiling. Immediately to the right of the top of the stairs is a wide wooden door. It is stained a deep red and covered with archaic runes.*

The murals have a purpose other than decoration. Anyone entering the room unescorted (by Xioz or one of his servants) must make a Will save (DC 28) or suffer the effects of an *insanity* spell. The runes painted on the door form a magic *fire* trap. If the door is opened by anyone other than Xioz (or one of his servants) it goes off.

**Bone Door:** 2 in. thick; hardness 8; hp 75; AC 5; break DC 26.

**Fire Trap:** CR 5; spell; spell trigger; no reset; spell effect (*fire trap*, 20th level wizard, 1d4+20 fire, DC 16 Reflex save half damage); Search DC 29; Disable Device DC 29.

## Location 4.14: Secret Vault

This bone door is locked (DC 28 to open) and sealed with a magical plaster that acts as an *arcane lock* (caster level 18). The door bears the same painted runes as the door to **Location 4.13**, although hidden on the inside.

**Bone Door:** 2 in. thick; hardness 8; hp 75; AC 5; break DC 26.

**Read aloud:** *This small alcove is lined with shelves from floor to ceiling. There are three coffers, a small iron box, and a large chest stacked neatly beneath the shelves.*

This room is filled with occult books, including a copy of Xioz's two favorite spellbooks.

- **Spellbook One**: 0 — *arcane mark, dancing lights, daze, detect magic, detect poison, disrupt undead, flare, ghost sound, light, mage hand, mending, open/close, prestidigitation, ray of frost, read magic, resistance.* 1st — *animate rope, change self, charm person, identify, mage armor, magic missile, magic weapon, shocking grasp, silent image, sleep, summon monster I.* 2nd — *blindness/deafness, blur, ghoul touch, levitate, magic mouth, mirror image, see invisibility, summon monster II, web.* 3rd — *dispel magic, explosive runes, fly, haste, hold person, lightning bolt, slow, summon monster III.*
- **Spellbook Two**: 4th — *arcane eye, bestow curse, charm monster, dimension door, fire shield, improved invisibility, lesser geas, phantasmal killer, polymorph self, summon monster IV.* 5th — *animate dead, cloudkill, cone of cold, contact other plane, dominate person, dream, greater shadow conjuration, hold monster, lesser planar binding, magic jar, mind fog, mirage arcana, permanency, seeming, sending, shadow evocation, summon monster V, teleport, transmute mud to rock, transmute rock to mud, wall of force, wall of iron, wall of stone.*

*Treasure:* The coffers hold Xioz's treasure trove: each contains 5,000 gp. The small locked iron box (DC 30 to open) is trapped. It contains an assortment of gems (10,000 gp total value).

**Poison Needle Trap:** CR 1; mechanical; touch trigger; manual reset; Atk +8 ranged (1 plus greenblood oil poison); Search DC 22; Disable Device DC 20.

**Hail of Needles Trap:** CR 3; mechanical; location trigger; manual reset; Atk +20 ranged (2d4); Search DC 22; Disable Device DC 22.

## Location 4.15: Living Quarters (EL 8)

**Read aloud:** *Lush rugs cover the floor of this opulent chamber. There is a bed, a wardrobe, and a small throne in the north half of the room, and four long tables to the south. The tables are covered with necromantic paraphernalia, books, and half-spent candles.*

*Standing beside the tables is a pale, ghostly figure in spiny white plate. Its terrifying gaze radiates hatred, and it wails hauntingly.*

*Xioz created this guardian ghost to protect his quarters. After standing idle for 800 years, it has gone quite mad. It mercilessly attacks any living creature that enters the room, and continues attacking until destroyed.*

**Creature:** One guardian ghost.

**Guardian Ghost (1), Ftr 6:** CR 8; Medium undead (augmented humanoid) (incorporeal); HD 6d12; hp 48; Init +6; Spd 40 ft. fly 80 ft. (perfect); AC 13, touch 13, flat-footed 10; Base Atk +6; Grp +10; Atk +12 melee (1d8+9(17–20/x2), longsword); Full Atk +12 melee (1d8+9(17–20/x2), longsword); Space/Reach 5 ft./5 ft.; SA Favored weapon (longsword, battleaxe), improved damage (longsword), corrupting gaze, frightful moan, manifestation, horrific appearance; SQ Undead traits, incorporeal subtype, rejuvenation, +4 turn resistance; AL CE; SV Fort +5, Ref +4, Will +3; Str 18, Dex 15, Con —, Int 14, Wis 13, Cha 13.

*Skills and Feats:* Hide +16*, Listen +16*, Search +10*, Spot +16*; Cleave, Combat Reflexes, Improved Critical, Improved Initiative, Power Attack, Sunder, Weapon Focus (longsword), Weapon Specialization (longsword). *+8 racial bonus on Hide, Listen, Search, and Spot checks.

*Favored Weapon (longsword, battleaxe):* The guardian ghost gains a +1 competence bonus to attack and damage rolls with the longsword and the battleaxe.

*Improved Damage (longsword):* The guardian ghost does an additional +2 (+3 total) damage with the longsword.

*Corrupting Gaze (Su):* A ghost can blast living beings with a glance, at a range of up to 30 feet. Creatures that meet the ghost's gaze must succeed on a Fortitude save (DC 15) or take 2d10 points of damage and 1d4 points of Charisma damage.

*Frightful Moan (Su):* A ghost can emit a frightful moan as a standard action. All living creatures within a 30-foot spread must succeed on a Will save (DC 15) or become panicked for 2d4 rounds. This is a sonic necromantic mind-affecting fear effect. A creature that successfully saves against the moan cannot be affected by the same ghost's moan for 24 hours.

*Horrific Appearance (Su):* Any living creature within 60 feet that views a ghost must succeed on a Fortitude save (DC 15) or immediately take 1d4 points of Strength damage, 1d4 points of Dexterity damage, and 1d4 points of Constitution damage. A creature that successfully saves against this effect cannot be affected by the same ghost's horrific appearance for 24 hours.

*Manifestation (Su):* Every ghost has this ability. A ghost dwells on the Ethereal Plane and, as an ethereal creature, it cannot affect or be affected by anything in the material world. When a ghost manifests, it partly enters the Material Plane and becomes visible but incorporeal on the Material Plane. A manifested ghost can be harmed only by other incorporeal creatures, magic weapons, or spells, with a 50% chance to ignore any damage from a corporeal source. A manifested ghost can pass through solid objects at will, and its own attacks pass through armor. A manifested ghost always moves silently. A manifested ghost can strike with its touch attack or with a ghost touch weapon. A manifested ghost remains partially on the Ethereal Plane, where is it not incorporeal. A manifested ghost can be attacked by opponents on either the Material Plane or the Ethereal Plane. The ghost's incorporeality helps protect it from foes on the Material Plane, but not from foes on the Ethereal Plane.

When a spellcasting ghost is not manifested and is on the Ethereal Plane, its spells cannot affect targets on the Material Plane, but they work normally against ethereal targets. When a spellcasting ghost manifests, its spells continue to affect ethereal targets and can affect targets on the Material Plane normally unless the spells rely on touch. A manifested ghost's touch spells don't work on nonethereal targets.

A ghost has two home planes, the Material Plane and the Ethereal Plane. It is not considered extraplanar when on either of these planes.

*Telekinesis (Su):* A ghost can use *telekinesis* as a standard action (caster level 12th). When a ghost uses this power, it must wait 1d4 rounds before using it again.

*Rejuvenation (Su):* In most cases, it's difficult to destroy a ghost through simple combat: The "destroyed" spirit will often restore itself in 2d4 days. Even the most powerful spells are usually only temporary solutions. A ghost that would otherwise be destroyed returns to its old haunts with a successful level check (1d20 + 6) against DC 16. As a rule, 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. The exact means varies with each spirit and may require a good deal of research.

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

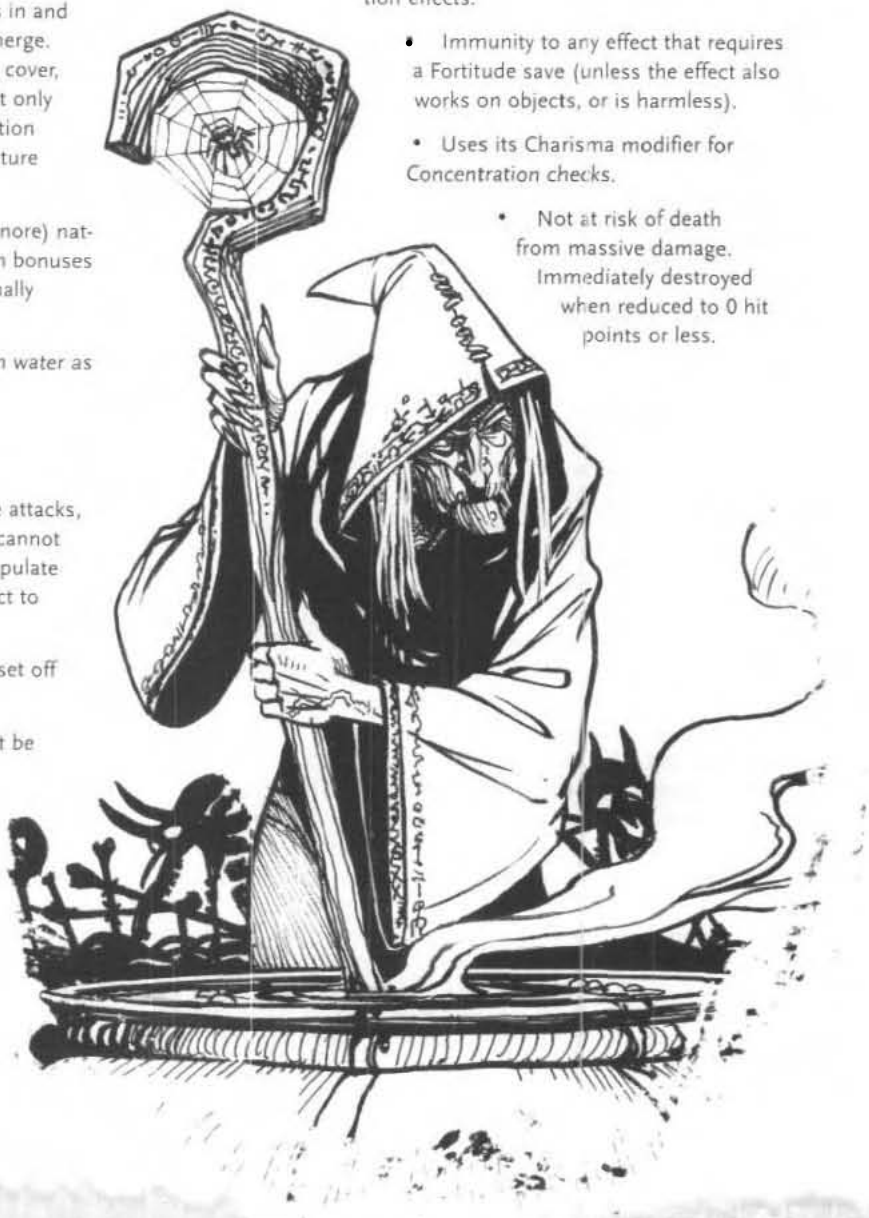
*Incorporeal Subtype:* Due to its incorporeal nature, a guardian ghost has the following traits:

- An incorporeal creature has no physical body. It can be harmed only by other incorporeal creatures, magic weapons or creatures that strike as magic weapons, and spells, spell-like abilities, or supernatural abilities.

- It is immune to all nonmagical attack forms. Even when hit by spells or magic weapons, it has a 50% chance to ignore any damage from a corporeal source (except for positive energy, negative energy, force effects such as *magic missile*, or attacks made with *ghost touch* weapons). Although it is not a magical attack, holy water can affect incorporeal undead, but a hit with holy water has a 50% chance of not affecting an incorporeal creature.
- An incorporeal creature has no natural armor bonus but has a deflection bonus equal to its Charisma bonus (always at least +1, even if the creature's Charisma score does not normally provide a bonus).
- An incorporeal creature can enter or pass through solid objects, but must remain adjacent to the object's exterior, and so cannot pass entirely through an object whose space is larger than its own. It can sense the presence of creatures or objects within a square adjacent to its current location, but enemies have total concealment (50% miss chance) from an incorporeal creature that is inside an object. In order to see farther from the object it is in and attack normally, the incorporeal creature must emerge. An incorporeal creature inside an object has total cover, but when it attacks a creature outside the object it only has cover, so a creature outside with a readied action could strike at it as it attacks. An incorporeal creature cannot pass through a force effect.
- An incorporeal creature's attacks pass through (ignore) natural armor, armor, and shields, although deflection bonuses and force effects (such as *mage armor*) work normally against it.
- Incorporeal creatures pass through and operate in water as easily as they do in air.
- Incorporeal creatures cannot fall or take falling damage.
- Incorporeal creatures cannot make trip or grapple attacks, nor can they be tripped or grappled. In fact, they cannot take any physical action that would move or manipulate an opponent or its equipment, nor are they subject to such actions.
- Incorporeal creatures have no weight and do not set off traps that are triggered by weight.
- An incorporeal creature moves silently and cannot be heard with Listen checks if it doesn't wish to be. It has no Strength score, so its Dexterity modifier applies to both its melee attacks and its ranged attacks. Nonvisual senses, such as scent and blindsight, are either ineffective or only partly effective with regard to incorporeal creatures.
- Incorporeal creatures have an innate sense of direction and can move at full speed even when they cannot see.

***Undead Traits:*** *The guardian ghost has the following traits:*

- No Constitution score.
- Darkvision out to 60 feet.
- Immunity to all mind-affecting effects (charms, compulsions, phantasms, patterns, and morale effects).
- Immunity to poison, sleep effects, paralysis, stunning, disease, death effects, and necromancy effects.
- Negative energy (such as an *inflict* spell) can heal undead creatures. The fast healing quality works regardless of the creature's Intelligence score.
- Not subject to critical hits, non-lethal damage, ability damage, ability drain, fatigue, exhaustion, or energy drain. Immune to damage to its physical ability scores (Strength, Dexterity, Constitution), as well as to fatigue and exhaustion effects.
- Immunity to any effect that requires a Fortitude save (unless the effect also works on objects, or is harmless).
- Uses its Charisma modifier for Concentration checks.
- Not at risk of death from massive damage. Immediately destroyed when reduced to 0 hit points or less.



- Not affected by *raise dead* and *reincarnate* spells or abilities. *Resurrection* and *true resurrection* can affect undead creatures. These spells turn undead creatures back into the living creatures they were before becoming undead.
- Proficient with its natural weapons, all simple weapons, and any weapon mentioned in its entry.
- Proficient with whatever type of armor (light, medium, and heavy) it is described as wearing, as well as all lighter types.
- Undead do not eat, sleep, or breathe.

## Location 4.16: Scrying Chamber

**Read aloud:** *This room is devoid of furnishings except for three mirrors in bone frames and a glossy black crystal ball resting on a marble pedestal.*

The door to this room is always locked (DC 28 to open) and trapped. Xioz has the only key. The mirrors are all suitable for scrying, as is the *crystal ball*.

*Lightning Bolt* **Trap:** CR 5; magic device; proximity trigger *(alarm)*; automatic reset; spell effect (*lightning bolt*, 10th-level wizard, 10d6 electricity, DC 14 Reflex save half damage); Search DC 28; Disable Device DC 28.

These doors are hidden behind bas-reliefs. They have runes running along their seams. There is a secret trigger in the relief that disarms the trap and another that opens the door.

## Location 4.17: Cellar

**Read aloud:** *This cellar is stacked with an assortment of building materials-cut stone slabs, reinforced beams, and stacks of wood. There are several casks of wine stored here.*

The wine is completely spoiled except for one cask.

## Location 4.18: Holding Area

This is a holding area for the times Xioz entertains in the torture chamber. Six sets of shackles are bolted to the back wall.

## Location 4.19: Storeroom

**Read aloud:** *Boxes, crates, shelves, and barrels line the walls of this chamber. Many have been destroyed — splintered wood, shattered crockery, broken furniture, and other debris litters the floor.*

The remaining containers hold nothing of value except for a small cask holding lamp oil and two lanterns.

## Location 4.20: Cell

**Read aloud:** *Gnawed, broken bones fill this room. A large earthenware bowl lies overturned by the door. The north wall contains a large winch connected to a heavy chain. An immense skeleton lies at the end of the chain, still connected to it by a black spiked collar.*

This door is *arcane locked* (DC 28 to open). A small wooden slide built into the lower part of the door allowed servants to slip food and water into the room without entering. Xioz kept a barrowgrim chained here, but it has long since died.

## Location 4.21: Cell

**Read aloud:** *This cell has a small barred window, an iron padlock, and a stout bar.*

*This cell is 5 ft. square, with closely set stone blocks in the walls and floor. A small drain in the floor is covered by a crossed iron grate. The room is empty.*

## Location 4.22: Torture Chamber

**Read aloud:** *This 30-foot by 30-foot chamber contains a rack, an iron maiden, marble preparation tables, several iron cages of various sizes, and all manner of torture devices — hooks, knives, piers, pincers, and dozens of items whose purpose is less obvious. Two skeletons hang in chains on one wall.*

This room saw plenty of use when Xioz was free. The tables have deep brown bloodstains on them from repeated use. All of the tools and devices remain in perfect repair (ensured by Xioz's magic). The skeletons were two guardsmen who displeased their master. After the betrayal, there was nobody left to set them free, so they dehydrated and died.

## Location 4.23: Cell (EL 7)

**Read aloud:** *From inside this cell you hear quiet babbling — a Human-sounding voice whose words are too muffled for you to understand. A solitary figures sits unmoving in the center of this room, its back to the door.*

Xioz had a prisoner locked in the tower when the Deverenians attacked, the vampire Uthisares. Centuries later, she is ravenous and utterly mad. The room is lined by invisible *walls of force*. Even if the PCs open the door to her cell, they cannot reach her unless the *walls of force* are removed. The door is trapped: any tampering releases a cloud of yellow mold spores.

**Yellow Mold Trap:** If this door is opened, mold bursts forth with a cloud of poisonous spores. All within 10 feet of the mold must make a Fort save (DC 15) or take 1d6 points of temporary Constitution damage. Another Fort save (DC 15) is required 1 minute later — even by those who succeeded at the first save — to avoid taking 2d6 points of temporary Constitution damage. Fire destroys yellow mold, and sunlight renders it dormant.

**Creature:** Uthisares, a 5th-level human vampire fighter.

**Uthisares, human vampire, 5th-level fighter:** CR 7; Medium undead (augmented humanoid); HD 5d12; hp 32; Init +8; Spd 30 ft.; AC 20, touch 13, flat-footed 17; Base Atk +5; Grp +11; Atk +12 melee (1d6+6 plus energy drain/x2, slam); Full Atk +12 melee (1d6+3 plus energy drain/x2, 2 slams); Space/Reach 5 ft./5 ft.; SA Favored Weapon (longsword, shortsword), improved damage (longsword), energy drain, blood drain, children of the night, create spawn, dominate; SQ Undead traits, damage

reduction 10/silver and magic, gaseous form, spider climb, alternate form, fast healing 5, +4 turn resistance, resistance to cold and electricity 10, vampire weaknesses; AL CE; SV Fort +4, Ref +5, Will +4; Str 22, Dex 18, Con —, Int 12, Wis 16, Cha 12.

*Skills and Feats:* Bluff +13*, Climb +13, Intimidate +14, Hide +11*, Listen +17*, Move Silently +11*, Search +9*, Sense Motive +12*, Spot +14*; Alertness, Blind-Fight, Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Iron Will, Improved Initiative, Great Fortitude, Lightning Reflexes. *Vampires have a +8 racial bonus on Bluff, Hide, Listen, Move Silently, Search, Sense Motive, and Spot checks.

*Favored Weapon (longsword, shortsword):* Uthisares gains a +1 competence bonus to attack and damage rolls with the longsword and the shortsword.

*Improved Damage (longsword):* Uthisares does an additional +2 (+3 total) damage with the longsword.

*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, dealing 1d4 points of Constitution drain each round the pin is maintained. On each such successful attack, the vampire gains 5 temporary hit points.

*Children of the Night (Su):* Vampires command the lesser creatures of the world and once per day can call forth 1d6+1 rat swarms, 1d4+1 bat swarms, or a pack of 3d6 wolves as a standard action. (If the base creature is not terrestrial, this power might summon other creatures of similar power.) These creatures arrive in 2d6 rounds and serve the vampire for up to 1 hour.

*Dominate (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 use a standard action, and those merely looking at it are not affected. Anyone the vampire targets must succeed on a Will save (DC 13) or fall instantly under the vampire's influence as though by a *dominate person* spell (caster level 12th). The ability has a range of 30 feet.

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

If the vampire instead drains the victim's Constitution to 0 or lower, the victim returns as a spawn if it had 4 or less 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 destruction. At any given time a vampire may have enslaved spawn totaling no more than twice its own Hit Dice; any spawn it creates that would exceed this limit are created as free-willed vampires or vampire spawn. A vampire that is enslaved may create and enslave spawn of its own, so a master vampire can control a number of lesser vampires in this fashion. A vampire may voluntarily free an enslaved spawn in order to enslave a new spawn, but once freed, a vampire or vampire spawn cannot be enslaved again.

*Energy Drain (Su):* Living creatures hit by a vampire's slam attack (or any other natural weapon the vampire might possess) gain two negative levels. For each negative level bestowed, the vampire gains 5 temporary hit points. A vampire can use its energy drain ability once per round.

*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 spell cast by a 12th-level character, except that the vampire does not regain hit points for changing form and must choose from among the forms mentioned here. While in its alternate form, the vampire loses its natural slam attack and dominate ability, but it gains the natural weapons and extraordinary special attacks of its new form. It can remain in that form until it assumes another or until the next sunrise. (If the base creature is not terrestrial, this power might allow other forms.)

*Damage Reduction (Su):* A vampire has damage reduction 10/silver and magic. A vampire's natural weapons are treated as magic weapons for the purpose of overcoming damage reduction.

*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 in combat, it 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.) Any additional damage dealt to a vampire forced into gaseous form has no effect. Once at rest in its coffin, a vampire is helpless. It regains 1 hit point after 1 hour, then is no longer helpless and 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 (caster level 5th), but it can remain gaseous indefinitely and has a fly speed of 20 feet with perfect maneuverability.

*Resistances (Ex):* A vampire has resistance to cold 10 and electricity 10.

*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 +2 to the vampire's Hit Dice total.

**Undead Traits:** The vampire has the following traits:

- No Constitution score.
- Darkvision out to 60 feet.
- Immunity to all mind-affecting effects (charms, compulsions, phantasms, patterns, and morale effects).
- Immunity to poison, sleep effects, paralysis, stunning, disease, death effects, and necromancy effects.
- Negative energy (such as an *inflict* spell) can heal undead creatures. The fast healing quality works regardless of the creature's Intelligence score.
- Not subject to critical hits, non-lethal damage, ability damage, ability drain, fatigue, exhaustion, or energy drain. Immune to damage to its physical ability scores (Strength, Dexterity, Constitution), as well as to fatigue and exhaustion effects.
- Immunity to any effect that requires a Fortitude save (unless the effect also works on objects, or is harmless).

- Uses its Charisma modifier for Concentration checks.
- Not at risk of death from massive damage. Immediately destroyed when reduced to 0 hit points or less.
- Not affected by *raise dead* and *reincarnate* spells or abilities. *Resurrection* and *true resurrection* can affect undead creatures. These spells turn undead creatures back into the living creatures they were before becoming undead.
- Proficient with its natural weapons, all simple weapons, and any weapon mentioned in its entry.
- Proficient with whatever type of armor (light, medium, and heavy) it is described as wearing, as well as all lighter types.
- Undead do not eat, sleep, or breathe.

*Vampire Weaknesses:* For all their power, vampires have a number of weaknesses.

- **Repelling a Vampire:** Vampires cannot tolerate the strong odor of garlic and will not enter an area laced with it. Similarly, they recoil from a mirror or a strongly presented holy symbol. These things don't harm the vampire—they merely keep it at bay. A recoiling vampire must stay at least 5 feet away from a creature holding the mirror or holy symbol and cannot touch or make melee attacks against the creature holding the item for the rest of the encounter. Holding a vampire at bay takes a standard action.
- Vampires are also unable to cross running water, although they can be carried over it while resting in their coffins or aboard a ship.
- They are utterly unable to enter a home or other building unless invited in by someone with the authority to do so. They may freely enter public places, since these are by definition open to all.
- **Slaying a Vampire:** Reducing a vampire's hit points to 0 or lower incapacitates it but doesn't always destroy it (see the note on fast healing). However, certain attacks can slay vampires. Exposing any vampire to direct sunlight disorients it: It can take only a single move action or attack action and is destroyed utterly in the next round if it cannot escape. Similarly, immersing a vampire in running water robs it of one-third of its hit points each round until it is destroyed at the end of the third round of immersion. Driving a wooden stake through a vampire's heart instantly slays the monster. However, it returns to life if the stake is removed, unless the body is destroyed. A popular tactic is to cut off the creature's head and fill its mouth with holy wafers (or their equivalent).

## Location 4.24: Hall

**Read aloud:** *This hallway is lined with painted frescoes on either side. They show ghostly apparitions and demons in a haunting procession.*

## Location 4.25: Guardian Chamber (EL 10)

**Read aloud:** *Filling the center of this bone-walled room is a large, humanoid-shaped construct of iron and bone. Bone spurs line its thick arms, and black iron plates cover its torso, back, and legs. This monstrosity stands at attention, motionless and lifeless.*

Xioz designed this construct to protect his workshop. It remains inactive unless a PC tries to enter **Location 4.27**. It immediately attacks anyone who does so.

**Creature:** One Tower guardian.

**Tower Guardian (1):** CR 10; Large construct; HD 11d10; hp 62; Init –1; Spd 30 ft.; AC 22, touch 8, flat-footed 21; Base Atk +6, Grp +21; Atk +13 melee (2d10+7/x2, slam); Full Atk +10melee (2d10+7/x2, 2 slams); SA Berserk, cursed wound; SQ Construct traits, damage reduction 20/magic, darkvision 60 ft., immunity to magic, low-light vision, haste; AL N; SV Fort +3, Ref +2, Will +3; Str 24, Dex 9, Con —, Int —, Wis 10, Cha 1.

*Berserk (Ex):* When the tower guardian enters combat, there is a cumulative 1% chance each round that it goes berserk. The guardian goes on a rampage, attacking the nearest living creature or smashing some object smaller than itself if no creature is within reach, then moving on to spread more destruction. The tower guardian's creator, if within 60 feet, can try to regain control by speaking firmly and persuasively to the tower guardian, which requires a DC 19 Charisma check. It takes 1 minute of inactivity by the tower guardian to reset the tower guardian's berserk chance to 0%.

*Cursed Wound (Ex):* The damage the tower guardian deals doesn't heal naturally and resists healing spells. A character attempting to cast a conjuration (healing) spell on a creature damaged by the tower guardian must succeed on a DC 26 caster level check, or the spell has no effect on the injured character.

*Haste (Su):* After it has engaged in at least 1 round of combat, a tower guardian can *haste* itself once per day as a free action. The effect lasts 3 rounds and is otherwise the same as the spell.

**Construct traits:** The tower guardian has the following traits:

- No Constitution score.
- Low-light vision.
- Darkvision out to 60 feet.
- Immunity to all mind-affecting effects (charms, compulsions, phantasms, patterns, and morale effects).
- Immunity to poison, sleep effects, paralysis, stunning, disease, death effects, and necromancy effects.

- Cannot heal damage on its own, but often can be repaired by exposing it to a certain kind of effect or through the use of the Craft Construct feat. A construct with the fast healing special quality still benefits from that quality.
- Not subject to critical hits, non-lethal damage, ability damage, ability drain, fatigue, exhaustion, or energy drain.
- Immunity to any effect that requires a Fortitude save (unless the effect also works on objects, or is harmless).
- Not at risk of death from massive damage. Immediately destroyed when reduced to 0 hit points or less.
- Since it was never alive, a construct cannot be raised or resurrected.
- Because its body is a mass of unliving matter, a construct is hard to destroy. It gains bonus hit points based on size, as shown in the Table on page 307 of the *Monster Manual*.
- Proficient with its natural weapons only, unless generally humanoid in form, in which case proficient with any weapon mentioned in its entry.
- Proficient with no armor.
- Constructs do not eat, sleep, or breathe.

*Damage Reduction (Su):* The tower guardian ignores the first 20 points of damage from any attack, natural or with a weapon, that is not magic (even if it has an enchantment bonus). The tower guardian takes normal damage from energy attacks (even nonmagical ones), spells, spell-like abilities, and supernatural abilities (see Immunity to Magic).

*Darkvision, 60 ft. (Ex):* The tower guardian can see in the dark with no light source at all, out to a range of 60 feet. Darkvision is black and white only (colors cannot be discerned). It does not allow the tower guardian to see anything that it could not see otherwise—invisible objects are still invisible, and illusions are still visible as what they seem to be. Likewise, darkvision subjects the tower guardian to gaze attacks normally. The presence of light does not spoil darkvision.

*Immunity to Magic (Ex):* The tower guardian is immune to any spell or spell-like ability that allows spell resistance. In addition, certain spells and effects function differently against the tower guardian, as noted below.

A magical attack that deals electricity damage slows a tower guardian (as the *slow* spell) for 3 rounds, with no saving throw.

A magical attack that deals fire damage breaks any *slow* effect on the golem and heals 1 point of damage for every 3 points of damage the attack would otherwise deal. If the amount of healing would cause the tower guardian to exceed its full normal hit points, it gains any excess as temporary hit points. For example, a tower guardian hit by a *fireball* heals 6 points of damage if the attack would have dealt 18 points of damage. The tower guardian gets no saving throw against fire effects.

A tower guardian is affected normally by rust attacks, such as that of a rust monster or a *rusting grasp* spell.

*Low-Light Vision (Ex):* The tower guardian can see twice as far as a Human in starlight, moonlight, torchlight, and similar conditions of shadowy illumination. It retains the ability to distinguish color and detail under these conditions.

## Location 4.26: Trophy Room

The door to this room is trapped.

**Lightning Bolt Trap:** CR 4; magic device; proximity trigger *(alarm)*; automatic reset; spell effect (*lightning bolt*, 5th-level wizard, 5d6 electricity, DC 14 Reflex save half damage); Search DC 28; Disable Device DC 28.

All sorts of monster, humanoid, and beast heads are mounted on the walls. There are also full specimens in various stages of decay on display.

## Location 4.27: Workshop

**Read aloud:** *Spell components, alchemical reagents, and tools for creating magic item are strewn about four 8-foot preparation tables. Occult items occupy almost every free surface. There is a small forge at the back of the chamber, along with smithing tools.*

*Spaced evenly along the southern wall are eight phonstones, each trapping an illuminating faerie. The stones are designed to reflect and project their immortal light. The entire room is bathed in a ghostly phosphorescent glow.*

*Treasure:* There is a locked strong box (DC 22 to open) on one of the tables. It is trapped, and contains the following potions: *invisibility, cure light wounds, swimming, tongues, alter self, cure moderate wounds, detect thoughts, oil of slipperiness, endurance, neutralize poison, protection from elements (cold), fly.*

**Poisoned Dart Trap:** CR 6; mechanical; location trigger; manual reset; Atk +15 ranged (1d4+4 plus poison, dart); multiple targets (1 dart per target in a 10-ft. by 10-ft. area); poison (wyvern poison, DC 17 Fortitude save resists, 2d6 Con/2d6 Con); Search DC 21; Disable Device DC 22.

## Location 4.28: Golem Storage (EL 7)

**Read aloud:** *This room is extremely cold — almost freezing. Your breath puffs out in clouds. The smell is awful: a fetid, horrible, rotten stench. Piles of corpses, humanoid and otherwise, in various stages of decay are strewn about the room. Everything is rimed with frost.*

*Something shifts at the back of the room and suddenly a disgusting figure rises from a pile of discarded flesh. It appears to have been a Nothrog at one time, but its twisted form has been augmented with pieces from other creatures. Its flesh is a zigzag of stitches and old, decaying flesh. It rushes forward with a low snarl; its eyes are dull and lifeless.*

This room is where Xioz practiced making flesh golems. He never excelled in this particular field of study; his golems are crude, misshapen, and unreliable. The golem is mindless; it attacks until destroyed.

**Creature:** One flesh golem.

**Flesh Golem (1):** CR 7; Large construct; HD 9d10+30; hp 79; Init –1; Spd 30 ft.; AC 18, touch 8, flat-footed 18; Base Atk +6, Grp +15; Atk +10 melee (2d8+5/x2, slam); Full Atk +10melee (2d8+5/x2, 2 slams); Space/Reach 10 ft./10 ft.; SA Berserk; SQ Construct traits, damage reduction 5/—, darkvision 60 ft., immunity to magic, low-light vision; AL N; SV Fort +3, Ref +2, Will +3; Str 21, Dex 9, Con —, Int —, Wis 11, Cha 1.

*Skills and Feats:* —; —.

*Berserk (Ex):* When a flesh golem enters combat, there is a cumulative 1% chance each round that its elemental spirit breaks free and the golem goes berserk. The golem goes on a rampage, attacking the nearest living creature or smashing some object smaller than itself if no creature is within reach, then moving on to spread more destruction. The golem's creator, if within 60 feet, can try to regain control by speaking firmly and persuasively to the golem, which requires a DC 19 Charisma check. It takes 1 minute of inactivity by the golem to reset the golem's berserk chance to 0%.

**Construct traits:** A flesh golem has the following traits:

- No Constitution score.
- Low-light vision.
- Darkvision out to 60 feet.
- Immunity to all mind-affecting effects (charms, compulsions, phantasms, patterns, and morale effects).
- Immunity to poison, sleep effects, paralysis, stunning, disease, death effects, and necromancy effects.
- Cannot heal damage on their own, but often can be repaired by exposing them to a certain kind of effect or through the use of the Craft Construct feat. A construct with the fast healing special quality still benefits from that quality.
- Not subject to critical hits, non-lethal damage, ability damage, ability drain, fatigue, exhaustion, or energy drain.
- Immunity to any effect that requires a Fortitude save (unless the effect also works on objects, or is harmless).
- Not at risk of death from massive damage. Immediately destroyed when reduced to 0 hit points or less.
- Since it was never alive, a construct cannot be raised or resurrected.
- Because its body is a mass of unliving matter, a construct is hard to destroy. It gains bonus hit points based on size, as shown in the Table on page 307 of the *Monster Manual*.
- Proficient with its natural weapons only, unless generally humanoid in form, in which case proficient with any weapon mentioned in its entry.
- Proficient with no armor.
- Constructs do not eat, sleep, or breathe.

*Damage Reduction (Su):* A flesh golem ignores the first 5 points of damage from any attack, natural or with a weapon (even if it has an enchantment bonus). The flesh golem takes normal damage from energy attacks (even nonmagical ones), spells, spell-like abilities, and supernatural abilities (see Immunity to Magic).

*Darkvision, 60 ft. (Ex):* A flesh golem can see in the dark with no light source at all, out to a range of 60 feet. Darkvision is black and white only (colors cannot be discerned). It does not allow the flesh golem to see anything that it could not see otherwise—invisible objects are still invisible, and illusions are still visible as what they seem to be. Likewise, darkvision subjects the flesh golem to gaze attacks normally. The presence of light does not spoil darkvision.

*Immunity to Magic (Ex):* A flesh golem is immune to any spell or spell-like ability that allows spell resistance. In addition, certain spells and effects function differently against the creature, as noted below.

A magical attack that deals cold or fire damage slows a flesh golem (as the *slow* spell) for 2d6 rounds, with no saving throw.

A magical attack that deals electricity damage breaks any *slow* effect on the golem and heals 1 point of damage for every 3 points of damage the attack would otherwise deal. If the amount of healing would cause the golem to exceed its full normal hit points, it gains any excess as temporary hit points. For example, a flesh golem hit by a *lightning bolt* heals 3 points of damage if the attack would have dealt 11 points of damage. A flesh golem gets no saving throw against attacks that deal electricity damage.

*Low-Light Vision (Ex):* A flesh golem can see twice as far as a Human in starlight, moonlight, torchlight, and similar conditions of shadowy illumination. It retains the ability to distinguish color and detail under these conditions.

## Location 4.29: Storage

**Read aloud:** *Crates, boxes, barrels, and other containers fill this storage room.*

All of these items are mundane supplies for Xioz' workroom. There is nothing of value here.

## Location 4.30 Bone Storage (EL 9)

This room is filled with skeletons of various sizes and shapes. Lying in the northeast corner is one of Xioz's experiments: a golem made from the skeletons of a Nothrog, a bear, and a giant boar. It remains inactive until disturbed. If touched, it springs into motion, attacking any intruders.

**Creature:** One bone golem.

**Bone Golem (1):** CR 7; Large construct; HD 9d10+30; hp 79; Init –1; Spd 30 ft.; AC 26, touch 8, flat-footed 25; Base Atk +6, Grp +15; Atk +14 melee (2d8+9/x2, slam); Full Atk +14 melee (2d8+9/x2, 2 slams); Space/Reach 10 ft./10 ft.; SA Berserk, slow; SQ Construct traits, damage reduction 15/bludgeoning, darkvision 60 ft., immunity to magic, low-light vision; AL N; SV Fort +4, Ref +3, Will +4; Str 29, Dex 9, Con —, Int —, Wis 11, Cha 1.

*Skills and Feats:* —; —.

*Berserk (Ex):* When a bone golem enters combat, there is a cumulative 1% chance each round that its elemental spirit breaks free and the golem goes berserk. The golem goes on a rampage, attacking the nearest living creature or smashing some object smaller than itself if no creature is within reach, then moving on to spread more destruction. The golem's creator, if within 60 feet, can try to regain control by speaking firmly and persuasively to the golem, which requires a DC 19 Charisma check. It takes 1 minute of inactivity by the golem to reset the golem's berserk chance to 0%.

*Slow (Su):* A bone golem can use a *slow* effect, as the spell, as a free action once every 2 rounds. The effect has a range of 10 feet and a duration of 7 rounds, requiring a DC 13 Will save to negate. The save DC is Constitution-based.

**Construct traits:** A bone golem has the following traits:

- No Constitution score.
- Low-light vision.
- Darkvision out to 60 feet.
- Immunity to all mind-affecting effects (charms, compulsions, phantasms, patterns, and morale effects).
- Immunity to poison, sleep effects, paralysis, stunning, disease, death effects, and necromancy effects.
- Cannot heal damage on their own, but often can be repaired by exposing them to a certain kind of effect or through the use of the Craft Construct feat. A construct with the fast healing special quality still benefits from that quality.
- Not subject to critical hits, non-lethal damage, ability damage, ability drain, fatigue, exhaustion, or energy drain.
- Immunity to any effect that requires a Fortitude save (unless the effect also works on objects, or is harmless).
- Not at risk of death from massive damage. Immediately destroyed when reduced to 0 hit points or less.
- Since it was never alive, a construct cannot be raised or resurrected.
- Because its body is a mass of unliving matter, a construct is hard to destroy. It gains bonus hit points based on size, as shown in the Table on page 307 of the *Monster Manual*.
- Proficient with its natural weapons only, unless generally humanoid in form, in which case proficient with any weapon mentioned in its entry.
- Proficient with no armor.
- Constructs do not eat, sleep, or breathe.

*Damage Reduction (Su):* A bone golem ignores the first 15 points of damage from any attack, natural or with a weapon, that is bludgeoning. The bone golem takes normal damage from energy attacks (even nonmagical ones), spells, spell-like abilities, and supernatural abilities (see Immunity to Magic).

*Darkvision, 60 ft. (Ex):* A bone golem can see in the dark with no light source at all, out to a range of 60 feet. Darkvision is black and white only (colors cannot be discerned). It does not allow the bone golem to see anything that it could not see otherwise—invisible objects are still invisible, and illusions are still visible as what they seem to be. Likewise, darkvision subjects the bone golem to gaze attacks normally. The presence of light does not spoil darkvision.

*Immunity to Magic (Ex):* A bone golem is immune to any spell or spell-like ability that allows spell resistance. In addition, certain spells and effects function differently against the creature, as noted below.

A magical attack that deals cold or fire damage slows a bone golem (as the *slow* spell) for 2d6 rounds, with no saving throw.

A magical attack that deals electricity damage breaks any *slow* effect on the golem and heals 1 point of damage for every 3 points of damage the attack would otherwise deal. If the amount of healing would cause the golem to exceed its full normal hit points, it gains any excess as temporary hit points. For example, a bone golem hit by a *lightning bolt* heals 3 points of damage if the attack would have dealt 11 points of damage. A bone golem gets no saving throw against attacks that deal electricity damage.

*Low-Light Vision (Ex):* A bone golem can see twice as far as a Human in starlight, moonlight, torchlight, and similar conditions of shadowy illumination. It retains the ability to distinguish color and detail under these conditions.

## Location 4.31: Hall

**Read aloud:** *This hall is completely empty. A stone door on the eastern wall faces the base of the stairs.*

The flagstone at the bottom of the stairs triggers a trap mechanism in the floor.

**Spiked Pit Trap (100 ft. deep):** CR 6; no attack roll necessary (10d6), +10 melee (1d4 spikes for 1d4+5 points of damage per successful hit); Ref save (DC 20) avoids; Search (DC 20); Disable Device (DC 20).

## Location 4.32: Vestry

**Read aloud:** *This chamber contains four high-backed chairs and small tables (a set in each corner). There is a bowl, a knife, and a folded towel on each table.*

This chamber is the vestry for the shrines in **Location 4.34**. The center of the south wall conceals a secret door to a wardrobe, which contains four sets of ceremonial robes. These robes have all the properties of a *magic vestment* spell. The door is trapped and locked (DC 28 to open).

**Secret Door:** 2 in. thick; hardness 8; hp 75; AC 5; break DC 28.

*Slay Living* **Trap:** CR 5; victim dies; Fort save (DC 17) negates, but victim still suffers 3d6+6 points of damage; Search (DC 30); Disable Device (DC 30)

## Location 4.33: War Room

**Read aloud:** *A crystal chandelier hangs above the magnificent oak table that dominates the room, flanked by a dozen plush chairs. On the table are several books, a handful of scrolls, a few unused parchment pages, a quill, and an empty inkwell. There is a large fireplace on the east wall. A brass candle-rod, for lighting the chandelier, rests in the corner beside it. The north wall is covered with maps of Deverenia, and its capital city Luthlarius.*

This planning room was the site of Xioz's daily scheming. Evidence here links the lich to several crimes within the capital, 800 years ago.

## Location 4.34: Shrine Antechamber (EL 9)

**Read aloud:** *This chamber contains a beautiful bone sculpture of an Elven maiden holding a bowl over her head. A shimmering blue flame flickers inside the bowl, illuminating the room.*

There are two doors on the right and left, and double doors at the far end of the room. Each of the side doors bears an intricate relief sculpture. The double doors are jet-black obsidian.

This is the antechamber for the four Elven shrines. The lamp has a *continual flame* spell cast on it. Xioz modified the spell for color.

These stone doors feature relief sculptures of stylistically carved Elves in ritual supplications to Blood (water), Bone (fire), Flesh (earth), and Spirit (air) altars.

**Stone Door:** 2 in. thick; hardness 8; hp 75; AC 5; break DC 26.

**Development:** Praying in these shrines might invoke a powerful summoning spell (25% chance) that calls forth an elemental. Each shrine is capable of summoning an elemental of the specified type once per day.

**Creatures:** One of each of the following: fire elemental, earth elemental, air elemental, and water elemental.

**Fire Elemental (1):** CR 9; Large elemental (Fire, Extraplanar); HD 9d10+27; hp 85; Init +9; Spd 50 ft.; AC 18, touch 14, flat-footed 13; Base Atk +6, Grp +12; Atk +10 melee (2d6+2 plus 2d6 fire/x2, slam); Full Atk +10 melee (2d6+2 plus 2d6 fire/x2, 2 slams); Space/Reach 10 ft./10 ft.; SA Burn; SQ Elemental traits, damage reduction 5/—, darkvision 60 ft., fire subtype; AL N; SV Fort +5, Ref +11, Will +2; Str 14, Dex 21, Con 16, Int 6, Wis 11, Cha 11.

*Skills and Feats:* Listen +5, Spot +6; Dodge, Improved Initiative, Mobility, Spring Attack, Weapon Finesse (slam).

*Burn (Ex):* A fire elemental's slam attack deals bludgeoning damage plus fire damage from the elemental's flaming body. Those hit by a fire elemental's slam attack also must succeed on a Reflex save (DC 17) or catch on fire. The flame burns for 1d4 rounds. A burning creature can take a move action to put out the flame. The save DC is Constitution- based.

Creatures hitting a fire elemental with natural weapons or unarmed attacks take fire damage as though hit by the elemental's attack, and also catch on fire unless they succeed on a Reflex save.

**Elemental Traits:** A fire elemental has the following traits:

- Immunity to poison, sleep effects, paralysis, and stunning.
- Not subject to critical hits or flanking.
- Unlike most other living creatures, an elemental does not have a dual nature—its soul and body form one unit. When an elemental is slain, no soul is set loose. Spells that restore souls to their bodies, such as *raise dead, reincarnate,* and *resurrection,* don't work on an elemental. It takes a different magical effect, such as *limited wish, wish, miracle,* or *true resurrection,* to restore it to life.
- Elementals do not eat, sleep, or breathe.

*Fire Subtype:* A creature with the fire subtype has immunity to fire. It has vulnerability to cold, which means it takes half again as much (+50%) damage as normal from cold, regardless of whether a saving throw is allowed, or if the save is a success or failure.

*Damage Reduction (Su):* A fire elemental ignores the first 5 points of damage from any attack, natural or with a weapon. The fire elemental takes normal damage from energy attacks (even nonmagical ones), spells, spell-like abilities, and supernatural abilities (see Immunity to Magic).

*Darkvision, 60 ft. (Ex):* A fire elemental can see in the dark with no light source at all, out to a range of 60 feet. Darkvision is black and white only (colors cannot be discerned). It does not allow the fire elemental to see anything that it could not see otherwise—invisible objects are still invisible, and illusions are still visible as what they seem to be. Likewise, darkvision subjects the fire elemental to gaze attacks normally. The presence of light does not spoil darkvision.

*Air Elemental (1):* CR 9; Large Elemental (Earth, Extraplanar); 9d8+36; hp 80; Init +11; Spd fly 100 ft. (perfect); AC 20, touch 16, flat-footed 13; Base Atk +6; Grp +12; Atk +12 melee (2d6+2/x2, slam); Full Atk +12 melee (2d6+2/x2, 2 slams); Space/Reach 10 ft./10 ft.; AL N; SA Air mastery, whirlwind; SQ Damage reduction 5/–, darkvision 60 ft., elemental traits; SV Fort +5, Ref +13, Will +2; Str 14, Dex 25, Con 16, Int 6, Wis 11, Cha 11.

*Skills and Feats:* Listen +5, Spot +6; Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Flyby Attack, Improved Initiative, Weapon Finesse (slam).

*Air Mastery (Ex):* Airborne creatures take a –1 penalty on attack and damage rolls against an air elemental.

*Whirlwind (Su):* The elemental can transform itself into a whirlwind once every 10 minutes and remain in that form for up to 1 round for every 2 HD it has. In this form, the elemental can move through the air or along a surface at its fly speed.

The whirlwind is 5 feet wide at the base, up to 30 feet wide at the top, and up to 50 feet tall, depending on the elemental's size. The elemental controls the exact height, but it must be at least 10 feet.

The elemental's movement while in whirlwind form does not provoke attacks of opportunity, even if the elemental enters the space another creature occupies. Another creature might be caught in the whirlwind if it touches or enters the whirlwind, or if the elemental moves into or through the creature's space.

Creatures one or more size categories smaller than the elemental might take damage when caught in the whirlwind *(see the table below for details)* and may be lifted into the air. An affected creature must succeed on a Reflex save when it comes into contact with the whirlwind or take the indicated damage. It must also succeed on a second Reflex save or be picked up bodily and held suspended in the powerful winds, automatically taking the indicated damage each round. A creature that can fly is allowed a Reflex save each round to escape the whirlwind. The creature still takes damage but can leave if the save is successful. The DC for saves against the whirlwind's effects varies with the elemental's size (see the table). The save DC is Strength based.

Creatures trapped in the whirlwind cannot move except to go where the elemental carries them or to escape the whirlwind.

Creatures caught in the whirlwind can otherwise act normally, but must succeed on a Concentration check (DC 15 + spell level) to cast a spell. Creatures caught in the whirlwind take a –4 penalty to Dexterity and a –2 penalty on attack rolls. The elemental can have only as many creatures trapped inside the whirlwind at one time as will fit inside the whirlwind's volume.

The elemental can eject any carried creatures whenever it wishes, depositing them wherever the whirlwind happens to be. A summoned elemental always ejects trapped creatures before returning to its home plane.

If the whirlwind's base touches the ground, it creates a swirling cloud of debris. This cloud is centered on the elemental and has a diameter equal to half the whirlwind's height. The cloud obscures all vision, including darkvision, beyond 5 feet. Creatures 5 feet away have concealment, while those farther away have total concealment.

Those caught in the cloud must succeed on a Concentration check (DC 15 + spell level) to cast a spell.

An elemental in whirlwind form cannot make slam attacks and does not threaten the area around it.

*Damage Reduction (Su):* An air elemental ignores the first 5 points of damage from any attack, natural or with a weapon. The air elemental takes normal damage from energy attacks (even nonmagical ones), spells, spell-like abilities, and supernatural abilities (see Immunity to Magic).

*Darkvision, 60 ft.:* An air elemental can see in the dark with no light source at all, out to a range of 60 feet. Darkvision is black and white only (colors cannot be discerned). It does not allow the air elemental to see anything that it could not see otherwise—invisible objects are still invisible, and illusions are still visible as what they seem to be. Likewise, darkvision subjects the air elemental to gaze attacks normally. The presence of light does not spoil darkvision.

**Elemental Traits:** An air elemental has the following traits:

- Immunity to poison, sleep effects, paralysis, and stunning.
- Not subject to critical hits or flanking.
- Unlike most other living creatures, an elemental does not have a dual nature—its soul and body form one unit. When an elemental is slain, no soul is set loose. Spells that restore souls to their bodies, such as *raise dead, reincarnate,* and *resurrection,* don't work on an elemental. It takes a different magical effect, such as *limited wish, wish, miracle,* or *true resurrection,* to restore it to life.
- Elementals do not eat, sleep, or breathe.

**Earth Elemental (1):** CR 9; Large Elemental (Earth, Extraplanar); 9d8+36; hp 80; Init –1; Spd 20 ft.; AC 18, touch 8, flat-footed 18; Base Atk +6; Grp +17; Atk +12 melee (2d8+7/x2, slam); Full Atk +12 melee (2d8+7/x2, 2 slams); Space/Reach 10 ft./10 ft.; AL N; SA Earth mastery, push; SQ Damage reduction 5/—, earth glide, darkvision 60 ft., elemental traits; SV Fort +10, Ref +1, Will +2; Str 25, Dex 8, Con 19, Int 6, Wis 11, Cha 11.

*Skills and Feats:* Listen +6, Spot +5; Cleave, Great Cleave, Power Attack.

*Earth Mastery (Ex):* An earth elemental gains a +1 bonus on attack and damage rolls if both it and its foe are touching the ground. If an opponent is airborne or waterborne, the elemental takes a –4 penalty on attack and damage rolls. (These modifiers are not included in the statistics block.)

*Push (Ex):* An earth elemental can start a bull rush maneuver without provoking an attack of opportunity. The combat modifiers given in Earth Mastery, above, also apply to the elemental's opposed Strength checks.

*Earth Glide (Ex):* An earth elemental can glide through stone, dirt, or almost any other sort of earth except metal as easily as a fish swims through water. Its burrowing leaves behind no tunnel or hole, nor does it create any ripple or other signs of its presence. A *move earth* spell cast on an area containing a burrowing earth elemental flings the elemental back 30 feet, stunning the creature for 1 round unless it succeeds on a DC 15 Fortitude save.

*Damage Reduction (Su):* An earth elemental ignores the first 5 points of damage from any attack, natural or with a weapon. The earth elemental takes normal damage from energy attacks (even nonmagical ones), spells, spell-like abilities, and supernatural abilities (see Immunity to Magic).

*Darkvision, 60 ft.:* An earth elemental can see in the dark with no light source at all, out to a range of 60 feet. Darkvision is black and white only (colors cannot be discerned). It does not allow the earth elemental to see anything that it could not see otherwise—invisible objects are still invisible, and illusions are still visible as what they seem to be. Likewise, darkvision subjects the earth elemental to gaze attacks normally. The presence of light does not spoil darkvision.

**Elemental Traits:** An earth elemental has the following traits:

- Immunity to poison, sleep effects, paralysis, and stunning.
- Not subject to critical hits or flanking.
- Unlike most other living creatures, an elemental does not have a dual nature—its soul and body form one unit. When an elemental is slain, no soul is set loose. Spells that restore souls to their bodies, such as *raise dead, reincarnate,* and *resurrection,* don't work on an elemental. It takes a different magical effect, such as *limited wish, wish, miracle,* or *true resurrection,* to restore it to life.

- Elementals do not eat, sleep, or breathe.

*Water Elemental (1):* CR 9; Large Elemental (Water, Extraplanar); 9d8+36; hp 80; Init +2; Spd 20 ft., swim 90 ft.; AC 20, touch 11, flat-footed 18; Base Atk +6; Grp +15; Atk +10 melee (2d8+5/x2, slam); Full Atk +10 melee (2d8+5/x2, 2 slams); Space/Reach 10 ft./10 ft.; AL N; SA Water mastery, drench, vortex; SQ Damage reduction 5/—, darkvision 60 ft., elemental traits; SV Fort +10, Ref +4, Will +2; Str 20, Dex 14, Con 19, Int 6, Wis 11, Cha 11.

*Skills and Feats:* Listen +5, Spot +6; Cleave, Great Cleave, Power Attack.

*Water Mastery (Ex):* A water elemental gains a +1 bonus on attack and damage rolls if both it and its opponent are touching water. If the opponent or the elemental is touching the ground, the elemental takes a –4 penalty on attack and damage rolls. (These modifiers are not included in the statistics block.)

A water elemental can be a serious threat to a ship that crosses its path. An elemental can easily overturn small craft (5 feet of length per Hit Die of the elemental) and stop larger vessels (10 feet long per HD). Even large ships (20 feet long per HD) can be slowed to half speed.

*Drench (Ex):* The elemental's touch puts out torches, campfires, exposed lanterns, and other open flames of nonmagical origin if these are of Large size or smaller. The creature can dispel magical fire it touches as *dispel magic* (caster level equals elemental's HD).

*Vortex (Su):* The elemental can transform itself into a whirlpool once every 10 minutes, provided it is underwater, and remain in that form for up to 1 round for every 2 HD it has. In vortex form, the elemental can move through the water or along the bottom at its swim speed. The vortex is 5 feet wide at the base, up to 30 feet wide at the top, and 10 feet or more tall, depending on the elemental's size. The elemental controls the exact height, but it must be at least 10 feet.

The elemental's movement while in vortex form does not provoke attacks of opportunity, even if the elemental enters the space another creature occupies. Another creature might be caught in the vortex if it touches or enters the vortex, or if the elemental moves into or through the creature's space.

Creatures one or more size categories smaller than the elemental might take damage when caught in the vortex (see the table on page 101 in the *Monster Manual* for details) and may be swept up by it. An affected creature must succeed on a Reflex save when it comes into contact with the vortex or take the indicated damage. It must also succeed on a second Reflex save or be picked up bodily and held suspended in the powerful currents, automatically taking damage each round. An affected creature is allowed a Reflex save each round to escape the vortex. The creature still takes damage, but can leave if the save is successful. The DC for saves against the vortex's effects is DC 19. The save DC is Strength-based.

Creatures trapped in the vortex cannot move except to go where the elemental carries them or to escape the whirlwind. Creatures caught in the whirlwind can otherwise act normally, but must make a Concentration check (DC 10 + spell level) to cast a spell. Creatures caught in the whirlwind take a –4 penalty to Dexterity and a –2 penalty on attack rolls. The elemental can have only as many creatures trapped inside the vortex at one time as will fit inside the vortex's volume.

The elemental can eject any carried creatures whenever it wishes, depositing them wherever the vortex happens to be. A summoned elemental always ejects trapped creatures before returning to its home plane.

If the vortex's base touches the bottom, it creates a swirling cloud of debris. This cloud is centered on the elemental and has a diameter equal to half the vortex's height. The cloud obscures all vision, including darkvision, beyond 5 feet. Creatures 5 feet away have concealment, while those farther away have total concealment.

Those caught in the cloud must make a Concentration check (DC 15 + spell level) to cast a spell.

An elemental in vortex form cannot make slam attacks and does not threaten the area around it.

*Skills:* A water elemental has a +8 racial bonus on any Swim check to perform some special action or avoid a hazard. It can always choose to take 10 on a Swim check, even if distracted or endangered. It can use the run action while swimming, provided it swims in a straight line.

*Damage Reduction (Su):* An water elemental ignores the first 5 points of damage from any attack, natural or with a weapon. The water elemental takes normal damage from energy attacks (even nonmagical ones), spells, spell-like abilities, and supernatural abilities (see Immunity to Magic).

*Darkvision, 60 ft.:* A water elemental can see in the dark with no light source at all, out to a range of 60 feet. Darkvision is black and white only (colors cannot be discerned). It does not allow the water elemental to see anything that it could not see otherwise—invisible objects are still invisible, and illusions are still visible as what they seem to be. Likewise, darkvision subjects the water elemental to gaze attacks normally. The presence of light does not spoil darkvision.

**Elemental Traits:** A water elemental has the following traits:

- Immunity to poison, sleep effects, paralysis, and stunning.
- Not subject to critical hits or flanking.
- Unlike most other living creatures, an elemental does not have a dual nature—its soul and body form one unit. When an elemental is slain, no soul is set loose. Spells that restore souls to their bodies, such as *raise dead, reincarnate,* and *resurrection,* don't work on an elemental. It takes a different magical effect, such as *limited wish, wish, miracle,* or *true resurrection,* to restore it to life.
- Elementals do not eat, sleep, or breathe.

The double doors at the far end of the room lead to Xioz's summoning chamber. They are painted with the same runes as **Location 4.13**.

## Location 4.34.A: Blood Shrine

**Read aloud:** *The walls and floors of this room have been stained a deep red. A strange orange-red light fades rhythmically in and out like a heartbeat.*

*In the center of the room stands a fountain depicting an Elven maiden pouring out a rune inscribed bowl. A thick red fluid cycles through the fountain.*

## Location 4.34.B: Flesh Shrine

**Read aloud:** *Stretched across each wall are thick tapestries of woven skin, pulled tight like a drumhead.*

## Location 4.34.C: Bone Shrine

**Read aloud:** *A grim sight greets you in this chamber. Every inch of the walls, ceiling, and floors has been mounted with bleached-white bones. Hosts of skulls stare down at you with eyeless sockets. Humans, Nothrogs, Elves — there must be more than a hundred fleshless heads.*

## Location 4.34.D: Spirit Shrine

**Read aloud:** *The walls, ceiling, and floor here have been painted black. A single phonstone hangs in the center of the room, gently swaying on a delicate silver chain. A greenish mist roils and seethes around the room, as if stirred by a powerful breeze.*

## Location 4.35: Summoning Room

**Read aloud:** *Silver runes are inlaid in the center of the floor in a 10-foot diameter circle. The circle pulses with swirling, crimson energy. You can barely make out a thin, humanoid form standing in its center.*

*Shattered bits of equipment, armor, and bone strewn about the room seem to have been smashed against the walls repeatedly. Deep brown splatters stain the walls and floor.*

**Development:** When Morghen Dythanus betrayed Xioz, he trapped his father's disciple inside the summoning chamber with Lord Sigard. Xioz tore the man limb from limb in a blind rage. The bloodstains are still on the walls. Lord Sigard's ghost remains trapped in the chamber; he has been tormenting the lich for centuries.

Sigard's first action upon the PCs' entry is to destroy the *Talisman of the Storm*; he does not allow it to fall into yet another thief's hands, Sigard then attempts to possess the first PC to enter the chamber. He wants to destroy Xioz at any cost, and tries to possess each PC until he finds a host. If all of them resist, he flies into a rage and tries to convince the PCs to attack Xioz. If attacked, he attempts to destroy the party, using all of his ghostly might.

Xioz is trapped inside the circle. Consult the *Adventure Timeline* for his power level. He defends himself to the best of his ability if attacked, but tries to convince the players to aid in his escape (if they are open to conversation). He promises to pay anything they ask for, fully intending to destroy the heroes once completely free.

**Creatures:** Xioz, a 15th-level necromancer; Sir Sigard's ghost, an 8th-level ghost fighter.

**Xioz, Male Elf Nec 15:** CR 15; Medium humanoid (Elf); HD 15d4; hp 45; Spd 30 ft.; Init +3; AC 19, touch 15, flat-footed 14; Base Atk +7; Grp +7; Atk +7 melee (1d6/x2, quarterstaff); Full Atk +7/+2 melee (1d6/x2, quarterstaff); SA Steal life (1d8+1), spells; SQ Cheat death, death's threshold (disease, mind-influencing effects, poison, sleep, stun), Elf traits, rebuke undead, spontaneous casting; AL LE; SV Fort +5, Ref +8, Will +11; Str 10, Dex 16, Con —, Int 19, Wis 14, Cha 12.

*Skills and Feats:* Concentration +15, Diplomacy +13, Knowledge (arcana) +18, Knowledge (necromancy) +15, Scry +15, Search +16, Sense Motive +14, Spellcraft +18, Spot +15; Brew Potion, Create Arms and Armor, Create Rod, Create Staff, Create Wand, Create Wondrous Item, Forge Ring, Maximize Spell, Silent Spell, Still Spell.

*Cheat Death:* Xioz has prepared for his own death. Should he be killed he can attempt a Will save (DC 20) at the moment of his death. If successful, Xioz returns to life exactly 13 hours later at a pre-determined location. If he returns, Xioz suffers one point of Constitution drain or loses one level (Xioz's choice).

*Death's Threshold:* Xioz does not need to sleep and is immune to sleep and stun effects. In addition, he is immune to poison, disease, and mind-influencing effects.

*Rebuke Undead:* Xioz may attempt to rebuke undead 4 times per day as a 9th level cleric.

*Spontaneous Casting:* Xioz may expend one of his memorized spells to cast any necromancy spell of equal or lower level

*Steal Life:* Xioz's unarmed attacks deal 1d10+1 lethal damage. Any damage dealt by this attack is added as hit points to Xioz's total; any excess hit points are lost at the rate of one per round. Attacking in this manner is still considered an unarmed attack and draws attacks of opportunity.

*Necromancer Spells Prepared* (4/5/5/5/5/4/3/2/1; save DC 14 + spell level): 0 — *light, resistance* x3; 1st — *chill touch, magic missile* x3, *sleep*; 2nd — *bone spikes* x2, *cloak of fear, song of blood* x2; 3rd — *deadly focus, shard storm* x4; 4th — *draining weapon, exhaustion* x3, *twice fatal blast*; 5th — *acid storm* x3, *lethargic gait*; 6th — *death is but a door, despair, mass animation*; 7th — *animation field, choking cloud*; 8th — *evil eye*.

*Possessions:* Quarterstaff, *bracers of armor +4, ring of protection +2*.

**Sir Sigard's Ghost, Ftr 8:** CR 10; Medium undead (augmented humanoid) (incorporeal); HD 8d12; hp 52; Init +3; Spd 40 ft. fly 80 ft. (perfect); AC 13, touch 13, flat-footed 10; Base Atk +8; Grp +12; Atk +13 melee (1d8+7(19–20/x2), longsword); Full Atk +13/+8 melee (1d8+7(19–20/x2), longsword); Space/Reach 5 ft./5 ft.; SA Favored weapon (longsword, hand axe), improved damage (longsword), malevolence, frightful moan, manifestation, horrific appearance; SQ Undead traits, incorporeal subtype, rejuvenation, +4 turn resistance; AL CE; SV Fort +6, Ref +5, Will +3; Str 18, Dex 17, Con -, Int 12, Wis 13, Cha 18.

*Skills and Feats:* Concentration +8, Diplomacy +7, Handle Animal +6, Heal +7, Hide +8*, Listen +8*, Knowledge (warfare) +7, Knowledge (Religion) +7, Ride +8; Search +8*, Spot +15*; Feats: Cleave, Great Cleave, Mounted Archery, Mounted Combat, Power Attack. *+8 racial bonus on Hide, Listen, Search, and Spot checks.

*Favored Weapon (longsword, hand axe):* Sir Sigard's ghost gains a +1 competence bonus to attack and damage rolls with the longsword and the hand axe.

*Improved Damage (longsword):* Sir Sigard's ghost does an additional +2 (+3 total) damage with the longsword.

*Malevolence (Su):* Once per round, Sir Sigard's ghost can merge its body with a creature on the Material Plane. This ability is similar to a *magic jar* spell (caster level 10th), except that it does not require a receptacle. To use this ability, the ghost must be manifested and it must try move into the target's space; moving into the target's space to use the malevolence ability does not provoke attacks of opportunity. The target can resist the attack with a successful Will save (DC 18). A creature that successfully saves is immune to that same ghost's malevolence for 24 hours, and the ghost cannot enter the target's space. If the save fails, the ghost vanishes into the target's body.

*Frightful Moan (Su):* Sir Sigard's ghost can emit a frightful moan as a standard action. All living creatures within a 30-foot spread must succeed on a Will save (DC 15) or become panicked for 2d4 rounds. This is a sonic necromantic mind-affecting fear effect. A creature that successfully saves against the moan cannot be affected by the same ghost's moan for 24 hours.

*Horrific Appearance (Su):* Any living creature within 60 feet that views a ghost must succeed on a Fortitude save (DC 15) or immediately take 1d4 points of Strength damage, 1d4 points of Dexterity damage, and 1d4 points of Constitution damage. A creature that successfully saves against this effect cannot be affected by the same ghost's horrific appearance for 24 hours.

*Manifestation (Su):* Every ghost has this ability. A ghost dwells on the Ethereal Plane and, as an ethereal creature, it cannot affect or be affected by anything in the material world. When a ghost manifests, it partly enters the Material Plane and becomes visible but incorporeal on the Material Plane. A manifested ghost can be harmed only by other incorporeal creatures, magic weapons, or spells, with a 50% chance to ignore any damage from a corporeal source. A manifested ghost can pass through solid objects at will, and its own attacks pass through armor. A manifested ghost always moves silently. A manifested ghost can strike with its touch attack or with a ghost touch weapon. A manifested ghost remains partially on the Ethereal Plane, where is it not incorporeal. A manifested ghost can be attacked by opponents on either the Material Plane or the Ethereal Plane. The ghost's incorporeality helps protect it from foes on the Material Plane, but not from foes on the Ethereal Plane.

When a spellcasting ghost is not manifested and is on the Ethereal Plane, its spells cannot affect targets on the Material Plane, but they work normally against ethereal targets. When a spellcasting ghost manifests, its spells continue to affect ethereal targets and can affect targets on the Material Plane normally unless the spells rely on touch. A manifested ghost's touch spells don't work on nonethereal targets.

A ghost has two home planes, the Material Plane and the Ethereal Plane. It is not considered extraplanar when on either of these planes.

*Telekinesis (Su):* Sir Sigard's ghost can use *telekinesis* as a standard action (caster level 12th). When a ghost uses this power, it must wait 1d4 rounds before using it again.

*Rejuvenation (Su):* In most cases, it's difficult to destroy a ghost through simple combat: The "destroyed" spirit will often restore itself in 2d4 days. Even the most powerful spells are usually only temporary solutions. A ghost that would otherwise be destroyed returns to its old haunts with a successful level check (1d20 + 6) against DC 16. As a rule, 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. The exact means varies with each spirit and may require a good deal of research.

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

*Incorporeal Subtype:* Due to its incorporeal nature, Sir Sigard's ghost has the following traits:

- An incorporeal creature has no physical body. It can be harmed only by other incorporeal creatures, magic weapons or creatures that strike as magic weapons, and spells, spell-like abilities, or supernatural abilities.
- It is immune to all nonmagical attack forms. Even when hit by spells or magic weapons, it has a 50% chance to ignore any damage from a corporeal source (except for positive energy, negative energy, force effects such as *magic missile*, or attacks made with *ghost touch* weapons). Although it is not a magical attack, holy water can affect incorporeal undead, but a hit with holy water has a 50% chance of not affecting an incorporeal creature.
- An incorporeal creature has no natural armor bonus but has a deflection bonus equal to its Charisma bonus (always at least +1, even if the creature's Charisma score does not normally provide a bonus).
- An incorporeal creature can enter or pass through solid objects, but must remain adjacent to the object's exterior, and so cannot pass entirely through an object whose space is larger than its own. It can sense the presence of creatures or objects within a square adjacent to its current location, but enemies have total concealment (50% miss chance) from an incorporeal creature that is inside an object. In order to see farther from the object it is in and attack normally, the incorporeal creature must emerge. An incorporeal creature inside an object has total cover, but when it attacks a creature outside the object it only has cover, so a creature outside with a readied action could strike at it as it attacks. An incorporeal creature cannot pass through a force effect.
- An incorporeal creature's attacks pass through (ignore) natural armor, armor, and shields, although deflection bonuses and force effects (such as *mage armor*) work normally against it.

- Incorporeal creatures pass through and operate in water as easily as they do in air.
- Incorporeal creatures cannot fall or take falling damage.
- Incorporeal creatures cannot make trip or grapple attacks, nor can they be tripped or grappled. In fact, they cannot take any physical action that would move or manipulate an opponent or its equipment, nor are they subject to such actions.
- Incorporeal creatures have no weight and do not set off traps that are triggered by weight.
- An incorporeal creature moves silently and cannot be heard with Listen checks if it doesn't wish to be. It has no Strength score, so its Dexterity modifier applies to both its melee attacks and its ranged attacks. Nonvisual senses, such as scent and blindsight, are either ineffective or only partly effective with regard to incorporeal creatures.
- Incorporeal creatures have an innate sense of direction and can move at full speed even when they cannot see.

**Undead Traits:** Sir Sigard's ghost has the following traits:

- No Constitution score.
- Darkvision out to 60 feet.
- Immunity to all mind-affecting effects (charms, compulsions, phantasms, patterns, and morale effects).
- Immunity to poison, sleep effects, paralysis, stunning, disease, death effects, and necromancy effects.
- Negative energy (such as an *inflict* spell) can heal undead creatures. The fast healing quality works regardless of the creature's Intelligence score.

### Creating Servitors

If a sentient, Medium-size or smaller creature is cocooned by the Spider Queen, the creature turns into a servitor. 24 hours after being cocooned, the victim emerges misshapen, freakish, and completely subservient to the Spider Queen. At any time during the 24 hours, the victim can still be saved if completely removed from the cocoon. As a servitor, the victim possesses all of its former abilities, with the addition of a permanent *spider climb* spell, treated as a supernatural ability. The new servitor also receives the following racial bonuses:

+2 Strength
+4 Dexterity
−6 Charisma

If the Spider Queen is destroyed, all servitors must make a Fortitude save (DC 28) or die. If they survive, they regain their free will (but not their forms).

### Adventure Timeline

The following events are set in motion when the adventure begins. Whether some or all of them occur depends largely on how quickly the PCs search the tower.

Centuries ago, Dythanus trapped Xioz in the summoning chamber (Location 4.35). No spells may be cast within the chamber, but the effect is fading; in nine days, it will be completely gone.

Day 0: The characters begin the adventure with *Begin Excavation* (see below), regardless of the direction from which they approach the area. Once the encounter has occurred, the following timetable is set in motion:

Day 1: Xioz regains 1st level spells.
Day 2: Xioz regains 2nd level spells.
Day 3: Xioz regains 3rd level spells.
Day 4: Xioz regains 4th level spells.
Day 5: Xioz regains 5th level spells.
Day 6: Xioz regains 6th level spells.
Day 7: Xioz regains 7th level spells.
Day 8: Xioz regains 8th level spells.
Day 9: The trap is gone. Xioz is free.

- Not subject to critical hits, non-lethal damage, ability damage, ability drain, fatigue, exhaustion, or energy drain. Immune to damage to its physical ability scores (Strength, Dexterity, Constitution), as well as to fatigue and exhaustion effects.
- Immunity to any effect that requires a Fortitude save (unless the effect also works on objects, or is harmless).
- Uses its Charisma modifier for Concentration checks.
- Not at risk of death from massive damage. Immediately destroyed when reduced to 0 hit points or less.
- Not affected by *raise dead* and *reincarnate* spells or abilities. *Resurrection* and *true resurrection* can affect undead creatures. These spells turn undead creatures back into the living creatures they were before becoming undead.
- Proficient with its natural weapons, all simple weapons, and any weapon mentioned in its entry.
- Proficient with whatever type of armor (light, medium, and heavy) it is described as wearing, as well as all lighter types.
- Undead do not eat, sleep, or breathe.

## Location 5: Spider Queen Lair (EL 15)

**Read aloud:** *No sunlight pierces the ceiling of webbing that spans the chasm. The floor is lost in darkness. Hanging upside down from the corners of this enormous web is a hideous spider-like beast with powerful mandibles and eight stinger-tipped limbs. Its bloated, chitinous abdomen is scarlet laced with gold and black patterns that look like flames.*

Two massive, misshapen beasts huddle beneath its mass.

The PCs have never seen a creature like this. It is a puppeteer spider queen (*see Part 6*), one of Xioz's many experiments. Its two servants were once Nothrog fighters. Now they are mindless slaves, dominated by the Spider Queen's magic (*see the Creating Servitors sidebar*).

**Creatures:** One puppeteer spider queen; two Nothrog Servitors, 5th-level fighters.

**Nothrog Servitor (2), Male Nothrog Ftr 5:** CR 5; Medium humanoid (Nothrog); HD 5d10+5; hp 35; Spd 20 ft.; Init +0; AC 16, touch 11, flat-footed 15; Base Atk +5; Grp +10; Atk +11 melee (1d10+8(19–20/x2), Nothrog longblade); Full Atk +11 melee (1d10+8(19–20/x2), Nothrog longblade); SA Favored weapon (Nothrog longblade, battleaxe), improved damage (Nothrog longblade); SQ Nothrog traits, servitor traits; AL NE; SV Fort +6, Ref +2, Will +3; Str 21, Dex 13, Con 15, Int 6, Wis 10, Cha 4.

*Skills and Feats:* Climb +5*, Handle Animal +1, Intimidate +4, Jump +4*, Listen +5, Ride +2; Alertness, Cleave, Power Attack. *includes –5 armor check penalty

*Favored Weapon (Nothrog longblade, battleaxe):* A Nothrog servitor gains a +1 competence bonus to attack and damage rolls with the Nothrog longblade and the battleaxe.

*Improved Damage (Nothrog longblade):* A Nothrog servitor does an additional +2 (+3 total) damage with the Nothrog longblade.

*Spider climb (Ex):* The Nothrog servitors are under a permanent *spider climb* spell.

*Possessions:* Chainmail, Nothrog longblade.

**Development:** The spider queen lives just below the center of the web, in the heart of the darkness. She rarely leaves this area, preferring to use her servitors and the terr org for menial tasks. She has grown incredibly bloated (she is half again the size she was when summoned from the Abyss) and lazy over the years. She will only engage the PCs if she has no other choice.

**Puppeteer Spider Queen:** CR 10; Large undead; HD 8d12; hp 58; Init +7; Spd 50 ft., climb 30 ft.; AC 20, touch 12, flat-footed 17; Base Atk +3; Grp +16; +Atk +8 melee (1d6+5/x2, stingers) or +3 melee (1d4+2/x2, mandibles); Full Atk +8 melee (1d6+5/x2, 8 stingers), +3 melee (1d4+2/x2, mandibles); Space/Reach 10 ft./15 ft. (10 ft. with mandibles); SA Web, poison, fear aura; SQ Undead traits, regeneration 5, create servitor; AL CE; SV Fort +2, Ref +5, Will +10; Str 21, Dex 16, Con —, Int 14, Wis 15, Cha 15.

*Skills and Feats:* Hide +12, Listen +11, Move Silently +12, Spot +11; Alertness, Iron Will, Improved Initiative

*Create Servitor (Ex):* (*See sidebar, page 204*)

*Fear Aura (Su):* As a free action, the Spider Queen can create an aura of fear in a 20-ft. radius. It is otherwise identical to the spell *fear* cast by a 14th level bard (save DC 19). If the save is successful, that creature cannot be affected again by that spider queen's aura for one day.

*Poison (Ex):* The Spider Queen's mandibles and stingers are coated with toxic venom. Bite or sting, Fort save (DC 14); initial and secondary damage 1d4 temporary Constitution.

*Regeneration 5 (Ex):* Holy, blessed, and magical weapons deal normal damage to the Spider Queen, while all other damage is converted to subdual damage. If the Spider Queen loses a limb or body part, the missing limb or chunk of flesh regenerates in 3d6 minutes. The spider queen can reattach the severed member instantly by holding it flush against the stump. If the Spider Queen's head is severed, its body continues to function for 4d4 rounds, during which time the Spider Queen desperately attempts to reattach its head in the above fashion. If it fails to do so in the allotted time, the Spider Queen dies.

*Spell-like Abilities:* At will — *animate dead, blasphemy, desecrate, detect good, detect magic, dispel magic, improved invisibility, magic circle against good, suggestion, unholy aura, unhallow.*

*Web (Ex):* The Spider Queen spins her webs in three ways; as a net or a sticky sheet to capture victims, or in a silky cocoon to create servitors.

The Spider Queen may spin a web three times per day. This is similar to an attack with a net but has a maximum range of 50 feet, a range increment of 10 feet, and is effective against Large or smaller targets. The web anchors the target in place, allowing no movement.

An entangled creature can escape with a successful Escape Artist check or break the web with a Strength check. Both are standard actions, DC 20 and DC 26 respectively (6 hp).

The Spider Queen can also create sheets of sticky webbing. She usually positions these sheets to snare flying creatures but can also try to trap prey on the ground. Approaching creatures must succeed at a Spot check (DC 20) to notice a web; otherwise they stumble into it and become trapped as if hit by a successful web attack. Attempts to escape or break the webbing gain a +5 bonus if the trapped creature has something to walk on or grab while pulling free. Each 5-ft. section has 6 hit points and the sheet webs have damage reduction 5/fire.

The Spider Queen can move across sheet web at its climb speed and can determine the exact location of any creature touching the web at any time.

**Undead Traits:** The spider queen has the following traits:

- No Constitution score.
- Darkvision out to 60 feet.
- Immunity to all mind-affecting effects (charms, compulsions, phantasms, patterns, and morale effects).
- Immunity to poison, sleep effects, paralysis, stunning, disease, death effects, and necromancy effects.
- Negative energy (such as an *inflict* spell) can heal undead creatures. The fast healing quality works regardless of the creature's Intelligence score.
- Not subject to critical hits, non-lethal damage, ability damage, ability drain, fatigue, exhaustion, or energy drain. Immune to damage to its physical ability scores (Strength, Dexterity, Constitution), as well as to fatigue and exhaustion effects.

- Immunity to any effect that requires a Fortitude save (unless the effect also works on objects, or is harmless).
- Uses its Charisma modifier for Concentration checks.
- Not at risk of death from massive damage. Immediately destroyed when reduced to 0 hit points or less.
- Not affected by *raise dead* and *reincarnate* spells or abilities. *Resurrection* and *true resurrection* can affect undead creatures. These spells turn undead creatures back into the living creatures they were before becoming undead.
- Proficient with its natural weapons, all simple weapons, and any weapon mentioned in its entry.
- Proficient with whatever type of armor (light, medium, and heavy) it is described as wearing, as well as all lighter types.
- Undead do not eat, sleep, or breathe.

*Treasure:* There is treasure scattered throughout the lair; the servitors and the terr org have picked through the boneyard and surrounding environs for suitable offerings for their deity. The pile contains the following: a total of 800 sp, 230 gp, 28 pp, two pearls (gem, nonmagical, 350 gp value), one uncut diamond (large gem, nonmagical, 900 gp value), one ruby ring (jewelry, nonmagical, 500 gp value), and a three potions of *cure light wounds* in crystal vials.

# Part 2: Timeline Events

## Timeline 1: Begin Excavation

The Deverenians begin excavation the morning of the first day. They secure a ledge on the western edge of the chasm and install a winch and basket to haul supplies and people to the base and back. They leave a small contingent to guard the campsite, and they bring the rest to start the excavation. Throughout the course of the adventure, they use this area as a launching point for forays into the boneyard and tower. The process is slow and dangerous. Combat erupts as the undead in the boneyard are drawn to the workers.

## Timeline 2: Time Passes

With several factions exploring the chasm environs, things should remain dynamic. The PCs should encounter opened doors, slain guardians and servants, sprung traps, and even other explorers. If they leave an area and return, the may find things have changed. Some suggestions include the following:

- The PCs find a wounded terr org hiding in the rubble at the edge of the chasm.
- The PCs find the door to the Bonespire open and unlocked.
- The PCs find two dead Deverenian workers in the boneyard.
- The PCs notice additional victims caught in the giant web.

## Timeline 3: Elves Attack!

On the second day, the Elves attack the Deverenian excavation team. After careful reconnaissance, Elohin decides to test his enemies' defenses. The Elves attack from the tree line with volleys of arrows as two of their number sneak up to the site to disable the winch. They fall back after ten rounds of combat, whether they are successful or not.

## Timeline 4: Guardian Activated

On the third day, Ashun Voll triggers the tower guardian in **Location 4.25**. Their battle can be heard anywhere inside the tower. Ashun manages to escape, but not without suffering damage (*see sidebar Medusan Lord Agent for stats*). The tower guardian is now active and alert. It destroyed the door between **Location 4.24** and **Location 4.25**, and now patrols back and forth between the two rooms.

## Timeline 5: Xioz Escapes!

On the ninth day, the trap fades, and Xioz escapes. If this happens, every living creature in the chasm is in peril. Xioz has been trapped for centuries and his thirst for vengeance cannot be overstated. He takes the *Talisman of the Storm* and fully equips himself with the items stashed in **Location 4.24**. Then he starts cleaning house. He destroys the Spider Queen, the terr org, the Deverenian camp, and anyone in or around the Bonespire. Once he reestablishes control over the area, he starts planning his return to power.

# Part 3: Concluding the Adventure

Depending on the actions of the PCs, this adventure could end in several ways.

- **Failure!** If the PCs fail to defeat Xioz and recover the *Talisman of the Storm* before he escapes the summoning chamber, there are serious repercussions. The Elves gain a powerful ally who is hell-bent on destroying humanity and armed with an incredibly potent weapon.
- **Success!** If the PCs defeat Xioz and recover the *Talisman of the Storm*, they have dealt their enemies a serious blow — especially the Medusan Lords, who wanted the *Talisman* for themselves. The PCs should be wary; they have the Medusan Lords' attention, and that is dangerous indeed.

Here are a couple adventure hooks that might lead the PCs on to other adventures.

- The PCs possess a valuable Deverenian treasure, one that would fetch an incredible price in the black market, and the PCs decide to travel deep into Deverenia to sell it.
- The Medusan Lords send a small band of well-trained mercenaries to intercept the PCs and steal the *Talisman of the Storm*.

# Part 4: The Stone of Fortune

**Read aloud:** *With the barest touch, the Stone of Fortune glows to a brilliant white as a new vision begins. A rolling storm — no, the Storm — soars across blasted plains. From within flies a giant of a man, clad in full plate and riding a massive verdatha.*

This is Blackthorn, returned from his latest foray into the Storm.

# Part 5: New Magic Items

## The Talisman of the Storm

MAJOR ARTIFACT

Though the Church of the Storm still counts Signon's personal relics as the holiest of all, those that belonged to Modred while he was still mortal also hold a sacred place. This simple holy symbol, a silver chain attached to a lightning bolt pendant, was a personal gift from Signon to his chosen Hierophant, shortly before Modred entered the Storm and returned as a stormwraith. During his long sabbaticals from the material plane, Modred often left the *Talisman of the Storm* with his favored servants, until Sir Sigard's death.

The *Talisman of the Storm* bestows upon its wearer a number of powers, not the least of which is protection from the Storm's environment. The bearer may turn undead as a cleric of his character level and Charisma, and may *teleport* at will as a free action a number of times per day equal to his Wisdom modifier.

All stormborn can intuitively sense if the *Talisman of the Storm* is within 1 mile, and whether it is worn by a faithful of the Storm or a heretic. If the latter, the stormborn invariably seek to slay the defiler and retrieve the relic.

*Caster level:* 20th, *Weight:* 0.5 lbs.

# Part 6: New Monsters

PUPPETEER SPIDER QUEEN (EITHULGON)

**Large Undead**
**Hit Dice:** 8d12 (52 hp)
**Initiative:** +7 (+3 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative)
**Speed:** 50 ft., climb 30 ft.
**AC:** 20 (–1 size, +3 Dex, +8 natural), touch 12, flat-footed 17
**Base Attack/Grapple:** +8/+16
**Attack:** Stingers +8 melee (1d6+5) or mandibles +3 melee (1d4+2)
**Full Attack:** 8 stingers +8 melee (1d6+5) and mandibles +3 melee (1d4+2)
**Space/Reach:** 10 ft./15 ft. (10 ft. with mandibles)
**Special Attacks:** Web, poison, fear aura, spell-like abilities
**Special Qualities:** Undead traits, regeneration 5, create servitor
**Saves:** Fort +2, Ref +5, Will +10
**Abilities:** Str 21, Dex 16, Con –, Int 14, Wis 15, Cha 15
**Skills:** Hide +12, Listen +11, Move Silently +12, Spot +11
**Feats:** Alertness, Iron Will, Improved Initiative
**Environment:** Forest, Underground
**Organization:** Solitary
**Challenge Rating:** 10
**Treasure:** Standard
**Alignment:** Always Chaotic Evil
**Advancement:** None
**Level Adjustment:** —

The puppeteer spider queen is a creation of Xioz's, although none know what the creature was like while it was alive. It is believed to be unique, although it is quite possible that Xioz placed others in remote areas before his imprisonment. With Xioz's death, the knowledge of its creation rites is lost.

COMBAT

The Spider Queen is a cautious fighter who prefers to use servitors rather than act directly. If attacked in the lair, the Spider Queen summons all servitors to her side and uses web attacks and spells to keep foes at bay until they arrive. She only engages foes in melee if backed into a corner.

*Create Servitor (Ex):* *(See sidebar, page 204)*

*Fear Aura (Su):* As a free action, the Spider Queen can create an aura of fear in a 20-ft. radius. It is otherwise identical to the spell *fear* cast by a 14th level bard (save DC 19). If the save is successful, that creature cannot be affected again by that spider queen's aura for one day.

*Poison (Ex):* The Spider Queen's mandibles and stingers are coated with toxic venom. Bite or sting, Fort save (DC 14); initial and secondary damage 1d4 temporary Constitution.

*Regeneration 5 (Ex):* Holy, blessed, and magical weapons deal normal damage to the Spider Queen, while all other damage is converted to subdual damage. If the Spider Queen loses a limb or body part, the missing limb or chunk of flesh regenerates in 3d6 minutes. The spider queen can reattach the severed member instantly by holding it flush against the stump. If the Spider Queen's head is severed, its body continues to function for 4d4 rounds, during which time the Spider Queen desperately attempts to reattach its head in the above fashion. If it fails to do so in the allotted time, the Spider Queen dies.

*Spell-like Abilities:* At will — *animate dead, blasphemy, desecrate, detect good, detect magic, dispel magic, improved invisibility, magic circle against good, suggestion, unholy aura, unhallow.*

*Web (Ex):* The Spider Queen spins her webs in three ways; as a net or a sticky sheet to capture victims, or in a silky cocoon to create servitors.

The Spider Queen may spin a web three times per day. This is similar to an attack with a net but has a maximum range of 50 feet, a range increment of 10 feet, and is effective against Large or smaller targets. The web anchors the target in place, allowing no movement.

An entangled creature can escape with a successful Escape Artist check or break the web with a Strength check. Both are standard actions, DC 20 and DC 26 respectively (6 hp).

The Spider Queen can also create sheets of sticky webbing. She usually positions these sheets to snare flying creatures but can also try to trap prey on the ground. Approaching creatures must succeed at a Spot check (DC 20) to notice a web; otherwise they stumble into it and become trapped as if hit by a successful web attack. Attempts to escape or break the webbing gain a +5 bonus if the trapped creature has something to walk on or grab while pulling free. Each 5-ft. section has 6 hit points and the sheet webs have damage reduction 5/fire.

The Spider Queen can move across sheet web at its climb speed and can determine the exact location of any creature touching the web at any time.

**Undead Traits:** The spider queen has the following traits:

- No Constitution score.
- Darkvision out to 60 feet.
- Immunity to all mind-affecting effects (charms, compulsions, phantasms, patterns, and morale effects).
- Immunity to poison, sleep effects, paralysis, stunning, disease, death effects, and necromancy effects.
- Negative energy (such as an *inflict* spell) can heal undead creatures. The fast healing quality works regardless of the creature's Intelligence score.
- Not subject to critical hits, non-lethal damage, ability damage, ability drain, fatigue, exhaustion, or energy drain. Immune to damage to its physical ability scores (Strength, Dexterity, Constitution), as well as to fatigue and exhaustion effects.
- Immunity to any effect that requires a Fortitude save (unless the effect also works on objects, or is harmless).
- Uses its Charisma modifier for Concentration checks.
- Not at risk of death from massive damage. Immediately destroyed when reduced to 0 hit points or less.
- Not affected by *raise dead* and *reincarnate* spells or abilities. *Resurrection* and *true resurrection* can affect undead creatures. These spells turn undead creatures back into the living creatures they were before becoming undead.
- Proficient with its natural weapons, all simple weapons, and any weapon mentioned in its entry.
- Proficient with whatever type of armor (light, medium, and heavy) it is described as wearing, as well as all lighter types.
- Undead do not eat, sleep, or breathe.



# Abyssal Attack

## Introduction

In Abyssal Attack, the party must defend a small Dwarven village from a horrendous wave of Abyssals who are allied with the dark forces plaguing the Accordlands.

This is one of four adventures in Tier 5. It is meant for characters of levels 8–10.

## Adventure Synopsis

In Abyssal Attack, the party faces Abyssals three times — a relatively easy fight with a single Abyssal, a more difficult encounter with a small swarm, and a deadly battle with a horde of Abyssals that they will not survive without help and preparation.

The last two attacks happen at specific times. The first swarm attacks Stoneheart Watchpoint four hours after the party arrives, with the major horde following ten hours later. The party does not know the exact timeline, though it should be clear from speaking with the Dwarves that attacks are inevitable and imminent. The party cannot change the timeline.

Should they decide to stay in Stoneheart and fight the coming assault, the party must decidev how to best use their time. They have several options and enough time to pursue some, but not all, of these avenues. Their options include: winning the trust of the Dwarven villagers so they can lead them into the fight; finding a powerful weapon wielded by a fallen Dwarf leader; helping finish a gargoyle; helping the smith craft weapons specifically shaped to harm Abyssals; erecting barricades and fortifications to strengthen their defense; and investigating rumors of a possible traitor in Stoneheart.

Keeping track of time is essential. Travel time is minimal since the entire cavern can be covered in a minute or two of walking. The GM must carefully track time spent searching areas, talking to NPCs, fighting battles, and performing tasks like gargoyle shaping, resting and weapon-making.

## Area 7: Stoneheart Watchpoint

Stoneheart is usually hamlet-sized, but recent attacks have left barely enough people to call it a camp. All surviving children have been sent away. The dominant industry is the military; in good times, the Watchpoint holds 70 warriors. The rest of the town supports the warriors, including a mushroom farm, a quartermaster and a chapel.

The survivors cannot maintain active patrols, since six of the nine remaining warriors are on guard duty at specific posts. Two guards are positioned at the center of the thousand-foot long cavern that holds Stoneheart. Since sound carries well in the cave, any cries for help bring those two guards quickly (1d4 minutes). Other Dwarves, including the farmers and quartermasters, also help when needed, as they know everyone must be a warrior now. During Abyssal incursions, the guards make up the front line of defense while other villagers stay back in case the front line falters.

**Dwarf Guards (9), Male Dwarf Ftr 5:** CR 5; Medium humanoid (Dwarf); HD 5d10+10; hp 33; Init +0; Spd 20 ft.; AC 15, touch 10, flat-footed 15; Base Atk +5; Grp +7; Atk +9 melee (1d10+7/x3, Dwarven waraxe); Full Atk +9 melee (1d10+7/x3, Dwarven waraxe); SA Favored weapon (Dwarven waraxe, longsword), improved damage (Dwarven waraxe); SQ Dwarf traits; AL LG; SV Fort +6, Ref +1, Will +4; Str 15, Dex 11, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 10.

*Skills and Feats:* Climb +3*, Craft (stonemason) +2, Intimidate +3, Spot +4; Iron Will, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (Dwarven waraxe), Weapon Specialization (Dwarven waraxe). *includes –4 armor check penalty

*Favored Weapon (Dwarven waraxe, longsword):* A Dwarf guard gains a +1 competence bonus to attack and damage rolls with the Dwarven waraxe and longsword.

*Improved Damage (Dwarven waraxe):* A Dwarf guard does an additional +2 (+3 total) damage with the Dwarven waraxe.

*Possessions:* Breastplate, Dwarven waraxe, 4 gp.

**Development:** In Stoneheart, the PCs receive +5 to all Diplomacy checks if they have any proof they helped Dwarves in a previous adventure, +10 if they have one or more pieces of ironcloth taken from a dead Dwarf. If Dwarves in Stoneheart are Helpful, they follow any orders the PCs give for village defense. However, if the PCs use their authority to contradict orders given by Marl Korservant without first getting his approval, his attitude toward the party becomes Unfriendly.

The leaders of the town (Captain of the Guard Marl Korservant and Vicar Justice Soulwrath) have only one desire: to hold off the Abyssals. The only dissenter is a Deverenian infiltrator disguised as a Dwarf mourner seeking to help the Abyssals overrun the Watchpoint.

**Stoneheart (hamlet):** Conventional; AL LG; 200 gp limit (higher than normal due to military needs; masterwork weapons are crafted in the hamlet but are not for sale); Current population: 25; Mixed (Dwarf 96%, Deverenian (in disguise) 4%). Authority Figure: Marl Korservant, Captain of the Guard, male Dwarf.

# Part 7: On the Surface

ENCOUNTER 1: THE FIRST ABYSSAL

**Read aloud:** *Spending enough time in Sarakia makes anyone jumpy. Travelers can walk for days over scorched earth without seeing any living being, and what creatures exist are itching for a fight.*

*This morning is nerve-wracking. Winds from the west have blown sand into the hills, making the surroundings nearly invisible and spreading a choking dust. This comes after a night that was repeatedly interrupted by distant shrieks and unidentifiable cries.*

*Rumor says there are Abyssals here. You have not seen any yet, but at least they have not seen you either.*

A golgoth lurks 40 feet away in the fog. Any PC succeeding in an opposed Spot check sees it before it sees them.

**Read aloud:** *A nightmare squats in the fog ahead of you, winged with a cruel hooked beak. Even squatting it is nearly five feet tall. Its eyes glow red through the mist.*

If the PCs fail their opposed Spot checks, it launches itself at the PCs with the advantage of surprise.

**Read aloud:** *Suddenly mist swirls about you as a six-foot creature flaps its wings. It opens its hooked beak and emits a grinding shriek.*

**Development:** After combat, any Dwarves in the party can identify the creature as a golgoth. Seeing it on the surface means underground security has broken down. If there are no Dwarves in the party, the PCs do not know the origin of the creature until Brash arrives, but they should be able to guess it is an Abyssal and its presence on the surface means nothing good.

**Creature:** One golgoth.

**Golgoth (1):** CR 5; Medium aberration (Lesser Abyssal); HD 8d8+24; hp 56; Init +3; Spd 30 ft., fly 60 ft. (poor); AC 22, touch 14, flat-footed 20; Base Atk +6; Grp +11; Atk +11 melee (2d4+5/x2, claw); Full Atk +11 melee (2d4+5/x2, 2 claws), +6 melee (2d6+2 plus poison/x2, bite); Space/Reach 5 ft./5 ft.; SA Frightful presence, poison, spell-like abilities; SQ Abyssal traits, darkvision 120 ft., damage reduction 5/blacksteel; AL CE; SV Fort +5, Ref +4, Will +8; Str 20, Dex 14, Con 16, Int 10, Wis 14, Cha 14.

*Skills and Feats:* Concentration +9, Intimidate +8, Listen +7, Spot +7; Dodge, Flyby Attack, Hover.

*Improved Grab (Ex):* To use this ability, a golgoth must hit with its claw attack. It can then attempt to start a grapple as a free action without provoking an attack of opportunity. If it wins the grapple check, it may overwhelm.

*Frightful Presence (Ex):* A golgoth can terrify a creature with a glance. This terror is purely instinctive, a result of the golgoth's single-minded dedication to destruction. Anyone that can see a golgoth within 60 ft. must make a DC 16 Will save or become

panicked for 3d6 rounds. Creatures that successfully save cannot be affected by the same golgoth's frightful presence for 24 hours.

*Poison (Ex):* Injury, Fortitude DC 17, initial damage 1d6 Dexterity, secondary damage 1d6 Strength. The save DC is Constitution-based.

*Spell-like abilities:* At will—blur, burning hands (DC 13), color spray (DC 13), confusion (DC 16), endure elements, hypnotic pattern (DC 14), invisibility (self only), mage armor, magic circle against good (self only), see invisibility, sleep (DC 13), web (DC 14). 3/day — false life, lesser globe of invulnerability, magic missile, true strike; 1/day — arcane eye, break enchantment, bull's strength (self only), chain lightning (DC 18), feeblemind (DC 17), reverse gravity, unholy aura. Caster level 9th.

**Abyssal Traits:**

- *Astral (Ex):* Abyssals are astral creatures. They exist simultaneously both on the prime material plane and in the Abyss, a tiny plane surrounding the Dragon's corpse. As such, any melee or ranged attack that targets an Abyssal has a 50% miss chance, unless the attack is made with a +1 or better magical weapon (in the case of ranged attacks, only the projectile must bear the enchantment, not necessarily the weapon itself). This is in all ways like incorporeality.
- *Darkvision (Ex):* Range of 120 feet.
- *Immunities (Ex):* Abyssals are immune to all mind-affecting effects, including spells and spell-like abilities, paralysis, poison, sleep, stunning, disease and death effects. Abyssals are also immune to fire, ability drain, and energy drain.
- *Resistances (Ex):* Abyssals have cold, poison and electricity resistance 20.
- *Spell-like Abilities:* All Abyssals have the following spell-like abilities: 3/day — chaos hammer, darkness, doom, and scorching ray.

### Encounter 2: Brash

**Read aloud:** *Just as the Abyssal falls, another set of footfalls rushes closer. A voice calls out from the mist "Was that it? Is it dead?"*

**Development:** The voice belongs to Brash, a Dwarf warrior from Stoneheart. After the most recent Abyssal assault, Brash rushed after the Abyssals heading toward the surface. He killed one and has been tracking the one encountered by the party. He arrives right after the battle concludes.

At the moment, Brash is focused on fighting Abyssals. His attitude toward the party is friendly regardless of the party's racial makeup, because they have killed the Abyssal. He figures they may be able to help back at Stoneheart, so he does not hesitate to ask the party to come with him. He tells them Stoneheart Watchpoint has been decimated by Abyssal attacks and is desperately short-handed. In its best days, Stoneheart sheltered nearly 100 Dwarves. Even recently it held as many as 65, but the recent attacks have left only two dozen survivors. He does not know when the next attack will come, but he assumes it will be soon.

**Creatures:** Brash, a sixth level Dwarf fighter.

**Brash, Male Dwarf Ftr 6:** CR 6; Medium humanoid (Dwarf); HD 6d10+12; hp 39; Init +5; Spd 20 ft.; AC 16, touch 11, flat-footed 15; Base Atk +6; Grp +9; Atk +11 melee (1d10+8/x3, Dwarven waraxe) or +7 ranged (1d6/x3, shortbow); Full Atk +11/+6 melee (1d10+8/x3, Dwarven waraxe) or +7/+2 ranged (1d6/x3, shortbow); SA Favored weapon (Dwarven waraxe, warhammer), improved damage (Dwarven waraxe); SQ Dwarf traits; AL LG; SV Fort +7, Ref +3, Will +5; Str 16, Dex 12, Con 15, Int 12, Wis 13, Cha 12.

*Skills and Feats:* Climb +4*, Craft (stonemason) +5, Listen +4, Spot +4, Use Rope +4; Iron Will, Power Attack, Run, Weapon Focus (Dwarven waraxe), Weapon Specialization (Dwarven waraxe). *includes –4 armor check penalty

*Favored Weapon (Dwarven waraxe, warhammer):* Brash gains a +1 competence bonus to attack and damage rolls with the Dwarven waraxe and warhammer.

*Improved Damage (Dwarven waraxe):* Brash does an additional +2 (+3 total) damage with the Dwarven waraxe.

*Possessions:* Breastplate, Dwarven waraxe, shortbow, 32 arrows, 12 gp.

**Development:** If the PCs refuse to accompany Brash, he returns on his own without much protest, since he wants to return to Stoneheart quickly. He tells to return to the path they used at Black Forge, but to take a certain passage half a mile north. He adds that, if they manage to find the Watchpoint, they can find him in the barracks in the third room on the right.

A PC with the Track feat may try to follow Brash (DC 19), or a PC with the Survival skill can try to find the entrance by heading uphill then traveling the direction they determine to be north (DC 15). If no one in the party has these abilities and they do not accompany Brash to the Watchpoint, spells such as divination, find the path, or even locate object can be helpful. If the party tries to find the entry on their own without the help of any skills or spells the GM can make a series of Spot checks (DC 23) to see if the PCs succeed in spying the rock pile. The GM may also introduce another escaped Abyssal (this time a fiendling), followed by another Dwarf (Brash again or some other Dwarf from the Watchpoint) who gives the PCs another chance to travel to Stoneheart.

### Encounter 3: To Stoneheart Watchpoint

**Development:** If the PCs accompany Brash to the entrance, he provides more details about Stoneheart Watchpoint's plight.

#### Brash

**This Dwarf was named well, as his willingness to go to the surface to chase down Abyssals attests. While he does not fight the PCs unless he is first attacked, their treatment of him affects the remainder of the adventure. Mistreatment of Brash sends him back to Stoneheart spreading negative stories about the adventurers he encountered, causing anyone in Stoneheart (including Brash) to start with an unfriendly attitude toward the PCs. Befriending Brash causes them to be initially friendly, as Brash encourages the other Dwarves to trust the PCs as much as he does.**

In better days, the Watchpoint housed 100 Dwarf warriors. Even before the recent wave of assaults, it held only 40–50 warriors, and the latest attacks by the Abyssals left only 25 warriors. They are convinced bigger attacks are on the way (due to reports from Twist and Ruby, two Blackstone Raiders resting in the Watchpoint after their latest exploration), and they fear that unless some form of help arrives soon, the Watchpoint will be overrun.

If Brash warms to the party and becomes helpful (Diplomacy check, DC 20), he shares some gossip from Stoneheart. There have been mutterings that the Abyssals have been getting assistance from someone within the Watchpoint — a suggestion too shocking for most Dwarves to believe. The suspicions center on two points: the Abyssals might have had help in breaking the wall of the Watchpoint, and calls for reinforcements from other Dwarven areas have gone unanswered. Some Dwarves in the Watchpoint believe the messengers sent to ask for reinforcements were killed soon after they headed for Rockhome.

If asked whom he suspects, Brash reluctantly admits his prime suspect is Justice Soulwrath, the Vicar of Kor in the Watchpoint. Soulwrath, Brash says, could have magically turned the wall to clay to help the Abyssals break through; clay, he says, was mixed with the pieces of rock at the breakthrough point. Also, Soulwrath has been offered better positions in the church and turned them down, which Brash cannot comprehend. While he can respect any Dwarf wishing to stay on the front lines to deal with the Abyssals, he does not think any Dwarf could turn down the higher calling of Kor without some ulterior motive.

# Part 2: Stoneheart Watchpoint

**Read aloud:** *The dark shaft widens into an immense cavern. The reddish-brown rock of the cavern floor and walls become smoother, Reflecting light from torches and braziers. Smoke, some of it trapped in the cavern for years, gives the entire cavern an acrid odor.*

*Columns, stalactites and stalagmites pierce the cavern in random spots, but even these appear smoothed. Dwarves have inhabited this cavern for a very long time.*

*There are few signs of life. Occasional footsteps or faint voices echo through the cavern, but other than that the cavern is silent.*

**Development:** The light in Stoneheart is dim, as it is in most Dwarf settlements.

If Brash is with the party, he asks them to accompany him to the captain's quarters. Unless otherwise noted, if Brash introduces the party to any Dwarves, the Dwarves start with a friendly attitude toward the party. If Brash and the party separate from this point, Brash does not have bad things to say about the party; thus the initial attitude of Dwarves the PCs meet is indifferent.

## Location 1: Abyssal Entry Point

**Read aloud:** *The floor in this part of the cavern is no longer smooth. Pieces of wood, metal, stone and bone are scattered across a few hundred square feet, and the floor is chipped and scratched.*

*Two Dwarves stand by a ten-foot-wide wound in the cavern wall, leaning on their weapons in weariness. The wall looks to have been blown out from the other side.*

*The only other living figure in sight is a Dwarf dressed in white, shuffling across the battlefield.*

This is where the Abyssals breached the Dwarves' cavern, and where the Dwarves expect future attacks to occur. If the players search the ground or the edges of the hole in the cavern wall, they find traces of clay. The clay is only on the Dwarves' side of the hole, meaning if the wall was weakened by a spell, the spell was cast from within Stoneheart.

Two guards are on duty, and decline to speak with the adventurers beyond telling them to visit the captain.

**Creatures:** Two Dwarf guards, 5th-level fighters *(see Area 1 for stats)*.

**Dwarf Warriors (2):** hp 37, 35.

**Development:** Wedged in the cavern wall about 50 feet away from the Abyssal entry point (to the left, if PCs are facing the hole) is the lost magical weapon Stoneheart Defender,

### The Mourner

One of the inhabitants of Stoneheart is dressed in seers' white. With death an everyday fact for Dwarves, they normally mourn only briefly at funerals. It is unusual for a Dwarf to return to the scene of a loved one's death to mourn. The Dwarves remaining at Stoneheart therefore consider the mourner deeply disturbed. None wish to insult the honor of the one that died, so they leave the mourner alone.

The PCs see the mourner frequently in Stoneheart. Each time they are at the Abyssal Entry Point, the Chapel of Kor, or the Smithy, they catch at least a brief glimpse of the mourner nearby. They may also notice the mourner glancing at them (Spot check DC 13).

The mourner does not respond to any attempts to speak with him in public and nearby Dwarves discourage the party's interruption.

Dwarves asked about the mourner respond curtly. If the party presses a friendly source for information, they are told the mourner is a recent addition to Stoneheart and distorts the beliefs of Kor. They have decided to leave the mourner alone, and will stop anyone who decides to pester him. They worry that interfering will dishonor the memory of the dead. After giving this information, no Dwarves respond to any further questions about the mourner.

The mourner is a Deverenian using constant applications of dust of illusion to appear as a Dwarf. A successful Spot check (DC 30) sees through the disguise (see page 213).

If the PCs attack the mourner in public, any nearby Dwarves defend the mourner. If the mourner is killed, the spell disappears and the Dwarves, in shock, stop fighting.

**Farakell, Imposter Mourner, Male Deverenian Clr 10:** CR 10; Medium humanoid (Deverenian); HD 10d8+10; 57; Spd 30 ft.; Init +1; AC 13, touch 13, flat-footed 12; Base Atk +7; Grp +9; Atk +11 melee (1d4+4 plus 1d6 fire(19–20/x2), +2 flaming dagger); Full Atk +11/+6 melee (1d4+4 plus 1d6 fire(19–20/x2), +2 flaming dagger); SA Spells; SQ Cleric domains (Death, Magic), Deverenian traits, spontaneous casting, rebuke undead; AL LE; SV Fort +8, Ref +4, Will +11; Str 14, Dex 13, Con 12, Int 14, Wis 18, Cha 12.

*Skills and Feats:* Concentration +10, Diplomacy +8, Disguise +8, Heal +14, Knowledge (history) +9, Spellcraft +12, Spot +6; Alertness, Dodge, Maximize Spell, Quicken Spell.

*Spontaneous Casting:* Farakell can "lose" a prepared spell (except for a domain spell) in order to cast any inflict spell of the same level or lower.

*Rebuke Undead:* Farakell can attempt to rebuke undead 4 times per day.

*Cleric Spells Prepared* (6/5+1/5+1/4+1/4+1/2+1; save DC 14 + spell level): 0 — create water, cure minor wounds, detect magic, detect poison, resistance, virtue; 1st — bane, comprehend languages, doom, inflict light wounds, summon monster I, undetectable aura; 2nd — bull's strength, cure moderate wounds, death knell, hold person, inflict moderate wounds, undetectable alignment; 3rd — bestow curse, dispel magic, meld into stone, stone shape, summon monster III; 4th — death ward, inflict critical wounds, neutralize poison, poison, spell immunity; 5th — flame strike, slay living, spell resistance. *Domain spell

*Possessions:* +2 flaming dagger, ring of protection +2, dust of illusion (2 applications).

waraxe of Rockbone Crave, deceased captain of the guard. A PC sees the axe with a successful Search check (DC 35 if the PC does not know the axe is there, DC 23 if they have spoken to Marl Korservant and heard about the missing waraxe). The axe is wedged into the wall 60 feet above the cavern floor. A PC who Climbs to the axe (DC 25) must make a successful Strength check (DC 13) to pull it out of the cavern wall.

*Treasure:* Stoneheart Defender (+2 Dwarven waraxe, +4 against Abyssals). This waraxe has seen heavy use. It looks worn, unremarkable except for the edge and the grip, both of which are shiny from use. Dwarven runes inscribed on the blade (Decipher Script DC 25 for any PC unfamiliar with Dwarven runes) read, "Right shall Rule the Bowels of the Earth."

### Encounter 4: The Abyssal Tunnel

PCs might wish to travel down the tunnel and get the Abyssals before the Abyssals get them. The guards (and any other Dwarves the PCs talk to) discourage them in the strongest possible terms, saying it is safer to defend Stoneheart rather than wander into the Abyssals' home. If the PCs are determined to go, though, the Dwarves do not stop them. They write the PCs off as fools.

If the PCs travel down the Abyssal tunnel, **read aloud:** The tunnel is much darker than the Watchpoint, nearly pitch black except for a faint reddish glow. Only random drips of water and a faint scratching break the silence.

Light sources reveal an ordinary tunnel, the same reddish-brown of Stoneheart but rougher.

The PCs can travel for up to 10 miles without incident (giving them plenty of time to rethink this course of action); then the Abyssals attack. The cavern walls around the PCs explode doing 6d6 damage (Ref save DC 17 for half damage). After that, the two groups of Abyssals listed in **Part 3** attack at once (unless the PCs venture down the tunnel after the first attack, in which case the Abyssals killed in that attack are not present), along with three additional fiendlings, two additional golgoths, and an additional zhul. Should the PCs choose to flee, the Abyssals give chase for 1/4 mile, then let them go (the Abyssals prefer to attack on their own terms).

If the party chooses to explore the tunnel after the final attack, they find it empty for miles and miles. The Abyssals, for the time being, are gone.

## Location 2: Captain Marl Korservant's Office and Quarters

**Read aloud:** *This small stone building has been in place for so long it looks like a natural part of the cavern — a large, rough-hewn boulder set on the floor. Only the round wooden door and a few small windows betray the fact this is more than a large rock.*

## Location 2.1: Korservant's Office (EL 10)

The door is unlocked and Korservant allows anyone to enter.

**Read aloud:** *The small building's interior is plain except for the trophy hanging on the east wall. A large Abyssal head, its face a mass of hooks, spikes, and scarlet-black chitin, mouth snarling, eyes dim, is mounted on a stone plaque. Abyssal blood and Dwarf blood still fleck the head's surface.*

The Dwarf behinds the desk says nothing, knowing people will eventually address him or leave.

**Development:** Marl Korservant has been captain of the Stoneheart guard for ten hours, since Abyssals killed the previous captain, Rockbone Crave. He has been assigned to Stoneheart for 12 years. The head on the wall belongs to the zhul who killed Crave.

Korservant can supply the same information about Stoneheart's recent history as Brash. As long as his attitude toward the party is indifferent or better, he accepts any offer of help the party makes. If his attitude is friendly or better (DC 15

if he is indifferent, 25 if unfriendly), he asks the PCs for help against the Abyssals. He suggests they talk to Stoker the smith about weapon design and creation, or to Justice Soulwrath at the Chapel of Kor about either designing fortifications around the entry point or designing gargoyles. He also tells them there is plenty of empty space in the barracks if they wish to rest.

**Creature:** Marl Korservant, a10th-level Dwarf fighter.

**Marl Korservant, Male Dwarf Ftr 10:** CR 10; Medium humanoid (Dwarf); HD 10d10+20; hp 82; Init +6; Spd 20 ft.; AC 17, touch 11, flat-footed 16; Base Atk +10; Grp +13; Atk +16 melee (1d10+9/18–20 x3, +1 Dwarven waraxe), or +12 ranged (1d6+3/x3, composite shortbow); Atk +16/+11 melee (1d10+9/18–20 x3, +1 Dwarven waraxe), or +13/+8 ranged (1d6+6/x3, composite shortbow); SA Favored weapon (Dwarven waraxe, shortbow, greataxe), improved critical threat (Dwarven waraxe), improved damage (Dwarven waraxe, shortbow); SQ Dwarf traits; AL LG; SV Fort +9, Ref +5, Will +6; Str 17, Dex 14, Con 14, Int 14, Wis 12, Cha 13.

*Skills and Feats:* Climb +6*, Craft (stonemason) +8, Diplomacy +6, Intimidate +11, Jump +6*, Listen +6; Blind-Fight, Cleave, Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Leadership, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (Dwarven waraxe), Weapon Specialization (Dwarven waraxe). *includes –5 armor check penalty.

*Favored Weapon (Dwarven waraxe, shortbow, greataxe):* Marl gains a +1 competence bonus to attack and damage rolls with the Dwarven waraxe, shortbow, and greataxe.

*Improved Critical Threat (Dwarven waraxe):* Marl's critical threat range is increased by +2 (to 18–20) with the Dwarven waraxe.

*Improved Damage (Dwarven waraxe, shortbow):* Marl does an additional +2 (+3 total) damage with the Dwarven waraxe and shortbow.

*Possessions:* Chainmail, +1 Dwarven waraxe, composite shortbow, 27 arrows, ring with engraved seal of Stoneheart (75 gp), 41 gp.

**Development:** If asked about the rumor that there is a traitor in Stoneheart, Korservant flatly denies it. He confirms that clay was found in the wall where the Abyssals broke through, but he attributes it to Abyssal magic. He does not appreciate speculation by Brash (and others) that Justice Soulwrath may be a traitor — Justice is a man of Kor, after all.

Korservant speaks fondly of Rockbone Crave given the slightest prompting. After extolling his values as a leader for a time, Korservant will bemoan the fact that, after Crave's death, the Stoneheart Defender was lost. The Stoneheart Defender is a waraxe that has been passed to the captain of the Stoneheart guard for centuries. Crave died near the center of a fireball blast, and the weapon was not recovered. Most of the survivors in Stoneheart believe it was destroyed, but others claim they saw it flying through the air and they could find it if only they knew where it landed.

If the party attempts to go through the door on the east wall, he curtly asks them what they are doing, but accepts almost any explanation short of, "We are going to go in and steal all your stuff."

Korservant is overjoyed if the PCs find the Stoneheart Defender, and allows them to use the axe while in Stoneheart. He would like it back when the PCs leave, but if the PCs turn back the Abyssals, allows any PC with more than five pieces of ironcloth to take it. If the PCs attempt to leave without defeating the Abyssals, Korservant demands the return of his axe and attacks if the PCs do not give it to him.

Korservant gives the PCs a pass to find out what happened to Sear (see **Location 8** for details), if he is Helpful toward them or if they Bluff him. If they succeed in either case, the PCs receive a pass for one of them to enter Rockhome Road. He will not write a pass for more than one PC. PCs suffer –5 on Diplomacy checks if any guards have reported the PCs were trying to enter restricted areas, such as the passage leading deeper into the earth.

## Location 2.2: Korservant's Quarters

**Read aloud:** *This room contains nothing more than a bed and a plain wooden chest — Korservant has not had time to settle in.*

The chest is locked with an average lock (DC 25) but has a magic trap built into it (DC 28). The trap casts sculpt sound on the chest, causing it to emit a piercing shriek. This is not a damaging sound — it serves as an alarm the chest has been broken into.

**Sculpt Sound Trap:** CR 3; magic device; proximity trigger (alarm); automatic reset; spell effect (*sculpt sound*); Search DC 28; Disable Device DC 28.

**Development:** If the alarm sounds, Korservant does not immediately come into the room, but instead waits for warriors from the barracks to assist him. Five warriors (four guards and Brash) arrive in 20 seconds. Once they have arrived, Korservant leads them into his quarters.

If the party tries to flee before the extra warriors arrive, Korservant attempts to stop them by himself.

His first approach is not to attack. He is desperate enough for help he may believe a Bluff from the PCs about what they were doing (he suffers a –5 circumstance penalty on his Sense Motive check).

*Treasure:* The chest contains 123 gp; a 700 gp golden ring with a Dwarven family seal on it; 10 torches; two blank scrolls, ink and a quill; a Dwarven waraxe; 2 potions of cure moderate wounds; and a horn of goodness/evil.

## Location 3: Dwarf Barracks

**Read aloud:** *A long, narrow building almost completely fills the space between two large natural columns. There are no windows in the entire building, only a single heavy wooden door at the west end. Some of the walls are natural rock rising from the cavern floor with wooden planks connecting them.*

The door is unlocked.

## Location 3.1: Barrack Security

**Read aloud:** *Two weary guards stand near a door in the opposite wall. Weapons racks are on the north wall, armor stands on the south. Both are nearly empty.*

**Development:** The guards do not respond to any questions (similar to the guards at the Abyssal entry point) except to refer the PCs to the captain of the guard. They say anyone who wants to pass into the barracks needs clearance, but they accept almost anything as clearance (e.g., if the PCs mention Brash's name or say Korservant said they could enter). The guards have a –5 circumstance penalty on their Sense Motive check versus any attempted Bluff since they are too tired to be interested in fighting non-Abyssals.

If the party tries to take any weapons or armor from the room, the guards again object but accept almost any explanation the PCs give (again, –5 circumstance modifier on the guards' Sense Motive check).

All rooms in the barracks beyond the security room have four cots. All but Brash's room and the Blackstone Raiders' room are empty of people and equipment.

**Creatures:** Two Dwarf guards, 5th-level fighters *(see Area 1 for stats)*.

**Dwarf Guards (2):** hp 31, 28.

*Treasure:* The weapons rack holds three warhammers, two Dwarven waraxes, and a masterwork scythe. The armor stands hold two sets of chainmail, both Medium.

## Location 3.2: The Blackstone Raiders

**Read aloud:** *This room looks much like the others except for its occupants. Inside are possibly the only energetic Dwarves in all of Stoneheart, a male and a female, who stomp around the room waving their arms and yelling. They might be talking to each other, or they might be talking to themselves, or both.*

Each Dwarf has waist-long braids matted with dirt and other substances. Neither stops talking or pacing when others enter the room, but they direct an unending series of expletives at the newcomers.

**Development:** The two Dwarves, Twist and Ruby, are Blackstone Raiders. It is not clear if they were chosen to explore deep Abyssal caverns because they are deranged, or if spending time deep in Abyssal caves unhinged them. Either way, they are insane and difficult to relate to (see sidebar Talking to Twist and Ruby).

Twist and Ruby explored the Abyssal tunnel after the first attack, so they can tell the party the Abyssal's base is several miles deep in the cavern. They also warn the PCs against going down the tunnels because of the Abyssal's tendency to set ambushes.

**Creatures:** Two Dwarves, 6th-level fighters/2nd-level Blackstone Raiders.

**Twist, Male Dwarf Ftr 6/Blackstone Raider 2:** CR 8; Medium humanoid (Dwarf); HD 6d10+12 plus 2d12+4; hp 64; Init +2; Spd 20 ft.; AC 17, touch 12, flat-footed 15; Base Atk +8; Grp +11; Atk +14 melee (2d4+8/x4, masterwork scythe); Full Atk +14/+9 melee (2d4+8/x4, masterwork scythe); SA Bloodlust, favored weapon (scythe, Dwarven maul), improved damage (scythe), shower of gore; SQ Dwarf traits; AL CG; SV Fort +9, Ref +4, Will +3; Str 16, Dex 14, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 10.

*Skills and Feats:* Climb +4*, Jump +4*, Spot +5, Survival +5; Endurance, Membership (Rockhome Guard), Weapon Focus (Dwarven maul), Weapon Focus (scythe), Weapon Specialization (Dwarven maul), Weapon Specialization (scythe). *includes –4 armor check penalty

*Bloodlust:* Any attempt to charm or use mind-influencing magic on Twist automatically fails if the DC is less than the amount of damage Twist has inflicted during the last round.

*Favored Weapon (scythe, Dwarven maul):* Twist gains a +1 competence bonus to attack and damage rolls with the scythe and Dwarven maul.

*Improved Damage (scythe):* Twist does an additional +2 (+3 total) damage with the scythe.

*Shower Of Gore:* If Twist kills an opponent with his scythe he may take a standard action to flick his blade clean, blinding an enemy up to 20 feet away. The enemy must make a Reflex save (DC 20) or be blinded for 1 round. This ability can only be used after killing creatures of the following types: aberration, animal, dragon, fey, giant, humanoid, magical beast, monstrous humanoid, outsider, plant, undead (corporeal and non-skeletal only), and vermin.

*Possessions:* Breastplate, masterwork scythe, 24 gp, ruby (30 gp).

**Ruby, Female Dwarf Ftr 6/Blackstone Raider 2:** CR 8; Medium humanoid (Dwarf); HD 6d10+6 plus 2d12+2; hp 54; Init +2; Spd 20 ft.; AC 15, touch 10, flat-footed 15; Base Atk +8; Grp +11; Atk +14 melee (2d4+8/x4, masterwork scythe); Full Atk +14/+9 melee (2d4+8/x4, masterwork scythe); SA Bloodlust, favored weapon (scythe, Dwarven maul), improved damage (scythe), shower of gore; SQ Dwarf traits; AL CG; SV Fort +8, Ref +2, Will +2; Str 17, Dex 11, Con 13, Int 13, Wis 11, Cha 14.

### Talking to Twist and Ruby

**Blackstone Raiders are the most zealous fighters the Dwarves have in their war against the Abyssals. They believe a direct assault against the Dragon's corpse is the only way to win this otherwise eternal conflict, regardless of past failed attempts. Like all Blackstone Raiders, Twist and Ruby would much rather war with the Abyssals, not be cooped up in a room waiting for an oncoming attack. To them the best defense is a masterful offense. The only thing keeping them here is their respect for the chain of command, and Captain Korservant's insistence that Stoneheart will not survive without their help. They are anxiously awaiting the next Abyssal assault when the PCs encounter them.**

**The Raiders speak boldly and state firm opinions on matters of which they know nothing. They disrespect authority, blaspheme, and criticize everything and anything about Dwarves if they feel like it. If any non-Dwarf says those same things, they are ready to fight in an instant.**

*Skills and Feats:* Climb +3*, Heal +3, Jump +3*, Listen +3, Intimidate +5, Spot +4, Survival +4; Endurance, Membership (Rockhome Guard), Weapon Focus (Dwarven maul), Weapon Focus (scythe), Weapon Specialization (Dwarven maul), Weapon Specialization (scythe). *includes –4 armor check penalty

*Bloodlust:* Any attempt to charm or use mind-influencing magic on Ruby automatically fails if the DC is less than the amount of damage Ruby has inflicted during the last round.

*Favored Weapon (scythe, Dwarven maul):* Ruby gains a +1 competence bonus to attack and damage rolls with the scythe and Dwarven maul.

*Improved Damage (scythe):* Ruby does an additional +2 (+3 total) damage with the scythe.

*Shower Of Gore:* If Ruby kills an opponent with her scythe she may take a standard action to flick her blade clean, blinding an enemy up to 20 feet away. The enemy must make a Reflex save (DC 20) or be blinded for 1 round. This ability can only be used after killing creatures of the following types: aberration, animal, dragon, fey, giant, humanoid, magical beast, monstrous humanoid, outsider, plant, undead (corporeal and non-skeletal only), and vermin.

*Possessions:* Breastplate, masterwork scythe.

**Development:** There are a number of ways PCs could goad the Raiders into a fight — if one of the PCs is Deverenian, a sideways glance may be enough. They are initially indifferent toward most PCs, but unfriendly to Deverenians due to some troubles with them during the conquest of Phrygai. If the Blackstone Raiders become angry enough to fight, they initially do so for the fun of combat rather than to hurt anyone, throwing down their scythes and attacking with their fists.

Twist and Ruby happily toss around theories about whether or not there is a traitor in Stoneheart. They waffle about the Vicar ("Yeah, yeah, maybe he could be a traitor." "Maybe. Maybe. I think he could be." "Me, too, I think so, too." "But then again, he is a servant of Kor." "Aye, 'tis true, 'tis true, he's a godly man." "So it cannot be him." "No, no, couldn't be the vicar."). They also name Marl Korservant, Stoker, Brash and anyone else they can think of as possible traitors.

As the conversation progresses, Ruby eventually accuses Twist of being a traitor, saying she thought Twist once had a wand that turned rock to mud to help in exploring. Twist protests there was no such wand, Ruby takes offence at being called a liar, and the two scuffle for a time. Track any damage Twist and Ruby inflict on each other. If the PCs cannot find a way to keep these two from hurting each other, the Raiders are that much weaker for the fights to come.

A successful Diplomacy or Intimidate check to make Ruby and Twist helpful (DC 30 for most PCs, 40 for Deverenians; PCs receive +5 on their check if they have the Dwarven maul from Stoker the blacksmith (see **Location 7**) allows the PCs to work on battle plans and tactics for when the Abyssals return with Twist and Ruby. Without this planning, the Blackstone Raiders simply charge headlong into any battle.

## Location 3.3: Brash's Quarters

**Read aloud:** *Four cots are in this room and two contain soundly sleeping Dwarves. A small footlocker lies at the end of each cot. Blankets, small weapons, torches, and other equipment is strewn across the floor.*

If the party did not accompany Brash to Stoneheart, they run into him here.

**Read aloud:** *A third Dwarf, weary but not yet asleep, looks up. He recognizes you instantly. "Decided to come after all?" Brash says with a slight sneer. "What do you want?"*

**Development:** Brash returns to this room any time he is not with the PCs.

If the party did not accompany Brash after the first Abyssal encounter, he uses this opportunity to share information with them — but only if the party persuades him to become friendly (Diplomacy check, DC 25)

Neither Brash nor his sleeping bunkmates object to the party taking anything from the floor, though they protest if the PCs rifle through their footlockers.

**Creatures:** Brash *(see Encounter 2 for stats);* two Dwarf guards, 5th-level fighters *(see Area 1 for stats).*

**Brash**: hp 39.

**Dwarf Guards (2):** hp 32, 38.

*Treasure:* The floor of the room has three metal plates, five mushrooms, three torches, two empty flasks, a spyglass with a broken lens, a hammer, two pitons, a backpack, two holy symbols of Kor, and a bell of thunder.

The bell of thunder is approximately the size and shape of a cowbell, and most times it sounds like a cowbell. There is a small button on the side of the bell's handle, and if pressed and held while the bell is rung, the bell makes a thunderous noise equivalent to the spell shout as cast by a 9th-level wizard. This ability can be used twice a day *(see Part 8 for complete details).*

The footlockers contain personal possessions — letters, clothes, and the like — and money: 63 gp in one, 69 in another, 72 in the third (which belongs to Brash). Brash's footlocker also holds a potion of cure light wounds. If the party does not take the potion, Brash has it for use when the Abyssals attack.

## Location 4: General Residences

**Read aloud:** *Small rock huts cluster around a large central fire pit. Several charred logs smolder in the pit, but no flames can be seen.*

*No one is outside and all of the huts but one are quiet. A low murmur comes from the largest one.*

All of the empty huts contain two or three cots, a small table and chairs, and a few dishes. There is nothing of worth in the huts — at this point, the residents of Stoneheart are ready to evacuate immediately and carry valuables with them.

**Inside the large hut, read aloud:** *Four Dwarves — one wear-*

*ing orange, one wearing blue, one wearing violet, and one wearing brown — sit in solemn conversation. They all look exhausted and probably should be sleeping.*

**Development:** The large hut contains the few surviving residents who have some time off. They are Spark, an apprentice blacksmith; Vigor, a mushroom farmer; Bellow, assistant quartermaster; and Aspire, initiate of Kor (Spark and Aspire are female, Vigor and Bellow male).

When PCs approach the Dwarves are talking wearily and fondly of Rockhome. They do not easily change the subject, as the atmosphere of doom hanging over Stoneheart has left them wanting to think of better places.

One other topic of which the Dwarves speak is lost colleagues. Three assistant quartermasters, four initiates, two apprentice smiths, and two farmers have been killed in recent battles.

Each Dwarf has a nearby backpack. PCs cannot steal an entire backpack without being noticed, but they can attempt to sneak items out of the bag by performing a Pick Pocket check against a Spot check for each Dwarf in the room. If an attempted theft is noticed, all the Dwarves are outraged. Spark leaves to report the incident to the captain of the guard, while the others demand the PCs return any stolen items. Any attempt by the PCs to leave with stolen items is met by an attack from the Dwarves (unless, of course, the theft was not detected).

**Creatures:** Spark, a 3rd-level fighter; Vigor, a 3rd-level druid; Bellow, 3rd-level fighter; Aspire, 4th-level cleric.

**Spark, Male Dwarf Ftr 3:** CR 3; Medium humanoid (Dwarf); HD 3d10+3; hp 22; Init +1; Spd 20 ft.; AC 15, touch 11, flat-footed 14; Base Atk +3; Grp +5; Atk +7 melee (1d8+3/x3, battleaxe); Full Atk +7 melee (1d8+3/x3, battleaxe); SA Favored weapon (battleaxe); SQ Dwarf traits; AL LG; SV Fort +4, Ref +2, Will +0; Str 14, Dex 13, Con 12, Int 12, Wis 9, Cha 9.

*Skills and Feats:* Climb +4*, Craft (stonemason) +5, Jump +4*, Listen +2; Dodge, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (battleaxe). *includes –2 armor check penalty

*Favored Weapon (battleaxe):* Spark gains a +1 competence bonus to attack and damage rolls with the battleaxe.

*Possessions:* Chain shirt, battleaxe.

**Bellow, Female Dwarf Ftr 3:** CR 3; Medium humanoid (Dwarf); HD 3d10+3; hp 20; Init +1; Spd 20 ft.; AC 14, touch 11, flat-footed 13; Base Atk +3; Grp +5; Atk +7 melee (1d8+3, heavy mace); Full Atk +7 melee (1d8+3, heavy mace); SA Favored weapon (heavy mace); SQ Dwarf traits; AL LG; SV Fort +4, Ref +2, Will +0; Str 14, Dex 13, Con 12, Int 12, Wis 8, Cha 10.

*Skills and Feats:* Climb +5*, Jump +5*, Profession (quartermaster) +1; Dodge, Iron Will, Weapon Focus (heavy mace). *includes –1 armor check penalty

*Favored Weapon (heavy mace):* Bellow gains a +1 competence bonus to attack and damage rolls with the heavy mace.

*Possessions:* Studded leather armor, heavy mace.

**Vigor, Female Dwarf Clr 3:** CR 3; Medium humanoid (Dwarf); HD 3d8+3; hp 23; Spd 20 ft.; Init +1; AC 13, touch 11, flat-footed 12; Base Atk +2; Grp +3; Atk +3 melee (1d8+1/x3, warhammer); Full Atk +3 melee (1d8+1/x3, warhammer); SA Spells, turn undead 6/day; SQ Cleric domains (Earth, War), Dwarf traits, spontaneous casting; AL LG; SV Fort +4, Ref +2, Will +6; Str 12, Dex 13, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 16, Cha 11.

*Skills and Feats:* Concentration +5, Profession (priest) +4, Spellcraft +4; Improved Turning, Scribe Scroll, Weapon Focus (warhammer), Martial Weapon Proficiency (warhammer).

*Spontaneous Casting:* Vigor can "lose" a prepared spell (except for a domain spell) in order to cast any cure spell of the same level or lower.

*Turn Undead:* Vigor can attempt to turn undead 6 times per day.

*Cleric Spells Prepared* (4/3+1/2+1; save DC 13 + spell level): 0 — create water, cure minor wounds, light, purify food and drink; 1st — bless, cause fear, divine favor, magic weapon*, remove fear; 2nd — aid, augury, spiritual weapon*. *Domain spell

*Possessions:* Leather armor, warhammer.

**Aspire, Male Dwarf Clr 4:** CR 4; Medium humanoid (Dwarf); HD 4d8; hp 16; Spd 20 ft.; Init +1; AC 13, touch 11, flat-footed 12; Base Atk +3; Grp +3; Atk +3 melee (1d8/x3, warhammer); Full Atk +3 melee (1d8/x3, warhammer); SA Spells, turn undead 3/day; SQ Cleric domains (Earth, War), Dwarf traits, spontaneous casting; AL LG; SV Fort +4, Ref +2, Will +7; Str 11, Dex 13, Con 11, Int 10, Wis 17, Cha 11.

*Skills and Feats:* Concentration +4, Diplomacy +2, Profession (priest) +4, Spellcraft +4; Improved Turning, Scribe Scroll, Weapon Focus (warhammer), Martial Weapon Proficiency (warhammer).

*Spontaneous Casting:* Aspire can "lose" a prepared spell (except for a domain spell) in order to cast any cure spell of the same level or lower.

*Turn Undead:* Aspire can attempt to turn undead 3 times per day.

*Cleric Spells Prepared* (4/4+1/3+1; save DC 13 + spell level): 0 — create water, cure minor wounds, guidance, inflict minor wounds, purify food and drink; 1st — bless, hide from undead, magic weapon*, remove fear, sanctuary; 2nd — aid, augury, gentle repose, spiritual weapon*. *Domain spell

*Possessions:* Leather armor, warhammer.

*Treasure:* The Dwarves' backpacks contain the following items:

- Spark's backpack: A small hammer, a large hammer, flint and steel, 12 gp.
- Vigor's backpack: Two packets of dried mushrooms, a trowel, 4 gp.
- Bellow's backpack: A jug, a mirror, stylus, inkwell, scroll with supply orders, 19 gp.
- Aspire's backpack: A healer's kit, one flask of holy water, book (Gargoyle Shaping by Coran Stonemeld), 6 gp.

**Development:** These four Dwarves are willing to discuss theories about possible traitors with the PCs, though not quite as enthusiastically as the Blackstone Raiders.

Spark mentions the clay that was found, but does not mention the vicar. He does not want to offend Aspire.

Vigor says he does not trust the Blackstone Raiders since they act so oddly. Also, whenever they are off duty they seem to poke around in areas where they are not wanted. This is the first time anyone in Stoneheart has dealt with Blackstone Raiders, so they do not realize their behavior is normal for Raiders.

Bellow does not accuse anybody, but he says the one person in the Watchpoint no one knows anything about is the mourner. He, of course, does not want to say anything bad about someone in mourning, but honesty compels him to point out how unnatural the mourning is. All Dwarves lose their loved ones, but to carry mourning to such an extreme is unheard of. He thinks the mourner spends a lot of time near the Abyssal entry point, but others say the mourner probably returns there because that is where the person he is mourning for died.

Aspire does not believe there is a traitor. He cannot believe any Dwarf would betray his own kind.

If the PCs talk about preparing for future Abyssal attacks, Spark mentions that Stoker the smith is working on special weapons for the next attack and Aspire adds that the vicar and some of the other initiates are trying to complete a gargoyle.

If the PCs manage to improve the attitude of these Dwarves to helpful (DC 20 if Brash is working with the PCs, 40 if Brash is working against them), they can work with them on tactics and strategy for the upcoming battles, and the Dwarves are receptive to any suggestions the party makes. If the Dwarves are not helpful, they wonder why the PCs are trying to give them orders and disregard any plans the PCs make.

## Location 5: Mushroom Farms

**Read aloud:** *Water drips throughout this area, the darkest of the entire cavern. Eerie white mushrooms, almost a light source of their own, spread over hundreds of square feet, with a few regular paths. Two farmers walk through the patch, spreading water to keep it from pooling, and harvesting mushrooms.*

**Development:** The two Dwarves here — Head Farmer Nourish, and Block — are weary to the point of collapse. They are trying to harvest as much as possible to take with them in case the entire village needs to flee. They work in shifts, allowing one farmer at a time to rest.

The farmers are not in a mood to talk. They refer the PCs to the captain of the guard. However, Block mutters a warning about staying away from the north end of the mushroom patch since it "feels strange" there.

**Creatures:** Nourish, a 5th-level cleric; Block, a 4th-level rogue.

**Nourish, Male Dwarf Clr 5:** CR 5; Medium humanoid (Dwarf); HD 5d8+15; hp 38; Spd 20 ft.; Init +0; AC 12, touch 10, flat-footed 12; Base Atk +3; Grp +4; Atk +4 melee (1d8+1/x3, warhammer); Full Atk +4 melee (1d8+1/x3, warhammer); SA Spells, turn undead 8/day; SQ Cleric domains (Earth, War), Dwarf traits, spontaneous casting; AL LG; SV Fort +7, Ref +1, Will +6; Str 13, Dex 11, Con 16, Int 11, Wis 15, Cha 12.

*Skills and Feats:* Concentration +7, Diplomacy +3, Heal +8, Knowledge (religion) +4, Profession (priest) +6, Spellcraft +4, Spot +6; Extra Turning, Improved Turning, Weapon Focus (warhammer), Martial Weapon Proficiency (warhammer).

*Spontaneous Casting:* Nourish can "lose" a prepared spell (except for a domain spell) in order to cast any cure spell of the same level or lower.

*Turn Undead:* Nourish can attempt to turn undead 8 times per day.

*Cleric Spells Prepared* (5/4+1/3+1/1+1; save DC 12 + spell level): 0 — cure minor wounds x2, detect poison, purify food and drink, virtue; 1st — bless, command, doom, magic weapon*, remove fear; 2nd — aid, bear's endurance, cure moderate wounds, spiritual weapon*; 3rd — glyph of warding, stone shape*. *Domain spell

*Possessions:* Leather armor, light mace.

**Block, Male Dwarf Rog 4:** CR 4; Medium humanoid (Dwarf); HD 4d6+8; hp 27; Spd 20 ft.; Init +3; AC 15, touch 13, flat-footed 12; Base Atk +3; Grp +5; Atk +5 melee (1d6+2(19–20/x2), shortsword) or +11 ranged (1d6/x3, shortbow); Full Atk +5 melee (1d6+2(19–20/x2), shortsword) or +11 ranged (1d6/x3, shortbow); SA Sneak attack +2d6; SQ Dwarf traits, evasion, hide in plain sight, improved nightsight; AL NG; SV Fort +3, Ref +7, Will +0; Str 15, Dex 17, Con 14, Int 14, Wis 9, Cha 10.

*Skills and Feats:* Balance +7, Bluff +3, Climb +5, Diplomacy +3, Escape Artist +6, Hide +9, Intimidate +6, Jump +6, Listen +7, Move Silently +9, Search +8, Sense Motive +3, Sleight of Hand +7, Spot +7, Use Rope +9; Alertness, Dodge.

*Evasion:* If Block makes a successful Reflex saving throw against an attack that normally deals half damage on a successful save, he instead takes no damage. Evasion can be used only if block is wearing light armor or no armor. If helpless, Block does not gain the benefit of evasion.

*Hide In Plain Sight:* Each time Block makes a Hide check, he may reduce the total penalty (if any) to his skill check by his rogue class level (4), to a minimum of 0.

*Improved Nightsight:* Block can see half again as far as normal in conditions of low light.

*Sneak Attack:* Anytime Block's target is denied a Dexterity bonus to AC, or when he flanks a target, Block deals an additional 2d6 points of damage on a successful melee attack.

*Possessions:* Leather armor, shortsword, shortbow, 20 arrows.

## Location 5.1: North End of the Mushroom Patch

**Read aloud:** *The main food source for the Dwarves of Stoneheart, mushrooms, grow all around. Two Dwarves tend mushrooms to the south.*

Two large phantom fungi lurk here. They do not act together — their presence at the same time is a coincidence — but each tries to sneak up on the party and attack when it has a chance.

**Creatures:** Two phantom fungi, hp 44, 62.

**Phantom Fungi (2):** CR 4; Large plant; HD 6d8+18; hp 44; Init +0; Spd 20 ft.; AC 15, touch 8, flat-footed 16; Base Atk +4, Grp +14; Atk +10 melee (2d6+9/x2, bite); Full Atk +10 melee (2d6+9/x2, bite); Space/Reach 10 ft./5 ft.; SA —; SQ Greater invisibility, low-light vision, plant traits; AL N; SV Fort +10, Ref +1, Will +2;

Str 22, Dex 8, Con 20, Int 2, Wis 11, Cha 9.

*Skills and Feats:* Listen +5, Move Silently +7*, Spot +1; Alertness, Improved Natural Armor, Improved Natural Attack. *A phantom fungus has a +5 racial bonus on Move Silently checks.

*Greater Invisibility:* This ability is constant, allowing a phantom fungus to remain invisible even when attacking. It works like greater invisibility (caster level 12th) and lasts as long as the phantom fungus is alive. This ability is not subject to the invisibility purge spell. A phantom fungus becomes visible 1 minute after it is killed.

*Low-Light Vision:* A phantom fungus can see twice as far as a human in starlight, moonlight, torchlight, and similar conditions of shadowy illumination. It retains the ability to distinguish color and detail under these conditions.

**Plant Traits:** A phantom fungus has the following traits:

- Immunity to all mind-affecting effects (charms, compulsions, phantasms, patterns, and morale effects).
- Immunity to poison, sleep effects, paralysis, polymorph, and stunning.
- Not subject to critical hits.
- Plants breathe and eat, but do not sleep.

*Treasure:* One phantom fungus has a 250 gp red garnet in its mouth.

## Location 6: Chapel of Kor

**Read aloud:** *After so many old buildings with collapsing walls, this building is a surprise. Cut stones fit together so well no mortar was necessary. A spire at the front of the building rises high toward the dark cavern ceiling, nearly disappearing from view. A warm glow comes from the many small windows.*

*A stooped, sorrowful figure dressed in white walks slowly around the chapel's exterior.*

If the PCs watch the mourner (*see sidebar The Mourner*) long enough, they see him walk into the chapel.

**Inside the building, read aloud:** *A blazing fire in the fireplace on the east wall makes this the most welcoming room in all of Stoneheart. It looks more like a common room than a church. A large oval granite table dominates the room, and wooden chairs facing all angles are scattered across the room. Sigils on the wall symbolizing the power of Kor are the only indication that this building serves a religious purpose.*

*Two Dwarves dressed in simple blue robes are present; one tidies the chapel, the other sits in a chair waiting for visitors. The second one speaks: "Welcome to the Chapel of Saint Quickblow. What can I offer you?"*

**Development:** The welcoming Dwarf is Vigilance, an initiate. The other initiate in the room is Rockclaw.

Vigilance tells the party the vicar, Justice Soulwrath, is through the door to the north, working on a gargoyle to defend Stoneheart. She allows the party to see Soulwrath, but cautions them that making the gargoyle is important work, so if the PCs are going to disturb Soulwrath, it had better be important.

**Creatures:** Vigilance, a 4th-level cleric; Rockclaw, a 3rd-level cleric.

**Vigilance, Female Dwarf Clr 4:** CR 4; Medium humanoid (Dwarf); HD 4d8; hp 16; Spd 20 ft.; Init +1; AC 13, touch 11, flat-footed 12; Base Atk +3; Grp +3; Atk +4 melee (1d6+1/x2, light mace); Full Atk +4 melee (1d6+1/x2, light mace); SA Spells, turn undead 3/day; SQ Cleric domains (Earth, Protection), Dwarf traits, spontaneous casting; AL LG; SV Fort +4, Ref +1, Will +7; Str 13, Dex 11, Con 11, Int 10, Wis 17, Cha 11.

*Skills and Feats:* Concentration +4, Diplomacy +3, Profession (priest) +3, Spellcraft +4; Combat Casting, Improved Turning.

*Spontaneous Casting:* Vigilance can "lose" a prepared spell (except for a domain spell) in order to cast any cure spell of the same level or lower.

*Turn Undead:* Vigilance can attempt to turn undead 3 times per day.

*Cleric Spells Prepared* (4/4+1/3+1; save DC 13 + spell level): 0 — create water, cure minor wounds, light, resistance; 1st — bless, deathwatch, hide from undead, magic stone*, obscuring mist, summon monster I; 2nd — aid, bull's strength, darkness, soften earth and stone*. *Domain spell

*Possessions:* Leather armor, light mace.

**Rockclaw, Male Dwarf Clr 3:** CR 3; Medium humanoid (Dwarf); HD 3d8+3; hp 13; Spd 20 ft.; Init +1; AC 13, touch 11, flat-footed 12; Base Atk +2; Grp +3; Atk +3 melee (1d6+1/x2, light mace); Full Atk +3 melee (1d6+1/x2, light mace); SA Spells, turn

### Saint Quickblow

Torkal Quickblow lived and died as a soldier in the time of Hember. At the time he was known only as Torkal and was assigned to the first guard post in the small village that would eventually grow into Stoneheart Watchpoint. He had a reputation of being fast with his feet and with his axe.

Shortly after Stoneheart was finished, Hember himself visited the fledging outpost. Sensing the leader of the Dwarves present, the Abyssals launched a surgical strike against the Dwarves. In the critical battle that followed, Hember's life was endangered when several snarling Abyssals broke through Dwarven lines and found a clear path to the Dwarven leader. Somehow Torkal crossed hundreds of feet in mere seconds and killed half a dozen Abyssals with a series of blindingly quick blows. He saved Hember's life, but lost his own. The Dwarves won the day and never lost their hold on Stoneheart Watchpoint.

Over time, many Stoneheart Watchpoint residents claim to have seen Abyssals slain by mysterious attacks that are swift and unseen. That, they say, is Saint Quickblow, preserving the city he helped found.

Saint Quickblow embodies two characteristics many Dwarven warriors cherish: martial prowess and self-sacrifice.

undead 4/day; SQ Cleric domains (Good, Protection), Dwarf traits, spontaneous casting; AL LG; SV Fort +4, Ref +4, Will +6; Str 12, Dex 12, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 16, Cha 12.

*Skills and Feats:* Concentration +4, Diplomacy +3, Profession (priest) +3, Spellcraft +4; Improved Turning, Lightning Reflexes.

*Spontaneous Casting:* Rockclaw can "lose" a prepared spell (except for a domain spell) in order to cast any cure spell of the same level or lower.

*Turn Undead:* Rockclaw can attempt to turn undead 4 times per day.

*Cleric Spells Prepared* (4/3+1/2+1; save DC 13 + spell level): 0 — create water, cure minor wounds, purify food and drink, resistance; 1st — bless, divine favor, magic weapon, protection from evil*, shield of faith; 2nd — aid*, augury, cure moderate wounds. *Domain spell

*Possessions:* Leather armor, light mace.

**Development:** Vigilance is eager to share the story of Saint Quickblow with visitors, and does so at the first opportunity (*see sidebar Saint Quickblow*). No member of the clergy in Stoneheart is willing to speculate about the rumors of a traitor. They have little patience for accusations against the vicar. Dwarven clergy are not bound by oaths of pacifism or gentleness, so the initiates eject any PC who annoys them sufficiently.

Like everyone in Stoneheart, the initiates discourage conversation about the mourner. However, if the PCs saw the mourner enter the chapel and ask the initiates where he went, they say the chapel has provided sanctuary to the mourner in their back rooms so they may have privacy. They refuse to give any more information about the back rooms.

## Location 6.1: Gargoyle Workroom

**Read aloud:** *Stone chips and tools litter the floor. A squat, powerful gargoyle dominates the small room. His teeth are sharp and his claws long, but his back is unfinished, and his eyes are dead. A Dwarf in a blue robe with silver fringe works feverishly, carving the gargoyle and muttering spells. He moves quickly, because if he slows down he might fall asleep on his feet.*

The room is windowless with two narrow doors on the east wall.

**Development:** The Dwarf here is the vicar of the chapel, Justice Soulwrath. He is seen by the church's higher authorities as a powerful priest and has been given opportunities recently to take more prestigious posts, but is dedicated to Stoneheart and will not leave while the Watchpoint is in danger.

Soulwrath allows PCs to say anything they want, but he only engages in significant conversation about defending Stoneheart. He hopes the gargoyle will be finished before the Abyssals come again.

**Creature:** Justice Soulwrath, a 9th-level cleric.

**Justice Soulwrath, Male Dwarf Clr 9:** CR 9; Medium humanoid (Dwarf); HD 9d8+18; 54; Spd 20 ft.; Init +1; AC 17, touch 11, flat-footed 16; Base Atk +6; Grp +8; Atk +9 melee (1d8+3/x3, +1 warhammer); Full Atk +9 melee (1d8+3/x3, +1 warhammer); SA Spells, turn undead 4/day; SQ Cleric domains (Earth, War), Dwarf traits, spontaneous casting; AL LG; SV Fort +8, Ref +4, Will +9; Str 14, Dex 12, Con 15, Int 11, Wis 17, Cha 12.

*Skills and Feats:* Concentration +8, Knowledge (Kor) +6, Profession (priest) +9, Spellcraft +6; Alertness, Maximize Spell, Quicken Spell, Scribe Scroll, Weapon Focus (warhammer), Martial Weapon Proficiency (warhammer).

*Spontaneous Casting:* Justice can "lose" a prepared spell (except for a domain spell) in order to cast any cure spell of the same level or lower.

*Turn Undead:* Justice can attempt to turn undead 4 times per day.

*Cleric Spells Prepared* (6/5+1/5+1/4+1/2+1/1+1; save DC 13 + spell level): 0 — cure minor wounds x2, detect poison, guidance, mending, read magic; 1st — bane, bless, cause fear, divine favor, magic stone*, obscuring mist; 2nd — augury, death knell, hold person, cure moderate wounds, make whole, soften earth and stone*; 3rd — magic vestment, remove curse, remove disease, speak with dead, stone shape*; 4th — divine power*, cure critical wounds, poison; 5th — slay living, wall of stone*. *Domain spell

*Possessions:* Chainmail, +1 warhammer, 47 gp.

**Development:** Soulwrath meets accusations of treachery with flat denials. He does not get angry, as anger will not help him get his work done. The only thing he cares about at present is finishing the gargoyle. Unfortunately, on his own he does not have time. The process Soulwrath knows for creating the gargoyle requires nine man-hours. His spells to bring the gargoyle to life take another six hours to go into effect, meaning the gargoyle would not be ready until one hour after the final Abyssal attack. If the PCs ask about the length of the process, Soulwrath tells them that although clerics who belong to the Order of St. Leda Stonehand can create gargoyles quickly he belongs to the Order of St. Vhorim. This is the only process he knows for creating a gargoyle.

The gargoyle can be finished on time with a Dwarven PC's help. PCs making a successful Craft (stonemasonry) check (DC 20) are able to help carve the gargoyle (Soulwrath has a standard set of masonry and carving tools they can use). Only Dwarves are allowed to take part in this activity; everyone else is politely turned away, out of respect for Sjonegaard.

There is only enough room for three people to work on the gargoyle, and when the carving is finished Soulwrath needs to be present to cast the final spells. The PCs and Soulwrath need to spend a combined nine hours carving the gargoyle to finish it. If three people (Soulwrath and two PCs, or three PCs) spend one hour carving, that counts as three hours total work on the gargoyle.

Stone shape cannot be used to help on the gargoyle, as it does not allow for the fine detail work required. Casting fabricate and making a successful Craft check puts the gargoyle into

shape instantly, leaving only the six hours needed for the awakening spells to work for the gargoyle to come to life.

When complete, a basalt gargoyle is available for the defense of Stoneheart.

**Creature:** One basalt gargoyle.

**Basalt Gargoyle (1):** CR 9; Large construct (gargoyle); HD 10d10+30; hp 80; Init –1; Speed 30 ft.; AC 26, touch 8, flat-footed 26; Base Atk +7; Grp +20; Atk +16 melee (2d6+11/x2, slam); Full Atk +16 melee (2d6+11/x2, 2 slams); Space/Reach 10 ft./10 ft.; SA —; SQ Fast healing 3, gargoyle traits, suffering; AL LG; SV Fort +3, Ref +2, Will +3; Str 28, Dex 9, Con —, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 6.

*Skills and Feats:* Intimidate +10, Jump +17, Listen +9, Spot +9*; Alertness, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (Slam), Weapon Specialization (Slam). * In addition to the usual racial modifiers for gargoyles, the basalt gargoyle receives a +8 racial modifier to Jump checks. In addition, when taking a standing jump, the basalt gargoyle behaves as if taking a running jump.

*Suffering:* Basalt gargoyles, for all their durability, are susceptible to pain. While immune to critical hits, like other constructs, such strikes shock basalt gargoyles. When a foe hits a basalt gargoyle with what would be a critical hit, the gargoyle must make a Will save (DC equal to the damage suffered) or be staggered until healed.

**Gargoyle Traits:** A tarpit gargoyle possesses the following additional traits:

- *Construct:* Gargoyles are constructs, though unlike most creatures of this type, they have an Intelligence score (they still lack Constitution scores). They are therefore immune to mind-influencing effects (charms, compulsions, phantasms, patterns, and morale effects) and to poison, sleep, paralysis, stunning disease, death effects, and necromantic effects. Further, they are not subject to critical hits, subdual damage, ability damage, ability drain, or energy drain. They are immune to any effect that requires a Fortitude save (unless that effect also works on objects). Gargoyles cannot die due to massive damage, but when reduced to 0 hit points or less, they immediately crumble to a loose pile of dust and rock. Gargoyles, which are never truly alive, cannot be *raised* or *resurrected*.
- *Darkvision:* Gargoyles have darkvision with a range of 60 feet.
- *Depth Sense (Ex):* Gargoyles always know how far they are beneath the surface of the world. They can detect whether a passage is rising or falling, and by precisely how much. Both of these abilities require a Survival check (DC 15) to use.
- *Fast Healing:* Nearly all gargoyles have the capacity to heal at a vastly accelerated rate, as noted in their individual entries.
- *Immunity:* All gargoyles are immune to lightning, cold, fear-based effects, and poison.
- *Skills:* All gargoyles receive a +4 racial bonus to Search and Spot checks while underground, as well as a +8 racial bonus to Survival checks at all times.
- *Spell-like abilities:* At will — *detect evil*; 3/day — *aid*, *magic circle against evil*. Gargoyles have a spellcaster level equal to 6 or their Hit Dice, whichever is greater.

**Development:** Soulwrath is convinced that activating the gargoyle is the best way for him to help Stoneheart, but if one or more PCs take over carving, a successful use of Diplomacy (DC 30) convinces Soulwrath to listen to any ideas the PCs have for strengthening Stoneheart's defenses. He may, for example, be used to cast wall of stone and stone shape to create defensive fortifications near the Abyssal entry point.

If asked about the other positions in the church he has been offered, Soulwrath says Stoneheart is the most important place he can be right now.

Soulwrath opposes any efforts by the party to pass through the doors to the east, and calls his initiates to help keep the PCs out if necessary. PCs may be able to slip into the rooms with a successful Hide check. Soulwrath is exhausted, suffering all appropriate penalties.

## Location 6.3: Sanctuary Room 1

**Read aloud:** *Except for a thin, lumpy bedroll on the floor, this room — barely bigger than a closet — is empty.*

*This room houses wanderers in need.*

## Location 6.4: Sanctuary Room 2

### The Mourner's Letter

"F. —

**Finish anon. The Abyssal Lord is impatient waiting for thy part of the bargain.**

**Know thou the reward for thy success. An it be not enough to move thee to action, remember thou the punishment the Lords inflict on those who fail.**

**— B."**

The description below occurs only if the mourner is still alive. If he is not, the room is empty except for his backpack.

**Read aloud:** *A backpack rests besides the bedroll in the room. A hollow-eyed Dwarf dressed in white stands in the middle of the room, glaring at anyone who dares enter his sanctuary.*

The mourner is not happy with the party's presence in Stoneheart and is particularly unhappy about their visit to his sanctuary. However, his sole method of communication (initially) is his glare.

**Creature:** The mourner, a 10th-level Deverenian cleric *(see sidebar The Mourner for stats)*.

**Development:** This is the first time the PCs have been close enough to the mourner to observe him. Though the mourner does not speak, there is enough in his body language for PCs to make a Sense Motive check (DC 25) to gain a hunch about whether he is an imposter. If the PCs fail their Sense Motive check or Spot check (see sidebar The Mourner), the only other way to see through the mourner's disguise is to search his backpack. There is plenty of incriminating evidence in it, so the mourner does not allow anyone to touch it. He pushes away anyone who tries to touch it, and more forceful efforts by the PCs result in an attack.

The mourner has been working underground for quite some time and has not received recent news from his superior, the Medusan Lord Tiberius Blackthorn. Thus, he does not know of the party's recent activities, and he does not recognize them. However, if they have been to the smithy's secret store room (**Location 7.3**) and are carrying the +2 halberd of mighty cleaving, the mourner smiles, gestures at the PCs to come in, then attacks once they are inside, since he wants the halberd and any other treasure from the smithy.

If the PCs found the piece of torn fabric on the claw of the fiendling in area J and confront the mourner with it, he attacks immediately.

*Treasure:* The mourner's backpack contains the following items: a 2,000 gp black star sapphire, a scroll of vampiric touch, 10 doses of dust of illusion, three torches and a letter (see sidebar The Mourner's Letter).

## Location 7: Smithy

**Read aloud:** *The hot orange glow and clanking sounds coming out of this squat hut announce this as Stoneheart's smithy.*

*A Dwarf in white wanders by, staying away from the entrance of the smithy.*

The mourner is curious about some things inside the smithy, but he does not want to walk in the front door — Stoker makes him nervous.

## Location 7.1 Work Area

**Read aloud:** *The air inside is much warmer than the rest of the cavern. Tools are strewn haphazardly. A Dwarf whose shoulders are as broad as he is tall feverishly hammers on weapons, rushing to finish them. He had been speaking with boisterous enthusiasm and the entrance of visitors to his smithy does not interrupt his monologue in the least.*

*"Come in! Come in! Do you know how many of those fire-bellied sacks of dung this beauty will kill? Do you know how easily it will crush their miserable legs, how smoothly it will bite into their worm-ridden chests? Come in, come in! Look at this!"*

**Development:** Stoker the smith is the last optimist in Stoneheart, and he will remain so right up until an Abyssal rips his heart out. He honestly believes the weapons he is working on will turn the tide of what has been a miserable series of battles for the Dwarves.

Stoker recently found some good granite in a nearby cave, and he discovered the two Blackstone Raiders are well trained in the use of Dwarven mauls. Stoker has everything planned out for the next Abyssal assault — in his plan, the Blackstone Raiders, armed with granite mauls, stands in front of the narrow Abyssal entry point, felling any that comes through. Other Dwarves will stand on the side of the opening and immediately carve up the fallen. No Abyssals can get through, meaning no Abyssal will survive more than a few feet past the entry point.

The weapons need 20 hours of work (ten hours per maul) before they are finished. Stoker also needs extra iron to join the granite to the handles. All supplies in Stoneheart are running short, but Hurl Longshaft, the quartermaster, might know where some iron could be found, especially for such a critical project.

Stoker is unconcerned about people entering the door on the east wall, and, if they ask, cheerfully tells the PCs there is a storeroom behind that door.

**Creature:** Stoker, a 4th-level fighter.

**Stoker, Male Dwarf Ftr 4:** CR 4; Medium humanoid (Dwarf); HD 4d10+4; hp 21; Init +1; Spd 20 ft.; AC 15, touch 11, flat-footed 14; Base Atk +4; Grp +7; Atk +10 melee (1d8+5/x3, +1 warhammer); Full Atk +10 melee (1d8+5/x3, +1 warhammer); SA Favored weapon (warhammer); SQ Dwarf traits; AL LG; SV Fort +5, Ref +2, Will +3; Str 16, Dex 12, Con 13, Int 12, Wis 10, Cha 9.

*Skills and Feats:* Climb +5*, Craft (weaponsmith) +8, Intimidate +5, Jump +5*; Endurance, Iron Will, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (warhammer). *includes –2 armor check penalty

*Favored Weapon (warhammer):* Stoker gains a +1 competence bonus to attack and damage rolls with the warhammer.

*Possessions:* Chain shirt, artisan's tools (blacksmith, masterwork),+1 warhammer.

*Treasure:* Most of the weapons in the room are unfinished, but there is a complete +1 battleaxe. Stoker does not want to sell the battleaxe, but if the PCs manage to help him finish both mauls before the final assault, he gives it to them in gratitude.

**Development:** If talk turns to the traitor, Stoker proclaims (with his customary enthusiasm) that if there is a traitor, it is not Soulwrath. He and Soulwrath were in the chapel for at least two hours before the Abyssals broke through the wall to the Watchpoint. Soulwrath could not have softened the stone in that time. If part of the wall had been clay for over two hours, Stoker is sure someone would have noticed it — especially at that time, when there were many more Dwarves in Stoneheart.

Stoker accepts any help the PCs offer. He has enough tools and space to allow two people to help him. Stoker has no other work to do, so he keeps working regardless of the help he receives. In order to help finish the mauls, PCs must make a Craft (weaponsmith) check (DC 20). Stoker has masterwork tools they can use in the task. Each maul needs a total of ten hours of work before it is complete. As with the gargoyle, two people working for one hour counts as two hours of work.

## Location 7.2: Storeroom

**Read aloud:** *Unlike the workroom, Stoker's storeroom is tidy and well ordered. Battleaxes, breastplates, and a waraxe or two line the walls. In better times, this room would be emptier since there would be more Dwarves to use these items.*

The room holds four battleaxes, three warhammers, and five breastplates, all masterwork. The secret door (Search check DC 20) is behind a row of armor stands. It is magically trapped, which is why Stoker does not worry about letting people in the room — he trusts the trap.

**Summon Monster VII Trap:** CR 8; magic device; proximity trigger (alarm); no reset; spell effect (summon monster VII, 13th-level wizard), Search DC 32; Disable Device DC 32.

If the trap is sprung, the spell summons a pain eater. Assuming the PCs are carrying precious metal, the pain eater attacks. The noise of crafting the mauls, as well as his focus, prevents Stoker from knowing his trap has been sprung.

**Creature:** One pain eater.

**Pain Eater (1):** CR 8; Large magical eater; HD 10d10+33 (80 hp); Init +0; Spd 30 ft.; AC 17, touch 9, flat-footed 17; Base Atk +10; Grp +19; Atk +14 melee (1d6+5/x2, slam) or +9 melee (1d8+5/x2, bite); Full Atk +14 melee (1d6+5/x2, 4 slams), +9 melee (1d8+2/x2, bite); Space/Reach 10 ft./5 ft.; SA —; SQ Blindsight, darkvision 60 ft., pain absorption; AL N; SV Fort +10, Ref +7, Will +3; Str 20, Dex 10, Con 17, Int 2, Wis 11, Cha 12.

*Skills and Feats:* Climb +10, Listen +4, Spot +4; Alertness, Cleave, Power Attack, Toughness.

*Blindsight (Ex):* Using nonvisual senses, a pain eater maneuvers and fights as well as a sighted creature. Invisibility, darkness, and most kinds of concealment are irrelevant, though a pain eater must have line of effect to a creature or object to discern that creature or object. A pain eater's blindsight has a range of 120 feet.

*Pain Absorption (Ex):* Whenever a pain eater suffers a significant amount of pain, it absorbs the neural energy of its own impulses and reprocesses it. Each time it does so, it gives itself a temporary, but nonetheless quite useful, surge of strength. In practice, this ability makes the pain eater a more lethal foe as it accumulates wounds in battle, becoming the most dangerous right when it is at the point of death.

Whenever a pain eater takes 5 or more points of damage from an attack of any kind, it gains 1d4 temporary Strength points. These temporary Strength points disappear after 12 hours, or once the pain eater is reduced to below 0 hit points. Healing a wounded pain eater does not remove these temporary Strength points.

## Location 7.3: Secret Storeroom

**Read aloud:** *In normal times, this small, dark room would be used to safeguard the most valuable weapons and armor in Stoneheart. These days, though, most of the valuable items in Stoneheart are in use or have been destroyed in the Abyssal battles. The room holds a couple of weapons and a single suit of armor.*

Along with the mentioned items, there is a ring hidden in a dark corner of the room (Spot check DC 17).

*Treasure:* The room contains: splint mail (large) +1; a +2 halberd of mighty cleaving; a +1 longspear; and a ring of the ram with 32 charges remaining. The armor and longspear appear ordinary; the halberd looks well kept and honed, and the ring is silver and engraved with a small spiral (an abstract version of a ram's horn).

**Development:** This room is the reason the mourner spends a significant amount of time near the smithy. He believes there is treasure in the smithy but he has not been able to take a look inside. If the mourner sees the party with the halberd, he knows they have been in the secret storeroom (since the mourner heard there was a powerful halberd in Stoneheart). When they are back outside the smithy, the mourner approaches the party, walks by quickly, and mutters, "Come to the chapel."

## Location 8: Quartermaster

**Read aloud:** *This is a popular destination; the stone floor in front of the door to this building is more worn than most of the cavern. A wooden sign with the word "Quartermaster" burned into it hangs over the door.*

**Inside the building, read aloud:** *This long building has space for a wide variety of supplies — space now empty of anything except for dust and debris. An old Dwarf missing half of his right leg sits on a chair against the opposite wall.*

*"Whatever you want, we're out of it," he growls.*

**Development:** The store is a simple building 20 feet by 50 feet. It is one large room.

The quartermaster, Hurl Longshaft, is the veteran of plenty of Abyssal fights, but his age and the loss of his leg keep him from being part of the guard. Nothing could keep him from the front lines of the fight; even if he was not given a job here, he would remain in Stoneheart. Hurl combines the bitterness of a warrior who believes he should either be fighting Abyssals or dead with the stubbornness of someone who will find a way to contribute to the fight as long as he lives.

The store is empty of nearly all supplies (a complete list of what is available is below), including iron. What the PCs see here is all there is; there is no backroom or additional storage space.

The only source of iron Longshaft can think of is his assistant, Sear, who was sent out a week ago to Abyssal's Crypt Watchpoint, two days' journey away. Sear was entrusted with some iron to take to Abyssal's Crypt, hoping to exchange it for the service of an additional guard or two. Sear has not been heard from, and the guards at the south end of the cavern thought they heard screams coming from the road to Rockhome shortly after he left. Korservant has not permitted anyone else to leave Stoneheart to find Sear, believing he cannot spare anyone. Perhaps, though, the PCs can talk Korservant into letting one of them go after Sear.

**Creature:** Hurl Longshaft, an 11th-level fighter.

**Hurl Longshaft, Male Dwarf Ftr 11:** CR 11; Medium humanoid (Dwarf); HD 11d10+3; hp 61; Init –2; Spd 20 ft.; AC 11, touch 8, flat-footed 13; Base Atk +11; Grp +13; Atk +15 melee (1d6+7/x2, quarterstaff); Full Atk +15/+10/+5 melee (1d6+7/x2, quarterstaff); SA Favored weapon (Dwarven waraxe, quarterstaff, warhammer), improved critical threat (Dwarven waraxe), improved damage (Dwarven waraxe, quarterstaff); SQ Dwarf traits; AL LG; SV Fort +7, Ref +1, Will +8; Str 15, Dex 6, Con 10, Int 15, Wis 16, Cha 14.

*Skills and Feats:* Climb +7*, Handle Animal +11, Intimidate +7, Jump +5*, Knowledge (history) +7, Profession (quartermaster) +8, Spot +9; Iron Will, Power Attack, Toughness, Two-Weapon Fighting, Weapon Focus (Dwarven waraxe), Weapon Focus (quarterstaff), Weapon Specialization (Dwarven waraxe), Weapon Specialization (quarterstaff). *includes –1 armor check penalty

*Favored Weapon (Dwarven waraxe, quarterstaff, warhammer):* Hurl gains a +1 competence bonus to attack and damage rolls with the Dwarven waraxe, quarterstaff, and warhammer.

*Improved Critical Threat (Dwarven waraxe):* Hurl's critical threat range is increased by +2 (to 18–20) with the Dwarven waraxe.

*Improved Damage (Dwarven waraxe, quarterstaff):* Hurl does an additional +2 (+3 total) damage with the Dwarven waraxe and quarterstaff.

*Possessions:* Studded leather armor, quarterstaff.

*Treasure:* The quartermaster's store has the following items: five bullseye lanterns, a pack of sealing wax, a miner's pick, two empty sacks and an iron pot. Longshaft sells these items at their normal price.

## Location 9: Exit from Stoneheart

**Read aloud:** *Here the cavern narrows back into a small corridor, descending into the heart of the Dwarves' world. The two guards here, knowing they are the last line of defense between Stoneheart and the rest of their kingdom, seem more alert than most.*

*"No one proceeds without a pass!" bellows one.*

**Development:** "No one proceeds without a pass" are just about the only words these guards know. They make that point repeatedly and emphatically. The only additional information they provide is that the captain of the guard, Marl Korservant, issues all passes.

The guards attack anyone who attempts to go by without a pass, or if more than one PC attempts to go by with a pass written for only one person. They shout an alarm that brings all other Dwarf guards running in 2d4 minutes.

PCs may attempt to Bluff their way past, but the guards receive +10 competence bonus on Sense Motive checks. If their Sense Motive check succeeds by more than 10, the guards report the attempted bluff to Korservant (without leaving their post — they pass the message through other Dwarfs), making it more difficult for the PCs to obtain a pass.

**Creatures:** Two Dwarf guards, 5th-level fighters *(see Area 1 for stats)*.

**Dwarf Guards (2):** hp 32, 38.

## Location 10: Road to Rockhome

The cave here is easily navigable with no branches for miles. The only ways to travel are toward Stoneheart or away from it.

**Read aloud:** *After a journey of only two miles, it becomes clear something is wrong. A hint of decay spreads through the air. Something is dead nearby.*

**Development:** The "something" is Sear, two and a half miles from Stoneheart. He has been dead for a week. He has long, deep, ragged wounds across his chest and his head is almost severed.

Sear's body is a breeding ground for disease. Anyone searching his body must make a Fortitude save (DC 14) or be struck with the devil chills (incubation period: 1d4 days; damage 1d4 Str). A PC with the devil chills must make successful Fortitude saves three days in a row to recover from the disease.

A few pounds of iron are in a pouch on his side. The Abyssals who killed him left it alone.

Two fiendlings hide behind rocks near the body and can be seen with a successful Spot check (DC 15). If the fiendlings are not seen, they jump out when the PCs either walk by them or turn back to Stoneheart.

**Creatures:** Two fiendlings.

**Fiendlings (2):** CR 1; Small aberration (Lesser Abyssal); HD 2d8; hp 8; Init +3; Spd 20 ft.; AC 17, touch 15, flat-footed 14; Base Atk +1; Grp –3; Atk +2 melee (1d3/x2, claw); Full Atk +2 melee (1d3/x2, 2 claws); Space/Reach 5 ft./5 ft.; SA Improved Grab, overwhelm; SQ Abyssal traits, darkvision 120 ft.; AL CE; SV Fort +0, Ref +3, Will +2; Str 10, Dex 16, Con 10, Int 8, Wis 8, Cha 8.

*Skills and Feats:* Hide +8, Listen +2, Move Silently +4, Spot +2, Tumble +4; Alertness.

*Improved Grab (Ex):* To use this ability, a fiendling must hit with its claw attack. It can then attempt to start a grapple as a free action without provoking an attack of opportunity. If it wins the grapple check, it may overwhelm.

*Overwhelm (Ex):* Fiendlings' preferred tactic is to attack en masse and drag their prey to the ground. For every additional fiendling adjacent to the target, the fiendling gains a +2 competence bonus to its grapple check. If sucessful, the target suffers claw damage and becomes prone. While their opponent is prone, fiendlings increase the critical threat range and multiplier of their claw attacks to 19–20/x3.

- *Astral (Ex):* Abyssals are astral creatures. They exist simultaneously both on the prime material plane and in the Abyss, a tiny plane surrounding the Dragon's corpse. As such, any melee or ranged attack that targets an Abyssal has a 50% miss chance, unless the attack is made with a +1 or better magical weapon (in the case of ranged attacks, only the projectile must bear the enchantment, not necessarily the weapon itself). This is in all ways like incorporeality.
- *Darkvision (Ex):* Range of 120 feet.
- *Immunities (Ex):* Abyssals are immune to all mind-affecting effects, including spells and spell-like abilities, paralysis, poison, sleep, stunning, disease and death effects. Abyssals are also immune to fire, ability drain, and energy drain.

- *Resistances (Ex):* Abyssals have cold, poison and electricity resistance 20.
- *Spell-like Abilities:* All Abyssals have the following spell-like abilities: 3/day — chaos hammer, darkness, doom, and scorching ray.

**Development:** One of the fiendlings has a piece of white cloth caught on its claw. It looks similar to the cloth worn by the mourner (the mourner played a role in setting the fiendlings on Sear, and the fiendlings, who have difficulty telling a friend from an enemy, almost attacked the mourner before they got to Sear).

Any PCs that make it out of Stoneheart might choose to explore the caverns instead of returning. About seven miles from Stoneheart, new cave branches appear, and the PCs must make choices about where to go. Survival (DC 15) may help them find their way, telling them the cave leading back to Stoneheart travels generally west.

There are no more Abyssals in this tunnel, as Abyssal activities in this region are focused on Stoneheart. They may find another Watchpoint, Abyssals' Crypt, 15 miles from Stoneheart, where they may attempt to ask for help. Time spent traveling and securing help goes beyond the timeline for the initial attack, so by the time any PCs return to Stoneheart from Abyssals' Crypt, Stoneheart is firmly in the hands of the Abyssals. See **Part 3** for rules on the number of Abyssals present.

# Part 3: "Here They Come!"

### Encounter 5: The First Assault

**After the PCs have been in Stoneheart for four hours, read aloud:** *Panicked shouts cut through the air. War drums from the north beat a fast, steady rhythm that sets every Dwarf in motion.*

*"Here they come!" every Dwarf yells as they scramble to their posts. "They're coming again!"*

The PCs have two minutes from the time the alarm sounds until the moment the first Abyssal crosses the Abyssal entry point.

**When the PCs are at the entry point and the Abyssals arrive, read aloud:** *Harsh growls and inhuman shrieks fill the air as the first Abyssals surge into the entryway. Small, pale creatures skittering on all fours hiss as they launch themselves at the guards, baring rows of spiny teeth. Behind them, dark clouds with glowing red circles that may be eyes hover, muttering incantations.*

**Creatures:** The first wave of Abyssals consists of ten fiendlings, four golgoths, three brullahka and a zhul.

**Brullahka (3):** CR 10; Huge aberration (Greater Abyssal); HD 12d8+60 hp 108; Init +1; Speed 30 ft.; AC 22, touch 10, flat-footed 22; Base Atk +9; Grp +25; Atk +15 melee (2d8+8/x2, claw); Full Atk +15 melee (2d8+8/x2, 2 claws), +10 melee (2d4+4/x2, bite); Space/Reach 15 ft./15 ft.; AL CE; SA Dominate, life drain, symbiosis; SQ Abyssal traits, traits, regeneration 3, spellcasting, spell resistance 23, summon Abyssal, tyrant mind; SV Fort +9, Ref +5, Will +13; Str 26, Dex 12, Con 20, Int 10, Wis 16, Cha 10.

*Skills and Feats:* Bluff +12, Intimidate +12, Listen +8, Spot +8; Alertness, Die Hard, Endurance, Iron Will, Track.

*Dominate (Su):* A brullakha can control and command others. Once per day, it may cast either *dominate animal, dominate monster,* or *dominate person* as a 9th-level wizard. The save DC is 10 + the spell level and is Intelligence-based. Use of this ability is considered a free action and does not draw an attack of opportunity. This is the brullakha's strongest weapon against unwary opponents.

*Life Drain (Ex):* A brullakha may drain the life from an individual by enveloping him. This works as *vampiric touch,* as cast by a 9th-level wizard. The save DC is 16 and is Wisdom-based. It may not use this ability in open sunlight.

*Spellcasting (Su):* The brullakha are natural spellcasters, and may memorize and cast spells as a shaman of as many levels as the brullakha has hit dice.

*Summon Abyssal (Su):* Once per day, a brullakha may summon 3d6 nightclaws. This is the equivalent of a 4th-level spell.

*Symbiosis (Su):* The dwarves consider this the most terrifying and foul ability of any Abyssal, and they thank Kor that it is unique to the brullakha. A brullakha may enter into a pact with another willing being, usually a dwarf, forever binding the two as master and servant. The other creature becomes lawful evil and gains the paladin class as a favored class, with the brullakha's corrupt spirit bestowing the class abilities, and service to the Abyssals and the brullakha defining the paladin's code of conduct. The brullakha, for its part, gains a powerful and dedicated servitor that cannot harm it. In addition, for every servitor, the brullakha gains an additional hit die, which is never lost, even if the servitor dies. This is the only manner in which brullakha can advance.

*Tyrant Mind (Su):* Though their telepathic abilities resemble other Abyssals', a brullakha's prowess is far greater, eclipsing even the mighty qor-teth. Furthermore, the control and range that brullakha exert is truly astounding. A brullakha can absolutely dominate the minds of all Abyssals within a mile radius so long as it maintains absolute concentration, and may project its senses and voice through any Abyssal it chooses. Brullakha themselves are immune to this effect.

In addition, brullakha are completely without morals and as such are unaffected by empathic energy or magic. Effects that would alter a brullakha's alignment fail.

**Abyssal Traits:**

- *Astral (Ex):* Abyssals are astral creatures. They exist simultaneously both on the prime material plane and in the Abyss, a tiny plane surrounding the Dragon's corpse. As such, any melee or ranged attack that targets an Abyssal has a 50% miss chance, unless the attack is made with a +1 or better magical weapon (in the case of ranged attacks, only the projectile must bear the enchantment, not necessarily the weapon itself). This is in all ways like incorporeality.
- *Darkvision (Ex):* Range of 120 feet.

- *Immunities (Ex):* Abyssals are immune to all mind-affecting effects, including spells and spell-like abilities, paralysis, poison, sleep, stunning, disease and death effects. Abyssals are also immune to fire, ability drain, and energy drain.
- *Resistances (Ex):* Abyssals have cold, poison and electricity resistance 20.
- *Spell-like Abilities:* All Abyssals have the following spell-like abilities: 3/day — chaos hammer, darkness, doom, and scorching ray. In addition, greater Abyssals may cast unholy aura at will.
- *Telepathy (Ex):* Greater Abyssals have the ability to communicate telepathically with any creature within 100 ft. The target of this ability must be able to speak (or at least clearly understand) at least one language. The Abyssal's telepathy automatically translates its thoughts into the language best understood by the recipient. The Abyssal may only communicate with one non-Abyssal in this fashion at a time. A greater Abyssal may telepathically communicate with any number of Abyssals at once, provided they are in range.

**Fiendlings (10):** CR 1; Small aberration (Lesser Abyssal); HD 2d8; hp 8; Init +3; Spd 20 ft.; AC 17, touch 15, flat-footed 14; Base Atk +1; Grp –3; Atk +2 melee (1d3/x2, claw); Full Atk +2 melee (1d3/x2, 2 claws); Space/Reach 5 ft./5 ft.; SA Improved Grab, overwhelm; SQ Abyssal traits, darkvision 120 ft.; AL CE; SV Fort +0, Ref +3, Will +2; Str 10, Dex 16, Con 10, Int 8, Wis 8, Cha 8.

*Skills and Feats:* Hide +8, Listen +2, Move Silently +4, Spot +2, Tumble +4; Alertness.

*Improved Grab (Ex):* To use this ability, a fiendling must hit with its claw attack. It can then attempt to start a grapple as a free action without provoking an attack of opportunity. If it wins the grapple check, it may overwhelm.

*Overwhelm (Ex):* Fiendlings' preferred tactic is to attack en masse and drag their prey to the ground. For every additional fiendling adjacent to the target, the fiendling gains a +2 competence bonus to its grapple check. If sucessful, the target suffers claw damage and becomes prone. While their opponent is prone, fiendlings increase the critical threat range and multiplier of their claw attacks to 19–20/x3.

**Abyssal Traits:**

- *Astral (Ex):* Abyssals are astral creatures. They exist simultaneously both on the prime material plane and in the Abyss, a tiny plane surrounding the Dragon's corpse. As such, any melee or ranged attack that targets an Abyssal has a 50% miss chance, unless the attack is made with a +1 or better magical weapon (in the case of ranged attacks, only the projectile must bear the enchantment, not necessarily the weapon itself). This is in all ways like incorporeality.
- *Darkvision (Ex):* Range of 120 feet.
- *Immunities (Ex):* Abyssals are immune to all mind-affecting effects, including spells and spell-like abilities, paralysis, poison, sleep, stunning, disease and death effects. Abyssals are also immune to fire, ability drain, and energy drain.
- *Resistances (Ex):* Abyssals have cold, poison and electricity resistance 20.
- *Spell-like Abilities:* All Abyssals have the following spell-like abilities: 3/day — chaos hammer, darkness, doom, and scorching ray.

**Golgoths (3):** CR 5; Medium aberration (Lesser Abyssal); HD 8d8+24; hp 56; Init +3; Spd 30 ft., fly 60 ft. (poor); AC 22, touch 14, flat-footed 20; Base Atk +6; Grp +11; Atk +11 melee (2d4+5/x2, claw); Full Atk +11 melee (2d4+5/x2, 2 claws), +6 melee (2d6+2 plus poison/x2, bite); Space/Reach 5 ft./5 ft.; SA Frightful presence, poison, spell-like abilities; SQ Abyssal traits, darkvision 120 ft., damage reduction 5/blacksteel; AL CE; SV Fort +5, Ref +4, Will +8; Str 20, Dex 14, Con 16, Int 10, Wis 14, Cha 14.

*Skills and Feats:* Concentration +9, Intimidate +8, Listen +7, Spot +7; Dodge, Flyby Attack, Hover.

*Improved Grab (Ex):* To use this ability, a fiendling must hit with its claw attack. It can then attempt to start a grapple as a free action without provoking an attack of opportunity. If it wins the grapple check, it may overwhelm.

**Abyssal Traits:**

- *Astral (Ex):* Abyssals are astral creatures. They exist simultaneously both on the prime material plane and in the Abyss, a tiny plane surrounding the Dragon's corpse. As such, any melee or ranged attack that targets an Abyssal has a 50% miss chance, unless the attack is made with a +1 or better magical weapon (in the case of ranged attacks, only the projectile must bear the enchantment, not necessarily the weapon itself). This is in all ways like incorporeality.
- *Darkvision (Ex):* Range of 120 feet.
- *Immunities (Ex):* Abyssals are immune to all mind-affecting effects, including spells and spell-like abilities, paralysis, poison, sleep, stunning, disease and death effects. Abyssals are also immune to fire, ability drain, and energy drain.
- *Resistances (Ex):* Abyssals have cold, poison and electricity resistance 20.
- *Spell-like Abilities:* All Abyssals have the following spell-like abilities: 3/day — chaos hammer, darkness, doom, and scorching ray.

*Frightful Presence (Ex):* A golgoth can terrify a creature with a

glance. This terror is purely instinctive, a result of the golgoth's single-minded dedication to destruction. Anyone that can see a golgoth within 60 ft. must make a DC 16 Will save or become panicked for 3d6 rounds. Creatures that successfully save cannot be affected by the same golgoth's frightful presence for 24 hours.

*Poison (Ex):* Injury, Fortitude DC 17, initial damage 1d6 Dexterity, secondary damage 1d6 Strength. The save DC is Constitution-based.

*Spell-like abilities:* At will—blur, burning hands (DC 13), color spray (DC 13), confusion (DC 16), endure elements, hypnotic pattern (DC 14), invisibility (self only), mage armor, magic circle against good (self only), see invisibility, sleep (DC 13), web (DC 14). 3/day — false life, lesser globe of invulnerability, magic missile, true strike; 1/day — arcane eye, break enchantment, bull's strength (self only), chain lightning (DC 18), feeblemind (DC 17), reverse gravity, unholy aura. Caster level 9th.

**Zhul (1):** CR 10; Medium aberration (Greater Abyssal); HD 19d8+95; hp 165; Init +4; Speed 30 ft.; AC 26, touch 15, flat-footed 18; Base Atk +7; Grp +3; Atk +12 melee (1d8+7 plus poison (18–20/x2), +2 longsword of brilliant energy); Full Atk +12/+7 (1d8+7 plus poison (18–20/x2), two +2 longswords of brilliant energy); Space/Reach 5 ft./5 ft.; AL CE; SA Fear aura, poison, spell-like abilities; SQ Abyssal traits, regeneration 5, spell turning, spell immunity, spell resistance 16, damage reduction 5/good; SV Fort +9, Ref +9, Will +14; Str 18, Dex 18, Con 18, Int 16, Wis 16, Cha 14.

*Skills and Feats:* Concentration +21, Diplomacy +17, Intimidate +17, Knowledge (great abyss) +18, Sense Motive +18; Dodge, Mobility, Spring Attack, Two Weapon Fighting, Improved Two Weapon Fighting, Cleave, Power Attack.

**Abyssal Traits:**

- *Astral (Ex):* Abyssals are astral creatures. They exist simultaneously both on the prime material plane and in the Abyss, a tiny plane surrounding the Dragon's corpse. As such, any melee or ranged attack that targets an Abyssal has a 50% miss chance, unless the attack is made with a +1 or better magical weapon (in the case of ranged attacks, only the projectile must bear the enchantment, not necessarily the weapon itself). This is in all ways like incorporeality.
- *Darkvision (Ex):* Range of 120 feet.
- *Immunities (Ex):* Abyssals are immune to all mind-affecting effects, including spells and spell-like abilities, paralysis, poison, sleep, stunning, disease and death effects. Abyssals are also immune to fire, ability drain, and energy drain.
- *Resistances (Ex):* Abyssals have cold, poison and electricity resistance 20.
- *Spell-like Abilities:* All Abyssals have the following spell-like abilities: 3/day — chaos hammer, darkness, doom, and scorching ray. In addition, greater Abyssals may cast unholy aura at will.
- *Telepathy (Ex):* Greater Abyssals have the ability to communicate telepathically with any creature within 100 ft. The target of this ability must be able to speak (or at least clearly understand) at least one language. The Abyssal's telepathy automatically translates its thoughts into the language best understood by the recipient. The Abyssal may only communicate with one non-Abyssal in this fashion at a time. A greater Abyssal may telepathically communicate with any number of Abyssals at once, provided they are in range.

*Fear Aura (Su):* A zhul is constantly surrounded by a 60-ft. radius aura of fear. Anyone within range must succeed at a DC 19 Will save or become panicked for 2d6 rounds. Even those who save successfully are considered shaken so long as they remain within range. Creatures that successfully save cannot be affected by the same aura of fear for 24 hours, but remain shaken, even if they leave the aura and return later.

*Poison (Ex):* Injury, Fortitude DC 22, initial damage 1d8 Dexterity, secondary damage 1d8 Constitution.

*Spell-like Abilities:* 3/day—animate dead, blasphemy, create undead, desecrate, detect good, detect magic, dispel magic, fly, improved invisibility, lightning bolt, magic circle against good, polymorph self, pyrotechnics, suggestion, shout, teleport without error (self plus 100 lbs. only), unholy aura, unhallowed, wall of stone; 1/day—finger of death, symbol (any). Save DC = 12 + spell level.

*Spell Immunity (Su):* Each zhul has different immunities. This zhul is permanently immune to magic missile, fireball, and lightning bolt.

*Spell Turning (Su):* Spells cast at a zhul have a chance of being reflected back at their caster per spell turning. This ability is inherent, and requires no action on behalf of the zhul. Any level of spell can be turned. Whenever a zhul succeeds at a save against a spell by more than +5, the spell is automatically redirected back to the target as if the zhul had cast the spell itself. The same is true of any spell resistance that succeeds in protecting the zhul. Such spells are automatically redirected back at the caster. Spells that have no save DC or ignore spell resistance still have a 25% chance of failing when the zhul is hit. If the zhul rolls a natural 20 or succeeds at the save by +10 or more, that spell becomes usable by the zhul once per day as an innate ability. If the zhul gains this benefit against a spell already in its repertoire, it gains an additional use of that spell per day. If the zhul succeeds at the save by +15 or more, it gains the above listed abilities, plus permanent immunity from that spell.

*Regeneration (Ex):* Fire and acid deal normal damage to a zhul, while all other damage is converted to subdual damage. If a zhul loses a limb or body part, the missing limb or chunk of flesh regenerates in 3d6 minutes. The zuhl can reattach the severed member instantly by holding it flush against the stump. If a zhul's head is severed, its body continues to function for 4d4 rounds, during which time the zhul desperately attempts to reattach its head in the above fashion. If it fails to do so in the allotted time, the zhul dies.

As usual, the zhul is vulnerable to attacks that do not deal hit point damage, such as most poisons and disintegration; similarly, it is affected normally by starvation, thirst, and suffocation. A zhul can be killed by massive damage normally; the massive trauma simply shuts down the zhul's nervous system, preventing it from regenerating the damage.

**Development:** The Abyssals send five fiendlings through the passageway immediately, assuming their deaths but hoping they can do damage. The zhul casts spells over the head of the short fiendlings.

Once the entryway is clear, the golgoths and remaining fiendlings try to come through, followed by the brullahkas, who look for strong opponents to drain the life from. The zhul stays back casting spells as long as possible, then comes out with his swords drawn.

All Abyssals coming through the entrance try to keep the entryway clear while engaging their enemies. The ideal set-up for the Abyssals would be for the zhul to stand by the entry point, casting spells, while the golgoths keep it as safe as possible and the fiendlings and brullakhas range farther out. The Abyssals attempt to kill all front-line combatants before moving on to attack the other villagers.

Not all Dwarves in Stoneheart join in combat. Dwarves involved are: six guards (two from the Abyssal Entry Point, two from the barracks entry room, two from Brash's room), Brash, Marl Korservant, Twist and Ruby. No other villagers join the conflict unless the PCs have devised a combat plan involving them and convinced them to carry it out. Under no circumstance do the two guards by the exit to Rockhome road leave their post.

Unless they agreed to another plan, Twist and Ruby fight without strategy, charging at the closest Abyssal. The other Dwarves break into two groups, three guards with Brash and three guards with Korservant. Brash's group approaches the right side of the entry point, Korservant's group the left. They want to push the zhul back and secure the entrance, then clear up any Abyssals that get through.

If the party put a wall in front of the entrance before the Abyssals arrive, the Abyssals must break through before entering. The alarms sound with the first assaults on the wall. The PCs and Dwarves have extra time to prepare for the battle and position themselves before the Abyssals break through.

*Treasure:* The only Abyssal to carry anything is the zhul, who has a ring of protection +4 and two +2 longswords of brilliant energy.

### Encounter 6: Adjustments Between Assaults

**Read aloud:** *The screeching of the Abyssals has finally stopped. The only screams left are of dead and dying Dwarves, and they are growing more and more faint.*

**Development:** One or more of the Dwarf leaders could die in the first conflict. The chain of command in Stoneheart is as follows:

1. Marl Korservant
2. Brash
3. Justice Soulwrath
4. Hurl Longshaft

Any new leader continues Korservant's policies of only giving passes to one person. If Soulwrath is in charge, he joins the final battle regardless of whether the PCs ask him to or not. If Longshaft is in charge, he stands on the edge of the battlefield giving orders but does not join the battle himself unless he is the only Dwarf left or is attacked in melee combat.

The NPCs who have important information or materials for the PCs (Soulwrath, Longshaft, Stoker, the mourner) all survive the first assault unless the PCs convinced some of them to fight on the front line. If Soulwrath is killed, his ability to help the PCs is lost. No one else can cast the spells that bring the gargoyle to life. If Stoker is killed, any PC can try to finish the mauls he started, as described in **Part 2.**

Longshaft's knowledge about Sear's mission to trade iron does not die with him; Korservant knew about the mission and its probable failure as well. If both Longshaft and Korservant die, there is no one else who knows Sear was carrying iron, and the mauls cannot be completed. If Twist and Ruby die, there is no one else in Stoneheart with their expertise with the maul, but anyone who wants to can try to use one.

If the PCs are absent from Stoneheart when the first assault occurs, or if they stay away from the battle, the Dwarves repel the attack, but Brash, Twist, Stoker, and three guards die. The attitude of the entire village toward the PCs is unfriendly and the PCs must work to gain Korservant's or Soulwrath's trust by making them at least friendly (DC 25) if they want to work on the gargoyle or the mauls.

### Encounter 7: The Final Assault

**Read aloud:** *The rhythm of war drums fills the air again, followed immediately by the wrenching screams of a ferocious Abyssal assault. They are coming again.*

This is the big one. At the end of this fight, the Abyssals will either have control of Stoneheart or will cease their attacks in the area for quite some time. Again, there are two minutes from the initial warning to the attack itself.

**When the Abyssals are at the entry point, read aloud:** *This attack is twice the size of the first. The fiendlings in front swarm through, all glowing eyes and razor claws, while the demons in back push forward for the chance to taste Dwarf flesh. Behind them all is a tall figure wearing a mask whose glowing ivory skull pierces the cavern's darkness.*

The final assault includes a base force and possible additional Abyssals determined by the amount of time the PCs have spent pursuing other adventures (see sidebar Additional Abyssals in the Final Assault). The base force is seventeen fiendlings, six golgoths, four brullahka, two zhuls, and Gar-Magog, an Abyssal lord. Statistics for fiendlings, golgoths, brullahka, and zhuls are given above in the first assault.

Creatures:

- **Fiendlings:** hp 13, 9, 6, 11, 6, 13, 11, 12, 10, 8, 7, 10, 9, 11, 4, 12, 5.
- **Golgoths:** hp 62, 68, 64, 63, 70, 58.
- **Brullahkas:** hp 114, 106, 103, 108.
- **Zhuls:** hp 136, 129.
- **Gar-Magog:** hp 181.

**Gar-Magog, Zhul:** CR 15; Large aberration (Greater Abyssal); HD 21d8+105; hp 181; Init +4; Speed 30 ft.; AC 26, touch 13, flat-footed 23; Base Atk +15; Grp +24; Atk +20 melee (1d8+5 plus poison (19–20/x2), longsword); Full Atk +20/+15/+10 (1d8+5 plus poison (19–20/x2), 2 +3 longswords); Space/Reach 10 ft./5 ft.; AL CE; SA Fear aura, poison, spell-like abilities; SQ Abyssal traits, regeneration 5, spell turning, spell immunity, spell resistance 16, damage reduction 5/good; SV Fort +12, Ref +13, Will +15; Str 20, Dex 18, Con 20, Int 16, Wis 16, Cha 14.

*Skills and Feats:* Climb +15, Concentration +20, Diplomacy +12, Intimidate +20, Jump +21, Knowledge (great abyss) +17, Sense Motive +14, Spot +17; Dodge, Mobility, Spring Attack, Two Weapon Fighting, Improved Two Weapon Fighting, Power Attack, Lightning Reflexes, Leadership.

**Abyssal Traits:**

- *Astral (Ex):* Abyssals are astral creatures. They exist simultaneously both on the prime material plane and in the Abyss, a tiny plane surrounding the Dragon's corpse. As such, any melee or ranged attack that targets an Abyssal has a 50% miss chance, unless the attack is made with a +1 or better magical weapon (in the case of ranged attacks, only the projectile must bear the enchantment, not necessarily the weapon itself). This is in all ways like incorporeality.
- *Darkvision (Ex):* Range of 120 feet.
- *Immunities (Ex):* Abyssals are immune to all mind-affecting effects, including spells and spell-like abilities, paralysis, poison, sleep, stunning, disease and death effects. Abyssals are also immune to fire, ability drain, and energy drain.
- *Resistances (Ex):* Abyssals have cold, poison and electricity resistance 20.
- *Spell-like Abilities:* All Abyssals have the following spell-like abilities: 3/day — chaos hammer, darkness, doom, and scorching ray. In addition, greater Abyssals may cast unholy aura at will.
- *Telepathy (Ex):* Greater Abyssals have the ability to communicate telepathically with any creature within 100 ft. The target of this ability must be able to speak (or at least clearly understand) at least one language. The Abyssal's telepathy automatically translates its thoughts into the language best understood by the recipient. The Abyssal may only communicate with one non-Abyssal in this fashion at a time. A greater Abyssal may telepathically communicate with any number of Abyssals at once, provided they are in range.

*Fear Aura (Su):* A zhul is constantly surrounded by a 60-ft. radius aura of fear. Anyone within range must succeed at a DC 19 Will save or become panicked for 2d6 rounds. Even those who save successfully are considered shaken so long as they remain within range. Creatures that successfully save cannot be affected by the same aura of fear for 24 hours, but remain shaken, even if they leave the aura and return later.

*Poison (Ex):* Injury, Fortitude DC 22, initial damage 1d8 Dexterity, secondary damage 1d8 Constitution.

*Spell-like Abilities:* 3/day—animate dead, blasphemy, create undead, desecrate, detect good, detect magic, dispel magic, fly, improved invisibility, lightning bolt, magic circle against good, polymorph self, pyrotechnics, suggestion, shout, teleport without error (self plus 100 lbs. only), unholy aura, unhallowed, wall of stone; 1/day—finger of death, symbol (any). Save DC = 12 + spell level.

*Spell Immunity (Su):* Each zhul has different immunities. Choose three arcane spells, totaling no more levels than it has Hit Dice. Gar-Magog is permanently immune to magic missile, fireball, and web.

*Spell Turning (Su):* Spells cast at a zhul have a chance of being reflected back at their caster per spell turning. This ability is inherent, and requires no action on behalf of the zhul. Any level of spell can be turned. Whenever a zhul succeeds at a save against a spell by more than +5, the spell is automatically redirected back to the target as if the zhul had cast the spell itself. The same is true of any spell resistance that succeeds in protecting the zhul. Such spells are automatically redirected back at the caster. Spells that have no save DC or ignore spell resistance still have a 25% chance of failing when the zhul is hit. If the zhul rolls a natural 20 or succeeds at the save by +10 or more, that spell becomes usable by the zhul once per day as an innate ability. If the zhul gains this benefit against a spell already in its repertoire, it gains an additional use of that spell per day. If the zhul succeeds at the save by +15 or more, it gains the above listed abilities, plus permanent immunity from that spell.

### Additional Abyssals in the Final Assault

**The PCs may have dealt a blow to the Abyssal armies earlier, but the Abyssals quickly refill their ranks. For every adventure after Black Forge but before Abyssal Attack, add the following Abyssals to the base force: three fiendlings, a golgoth and a brullahka or zhul. If the PCs recall the adventure Black Forge, they recognize the Abyssal lord Gar-Magog, who seeks retribution against the PCs for their role at Black Forge. He is substantially more powerful than when the PCs last met him.**

### The Abyssal Lord's Letter

"Almighty Gar-Magog,
Thy tolerance and mercy in dealing with minor creatures like myself is most gratefully acknowledged. Thy patience will soon bear fruit, as thy early assaults' savagery hath brought the Dwarves to their knees. I urge thee, muster thy forces for a final assault, led by thy most puissant sword. The Dwarves shall fall before thee, and the path to the surface will be clear. The portion of the world promised thee by my masters will be ready for thee to ravage.
Awaiting your mighty wrath,
Farrakell"

*Regeneration (Ex):* Fire and acid deal normal damage to a zhul, while all other damage is converted to subdual damage. If a zhul loses a limb or body part, the missing limb or chunk of flesh regenerates in 3d6 minutes. The zuhl can reattach the severed member instantly by holding it flush against the stump. If a zhul's head is severed, its body continues to function for 4d4 rounds, during which time the zhul desperately attempts to reattach its head in the above fashion. If it fails to do so in the allotted time, the zhul dies.

As usual, the zhul is vulnerable to attacks that do not deal hit point damage, such as most poisons and disintegration; similarly, it is affected normally by starvation, thirst, and suffocation. A zhul can be killed by massive damage normally; the massive trauma simply shuts down the zhul's nervous system, preventing it from regenerating the damage.

**Development:** The Abyssals' tactics are similar to those of the first battle. The fiendlings and golgoths burst through first and run loose while the zhuls and Gar-Magog stay back and do their damage from a distance. The zhuls stay in front of Gar-Magog to shield him from any ranged attacks, though they have to leave enough space for his spells to get though. If Gar-Magog is blocked from the battle, he Climbs walls to get into position to throw spells into the battle. As soon as he is in range of anyone, PC or NPC, he lets loose his mask of the skull.

If the mourner is still alive and functional when the second battle occurs, the Abyssals divide themselves into two groups. One group stays with Gar-Magog and comes through the existing entry point. The mourner helps the other group open a new entrance east of the existing entry point and attack the PCs and NPCs from behind. The mourner joins in the assault. If the mourner is dead or otherwise incapacitated, all Abyssals come through the single entry point.

If the PCs did not complete any of the available tasks in the past ten hours, the Dwarf tactics will be the same as the first battle. Any tasks completed will alter strategy. If Twist and/or Ruby have mauls, they will try to trip Abyssals at the entry point instead of attacking indiscriminately. If the gargoyle was completed, the Dwarves will send it in to take the brunt of the early attacks and block off the entry point. If the PCs helped construct new fortifications, they are responsible for drawing up new tactics with the NPCs.

*Treasure:* Both zhuls are equipped like the zhul from the previous attack. Gar-Magog has two +3 longswords, a major circlet of blasting, a mask of the skull, a ring of climbing and a letter (see sidebar *The Abyssal Lord's Letter*).

## Part 4: If the Party Misses the Final Assault

If the party is away from Stoneheart when the final assault occurs, they return to find the Watchpoint overrun by Abyssals and all the Dwarves dead. The following Abyssals have survived: ten fiendlings, two golgoths, two brullahkas, a zhul and Gar-Magog. During the first day after the Abyssals' victory, they receive reinforcements every three hours. The reinforcements consist of four fiendlings, two golgoths and a zhul. That means after 24 hours Stoneheart Watchpoint holds 42 fiendlings, 18 golgoths, two brullahkas, nine zhuls and Gar-Magog. The PCs will need to be much stronger than their current level to take Stoneheart back from the Abyssals.

## Part 5: Concluding the Adventure

If the PCs turned back the Abyssals, **read aloud:** The Abyssal threat at Stoneheart is over — for now. Every Dwarf knows the Abyssals will come back, because they always come back. At this moment, though, they are beaten.

Stoneheart has been devastated, but it could have been much worse if this force of Abyssals broke through to the surface. They would have found a whole new banquet of surface dwellers to feast upon.

But today you are victorious. Today the survivors of Stoneheart can believe they will live to see more than a handful of tomorrows. Their celebration will be more relieved than boisterous, but their gratitude is profound. As long as there are Dwarves in Stoneheart, you have friends in the underworld.

The Dwarves have very little with which to reward the party, but Korservant (or whoever is in charge if Korservant has perished) makes gives the best treasure carried by the Abyssals to the party. At least one Dwarf is absent from the victory celebration, as he travels to Rockhome with the hope of finally getting through.

The PCs can rest in Stoneheart for as long as they wish. If they stay for a day or more, a small group or reinforcements arrives from a nearby Watchpoint.

**If Stoneheart fell to the Abyssals, read aloud:** *Stoneheart is gone. The Abyssals have a clear path to the surface. They now have access to a whole new realm upon which to feast.*

*It is too late to retake Stoneheart. All that can be done now is to find those who helped the Abyssals take Stoneheart, those who have done so much harm to the Accordlands, and stop them before their plots reach fruition.*

If Stoneheart is in the hands of the Abyssals at the end of the adventure, PCs have a chance of encountering Abyssals any time they are in Sarakia. Each day, there is a 25% chance they encounter a group of five fiendlings and two golgoths.

# Part 6: The Stone of Fortune

**If the PCs successfully turned back the Abyssals, read aloud:** *For a moment, you wonder if you have somehow erred, as the stone projects a vision of the Abyssal legions surging through the tunnels. Soon, however, you see the truth: the Abyssals are retreating in panic, trampling their slower brethren as they go.*

**If the PCs failed to turn back the Abyssals, read aloud:** *You breathe a sigh of relief as the stone shows you Sarakia, just as you left it... and then, impossibly, the earth rolls like a sea in summer gale. The parched earth cracks, and the Dragon's foul brood spills out into the World Above.*

# Part 7: New Monsters

GAR-MAGOG (ABYSSAL LORD)

**Large Aberration**
**Hit Dice:** 21d8+105 (181 hp)
**Initiative:** +4
**Speed:** 30 ft. (6 squares)
**AC:** 26 (–1 size, +2 deflection, +3 Dex, +13 natural), touch 13, flat-footed 24
**Base Attack/Grapple:** +15/+24
**Attacks:** 2 longswords +20 melee (1d8+5 plus poison (19–20/x2))
**Space/Reach:** 10 ft./5 ft.
**Special Attacks:** Fear aura, poison, spell-like abilities
**Special Qualities:** Abyssal traits, regeneration 5, spell turning, spell immunity, spell resistance 16, damage reduction 5/good
**Saves:** Fort +12, Ref +13, Will +15
**Abilities:** Str 20, Dex 18, Con 20, Int 16, Wis 16, Cha 14
**Skills:** Climb +15, Concentration +20, Diplomacy +12, Intimidate +20, Jump +21, Knowledge (great abyss) +17, Sense Motive +14, Spot +17
**Feats:** Dodge, Mobility, Spring Attack, Two Weapon Fighting, Improved Two Weapon Fighting, Power Attack, Lightning Reflexes, Leadership
**Climate/Terrain:** Underground
**Organization:** Unique (leads Abyssals)
**Challenge Rating:** 15
**Treasure:** Mask of the skull
**Alignment:** Chaotic Evil
**Advancement:** —

Gar-Magog rose to prominence because of his patience and his willingness to form alliances, two rare qualities among Abyssals. Any being who mistakes those traits for softness, though, is soon corrected. Gar-Magog may take his time, but only so that his assaults will be all the more devastating.

Gar-Magog also has a stronger survival instinct than other Abyssals, who often get caught up in wreaking havoc at the expense of their existence. He likes to surround himself with large forces and let them do as much work for him as possible. When he decides to fight, he is powerful, precise, and deadly.

His face and body are covered with the hooks and spines characteristic of a zhul, but he is blue-black instead of scarlet in color. He accentuates his fierce appearance with a skull-like mask, which has red and black spines protruding from the top and back.

COMBAT

Gar-Magog commands troops from the rear, throwing spells over his troops' heads while they attack. He climbs walls to find clear sight lines for his spells instead of charging ahead if blocked. As soon as he is within 50 feet of an enemy, he uses his mask of the skull. If the battle goes against him and he starts losing troops, he first summons more through his summon monster VII ability, before charging into the fray himself.

**Abyssal Traits:**

- **Astral (Ex):** Abyssals are astral creatures. They exist simultaneously both on the prime material plane and in the Abyss, a tiny plane surrounding the Dragon's corpse. As such, any melee or ranged attack that targets an Abyssal has a 50% miss chance, unless the attack is made with a +1 or better magical weapon (in the case of ranged attacks, only the projectile must bear the enchantment, not necessarily the weapon itself). This is in all ways like incorporeality.
- **Darkvision (Ex):** Range of 120 feet.
- **Immunities (Ex):** Abyssals are immune to all mind-affecting effects, including spells and spell-like abilities, paralysis, poison, sleep, stunning, disease and death effects. Abyssals are also immune to fire, ability drain, and energy drain.
- **Resistances (Ex):** Abyssals have cold, poison and electricity resistance 20.
- **Spell-like Abilities:** All Abyssals have the following spell-like abilities: 3/day — chaos hammer, darkness, doom, and scorching ray. In addition, greater Abyssals may cast unholy aura at will.
- **Telepathy (Ex):** Greater Abyssals have the ability to communicate telepathically with any creature within 100 ft. The target of this ability must be able to speak (or at least clearly understand) at least one language. The Abyssal's telepathy automatically translates its thoughts into the language best understood by the recipient. The Abyssal may only communicate with one non-Abyssal in this fashion at a time. A greater Abyssal may telepathically communicate with any number of Abyssals at once, provided they are in range.

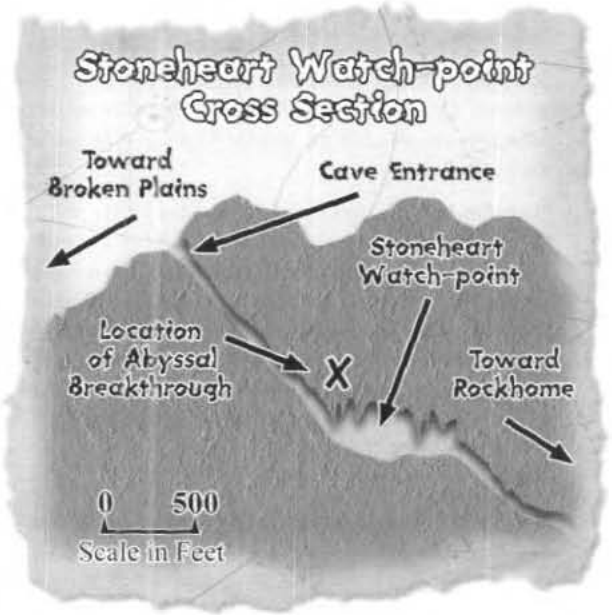
*Fear Aura (Su):* A zhul is constantly surrounded by a 60-ft. radius aura of fear. Anyone within range must succeed at a DC 19 Will save or become panicked for 2d6 rounds. Even those who save successfully are considered shaken so long as they remain within range. Creatures that successfully save cannot be affected by the same aura of fear for 24 hours, but remain shaken, even if they leave the aura and return later.

*Poison (Ex):* Injury, Fortitude DC 22, initial damage 1d8 Dexterity, secondary damage 1d8 Constitution.

*Spell-like Abilities:* 3/day—animate dead, blasphemy, create undead, desecrate, detect good, detect magic, dispel magic, fly, improved invisibility, lightning bolt, magic circle against good, polymorph self, pyrotechnics, suggestion, shout, teleport without error (self plus 100 lbs. only), unholy aura, unhallowed, wall of stone; 1/day—finger of death, symbol (any). Save DC = 12 + spell level.

*Spell Immunity (Su):* Each zhul has different immunities. Choose three arcane spells, totaling no more levels than it has Hit Dice. Gar-Magog is permanently immune to magic missile, fireball, and web.

*Spell Turning (Su):* Spells cast at a zhul have a chance of being reflected back at their caster per spell turning. This ability is inherent, and requires no action on behalf of the zhul. Any level of spell can be turned. Whenever a zhul succeeds at a save against a spell by more than +5, the spell is automatically redirected back to the target as if the zhul had cast the spell itself. The same is true of any spell resistance that succeeds in protecting the zhul. Such spells are automatically redirected back at the caster. Spells that have no save DC or ignore spell resistance still have a 25% chance of failing when the zhul is hit. If the zhul rolls a natural 20 or succeeds at the save by +10 or more, that spell becomes usable by the zhul once per day as an innate ability. If the zhul gains this benefit against a spell already in its repertoire, it gains an additional use of that spell per day. If the zhul succeeds at the save by +15 or more, it gains the above listed abilities, plus permanent immunity from that spell.




*Regeneration (Ex):* Fire and acid deal normal damage to a zhul, while all other damage is converted to subdual damage. If a zhul loses a limb or body part, the missing limb or chunk of flesh regenerates in 3d6 minutes. The zuhl can reattach the severed member instantly by holding it flush against the stump. If a zhul's head is severed, its body continues to function for 4d4 rounds, during which time the zhul desperately attempts to reattach its head in the above fashion. If it fails to do so in the allotted time, the zhul dies.

As usual, the zhul is vulnerable to attacks that do not deal hit point damage, such as most poisons and disintegration; similarly, it is affected normally by starvation, thirst, and suffocation. A zhul can be killed by massive damage normally; the massive trauma simply shuts down the zhul's nervous system, preventing it from regenerating the damage.

# Part 8: New Magic Items

BELL OF THUNDER

**Minor Artifact**

The bell of thunder looks like an ordinary cowbell and, when it is rung, generally sounds like an ordinary cowbell. It has a small button on the side of the handle. If the button is pressed and held while the bell is rung, the noise from the bell becomes thunderous. The effect is equivalent to the spell shout as cast by a 9th-level wizard. This ability can be used twice a day. Any attempts to use it more than twice a day results in the regular cowbell sound.

**Caster level:** 9th; Prerequisites: Craft Wondrous Item, shout; Market Price: 9,150 gp. Weight: 1/2 pound.



# The Terror of Sharn Keep

## Introduction

In The Terror of Sharn Keep the PCs are sealed in an isolated mountain fortress with a bunch of Nothrog, a handful of other waylaid travelers, and one of the most feared creatures in the Accordlands.

This is one of four adventures in Tier 5. It is meant for characters of levels 8–10.

## Adventure Synopsis

The PCs may be brought to Sharn Keep for a variety of reasons, but all PCs arriving at the keep should know something has happened without having any clear idea what it is.

A reaver, the Terror of Sharn Keep, has taken over. The PCs should not know that a reaver is behind the troubles until they meet it in its lair in the third level of the keep, though PCs who have completed Condor Pass might have an inkling of what is going on.

Reavers are among the most feared creatures in the Accordlands, and the Terror gives the PCs all they can handle if the PCs confront it face to face. Reavers derive their power from their ability to have other creatures do their bidding. The reaver's preferred combat strategy is to sit comfortably in its lair while its legions of slaves do its bidding. This does not mean that a lone reaver stripped of these followers is not formidable.

The Terror of Sharn Keep used its maddening presence ability on other creatures to take over the keep, enslaving a nearby Nothrog legion and commanding it to kill most of the Deverenians in Sharn Keep. One of the two Deverenian survivors of the reaver's attack now serves the reaver (unwittingly) in Condor Pass, while the other is hidden within the keep. The surviving Nothrog remain in the keep to serve and protect the reaver.

These Nothrog are not enough to suit the reaver, which does not acknowledge the existence of "enough." The Terror has a number of schemes to increase its wealth and power, such as the invasion of Condor Pass by its offspring. It also radiates a strong allure that brings passers-by into the keep, even though they do not know why they are coming.

This is the environment the PCs stumble into. To prevent the Terror from expanding its control deeper into the Accordlands, they must deal with Nothrog slaves; creatures from surrounding lands summoned by the reaver; creatures being bred by the reaver; and, finally, the reaver itself.

The PCs are not the only adventurers in the keep; another less-noble group arrived before them. The primary goal of this second group is gain; securing treasure for themselves without fixing the evil of the keep is fine with them.

The reaver is an inert villain — it waits patiently in his lair until the PCs arrive. The other party of adventurers, by contrast, is continually on the move, hatching a series of schemes and plots that may help or hinder the PCs. More details about working with this group of NPCs are found in the various Encounters in the adventure.

# Area 1: Sharn Keep

Sharn Keep is in a small cluster of mountains at the southern end of the Deverenian Empire, close to Nothrog lands. Like many border keeps, Sharn has seen plenty of combat, but never changed hands until recent years, when the Terror took over. The hewn stone walls, cut so precisely that the stones fit together without mortar, instantly announce the Deverenian character of the keep.

Though primarily a military outpost, Sharn has served as a stop for merchants during peaceful times, and it has also housed diplomats in negotiations with the Nothrog. Thus, some of the rooms within the keep are more opulent than functional.

The Terror is doing its best to conceal its presence, and has set up its slaves to operate as if this is a real Nothrog conquest. Most Nothrog in the keep (besides the PCs and two NPCs) honestly believe that Arak'honn commands the keep. They believe the keep was taken under the orders of the legion's powerful new totem. They can't remember any details about this totem, and become angry if pressed.

Most Nothrog in Sharn are either guards or servants. Statistics for each are below:

**Creatures:** Nothrog guards, 6th-level fighters; Nothrog servants, 2nd-level fighters.

**Nothrog guards, Male and Female Nothrog Ftr 6:** CR 6; Medium humanoid (Nothrog); HD 6d10+6; hp (varies); Init +1; Spd 20 ft.; AC 16, touch 11, flat-footed 15; Base Atk +6; Grp +9; Atk +11 melee (1d8+8(19–20/x2), Nothrog longblade) or +8 ranged (1d6+1/x3, shortbow); Full Atk +11/+6 melee (1d8+8(19–20x2), Nothrog longblade) or +8/+3 ranged (1d6+1/x3, shortbow); SA Favored weapon (Nothrog longblade, shortbow), improved damage (Nothrog longblade); SQ Nothrog traits; AL LE; SV Fort +6, Ref +3, Will +3; Str 17, Dex 12, Con 13, Int 13, Wis 12, Cha 8.

*Skills and Feats:* Bluff +1, Climb +2*, Listen +4, Jump +2*, Ride +4, Spot +4; Alertness, Point Blank Shot, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (Nothrog longblade), Weapon Specialization (Nothrog longblade). *includes –5 armor check penalty

*Favored Weapon (Nothrog longblade, shortbow):* A guard gains a +1 competence bonus to attack and damage rolls with the Nothrog longblade and shortbow.

*Improved Damage (Nothrog longblade):* A guard does an additional +2 (+3 total) damage with the Nothrog longblade.

*Possessions:* Chainmail, Nothrog longblade, shortbow.

**Nothrog servants, Male and Female Nothrog Ftr 2:** CR 2; Medium humanoid (Nothrog); HD 2d10+2; hp (varies); Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; AC 12, touch 11, flat-footed 11; Base Atk +2; Grp +4; Atk +6 melee (1d6+3(19–20/x2), short sword); Full Atk +6 melee (1d6+3(19–20/x2), short sword); SA Favored weapon (short sword); SQ Nothrog traits; AL LE; SV Fort +4, Ref +1, Will +0; Str 15, Dex 12, Con 13, Int 11, Wis 10, Cha 10.

*Skills and Feats:* Diplomacy +3, Sense Motive +2; Alertness, Favored Weapon (short sword), Weapon Focus (short sword).

*Favored Weapon (short sword):* A servant gains a +1 competence bonus to attack and damage rolls with the short sword.

*Possessions:* Padded armor, short sword.

**Development:** Nothrog on each level of the keep refer questions from the adventurers to the watch commander of that level (*see Table 11–1*). Unless otherwise noted, that is all the Nothrog say, and they do not speak unless spoken to. Each watch commander is hostile, and looks for any pretext to attack the PCs. Nothrog not involved in these combats do not believe they occurred, no matter how much evidence the PCs show them. The PCs could show the Nothrog on the second floor the decapitated head of the commander of the first floor watch, and the second floor Nothrog would admit it is unfortunate that the commander's head is no longer with his body while refusing to believe anything is amiss. Signs like this should let the PCs know that all is not right with these Nothrog.

Another sign something is wrong is the treatment by the Nothrog of their dead. Any dead Nothrog lie where they fall until the Terror's closest servants can gather them when no one is watching. There are no funeral pyres in Sharn. PCs that successfully Hide in any room with Nothrog corpses see other Nothrog enter the room half an hour after the combat and drag the bodies away. The bodies are taken to the large staircase, hauled up to the third level and taken to **Location 4.11**, where the bodies are

disposed of by the reaver.

Arak'honn is the ostensible commander, but he answers to the Terror. The Terror's purpose is to amass power and wealth both through luring travelers to its keep and through more sophisticated schemes like controlling trade across the Nothrog/Deverenian border.

All buildings besides the central keep and guard towers are being used as warehouses for people and creatures that have been drawn into the keep and are now trapped inside. When the Terror decides it needs them for either food or additional slaves, they are brought into the central building under the pretense of being admitted for an audience with a Nothrog in authority. Populations for each building in the keep are listed in **Part 1**.

The central keep is the Terror's headquarters. The Terror is not averse to fighting, but it likes to do it on its terms instead of having creatures burst into its lair. It also wants to protect the secret of its existence for as long as possible, knowing it functions best from the shadows. The Terror of Sharn Keep has positioned the Nothrog and other creatures in its service precisely where it wants them to be. They do not wander, so there are no random encounters in Sharn Keep unless the PCs attempt to rest. If they do, there is a 15% chance every hour that a patrol of four guards finds them sleeping and prods them to wake up. The guards do not attack; they simply do not want strangers sleeping in the keep.

However, the PCs may encounter creatures besides those listed in the rooms of the keep because of the workings of the rogue adventurers (unless the PCs kill the rogue adventurers before they enter the central building). Before the individual room descriptions of each level of the central building is a section describing what the rogue adventurers are up to on that level and where the PCs might encounter them.

The rogue adventurers' activities depend on the PCs' location. If the PCs leave a particular level before the rogue adventurers finish their plan for that level, the rogue adventurers drop their plans and travel upward. If the PCs subsequently return to the lower level, the rogue adventurers return as well and pick up their plans where they left them. This means that if the PCs travel up to level two then back down to level one, the rogue adventurers return to their efforts to set up a glyph of warding, postponing their attempt to set a fire and smoke out Nothrog guards until the PCs return to the second level.

Some of the rogue adventurers' actions are determined by their current attitude toward the PCs. Their basic plans remain the same, but the targets of their activities may change. Specific changes are listed with each section.

Each level of the keep contains three staircases to the next level higher (or lower), and each staircase can be accessed from any part of each level as long as certain secret doors are uncovered. This makes it entirely possible for two separate groups of adventurers to travel parallel paths through the keep, going up and down without running into each other.

TABLE 11–1:
COMMANDERS OF EACH LEVEL OF THE CENTRAL KEEP

| Level | Commander |
|---|---|
| 1 | Krax |
| 2 | Ypollonk |
| 3 | Arak'honn |

# Part 1: Entering the Keep

## Location 1: Sharn Keep *(map page 496)*

## Location 1.1: The Gates

The adventure begins as the PCs approach the exterior gates of Sharn Keep.

**Read aloud:** *Sharn Keep is built into the side of a bare gray mountain, thrusting out like a fist. Its smooth stone walls are slightly darker than the rock upon which it perches. No flags fly from the octagonal towers at either end of the front wall.*

*The gates to the keep stand wide open. No one is visible, but four windows above the gateway overlook the entrance.*

**When the PCs are within ten feet of the gate, read aloud:** *A flat voice calls from a window above. "You are entering Sharn Keep, led by Legion Commander Arak'honn. State your business."*

Any business the PCs state, including "Killing you, your commander, and anyone else we see," works. The PCs may enter Sharn without difficulty.

**When the PCs are at least 30 feet inside the keep, read aloud:** *With a clatter and a crash, a portcullis falls. A more muffled sound announces a second portcullis closing behind it.*

*The guards above the gate remain silent, offering no explanation for why the gates have closed.*

The gates are two iron portcullises. At the first attempt to lift or break the portcullis, the Nothrog above the gate shout down a warning. Should the PCs continue to try to break free, all the Nothrog above the gate come down the stairs and attack.

**Iron portcullises:** 2 in. thick; hardness 10; hp 60; Break DC 28, Lift DC 25.

If the PCs get through the gates, leave Sharn and return later, everything is exactly the same. The guards allow them in on any business, and then shut the gates behind them.

The stone door to the room above the gate is in the wall just west of the gate. The stone door is locked from the inside. Eight Nothrog guards are in a plain room above the gate. The room holds them and nothing else.

**Door:** 4 in. thick; hardness 8; hp 60; Break DC 28.

**Creatures:** Eight Nothrog guards, 6th-level fighters *(see Area 1 for stats)*.

**Nothrog guards (8):** hp 34, 40, 43, 34, 28, 39, 50, 37.

## Location 1.2: Southwest Tower

This tower is occupied only for the first three days after the PCs enter Sharn. If they come here after three days, the tower is uninhabited.

**Read aloud:** *A thick stone door at the base of the tower sits ajar, revealing a spiral staircase. No noise comes from above, but a flickering yellow glow lights up the top of the stairs.*

**In the room at the top of the stairs, read aloud:** *Six windows, each only 6 inches wide, would give a good view downhill toward Nothrog territory if they were not boarded up. The room has nicer furniture than the typical guard tower: polished wooden chairs with thick burgundy cushions. Five Humans lounge on the chairs; one even has her feet up on an ottoman.*

The woman with her feet on the ottoman is Mataline, the leader of this group of mercenaries and the only person in the room capable of completing a sentence. The others greet the PCs when they enter and appear happy to answer any questions, but midway through the first sentence of anything they say they drift off into silence and stare vacantly in front of them. They are not certain of their names.

Mataline is certain she is on an important, high-paying job. She seems to remember the job has something to do with a shipment of goods heading to Denska, but she cannot recall what brought them to Sharn or what happened to the goods they were supposed to be transporting. Things are good in Sharn — Nothrog come out with food a couple of times each day, and this tower is comfortable. Mataline is content to wait, though she is not sure what she is waiting for.

Occasionally Mataline refers to "the six of us." If the PCs point out there are only five mercenaries in the room, Mataline looks puzzled but says nothing.

PCs searching the mercenaries' possessions may notice that they do not have much money. Mataline has no explanation for what happened to the money from their "high-paying job."

Mataline and her friends have already been exposed to the Terror of Sharn Keep, and are under the effects of its maddening presence ability. It has yet to issue them explicit orders beyond forbidding them to leave the Keep. Should the PCs try to convince them to leave, they will be highly resistant, to the point of violence if necessary.

**Creatures:** Two 6th-level fighters; two 6th-level rogues; Mataline, an 8th-level assassin.

**Mercenary Fighters (2), Male Human Ftr 6:** CR 6; Medium humanoid (Human); HD 6d10+12; hp 42, 44; Init +1; Spd 20 ft.; AC 16, touch 11, flat-footed 15; Base Atk +6; Grp +9; Atk +11 melee (1d8+8/x3, battleaxe); Full Atk +11 melee (1d8+8/x3, battleaxe); SA Favored weapon (battleaxe, longsword), improved damage (battleaxe); SQ —; AL CN; SV Fort +9, Ref +3, Will +4; Str 16, Dex 12, Con 15, Int 11, Wis 10, Cha 9.

*Skills and Feats:* Climb +4*, Handle Animal +3, Jump +3*, Profession (hunter) +3, Ride +5, Swim +2*; Alertness, Great Fortitude, Iron Will, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (battleaxe), Weapon Specialization (battleaxe). *includes –5 armor check penalty

*Favored Weapon (battleaxe, longsword):* A mercenary gains a +1 competence bonus to attack and damage rolls with the battleaxe and longsword.

*Improved Damage (battleaxe):* A mercenary does an additional +2 (+3 total) damage with the battleaxe.

*Possessions:* Chainmail, battleaxe.

**Mercenary Rogues (2), Male and Female Human Rog 6:** CR 6; Medium humanoid (Human); HD 6d6–6; hp17; Spd 30 ft.; Init +2; AC 15, touch 12, flat-footed 13; Base Atk +4; Grp +6; Atk +6 melee (1d8+2(19–20/x2), longsword) or +6 ranged (1d6/x3, shortbow); Full Atk +6 melee (1d8+2(19–20/x2), longsword) or +6 ranged (1d6/x3, shortbow); SA Sneak attack +2d6; SQ Catfall, evasion, hide in plain sight, improved nightsight; AL N; SV Fort +1, Ref +7, Will +3; Str 14, Dex 15, Con 9, Int 12, Wis 9, Cha 11.

*Skills and Feats:* Balance +7*, Bluff +5, Disable Device +9, Disguise +4, Escape Artist +5*, Forgery +4, Hide +7*, Move Silently +8*, Open Lock +9, Search +8, Sleight of Hand +6*, Tumble +5*, Use Rope +6, Wilderness Lore +5, Survival +5; Alertness, Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Iron Will. *includes –1 armor check penalty

*Catfall:* On a successful Reflex save (DC 10 + 1 for every 10 feet fallen), the rogue takes only half normal damage from a fall.

*Evasion:* If a rogue makes a successful Reflex saving throw against an attack that normally deals half damage on a successful save, he instead takes no damage. Evasion can be used only if the rogue is wearing light armor or no armor. A helpless rogue does not gain the benefit of evasion.

*Hide In Plain Sight:* Each time a rogue makes a Hide check, he may reduce the total penalty (if any) to his skill check by his rogue class level (6), to a minimum of 0.

*Improved Nightsight:* A rogue can see half again as far as normal in conditions of low light.

*Sneak Attack:* Anytime a rogue's target is denied a Dexterity bonus to AC, or when he flanks a target, the mercenary deals an additional 2d6 points of damage on a successful melee attack.

*Possessions:* Studded leather armor, longsword, shortbow.

**Mataline, Female Human Asn 8:** CR 8; Medium humanoid (Human); HD 8d6+8; hp 34; Spd 30 ft.; Init +3; AC 17, touch 13, flat-footed 14; Base Atk +6; Grp +8; Atk +10 melee (1d6+4/19–20, +2 short sword); Full Atk +10/+5 melee (1d6+4/19–20, +2 short sword); SA Crippling strike (+1d2), sneak attack +4d6; SQ Poison immunity and resistance +2, poison use, ruthless (attack action), skilled brewer, spells; AL N; SV Fort +3, Ref +9, Will +2; Str 14, Dex 17, Con 12, Int 13, Wis 10, Cha 14.

*Skills and Feats:* Balance +9, Climb +9, Disguise +7, Escape Artist +8, Hide +9, Jump +7, Listen +7, Move Silently +11, Poison +7; Alertness, Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Leadership.

*Crippling Strike:* When Mataline scores a critical hit in melee combat, rather than inflicting damage she may inflict normal damage (the hit point damage is not doubled as usual for a critical hit) plus 1d2 + her Intelligence modifier (+1) in temporary damage to the victim's Strength, Dexterity, or Constitution.

*Poison Immunity and Resistance:* Mataline has a +1 save bonus against all poisons and is immune to crypt wine and quicksilver poison.

*Poison Use:* Mataline is trained in the use of poison and never

risks accidentally poisoning herself when applying poison to a blade.

*Ruthless:* Mataline may make one coup de grace attack as a melee attack action once per round.

*Skilled Brewer:* Mataline is trained to brew poison and always has a +2 competence bonus to Poison skill checks.

*Sneak Attack:* Anytime Mataline's target is denied a Dexterity bonus to AC, or when she flanks a target, Mataline deals an additional 4d6 points of damage on a successful melee attack.

*Assassin Spells Prepared* (0/2; save DC 11 + spell level): 1st — obscuring mist, spider climb.

*Possessions:* +2 leather armor, +2 short sword.

*Treasure:* Several packs lie on the floor haphazardly. PCs may search any without objection from the mercenaries. The packs contain: 8 gp, paper, a vial of ink, three empty flasks and a potion of *aid*. None of the mercenaries remember that the potion is there and do not use it in combat.

## Location 1.3: Primary Barracks

**Read aloud:** *Empty cots fill this room. Up to 100 troops could sleep here if the keep were fully staffed. No one is here now.*

A door at the back of the room opens onto a staircase leading to **Location 1.4.** Any PCs glancing at the floor notice that it has been recently swept clean.

## Location 1.4: Southeast Tower

**Read aloud:** *A large man sits on the floor next to a chair that is clearly too small for him. He is slouched against the wall, his eyes half closed, his sword still by his side.*

**Development:** Initially this man, a mercenary, is like the mercenaries in **Location 1.2.** He seems amiable enough, but he cannot complete a sentence before drifting into silence. PCs making a successful Sense Motive check (DC 20) notice that his eyes are more alert than the other mercenaries and his hand occasionally edges toward his sword. His vagueness is an act.

The mercenary, a 7th-level scout named Brisbuck, has for the moment avoided the mental effects of the Terror, but he has not found a way out. He does not know about the Terror's existence, but he believes something is wrong with the Nothrog commander and knows for sure something is strange here.

He does not tell the PCs any of this unless he trusts them, and he does not trust them unless they bring him the pack from **Location 2.18.** He will ask them to find the pack, and describe it, but he does not know where in the tower it lies. If they return the pack, he immediately drops his act and levels with the PCs. He tells them he is on an important information-gathering mission for a foreign power desperate for information from the Deverenians. There are some coded messages he knows are in the keep but has not been able to locate. He does not feel he could make it through the keep by himself, but if the PCs retrieve the messages for him he will reward them.

If the PCs obtain the messages and deliver them to Brisbuck, he shows his gratitude by decoding the messages and giving the PCs a ruby worth 200 gp.

**Creature:** Brisbuck, a 7th-level scout.

**Brisbuck, Male Human Sct 7:** CR 7; Medium humanoid (Human); HD 7d8+7; hp 32; Spd 30 ft.; Init +4; AC 17, touch 14, flat-footed 13; Base Atk +5; Grp +8; Atk +8 melee (1d6+3(19–20/x2), short sword); Full Atk +8 melee (1d6+3(19–20/x2), short sword); SA Sneak attack +2d6; SQ Camouflage, precision, sniper, uncanny dodge (flanking); AL CG; SV Fort +6, Ref +9, Will +5; Str 16, Dex 18, Con 12, Int 13, Wis 16, Cha 12.

*Skills and Feats:* Concentration +7, Hide +11*, Knowledge (mountains) +7, Listen +9, Move Silently +11*, Search +7, Spot +11, Survival +9; Alertness, Dodge, Quick Draw, Run. *includes –1 armor check penalty

*Camouflage:* If he has at least ten rounds (one minute) to prepare a hiding place without detection, Brisbuck my take 20 on his Hide check in natural surroundings provided he remains perfectly still. This may require a Move Silently roll and does not exempt Brisbuck from circumstance penalties due to unfavorable terrain.

*Precision:* When making a ranged attack, if the target is within a number of range increments equal to half Brisbuck's level (3), his threat range is increased by 1.

*Sneak Attack:* Anytime Brisbuck's target is denied a Dexterity bonus to AC, or when he flanks a target, Brisbuck deals an additional 2d6 points of damage on a successful attack.

*Sniper:* Starting at 4th level, when Brisbuck is making a sneak attack with a ranged attack the AC value of cover or concealment of his target is reduced by 2. Total cover and concealment are unaffected by this ability.

*Uncanny Dodge (flanking):* Brisbuck retains his Dexterity bonus to AC if caught flat-footed or struck by an invisible attacker. He can no longer be flanked except by a character four levels higher with uncanny dodge.

*Possessions:* Studded leather armor, short sword.

*Treasure:* Brisbuck carries three rubies, each worth 200 gp.

## Location 1.5: Northwest Tower

**Read aloud:** *Two padded chairs with worn velvet upholstery are the only items in this room. Four narrow windows on the west wall have been boarded up.*

The windows are six inches wide, and the boards have a Break DC of 23. Removing the boards provides a decent view of the downward slope to the west.

If the PCs stay in this room continuously for more than three hours, a Nothrog servant comes in and wordlessly drops off a steaming tray of food. The food is meaty and quite good. The Nothrog delivering the food immediately returns to the kitchen on the first floor of the central building.

## Location 1.6: Stables

**Read aloud:** *A strange assortment of creatures roam inside the wide-open interior of this building. Most are wildlife from the surrounding areas, including a bear, some snakes, and a few wolves. Other, more exotic creatures roam these hallways as well. An Markappal basilysk attempts to dig into a nearby corner,and, most impressively, a makusog lumbers across the far end of the building.*

Once the PCs have been in the building three minutes, a large, nervous viper strikes. None of the other creatures care

about the viper's attack or its eventual death.

Any Search by the PCs reveals that the building formerly had several dividing walls, but they have all been removed. A successful Search (DC 22) reveals a loose flagstone in the floor near the northwest corner of the building. Beneath the flagstone are several broken bits of metal, 10 cp, 3 sp and 8 gp. A second successful Search (DC 15) discovers a ring of counterspells among the bits of metal.

**Creatures:** A black bear; a large viper; a medium constrictor; three wolves; a makusog; a Markappal basilysk.

**Black Bear (1):** CR 2; Medium animal; HD 3d8+6; hp 19; Init +1; Spd 40 ft.; AC 13, touch 11, flat-footed 12; Base Atk +2, Grp +6; Atk +6 melee (1d4+4/x2, claw); Full Atk +6/+6 melee (1d4+4/x2, claw), +1 melee (1d6+2/x2, bite); Space/Reach 5ft./5ft.; SA —; SQ Low-light vision, scent; AL N; SV Fort +5, Ref +4, Will +2; Str 19, Dex 13, Con 15, Int 2, Wis 12, Cha 6.

*Skills and Feats:* Climb +4, Listen +4, Spot +4, Swim +8*; Endurance, Run. *a black bear has a +4 racial bonus on Swim checks.

*Low-Light Vision:* A black bear can see twice as far as a Human in starlight, moonlight, torchlight, and similar conditions of shadowy illumination. It retains the ability to distinguish color and detail under these conditions.

*Scent:* The black bear can detect opponents within 30 feet by sense of smell. If the opponent is upwind, the range increases to 60 feet; if downwind, it drops to 15 feet. Strong scents, such as smoke or rotting garbage, can be detected at twice the ranges noted above. Overpowering scents, such as skunk musk or troglodyte stench, can be detected at triple normal range. When a creature detects a scent, the exact location of the source is not revealed—only its presence somewhere within range. The creature can take a move action to note the direction of the scent.

Whenever the creature comes within 5 feet of the source, the creature pinpoints the source's location.

**Snake, Large Viper (1):** CR 2; Large animal; HD 3d8; hp 13; Init +7; Spd 20 ft., climb 20 ft., swim 20 ft.; AC 15, touch 12, flat-footed 12; Base Atk +2, Grp +6; Atk +4 melee (1d4 plus poison/x2, bite); Full Atk +4 melee (1d4 plus poison/x2, bite); Space/Reach 10ft./5ft.; SA Poison; SQ Scent; AL N; SV Fort +3, Ref +6, Will +2; Str 10, Dex 17, Con 11, Int 1, Wis 12, Cha 2.

*Skills and Feats:* Balance +11, Climb +11, Hide +8, Listen +5, Spot +6, Swim +8; Improved Initiative, Weapon Finesse.

*Poison:* A viper has a poisonous bite that deals initial and secondary damage of 1d6 Con. The save DC is 11 and is Constitution-based.

*Scent:* The viper can detect opponents within 30 feet by sense of smell. If the opponent is upwind, the range increases to 60 feet; if downwind, it drops to 15 feet. Strong scents, such as smoke or rotting garbage, can be detected at twice the ranges noted above. Overpowering scents, such as skunk musk or troglodyte stench, can be detected at triple normal range. When a creature detects a scent, the exact location of the source is not revealed—only its presence somewhere within range. The creature can take a move action to note the direction of the scent.

Whenever the creature comes within 5 feet of the source, the creature pinpoints the source's location.

**Snake, Constrictor (1):** CR 2; Medium animal; HD 3d8+3+3; hp 19; Init +3; Spd 20 ft., climb 20 ft., swim 20 ft.; AC 15, touch 13, flat-footed 12; Base Atk +2, Grp +5; Atk +5 melee (1d3+4/x2, bite); Full Atk +5 melee (1d3+4/x2, bite); Space/Reach 5ft./5ft.; SA Constrict 1d3+4, improved grab; SQ Scent; AL N; SV Fort +4, Ref +6, Will +2; Str 17, Dex 17, Con 13, Int 1, Wis 12, Cha 2.

*Skills and Feats:* Balance +11, Climb +14, Hide +10, Listen +7, Spot +7, Swim +11; Alertness, Toughness.

*Constrict:* On a successful grapple check, a constrictor snake deals 1d3+4 points of damage.

*Improved Grab:* To use this ability, a constrictor snake must hit with its bite attack. It can then attempt to start a grapple as a free action without provoking an attack of opportunity. If it wins the grapple check, it establishes a hold and can constrict.

*Scent:* The constrictor can detect opponents within 30 feet by sense of smell. If the opponent is upwind, the range increases to 60 feet; if downwind, it drops to 15 feet. Strong scents, such as smoke or rotting garbage, can be detected at twice the ranges noted above. Overpowering scents, such as skunk musk or troglodyte stench, can be detected at triple normal range. When a creature detects a scent, the exact location of the source is not revealed—only its presence somewhere within range. The creature can take a move action to note the direction of the scent.

Whenever the creature comes within 5 feet of the source, the creature pinpoints the source's location.

**Wolves (3):** CR 1; Medium animal; HD 2d8+4; hp 13; Init +2; Spd 50 ft.; AC 14, touch 12, flat-footed 12; Base Atk +1, Grp +2; Atk +3 melee (1d6+1/x2, bite); Full Atk +3 melee (1d6+1/x2, bite); Space/Reach 5ft./5ft.; SA Trip; SQ Low-light vision, scent; AL N; SV Fort +5, Ref +5, Will +1; Str 13, Dex 15, Con 15, Int 2, Wis 12, Cha 6.

*Skills and Feats:* Hide +2, Listen +3, Move Silently +3, Spot +3, Survival +1*; Track, Weapon Focus (bite). *a wolf has a +4 racial bonus on Survival checks when tracking by scent.

*Low-Light Vision:* A wolf can see twice as far as a Human in starlight, moonlight, torchlight, and similar conditions of shadowy illumination. It retains the ability to distinguish color and detail under these conditions.

*Scent:* The wolf can detect opponents within 30 feet by sense of smell. If the opponent is upwind, the range increases to 60 feet; if downwind, it drops to 15 feet. Strong scents, such as smoke or rotting garbage, can be detected at twice the ranges noted above. Overpowering scents, such as skunk musk or troglodyte stench, can be detected at triple normal range. When a creature detects a scent, the exact location of the source is not revealed—only its presence somewhere within range. The creature can take a move action to note the direction of the scent.

Whenever the creature comes within 5 feet of the source, the creature pinpoints the source's location.

*Trip:* A wolf that hits with a bite attack can attempt to trip the opponent (+1 check modifier) as a free action without making a touch attack or provoking an attack of opportunity. If the attempt fails, the opponent cannot react to trip the wolf.

**Markappal Basilysk (1):** CR 1; Small magical beast; HD 1d10+4; hp 9; Init +3; Spd 20 ft., fly 60 ft. (average); AC 19, touch 14, flat-footed 16; Base Atk +1; Grp –5; Atk +5 melee (1d3–2/x2, claw); Full Atk +5 melee (1d3–2/x2, 2 claws); Space/Reach 5 ft./5 ft.; SA Petrifying gaze, spell-like abilities; SQ Fire resistance 5; AL N; SV Fort +6, Ref +5, Will +1; Str 7, Dex 16, Con 19, Int 1, Wis 12, Cha 6.

*Skills and Feats:* Hide +9*, Listen +4, Spot +4; Alertness, Weapon Finesse (claws). *The Markappal basilysk's natural coloration allows it a +8 racial bonus to Hide Checks in outdoor settings.

*Petrifying Gaze (Su):* Turn to stone 1d4 weeks, range 30 ft.; Fortitude DC 8 negates. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Unlike normal petrification, the creature's body continues to operate within the stone shell created from their own bodies. Inside this 'shell,' the opponent may very well starve before the effects of the gaze wear off. Each day, the victim is allowed a DC 13 Fortitude save, gaining a +1 circumstance bonus for each day spent trapped inside the shell.

A remove curse, break enchantment, or similar spell restores the creature, as does stone to flesh. Stone shape has a 25% chance of turning the creature back to normal; otherwise it reduces the duration of the petrification by 1 day.

*Spell-Like Abilities:* 1/day—jump, magic fang, obscuring mist. Caster level 5th.

**Makusog (1):** CR 13; Huge beast; HD 12d10+84; hp 144; Init +0; Spd 30 ft.; AC 28, touch 8, flat-footed 28; Base Atk +12; Grp +28; Atk +15 melee (1d8+8/x2, slam) or +18 melee (2d6+8/x2, gore); Full Atk +15 melee (1d8+8/x2, 2 slams), +13 melee (2d6+4/x2, gore); Space/Reach 15 ft./10 ft.; SA Rush, trample (4d6+12); SQ Low-light vision, damage reduction 10/piercing; AL N; SV Fort +17, Ref +10, Will +6; Str 27, Dex 10, Con 25, Int 1, Wis 12, Cha 10.

*Skills and Feats:* Listen +6, Spot +6, Survival +6; Awesome Blow, Beast of Burden, Follow Through, Power Attack, Run.

*Rush (Ex):* Once per minute, the makusog can increase its speed to triple normal movement for one round. During this time, its balance is precarious, and if the makusog suffers damage, it must make a Reflex save (DC 5 + damage suffered) or fall prone.

A fallen makusog must spend 3 full rounds rising to its feet. Any riders must make a DC 20 Reflex save, or be thrown from its back and suffer 3d6 falling damage.

*Trample (Ex):* As a standard action, a makusog may trample a Large prone opponent or Medium or smaller standing opponent dealing 4d6+12 bludgeoning damage. The victim is allowed an attack of opportunity, suffering a –4 circumstance penalty. Alternately, he is allowed a DC 24 Reflex save to halve the damage. The save DC is Strength-based.

*Low-Light Vision:* A makusog can see twice as far as a Human in starlight, moonlight, torchlight, and similar conditions of shadowy illumination. It retains the ability to distinguish color and detail under these conditions.

*Treasure:* 10 cp, 3 sp, 8 gp and a ring of counterspells hidden under a loose flagstone.

## Location 1.7: Tower of Duty

**Read aloud:** *The word "duty" is carved into this tower above the doorway, a clear sign of the Deverenian origins of Sharn Keep. The tower, made of stone one shade lighter than black, rises 60 feet into the air.*

**When the PCs are inside the tower, read aloud:** *The tower is hollow. A staircase winds along the inside wall to the top. Part of the roof is open, allowing a bit of natural light to fall onto a single wooden chair sitting in the middle of the room.*

This tower and its nearby twin were designed for Deverenians to sit in contemplation of their highest ideals. With no Deverenians in the keep, the towers remain empty.

The top floor of the central keep is lower than the top of the Tower of Duty, but the windows of the top floor of the keep are broad. Someone standing by those windows would be visible to someone on top of the tower, and vice versa.

A broad window looks into Location of the third level of the keep, where a Nothrog guard armed with a shortbow is plainly visible. The guard does not give any indication of noticing or caring about the presence of the PCs.

Any attack by the PCs on this guard causes the Nothrog on the third floor to go onto alert status, meaning half of the Nothrog present in **Location 1.7** move to **Location 1.8** of the third level.

## Location 1.8: Tower of Honor

This tower is identical to the **Location 1.7**, except the word "Honor" is carved over the doorway. Since it is farther east, the top of this tower does not offer a clear view into **Location 4.7** of the third level of the keep. The tower does look onto a window in **Location 4.5** of the third level, but a drawn curtain keeps anyone in the tower from peering into the room.

### Encounter 1: Outside the Central Keep

**Read aloud:** *The central building of Sharn Keep sits toward the rear of the walls, burying itself in the mountain. Imposing double wooden doors seal the building.*

*Four figures — three Humans and an elf — sit near the doors. Polished armor glints beneath their worn cloaks. The four of them barely glance up as they work, looking as if they are preparing for a difficult battle. One hones a sword, another restrings a bow; a third attempts to repair the handle of a steel shield, while the fourth studies a book.*

*One of them, the man sharpening the sword, speaks without raising his eyes from his work. "The doors are open," he says. "But if I were you, I'd make sure I was ready before I went in there."*

**Development:** These four are the rogue adventurers. They are: Scarpin, the leader, a Human 9th-level ranger from Andover; Issik, an Elven female of House Glyn from Tseluse, a 6th-level rogue; Oroluz, a Human male, a 'low' mercenary not associated with any established group, a 7th-level cleric; and Dunn, a Human male, a 9th-level wizard also from Andover (*see sidebar Personalities of the Rogue Adventurers*).

Scarpin and Dunn have been traveling together since they were old enough to leave home. Issik joined them about three years ago when she ran into trouble with her House and had to flee Tseluse. Oroluz joined the group less than a year ago, hired by

Scarpin and Dunn after one of their companions, a man named Eddolard, was killed in Nothrog lands.

Oroluz has been in the keep and claims to have made a quick scan of each floor, though he did not enter every room. He says the place is filled with Nothrog and other creatures. Scarpin and the others have a strategy for four adventurers to wander the keep and loot it of its valuables, and are almost ready to start.

Scarpin's group is initially indifferent to the PCs. Under no circumstance will Scarpin's group agree to team up with the PCs; however, their attitude toward the PCs determines how much they help or hinder the PCs on each level (see descriptions before each level for details). They are equally uninterested, at this point in time, in fighting the PCs and attempt to defuse any conflict before it comes to blows.

As soon as Scarpin sees there are other adventurers in the keep, he realizes that it is to his advantage to wait for the PCs to enter the central building before his group goes in. He hopes the PCs will distract the keep's inhabitants, allowing his group to carry out their plans. Thus, as long as the PCs are outside the central building, Scarpin's adventurers are as well. Once the PCs enter, Scarpin's group enters. Once in, they stay in the central keep, even if the PCs leave.

**Creatures:** Scarpin, a 9th-level ranger; Issik, a 6th-level rogue; Oroluz, a 7th-level cleric; Dunn, a 9th-level wizard.

**Scarpin, Male Human Rgr 9:** CR 9; Medium humanoid (Human); HD 9d8; hp 53; Init +5; Spd 20 ft.; AC 17, touch 11, flat-footed 16; Base Atk +9; Grp +12; Atk +14 melee (1d8+4(19–20/x2), +1 longsword); Full Atk +14 melee (1d8+4(19–20/x2), +1 longsword); SA —; SQ Favored terrain (mountains, hills); AL CN; SV Fort +6, Ref +4, Will +3; Str 17, Dex 13, Con 11, Int 15, Wis 10, Cha 12.

*Skills and Feats:* Concentration +3, Handle Animal +6, Heal +6, Listen +6, Move Silently +2*, Ride +7, Search +9, Spot +6, Survival +5; Alertness, Improved Initiative, Improved Track, Leadership, Power Attack, Track, Weapon Focus (longsword). *includes –6 armor check penalty

*Favored terrain (mountains, hills):* Scarpin gains a +3 circumstance bonus to Climb, Hide, Listen, Knowledge (nature), Move Silently, Ride, Search, Spot, Swim, Use Rope, and Survival checks as well as a +2 circumstance bonus to all attack rolls in mountains and hills.

*Ranger Spells Prepared* (0/1; save DC 10 + spell level): 1st — entangle.

*Possessions:* Banded mail, +1 longsword.

**Issik, Female Elf Rog 6:** CR 6; Medium humanoid (Elf); HD 6d6–6; hp 17; Spd 30 ft.; Init +4; AC 18, touch 16, flat-footed 14; Base Atk +4; Grp +6; Atk +6 melee (1d6+2(19–20x2), short sword) or +8 ranged (1d6/x3, shortbow); Full Atk +6 melee (1d6+2(19–20/x2), short sword) or +8 ranged (1d6/x3, shortbow); SA Sneak attack +2d6; SQ Catfall, evasion, Elf traits, hide in plain sight, improved nightsight; AL CE; SV Fort +1, Ref +9, Will +2; Str 15, Dex 18, Con 9, Int 12, Wis 10, Cha 9.

*Skills and Feats:* Appraise +5, Balance +10, Bluff +6, Diplomacy +5, Disguise +3, Escape Artist +10, Hide +11, Innuendo +4, Jump +8, Listen +10, Move Silently +9, Open Lock +10, Search +7, Spot +10; Alertness, Combat Reflexes, Dodge.

*Catfall:* On a successful Reflex save (DC 10 + 1 for every 10 feet fallen), Issik takes only half normal damage from a fall.

*Evasion:* If Issik makes a successful Reflex saving throw against an attack that normally deals half damage on a successful save, she instead takes no damage. Evasion can be used only if Issik is wearing light armor or no armor. If helpless, Issik does not gain the benefit of evasion.

*Hide In Plain Sight:* Each time Issik makes a Hide check, she may reduce the total penalty (if any) to her skill check by her

### Personalities of the Rogue Adventurers

**Scarpin: Works hard at seeming like the strong, silent type, but he has too much he wants to say. He cannot resist telling people what he thinks they should be doing. Even if he is not silent, he tries to make all his remarks curt. He is adventuring for the money, and he likes having as little help as possible so he does not have to split up the loot.**

**Issik: In some ways the perfect companion for Scarpin, because she does not seem to care about wealth, allowing him to shortchange her at every opportunity. It is not immediately clear what drives her until the PCs see the light in her eyes during combat. She enjoys killing, especially as she tries to maximize the damage caused by her spells. Fortunately, to this point she has contained that enjoyment within her moral structure and she kills only with reason. As time goes by, though, she is able to discover more and more reasons.**

**Oroluz: A man who truly wants to be lazy but cannot afford it. Oroluz had his reputation ruined by his lassitude and was lucky to join any band. Now, he is committed to working hard for Scarpin so he can earn his retirement money as soon as possible.**

**Dunn: An intelligent man with tremendous book learning but little idea of what to do with that knowledge. He sticks with Scarpin because Scarpin finds ways for Dunn to use his talents to get money. On his own, Dunn would most likely sit and read books until he starved to death. He is a wonderful tool for Scarpin because he is easily led.**

rogue class level (6), to a minimum of 0.

*Improved Nightsight:* Issik can see half again as far as normal in conditions of low light.

*Sneak Attack:* Anytime Issik's target is denied a Dexterity bonus to AC, or when she flanks a target, Issik deals an additional 2d6 points of damage on a successful melee attack.

*Possessions:* Leather armor, short sword, longbow, ring of protection +2.

**Oroluz, Male Human Clr 7:** CR 7; Medium humanoid (Human); HD 7d8; 23; Spd 30 ft.; Init –1; AC 12, touch 9, flat-footed 12; Base Atk +5; Grp +7; Atk +7 melee (1d6+2/x2, light mace); Full Atk +7 melee (1d6+2/x2, light mace); SA Spells, turn undead 3/day; SQ Cleric domains (Magic, Trickery), spontaneous casting; AL N; SV Fort +5, Ref +1, Will +8; Str 14, Dex 9, Con 10, Int 12, Wis 17, Cha 10.

*Skills and Feats:* Concentration +6, Disguise +4, Heal +10, Hide +3, Spellcraft +8; Alertness, Cleave, Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Power Attack.

*Spontaneous Casting:* Oroluz can "lose" a prepared spell (except for a domain spell) in order to cast any cure spell of the same level or lower.

*Turn Undead:* Oroluz can attempt to turn undead 3 times per day.

*Cleric Spells Prepared* (6/5+1/4+1/3+1/1+1; save DC 13 + spell level): 0 — inflict pain, strangled steel, cure minor wounds, create water, detect magic, read magic; 1st — disguise self*, begone, curse of the lady, inflict light wounds, magic weapon, shield of faith; 2nd — identify*, bull's strength, death knell, phantom touch, summon monster II; 3rd — dispel magic*, magic vestment, contagion, Hember's hammer; 4th — confusion*, inferno. *Domain spell

*Possessions:* Leather armor, small steel shield, light mace.

**Dunn, Male Human Wiz 9:** CR 9; Medium humanoid (Human); HD 9d4; hp 26; Spd 30 ft.; Init +1; AC 14, touch 13, flat-footed 13; Base Atk +4; Grp +5; Atk +5 melee (1d4+1(19–20/x2), dagger); Full Atk +5 melee (1d4+1(19–20/x2), dagger); SA Spells; SQ Eidetic Memory (begone, shard storm, kiss of lethe, ice bolt), summon familiar (rat); AL CN; SV Fort +7, Ref +4, Will +7; Str 12, Dex 13, Con 11, Int 17, Wis 12, Cha 13.

*Skills and Feats:* Concentration +9, Craft (alchemy) +9, Craft (gemcutting) +7, Diplomacy +3, Hide +5, Knowledge (arcana) +7, Move Silently +5, Spellcraft +12, Spot +5; Craft Wand, Dodge, Great Fortitude, Maximize Spell, Quicken Spell, Scribe Scroll, Silent Spell, Alertness.

*Eidetic Memory:* Dunn may spontaneously cast begone, shard storm, kiss of lethe, and ice bolt in place of a prepared spell of equal or higher level. This loses the prepared spell to fuel the memorized spell.

*Familiar (rat):* Dunn's rat familiar has the following statistics

*Wizard Spells Prepared (4/5/5/4/2/1; save DC 13 + spell level):* 0 — resistance, detect magic, read magic, light; 1st — power spike, cone of silence, magic missile, charm person, cause fear; 2nd — begone, fireeyes, flame arrow, weakness, glitterdust; 3rd — cloak of fear, imperviousness, greater identify, fireball; 4th — primal fear, soul knife; 5th — cloudkill. *5% arcane spell failure chance

*Possessions:* Padded armor, dagger, ring of protection +2.

**Rat (Familiar):** CR —; Tiny magical beast; HD 8; hp 20; Init +2; Spd 15 ft, climb 15 ft, swim 15 ft; AC 19, touch 14, flat-footed 16; Base Atk +4; Grp –8; Atk +6 melee (1d3–4/x2, bite); Full Atk +6 melee (1d3–4/x2, bite); Space/Reach 2–1/2 ft./0 ft.; SA —; SQ low-light vision, scent, empathic link, share spells, improved evasion, deliver touch spells, speak with master, speak with animals of its kind; AL N; SV Fort +2, Ref +5, Will +7; Str 2, Dex 15, Con 10, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 2.

*Skill and Feats:* Balance +10, Climb +12, Hide +14, Move Silently +10, Swim +10; Weapon Finesse (bite).

*Low-Light Vision (Ex):* A rat can see twice as far as a Human in starlight, moonlight, torchlight, and similar conditions of shadowy illumination. It retains the ability to distinguish color and detail under these conditions.

*Scent (Ex):* A rat can detect opponents within 30 feet by sense of smell. If the opponent is upwind, the range increases to 60 feet; if downwind, it drops to 15 feet. Strong scents, such as smoke or rotting garbage, can be detected at twice the ranges noted above. Overpowering scents, such as skunk musk or troglodyte stench, can be detected at triple normal range. When a rat detects a scent, the exact location of the source is not revealed—only its presence somewhere within range. The rat can take a move action to note the direction of the scent.

Whenever the rat comes within 5 feet of the source, the rat pinpoints the source's location.

*Familiar Ability Descriptions:* All familiars have special abilities (or impart abilities to their masters) depending on Dunn' combined level in classes that grant familiars. The abilities are cumulative.

*Alertness (Ex):* While his familiar is within arm's reach, Dunn gains the Alertness feat.

*Improved Evasion (Ex):* When subjected to an attack that normally allows a Reflex saving throw for half damage, a familiar takes no damage if it makes a successful saving throw and half damage even if the saving throw fails.

*Share Spells:* At Dunn's option, he may have any spell (but not any spell-like ability) he casts on himself also affect his familiar. The familiar must be within 5 feet at the time of casting to receive the benefit. If the spell or effect has a duration other than instantaneous, it stops affecting the familiar if it moves farther than 5 feet away and will not affect the familiar again even if it returns to Dunn before the duration expires. Additionally, Dunn may cast a spell with a target of "You" on his familiar (as a touch range spell) instead of on himself. Dunn and his familiar can share spells even if the spells normally do not affect creatures of the familiar's type (magical beast).

*Empathic Link (Su):* Dunn has an empathic link with his familiar out to a distance of up to 1 mile. Dunn cannot see through the familiar's eyes, but they can communicate empathically. Because of the limited nature of the link, only general emotional content can be communicated. Because of this empathic link, Dunn has the same connection to an item or place that his familiar does.

*Deliver Touch Spells (Su):* Dunn's familiar can deliver touch

spells for him. If Dunn and the familiar are in contact at the time Dunn casts a touch spell, he can designate his familiar as the "toucher." The familiar can then deliver the touch spell just as Dunn could. As usual, if Dunn casts another spell before the touch is delivered, the touch spell dissipates.

*Speak with Master (Ex):* Dunn and his familiar can communicate verbally as if they were using a common language. Other creatures do not understand the communication without magical help.

*Speak with Animals of Its Kind (Ex):* Dunn's familiar can communicate with rodents (including dire varieties). Such communication is limited by the intelligence of the conversing creatures.

*Treasure:* The rogue adventurers carry the following items:

- Scarpin: +1 longsword, large steel shield, banded mail, potion of invisibility, 39 gp, platinum necklace (350 gp).
- Issik: Longbow, 12 arrows +1, 24 arrows, short sword, leather armor, ring of protection +2, potion of invisibility, masterwork thieves tools, 24 gp, white pearl (80 gp).
- Oroluz: Light mace, small steel shield, leather armor, potion of invisibility, 30 gp.
- Dunn: Dagger, padded armor, ring of protection +2, potion of invisibility, 2 potions of cure moderate wounds, scroll of lightning bolt, scroll of see invisibility, 12 gp.

## Location 2: The Central Keep, Level 1

ENCOUNTER 2: THE ROGUE ADVENTURERS

**Development:** Scarpin's band wants to find a safe place within the central building as a base. Oroluz believes there are secret passages in the keep but has not yet found them. His best guess is that a passage branches off from either **Location 2.3** or **Location 2.8.**

Scarpin's party waits for 15 minutes after the PCs enter the keep, then enters (hoping the PCs cause enough distractions that they will not be noticed). Scarpin and Dunn go to **Location 2.8**; Oroluz and Issik go to **Location 2.3.** Oroluz searches for as long as it takes until he finds the secret door. He does not search if the PCs are in the room with him, but does a miserable job of acting casual and stammering fake reasons why he is in the room.

Once Oroluz has found the secret door, Dunn fetches the others and they all proceed through the passageway to **Location 2.14.** Once there, Oroluz casts glyph of warding (blast glyph, cold) on the doorway (Search DC 28, Disable Device DC 28). If Scarpin's party is Helpful, Scarpin sits near the doorway, warns the PCs about the glyph if they approach, and, if they ask, gives them the password ("makusog"). Otherwise, Scarpin's party sits at the north end of the room. If the trap hits the PCs, Scarpin and the others are apologetic, claiming they did not hear the PCs approaching.

### Location 2.1: Entry Hall

**Read aloud:** *From here, everything about Sharn Keep looks normal, except it is held by Nothrog instead of Deverenians. Soldiers and servants walk briskly back and forth. None of them says a word.*

The Nothrog the PCs see are the ones crossing **Location 2.2.**

### Location 2.2: Greeting Room

**Read aloud:** *Tapestries hang on each of the walls in this large hexagonal room. Each tapestry presumably showed some important moment in Deverenian history, but those images have been lost, shredded to ribbons by the Nothrog invaders.*

Every few minutes, a door opens and one or two Nothrog walk quickly through the room, staring straight ahead.

**Development:** The Nothrog crossing this room are from **Location 2.5** and **Location 2.8.** Every 10 minutes, two Nothrog servants exit the banquet hall and cross to **Location 2.10.** They remain for 5 minutes, then exit carrying some items (table cloths, chairs, etc.) and return to the banquet hall.

A single Nothrog exits the servants' hall every 5 minutes carrying a piece of paper. He wanders to **Location 2.6,** speaks briefly with Krax, then returns to the servants' hall, only to leave again shortly.

### Location 2.3: The Diplomats' Anteroom

**Read aloud:** *A low chandelier hovers in this room. Every one of its dozens of candles is lit.*

*The chairs here are covered in rich blue velvet. A dark wood tabletop sits on the floor upside down. If it had legs, they would be sticking up in the air, but they have been removed — roughly chopped off, by the looks of it.*

*Each corner of the room has a small table, legs intact. Silver goblets sit on each table with condensation running down their sides.*

The silver goblets contain cold water. As treasure, they are worth 75 gp each.

The secret door on the west wall has a Search DC of 20.

### Location 2.4: Warriors' Anteroom

**Read aloud:** *Empty weapons racks line the walls of this room. Presumably, visiting warriors could rest their arms here and proceed peacefully into the keep. The racks are empty. Any visitors in the keep right now apparently want their weapons nearby.*

### Location 2.5. The Banquet Hall

**Read aloud:** *A long table, capable of seating as many as 150 people, stretches across the middle of the room. Nothrog banners hang on the walls beneath the remnants of hastily torn Deverenian pennants.*

*The table looks as though it is being set for a large meal. In fact, it looks as though it is being set too much — each chair has a plate, but servants still bring in more plates and utensils, placing the extras in an ever-growing pile in the middle of the table.*

**Development:** As time passes, the pile of plates on the mid-

dle of the table grows ever larger. Before long (2d4x10 minutes), there are chairs on top of the pile.

The banners on the wall are jet black with a crude representation of a bear drawn on them. PCs making a successful Knowledge (Nothrog legions) check (DC 13) notice something wrong with the banners, as the Savage Bear Legion does not use actual pictures of a bear on the banner, but leaves them jet black.

## Location 2.6: First Floor Garrison

**Read aloud:** *Several Nothrog sit on cots in this room. They do not lounge, and could not be said to be relaxing. Rather, they sit stiffly on their beds, staring straight ahead as if sleeping with their eyes open.*

*Two alert Nothrog stand in front of a desk by the south wall. A female Nothrog wearing a sash with a bear claw sits behind the desk, staring at a stack of papers.*

**Development:** None of the Nothrog on the cots are responsive. They only move if the power controlling them decides they need to fight.

The Nothrog behind the desk is Krax. She claims to be part of the Savage Bear Legion, though the sash she wears is not consistent with the stringent dress code of that particular legion (they wear no personal symbols). She says the legion earned great glory by conquering the keep, but she offers no motivations for the attack. She is fond of repeating these sentences: "Everything here is under control. No assistance is needed. You may depart."

The longer the PCs engage her in conversation, the firmer her requests to depart become. After ten minutes, she tells her guards to escort the PCs out of the keep. If the PCs resist, Krax, her guards, and all the Nothrog on the cots attack.

Many of the papers on Krax's desk are blank. Those with writing are covered with gibberish.

**Creatures:** Krax, an 8th-level Nothrog fighter; eight Nothrog guards, 6th-level fighters *(see Area 1 for stats)*.

**Nothrog guards (8):** hp 38, 34, 29, 30, 42, 45, 41, 39.

**Krax, Female Nothrog Ftr 8:** CR 8; Medium humanoid (Nothrog); HD 8d10+16; hp 52; Init +1; Spd 20 ft.; AC 16, touch 11, flat-footed 15; Base Atk +8; Grp +11; Atk +14 melee (1d8+9/x2 or 1d6+9/x3 or x4, +1 hooked hammer); Full Atk +14/+9 melee (1d8+9/x2 or 1d6+9/x3 or x4, +1 hooked hammer); SA Favored weapon (hooked hammer, Nothrog longblade), improved damage (hooked hammer); SQ Nothrog traits; AL LE; SV Fort +8, Ref +3, Will +3; Str 17, Dex 13, Con 14, Int 13, Wis 12, Cha 8.

*Skills and Feats:* Bluff +1, Climb +4*, Listen +5, Jump +4*, Ride +4, Spot +4; Dodge, Exotic Weapon Proficiency (hooked hammer), Power Attack, Weapon Focus (hooked hammer), Weapon Specialization (hooked hammer). *includes –5 armor check penalty

*Favored Weapon (hooked hammer, Nothrog longblade):* Krax gains a +1 competence bonus to attack and damage rolls with the hooked hammer and Nothrog longblade.

*Improved Damage (hooked hammer):* Krax does an additional +2 (+3 total) damage with the hooked hammer.

Possessions: Chainmail, +1 hooked hammer.

## Location 2.7: Servants' Ready Room

This room is empty. In normal times, servants helping present a banquet stand here when they are not needed so they can remain out of sight. This room is ignored by the inhabitants of the keep, and as such provides a good hiding place and watchpoint, especially if the PCs are interested in killing anyone in the banquet hall and observing what happens to the bodies.

## Location 2.8: The Servants' Hall

**Read aloud:** *Scattered torches cast dim light in this cavernous room. Some cots in this room are intact, but most are piles of broken metal and fabric. Still, some Nothrog lie on these heaps, eyes open, staring at the ceiling.*

A heap of papers sits in the southwest corner of the room. The servant walking back and forth between here and area 6 keeps taking a piece of paper off the top of the stack and carrying it to Krax. As with the papers on Krax' desk, most papers here are either blank or gibberish. However, a successful Search (DC 13) through the stack reveals a paper with actual words on it. It was ripped out of a spell book from the second-floor library and brought here. Casting read magic reveals that this page is a scroll of bestow curse.

**Creatures:** Six Nothrog servants *(see Area 1 for stats)*.

**Nothrog servants (6):** hp 8, 18, 16, 12, 15, 16, 16.

## Location 2.9: Servants' Storage

**Read aloud:** *A few rags lie on the floor of this room. A Nothrog wearing similar rags quivers in a corner.*

This Nothrog has begun to shake off the effects of the Terror's mental controls. He is halfway between the Terror's control and mental freedom, and the opposing forces have left him unbalanced. He knows he should be doing something, but he cannot remember what it is, and he does not trust anyone in the keep. He has no better solution to his troubles than to sit in a corner.

Just before the PCs exit the room, the Nothrog has a brief moment of lucidity.

**Read aloud:** *"Just tell me what to do!" he screams. "You can take my mind again, just tell me what to do!"*

*Then he lapses into incoherent mumbling.*

**Creatures:** One Nothrog servant *(see Area 1 for stats)*.

**Nothrog servants (1):** hp 14.

## Location 2.10: Extra Storage

**Read aloud:** *All the supplies needed for hosting an impressive banquet are here, from a wide variety of chairs to several sets of dishes to utensils, goblets, and napkins.*

This room is gradually emptied while the PCs are in the keep, as two Nothrog keep taking items from this room and stacking them on the table in area 5. The northwest corner of the room holds a large pile of tablecloths that hide two small monstrous spiders.

**Creatures:** Two Nothrog servants *(see Area 1 for stats);* two small monstrous spiders.

**Nothrog servants (2):** hp 12, 19.

**Monstrous Spider, Small (2):** CR 1/2; Small vermin; HD 1d8; hp 6; Init +3; Spd 30 ft., climb 20 ft.; AC 14, touch 14, flat-footed 11; Base Atk +0; Grp –6; Atk +4 melee (1d4–2 plus poison/x2, bite); Full Atk +4 melee (1d4–2 plus poison/x2, bite); Space/Reach 15 ft./10 ft.; SA Poison, web; SQ Vermin traits, darkvision 60 ft., tremorsense 60 ft.; AL N; SV Fort +2, Ref +3, Will +0; Str 7, Dex 17, Con 10, Int —, Wis 10, Cha 2;.

*Skills and Feats:* Climb +11*, Hide +11*, Jump –2*, Spot +4*; Weapon Finesse (bite). *Monstrous spiders have a +4 racial bonus on Hide and Spot checks and a +8 racial bonus on Climb checks. A monstrous spider can always choose to take 10 on Climb checks, even if rushed or threatened. These monstrous spiders use their Dexterity modifier (+3) for Climb checks.

*Poison (Ex):* A monstrous spider has a poisonous bite. Poison (Injury, Fortitude DC 17, initial and secondary damage 1d3 Str. The save DC is Constitution-based).

*Web (Ex):* Monstrous spiders often wait in their webs or in trees, then lower themselves silently on silk strands and leap onto prey passing beneath. A single strand is strong enough to support the spider and one creature of the same size. Web-spinners can throw a web eight times per day. This is similar to an attack with a net but has a maximum range of 50 feet, with a range increment of 10 feet, and is effective against targets up to one size category larger than the spider. An entangled creature can escape with a successful Escape Artist check (DC 10) or burst it with a Strength check (DC 14). Both are standard actions. The check DCs are Constitution-based, and the Strength check DC includes a +4 racial bonus. The web has 4 hp.

Web-spinners often create sheets of sticky webbing from 5 to 60 feet square, depending on the size of the spider. They usually position these sheets to snare flying creatures but can also try to trap prey on the ground. Approaching creatures must succeed on a DC 20 Spot check to notice a web; otherwise they stumble into it and become trapped as though by a successful web attack. Attempts to escape or burst the webbing gain a +5 bonus if the trapped creature has something to walk on or grab while pulling free. Each 5-foot section has the hit points given on the table, and sheet webs have damage reduction 5/—.

A monstrous spider can move across its own web at its climb speed and can pinpoint the location of any creature touching its web.

*Tremorsense (Ex):* A monstrous spider can detect and pinpoint any creature or object within 60 feet in contact with the ground, or within any range in contact with the spider's webs.

## Location 2.11: First Floor Guard Post

**Read aloud:** *A series of windows look over the inner bailey, and a line of Nothrog guards gaze fixedly through them. There are only about half as many Nothrog as there are windows.*

**Development:** When the PCs enter this room, they hear the distant sound of the portcullis crashing down (it had been raised while they were wandering elsewhere). A warning shout quickly follows, and the formerly stiff guards spring to life. Two facing south fire arrows immediately, while the others line up shots. A loud crash sounds from the south wall.

Two hill giants have entered the keep. One threw a boulder at the central keep as soon as he was inside. Once they are near enough, they draw glaives and attempt to stab Nothrog through the windows. As long as they are alive, the hill giants attack anyone in this room. If no one is left in the room they move to the front doors of the central keep and wait there, remaining outside the building because of the low ceilings.

**Creatures:** Two hill giants.

**Hill Giants (2):** CR 7; Huge giant; HD 12d8+48; hp 96, 88; Init –1; Spd 40 ft.; AC 19, touch 7, flat-footed 19; Base Atk +9; Grp +24; Atk +15 melee (2d6+10/x2, greatclub); Full Atk +15/+10 melee (2d6+10/x2, greatclub) or +6 ranged (2d6+7/x2, rock); Space/Reach 15 ft./15 ft.; SA —; SQ Giant traits; AL NE; SV Fort +12, Ref +3, Will +4; Str 25, Dex 8, Con 19, Int 6, Wis 10, Cha 17.

*Skills and Feats:* Climb +9, Jump +9, Spot +5; Cleave, Collateral Damage, Great Cleave, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (greatclub).

*Giant traits:* A giant has the following traits:

- *Bellow (Ex):* All giants have the ability to bellow, causing great windy gusts to burst forth from their lungs. Anyone caught within the 20-ft. cone of this bellow must make a Reflex save (DC 19) or fall back onto the ground, and be hurled 1d4 × 10 ft. away from the giant. Giants frequently send opponents careening off a cliff with a well-timed shout.
- *Earth Bond (Su):* Giants are inextricably bound to the earth. So long as a giant is in direct contact with the earth, be it with dirt or with stone, he gains the Regenerate 1 special quality.
- *Rock Catching (Ex):* A giant can catch Small, Medium, or Large rocks (or projectiles of similar shape). Once per round, a giant that would otherwise be struck by such a rock can attempt a Reflex save to catch it as a free action. The DC is 15 for a Small rock, 20 for a Medium rock, and 25 for a Large rock. If the projectile has a magical bonus to the attack roll, the DC of the Reflex save is increased by an equal amount. A giant who is flat-footed (or otherwise denied his Dexterity bonus to AC) may not attempt this action, nor may a giant who is unaware of the attack.
- *Rock Throwing (Ex):* Adult giants are accomplished rock and caber throwers, and can hurl boulders or trees long distances. A full-grown giant can hurl rocks weighing 40 to 50 pounds each with ease. Such projectiles have a range increment of 10 feet and a maximum range of 50 feet, and inflict 3d6 damage (plus the giant's Strength modifier) on opponents. Most giants carry one or two such boulders with them while traveling, and often refresh their supplies from the side of a road.

## Location 2.12: Central Kitchen

**Read aloud:** *A huge fireplace built into the east wall holds two large cauldrons and a skinned carcass. Nothrog dart back and forth, chopping vegetables, cutting already cooked meat, and generally looking though they are preparing to feed an army.*

*The bodies of many small animals hang by the north wall, a natural rock wall.*

**Development:** As soon as they enter, a servant limps over to them and asks if they have come to eat. If the PCs respond positively, he snaps his fingers and two other Nothrog with bowls run to the southern cauldron and dish up bowls of soup for each PC.

The soup they have just been served from the southern cauldron is poisoned with arsenic. The soup in the northern cauldron is not poisoned.

**Arsenic:** Ingested DC 13; Initial damage 1 Con; Secondary damage 1d8 Con.

**Creatures:** Eight Nothrog servants *(see Area 1 for stats).*

**Nothrog Servants (8):** hp 16, 14, 17, 12, 16, 8, 14, 11.

## Location 2.13: Food Storage

**Read aloud:** *Fruits, vegetables, spices and seasonings fill the counters and shelves in this room lining every wall. Most of this food must have been left by the Deverenians, since there is far more food than an invading legion would carry.*

The shelves are three-tiered. A successful Search check (DC 15) uncovers a flask and a small vial. After casting detect poison, a successful Alchemy check (DC 20) for each container reveals that the flask holds arsenic (enough for 10 doses; worth 1,200 gp) and the vial holds scorpion venom (vial holds 3 doses, worth 600 gp).

**Arsenic (poison):** Ingested DC 13; Initial damage 1 Con; Secondary damage 1d8 Con.

**Scorpion venom (poison):** Injury DC 18; Initial damage 1d6 Str; Secondary damage 1d6 Str.

## Location 2.14: Empty Storage

This room is empty unless the rogue adventurers have set up camp here *(see sidebar The Rogue Adventurers).*

## Location 2.15: Brewery Storeroom

**Read aloud:** *The smell of dried leaves and herbs fills this room. Some leaves hang from strings, others lay upon counters along each wall. Small vials and bowls lie scattered about, some empty, some not.*

This room contains many material components for spells and potions, but most of them are no longer fresh. A successful Search (DC 13) finds a few usable items: 10 pounds of powdered silver worth 50 gp; jade worth 300 gp; and a pound of gold dust worth 50 gp.

## Location 2.16: Potion Brewery

**Read aloud:** *A Nothrog, shorter and less bulky than most, darts back and forth between bubbling flasks, mortars filled with powdered ingredients, and cooling liquids. The equipment here, from small burners to metal tongs, is immaculate.*

*After a few seconds, the Nothrog notices someone is in the room with him. He abruptly draws himself up and stands at attention. He cannot conceal the fear in his eyes. "Do you bring me new orders?" he asks.*

**Development:** A consequence of mass mental enslavement is that the enslaved do not operate at their peak mental abilities. The Terror wants this Nothrog, Portiz, thinking properly, so it removed the mental enslavement.

Fortunately for the Terror, it has other means of control at its disposal. Portiz has never seen the Terror but he has been brought before Arak'honn. He lives in fear of the moment he fails an order and is brought before Arak'honn again.

If the PCs give Portiz an order, Portiz believes it comes from Arak'honn and follows it, unless it is beyond his abilities, in which case he begs the PCs to understand his limitations.

He knows that a room just past his lab had been used to store magical items when the Deverenians held the keep, but he does not know what is left in that room. He does not know of the secret door at area 19.

The equipment here serves as an alchemy lab, giving a +2 bonus to any Alchemy checks when it is used. The PCs may use the equipment freely as long as they keep it in the lab. Portiz resists any attempts to remove the equipment or the potions he has completed from the lab, receiving a +20 on any Sense Motive checks regarding a PC Bluff to take items away. If the PCs take the equipment or potions without a successful Bluff, Portiz attacks.

**Creature:** Portiz, a 7th-level summoner.

**Portiz, Male Nothrog Sum 7:** CR 7; Medium humanoid (Nothrog); HD 7d4; hp 16; Spd 30 ft.; Init +1; AC 12, touch 11, flat-footed 11; Base Atk +3; Grp +4; Atk +4 melee (1d4+1/19–20, dagger); Full Atk +4 melee (1d4+1/19–20, dagger); SA Spells; SQ Beast friend, bond, spontaneous casting, tame, summon familiar (cat); AL LE; SV Fort +2, Ref +3, Will +6; Str 12, Dex 12, Con 10, Int 16, Wis 13, Cha 9.

*Skills and Feats:* Concentration +6, Craft (alchemy) +12, Knowledge (chemicals) +8, Listen +6, Profession (alchemist) +7, Spellcraft +10; Alertness, Spell Focus (conjuration), Augment Summoning, Maximize Spell.

**Summoner Abilities:**

*Tame:* Portiz may exert mental control over one summoned creature. Each creature so affected by this ability receives an automatic Will save to resist (DC 23). Creatures controlled by Portiz are totally subverted by his will, and have no minds of their own. Their statistics remain unchanged, but their actions are decided by Portiz. Portiz may only use this ability on creatures he summons himself. This is a spell-like mind-affecting ability.

*Bond:* Portiz may bond a summoned creature to accomplish a specific task, which extends the duration of the summoning spell as long as is required to accomplish the goal (for up to seven hours). The task in question must be stated in a single simple sentence. For instance, "Guard our camp until morning," is fine, but "Guard our camp until morning, and make sure to put the fire out when we're asleep," is not. Portiz may not use the tame ability on bonded creatures. Portiz may not use the bond ability to force a creature to remain in combat, though a command to "guard" may result in combat.

*Beast Friend:* Portiz may communicate freely with any living being. Portiz uses his magical energies to engage in a form of telepathy which allows him to communicate verbally in the target's own "language." Portiz may converse normally with creatures of above animal intelligence, but when speaking to creatures of animal intelligence, Portiz only receives a sense of the target's emotional state and immediate goal, rather than holding a true conversation. Portiz may only use this ability to communicate with creatures within one step of his own alignment.

*Spontaneous Casting:* Portiz may "lose" any memorized spell to cast a different spell with "summon" in its name, provided the spell cast is equal to or lower spell level than the expended spell. Further, *Portiz may cast such spells without the use of a focus or material components, even if they are normally required. The summon spell that Portiz wishes to spontaneously cast must be in his spellbook for this ability to function. Portiz knows summon monster I–IV, and may cast them spontaneously.*

**Familiar (cat):** Portiz's cat familiar has the following statistics:

**Cat (Familiar):** CR —; Tiny magical beast; HD 7; hp 8; Init +2; Spd 30 ft; AC 18, touch 14, flat-footed 15; Base Atk +3; Grp –9; Atk +6 melee (1d2–4/x2, claw); Full Atk +6 melee (1d2–4/x2, 2 claws), +1 melee (1d3–4/x2, bite); Space/Reach 2–1/2 ft./0 ft.; SA —; SQ low-light vision, scent, empathic link, share spells, improved evasion, deliver touch spells, speak with master, speak with animals of its kind; AL N; SV Fort +2, Ref +5, Will +6; Str 3, Dex 15, Con 10, Int 12, Wis 12, Cha 7.

*Skill and Feats:* Balance +10*, Climb +6*, Hide +14*, Jump +10*, Listen +6, Move Silently +6*, Spot +3; Weapon Finesse (claws, bite). *Cats have a +4 racial bonus on Climb, Hide, and Move Silently checks and a +8 racial bonus on Jump checks. Cats have a +8 racial bonus on Balance checks. They use their Dexterity modifier instead of their Strength modifier for Climb and Jump checks. In areas of tall grass or heavy undergrowth, the Hide bonus rises to +8.

*Low-Light Vision:* A cat can see twice as far as a Human in starlight, moonlight, torchlight, and similar conditions of shadowy illumination. It retains the ability to distinguish color and detail under these conditions.

*Scent:* A cat can detect opponents within 30 feet by sense of smell. If the opponent is upwind, the range increases to 60 feet; if downwind, it drops to 15 feet. Strong scents, such as smoke or rotting garbage, can be detected at twice the ranges noted above. Overpowering scents, such as skunk musk or troglodyte stench, can be detected at triple normal range. When a cat detects a scent, the exact location of the source is not revealed—only its presence somewhere within range. The cat can take a move action to note the direction of the scent.

Whenever the cat comes within 5 feet of the source, the cat pinpoints the source's location.

*Familiar Ability Descriptions:* All familiars have special abilities (or impart abilities to their masters) depending on Portiz's combined level in classes that grant familiars. The abilities are cumulative.

*Alertness (Ex):* While his familiar is within arm's reach, Portiz gains the Alertness feat.

*Improved Evasion (Ex):* When subjected to an attack that normally allows a Reflex saving throw for half damage, a familiar takes no damage if it makes a successful saving throw and half damage even if the saving throw fails.

*Share Spells:* At Portiz's option, he may have any spell (but not any spell-like ability) he casts on herself also affect his familiar. The familiar must be within 5 feet at the time of casting to receive the benefit. If the spell or effect has a duration other than instantaneous, it stops affecting the familiar if it moves farther than 5 feet away and will not affect the familiar again even if it returns to Portiz before the duration expires. Additionally, Portiz may cast a spell with a target of "You" on his familiar (as a touch range spell) instead of on himself. Portiz and his familiar can share spells even if the spells normally do not affect creatures of the familiar's type (magical beast).

*Empathic Link (Su):* Portiz has an empathic link with his familiar out to a distance of up to 1 mile. Portiz cannot see through the familiar's eyes, but they can communicate empathically. Because of the limited nature of the link, only general emotional content can be communicated. Because of this empathic link, Portiz has the same connection to an item or place that his familiar does.

*Deliver Touch Spells (Su):* Portiz's familiar can deliver touch spells for him. If Portiz and the familiar are in contact at the time Portiz casts a touch spell, he can designate his familiar as the "toucher." The familiar can then deliver the touch spell just as Portiz could. As usual, if Portiz casts another spell before the touch is delivered, the touch spell dissipates.

*Speak with Master (Ex):* Portiz and his familiar can communicate verbally as if they were using a common language. Other creatures do not understand the communication without magical help.

*Speak with Animals of Its Kind (Ex):* Portiz's familiar can communicate with felines (including dire varieties). Such communication is limited by the intelligence of the conversing creatures.
*Summoner Spells Prepared* (4/5/4/3/1*; save DC 13 + spell level): 0 — flare, disrupt undead, daze, read magic; 1st — summon object, summon monster I (2), begone, grease; 2nd — acid arrow, summon monster II, water weird, darkness; 3rd — floralight, flame arrow, summon monster III; 4th — summon monster IV. *5% arcane spell failure chance

*Possessions:* Padded armor, dagger.

*Treasure:* An alchemy lab worth 500 gp and two potions: a potion of cure light wounds and oil of stone to flesh.

## Location 2.17: Magical Storage

**Read aloud:** *This room has been emptied, either by the Deverenians before the assault or the Nothrog after. One item remains and is prominently displayed: a polished sword with a gold hilt resting on a block of marble.*

The block of marble and the sword are a silent image. PCs see through the illusion with a Will save (DC 11) if they try to touch the sword or the stone. Three gallows fiends hide under the illusion.

**Creatures:** Three gallows fiends.

**Gallows Fiend (3):** CR 1; Small monstrous humanoid; HD 1d8+1; hp 5; Init +3; Spd 20 ft.; AC 20, touch 14, flat-footed 17; Base Atk +1; Grp –2; Atk +5 melee (1d3+1 plus pain touch/x2, claw); Full Atk +5 melee (1d3+1plus pain touch/x2, 2 claws), –1 melee (1d3/x2, bite), +4 ranged (2d4 + Fort save (DC 11) or be blinded for 1d4 rounds/x2, acid spew); Space/Reach 5 ft./5 ft.; SA Acid spew (2d4), pain touch; SQ Bone armor; AL LE; SV Fort +1, Ref +5, Will +3; Str 12, Dex 16, Con 12, Int 6, Wis 12, Cha 12.

*Skills and Feats:* Hide +8, Listen +3, Move Silently +4, Spot +5*; Weapon Finesse (claws). *Gallows fiends have a +4 racial bonus to Spot checks.

*Acid Spew (Ex):* A gallows fiend can spew organic acid, blinding enemies. This is a ranged attack with a +4 attack bonus, a 5 foot range increment, and a maximum range of 25 feet. It inflicts 2d4 damage, and those struck must make a Fort save (DC 11) or be blinded for 1d4 rounds.

*Bone Armor (Ex):* A gallows fiend has sharp spikes of bone protruding from its spine. These bone spikes are so thick that any slashing weapon that strikes a gallows fiend has a 30% chance of shattering against the creature's bony hide. Masterwork weapons and magical weapons are not subject to this effect.

*Pain Touch (Su):* The touch of a gallows fiend is excruciating, and they love to use this ability on the condemned. Those touched by the gallows fiend must make a Will save (DC 11) or suffer 1 point of temporary Constitution damage. This ability takes effect every time the gallows fiend strikes its opponent with one of its natural weapons, and any time an opponent strikes the creature with its natural weapons of its own (e.g. fists, claws, a bite). Any attempt to grapple the gallows fiend automatically fails due to the creature's painful touch, unless the attacker makes a Will save (DC 11) after the initial touch attack. Regardless of whether this save is successful, the grappling creature suffers the temporary Constitution damage noted above. Further, each round an opponent grapples with the gallows fiend (regardless of who initiates the grapple), the opponent suffers an additional point of temporary Constitution damage at the beginning of the round. The save DC is Constitution-based.

### Coded Notes

1. **Treaty being kept by local tribes. Pullback occurring as expected.**
2. **Hate issued no orders to approach the fort. Cannot explain reported troop movements.**
3. **Disturbances to the northeast cannot be attributed to Nothrog activity. Most spies sent to look into disturbances remain missing.**



## Location 2.18: Spies' Safe Room

**Read aloud:** *A simple bedroom nestles in this secret passageway. A wooden bed and desk are the only furniture, and a thick bear hide rug covers much of the floor.*

A small package in a desk drawer holds a few pieces of paper, all written in code (Decipher Script DC 27). PCs only need one successful check; once they break the code for one note, they can read all of them (*see sidebar Coded Notes*). This is what Brisbuck from **Location 1.4** is looking for.

## Location 2.19: Hidden Stairway

The secret door here has a Search DC of 22.

## Location 3: Central Keep, Level 2

ENCOUNTER 3: THE ROGUE ADVENTURERS

**Development:** On this floor, the rogue adventurers decide to smoke out the guards from **Location 3.6** and kill them while visibility is poor.

It takes the rogue adventurers twenty minutes from the time the PCs first enter this level to quickly explore the level and devise a plan. After ten more minutes, they transport many of the books from **Location 3.2** to **Location 3.9**, including Calor's Transmutations and Evocations. They place these books near the secret door, then start chopping furniture. After 20 more minutes, the rogue adventurers have a large pile of books and wood that they set alight. They take 5 minutes to make masks for themselves out of bed sheets, then light the fire, allowing smoke to build for another 5 minutes. Scarpin then opens the secret door while Dunn casts control wind so that a light wind (under 10 mph) blows the smoke into area 6. The rogue adventurers then attack. At this point, an hour has passed since they first entered this level.

Thanks to the Terror's control of the Nothrog, the smoke does not have the intended effect and the Nothrog in the room fight instead of fleeing. The battle takes place in thick smoke, giving one-half concealment (20% miss chance) to everyone. Additionally, everyone in the room must make a Fortitude save (DC 15, +1 per previous check) or spend a round choking and coughing. Anyone choking for two consecutive rounds takes 1d6 points of subdual damage.

If the rogue adventurers are helpful toward the PCs and encounter them as they prepare the fire, they tell the PCs about the plan. They do not invite the PCs to fight with them, but they do not dissuade PCs intent on joining the battle.

If the rogue adventurers are unfriendly, indifferent, or friendly toward the PCs, they carry on with their plan as if the PCs did not exist.

If the rogue adventurers are hostile toward the PCs, Oroluz finds the PCs and attempts to lure them into the second floor garrison (by any method the GM deems appropriate, such as lying to the PCs that a great treasure awaits them there, or throwing rocks at the PCs and then running toward the room). Once the PCs are in the room, Scarpin lights the fire and the rogue adventurers attack. They target the Nothrog, but do not care if some blows strike the PCs.

The sounds of the fighting echo through the level, with the exception of the secret section to the northwest (**Locations 3.14 — 3.19**). If the PCs arrive at the second floor garrison after the battle has ended, all Nothrog and Issik of the rogue adventurers are dead. Issik has been stripped of valuables, but her body remains.

## Location 3.1: The Grand Parlor

**Read aloud:** *As in the rooms below, all tapestries on the walls hang in ribbons. The room, however, remains quite impressive, with several soft, velvet-covered chairs, a number of dark wood tables scattered across the room, and a finely woven violet rug.*

*Two Nothrog stand in front of a door in the south wall. A third stands stiffly in the middle of the room, a vacuous smile frozen on her face.*

*"Our honored guests are welcome," she says. "Do you require accommodations?"*

**Development:** The Nothrog by the door on the south wall are mainly there to look tough. They let the PCs pass through any door.

The Nothrog in the center of the room is a servant named Ghall, and she is as much help as a mentally enslaved Nothrog can be. She informs the PCs that they are welcome to use the library (**Location 3.2**) as long as they are in the keep and gives directions to it if the PCs do not know where it is. She tells the PCs that a room (**Location 3.12**) has been prepared for them and invites them to rest there.

**Creatures:** Two Nothrog guards, 6th-level fighters *(see Area 1 for stats)*; Ghall, a Nothrog servant *(see Area 1 for stats)*.

**Nothrog guards:** hp 41, 39.

**Ghall, Nothrog servant:** hp 9.

## Location 3.2. The Keep Library

**Read aloud:** *Four immense bookshelves dominate this room, towering all the way to the ceiling. Loose papers have been crammed between volumes, but the books themselves are mostly immaculate.*

*No Nothrog are in the library.*

The secret door shown on the map is well hidden (Search DC 32) and magically trapped. The trap is triggered anytime a PC tries to push or pull the door open; it automatically resets itself up to 8 times.

**Inflict moderate wounds Trap:** CR 3; magic device; mechanical trigger; automatic reset; spell effect (inflict moderate wounds (2d8), Caster 5th-level cleric, Will save (DC 12) for half damage); Search DC 32; Disable Device DC 25).

**Development:** A sign on the east wall near the secret door reads "Knowledge is the key to progress." A shelf across from the door has a space that is conspicuously empty in an otherwise crowded library.

PCs may Search the third shelf (counting from the top of the map; DC 12) and find a volume entitled Disarming Traps and Opening Doors: A Practical Guide. Placing this book in the empty spot on the shelf across from the door disarms the trap and opens the door.

PCs might also find two other books (Search DC 15); one called Calor's Transmutations and Evocations and another called Instant Summoning. Most of the pages of Calor's Transmutations and Evocations have been ripped out (including the page in **Location 1.8** on the first level). However, with the help of a read magic spell, PCs find that one intact page is a scroll of fire shield.

The book Instant Summoning is a trapped book that activates when the book is opened.

**Summon Monster Trap:** CR 8; magic device; touch trigger (glyph of warding); automatic reset; spell effect (summon monster VI, caster level 12th level cleric); Search DC 25; Disable Device DC 24. Fifty minutes after the PCs enter the second level, the rogue adventurers remove many books on the southern shelves, including Calor's Transmutations and Evocations.

*Treasure:* scroll of fire shield.

## Location 3.3: Study Room 1

**Read aloud:** *A large desk, a wooden chair and many layers of dust occupy this room.*

*The room is otherwise empty.*

## Location 3.4: Study Room 2

**Read aloud:** *An unbearable stench roils from this room as soon as the door opens. A rotted Nothrog body lies in the middle of the room.*

*Treasure:* The Nothrog clutches a small tin cup in his hand. He has a bastard sword, a suit of chain mail and 23 gp. The Nothrog was ordered to watch over this room, and under the effects of the maddening presence ability he did so until he starved to death.

## Location 3.5: Head Librarian's Office

**Read aloud:** *Even more bookshelves line the wall of this room. If anything, the books here are in even better condition than those in the main library. An ornate desk sits in the middle of the room, flanked by iron candelabras. The room is orderly and does not look like the Nothrog invaders have disturbed it.*

This room has not been touched because the Deverenian librarian made sure the treasures of his collection were well guarded. A Markappal basilysk, brought in by the librarian, sits curled up under the desk.

**Creature:** A Markappal basilysk.

**Markappal Basilysk (1):** CR 1; Small magical beast; HD 1d10+4; hp 9; Init +3; Spd 20 ft., fly 60 ft. (average); AC 19, touch 14, flat-footed 16; Base Atk +1; Grp –5; Atk +5 melee (1d3–2/x2, claw); Full Atk +5 melee (1d3–2/x2, 2 claws); Space/Reach 5 ft./5 ft.; SA Petrifying gaze, spell-like abilities; SQ Fire resistance 5; AL N; SV Fort +6, Ref +5, Will +1; Str 7, Dex 16, Con 19, Int 1, Wis 12, Cha 6.

*Skills and Feats:* Hide +9*, Listen +4, Spot +4; Alertness, Weapon Finesse (claws). *The Markappal basilysk's natural coloration allows it a +8 racial bonus to Hide Checks in outdoor settings.

*Petrifying Gaze (Su):* Turn to stone 1d4 weeks, range 30 ft.; Fortitude DC 8 negates. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Unlike normal petrification, the affected creature's body continues to operate within the stone shell created from their own bodies. Inside this 'shell,' the opponent may very well starve before the effects of the gaze wear off. Each day, the victim is allowed a DC 13 Fortitude save, gaining a +1 circumstance bonus for each day spent trapped inside the shell.

A remove curse, break enchantment, or similar spell restores the creature, as does stone to flesh. Stone shape has a 25% chance of turning the creature back to normal; otherwise it reduces the duration of the petrification by 1 day.

*Spell-Like Abilities:* 1/day—jump, magic fang, obscuring mist. Caster level 5th.

*Treasure:* The books in the room are mainly of historical interest. However, should the PCs take any, they could sell them to Deverenian historians for about 30 gp apiece.

## Location 3.6: Second Floor Garrison

The description below only occurs if the rogue adventurers have not attacked this room. If the PCs arrive after the rogue adventurer's assault, the room is filled with smoke and the Nothrog are gone. Issik's body lies on the floor.

**Read aloud:** *Several Nothrog guards stand at attention across the room. Some of them directly face a wall. One stands on a cot. None of them moves.*

These Nothrog are like the ones in Location 2.6. They are dumb and motionless, unresponsive. However, an attack on any of the guards in this room, the next room (Location 3.7), or in Location 3.8 brings these Nothrog into action and they join the fight.

**Creatures:** Eight Nothrog guards, 6th-level fighters *(see Area 1 for stats)*.

**Nothrog guards (8):** hp 34, 35, 50, 40, 34, 43, 39, 32.

## Location 3.7: Stairway Guard

**Read aloud:** *Two guards stand in the middle of a room. Between them is an empty suit of armor.*

The armor is a set of full plate. Any attempt to move the armor brings an attack from the guards here and from Location 3.6.

**Creatures:** Two Nothrog guards, 6th-level fighters *(see Area 1 for stats)*.

**Nothrog guards (2):** hp 44, 35.

## Location 3.8: Ypollonk's Office

**Read aloud:** *While the two Nothrog standing on either side of the desk in this room look as dazed as any others in the keep, the burly Nothrog behind the desk appears alert. No pennants or décor of any sort hang in the room.*

*"This is no place for civilians!" the burly Nothrog barks. "Explain your business here!"*

**Development:** The Nothrog behind the desk is Ypollonk, leader of the second floor guard. He knows of the Terror's existence and is not under the same mental controls of the others. Ypollonk does not know what kind of creature the Terror is, but he knows it is powerful, ruthless, and wealthy. He knows he could either fight against the Terror and meet with torture and death, or work for it and have security and comfort. He chose the latter.

Arak'honn (commander of the keep's third level) convinced Ypollonk that maintaining secrecy about the Terror is vital, so as long as he is alive and in control of his own mind Ypollonk swears that Arak'honn is in charge and took over the keep on his own. He denies that any Nothrog in the keep are acting strangely.

Ypollonk insists that the PCs go to their quarters in **Location 3.13**. If the PCs do not leave immediately, he orders his guards to arrest the PCs and take them to their room, or kill the PCs if they will not go peacefully.

**Creatures:** Two Nothrog guards, 6th-level fighters *(see Area 1 for stats)*; Ypollonk, a 9th-level fighter.

**Nothrog guards (2)**: hp 38, 39.

**Ypollonk, Male Nothrog Ftr 9:** CR 9; Medium humanoid (Human); HD 9d10+18; hp 70; Init +5; Spd 20 ft.; AC 9, touch 10, flat-footed 19; Base Atk +9; Grp +12; Atk +16 melee (1d8+10(17–20/x2), +2 keen longsword); Full Atk +16/+11 melee (1d8+10(17–20/x2), +2 keen longsword); SA Favored weapon (longsword, Nothrog longblade), improved damage (longsword); SQ Nothrog traits; AL LE; SV Fort +8, Ref +4, Will +4; Str 17, Dex 13, Con 14, Int 13, Wis 12, Cha 10.

*Skills and Feats:* Bluff +1, Climb +0*, Listen +5, Jump +3*, Ride +4, Spot +4; Dodge, Improved Initiative, Leadership, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (longsword), Weapon Specialization (longsword). *includes –9 armor check penalty

*Favored Weapon (longsword, Nothrog longblade):* Ypollonk gains a +1 competence bonus to attack and damage rolls with the longsword and Nothrog longblade.

*Improved Damage (longsword):* Ypollonk does an additional +2 (+3 total) damage with the longsword.

*Possessions:* Half-plate armor, large steel shield, +2 keen longsword.

## Location 3.9: Guest Quarters I

This room is ornately furnished but otherwise empty. There is a secret door on the east wall (Search DC 20).

Fifty minutes after the PCs first enter the second level, the rogue adventurers are here, preparing their fire *(see sidebar The Rogue Adventurers)*.

## Location 3.10: Dwarves' Quarters

**Read aloud:** *This room is lavishly furnished with a canopied bed, fully upholstered chairs, a flawlessly smooth mirror, and a divan. Two Dwarves sit in the chair, seemingly alert but unmoving.*

**Development:** The two Dwarves, Shatter and Firm, answer questions readily but in the near-monotone shared by most Sharn Keep residents. They say that a Dwarf named Yaw convinced their leader to explore possibilities of an alliance with the races on the surface. However, when they arrived they found the keep in the hands of the Nothrog. This set their negotiations back, but they are staying here as talks advance, and hope to make progress in discussions with Arak'honn.

This is their entire story, and they stick with it even if holes in it (ie. What happened to the rest of the battalion? What are they offering as part of the negotiations?) are pointed out.

If the PCs question the Dwarf story at all, the Dwarves leave this room shortly after the PCs depart and travel to **Location 3.8.** If Ypollonk is still alive, the Dwarves warn him about the PCs and stay with him. Ypollonk is subsequently more aggressive about imprisoning or killing the PCs. If Ypollonk is dead, the Dwarves attempt to follow the PCs and ambush them whenever they have the chance.

**Creatures:** Shatter, a 7th-level rogue; Firm, a 6th-level fighter.

**Shatter, Male Dwarf Rog 7:** CR 7; Medium humanoid (Dwarf); HD 7d6+14; hp 35; Spd 20 ft.; Init +3; AC 16, touch 13, flat-footed 13; Base Atk +5; Grp +8; Atk +9 melee (1d6+4/x3, +1 handaxe); Full Atk +9 melee (1d6+4/x3, +1 handaxe); SA Sneak attack +3d6; SQ Catfall, Dwarf traits, evasion, hide in plain sight, improved nightsight; AL N; SV Fort +4, Ref +8, Will +1; Str 16, Dex 17, Con 14, Int 14, Wis 9, Cha 10.

*Skills and Feats:* Appraise +9, Bluff +8, Decipher Script +9, Disable Device +9, Disguise +8, Escape Artist +9*, Diplomacy +5, Hide +10*, Listen +7, Open Lock +7, Search +9, Sleight of Hand +8, Speak Language (Common), Spot +7, Use Magic Device +6; Alertness, Combat Reflexes, Dodge. *includes –1 armor check penalty

*Catfall:* On a successful Reflex save (DC 10 + 1 for every 10 feet fallen), Shatter takes only half normal damage from a fall.

*Evasion:* If Shatter makes a successful Reflex saving throw against an attack that normally deals half damage on a successful save, he instead takes no damage. Evasion can be used only if Shatter is wearing light armor or no armor. If helpless, Shatter does not gain the benefit of evasion.

*Hide In Plain Sight:* Each time Shatter makes a Hide check, he may reduce the total penalty (if any) to his skill check by his rogue class level (7), to a minimum of 0.

*Improved Nightsight:* Shatter can see half again as far as normal in conditions of low light.

*Sneak Attack:* Anytime Shatter's target is denied a Dexterity bonus to AC, or when he flanks a target, Shatter deals an additional 3d6 points of damage on a successful melee attack.

*Possessions:* Studded leather armor, +1 handaxe.

**Firm, Male Dwarf Ftr 6:** CR 6; Medium humanoid (Dwarf); HD 6d10+12; hp 45; Init +5; Spd 20 ft.; AC 16, touch 11, flat-footed 15; Base Atk +6; Grp +9; Atk +11 melee (1d10+8/x3, Dwarven waraxe); Full Atk +11/+5 melee (1d10+8/x3, Dwarven waraxe); SA Favored weapon (Dwarven waraxe, warhammer), improved damage (Dwarven waraxe); SQ Dwarf traits; AL LG; SV Fort +7, Ref +3, Will +5; Str 17, Dex 12, Con 15, Int 12, Wis 13, Cha 12.

*Skills and Feats:* Climb +4*, Jump +2*, Listen +4, Speak Language (Common), Spot +5, Use Rope +3; Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Weapon Focus (Dwarven waraxe), Weapon Specialization (Dwarven waraxe).

*includes –4 armor check penalty

*Favored Weapon (Dwarven waraxe, warhammer):* Firm gains a +1 competence bonus to attack and damage rolls with the Dwarven waraxe and warhammer.

*Improved Damage (Dwarven waraxe):* Firm does an additional +2 (+3 total) damage with the Dwarven waraxe.

*Possessions:* Breastplate, waraxe.

*Treasure:* A small chest near the bed contains a potion of cure moderate wounds and a black pearl worth 450 gp.

## Location 3.11: Guest Quarters II

**Read aloud:** *This room is ornate, luxurious, and empty.*

This room is similar to Location 3.10. However, the room's south wall bears the only intact Deverenian tapestry in the entire keep. It shows followers of lesser guards bowing to priests of the Storm. Behind the tapestry is a doorway. The doorway is not carefully hidden, so anything more than a casual look around the room reveals it.

**If the PCs enter the small room behind the tapestry, read aloud:** An open window makes this room colder than the others. Someone has tried to keep warm here with a small fire. Only the charred remains of furniture remains in a small pile in the middle of the room.

**Development:** Wyttle, the last surviving member of another party of adventurers that broke into the keep, perches on a small ledge on the north wall, about 8 feet off the ground (PCs Spot check vs. his Hide check to see him). His preference is for the PCs to come in, poke around for a little, and leave without ever noticing him. If they see him, he tries to talk them into leaving them alone. He is not willing to leave his room without a fight, since he has come to believe that it is the only place he has a chance of being safe.

He is willing to barter with the PCs, exchanging information for useful items, such as food, pieces of wood, or healing potions. He provides one piece of information per item he receives, in the following order:

1. "Do not go to the third floor. They have it better guarded than the others. My group made it through the lower floors okay, but... but not the third floor. What is left of my friends is still up there."
2. "One of my friends, a wizard named Mullinill, found a good spell book in the library on this level. He ripped out a few pages before some Nothrog charged into the library, chasing us out. There might be a few pages left in the book."
3. "Oh, this is the most important thing, I should have told you this first. There is a large cistern of water on the northeast part of the floor. Do not drink any of it, whatever you do. Something is very, very wrong with it."

**Creature:** Wyttle, a 3rd-level rogue.

**Wyttle, Male Human Rog 3:** CR 3; Medium humanoid (Human); HD 3d6+3; hp 13; Spd 30 ft.; Init +7; AC 16, touch 13, flat-footed 13; Base Atk +2; Grp +3; Atk +3 melee (1d6+1(19–20/x2), short sword); Full Atk +3 melee (1d6+1(19–20/x2), short sword); SA Sneak attack +1d6; SQ Evasion, hide in plain sight; AL N; SV Fort +2, Ref +6, Will +3; Str 13, Dex 16, Con 13, Int 12, Wis 10, Cha 11.

*Skills and Feats:* Appraise +4, Balance +6*, Bluff +4, Decipher Script +3, Diplomacy +3, Disable Device +4, Disguise +3, Escape Artist +7, Forgery +5, Hide +6*, Listen +4, Move Silently +6*, Open Lock +7, Search +5, Sense Motive +2, Sleight of Hand +6*, Survival +2; Dodge, Improved Initiative, Iron Will. *includes –1 armor check penalty

*Evasion:* If Wyttle makes a successful Reflex saving throw against an attack that normally deals half damage on a successful save, he instead takes no damage. Evasion can be used only if Wyttle is wearing light armor or no armor. If helpless, Wyttle does not gain the benefit of evasion.

*Hide In Plain Sight:* Each time Wyttle makes a Hide check, he may reduce the total penalty (if any) to his skill check by his rogue class level (3), to a minimum of 0.

*Sneak Attack:* Anytime Wyttle's target is denied a Dexterity bonus to AC, or when he flanks a target, Wyttle deals an additional 1d6 points of damage on a successful melee attack

*Possessions:* Studded leather armor, shortsword.

## Location 3.12: Guest Room III

This room is empty of anything besides ornate furniture.

## Location 3.13: Guest Room IV

This room is furnished identically to the other guest rooms, and on first glance there is nothing to differentiate it from the others. However, the middle six squares of the room are a pressure plate trap that seals the door and sets the walls moving together. The walls move at 2 ft./round, meaning the door (which opens into the room) is blocked off after 6 rounds and the walls meet after 7 rounds.

**Wooden Door:** 1 1/2 in. thick; hardness 5; hp 20; AC 5; Break DC 25.

**Crushing Wall Trap:** CR 10; mechanical; touch trigger (pressure plate); automatic reset; Atk no attack roll required (20d6/x3); Search DC 20; Disable Device DC 25.

## Location 3.14: The Ventilated Room

**Read aloud:** *This small, mostly empty room has invigorating, fresh mountain air from small vents near the ceiling.*

*A finely crafted book lies in the southwest corner of the room.*

The book, bound in leather, is entitled The Round Table Book. Inside are several drawings of round tables, coupled with glowing descriptions of their workmanship. Placing this book on the round table in Location 3.14 disables the trap on the eastern secret door.

## Location 3.15: Medical Room

**Read aloud:** *A long stone slab sits in the exact center of this room. Shelves around the room are mostly empty except for a few strips of bandages and some small jars.*

The Deverenians used this room as a small medical office. Most battle wounds were tended in the field; this room was used to treat more run-of-the-mill illnesses.

A jar in the spot marked "a" on the map contains sassone leaf residue. A jar in the spot marked "b" contains a potion of cure moderate wounds.

*Sassone leaf residue:* contact poison (DC 16); initial damage 2d12 hp; secondary damage 1d6 Con; 3 doses; worth 900 gp.

*Treasure:* potion of cure moderate wounds

## Location 3.16: Prison Cells

**Read aloud:** *The stone floors and walls of this room are blackened and charred. Three small rooms look like they used to be jail cells, but the middle of the room has been blasted away. Puddles of metal, now cooled, sit at the bottom of the stumps of metal.*

**Development:** Two of the three cells are empty. The middle cell contains a burnt skeleton. Its hand clutches an object that survived the blast, a stone pendant with a sigil of Free Kingdoms design. The victim of the blast was a wizard from Merrick, a prominent businessman captured by the Nothrog then traded to the Deverenians. He was at Sharn, waiting to be transported deeper into the Empire, when the Nothrog attacked. The Terror decided this wizard was too mentally strong and too dangerous, and killed him soon after it took Sharn.

## Location 3.17 The Last Deverenian

A secret door hides this room (Search DC 26).

**Read aloud:** *A Deverenian, in full battle regalia, waits on the other side of the door. His sword is already drawn.*

*"I am quite prepared to die," he states firmly. "I hope you are."*

The Deverenian, Hathos Rellion, is not as determined to fight as his words make him seem. He was wounded in the Nothrog assault and awoke in this room, unsure how he got there and ashamed to still be alive. His first impulse was to run out and fight any Nothrog he encountered. He thought better of it, and decided he could best serve the Empire by gathering information on the Nothrog forces. His left leg is still healing from the battle, but he estimates he will be well enough to travel in two weeks. He feels residual shame that he is not dead or fighting, but he hides it well.

Hathos Rellion fully believes that Nothrog and Nothrog only are behind the assault. If confronted with information about peculiar behavior in the keep, he avers that Nothrog culture is peculiar, and any behavior the PCs do not understand is just evidence of that peculiarity.

Hathos claims that, as the highest-ranking Deverenian in the keep, he is the ruling official. If the PCs wish to remain in the keep, they must subordinate themselves to him. If they agree, he tells them the shortest path to **Location 4.8** on the third level. He also says that there is a secret war room beyond the bedroom, but he does not have the key to it. He orders the PCs to slay the Nothrog commander and report back to him. If the PCs refuse to obey him, he attacks, wounded leg and all.

If they kill the Nothrog commander, Arak'honn, and return to Hathos with proof, he rewards them with a diamond worth 5,000 gp. He tells them the diamond is the "Star of Aquiliea," and that nobles of Aquileia will recognize it and show the bearer due respect.

**Creatures:** Hathos Rellion, a 9th-level paladin.

**Hathios Rellion, Male Deverenian Pal 9:** CR 9; Medium humanoid (Deverenian); HD 9d8+9; hp 43; Init +1; Spd 20 ft.; AC 19, touch 11, flat-footed 18; Base Atk +9; Grp +12; Atk +16 melee (1d10+6 plus 1d6 vs. good/19–20, +3 consecrated (unholy) blessed bastard sword); Full Atk +16/+11 melee (1d10+6 plus 1d6 vs. good /19–20, +3 consecrated (unholy) blessed bastard sword); SA Blessed armament (+3) (bastard sword), spells; SQ Aura of courage, detect alignment, Deverenian traits, divine health, lay on hands, rebuke undead, zeal; AL LE; SV Fort +7, Ref +4, Will +5; Str 17, Dex 12, Con 12, Int 11, Wis 15, Cha 15.

*Skills and Feats:* Concentration +8, Diplomacy +8, Heal +9, Knowledge (Storm) +4, Ride +7; Alertness, Exotic Weapon Proficiency (bastard sword), Power Attack, Weapon Focus (bastard sword).

*Aura of Courage:* Hathios is immune to fear (magical or otherwise). Allies within 10 feet of the paladin gain a +4 morale bonus on saving throws against fear effects; this is a supernatural ability.

*Blessed Armament (bastard sword):* Hathios' bastard sword is invested with the might of his deity and functions as a +3 blessed magic weapon that deals +1d6 points of damage against creatures opposite the paladin's alignment (unholy). In addition, Hathios may cast dispel magic once per day at a caster level equal to his paladin level.

*Detect Alignment:* At will, Hathios can detect the presence of the opposite alignment as a spell-like ability (detect good).

*Divine Health:* Hathios is immune to all diseases, including magical ones.

*Lay On Hands:* Hathios may cure up to 18 hit points of damage per day.

*Rebuke Undead:* Hathios may rebuke undead 5 times per day as a cleric two levels lower than his paladin level.

*Zeal:* When Hathios is reduced to 0 or fewer hit points he may make a Fortitude save (DC 10 + the number of hit points below 0) to continue fighting as if he were at one hit point. Each time the paladin suffers additional damage, he must continue to make a Fortitude save to keep fighting. When Hathios is reduced to –10 hit points, he dies as normal.

*Paladin Spells Prepared (0/2/1; save DC 12 + spell level):* 1st — bless weapon, bless arms; 2nd — battle cry.

*Possessions:* +1 breastplate, +1 small steel shield, bastard sword (+3 consecrated (unholy) blessed bastard sword).

*Treasure:* In a small pouch on his belt, Hathos has the "Star of Aquiliea," a 5,000 gp diamond.

## Location 3.18: The Drinking Room

**Read aloud:** *A narrow metal table sits near one end of the room, covered with bottles, many of them empty. A few rickety wooden tables and chairs are scattered through the room.*

**Development:** Deverenians are not known for their energetic social life, but even members of the most rigid social order need to relax. This room served as a small bar for the occupants of Sharn Keep. The Terror has no use for drunken slaves, so the drinking room has not been used since it took over.

The bottles that are not empty contain a fine assortment of liquor. If the PCs need some time to relax, they may drink here undisturbed; guards do not patrol here. Deverenian liquor is powerful, and every three drinks imposes a –1 Dex penalty on the drinker for one hour.

## Location 4: Central Keep, Level 3

ENCOUNTER 5: THE ROGUE ADVENTURERS

**Development:** Oroluz's initial explorations located the arrows in **Location 4.8**. He absconded with two, and Issik confirmed they are magical. The rogue adventurers (particularly Issik, if she still lives) want the rest of those arrows.

The rogue adventurers arrive on this level 15 minutes after the PCs. They use potions of invisibility (each has one) to sneak past the guard at the top of the stairs and the mad shaman (**Locations 4.9 and 4.10**), then head through the secret door. They attack the archers about 20 minutes after the PCs arrive on this floor.

The battle can be heard anywhere in the level (except the areas beyond the secret door in **Location 4.12**). If the PCs want to investigate the noise, the GM should keep track of the battle as it progresses and then allow the PCs to join. If the PCs do not choose to join the battle, Scarpin is the only survivor. He takes all the arrows from the barrel.

After the battle, the weakened condition of the surviving rogue adventurers, combined with the length of time they have spent in Sharn Keep, breaks their minds and they bow to the Terror's will. If the PCs are in the room with the rogue adventurers, any surviving rogue adventurers grab the arrows from the barrel and attack the PCs. If the PCs are elsewhere, Scarpin heads toward **Location 4.15** and waits there with the zombie for the PCs.

## Location 4.1: Third Level Stairway

**Read aloud:** *Six burly guards, looking less vacant than the Nothrog on the previous floors, stand at attention in front of a door at the end of a short hallway.*

*"No admittance!" barks one. "Retreat or suffer!"*

These Nothrog have no patience for bargaining or any other nonsense. They give the PCs 5 rounds to leave, then attack.

**Creatures:** Six Nothrog guards, 6th-level fighters *(see Area 1 for stats).*

**Nothrog guards:** hp 40, 40, 46, 42, 31, 45.

## Location 4.2: Commander's Reception Hall

This room has been stripped bare.

## Location 4.3: Commander's Guard Supply Room

**Read aloud:** *Racks, filled with all manner of weapons, line the walls of this room. Some of them still have dried blood on their blades.*

*Treasure:* Most of the weapons are normal except for a halberd with a worn staff and a tarnished head. It is a +2 holy halberd (+2d6 damage to evil); its location is marked on the map with an "A." The other weapons in the room are: 2 halberds, a trident, three longspears, a greatsword, 3 longswords, 4 warhammers, 2 morningstars, and a heavy mace.

## Location 4.4: Chapel of the Storm

**Read aloud:** *In most rooms of Sharn Keep, all traces of the former Deverenian overlords have been removed. Not here. The altar to the Storm still stands, and artworks on the walls display ancient saints surrendering to the will of the Storm. The wooden benches are unscratched.*

*The chapel is most likely in such good condition thanks to its guardians, who stand around the altar, staring at intruders with dead eyes.*

**Development:** The Terror prefers to use its enslaved Nothrog to guard most of the keep, but thought that no Nothrog would guard this chapel as fervently as those who formerly worshiped there. The fact that those guards were killed in the Nothrog assault was only a minor obstacle. After a few waves of a modified wand of create greater undead, the Terror raised four ghosts to watch the temple. The ghosts immediately attack anyone entering the chapel.

**Creatures:** Four Deverenian ghost guards, 7th-level fighters.

**Deverenian Ghost Guards (4), Ftr 7:** CR 9; Medium undead (augmented humanoid) (incorporeal); HD 7d12; hp 55; Init +6; Spd 40 ft. fly 80 ft. (perfect); AC 13, touch 13, flat-footed 10; Base Atk +7; Grp +11; Atk +13 melee (1d8+9(17–20/x2), longsword); Full Atk +13/+8 melee (1d8+9(17–20/x2), longsword); Space/Reach 5 ft./5 ft.; SA Favored weapon (longsword, battleaxe), improved damage (longsword), corrupting gaze, frightful moan, manifestation, horrific appearance; SQ Undead traits, incorporeal subtype, rejuvenation, +4 turn resistance, Deverenian traits; AL LE; SV Fort +5, Ref +4, Will +3; Str 18, Dex 15, Con —, Int 14, Wis 13, Cha 13.

*Skills and Feats:* Hide +16*, Listen +13*, Knowledge (the Storm) +6, Search +10*, Spot +13*; Cleave, Alertness, Improved Critical, Improved Initiative, Power Attack, Sunder, Weapon Focus (longsword), Weapon Specialization (longsword). *+8 racial bonus on Hide, Listen, Search, and Spot checks.

*Favored Weapon (longsword, battleaxe):* A Deverenian ghost guard gains a +1 competence bonus to attack and damage rolls

with the longsword and the battleaxe.

*Improved Damage (longsword):* A Deverenian ghost guard does an additional +2 (+3 total) damage with the longsword.

*Corrupting Gaze (Su):* A ghost can blast living beings with a glance, at a range of up to 30 feet. Creatures that meet the ghost's gaze must succeed on a Fortitude save (DC 15) or take 2d10 points of damage and 1d4 points of Charisma damage.

*Frightful Moan (Su):* A ghost can emit a frightful moan as a standard action. All living creatures within a 30-foot spread must succeed on a Will save (DC 15) or become panicked for 2d4 rounds. This is a sonic necromantic mind-affecting fear effect. A creature that successfully saves against the moan cannot be affected by the same ghost's moan for 24 hours.

*Horrific Appearance (Su):* Any living creature within 60 feet that views a ghost must succeed on a Fortitude save (DC 15) or immediately take 1d4 points of Strength damage, 1d4 points of Dexterity damage, and 1d4 points of Constitution damage. A creature that successfully saves against this effect cannot be affected by the same ghost's horrific appearance for 24 hours

*Manifestation (Su):* Every ghost has this ability. A ghost dwells on the Ethereal Plane and, as an ethereal creature, it cannot affect or be affected by anything in the material world. When a ghost manifests, it partly enters the Material Plane and becomes visible but incorporeal on the Material Plane. A manifested ghost can be harmed only by other incorporeal creatures, magic weapons, or spells, with a 50% chance to ignore any damage from a corporeal source. A manifested ghost can pass through solid objects at will, and its own attacks pass through armor. A manifested ghost always moves silently. A manifested ghost can strike with its touch attack or with a ghost touch weapon. A manifested ghost remains partially on the Ethereal Plane, where is it not incorporeal. A manifested ghost can be attacked by opponents on either the Material Plane or the Ethereal Plane. The ghost's incorporeality helps protect it from foes on the Material Plane, but not from foes on the Ethereal Plane.

When a spellcasting ghost is not manifested and is on the Ethereal Plane, its spells cannot affect targets on the Material Plane, but they work normally against ethereal targets. When a spellcasting ghost manifests, its spells continue to affect ethereal targets and can affect targets on the Material Plane normally unless the spells rely on touch. A manifested ghost's touch spells don't work on nonethereal targets.

A ghost has two home planes, the Material Plane and the Ethereal Plane. It is not considered extraplanar when on either of these planes.

*Telekinesis (Su):* A ghost can use telekinesis as a standard action (caster level 12th). When a ghost uses this power, it must wait 1d4 rounds before using it again.

*Rejuvenation (Su):* In most cases, it's difficult to destroy a ghost through simple combat: The "destroyed" spirit will often restore itself in 2d4 days. Even the most powerful spells are usually only temporary solutions. A ghost that would otherwise be destroyed returns to its old haunts with a successful level check (1d20 + 7) against DC 16. As a rule, 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. The exact means varies with each spirit and may require a good deal of research

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

*Incorporeal Subtype:* Due to its incorporeal nature, a Deverenian ghost guard has the following traits:

- An incorporeal creature has no physical body. It can be harmed only by other incorporeal creatures, magic weapons or creatures that strike as magic weapons, and spells, spell-like abilities, or supernatural abilities.
- It is immune to all nonmagical attack forms. Even when hit by spells or magic weapons, it has a 50% chance to ignore any damage from a corporeal source (except for positive energy, negative energy, force effects such as magic missile, or attacks made with ghost touch weapons). Although it is not a magical attack, holy water can affect incorporeal undead, but a hit with holy water has a 50% chance of not affecting an incorporeal creature.
- An incorporeal creature has no natural armor bonus but has a deflection bonus equal to its Charisma bonus (always at least +1, even if the creature's Charisma score does not normally provide a bonus).
- An incorporeal creature can enter or pass through solid objects, but must remain adjacent to the object's exterior, and so cannot pass entirely through an object whose space is larger than its own. It can sense the presence of creatures or objects within a square adjacent to its current location, but enemies have total concealment (50% miss chance) from an incorporeal creature that is inside an object. In order to see farther from the object it is in and attack normally, the incorporeal creature must emerge. An incorporeal creature inside an object has total cover, but when it attacks a creature outside the object it only has cover, so a creature outside with a readied action could strike at it as it attacks. An incorporeal creature cannot pass through a force effect.
- An incorporeal creature's attacks pass through (ignore) natural armor, armor, and shields, although deflection bonuses and force effects (such as mage armor) work normally against it.
- Incorporeal creatures pass through and operate in water as easily as they do in air.
- Incorporeal creatures cannot fall or take falling damage.
- Incorporeal creatures cannot make trip or grapple attacks, nor can they be tripped or grappled. In fact, they cannot take any physical action that would move or manipulate an opponent or its equipment, nor are they subject to such actions.
- Incorporeal creatures have no weight and do not set off traps that are triggered by weight.
- An incorporeal creature moves silently and cannot be heard with Listen checks if it doesn't wish to be. It has no Strength score, so its Dexterity modifier applies to both its melee attacks and its ranged attacks. Nonvisual senses, such as

scent and blindsight, are either ineffective or only partly effective with regard to incorporeal creatures.

- Incorporeal creatures have an innate sense of direction and can move at full speed even when they cannot see.

*Undead Traits:* The Deverenian ghost guards have the following traits:

- No Constitution score.
- Darkvision out to 60 feet.
- Immunity to all mind-affecting effects (charms, compulsions, phantasms, patterns, and morale effects).
- Immunity to poison, sleep effects, paralysis, stunning, disease, death effects, and necromancy effects.
- Negative energy (such as an inflict spell) can heal undead creatures. The fast healing quality works regardless of the creature's Intelligence score.
- Not subject to critical hits, non-lethal damage, ability damage, ability drain, fatigue, exhaustion, or energy drain. Immune to damage to its physical ability scores (Strength, Dexterity, Constitution), as well as to fatigue and exhaustion effects.
- Immunity to any effect that requires a Fortitude save (unless the effect also works on objects, or is harmless).
- Uses its Charisma modifier for Concentration checks.
- Not at risk of death from massive damage. Immediately destroyed when reduced to 0 hit points or less.
- Not affected by raise dead and reincarnate spells or abilities. Resurrection and true resurrection can affect undead creatures. These spells turn undead creatures back into the living creatures they were before becoming undead.
- Proficient with its natural weapons, all simple weapons, and any weapon mentioned in its entry.
- Proficient with whatever type of armor (light, medium, and heavy) it is described as wearing, as well as all lighter types.
- Undead do not eat, sleep, or breathe.

## Location 4.5: Priest's Quarters

**Read aloud:** *Religious art and bookshelves line this room. Most of the books have the word "Storm" in the title.*

*A large desk sits on a raised platform. Behind the desk is an impressive high-backed chair designed to make anyone sitting in it look imposing. The effect does not, however, work on the current occupant, a small, frail man who beckons with a flickering finger.*

*"Come closer," he whispers. "Learn from me."*

**Development:** The Terror had one more create greater undead spell charge available to make a ghost of the priest of Sharn Keep. Unlike the ghosts of the chapel, the priest's ghost does not attack immediately. He wants intruders dead, but he wants them to understand why he must kill them before he does so. Thus, he seeks to engage the PCs in a conversation about the Storm and its power. By the end of the conversation, he hopes the PCs will understand that the Storm is all-powerful and deserving of worship, and that its power must now be used to wipe the PCs off the face of the earth. The ghost then attacks.

**Creatures:** The ghost of the chapel priest.

**Chapel Priest Deverenian Ghost (1), Pal 9:** CR 11; Medium undead (augmented humanoid) (incorporeal); HD 9d12; hp 65; Init +6; Spd 40 ft. fly 80 ft. (perfect); AC 13, touch 13, flat-footed 10; Base Atk +9; Grp +13; Atk +16 melee (1d8+4 plus 1d6 vs. good (19–20/x2), +3 consecrated (unholy) blessed longsword); Full Atk +16/+11 melee (1d8+4 plus 1d6 vs. good (19–20/x2), +3 consecrated (unholy) blessed longsword); Space/Reach 5 ft./5 ft.; SA Blessed armament (+3) (longsword), corrupting gaze, frightful moan, manifestation, horrific appearance, spells; SQ Undead traits, incorporeal subtype, rejuvenation, +4 turn resistance, aura of courage, detect alignment, Deverenian traits, divine health, lay on hands, rebuke undead, zeal; AL LE; SV Fort +6, Ref +4, Will +3; Str 19, Dex 13, Con —, Int 14, Wis 12, Cha 12.

*Skills and Feats:* Concentration +8, Diplomacy +8, Heal +10, Hide +17*, Knowledge (the Storm) +9, Listen +8*, Profession (priest) +10, Search +17*, Spot +18*; Dodge, Leadership, Maximize Spell, Quicken Spell. *+8 racial bonus on Hide, Listen, Search, and Spot checks.

*Aura of Courage:* The chapel priest ghost is immune to fear (magical or otherwise). Allies within 10 feet of the paladin gain a +4 morale bonus on saving throws against fear effects; this is a supernatural ability.

*Blessed Armament (bastard sword):* The chapel priest ghost's longsword is invested with the might of his deity and functions as a +3 blessed magic weapon that deals +1d6 points of damage against creatures opposite the paladin's alignment (unholy). In addition, he may cast dispel magic once per day at a caster level equal to his paladin level.

*Detect Alignment:* At will, the chapel priest ghost can detect the presence of the opposite alignment as a spell-like ability (detect good).

*Divine Health:* The chapel priest ghost is immune to all diseases including magical ones.

*Lay On Hands:* The chapel priest ghost may cure up to 18 hit points of damage per day.

*Rebuke Undead:* The chapel priest ghost may rebuke undead 5 times per day as a cleric two levels lower than his paladin level.

*Zeal:* When the chapel priest ghost is reduced to 0 or fewer hit points he may make a Fortitude save (DC 10 + the number of hit points below 0) to continue fighting as if he were at one hit point. Each time the paladin suffers additional damage, he must continue to make a Fortitude save to keep fighting. When the paladin is reduced to –10 hit points, he dies as normal.

*Paladin Spells Prepared* (0/2/1; save DC 12 + spell level): 1st — endure elements, resistance; 2nd — resist elements.

*Corrupting Gaze (Su):* A ghost can blast living beings with a glance, at a range of up to 30 feet. Creatures that meet the ghost's gaze must succeed on a Fortitude save (DC 15) or take 2d10 points of damage and 1d4 points of Charisma damage.

*Frightful Moan (Su):* A ghost can emit a frightful moan as a standard action. All living creatures within a 30-foot spread must succeed on a Will save (DC 15) or become panicked for 2d4 rounds. This is a sonic necromantic mind-affecting fear effect. A creature that successfully saves against the moan cannot be affected by the same ghost's moan for 24 hours.

*Horrific Appearance (Su):* Any living creature within 60 feet that views a ghost must succeed on a Fortitude save (DC 15) or immediately take 1d4 points of Strength damage, 1d4 points of Dexterity damage, and 1d4 points of Constitution damage. A creature that successfully saves against this effect cannot be affected by the same ghost's horrific appearance for 24 hours

*Manifestation (Su):* Every ghost has this ability. A ghost dwells on the Ethereal Plane and, as an ethereal creature, it cannot affect or be affected by anything in the material world. When a ghost manifests, it partly enters the Material Plane and becomes visible but incorporeal on the Material Plane. A manifested ghost can be harmed only by other incorporeal creatures, magic weapons, or spells, with a 50% chance to ignore any damage from a corporeal source. A manifested ghost can pass through solid objects at will, and its own attacks pass through armor. A manifested ghost always moves silently. A manifested ghost can strike with its touch attack or with a ghost touch weapon. A manifested ghost remains partially on the Ethereal Plane, where is it not incorporeal. A manifested ghost can be attacked by opponents on either the Material Plane or the Ethereal Plane. The ghost's incorporeality helps protect it from foes on the Material Plane, but not from foes on the Ethereal Plane.

When a spellcasting ghost is not manifested and is on the Ethereal Plane, its spells cannot affect targets on the Material Plane, but they work normally against ethereal targets. When a spellcasting ghost manifests, its spells continue to affect ethereal targets and can affect targets on the Material Plane normally unless the spells rely on touch. A manifested ghost's touch spells don't work on nonethereal targets.

A ghost has two home planes, the Material Plane and the Ethereal Plane. It is not considered extraplanar when on either of these planes.

*Telekinesis (Su):* A ghost can use telekinesis as a standard action (caster level 12th). When a ghost uses this power, it must wait 1d4 rounds before using it again.

*Rejuvenation (Su):* In most cases, it's difficult to destroy a ghost through simple combat: The "destroyed" spirit will often restore itself in 2d4 days. Even the most powerful spells are usually only temporary solutions. A ghost that would otherwise be destroyed returns to its old haunts with a successful level check (1d20 + 6) against DC 16. As a rule, 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. The exact means varies with each spirit and may require a good deal of research.

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

*Incorporeal Subtype:* Due to its incorporeal nature, a chapel priest has the following traits:

- An incorporeal creature has no physical body. It can be harmed only by other incorporeal creatures, magic weapons or creatures that strike as magic weapons, and spells, spell-like abilities, or supernatural abilities.
- It is immune to all nonmagical attack forms. Even when hit by spells or magic weapons, it has a 50% chance to ignore any damage from a corporeal source (except for positive energy, negative energy, force effects such as magic missile, or attacks made with ghost touch weapons). Although it is not a magical attack, holy water can affect incorporeal undead, but a hit with holy water has a 50% chance of not affecting an incorporeal creature.
- An incorporeal creature has no natural armor bonus but has a deflection bonus equal to its Charisma bonus (always at least +1, even if the creature's Charisma score does not normally provide a bonus).
- An incorporeal creature can enter or pass through solid objects, but must remain adjacent to the object's exterior, and so cannot pass entirely through an object whose space is larger than its own. It can sense the presence of creatures or objects within a square adjacent to its current location, but enemies have total concealment (50% miss chance) from an incorporeal creature that is inside an object. In order to see farther from the object it is in and attack normally, the incorporeal creature must emerge. An incorporeal creature inside an object has total cover, but when it attacks a creature outside the object it only has cover, so a creature outside with a readied action could strike at it as it attacks. An incorporeal creature cannot pass through a force effect.
- An incorporeal creature's attacks pass through (ignore) natural armor, armor, and shields, although deflection bonuses and force effects (such as mage armor) work normally against it.
- Incorporeal creatures pass through and operate in water as easily as they do in air.
- Incorporeal creatures cannot fall or take falling damage.
- Incorporeal creatures cannot make trip or grapple attacks, nor can they be tripped or grappled. In fact, they cannot take any physical action that would move or manipulate an opponent or its equipment, nor are they subject to such actions.
- Incorporeal creatures have no weight and do not set off traps that are triggered by weight.
- An incorporeal creature moves silently and cannot be heard with Listen checks if it doesn't wish to be. It has no Strength score, so its Dexterity modifier applies to both its melee attacks and its ranged attacks. Nonvisual senses, such as scent and blindsight, are either ineffective or only partly effective with regard to incorporeal creatures.
- Incorporeal creatures have an innate sense of direction and can move at full speed even when they cannot see.

*Undead Traits:* The chapel priest has the following traits:

- No Constitution score.
- Darkvision out to 60 feet.
- Immunity to all mind-affecting effects (charms, compulsions, phantasms, patterns, and morale effects).

- Immunity to poison, sleep effects, paralysis, stunning, disease, death effects, and necromancy effects.
- Negative energy (such as an inflict spell) can heal undead creatures. The fast healing quality works regardless of the creature's Intelligence score.
- Not subject to critical hits, non-lethal damage, ability damage, ability drain, fatigue, exhaustion, or energy drain. Immune to damage to its physical ability scores (Strength, Dexterity, Constitution), as well as to fatigue and exhaustion effects.
- Immunity to any effect that requires a Fortitude save (unless the effect also works on objects, or is harmless).
- Uses its Charisma modifier for Concentration checks.
- Not at risk of death from massive damage. Immediately destroyed when reduced to 0 hit points or less.
- Not affected by raise dead and reincarnate spells or abilities. Resurrection and true resurrection can affect undead creatures. These spells turn undead creatures back into the living creatures they were before becoming undead.
- Proficient with its natural weapons, all simple weapons, and any weapon mentioned in its entry.
- Proficient with whatever type of armor (light, medium, and heavy) it is described as wearing, as well as all lighter types.
- Undead do not eat, sleep, or breathe.

*Treasure:* The desk has been cleared out, but the Nothrog missed a false bottom in the bottom right desk drawer (Search DC 23). Under the false bottom is a ring of blinking, a necklace of prayer beads and a large opal worth 400 gp.

## Location 4.6: Commander's Parlor

Read the description only if the PCs have not already been to **Location 4.7**, the third floor garrison, and the PCs are visible to the Nothrog. If the PCs are invisible or successfully hiding, the furniture is pushed against the walls but the Nothrog do not immediately shout.

**Read aloud:** *Nothrog shout in alarm as soon as the door opens. They rush forward to battle. Any furniture that might impede them has been pushed against the walls.*

Eight Nothrog guards are in this room. Any living guards from area 7 come in at the shout and join the combat.

**Creatures:** Eight Nothrog guards, 6th-level fighters *(see Area 1 for stats).*

**Nothrog guards (8):** hp 35, 42, 41, 50, 28, 39, 46, 41.

## Location 4.7: Third Floor Guard Garrison

Read the description only if the PCs have not already been to **Location 4.6**, the commander's parlor, and the PCs are visible to the Nothrog. If the PCs are invisible or successfully hiding, the furniture is pushed against the walls but the Nothrog do not immediately shout.

**Read aloud:** *Nothrog shout in alarm as soon as the door opens. They rush forward to battle. Any furniture that might impede them has been pushed against the walls.*

Six Nothrog guards are in this room. Any living guards from **Location 4.6** come in at the shout and join the combat.

Three of these guards might have moved into **Location 4.8** if they saw the PCs on top of the Tower of Duty.

**Creatures:** Six Nothrog guards, 6th-level fighters *(see Area 1 for stats).*

**Nothrog guards (6):** hp 36, 28, 39, 43, 35, 31.

## Location 4.8: Archery Post

**Read aloud:** *Arrow slits line the south and west walls of this room, and many of the slots have a Nothrog archer posted by them. Each Nothrog has a chair 5 feet behind them, but none are sitting.*

The commander of these archers prowls behind them, urging them to stay alert and issuing orders as needed.

**Development:** As soon as he notices the PCs, the commander orders his archers to fire on them. He draws his sword and charges, doing his best to keep the PCs away from the archers so they can continue using their bows. The archers move toward the west wall as they fire. They always choose moving away to melee combat and only fight melee if cornered.

The secret door in this room has a search DC of 21.

**Creatures:** Eight Nothrog guards, 6th-level fighters *(see Area 1 for stats);* Commander of the archers, an 8th-level fighter.

**Nothrog guards (8):** hp 35, 39, 35, 46, 39, 30, 33, 32.

**Archer Commander, Male Nothrog Ftr 8:** CR 8; Medium humanoid (Nothrog); HD 8d10+8; hp 46; Init +3; Spd 20 ft.; AC 17, touch 12, flat-footed 15; Base Atk +8; Grp +11; Atk +13 melee (1d8+8(19–20/x2), Nothrog longblade) or +12 ranged (1d8+1/x3, longbow); Full Atk +13/+8 melee (1d8+8(19–20/x2), Nothrog longblade) or +12/+7 ranged (1d8+1/x3, longbow); SA Favored weapon (Nothrog longblade, longbow), improved damage (Nothrog longblade); SQ Nothrog traits; AL LE; SV Fort +6, Ref +3, Will +5; Str 17, Dex 16, Con 13, Int 13, Wis 12, Cha 8.

*Skills and Feats:* Bluff +1, Climb +0*, Listen +4, Jump +0*, Ride +4, Spot +4; Dodge, Point Blank Shot, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (Nothrog longblade), Weapon Specialization (Nothrog longblade), Mobility. *includes –5 armor check penalty

*Favored Weapon (Nothrog longblade, longbow):* The commander gains a +1 competence bonus to attack and damage rolls with the Nothrog longblade and longbow.

*Improved Damage (Nothrog longblade):* The commander does an additional +2 (+3 total) damage with the Nothrog longblade.

*Possessions:* Chainmail, Nothrog longblade, longbow.

*Treasure:* The location marked "B" is a barrel with the commander's special store of arrows to be used only in emergencies. When he charges the PCs, he does not get a chance to distribute them, but any archer who gets within 5 feet of the barrel grabs a handful of arrows. The barrel contains 20 arrows +1 and 12 arrows +2.

## Location 4.9: Tops of the Stairs Guard Post

**Read aloud:** *Four guards, looking less vacant than Nothrog on the previous floors, move ahead slowly and wordlessly.*

These Nothrog attack immediately. The secret door in this room has a search DC of 21.

**Creatures:** Four Nothrog guards, 6th-level fighters *(see Area 1 for stats).*

**Nothrog guards (4):** hp 42, 38, 37, 39.

## Location 4.10: Shaman's Quarters

**Read aloud:** *Thin straw mattresses hang on every wall of this room. Some have been ripped apart, their stuffing piled in a corner.*

*A pale-skinned Nothrog runs back and forth across the room, tearing at his white hair.*

*"The bear is not appeased!" he screams. "Not appeased! NOT APPEASED!"*

*He whirls about, eyes trying to focus. "Is it your fault? Yours? Will your death appease? It must. It must do!"*

The mental controls forced on this shaman have put his behavior at odds with his totem. His totem, Bear, has tried to reclaim control of him, ripping his mind apart. Though far from sane, the Nothrog's battle instincts are deeply ingrained, and he attacks intruders in the hope of winning back the favor of his totem. In battle, he stays as far away from opponents as possible so he can cast spells without being caught in melee combat.

The shaman has no items, to keep him from harming himself. His familiar has been killed.

**Creatures:** An 11th-level shaman.

**Crazed Shaman, Male Albino Nothrog Sha 11:** CR 11; Medium humanoid (albino Nothrog); HD 11d4; hp 28; Spd 30 ft.; Init +4; AC 10, touch 10, flat-footed 10; Base Atk +5; Grp +7; Atk +7 melee (1d3+2/x2, unarmed strike); Full Atk +7 melee (1d3+2/x2, unarmed strike); SA Spells; SQ Albino Nothrog traits, beast bond, familiar (bat), favored terrain (mountains, hill, urban); AL CE; SV Fort +4, Ref +6, Will +8; Str 14, Dex 12, Con 13, Int 17, Wis 12, Cha 16.

*Skills and Feats:* Concentration +12, Craft (alchemy) +9, Knowledge (totems) +11, Listen +3, Spellcraft +13, Spot +3, Survival +5; Alertness, Improved Initiative, Lightning Reflexes, Quicken Spell, Maximize Spell.

*Favored Terrain (mountains, hill, urban):* While in mountainous, hill, or urban terrain, the shaman's caster level is considered 12th and he does not need to have access to his medicine bag to prepare fetishes.

*Beast Bond:* The shaman may share his consciousness with his familiar, allowing him to share his familiar's perceptions and be in full control of his familiar's actions. While using this ability the shaman is unaware of himself and is considered helpless; he may not move, speak, or act in any way.

*Low-Light Vision:* The shaman can see twice as far as a Human in starlight, moonlight, torchlight, and similar conditions of shadowy illumination. The shaman retains the ability to distinguish color and detail under these conditions.

*Shaman Spells Per Day* (6/7/7/7/6/4; save DC 13 + spell level): 0 — resistance, daze, ray of frost (2), mending, open//close; 1st — begone, expeditious journey, foxfire, manacles of might, stone hands, endure elements, protection from good; 2nd — clumsiness, phantom touch, tail strike, fog cloud, see invisibility, memory's flame, wizard's duel; 3rd — cloak of fear, firebombs, hail of thorns, lone wolf, tremor, object read, wilderness stride; 4th — acid storm, fiery whip, inferno, primal fear, spectral advisor, weakness won; 5th — clinging miasma, greater bull's strength, howling rain, ethereal drain.

*Possessions:* None.

## Location 4.11: Commander's Bedroom

**Read aloud:** *A large Nothrog stands in the center of this room, dwarfing even his six personal guards. Anything Deverenian in this room, including all furniture, lies in pieces. Behind him is a pile of corpses, most of them Nothrog. The room reeks of decay.*

*The large Nothrog's deep growl seems to shake the floor. "You have come far, but know little. There is nothing but death ahead. You do not know my master."*

### The Two Terrors

**The Terror of Sharn Keep is one of the oldest reavers in the Accordlands, and has spawned a child, the Terror of Condor Pass. Though ambitious in the extreme, the Terror of Condor Pass is also rather foolish compared to its parent, and believes itself rebellious even as it obeys the Terror of Sharn Keep's every whim.**

**Arak'honn, the Terror of Sharn Keep's proxy, regularly sends letters to Denska with new orders for the Terror of Condor Pass. These messages are surprisingly plain-spoken for reavers, and delivered by simple courier to Condor Pass, there for the courier to fall prey to the younger reaver's powers.**

**Arak'honn has one such note ready for post, but has yet to receive permission to send:**

**"Pubescent:**

**Maintain your intrigues interpolated Dominion and insurgent adjoining principality. Attend transitions to elder reptilians' domicile, but abjure pubescent versus the colossus' multitude. Sustain their preceptor's incomprehension vesting our propositions. Endure reticent, and in deference to the Cruor Satellite, forbear. Abstain from instigating protagonistic encroachments. Both units admit superfluities, but reverse if pubescent misconjectures recurrently. Begetter persists beyond exculpating pubescent concerning pubescent's influx docket.**

**Prevail select.**

**Felicitations,**

**Begetter"**

**This letter, however obtuse and alien, contains a simple message:**

**"Keep up playing Deverenia against Denska. Watch the dragons' lair, but stay out of Sceth Hellbringer's way. Do not alert Hate or heroes to our plans."**

**Development:** The large Nothrog is Arak'honn, "commander" of Sharn Keep. Arak'honn serves the Terror of his own free will (mostly — the Terror wouldn't be the Terror if it did not give its servants a mental nudge every once in a while). He believes serving the Terror will give him great status in the lands surrounding Sharn Keep, while also ensuring that the Terror does not devour him.

He tells the PCs that if they drop everything they have, he will escort them to meet his master. If the PCs ask who his master is, Arak'honn responds, "The Terror of Sharn Keep."

Arak'honn attacks any PCs who do not accept his offer. If they accept, he escorts them to **Location 4.16**, the Terror's lair, making sure they are not attacked on the way.

**Creatures:** Six Nothrog guards, 6th-level fighters *(see Area 1 for stats)*; Arak'honn, a 10th-level fighter.

**Nothrog guards (6):** hp 35, 33, 35, 40, 41, 47.

**Arak'honn, Male Nothrog Ftr 10:** CR 10; Medium humanoid (Nothrog); HD 10d10+20; hp 67; Init +6; Spd 30 ft.; AC 19, touch 11, flat-footed 18; Base Atk +10; Grp +14; Atk +19 melee (1d6+12(16–20/x2), +3 scimitar); Full Atk +19/+14 melee (1d6+12(16–20/x2), +3 scimitar); SA Favored weapon (scimitar, longsword, Nothrog longblade), improved critical threat (scimitar), improved damage (scimitar, longsword, Nothrog longblade); SQ Nothrog traits; AL LE; SV Fort +9, Ref +5, Will +4; Str 18, Dex 14, Con 14, Int 13, Wis 12, Cha 10.

*Skills and Feats:* Bluff +2, Climb –1*, Listen +5, Jump +1*, Ride +4, Spot +4; Dodge, Formation Defense, Leadership, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (scimitar), Weapon Specialization (scimitar). *includes –5 armor check penalty

*Favored Weapon (scimitar, longsword, Nothrog longblade):* Arak'honn gains a +1 competence bonus to attack and damage rolls with the scimitar, longsword, and Nothrog longblade.

*Improved Critical Threat (scimitar):* Arak'honn's critical threat range is increased by +2 (to 16–20) with the scimitar.

*Improved Damage (scimitar, longsword):* Arak'honn does an additional +2 (+3 total) damage with the scimitar and longsword.

*Possessions:* +2 banded mail, +3 scimitar.

*Treasure:* Along with the combat items, Arak'honn also has 86 gp and a message he was preparing for the Terror (see sidebar The Two Terrors). This message should provide the PCs enough information to send them to Condor Pass if they are interested.

## Location 4.12: Commander's War Room

**Read aloud:** *A map of the northern Accordlands lies on the large oval table in this room. Around the table is assembled a surpassingly strange war council. Three Nothrog, two Deverenians and a Dwarf all sit together without a hostile glance among them. They are all stiff and silent.*

**Development:** All of these individuals impressed the Terror in combat, so once it had control of their minds it brought them to guard the secret door in the north wall. All six instantly attack any intruders.

The map on the table has a few locations marked with "x"s in the Deverenian Empire. These marks were made before the Terror took the keep and have nothing to do with the Terror's plans for Condor Pass; rather, they mark Deverenian towns where masterwork weapons are available.

There is a secret door in the north wall (Search DC 20).

**Creatures:** Three Nothrog guards, 6th-level fighters *(see Area 1 for stats)*; two Deverenian fighters, 7th-level fighters; a Dwarf fighter, 10th-level fighter.

**Nothrog guards (3):** hp 37, 38, 41.

**Deverenian Fighters (2), Male Deverenian Ftr 7:** CR 7; Medium humanoid (Deverenian); HD 7d10+14; hp 53, 59; Init +1; Spd 20 ft.; AC 16, touch 11, flat-footed 15; Base Atk +7; Grp +10; Atk +12 melee (1d8+6(19–20/x2), longsword); Full Atk +12/+7 melee (1d8+6(19–20/x2), longsword); SA Favored weapon (longsword, warhammer), improved damage (longsword); SQ Deverenian traits; AL LE; SV Fort +7, Ref +3, Will +5; Str 17, Dex 12, Con 14, Int 12, Wis 12, Cha 11.

*Skills and Feats:* Climb +2*, Handle Animal +5, Jump +3*, Knowledge (Deverenian military) +7, Ride +8, Swim +4*; Alertness, Cleave, Iron Will, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (longsword). *includes –4 armor check penalty

*Favored Weapon (longsword, warhammer):* A fighter gains a +1 competence bonus to attack and damage rolls with the longsword and warhammer.

*Improved Damage (longsword):* A fighter does an additional +2 (+3 total) damage with the longsword.

*Possessions:* Breastplate, longsword.

**Dwarf Fighter, Female Dwarf Ftr 10:** CR 10; Medium humanoid (Dwarf); HD 10d10+10; hp 82; Init +7; Spd 20 ft.; AC 17, touch 12, flat-footed 15; Base Atk +10; Grp +13; Atk +15 melee (1d10+7/18–20 x3, Dwarven waraxe); Full Atk +15/+10 melee (1d10+7/x3, Dwarven waraxe); SA Favored weapon (Dwarven waraxe, bastard sword, warhammer), improved critical threat (Dwarven waraxe), improved damage (Dwarven waraxe, bastard sword); SQ Dwarf traits; AL LG; SV Fort +8, Ref +6, Will +6; Str 17, Dex 15, Con 14, Int 14, Wis 12, Cha 13.

*Skills and Feats:* Climb +3*, Diplomacy +5, Gather Information +4, Heal +4, Jump +4*, Listen +5, Speak Language (Common), Spot +6, Swim +0*; Exotic Weapon Proficiency (bastard sword), Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (Dwarven waraxe), Weapon Specialization (Dwarven waraxe). *includes –5 armor check penalty

*Favored Weapon (Dwarven waraxe, bastard sword, warhammer):* The fighter gains a +1 competence bonus to attack and damage rolls with the Dwarven waraxe, bastard sword, and warhammer.

*Improved Critical Threat (Dwarven waraxe):* The fighter's critical threat range is increased by +2 (to 18–20) with the Dwarven waraxe.

*Improved Damage (Dwarven waraxe, bastard sword):* The fighter does an additional +2 (+3 total) damage with the Dwarven waraxe and bastard sword.

*Possessions:* Chainmail, Dwarven waraxe.

## Table 11-2: Creatures Present in Breeding Room

| Number of Level 8–10 adventures completed by PCs | Number of creatures in room |
|---|---|
| 0 | 1 Markappal basilysk, 6 stirges, 1 shade harpy, 1 spirit wing |
| 1 | All of the creatures above, plus: 6 stirges, 1 teratorn |
| 2 | All of the creatures above, plus: 1 Markappal basilysk |
| 3 | All of the creatures above, plus: 6 stirges |
| 4 | All of the creatures above, plus: 1 spirit wing |

## Location 4.13: Breeding room

The secret door to this room has a Search DC of 23.

**Read aloud:** *Cracked eggshells and thick, sticky fluids spot the floor of this cool, moist room. In one corner, the stone bubbles and hisses. Several young creatures of various types crawl across the floor.*

The Terror is breeding more help here. The number of creatures present depends on the number of Tier 5 adventures (Abyssal Attack, Condor Pass and Dythanus' Disciple) the PCs completed before The Terror of Sharn Keep.

**Creatures:** *See Table 11–2.*

**Markappal Basilysk (1):** CR 1; Small magical beast; HD 1d10+4; hp 9; Init +3; Spd 20 ft., fly 60 ft. (average); AC 19, touch 14, flat-footed 16; Base Atk +1; Grp –5; Atk +5 melee (1d3–2/x2, claw); Full Atk +5 melee (1d3–2/x2, 2 claws); Space/Reach 5 ft./5 ft.; SA Petrifying gaze, spell-like abilities; SQ Fire resistance 5; AL N; SV Fort +6, Ref +5, Will +1; Str 7, Dex 16, Con 19, Int 1, Wis 12, Cha 6.

*Skills and Feats:* Hide +9*, Listen +4, Spot +4; Alertness, Weapon Finesse (claws). *The Markappal basilysk's natural coloration allows it a +8 racial bonus to Hide Checks in outdoor settings.

*Petrifying Gaze (Su):* Turn to stone 1d4 weeks, range 30 ft.; Fortitude DC 8 negates. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Unlike normal petrification, the creature's body continues to operate within the stone shell created from their own bodies. Inside this 'shell,' the opponent may very well starve before the effects of the gaze wear off. Each day, the victim is allowed a DC 13 Fortitude save, gaining a +1 circumstance bonus for each day spent trapped inside the shell.

A remove curse, break enchantment, or similar spell restores the creature, as does stone to flesh. Stone shape has a 25% chance of turning the creature back to normal; otherwise it reduces the duration of the petrification by 1 day.

*Spell-Like Abilities:* 1/day—jump, magic fang, obscuring mist. Caster level 5th.

**Stirges (6):** CR 1/2; Tiny magical beast; HD 1d10; hp 5; Init +4; Spd 10 ft., fly 40 ft. (average); AC 16, touch 16, flat-footed 12; Base Atk +1, Grp –11 (+1 when attached); Atk +7 melee (attach, touch); Full Atk +7 melee (attach, touch); Space/Reach 2–1/2 ft./0 ft.; SA Attach, blood drain; SQ Darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; AL N; SV Fort +2, Ref +6, Will +1; Str 3, Dex 19, Con 10, Int 1, Wis 12, Cha6.

*Skills and Feats:* Hide+14, Listen +4, Spot +4; Alertness, Weapon Finesse (pincers).

*Attach:* If a stirge hits with a touch attack, it uses its eight pincers to latch onto the opponent's body. An attached stirge is effectively grappling its prey. The stirge loses its Dexterity bonus to AC and has an AC of 12, but holds on with great tenacity. Stirges have a +12 racial bonus on grapple checks (already figured into the Base Attack/Grapple entry above). An attached stirge can be struck with a weapon or grappled itself. To remove an attached stirge through grappling, the opponent must achieve a pin against the stirge.

*Blood Drain:* A stirge drains blood, dealing 1d4 points of Constitution damage in any round when it begins its turn attached to a victim. Once it has dealt 4 points of Constitution damage, it detaches and flies off to digest the meal. If its victim dies before the stirge's appetite has been sated, the stirge detaches and seeks a new target.

*Darkvision, 60 ft.:* A stirge can see in the dark with no light source at all, out to a range of 60 feet. Darkvision is black and white only (colors cannot be discerned). It does not allow the stirge to see anything that it could not see otherwise—invisible objects are still invisible, and illusions are still visible as what they seem to be. Likewise, darkvision subjects the stirge to gaze attacks normally. The presence of light does not spoil darkvision

*Low-Light Vision:* A stirge can see twice as far as a Human in starlight, moonlight, torchlight, and similar conditions of shadowy illumination. It retains the ability to distinguish color and detail under these conditions.

**Shade Harpy (1):** CR 4; Medium monstrous humanoid; HD 8d8; hp 32; Init +2; Spd 20 ft., fly 80 ft. (average); AC 17, touch 12, flat-footed 15; Base Atk +8; Grp +8; Atk +8 melee (1d4 plus berserk/x2, claw); Full Atk +8 melee (1d4 plus berserk/x2, 2 claws); Space/Reach 5 ft./5 ft.; SA Berserk, mourning song; SQ Damage reduction 2/-, harpy murder, immunities; AL CE; SV Fort +2, Ref +8, Will +6; Str 10, Dex 15, Con 10, Int 7, Wis 10, Cha 15.

*Skills and Feats:* Bluff +4, Listen +3, Perform (song) +9, Spot +3; Dodge, Flyby Attack.

*Berserk (Su):* Creatures struck by a shade harpy's claws must succeed at a DC 16 Fortitude save or suffer the effects of feeblemind and rage for 1d4+4 rounds. Berserk victims attack the nearest creature, friend or foe, while the shade harpy flies away to safety. This tactic works best during a flyby attack. The harpy targets the largest 'food source' and lets the victim turn on his own comrades. Later, the shade harpy can feed on the remains of the battle or terrorize the party, attacking the weakest PC in the melee. The save DC is Charisma-based.

*Harpy Murder (Ex):* Harpies travel in murders. While in a murder an individual harpy gains a morale bonus to her attacks, weapon damage, ability checks, skill checks and saving throws equal to the number of other harpies in the murder (i.e. a harpy in a murder with six other harpies would gain a +6 morale bonus to her attacks, weapon damage, checks and saves while in that murder). As members of the murder are dispatched or separated from the murder (by a distance of at least 250 ft.), the bonus reduces immediately. This bonus extends to all darkfeast, famine, madness, and shade harpies in the murder.

*Immunities (Ex):* Shade harpies are particularly resilient. They are immune to all diseases, mundane and magical, including mummy rot and lycanthropy.

*Mourning Song (Su):* Unlike other harpies, shade harpies constantly sing their mourning song. More of a murmur than a song, every creature within 60 ft. of the shade harpy that hears this song becomes fatigued and shaken. There is no save. Much like a bard's song, the shade harpy can continue singing while performing other tasks. All harpies are immune to the effect of the mourning song.

**Spirit wing (1):** CR 3; Large magical beast; HD 3d10+9; hp 24; Init +1; Spd fly 60 ft. (average); AC 16, touch 10, flat-footed 15; Base Atk +3; Grp +11; Atk +6 melee (1d6+6 plus poison/x2, bite); Full Atk +6 melee (1d6+6 plus poison/x2, bite); Space/Reach 10 ft./5 ft.; SA Frightful presence, improved grab, poison, spell-like abilities; SQ —; AL N; SV Fort +6, Ref +4, Will +3; Str 18, Dex 13, Con 16, Int 2, Wis 10, Cha 10.

*Skills and Feats:* Listen +3, Spot +3; Flyby Attack, Iron Will

*Frightful Presence (Ex):* Opponents who hear the spiritwing's cry (often uttered before entering combat) must make a DC 11 Will save or become shaken for 2d6 rounds. The save DC is Charisma-based.

*Improved Grab (Ex):* To use this ability, a spirit wing must hit a creature of any size with its bite attack. It can then attempt to start a grapple as a free action without provoking an attack of opportunity.

*Poison (Ex):* Bite — Fortitude DC 14, initial damage 1d6 Strength, secondary damage 1d6 Strength. The save DC is Constitution-based.

*Spell-like Abilities:* 1/hour — magic missile; 3/day — minor illusion; 1/day — dimension door. Caster level 4th. The save DC is Charisma-based.

**Teratorn (1):** CR 4; Huge magical beast; HD 4d10+20; hp 40; Init +1; Spd 10 ft., fly 40 ft. (poor); AC 15, touch 9, flat-footed 14; Base Atk +4, Grp +20; Atk +10 melee (1d8+8/x2, claw); Full +10 melee (1d8+8/x2, 2 claws); Space/Reach 15ft./10ft.; SA Swoop; SQ Mount; AL N; SV Fort +9, Ref +5, Will +1; Str 26, Dex 13, Con 20, Int 2, Wis 10, Cha 10.

*Skills and Feats:* Listen +3, Spot +4; Flyby Attack, Hover.
*Teratorns have a +2 racial bonus to Listen and Spot checks

*Mount (Ex):* Any rider the teratorn carries must be Medium or smaller. This is an exception to the usual size allowance for mounts, due largely to the teratorn's poor flight capabilities. The creature can always fight while carrying a rider, but the rider must make a Ride check (DC 10) to be able to attack as well. For every size category less than Medium the rider is, the DC of any Ride checks required are increased by +5. Further, the teratorn's clumsy landings require the rider to make a Ride check (at the usual DC) or be thrown from the saddle, suffering 2d6 falling damage (which may be reduced as normal by a Tumble check).

*Swoop (Ex):* As a full action, the teratorn can plummet from the air in a powerful controlled dive. While in this dive it can reach up to x4 its normal speed. The teratorn can attack an opponent at any point in the dive, then continue flying its remaining move distance. This does not provoke an attack of opportunity. Any rider must make a Ride check at the usual DC or be thrown from the saddle. Fallen riders suffer 2d6 damage, +1d6 for every 40 ft. faster than its usual movement the teratorn is moving (rounded up) in addition to the distance of the fall.

*Treasure:* If the PCs arrive here without completing another Tier 5 adventure, there are three unhatched eggs in the room, one each for the teratorn (worth 4,000 gp), the basilysk (worth 2,000 gp) and the spiritwing (worth 10,000 gp). The later the PCs come, the more of these eggs hatch, meaning they are not available for the PCs.

## Location 4.14: Excavation Guard

**Read aloud:** *A torn piece of purple fabric poorly conceals a hole dug into the mountain wall. Four stone-faced Nothrog flank the hole.*

The Nothrog attack immediately unless the PCs have disarmed themselves and come with Arak'honn.

**Creatures:** Four Nothrog guards, 6th-level fighters *(see Area 1 for stats).*

**Nothrog guards (4):** hp 37, 35, 40, 49.

## Location 4.15: Zombie Guards

**Read aloud:** *A hideous sight stands in the middle of this dug-out cavern. A flayed Nothrog, innards exposed and dripping, glistens and grins a permanent smile. Its jaw moves slowly beneath its bulging eyes.*

**Development:** The creature is a zombie, here more for effect than for stopping power.

Other creatures might be here. Scarpin of the rogue adventurers might be here *(see Encounter 5).* Additionally, if the PCs have been in the keep for more than three days, Mataline and her fellow mercenaries are here and under the Terror's control *(see Location 1.2).* They attack with the zombie.

**Creature:** One zombie; possibly: Scarpin, a 9th-level ranger (see sidebar Personalities of the Rogue Adventurers for stats); possibly: two Mercenary fighters, 6th-level fighters; two 6th-level rogues; Mataline, an 8th-level assassin *(see Location 1.2 for stats).*

**Zombie (1):** CR 1/2; Medium undead; HD 2d12+3; hp 16; Init –1; Spd 30 ft. (can't run); AC 11, touch 9, flat-footed 11; Base Atk +1, Grp +2; Atk +2 melee (1d6+1/x2, slam); Full Atk +2 melee (1d6+1/x2, slam); Space/Reach 5 ft./5 ft.; SA —; SQ Damage reduction 5/slashing, darkvision 60 ft., single actions only, undead traits; AL N; SV Fort +0, Ref –1, Will +3; Str 12, Dex 8, Con —, Int —, Wis 10, Cha 1.

*Skills and Feats:* —; Toughness.

*Darkvision, 60 ft.* A zombie can see in the dark with no light source at all, out to a range of 60 feet. Darkvision is black and white only (colors cannot be discerned). It does not allow the zombie to see anything that it could not see otherwise — invisible objects are still invisible, and illusions are still visible as what they seem to be. Likewise, darkvision subjects the zombie to gaze attacks normally. The presence of light does not spoil darkvision.

*Single Actions Only:* A zombie has poor reflexes and can perform only a single move action or attack action each round. A zombie can move up to its speed and attack in the same round, but only if it attempts a charge.

**Undead Traits:** A zombie has the following traits:

- No Constitution score.
- Darkvision out to 60 feet.
- Immunity to all mind-affecting effects (charms, compulsions, phantasms, patterns, and morale effects).
- Immunity to poison, sleep effects, paralysis, stunning, disease, death effects, and necromancy effects.
- Cannot heal damage on its own if it has no Intelligence score, although it can be healed. Negative energy (such as an inflict spell) can heal undead creatures. The fast healing quality works regardless of the creature's Intelligence score.
- Not subject to critical hits, non-lethal damage, ability damage, ability drain, fatigue, exhaustion, or energy drain. Immune to damage to its physical ability scores (Strength, Dexterity, Constitution), as well as to fatigue and exhaustion effects.
- Immunity to any effect that requires a Fortitude save (unless the effect also works on objects, or is harmless).
- Uses its Charisma modifier for Concentration checks.
- Not at risk of death from massive damage. Immediately destroyed when reduced to 0 hit points or less.
- Not affected by raise dead and reincarnate spells or abilities. Resurrection and true resurrection can be affect undead creatures. These spells turn undead creatures back into the living creatures they were before becoming undead.
- Proficient with its natural weapons, all simple weapons, and any weapon mentioned in its entry.
- Proficient with whatever type of armor (light, medium, and heavy) it is described as wearing, as well as all lighter types.
- Undead do not eat, sleep, or breathe.

## Location 4.16: The Terror's Lair

**Read aloud:** *Much of the opulence and riches formerly in the keep itself now adorn this large cavern. Undamaged, lushly colored tapestries hang on the walls. Gold chalices gleam on finely carved tables. Coins spill out of two chests placed on either side of the room.*

*In the midst of the splendor and wealth is a hideous, bulbous creature. It glares hatred and arrogance through a single enlarged eye and tendrils flail about it's body.*

*"ACCEPTANCE TO THIS TERRAIN," you hear a calm voice say within your head. "YOUR CORPUS WILL REIMBURSE LIQUIDATED ADHERENTS."*

**Development:** This is the Terror of Sharn Keep, a reaver. It has four Nothrog guards with it.

The reaver's first attacks try to control the minds of the PCs. It only moves to kill after efforts of its maddening presence ability have failed.

**Creature:** Four Nothrog guards, 6th-level fighters *(see Area 1 for stats)*; the Terror of Sharn Keep, a reaver.

**Nothrog guards (4):** hp 43, 37, 38, 37.

**Terror of Sharn Keep, Reaver:** CR 20; Large aberration (Bascaron); HD 20d8+66 (165 hp); Init +5; Spd 5 ft., fly 30 ft. (good), swim 15 ft.; AC 39, touch 8, flat-footed 39; Base Atk +18; Grp +34; Atk +14 melee (2d6+8/x2, tentacle); +14 melee (2d6+8/x2, 4 tentacles); Space/Reach 15 ft./15 ft.; SA Devour, disgorge magic, maddening presence; SQ Blindsense, enhanced advancement, telepathy, tremorsense 120 ft.; AL LE; SV Fort +9, Ref +7, Will +15; Str 27, Dex 11, Con 21, Int 20, Wis 15, Cha 15.

*Skills and Feats:* Knowledge (arcana) +25, Knowledge (any two) +25, Listen +23, Search +25, Spot +23; Cleave, Flyby Attack, Follow Through, Hover, Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Power Attack.

*Devour (Ex):* Reavers are voracious, their fiendish appetites limited only by their narrow feeding tendrils. They can drain a body of its fluids and smaller organs with surprising ease (1 round for Fine creatures, 2 for Diminutive creatures, doubling again for each size category thereafter). Reavers may devour only helpless victims, but once finished, nothing short of a wish or miracle can raise their prey from the dead.

*Disgorge Magic (Su):* While reavers' efficient biologies digest most substances completely, inherent magical energies remain behind. Reavers may spew out these energies, duplicating any supernatural or spell-like ability of any creature they have eaten (including spellcasters' spells). Each time a reaver uses this ability, roll 1d20 and compare it to the reaver's HD. If the result is less than the reaver's HD, the reaver loses 1 HD and the ability to duplicate that specific ability until the reaver regains it through a feeding. Reavers may not be reduced below their base HD in this manner.

*Enhanced Advancement (Su):* Unlike most creatures, reavers' advancement is not limited to steady growth. By glutting themselves on magical power, reavers may rapidly grow in size and power. This is a painful process, but one reavers indulge in for

the associated benefits. Whenever a reaver devours a creature with one or more supernatural or spell-like abilities (including spellcasters), it advances one HD.

*Maddening Presence (Su):* The reaver's most basic defense is its unsettling effect on lesser minds. Reavers are the very essence of Bascaron's corruption, and the taint of their species' creation lingers still. Any other creature that looks upon a reaver for the first time must make a Will save (DC equal to the reaver's HD) or become a slavering minion of that reaver. Creatures may attempt another save each day they are not in the reaver's presence. While enthralled, creatures believe the reaver to be something other than what it truly is, such as a Nothrog totem or a powerful Stormborn.

*Telepathy (Su):* A reaver can initiate telepathy with any sentient being, allowing it to give orders to dominated servants without interrupting its spellcraft. The reaver must have the target individual in sight in order to initiate contact for the first time; once it 'knows the mind' of a target in this manner, the range on its telepathy is one mile. While a reaver has at least three of its servants nearby, it may not be flanked.

*Blindsense (Ex):* Using nonvisual senses, a reaver maneuvers and fights as well as a sighted creature. The reaver usually does not need to make Spot or Listen checks to pinpoint the location of a creature within range of its blindsense ability, provided that it has line of effect to that creature. Any opponent the reaver cannot see still has total concealment against the reaver, and the reaver still has the normal miss chance when attacking foes that have concealment. A reaver is still denied its Dexterity bonus to Armor Class against attacks from creatures it cannot see. A reaver's blindsense has a range of 120 feet.

*Tremorsense (Ex):* A reaver is sensitive to vibrations in the ground and can automatically pinpoint the location of anything that is contact with the ground. A reaver's tremorsense has a range of 120 feet.

*Treasure:* During its reign, the Terror amassed the following: 976 gp, two tapestries (each worth 400 gp), four jeweled goblets (each worth 110 gp); 10 gold plates (each worth 100 gp); a oil painting of the Deverenian emperor (worth 100 gp, 500 gp to Deverenians); two pieces of amber (worth 95 a 110 gp); a large emerald (5,000 gp); a jade necklace (1,300 gp); a +3 defending longbow, and a staff of earth and stone.

# Part 2: Concluding the Adventure

The PCs may have gathered enough information to head to Condor Pass next (if they have not been there already). Or they might have a conversation with a departing Nothrog, whose mind has returned and allowed him to remember that he must head to Baraxton, where Nassiral Hate strives to increase his power.

# Part 3: The Stone of Fortune

**If the party has not yet been on The Terror of Condor Pass adventure, read aloud:** *The stone flashes bright in your grip, revealing a massive fort in a canyon. Down through the canyon the vision takes you, to a filthy cave covered in refuse. There, another creature lies in wait, its many eyes whirling about it.*

This is the Terror of Condor Pass.

**If the party has already been on The Terror of Condor Pass adventure, read aloud:** *The stone's vision is blurry for a few moments, as though you had awakened it early. As the image clears, however, you see fuzzy shapes, then more distinct ones — the Nothrog and Dwarves, and other prisoners at Sharn, each slowly awakening to themselves again. The former slaves leave the keep in an almost orderly fashion, never so much as glancing at each other. Sharn is empty once again.*

The PCs have evolved from mere adventurers to heroes, and likely saved at least one nation by now. The Medusan Lords, realizing that the PCs are no longer idle threats but have become serious annoyances, intend to make an example of them. Other noteworthy people of the Accordlands approach the heroes for their own schemes. Tier 6, suitable for characters of levels 11–13, gives the party their first opportunity to strike directly at one of the Medusan Lords: Nassiral Hate, leader of the Nothrog Legions.

# Tier 6

## Ichaerus Rising

*Ichaerus*, king of the elven House Netheryn, approaches the PCs with a unique offer: in exchange for willingly participating in a scheme to unseat High Queen Tepheroth, the PCs may free an entire village of human prisoners, already on their way to the necromancers for conversion into undead conscripts.

## Siege of Kcal'den Fortress

An old acquaintance of the heroes needs their aid in attacking Kcal'den Fortress, a legendary deathtrap designed by the keen Nothrog Siegemaster Kcal'den himself. This is the party's opportunity to come to a friend's rescue, or to turn an old enemy into a new ally.

## Believers

In a moment of weakness, the heroes find themselves with a surprising new ally: Modred of Carcius, the Hierophant of the Storm. Returning the favors visited upon his church, Modred throws the party a banquet to which he invites Deverenia's elite, including old enemies. The party must play a very different game in the Grand Cathedral of the Storm, for dishonor is as deadly as an assassin's poison.

## Dragon Keep Festival

A host of new and old servants of Kor invite the party to a feast in honor of their victory over the dragon Valanir. During the celebrations, however, the PCs discover a hidden passage below the former dragons' lair.

## Lord of Baraxton

Nassiral Hate is the most infamous Nothrog of the times, a seer without peer and the new master over the human city of Baraxton. As the party has discovered, he is also the most visible member of the Medusan Lords, and therefore the most vulnerable. The PCs have the chance to strike at their hated enemy. Other forces interfere on the party's behalf, and a strange prophecy warns the party of the price of failure in the coming days.

## Campaign Notes:



# Ichærus Rising

## Introduction

This adventure takes the party into the web of deceit that is Elven politics, and the darkness of a necromancer's den.

This is one of five adventures in Tier 6. It is meant for characters of levels 11–13.

## Adventure Synopsis

Ichærus intends to inform the PCs of the fate of Ventorston, and show them the location of the dungeon where the villagers are being held. He expects the PCs to rush off and save the innocents without thought for their own welfare.

The PCs must infiltrate the dungeons of the necromancer Damothien in search of the villagers. However, Ichærus intends to betray the PCs, "coincidentally" capturing them in the act of rescuing them. He then brings them before the Elven High Council, stating that their presence proves the incompetence of Queen Tepheroth.

Each member of the High Council has the opportunity to interrogate the PCs privately, though only two do so. Each member offers them freedom, for a price. The PCs must choose which house they ally with, and then deal with the consequences of that decision.

Finally the PCs must escape the forest of Myreth, dogged by agents of the houses they spurned.

# Part 1: Entering the Dungeon Keep

## Location 1: Damothien's Dungeon

Specifically designed to keep captives in and visitors out, Damothien's home is a labyrinthine structure of bone and stone, lit by phon faeries trapped in translucent globes. The phons emit a soft continuous glow, ideal for keeping dungeons lit. The dungeon itself is primarily stone, with bone rafters, braces, and accents. The bones are unimaginably old, the remains of long-dead giants, dragons, and other monsters unfathomable to those of this age.

Damothien, a young necromancer, is by no means the first occupant of this residence. He inherited it from his master, who has begun work on a new sanctum, one more suited to his new life as a lich. The complex is extensive, and many necromancers covet it while anxiously awaiting an accident to befall Damothien.

The dungeon itself is broken up into four floors, each serving a specific purpose. The top (ground) floor is Damothien's living quarters, containing his bedchamber, library, meeting rooms, and other functional rooms of a normal household. Traps and guardians discourage unwelcome intrusion.

The next floor down contains, among other things, Damothien's laboratories, one per course of study. There is an alchemy lab, a divination lab, and a vivisection lab, but central and largest is of course the necromancy laboratory. Many creatures in various stages of undeath wait here, and Damothien, as jealous of his secrets as any other necromancer, keeps this area well defended.

Third floor down is the bestiary, where Damothien keeps many of the creatures he has animated. Additionally, his "servants' quarters" are located on this floor, along with the various storerooms.

The bottom floor contains the prison and spare-parts rooms. What Damothien considers a "spare parts room," most would call a mausoleum: it contains shelves stacked high with various limbs, organs, bones, and other components of once-living things.

Each floor has a guardian from one of the cornerstones of Elven religion: Flesh, Blood, Bone, and Spirit. These powerful guardians are magically bound to their floors and cannot leave. Each guardian has a password that allows safe passage, but only Damothien knows all four of them, and not all of them are written down.

### Damothien

**Damothien is a typical necromancer of House Dythanus: cold, ruthless, arrogant, ambitious, and powerful. He considers nobody his equal, only his inferiors who have not yet learned of his superiority. He is loyal to his house, and he was loyal to his master, but the ultimate reason for both of these allegiances is power. He believes he is close to immortality, and needs only a few more experiments before he is confident enough to become undead. The Human chattel he has acquired should provide for ample study, and Damothien can nearly taste eternity.**

**Damothien's stats are provided, in spite of the fact that he is dead when the PCs first encounter him, because Cear Adinerach did not slay him with his life and death ability. He has been researching many arcane rituals, and it occurred to him such knowledge could be dangerous. As a high-level necromancer, he made preparations for his own assassination, and returns to life, fully refreshed (except for one point of Con) in the necromancy laboratory (Location 1.2.4) exactly thirteen hours from his death.**

**For this reason, it is important to track the time that has passed from the moment Damothien is killed. If the PCs are still in his home when he awakens in the laboratory, he naturally assumes they are in league with Adinerach and tries to kill them, using features of the dungeon to his advantage. If they are not, and they have left no clues as to their next location, he has no way to track them. While he may appear later, his major purpose in this adventure is to die.**

**Damothien, Male Elf Nec 13:** CR 13; Medium humanoid (Elf); HD 13d4+3; hp 36; Spd 30 ft.; Init +8; AC 14, touch 14, flat-footed 10; Base Atk +6; Grp +6; Atk +10 melee (1d4(19–20/x2), dagger) or +10 melee (1d8+3 plus steal life/x2, unarmed strike); Full Atk +10/+5 melee (1d4(19–20/x2), dagger) or +10/+5 melee (1d8+3 plus steal life/x2, unarmed strike); SA Steal life (1d8+3), spells, rebuke undead 6/day; SQ Cheat death, death's threshold (sleep, poison, disease, mind-influencing effects), Elf traits, spontaneous casting; AL NE; SV Fort +4, Ref +8, Will +9; Str 10, Dex 18, Con 11, Int 19, Wis 12, Cha 17.

*Skills and Feats:* Alchemy +16, Concentration +16, Listen +10, Scry +16, Spellcraft +16, Spot +10; Improved Initiative, Improved Unarmed Strike, Scribe Scroll, Toughness, Weapon Finesse (dagger), Weapon Finesse (Unarmed).

*Cheat Death:* Damothien has prepared for his own death. Should he be killed he can attempt a Will save (DC 20) at the moment of his death. If successful, Damothien returns to life exactly 13 hours later at a pre-determined location (the necromancy lab). If he returns, Damothien chooses to suffer the loss of one point of Constitution.

*Death's Threshold:* Damothien does not need to sleep and is immune to sleep effects. In addition, he is immune to poison, disease, and mind-influencing effects.

*Rebuke Undead:* Damothien may attempt to rebuke undead 6 times per day as an 8th level cleric.

*Spontaneous Casting:* Damothien may expend one of his memorized spells to cast any necromancy spell of equal or lower level.

*Steal Life:* Damothien's unarmed attacks deal 1d8+3 lethal damage. Any damage dealt by this attack is added as hit points to Damothien's total; any excess hit points are lost at the rate of one per round.

*Necromancer Spells Prepared* (4/5/5/5/5/3/2/1; save DC 14 + spell level): 0 — detect magic, ghost sound, mage hand, read magic; 1st — burning hands, magic missile, protection from good, shield, true strike; 2nd — alter self, detect thoughts, invisibility, protection from arrows, web; 3rd — dispel magic, fireball, fly, hold person, lightning bolt, nondetection; 4th — arcane eye, confusion, ice storm, improved invisibility, stoneskin; 5th — cloudkill, dominate person, teleport; 6th — chain lightning, true seeing; 7th — tomb of earth.

*Possessions:* Dagger, spellbook.

ENCOUNTER 1: FIRST MEETING

Ichærus' meeting with the PCs can occur nearly anywhere, as he is powerful enough to reach almost anywhere in the Accordlands, and knowledgeable enough to track the PCs down

**Read aloud:** *An Elf walks up to you, looking at you haughtily, and immediately begins to speak to you. He is obviously accustomed to being listened to without interruption. "I am Ichærus. Rumor has it you consider yourselves heroes. If your 'heroism' extends to the rescue of innocents, then there is a situation that calls to you desperately. Of course, there is much danger and little reward involved, but that matters little to a true hero, does it not?"* It is impressive how much contempt he has managed to fit into a plea for help.

Ichærus explains that the villagers of Ventorston are being held by a powerful Elven necromancer, who will remake them into undead slaves in a matter of days. He entreats the PCs to journey into Myreth and to rescue the villagers from the necromancer's dungeon. If the PCs continue to delve into Ichærus' motives or source of information, he questions their heroism, implying that real heroes would leave to save the villagers immediately. He continually impresses on them that there is no time to waste. Ichærus freely admits that he has ulterior motives in coming to the PCs, but claims that his house has little taste for necromancy, and that this is the party's chance to save many innocents from eternal damnation as undead.

How much time the PCs have to save the villagers is up to the GM, depending on how far they are from Myreth. Damothien's residence is roughly 30 miles almost due north of Ventorston (or at least, the remnants thereof). Ichærus can give them specific directions. They need to travel quickly, and leave almost immediately from the meeting in order to arrive in time. Ichærus planned the meeting this way, figuring the more time the PCs have to examine the situation, the harder it is to fool them.

Feel free to throw any encounters or other adventure hooks at the PCs while they are on their way to Damothien's house. There are many fascinating residents of the Myreth forest for the PCs to interact with, but since none of them are central to the plot of this adventure, they are not detailed here.

## Location 1.1: Damothien's Dungeon, First Floor

**As the PCs reach the keep, Read aloud:** *Before you is a wide, squat building, made of what appears to be tightly-packed bone. Like everything else in this strange forest, it appears fragile, but you have learned looks can be deceiving. Likely it is reinforced by magic on the outside, and protected by it on the inside. Above the two great black doors, the skull of some strange beast stares down at you, its empty eye sockets oddly expressive.*

**Development:** The doors are neither locked nor magically reinforced, since Damothien figures that only the incredibly foolish would intentionally enter the home of an Elven necromancer uninvited. There are no other entrances, nor any windows (sunlight being distinctly unfriendly to undead).

## Location 1.1.1: The Grand Foyer (EL 9)

**Read aloud:** *As you pass through the double doors, you enter a large hall, archaically and tastefully decorated. A lush red carpet lines the floor, softly glowing globes hanging from the ceiling provide comfortable light, and statues are interspersed throughout the room. Approaching you from the other side of the hall is an Elven woman of surpassing beauty. Her pale skin, dark hair and fine features are somehow accented by her suit of polished bone armor, and she almost glides across the room. She smiles, and in a rich voice says, "Welcome to my lord's home. What is your business here?"*

**Development:** Only close inspection penetrates the illusion of this room, because the illusion is more psychological than magical. Nothing here is what it seems. It is no coincidence the carpet is the color of blood, for each group of Humans Damothien disposes of contributes to its maintenance. The "statues" are individuals whose appearance Damothien's predecessor found intriguing, and decided to preserve indefinitely (they are under a permanent flesh to stone spell). The softly glowing crystal globes are imprisoned phon fairies, doomed to eternal captivity. Finally, the pale-skinned beauty is definitely more than she appears.

This Elf is Llyanwyn, and she moves with unearthly grace because she is a vampire. Made immortal by Damothien's predecessor, she is paying for that privilege by serving as the seneschal of the house. She is also the first Guardian, that of Blood, and is magically bound to this floor. This bond is so strong that Damothien's master could not free her to accompany him to his new sanctum (an unintended consequence), and so she must fulfill her term of service here. She has only 146 more years until her indenture is complete.

Llyanwyn is polite, cordial, and courteous until she suspects the PCs are neither invited by nor there to do business with Damothien. If the PCs somehow trick her into believing their intentions are benign, she escorts them wherever they need to go. If she is with them when they come across Damothien's corpse (**Location 1.1.7**), she immediately orders them to surrender, attacking if they do not.

If and when Llyanwyn suspects the PCs of foul play, she tries to catch them off-guard, then uses her domination ability on the one she suspects is weakest-willed. She does her best to use the PCs against each other, preferring to subdue them for interrogation, but does not hesitate to kill if necessary.

**Creature:** Llyanwyn, a 7th-level vampire fighter.

**Llyanwyn, Elven vampire, 7th-level fighter:** CR 9; Medium undead (augmented humanoid); HD 7d12; hp 46; Init +5; Spd 30 ft.; AC 28, touch 15, flat-footed 23; Base Atk +7; Grp +10; Atk +11 melee (1d6+3 plus energy drain/x2, slam); Full Atk +11/+6 melee (1d6+3 plus energy drain/x2, 2 slams); Space/Reach 5 ft./5 ft.; SA Favored weapon (longsword, shortsword), improved damage (longsword), energy drain, blood drain, children of the night, create spawn, dominate; SQ Undead traits, damage reduction 10/silver and magic, gaseous form, spider climb, alternate form, fast healing 5, +4 turn resistance, resistance to cold and electricity 10, vampire weaknesses, guardian (see sidebar The Guardians); AL LE; SV Fort +7, Ref +9, Will +5; Str 18, Dex 20, Con —, Int 16, Wis 12, Cha 20.

*Skills and Feats:* Bluff +16*, Climb +11, Intimidate +11, Hide +11*, Listen +17*, Move Silently +11*, Search +11*, Sense Motive +16*, Spot +16*; Alertness, Combat Expertise, Improved Initiative, Lightning Reflexes, Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Mobility, Spring Attack, Great Fortitude, Iron Will, Whirlwind Attack. *Vampires have a +8 racial bonus on Bluff, Hide, Listen, Move Silently, Search, Sense Motive, and Spot checks.

*Favored Weapon (longsword, shortsword):* Llyanwyn gains a +1 competence bonus to attack and damage rolls with the longsword and the shortsword.

*Improved Damage (longsword):* Llyanwyn does an additional +2 (+3 total) damage with the longsword.

*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, dealing 1d4 points of Constitution drain each round the pin is maintained. On each such successful attack, the vampire gains 5 temporary hit points.

*Children of the Night (Su):* Vampires command the lesser creatures of the world and once per day can call forth 1d6+1 rat swarms, 1d4+1 bat swarms, or a pack of 3d6 wolves as a standard action. (If the base creature is not terrestrial, this power might summon other creatures of similar power.) These creatures arrive in 2d6 rounds and serve the vampire for up to 1 hour.

*Dominate (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 use a standard action, and those merely looking at it are not affected. Anyone the vampire targets must succeed on a Will save (DC 13) or fall instantly under the vampire's influence as though by a dominate person spell (caster level 12th). The ability has a range of 30 feet.

*Create Spawn (Su):* A humanoid or monstrous humanoid slain by a vampire's energy drain rises as a vampire spawn 1d4 days after burial. If the vampire instead drains the victim's Constitution to 0 or lower, the victim returns as a spawn if it had 4 or less 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 destruction. At any given time a vampire may have enslaved spawn totaling no more than twice its own Hit Dice; any spawn it creates that would exceed this limit are created as free-willed vampires or vampire spawn. A vampire that is enslaved may create and enslave spawn of its own, so a master vampire can control a number of lesser vampires in this fashion. A vampire may voluntarily free an enslaved spawn in order to enslave a new spawn, but once freed, a vampire or vampire spawn cannot be enslaved again.

*Energy Drain (Su):* Living creatures hit by a vampire's slam attack (or any other natural weapon the vampire might possess) gain two negative levels. For each negative level bestowed, the vampire gains 5 temporary hit points. A vampire can use its energy drain ability once per round.

*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 spell cast by a 12th-level character, except that the vampire does not regain hit points for changing form and must choose from among the forms mentioned here. While in its alternate form, the vampire loses its natural slam attack and dominate ability, but it gains the natural weapons and extraordinary special attacks of its new form. It can remain in that form until it assumes another or until the next sunrise. (If the base creature is not terrestrial, this power might allow other forms.)

*Damage Reduction (Su):* A vampire has damage reduction 10/silver and magic. A vampire's natural weapons are treated as magic weapons for the purpose of overcoming damage reduction.

*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 in combat, it 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.) Any additional damage dealt to a vampire forced into gaseous form has no effect. Once at rest in its coffin, a vampire is helpless. It regains 1 hit point after 1 hour, then is no longer helpless and 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 (caster level 5th), but it can remain gaseous indefinitely and has a fly speed of 20 feet with perfect maneuverability.

*Resistances (Ex):* A vampire has resistance to cold 10 and electricity 10.

*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 +2 to the vampire's Hit Dice total.

*Guardian (Su):* As one of the four elemental protectors of Damothien's home, the guardian can never be removed from its assigned protectorate. All attempts to forcibly relocate the guardian (such as teleportation) automatically fail. A turned guardian automatically recovers from turning if it is being forced out of its assigned area.

*Undead Traits:* The vampire has the following traits:

- No Constitution score.
- Darkvision out to 60 feet.
- Immunity to all mind-affecting effects (charms, compulsions, phantasms, patterns, and morale effects).
- Immunity to poison, sleep effects, paralysis, stunning, disease, death effects, and necromancy effects.
- Negative energy (such as an inflict spell) can heal undead creatures. The fast healing quality works regardless of the creature's Intelligence score.
- Not subject to critical hits, non-lethal damage, ability damage, ability drain, fatigue, exhaustion, or energy drain. Immune to damage to its physical ability scores (Strength, Dexterity, Constitution), as well as to fatigue and exhaustion effects.
- Immunity to any effect that requires a Fortitude save (unless the effect also works on objects, or is harmless).
- Uses its Charisma modifier for Concentration checks.
- Not at risk of death from massive damage. Immediately destroyed when reduced to 0 hit points or less.

- Not affected by raise dead and reincarnate spells or abilities. Resurrection and true resurrection can affect undead creatures. These spells turn undead creatures back into the living creatures they were before becoming undead.
- Proficient with its natural weapons, all simple weapons, and any weapon mentioned in its entry.
- Proficient with whatever type of armor (light, medium, and heavy) it is described as wearing, as well as all lighter types.
- Undead do not eat, sleep, or breathe.

*Vampire Weaknesses:* For all their power, vampires have a number of weaknesses.

- Repelling a Vampire: Vampires cannot tolerate the strong odor of garlic and will not enter an area laced with it. Similarly, they recoil from a mirror or a strongly presented holy symbol. These things don't harm the vampire—they merely keep it at bay. A recoiling vampire must stay at least 5 feet away from a creature holding the mirror or holy symbol and cannot touch or make melee attacks against the creature holding the item for the rest of the encounter. Holding a vampire at bay takes a standard action.
- Vampires are also unable to cross running water, although they can be carried over it while resting in their coffins or aboard a ship.
- They are utterly unable to enter a home or other building unless invited in by someone with the authority to do so. They may freely enter public places, since these are by definition open to all.
- Slaying a Vampire: Reducing a vampire's hit points to 0 or lower incapacitates it but doesn't always destroy it (see the note on fast healing). However, certain attacks can slay vampires. Exposing any vampire to direct sunlight disorients it: It can take only a single move action or attack action and is destroyed utterly in the next round if it cannot escape. Similarly, immersing a vampire in running water robs it of one-third of its hit points each round until it is destroyed at the end of the third round of immersion. Driving a wooden stake through a vampire's heart instantly slays the monster. However, it returns to life if the stake is removed, unless the body is destroyed. A popular tactic is to cut off the creature's head and fill its mouth with holy wafers (or their equivalent).

### The Guardians

**Damothien has taken several steps to ensure his guardians can never be forced away from their duties, a process he learned from his master. His necromantic magic binds them to their protectorates.**

**A guardian can never leave the floor it is bound to, not to flee in self-preservation nor to pursue enemies. Any attempt to magically remove a guardian from its domain fails automatically, and it resists with all of its power any attempts to do so physically. Furthermore, while a guardian can be turned as normal while in its assigned domain, it recovers automatically if it is ever forced to leave.**

## Location 1.1.2: The Dining Room (EL 8)

**Read aloud:** *You are in a spacious room, dominated by the large bone-white table in the center, set with eating daggers for eight people, with room for nearly a dozen more. A chandelier hangs above it. Besides the legs and feet of the table being actual skeletal legs and feet, this room is frighteningly normal. At least, it seemed to be until the toes of the skeletal table legs began tapping...*

The dining room is exactly what it appears to be, but the table conceals a nasty secret. In Damothien's absence, it breaks apart into 12 Large skeletons, attacking the PCs with their slam attacks. If the PCs feel like stealing Damothien's silverware, it is worth roughly 100 gp total.

**Creature:** Twelve skeletons.

**Skeletons (12):** CR 1; Large undead; HD 2d12; hp 17; Init +5; Spd 40 ft.; AC 13, touch 10, flat-footed 13; Base Atk +0; Grp +6; Atk +2 melee (1d6+2/x2, claw); Full Atk +2 melee (1d6+2/x2, 2 claws); Space/Reach 10 ft./5 ft.; SA —; SQ Undead traits, damage reduction 5/bludgeoning, darkvision 60 ft., immunity to cold; AL NE; SV Fort +0, Ref +1, Will +3; Str 14, Dex 12, Con —, Int —, Wis 10, Cha 11.

*Darkvision, 60 ft. (Ex):* A skeleton can see in the dark with no light source at all, out to a range of 60 feet. Darkvision is black and white only (colors cannot be discerned). It does not allow the skeleton to see anything that it could not see otherwise—invisible objects are still invisible, and illusions are still visible as what they seem to be. Likewise, darkvision subjects the skeleton to gaze attacks normally. The presence of light does not spoil darkvision.

*Immunity to Cold (Ex):* A skeleton takes no damage from any cold-based attacks.

*Undead Traits:* The skeleton has the following traits:

- No Constitution score.
- Darkvision out to 60 feet.
- Immunity to all mind-affecting effects (charms, compulsions, phantasms, patterns, and morale effects).
- Immunity to poison, sleep effects, paralysis, stunning, disease, death effects, and necromancy effects.
- Cannot heal damage on its own if it has no Intelligence score, although it can be healed. Negative energy (such as an inflict spell) can heal undead creatures. The fast healing quality works regardless of the creature's Intelligence score.
- Not subject to critical hits, non-lethal damage, ability damage, ability drain, fatigue, exhaustion, or energy drain. Immune to damage to its physical ability scores (Strength, Dexterity, Constitution), as well as to fatigue and exhaustion effects.
- Immunity to any effect that requires a Fortitude save (unless the effect also works on objects, or is harmless).
- Uses its Charisma modifier for Concentration checks.
- Not at risk of death from massive damage. Immediately destroyed when reduced to 0 hit points or less.

- Not affected by raise dead and reincarnate spells or abilities. Resurrection and true resurrection can affect undead creatures. These spells turn undead creatures back into the living creatures they were before becoming undead.
- Proficient with its natural weapons, all simple weapons, and any weapon mentioned in its entry.
- Proficient with whatever type of armor (light, medium, and heavy) it is described as wearing, as well as all lighter types.
- Undead do not eat, sleep, or breathe.

## Location 1.1.3: The Kitchen (EL 5)

**Read aloud:** *Again, you are struck by the absurdity of the idea that a powerful necromancer needs a kitchen, but obviously he does. A water barrel, an oven, and a large cooking fire (complete with brazier of hot coals) all contribute to the impression this kitchen would not be out of place in any home in the Accordlands. Except, of course, for the mystical words coming out of thin air. As the magic words fade into silence, the cooking fire flares up and begins to take shape...*

The brazier of coals is in fact a brazier of commanding fire elementals, and is one of the subtle booby traps Damothien uses to keep uninvited guests on their toes without detracting from the décor of his home. The magic words come from a set of complex wards designed to trigger when a living non-Elf being steps through the kitchen door. In the unlikely event all of the PCs are Elves, the trap stays dormant. The result is to summon a Large fire elemental whose orders are to attack all non-Elves in the kitchen.

The elemental does not leave the kitchen under any circumstances, nor does it hesitate to destroy anything within the room (Damothien values nothing in the kitchen except the brazier, but is less callous about the rest of the house). Quick PCs can use the water barrel to their advantage. Once the elemental is taken care of, the brazier is there for the taking, assuming the PCs cool it off first.

**Creature:** One fire elemental.

**Fire Elemental (1):** CR 5; Large elemental (Fire, Extraplanar); HD 5d10+15; hp 35; Init +9; Spd 50 ft.; AC 18, touch 14, flat-footed 13; Base Atk +6, Grp +12; Atk +10 melee (2d6+2 plus 2d6 fire/x2, slam); Full Atk +10 melee (2d6+2 plus 2d6 fire/x2, 2 slams); Space/Reach 10 ft./10 ft.; SA Burn; SQ Elemental traits, damage reduction 5/—, darkvision 60 ft., fire subtype; AL N; SV Fort +5, Ref +11, Will +2; Str 14, Dex 21, Con 16, Int 6, Wis 11, Cha 11.

*Skills and Feats:* Listen +5, Spot +6; Dodge, Improved Initiative, Mobility, Spring Attack, Weapon Finesse (slam).

*Burn (Ex):* A fire elemental's slam attack deals bludgeoning damage plus fire damage from the elemental's flaming body. Those hit by a fire elemental's slam attack also must succeed on a Reflex save (DC 17) or catch on fire. The flame burns for 1d4 rounds. A burning creature can take a move action to put out the flame. The save DC is Constitution-based.

Creatures hitting a fire elemental with natural weapons or unarmed attacks take fire damage as though hit by the elemental's attack, and also catch on fire unless they succeed on a Reflex save.

*Elemental Traits:* A fire elemental has the following traits:

- Immunity to poison, sleep effects, paralysis, and stunning.
- Not subject to critical hits or flanking.
- Unlike most other living creatures, an elemental does not have a dual nature—its soul and body form one unit. When an elemental is slain, no soul is set loose. Spells that restore souls to their bodies, such as raise dead, reincarnate, and resurrection, don't work on an elemental. It takes a different magical effect, such as limited wish, wish, miracle, or true resurrection, to restore it to life.
- Elementals do not eat, sleep, or breathe.

*Fire Subtype:* A creature with the fire subtype has immunity to fire. It has vulnerability to cold, which means it takes half again as much (+50%) damage as normal from cold, regardless of whether a saving throw is allowed, or if the save is a success or failure.

*Damage Reduction (Su):* A fire elemental ignores the first 5 points of damage from any attack, natural or with a weapon. The fire elemental takes normal damage from energy attacks (even nonmagical ones), spells, spell-like abilities, and supernatural abilities (see Immunity to Magic).

*Darkvision, 60 ft. (Ex):* A fire elemental can see in the dark with no light source at all, out to a range of 60 feet. Darkvision is black and white only (colors cannot be discerned). It does not allow the fire elemental to see anything that it could not see otherwise—invisible objects are still invisible, and illusions are still visible as what they seem to be. Likewise, darkvision subjects the fire elemental to gaze attacks normally. The presence of light does not spoil darkvision.

## Location 1.1.4: Sitting Room (EL 8)

**Development:** The PCs do not know that they are not the only visitors to Damothien's home this day. Shortly before they arrived, Cear Adinerach and his associate, Thylean, paid an incognito call on Damothien. Adinerach and Damothien went back to Damothien's study to discuss business, while Llyanwyn and Thylean exchanged pleasantries in the sitting room. Shortly thereafter, Llyanwyn went to meet the PCs at the door.

Neither Llyanwyn nor the PCs know that Cear Adinerach killed Damothien as soon as they were alone, intending for the PCs to take the fall for the murder. Thylean is there to keep Llyanwyn occupied until they arrive. Now that they have, he intends to ambush them, in order to buy time for Adinerach to finish the set-up.

Thylean is watching the PCs from the doorway of the sitting room, and any sign they are coming towards either him or Damothien's chambers causes him to strike. He is an experienced rogue and assassin, and attempts to sneak up and attack the PC whose back is closest to him. After he has fought for 3 rounds, he runs out the front door, assuming Adinerach can fend for himself.

The sitting room itself is staid, with four paintings (each worth about 300 gp if the PCs feel the urge to steal them), some wooden chairs and a table with a half-full bottle of Elven wine.

**Thylean, Male Elf Asn 8:** CR 8; Medium humanoid (Elf); HD 8d6; hp 34; Spd 30 ft.; Init +9; AC 17, touch 15, flat-footed 12; Base Atk +6; Grp +6; Atk +11 melee (1d6 plus poison(19–20/x2), short sword); Full Atk +11/+6 melee (1d6 plus poison(19–20/x2), short sword); SA Crippling strike, ruthless (attack action), sneak attack +4d6, spells; SQ Elf traits, poison immunity and resistance +2, poison use, skilled brewer; AL NE; SV Fort +2, Ref +11, Will +3; Str 10, Dex 20, Con 11, Int 14, Wis 12, Cha 10.

*Skills and Feats:* Balance +5, Climb +5, Escape Artist +6, Gather Information +6, Hide +11, Listen +11, Move Silently +11, Poison +11; Feats: Blind-Fight, Improved Initiative, Weapon Finesse (short sword).

*Crippling Strike:* When Thylean scores a critical hit in melee combat, rather than inflicting damage he may inflict normal damage (the hit point damage is not doubled as usual for a critical hit) plus 1d2 + his Intelligence modifier (+2) in temporary damage to the victim's Strength, Dexterity, or Constitution.

*Poison Immunity and Resistance:* Thylean has a +2 save bonus against all poisons and is immune to quicksilver and black lotus poison.

*Poison Use:* Thylean is trained in the use of poison and never risks accidentally poisoning himself/herself when applying poison to a blade.

*Ruthless:* Thylean may make one coup de grace attack as a melee attack action once per round.

*Skilled Brewer:* Thylean is trained to brew poison and always has a +2 competence bonus to Poison skill checks.

*Sneak Attack:* Anytime Thylean's target is denied a Dexterity bonus to AC, or when he flanks a target, Thylean deals an additional 4d6 points of damage on a successful melee attack.

*Assassin Spells Available* (0/2/1; save DC 12 + spell level): 1st — ghost sound, spider climb; 2nd — darkness.

*Possessions:* Leather armor, short sword with scorpion venom [Scorpion venom (poison): Injury DC 18; Initial damage 1d6 Str; Secondary damage 1d6 Str.].

## Location 1.1.5: Trophy Room

**Read aloud:** *You are in what appears to be a trophy room. Strange artifacts grace the walls here, and you wonder how many of them are merely ornamental, how many are deadly, and perhaps, how many are both. Exotic animals are displayed as well, but with what you've seen of this house you know better than to trust appearances.*

Oddly enough, this room is exactly what it appears to be: an innocuous trophy room intended to impress visitors. The objects on the walls are all non-magical, and the creatures on display are dead and inert.

## Location 1.1.6: Damothien's Antechamber

**Read aloud:** *As you reach the entrance to the master suite, a humanoid silhouette appears in the far doorway. Despite its easy, confident approach, the silhouette somehow fails to resolve itself, and only when the Elf stands right in front of you do you finally make out a face, a familiar face. The face in front of you has haunted your dreams since the Assassins' Strike. Just as on that fateful night at Ghostwood Keep, he carries a bloody dagger, which he tosses to your feet with a laugh. After a moment's hesitation, he produces a large flower from nowhere.*

**Development:** This Elf is, of course, Cear Adinerach, and he has just finished killing Damothien and vandalizing his quarters. The flower he holds is a black lotus, which he places behind the ear of the nearest female PC (not because of any kind of attraction, he just knows what's in store for them and finds it amusing), or in the hand of a male if there are no females. Unlike in The Ghostwood Treaty, he does not toy with the party here. He chooses one of the party (preferably a bard, but any PC the GM deems to be the "heart" of the party), and uses his Life & Death ability to slay this PC, adding: "We have indulged you long enough, because you have yet to challenge us. Continue, and we may reconsider whether you truly pose a threat." Cear then raises his victim, who thereafter suffers the side-effects of the process as outlined in Cear's ability description.

**Creature:** Caer Adinerach, Medusan Lord, 15th-level assassin/5th-level Tansiq flesher *(see The Ghostwood Treaty adventure for stats).*

**Cear Adinerach:** hp 193.

## Location 1.1.7: Damothien's Bedroom

**Read aloud:** *The most striking feature in this room is not the great canopy bed, or the bedposts that are unmistakably enormous femurs. Nor is it the many skeletons lined up on the rear wall, like soldiers waiting for inspection, nor even the huge skeletal griffon hanging in the air as if in mid-flight. No, the most striking feature in this room is the Elf lying on the bed, his slit throat slowly staining the sheets.*

**Development:** The Elf on the bed is Damothien, slain by Cear Adinerach. He has been arranged to look as if he was killed in his sleep with the dagger Adinerach left at the PCs' feet. One of the few truthful legends about Cear Adinerach is his ability to seal the death of his victims. No communication, animation, or revivification spell works on Damothien, and the backlash is such that anybody attempting such a spell on him takes 1d6 damage per level of the spell (Will save DC 20 for half). It should be apparent to the PCs they are being set up, and equally apparent that the villagers are still in danger.

Damothien's bedroom contains many valuables, none of them in plain sight. Hanging in his closet, among other robes of varying color and quality, is a blue robe of eyes. Damothien's rod of withering rests on a stand near his bed. His corpse has on it a concealed +3 dagger, which he never had a chance to draw against Adinerach (Search DC 15 to find it on him). Otherwise, the contents of the room, while valuable, are of no help to the PCs, who should by now be realizing they are caught up in something more than a simple rescue attempt.

*Treasure:* robe of eyes, +3 dagger.

## Location 1.1.8: Library

**Read aloud:** *Finally, a room that looks appropriate for an evil wizard's sanctum. Shelves upon shelves of polished bone hold innumerable books in a spacious room. Titles that catch your eye range from Preservation Techniques for Human Remains to the cryptic Secrets of Life and Death. Even non-necromantic books are on display, and you could swear you saw Care and Feeding of Oozes, Slimes, and Carnivorous Molds on a high shelf.*

**Development:** The library is completely undisturbed, although there are several objects of interest. The first of these is an otherwise unremarkable blue leather-bound tome, bound identically to other books throughout the library. This one is a tome of clear thought +4, as yet unread. Short of reading every book in the library, the only way to find the tome is by detect magic.

The second object of interest is the group of several books lying open on a table. These books seemingly have nothing in common, ranging from a history of emperors of Deverenia to an ancient treatise on the Great Dragon.

This latter is titled The Life and Death of the Eternal Dragon. It discusses in great detail the Dragon, recounting the failed wars fought to kill it, and its eventual death. Athenae took the Dragon's eggs hostage, and it allowed itself to be slain to save the lives of its offspring, opening its mouth and permitting Athanae to pierce its heart from the inside. The Dragon's powerful, tormented soul would haunt the Accordlands forever as the Storm. The Dragon's thrashing corpse buried itself deep under the skin of the world, where it yet remains. This treatise speculates that the Dragon could be reanimated by pulling the Storm back into its body.

Damothien, during the course of his studies, stumbled across a clue regarding the Medusan Lords and their plan. Part of the reason Cear Adinerach killed him was to ensure his research never made it past the hypothetical stage.

## Location 1.1.9: Study

**Read aloud:** *This room is apparently the wizard's study, as evinced by the desk, and more shelves of books, all bound identically in bleached white leather. The desk itself is, surprisingly, made of wood. You surmise that bone drawers might be beyond even the most skilled Elven craftsman.*

**Development:** There is little of interest in Damothien's study, unless the PCs want to raid his spellbooks. In a trapped drawer (see below), Damothien has a *wand of contagion* (26 charges remaining) and an *arcane scroll of teleportation circle*. More importantly, however, the drawer contains a parchment with three words written on it in ancient Elven: 'burn,' 'freeze,' and 'scorch.' If no PC speaks ancient Elven, the Decipher Script DC is 20. These are three of the passwords for Damothien's laboratories.

**Poison Needle Trap:** CR 2; mechanical; touch trigger; repair reset; lock bypass (Open Lock DC 30); Atk +17 melee (1 plus poison, needle); poison (blue whinnis, DC 14 Fortitude save resists (poison only), 1 Con/unconsciousness); Search DC 22; Disable Device DC 17.

## Location 1.2: Damothien's Dungeon, First Basement

**Development:** This floor contains Damothien's four laboratories: alchemy, divination, vivisection, and necromancy. Despite each laboratory's unique purpose, they all have a few things in common. Most of these common properties are not friendly to intruders like the PCs.

Each of the outer laboratories has a trap on the outside of the door. When Damothien needed something brought to him there, he opened the door beforehand to avoid harming his servants.

## Location 1.2.1: Divination Laboratory (EL 6)

This door is trapped with a glyph of warding, linked to a fireball spell. Anybody who tries to open the door without speaking the pass phrase (ancient Elven for 'scorch') triggers the glyph, releasing the fireball.

**Fireball Trap:** CR 5; magic device; touch trigger; automatic reset; spell effect (fireball, 8th-level wizard, 8d6 fire, DC 14 Reflex save half damage); Search DC 28; Disable Device DC 28.

**When the PCs enter the room, read aloud:** *This room contains candles, censers, braziers, and mystic circles. Across the room, set into a curved wall, is another door. It looks deserted, as if none of its materials have been used in some time.*

**Development:** PCs who make a Knowledge (arcana) check (DC 15) know that the things in this room are all used for Divination magic. Damothien rarely uses this laboratory, and besides the candle of truth hidden among the dozens of candles, there is little of note in here. Any spellcaster attempting to cast a divination spell in this room gains a +2 circumstance bonus to any checks or saves involved in the spell.

## Location 1.2.2: Alchemy Laboratory (EL 4)

This door is trapped with a glyph of warding linked to an acid arrow spell. Anybody who tries to open the door without speaking the pass phrase (ancient Elven for 'burn') triggers the glyph, releasing the acid.

**Acid Arrow Trap:** CR 3; magic device; proximity trigger *(alarm)*; automatic reset; Atk +2 ranged touch; spell effect (acid arrow, 3rd-level wizard, 2d4 acid/round for 2 rounds); Search DC 27; Disable Device DC 27. Cost: 3,000 gp, 240 XP.

**When the PCs enter the room, read aloud:** *Bottles, beakers, vials, alembics, and other alchemical equipment is littered all over the three large tables in this room. They contain various concoctions, and in a corner, you see a small fireplace, ideal for a cauldron.*

**Development:** PCs who make a Knowledge (arcana) or Alchemy check (DC 15) know that the things in this room are all used for alchemy. The alchemical laboratory is also unused, but contains several potions Damothien had brewed and left. Lying around are potions of: *intelligence, cure moderate wounds, cure serious wounds, ghoul touch, truth, and invisibility.* Also, there are many components for potion brewing here, enough to brew any one spell of 3rd level or less. Eager PCs might need to be reminded that time is of the essence, and potion brewing takes an entire day.

## Location 1.2.3: Vivisection Laboratory (EL 9)

This door is trapped with a *globe of cold*. Anybody who tries to open the door without speaking the pass phrase (ancient Elven for 'freeze') triggers the trap, releasing the globe.

**Cone of Cold Trap:** CR 6; magic device; proximity trigger (alarm); automatic reset; spell effect (cone of cold, 11th-level wizard, 11d6 cold damage in 60 ft. cone-shaped burst, DC 17 Reflex save half damage); Search DC 30; Disable Device DC 30.

**When the PCs enter the room, read aloud:** *The stench is overwhelming, predominantly rotting flesh, with overtones of bile, blood, and some kind of sharp, alchemical smell. Blinking back tears from the smell, you look around the room. Tables, caked in blood and gobbets of flesh, are spread throughout the laboratory, and cages of various sizes occupy the corners. One cage, significantly larger than man-sized, is not empty. With a ferocious roar, its demonic occupant, enraged from countless hours of torment, pulls free of the cage and charges you!*

The creature is a zhul, an abyssal who was captured by Damothien and subjected to numerous painful experiments. While normally a zhul would overmatch the PCs, it is weak from captivity.

**Creature:** One zhul.

**Zhul (1):** CR 10 (currently 9); Medium aberration (Greater Abyssal); HD 14d8+70; hp 121 (currently 50); Init +4; Speed 30 ft.; AC 26, touch 15, flat-footed 18; Base Atk +7; Grp +3; Atk +12 melee (1d8+7 plus poison (18–20/x2), +2 longsword of brilliant energy); Full Atk +12/+7 (1d8+7 plus poison (18–20/x2), two +2 longswords of brilliant energy); Space/Reach 5 ft./5 ft.; AL CE; SA Fear aura, poison, spell-like abilities (currently suppressed by Damothien's magic for 24 hours); SQ Abyssal traits, regeneration 5 (currently suppressed by Damothien's magic for 24 hours), spell turning, spell immunity, spell resistance 16, damage reduction 5/good; SV Fort +9, Ref +9, Will +14; Str 18, Dex 18, Con 18, Int 16, Wis 16, Cha 14.

*Skills and Feats*: Concentration +21, Diplomacy +17, Intimidate +17, Knowledge (great abyss) +18, Sense Motive +18; Dodge, Mobility, Spring Attack, Two Weapon Fighting, Improved Two Weapon Fighting, Cleave, Power Attack.

*Abyssal Traits:*

- *Astral (Ex):* Abyssals are astral creatures. They exist simultaneously both on the prime material plane and in the Abyss, a tiny plane surrounding the Dragon's corpse. As such, any melee or ranged attack that targets an Abyssal has a 50% miss chance, unless the attack is made with a +1 or better magical weapon (in the case of ranged attacks, only the projectile must bear the enchantment, not necessarily the weapon itself). This is in all ways like incorporeality.
- *Darkvision (Ex):* Range of 120 feet.
- *Immunities (Ex):* Abyssals are immune to all mind-affecting effects, including spells and spell-like abilities, paralysis, poison, sleep, stunning, disease and death effects. Abyssals are also immune to fire, ability drain, and energy drain.
- *Resistances (Ex):* Abyssals have cold, poison and electricity resistance 20.
- *Spell-like Abilities:* All Abyssals have the following spell-like abilities: 3/day — chaos hammer, darkness, doom, and scorching ray. In addition, greater Abyssals may cast unholy aura at will.
- *Telepathy (Ex):* Greater Abyssals have the ability to communicate telepathically with any creature within 100 ft. The target of this ability must be able to speak (or at least clearly understand) at least one language. The Abyssal's telepathy automatically translates its thoughts into the language best understood by the recipient. The Abyssal may only communicate with one non-Abyssal in this fashion at a time. A greater Abyssal may telepathically communicate with any number of Abyssals at once, provided they are in range.

*Fear Aura (Su):* A zhul is constantly surrounded by a 60-ft. radius aura of fear. Anyone within range must succeed at a DC 19 Will save or become panicked for 2d6 rounds. Even those who save successfully are considered shaken so long as they remain within range. Creatures that successfully save cannot be affected by the same aura of fear for 24 hours, but remain shaken, even if they leave the aura and return later.

*Poison (Ex):* Injury, Fortitude DC 22, initial damage 1d8 Dexterity, secondary damage 1d8 Constitution.

*Spell-like Abilities:* At the moment, none: they have been suppressed by Damothien. Ordinarily: 3/day—animate dead, blasphemy, create undead, desecrate, detect good, detect magic, dispel magic, fly, improved invisibility, lightning bolt, magic circle against good, polymorph self, pyrotechnics, suggestion, shout, teleport without error (self plus 100 lbs. only), unholy aura, unhallowed, wall of stone; 1/day—finger of death, symbol (any). Save DC = 12 + spell level.

*Spell Immunity (Su):* Each zhul has different immunities. Choose three arcane spells, totaling no more levels than it has Hit Dice. This zhul is permanently immune to burning hands, lightning bolt, and fireball.

*Spell Turning (Su):* Spells cast at a zhul have a chance of being reflected back at their caster per spell turning. This ability is inherent, and requires no action on behalf of the zhul. Any level of spell can be turned. Whenever a zhul succeeds at a save against a spell by more than +5, the spell is automatically redirected back to the target as if the zhul had cast the spell itself. The same is true of any spell resistance that succeeds in protecting the zhul. Such spells are automatically redirected back at the caster. Spells that have no save DC or ignore spell resistance still have a 25% chance of failing when the zhul is hit. If the zhul rolls a natural 20 or succeeds at the save by +10 or more, that spell becomes usable by the zhul once per day as an innate ability. If the zhul gains this benefit against a spell already in its repertoire, it gains an additional use of that spell per day. If the zhul succeeds at the save by +15 or more, it gains the above listed abilities, plus permanent immunity from that spell.

*Regeneration (Ex):* Fire and acid deal normal damage to a zhul, while all other damage is converted to subdual damage. If a zhul loses a limb or body part, the missing limb or chunk of flesh regenerates in 3d6 minutes. The zuhl can reattach the severed member instantly by holding it flush against the stump. If a zhul's head is severed, its body continues to function for 4d4 rounds, during which time the zhul desperately attempts to reattach its head in the above fashion. If it fails to do so in the allotted time, the zhul dies.

As usual, the zhul is vulnerable to attacks that do not deal hit point damage, such as most poisons and disintegration; similarly, it is affected normally by starvation, thirst, and suffocation. A zhul can be killed by massive damage normally; the massive trauma simply shuts down the zhul's nervous system, preventing it from regenerating the damage.

*Treasure:* This room contains several items that may be useful to the PCs, but they have a hard time getting the stench out of them. A hand of glory rests on a shelf, next to several other mummified limbs. On a stand nearby, a mask of the skull grins at the PCs. It is normal in all respects except, instead of being ivory carved into the form of a skull, it is in fact a real, enchanted skull.

## Location 7.2.4: Necromancy Laboratory (EL 7)

There are four doors leading into this room, each trapped in the same way. The trap triggers only when someone enters the laboratory. In this case, it is a simple poisoned needle trap; Damothien figures anybody who tries to break into his necromancy laboratory deserves what they find. There is no password for this laboratory.

**Poison Needle Trap:** CR 6; mechanical; touch trigger; repair reset; lock bypass (Open Lock DC 30); Atk +17 melee (1 plus poison, needle); poison (deathblade, DC 20 Fortitude save resists (poison only), 1d6 Con/2d6 Con); Search DC 22; Disable Device DC 17.

When the PCs enter the room, read aloud: This room seems to be an amalgam of the three surrounding it. Mystical symbols, strange concoctions, and assorted components of living things are spread liberally throughout this room. You feel a wash of cold in your bones as you enter, and it is certain to you that in this laboratory the living are severed from their former existence. The spectral silhouette approaching you reinforces this certainty...

**Development:** This is a guardian of Spirit, one of Damothien's failed experiments. It is a spectre whom Damothien delights in tormenting, and as a result has become obsessed with killing anything it can. It knows better than to try to confront Damothien, so it lashes out at the few unfortunates who manage to penetrate Damothien's laboratory uninvited.

**Creature**: Guardian of spirit, a spectre.

**Guardian of Spirit (1)**: CR 7; Medium undead (incorporeal); HD 7d12; hp 66; Init +7; Spd 40 ft., fly 80 ft. (perfect); AC 15, touch 15, flat-footed 13; Base Atk + 3, Grp -; Atk +6 melee (1d8 plus energy drain/x2, incorporeal touch); Full Atk +6 melee (1d8 plus energy drain/x2, incorporeal touch); Space/Reach 5 ft./ 5 ft.; SA Energy drain, create spawn; SQ Darkvision 60 ft., incorporeal subtype, +2 turn resistance, sunlight powerlessness, undead traits, unnatural aura, guardian (see sidebar The Guardians); AL LE; SV Fort +2, Ref +5, Will +7; Str —, Dex 16, Con —, Int 14, Wis 14, Cha 15.

*Skills and Feats:* Hide +13, Intimidate +12, Knowledge (religion) +12, Listen +14, Search +12, Spot +14, Survival +2 (+4 following tracks); Alertness, Blind-Fight, Improved Initiative.

*Energy Drain (Su):* Living creatures hit by a spectre's incorporeal touch attack gain two negative levels. The DC is 15 for the Fortitude save to remove a negative level. The save DC is Charisma-based. For each such negative level bestowed, the spectre gains 5 temporary hit points.

*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.

*Unnatural Aura (Su):* Animals, whether wild or domesticated, can sense the unnatural presence of a spectre at a distance of 30 ft. 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.

*Sunlight Powerlessness (Ex):* Spectres are powerless in natural sunlight (not merely a daylight spell) and flee from it. A spectre caught in sunlight cannot attack and can take only a single move or attack action in a round.

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

*Guardian (Su):* As one of the four elemental protectors of Damothien's home, the guardian can never be removed from its assigned protectorate. All attempts to forcibly relocate the guardian (such as teleportation) automatically fail. A turned guardian automatically recovers from turning if it is being forced out of its assigned area.

*Incorporeal Subtype:* Due to its incorporeal nature, a spectre has the following traits:

- An incorporeal creature has no physical body. It can be harmed only by other incorporeal creatures, magic weapons or creatures that strike as magic weapons, and spells, spell-like abilities, or supernatural abilities.
- It is immune to all nonmagical attack forms. Even when hit by spells or magic weapons, it has a 50% chance to ignore any damage from a corporeal source (except for positive energy, negative energy, force effects such as magic missile, or attacks made with ghost touch weapons). Although it is not a magical attack, holy water can affect incorporeal undead, but a hit with holy water has a 50% chance of not affecting an incorporeal creature.
- An incorporeal creature has no natural armor bonus but has a deflection bonus equal to its Charisma bonus (always at least +1, even if the creature's Charisma score does not normally provide a bonus).
- An incorporeal creature can enter or pass through solid objects, but must remain adjacent to the object's exterior, and so cannot pass entirely through an object whose space is larger than its own. It can sense the presence of creatures or objects within a square adjacent to its current location, but enemies have total concealment (50% miss chance) from an incorporeal creature that is inside an object. In order to see farther from the object it is in and attack normally, the incorporeal creature must emerge. An incorporeal creature inside an object has total cover, but when it attacks a creature outside the object it only has cover, so a creature outside with a readied action could strike at it as it attacks. An incorporeal creature cannot pass through a force effect.

- An incorporeal creature's attacks pass through (ignore) natural armor, armor, and shields, although deflection bonuses and force effects (such as mage armor) work normally against it.
- Incorporeal creatures pass through and operate in water as easily as they do in air.
- Incorporeal creatures cannot fall or take falling damage.
- Incorporeal creatures cannot make trip or grapple attacks, nor can they be tripped or grappled. In fact, they cannot take any physical action that would move or manipulate an opponent or its equipment, nor are they subject to such actions.
- Incorporeal creatures have no weight and do not set off traps that are triggered by weight.
- An incorporeal creature moves silently and cannot be heard with Listen checks if it doesn't wish to be. It has no Strength score, so its Dexterity modifier applies to both its melee attacks and its ranged attacks. Nonvisual senses, such as scent and blindsight, are either ineffective or only partly effective with regard to incorporeal creatures.
- Incorporeal creatures have an innate sense of direction and can move at full speed even when they cannot see.

*Undead Traits:* The spectre has the following traits:

- No Constitution score.
- Darkvision out to 60 feet.
- Immunity to all mind-affecting effects (charms, compulsions, phantasms, patterns, and morale effects).
- Immunity to poison, sleep effects, paralysis, stunning, disease, death effects, and necromancy effects.
- Negative energy (such as an inflict spell) can heal undead creatures. The fast healing quality works regardless of the creature's Intelligence score.
- Not subject to critical hits, non-lethal damage, ability damage, ability drain, fatigue, exhaustion, or energy drain. Immune to damage to its physical ability scores (Strength, Dexterity, Constitution), as well as to fatigue and exhaustion effects.
- Immunity to any effect that requires a Fortitude save (unless the effect also works on objects, or is harmless).
- Uses its Charisma modifier for Concentration checks.
- Not at risk of death from massive damage. Immediately destroyed when reduced to 0 hit points or less.
- Not affected by raise dead and reincarnate spells or abilities. Resurrection and true resurrection can be affect undead creatures. These spells turn undead creatures back into the living creatures they were before becoming undead.
- Proficient with its natural weapons, all simple weapons, and any weapon mentioned in its entry.
- Proficient with whatever type of armor (light, medium, and heavy) it is described as wearing, as well as all lighter types.
- Undead do not eat, sleep, or breathe.

**Development:** The most important aspect of the laboratory is the fresh corpse on one of the biers. A Spellcraft check (DC 15, automatically successful for a necromancer) reveals the corpse was killed as part of a necromantic ritual for cheating death. Precisely thirteen hours after the moment Cear Adinerach killed him, Damothien arises on this bier (next to the corpse). If he is killed after that, however, he dies permanently.

## Location 1.3: Damothien's Dungeon, Second Basement

**Development:** This floor contains Damothien's galleries. One of his hobbies is the collection and preservation of exotic creatures, which he displays on this floor. Naturally, he keeps them as animated undead, making organization and movement more convenient (and also removes the need for support frames). This floor also holds Damothien's storerooms and "servants' quarters."

**When the PCs descend the stairs, read aloud:** *You estimate you have climbed down nearly a hundred stairs by the time you reach the next level.*

## Location 1.3.1: Gallery (EL 7)

**Read aloud:** *As you step away from the stairwell into the room, you are greeted by the sight of two large striped hunting cats standing motionless, preparing to pounce on an equally still boar. Before you can take too long to admire them, the animals suddenly jerk forward...*

These three creatures are all zombies, preserved by Damothien to keep from rotting, then animated. They are to attack anybody they see who is not accompanying him.

**Creatures:** Two zombie tigers; one zombie boar.

**Zombie Tigers (2):** CR 2; Large undead animal; HD 6d12+3; hp 45; Init +1; Spd 40 ft. (can't run); AC 17, touch 15, flat-footed 16; Base Atk +1, Grp +12; Atk +8 melee (1d8+7/x2, claw) or +8 melee (1d8+7/x2, slam); Full Atk +8 melee (1d8+7/x2, 2 claws), +4 melee (2d6+4/x2, bite) or +8 melee (1d8+7/x2, slam); Space/Reach 10 ft./5 ft.; SA —; SQ Damage reduction 5/slashing, darkvision 60 ft., single actions only, undead traits; AL NE; SV Fort +1, Ref +1, Will +3; Str 25, Dex 13, Con —, Int —, Wis 10, Cha 1.

*Skills and Feats:* None; Toughness.

*Darkvision, 60 ft.:* A zombie can see in the dark with no light source at all, out to a range of 60 feet. Darkvision is black and white only (colors cannot be discerned). It does not allow the zombie to see anything that it could not see otherwise—invisible objects are still invisible, and illusions are still visible as what they seem to be. Likewise, darkvision subjects the zombie to gaze attacks normally. The presence of light does not spoil darkvision.

*Single Actions Only:* A zombie has poor reflexes and can perform only a single move action or attack action each round. A zombie can move up to its speed and attack in the same round, but only if it attempts a charge.

*Undead Traits:* A zombie has the following traits:

- No Constitution score.
- Darkvision out to 60 feet.
- Immunity to all mind-affecting effects (charms, compulsions, phantasms, patterns, and morale effects).

- Immunity to poison, sleep effects, paralysis, stunning, disease, death effects, and necromancy effects.
- Cannot heal damage on its own if it has no Intelligence score, although it can be healed. Negative energy (such as an inflict spell) can heal undead creatures. The fast healing quality works regardless of the creature's Intelligence score.
- Not subject to critical hits, non-lethal damage, ability damage, ability drain, fatigue, exhaustion, or energy drain. Immune to damage to its physical ability scores (Strength, Dexterity, Constitution), as well as to fatigue and exhaustion effects.
- Immunity to any effect that requires a Fortitude save (unless the effect also works on objects, or is harmless).
- Uses its Charisma modifier for Concentration checks.
- Not at risk of death from massive damage. Immediately destroyed when reduced to 0 hit points or less.
- Not affected by raise dead and reincarnate spells or abilities. Resurrection and true resurrection can be affect undead creatures. These spells turn undead creatures back into the living creatures they were before becoming undead.
- Proficient with its natural weapons, all simple weapons, and any weapon mentioned in its entry.
- Proficient with whatever type of armor (light, medium, and heavy) it is described as wearing, as well as all lighter types.
- Undead do not eat, sleep, or breathe.

**Zombie Boar (1):** CR 2; Medium undead animal; HD 3d12+3; hp 24; Init –1; Spd 40 ft. (can't run); AC 18, touch 10, flat-footed 18; Base Atk +1, Grp +4; Atk +4 melee (1d8+3/x2, gore) or +4 melee (1d6+3/x2, slam); Full Atk +4 melee (1d8+3/x2, gore) or +9 melee (1d6+3/x2, slam); Space/Reach 5 ft./5 ft.; SA —; SQ Damage reduction 5/slashing, darkvision 60 ft., single actions only, undead traits; AL NE; SV Fort +1, Ref –1, Will +3; Str 17, Dex 8, Con —, Int —, Wis 10, Cha 1.

*Skills and Feats:* None; Toughness.

*Darkvision, 60 ft.* A zombie can see in the dark with no light source at all, out to a range of 60 feet. Darkvision is black and white only (colors cannot be discerned). It does not allow the zombie to see anything that it could not see otherwise—invisible objects are still invisible, and illusions are still visible as what they seem to be. Likewise, darkvision subjects the zombie to gaze attacks normally. The presence of light does not spoil darkvision.

*Single Actions Only:* A zombie has poor reflexes and can perform only a single move action or attack action each round. A zombie can move up to its speed and attack in the same round, but only if it attempts a charge.

*Undead Traits:* A zombie has the following traits:

- No Constitution score.
- Darkvision out to 60 feet.
- Immunity to all mind-affecting effects (charms, compulsions, phantasms, patterns, and morale effects).
- Immunity to poison, sleep effects, paralysis, stunning, disease, death effects, and necromancy effects.
- Cannot heal damage on its own if it has no Intelligence score, although it can be healed. Negative energy (such as an inflict spell) can heal undead creatures. The fast healing quality works regardless of the creature's Intelligence score.
- Not subject to critical hits, non-lethal damage, ability damage, ability drain, fatigue, exhaustion, or energy drain. Immune to damage to its physical ability scores (Strength, Dexterity, Constitution), as well as to fatigue and exhaustion effects.
- Immunity to any effect that requires a Fortitude save (unless the effect also works on objects, or is harmless).
- Uses its Charisma modifier for Concentration checks.
- Not at risk of death from massive damage. Immediately destroyed when reduced to 0 hit points or less.
- Not affected by raise dead and reincarnate spells or abilities. Resurrection and true resurrection can be affect undead creatures. These spells turn undead creatures back into the living creatures they were before becoming undead.
- Proficient with its natural weapons, all simple weapons, and any weapon mentioned in its entry.
- Proficient with whatever type of armor (light, medium, and heavy) it is described as wearing, as well as all lighter types.
- Undead do not eat, sleep, or breathe.

## Location 1.3.2: Storeroom (EL 9)

**Read aloud:** *You nearly choke on the dust that flies up when you open the door to this room. In front of several shredded sacks of grain, dried meat, and other comestibles, are five giant beetles, irritated that you have disturbed their repast.*

**Development:** Damothien learned long ago how to overcome such mortal limitations as eating. Since he rarely entertains living guests, his supply rooms sit full and forgotten. Giant stag beetles have burrowed in and gorged themselves on Damothien's forgotten supplies for several days now. Having exhausted most of the readily available food, they consider the PCs an adequate replacement.

**Creatures:** Five giant stag beetles.

**Giant Stag Beetle (5):** CR 5; Large vermin; HD 7d8+21; hp 48, 55; Init +0; Spd 20 ft.; AC 19, touch 9, flat-footed 19; Base Atk +5, Grp +15; Atk +10 melee (4d6+9/x2, bite); Full Atk +10 melee (4d6+9/x2, bite); Space/Reach 10ft./5ft.; SA Trample 2d8+3; SQ Darkvision 60 ft., vermin traits; AL N; SV Fort +8, Ref +2, Will +2; Str 23, Dex 10, Con 17, Int —, Wis 10, Cha 9.

*Skills and Feats:* None; none.

*Darkvision, 60 ft.:* A giant stag beetle can see in the dark with no light source at all, out to a range of 90 feet. Darkvision is black and white only (colors cannot be discerned). It does not allow the giant stag beetle to see anything that it could not see otherwise — invisible objects are still invisible, and illusions are still visible as what they seem to be. Likewise, darkvision subjects the giant stag beetle to gaze attacks normally. The presence of light does not spoil darkvision.

*Trample (Ex):* As a standard action, a giant stag beetle may trample a Large prone opponent or Medium or smaller standing opponent dealing 2d8+3 bludgeoning damage. The victim is allowed an attack of opportunity, suffering a –4 circumstance penalty. Alternately, he is allowed a DC 19 Reflex save to halve the damage. The save DC is Strength-based.

*Vermin Traits:* A giant stag beetle possesses the following traits:

- Mindless: No Intelligence score, and immunity to all mind-affecting effects (charms, compulsions, phantasms, patterns, and morale effects).
- Vermin breathe, eat, and sleep.

## Location 1.3.3: Guardian's Hall (EL 7)

**Read aloud:** *This great hall is the size of many buildings, and the reason is apparent. In front of you is the skeleton of a great dragon, its bones gleaming white. Not a scrap of flesh remains anywhere on the great carcass, and you are forced to wonder how such an object was transported here. Nevertheless, such thoughts have to wait for another time, as the skeletal beast turns its huge head to you, its teeth just as whole as the rest of its bones...*

**Development:** This beast is a guardian of Bone, assigned to keep intruders away from the lower floor. The least of the four guardians of the keep, the guardian of Bone is, for all its size and strength, still only an animate skeleton. It does its best to protect the stairway to the lower basement, but smart PCs may use its size against it, as it is far too large to pursue them through any of the doorways. The guardian of Bone is one of Damothien's prize possessions. A preserved dragon skeleton, the guardian waits in the gallery for unwary intruders. Damothien keeps the skeleton more for decoration and aesthetic value than for its protective capabilities, but it is still an effective deterrent to intruders trying to reach the lowest basement.

Like the rest of Damothien's prize skeletons, the guardian receives far more care than does most other undead servants, and is thus well preserved, polished, and clean. It is under orders to attack anybody who enters its chamber, except Damothien and those accompanying him.

**Guardian of Bone (1):** CR 7; Huge undead; HD 15d12+3; hp 108; Init +4; Spd 30 ft.; AC 18, touch 8, flat-footed 18; Base Atk +7, Grp +22; Atk +15 melee (2d6+7/x2, claw) or +10 melee (3d6+7/x2, bite) or +14 melee (2d6+7/x2, slam); Full Atk +15 melee (2d6+7/x2, 2 claws), +10 melee (3d6+7/x2, bite) or +14 melee (2d6+7/x2, slam); Space/Reach 15ft./15ft.; SA —; SQ Damage reduction 5/bludgeoning, darkvision 60 ft., immunity to cold, undead traits, guardian (see sidebar The Guardians); AL NE; SV Fort +4, Ref +5, Will +9; Str 25, Dex 10, Con —, Int —, Wis 10, Cha 1.

*Skills and Feats:* None; Improved Initiative, Weapon Focus (claws), Toughness.

*Darkvision, 60 ft. (Ex):* The guardian of Bone can see in the dark with no light source at all, out to a range of 90 feet. Darkvision is black and white only (colors cannot be discerned). It does not allow the skeleton to see anything that it could not see otherwise — invisible objects are still invisible, and illusions are still visible as what they seem to be. Likewise, darkvision subjects the skeleton to gaze attacks normally. The presence of light does not spoil darkvision.

*Immunity to Cold (Ex):* The guardian of Bone takes no damage from any cold-based attacks.

*Guardian (Su):* As one of the four elemental protectors of Damothien's home, the guardian can never be removed from its assigned protectorate. All attempts to forcibly relocate the guardian (such as teleportation) automatically fail. A turned guardian automatically recovers from turning if it is being forced out of its assigned area.

*Undead Traits:* The guardian of Bone has the following traits:

- No Constitution score.
- Darkvision out to 60 feet.
- Immunity to all mind-affecting effects (charms, compulsions, phantasms, patterns, and morale effects).
- Immunity to poison, sleep effects, paralysis, stunning, disease, death effects, and necromancy effects.
- Cannot heal damage on its own if it has no Intelligence score, although it can be healed. Negative energy (such as an inflict spell) can heal undead creatures. The fast healing quality works regardless of the creature's Intelligence score.
- Not subject to critical hits, non-lethal damage, ability damage, ability drain, fatigue, exhaustion, or energy drain. Immune to damage to its physical ability scores (Strength, Dexterity, Constitution), as well as to fatigue and exhaustion effects.
- Immunity to any effect that requires a Fortitude save (unless the effect also works on objects, or is harmless).
- Uses its Charisma modifier for Concentration checks.
- Not at risk of death from massive damage. Immediately destroyed when reduced to 0 hit points or less.
- Not affected by raise dead and reincarnate spells or abilities. Resurrection and true resurrection can affect undead creatures. These spells turn undead creatures back into the living creatures they were before becoming undead.
- Proficient with its natural weapons, all simple weapons, and any weapon mentioned in its entry.
- Proficient with whatever type of armor (light, medium, and heavy) it is described as wearing, as well as all lighter types.
- Undead do not eat, sleep, or breathe.

## Location 1.3.4: Servants' Quarters (EL 6)

**Read aloud:** *This room is bare stone with no definable purpose or decoration, except for the large group of skeletons dressed in black and blue livery. Unlike most other Human skeletons you have seen, these are disturbingly clean and well cared for, the bones polished and gleaming white.*

**Development:** Because skeletons care nothing for aesthetics or amenities, Damothien keeps his servants in empty rooms until he needs them. Nevertheless, he does care for such things, which is why they all wear uniforms and are clean enough to have present for company.

**Creatures:** Twenty skeletons.

**Skeletons (20):** CR 1/3; Medium undead; HD 1d12; hp 6; Init +5; Spd 30 ft.; AC 15, touch 11, flat-footed 14; Base Atk +0, Grp +1; Atk +1 melee (1d4+1/x2, claw); Full Atk +1 melee (1d4+1/x2, claw); Space/Reach 5ft./5ft.; SA —; SQ Damage reduction 5/bludgeoning, darkvision 60 ft., immunity to cold, undead traits; AL NE; SV Fort +0, Ref +1, Will +2; Str 13, Dex 17, Con —, Int —, Wis 10, Cha 1.

*Skills and Feats:* None; Improved Initiative.

*Darkvision, 60 ft. (Ex):* A skeleton can see in the dark with no light source at all, out to a range of 90 feet. Darkvision is black and white only (colors cannot be discerned). It does not allow the skeleton to see anything that it could not see otherwise—invisible objects are still invisible, and illusions are still visible as what they seem to be. Likewise, darkvision subjects the skeleton to gaze attacks normally. The presence of light does not spoil darkvision.

*Immunity to Cold (Ex):* A skeleton takes no damage from any cold-based attacks.

*Undead Traits:* The skeleton has the following traits:

- No Constitution score.
- Darkvision out to 60 feet.
- Immunity to all mind-affecting effects (charms, compulsions, phantasms, patterns, and morale effects).
- Immunity to poison, sleep effects, paralysis, stunning, disease, death effects, and necromancy effects.
- Cannot heal damage on its own if it has no Intelligence score, although it can be healed. Negative energy (such as an inflict spell) can heal undead creatures. The fast healing quality works regardless of the creature's Intelligence score.
- Not subject to critical hits, non-lethal damage, ability damage, ability drain, fatigue, exhaustion, or energy drain. Immune to damage to its physical ability scores (Strength, Dexterity, Constitution), as well as to fatigue and exhaustion effects.
- Immunity to any effect that requires a Fortitude save (unless the effect also works on objects, or is harmless).
- Uses its Charisma modifier for Concentration checks.
- Not at risk of death from massive damage. Immediately destroyed when reduced to 0 hit points or less.
- Not affected by raise dead and reincarnate spells or abilities. Resurrection and true resurrection can affect undead creatures. These spells turn undead creatures back into the living creatures they were before becoming undead.
- Proficient with its natural weapons, all simple weapons, and any weapon mentioned in its entry.
- Proficient with whatever type of armor (light, medium, and heavy) it is described as wearing, as well as all lighter types.
- Undead do not eat, sleep, or breathe.

## Location 1.4: Damothien's Dungeon, Third Basement

**Development:** This floor contains the living creatures Damothien has yet to deal with, including the villagers of Ventorston. The "spare parts" rooms are also on this floor, where Damothien stores such useful things as bones, organs, blood, and other components of living and undead beings. Furthermore, one of Damothien's greatest creations, a guardian of Flesh, waits here, guarding the villagers from any foolish enough to attempt rescue.

Each of the large arcs (**Locations 1.4.1 — 1.4.4**) is a holding cell. Steel grates are embedded in the floor and ceiling, with a wall of force in place of a door. These walls of force are impenetrable, and can only be removed by being *dispelled* (*dispel* check DC 24) or being deactivated with the controls located in the guardroom (**Location 1.4.7**).

## Location 1.4.1: Owlbears (EL 6)

**Read aloud:** *You see in the large cage in front of you two furred and feathered creatures, each nearly twice as tall as a man. They charge towards you, snapping beaks you suspect could split bone like kindling. As their great claws slash at the cage walls, you find yourselves grateful for the presence of the steel barrier. As you move to the front of the cage, the creatures follow you, slamming into the magical wall that serves as a door to this strange prison.*

**Development:** Damothien captured these creatures several weeks ago, and is still determining the best purpose for them. He is considering using them as a breeding pair, for a young owlbear can make an excellent guardian beast. In the meantime, they have become vicious from abuse, lethargy, and claustrophobia. They are slightly injured from Damothien's abuse, and ravenously hungry and angry.

**Creatures:** Two owlbears.

**Owlbears (2):** CR 4; Large magical beast; HD 5d10+25; hp 33 (out of 44) and 40 (out of 60); Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; AC 15, touch 10, flat-footed 14; Base Atk +5, Grp +14; Atk +9 melee (1d6+5/x2, claw); Full Atk +9/+9 melee (1d6+5/x2, 2 claws); Space/Reach 10 ft./5 ft.; SA Improved Grab; SQ Scent; AL N; SV Fort +9, Ref +5, Will +2; Str 21, Dex 12, Con 21, Int 2, Wis 12, Cha 10.

*Skills and Feats:* Listen +8, Spot +8; Alertness, Track.

*Improved Grab:* To use this ability, an owlbear must hit with a claw attack. It can then attempt to start a grapple as a free action without provoking an attack of opportunity.

*Scent:* An owlbear can detect opponents within 30 feet by sense of smell. If the opponent is upwind, the range increases to 60 feet; if downwind, it drops to 15 feet. Strong scents, such as smoke or rotting garbage, can be detected at twice the ranges noted above. Overpowering scents, such as skunk musk or troglodyte stench, can be detected at triple normal range. When a creature detects a scent, the exact location of the source is not revealed — only its presence somewhere within range. An owlbear can take a move action to note the direction of the scent.

Whenever an owlbear comes within 5 feet of the source, the owlbear pinpoints the source's location.

## Location 1.4.2: Ventorston Prisoners

**Read aloud:** *As you approach this cage, you see numerous humanoid silhouettes huddled together in despair. You can distinguish a couple dozen Human men, women, and children, all of them resigned to death or worse. An old woman looks up and sees you, her eyes shining with hope for what must be the first time in days. "Help us, please," she begs, and others look up and notice you. They begin to approach you, pleading through the bars for rescue.*

**Development:** The villagers have been here for several days, and realized they stood no chance of leaving. They are ready to trust and obey the PCs absolutely, since the alternative is the horrible death and transformation that awaits them as Elven captives.

The *wall of force* protecting their prison has been reinforced, raising the dispel DC to 30. Astute PCs realize they are better off finding another means of lowering the barrier.

## Location 1.4.3: Larangor (EL 6)

**Read aloud:** *This cage contains a male Nothrog, his green skin tinged with yellow. He looks up as you approach, and speaks to you in a voice rusty from disuse. "Free me, and I shall help you in whatever purpose you have here." Unsteadily, he rises to his feet and grips the bars of his prison. He stares into your eyes, daring you to take pity on him. Despite the despair and anguish in his eyes, he is still a Nothrog at heart, and you honestly believe he would gladly take on every abomination in this place if it would free him, either from captivity or life.*

**Development:** This is Larangor, who was captured several months ago. Damothien has been studying him, performing experiments and torture. Ostensibly, he is searching for weaknesses in the Nothrog psyche, to benefit the war effort, but the work thus far has done far more to satisfy Damothien's sadism than to satisfy any thirst for knowledge.

Larangor's offer is genuine, and despite his distrust of the PCs, he earnestly believes any situation would be an improvement on his current one. While he bears no love for the Human prisoners, he helps the PCs to free them if they ask him to.

**Creature:** Larangor, a 6th-level fighter.

**Larangor, Male Nothrog Ftr 6:** CR 6; Medium humanoid (Nothrog); HD 6d10+15; hp 61; Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; AC 11, touch 11, flat-footed 10; Base Atk +6; Grp +9; Atk +9 melee (1d3+3/x2, unarmed strike); Full Atk +9 melee (1d3+3/x2, unarmed strike); SA Favored weapon (longsword, greatsword), improved damage (longsword); SQ Nothrog traits; AL LE; SV Fort +7, Ref +3, Will +3; Str 16, Dex 12, Con 14, Int 9, Wis 11, Cha 7.

*Skills and Feats:* Climb +3, Jump +3; Power Attack, Toughness, Cleave, Great Cleave, Improved Bull Rush.

*Favored Weapon (longsword, greatsword):* Larangor gains a +1 competence bonus to attack and damage rolls with the longsword and greatsword.

*Improved Damage (longsword):* Larangor does an additional +2 (+3 total) damage with the longsword.

*Possessions:* Nothing.

## Location 1.4.4: Spare Parts Room

**Read aloud:** *On shelves, bones are piled in neat stacks, with labels regarding their creature of origin, type, and quantity, such as the first pile that catches your eye: "Human femur, 20." These must be Damothien's components for skeletal servants. Despite the eerie feeling in a room used for storing the bones of sentient creatures, you perceive no immediate threat.*

Figuring there is little demand for spare bones, Damothien has not bothered to trap or otherwise protect this room. Unless the PCs need bones for some reason, there is nothing to be gained in this room.

## Location 1.4.5: Spare Parts Room

**Read aloud:** *The shelves in this room are covered with jars, each labeled in the same spidery hand. Organs of all shapes, types, and species rest in the jars, adjacent to several beakers of blood. Several other opaque bottles and beakers occupy the shelves on the other side of the room, unlabeled. Everything is covered in a thin layer of dust.*

*Treasure:* Besides the potions on the shelves (the unlabeled bottles), there is little of note in this room. The potions include: remove disease, cure serious wounds, haste, and neutralize poison.

## Location 1.4.6: Treasury (EL 4)

**Development:** This door is trapped, a glyph of warding on the outside. Attempts to open the door trigger the glyph, casting a magic missile at the opener. Damothien uses a skeleton to open the door, not willing to risk a password on his treasury.

**Magic Missile Trap:** CR 3; magic device; proximity trigger (alarm); automatic reset; spell effect (magic missile, 9th-level wizard, 5d4 force, no save); Search DC 26; Disable Device DC 26.

**Read aloud:** *As you enter this room, the first thing you see is the glint of gold. After your eyes adjust to the darkness, you can make out several chests, each piled with stacks of wealth, along with a ledger on a table in the corner.*

*Treasure:* This is Damothien's treasury, and it contains 2,358 gp (according to the ledger).

## Location 1.4.7: Guardroom (EL7)

**Read aloud:** *As you enter this room, you see a tall humanoid figure standing motionless in the corner. You can tell it has been stitched together from the dead flesh of a dozen different creatures. On the opposite side of the room, six levers are built into the wall, and you know instinctively the key to freeing the prisoners lies in those levers. Nevertheless, more immediate concerns take precedence, as the flesh construct begins moving towards you...*

**Development:** The golem is the final guardian, the guardian of Flesh. Its primary purpose is to guard the controls to the cells, and if the PCs leave the controls alone, it returns the favor. However, unless they dispel the barriers on the cells, the only way to free the villagers is by going through this guardian.

**Guardian of Flesh, Flesh Golem (1):** CR 7; Large construct; HD 9d10+30; hp 79; Init –1; Spd 30 ft.; AC 18, touch 8, flat-footed 18; Base Atk +6, Grp +15; Atk +10 melee (2d8+5/x2, slam); Full Atk +10 melee (2d8+5/x2, 2 slams); Space/Reach 10 ft./10 ft.; SA Berserk; SQ Construct traits, damage reduction 5/adamantine, darkvision 60 ft., immunity to magic, low-light vision, guardian (see sidebar The Guardians); AL N; SV Fort +3, Ref +2, Will +3; Str 21, Dex 9, Con —, Int —, Wis 11, Cha 1.

*Skills and Feats:* None; none.

*Berserk:* When a flesh golem enters combat, there is a cumulative 1% chance each round that its elemental spirit breaks free and the golem goes berserk. The uncontrolled golem goes on a rampage, attacking the nearest living creature or smashing some object smaller than itself if no creature is within reach, then moving on to spread more destruction. The golem's creator, if within 60 feet, can try to regain control by speaking firmly and persuasively to the golem, which requires a DC 19 Charisma check. It takes 1 minute of inactivity by the golem to reset the golem's berserk chance to 0%.

*Guardian (Su):* As one of the four elemental protectors of Damothien's home, the guardian can never be removed from its assigned protectorate. All attempts to forcibly relocate the guardian (such as teleportation) automatically fail. A turned guardian automatically recovers from turning if it is being forced out of its assigned area.

*Construct Traits:* A flesh golem possesses the following traits:

- Immunity to all mind-affecting effects (charms, compulsions, phantasms, patterns, and morale effects).
- Immunity to poison, sleep effects, paralysis, stunning, disease, death effects, and necromancy effects.
- Cannot heal damage on its own, but can be repaired by being exposed to a certain kind of effect (see the Immunity to Magic for details) or through the use of the Craft Construct feat.
- Not subject to critical hits, nonlethal damage, ability damage, ability drain, fatigue, exhaustion, or energy drain.
- Immunity to any effect that requires a Fortitude save (unless the effect also works on objects, or is harmless).
- Not at risk of death from massive damage. Immediately destroyed when reduced to 0 hit points or less.
- Since it was never alive, a construct cannot be raised or resurrected.
- Constructs do not eat, sleep, or breathe.

*Darkvision, 60 ft.:* A flesh golem can see in the dark with no light source at all, out to a range of 90 feet. Darkvision is black and white only (colors cannot be discerned). It does not allow the flesh golem to see anything that it could not see otherwise—invisible objects are still invisible, and illusions are still visible as what they seem to be. Likewise, darkvision subjects the flesh golem to gaze attacks normally. The presence of light does not spoil darkvision.

*Immunity to Magic:* A flesh golem is immune to any spell or spell-like ability that allows spell resistance. In addition, certain spells and effects function differently against the creature, as noted below.

A magical attack that deals cold or fire damage slows a flesh golem (as the slow spell) for 2d6 rounds, with no saving throw.

A magical attack that deals electricity damage breaks any slow effect on the golem and heals 1 point of damage for every 3 points of damage the attack would otherwise deal. If the amount of healing would cause the golem to exceed its full normal hit points, it gains any excess as temporary hit points. For example, a flesh golem hit by a lightning bolt heals 3 points of damage if the attack would have dealt 11 points of damage. A flesh golem golem gets no saving throw against attacks that deal electricity damage.

*Low-Light Vision:* A flesh golem can see twice as far as a Human in starlight, moonlight, torchlight, and similar conditions of shadowy illumination. It retains the ability to distinguish color and detail under these conditions.

**Development:** The six levers control the four holding cells, along with two nasty surprises. Going from left to right, they do the following:

1. Opens the southeast cell (**Location 1.4.8**).
2. Chain lightning, as cast by a 13th level necromancer, initially targeting the character who pulled the lever.
3. Opens the northwest cell (**Location 1.4.1**).
4. Opens the northeast cell (**Location 1.4.2**).
5. Teleports, as cast by a 13th level necromancer, the character who pulled the lever into the southeast cell (Location 1.4.8) and closes the cell if it was not already.
6. Opens the southwest cell (**Location 1.4.3**).

The walls of force vanish when the lever is pulled, and stay gone until the lever is returned to its original position. However, besides the two trapped levers (whose effects are obvious when triggered), no visible effect happens in the guardroom when the levers are pulled.

### Location 1.4.8: Empty Cell

This holding cell is empty, although its barrier is active.

## Part 2: Leaving the Dungeon Keep

ENCOUNTER 2: BETRAYED BY ICHÆRUS!

The villagers of Ventorston, once freed, wish only to return home, and follow directions from the PCs if the party escorts them home safely.

**When the PCs return to the foyer on the first floor (Location 1.1.1), read aloud:** *As you enter the foyer, preparing to leave this house of horrors once and for all, you find you and the grateful villagers are not alone. Standing in the great hallway, over the corpse of the necromancer whose home you have broken into, are a number of Elves, Ichærus at their head, dressed in silken robes and golden armor. They exude power. Ichærus speaks in a deep voice. "You have violated the land of Myreth and murdered an Elven noble. Surrender and face justice, or die where you stand."*

**Development:** While he would prefer the PCs' capture, interrogation and trial before the High Council, Ichærus has no qualms about killing them now, and his associates attack if he commands it. If the PCs surrender, they are stripped of obvious weapons, and lifted by telekinesis to accompany Ichærus and his cronies. It should be apparent to the PCs they are outnumbered and outgunned, with surrender their only smart option. If the PCs start gaining the upper hand, Ichærus joins the fray, tipping the scales decisively.

These Elven wizards are not fools. They are experienced, powerful spellcasters who have seen plenty of combat. They remain far enough apart so that no two can be caught by the same area-effect spell.

**Creatures:** Eight Elven wizards, 9th-level wizards; Ichærus, 5th-level fighter/5th-level cleric/5th-level wizard.

**Elven Wizards (8), Male Elf Wiz 9:** CR 9; Medium humanoid (Elf); HD 9d4+3; hp 30; Spd 30 ft.; Init +5; AC 11, touch 11, flat-footed 10; Base Atk +4; Grp +4; Atk +4 melee (1d4(19–20/x2), dagger); Full Atk +4 melee (1d4(19–20/x2), dagger); SA Spells; SQ Eidetic memory (magic missile, burning hands, charm person, lightning bolt), Elf traits, summon familiar (hawk); AL LE; SV Fort +5, Ref +4, Will +7; Str 10, Dex 13, Con 11, Int 16, Wis 12, Cha 9.

*Skills and Feats:* Alchemy +11, Concentration +11, Listen +5, Scry +11, Spellcraft +11, Spot +3*; Scribe Scroll, Quicken Spell, Improved Initiative, Toughness, Dodge, Great Fortitude, Alertness. *The Elven wizard gains +3 to their Spot checks in bright light due to their familiar.

*Eidetic Memory:* An Elven wizard may spontaneously cast magic missile, burning hands, charm person, and lightning bolt in place of a prepared spell of equal or higher level. This loses the prepared spell to fuel the memorized spell.

*Wizard Spells Prepared* (4/5/4/4/3; save DC 14 + spell level): 0 — resistance, detect magic, read magic, light; 1st — power spike, cone of silence, magic missile, charm person, cause fear; 2nd — begone, fireeyes, flame arrow, weakness; 3rd — cloak of fear, imperviousness, greater identify, fireball; 4th — phantasmal killer, primal fear, soul knife.

*Possessions:* Dagger, spellbook.

*Familiar (hawk):* An Elven wizard's hawk familiar has the following statistics:

**Hawk (Familiar):** CR —; Tiny magical beast; HD 9; hp 20; Init +2; Spd 10 ft, fly 60 ft. (average); AC 22, touch 15, flat-footed 19; Base Atk +4; Grp –6; Atk +7 melee (1d4–2/x2, talon); Full Atk +7 melee (1d4–2/x2, 2 talons); Space/Reach 2–1/2 ft./0 ft.; SA —; SQ low-light vision, empathic link, share spells, improved evasion, deliver touch spells, speak with master, speak with animals of its kind; AL N; SV Fort +3, Ref +6, Will +8; Str 6, Dex 17, Con 10, Int 10, Wis 14, Cha 6.

*Skill and Feats:* Listen +4, Spot +14*; Weapon Finesse (talons). *Hawks have a +8 racial bonus on Spot checks.

*Low-Light Vision (Ex):* A hawk can see twice as far as a Human in starlight, moonlight, torchlight, and similar conditions of shadowy illumination. It retains the ability to distinguish color and detail under these conditions.

*Familiar Ability Descriptions:* All familiars have special abilities (or impart abilities to their masters) depending on the Elven wizard's combined level in classes that grant familiars. The abilities are cumulative.

*Alertness (Ex):* While his familiar is within arm's reach, an Elven wizard gains the Alertness feat.Improved Evasion (Ex): When subjected to an attack that normally allows a Reflex saving throw for half damage, a familiar takes no damage if it makes a successful saving throw and half damage even if the saving throw fails.

*Share Spells:* At the Elven wizard's option, he may have any spell (but not any spell-like ability) he casts on himself also affect his familiar. The familiar must be within 5 feet at the time of casting to receive the benefit. If the spell or effect has a duration other than instantaneous, it stops affecting the familiar if it moves farther than 5 feet away and will not affect the familiar again even if it returns to the Elven wizard before the duration expires. Additionally, the Elven wizard may cast a spell with a target of "You" on his familiar (as a touch range spell) instead of on himself. The Elven wizard and his familiar can share spells even if the spells normally do not affect creatures of the familiar's type (magical beast).

*Empathic Link (Su):* The Elven wizard has an empathic link with his familiar out to a distance of up to 1 mile. The Elven wizard cannot see through the familiar's eyes, but they can communicate empathically. Because of the limited nature of the link, only general emotional content can be communicated. Because of this empathic link, the Elven wizard has the same connection to an item or place that his familiar does.

*Deliver Touch Spells (Su):* The Elven wizard's familiar can deliver touch spells for him. If the Elven wizard and the familiar are in contact at the time the Elven wizard casts a touch spell, he can designate his familiar as the "toucher." The familiar can then deliver the touch spell just as the Elven wizard could. As usual, if the Elven wizard casts another spell before the touch is delivered, the touch spell dissipates.

*Speak with Master (Ex):* The Elven wizard and his familiar can communicate verbally as if they were using a common language. Other creatures do not understand the communication without magical help.

*Speak with Animals of Its Kind (Ex):* The Elven wizard's familiar can communicate with birds (including dire varieties). Such communication is limited by the intelligence of the conversing creatures.

*Wizard Spells Memorized* (4/5/5/4/2/1; save DC 13 + spell level): 0 — detect magic, read magic, light, mage hand; 1st — magic missile, mage armor, ray of enfeeblement, burning hands, charm person; 2nd — acid arrow, protection from arrows, web, weakness, flame arrow; 3rd — blindness/deafness, see invisibility, lightning bolt, haste; 4th — fear, telekinesis; 5th — ball lightning.

**Ichærus, Leader of House Netheryn, Male Elf Clr 5/Ftr 5/Wiz 5:** CR 15; Medium humanoid (Elf); HD 5d8+5 plus 5d10+5 plus 5d4+5; hp 70; Init +6; Spd 20 ft.; AC 27, touch 17, flat-footed 25; Base Atk +10; Grp +13; Atk +17 melee (1d6+9(15–20/x2), +3 dancing scimitar) or +15 ranged (1d8+3(19–20/x2), +2 repeating light crossbow); Full Atk +17/+12 melee (1d6+9(15–20/x2), +3 dancing scimitar) or +15 ranged (1d8+3(19–20/x2), +2 repeating light crossbow); SA Favored weapon (scimitar, repeating crossbow), improved damage (scimitar), spells, rebuke undead 5/day; SQ Cleric domains (Knowledge, Trickery), eidetic memory (flame arrow, fireball), Elf traits, spontaneous casting, race/class abilities; AL LE; SV Fort +11, Ref +7, Will +12; Str 16, Dex 15, Con 14, Int 16, Wis 16, Cha 14.

*Skills and Feats:* Alchemy +11, Concentration +11, Listen +5, Scry +11, Spellcraft +11; Scribe Scroll, Quicken Spell, Dodge, Improved Initiative, Mobility, Power Attack, Spring Attack, Alertness, Improved Critical (scimitar).

*Race/Class Abilities:* Fighter: Improved Critical (scimitar); Wizard: Range Touch (+10 ft.); Cleric: Spiritual Armor (+2).

*Eidetic Memory:* Ichærus may spontaneously cast flame arrow and fireball in place of a prepared spell of equal or higher level. This loses the prepared spell to fuel the memorized spell.

*Favored Weapon (scimitar, repeating crossbow):* Ichærus gains a –1 competence bonus to attack and damage rolls with the scimitar and repeating crossbow.

*Improved Damage (scimitar):* Ichærus does an additional +2 (+3 total) damage with the scimitar.

*Rebuke Undead:* Ichærus can attempt to rebuke undead 5 times per day.

*Spontaneous Casting:* Ichærus can "lose" a prepared spell (except for a domain spell) in order to cast any inflict spell of the same level or lower.

*Wizard Spells Prepared* (4/4/3/2; save DC 13 + spell level): 0 — resistance, detect magic, read magic, light; 1st — power spike, magic missile, charm person, cause fear; 2nd — begone, flame arrow, weakness; 3rd — fireball, cloak of fear. *Ichærus has a 30% arcane spell failure chance for any spell with a somatic component thanks to his armor.

*Possessions:* +5 chainmail, +3 dancing scimitar, +2 repeating light crossbow, ring of protection +3, scroll of teleportation circle, spellbook.

*Familiar (weasel).* Ichærus' weasel familiar has the following statistics:

**Weasel (Familiar):** CR —; Tiny magical beast; HD 5; hp 35; Init +2; Spd 20 ft, climb 20 ft.; AC 17, touch 14, flat-footed 15; Base Atk +10; Grp +2; Atk +12 melee (1d3–4/x2, bite); Full Atk +12 melee (1d3–4/x2, bite); Space/Reach 2–1/2 ft./0 ft.; SA —; SQ low-light vision, scent, attach, empathic link, share spells, improved evasion, deliver touch spells, speak with master; AL N; SV Fort +9, Ref +5, Will +10; Str 3, Dex 15, Con 10, Int 8, Wis 12, Cha 5.

*Skill and Feats:* Balance +10*, Climb +10*, Hide +11, Move Silently +8*, Spot +3; Weapon Finesse (bite). *Weasels have a +4 racial bonus on Move Silently checks and a +8 racial bonus on Balance and Climb checks. They use their Dexterity modifier for Climb checks. A weasel can always choose to take 10 on a Climb check, even if rushed or threatened.

*Low-Light Vision:* A weasel can see twice as far as a Human in starlight, moonlight, torchlight, and similar conditions of shadowy illumination. It retains the ability to distinguish color and detail under these conditions.

*Scent:* A weasel can detect opponents within 30 feet by sense of smell. If the opponent is upwind, the range increases to 60 feet; if downwind, it drops to 15 feet. Strong scents, such as smoke or rotting garbage, can be detected at twice the ranges noted above. Overpowering scents, such as skunk musk or troglodyte stench, can be detected at triple normal range. When a weasel detects a scent, the exact location of the source is not revealed—only its presence somewhere within range. The weasel can take a move action to note the direction of the scent. Whenever the weasel comes within 5 feet of the source, the weasel pinpoints the source's location.

*Attach (Ex):* If a weasel hits with a bite attack, it uses its powerful jaws to latch onto the opponent's body and automatically deals bite damage each round it remains attached. The attached weasel loses its Dexterity bonus to Armor Class and has an AC of 18. An attached weasel can be struck with a weapon or grappled itself. To remove an attached weasel through grappling, the opponent must achieve a pin against the creature.

*Familiar Ability Descriptions:* All familiars have special abilities (or impart abilities to their masters) depending on Ichærus' combined level in classes that grant familiars. The abilities are cumulative.

*Alertness (Ex):* While his familiar is within arm's reach, Ichærus gains the Alertness feat.

*Improved Evasion (Ex):* When subjected to an attack that normally allows a Reflex saving throw for half damage, a familiar takes no damage if it makes a successful saving throw and half damage even if the saving throw fails.

*Share Spells:* At Ichærus' option, he may have any spell (but not any spell-like ability) he casts on himself also affect her familiar. The familiar must be within 5 feet at the time of casting to receive the benefit. If the spell or effect has a duration other than instantaneous, it stops affecting the familiar if it moves farther than 5 feet away and will not affect the familiar again even if it returns to Ichærus before the duration expires. Additionally, Ichærus may cast a spell with a target of "You" on his familiar (as a touch range spell) instead of on himself. Ichærus and his familiar can share spells even if the spells normally do not affect creatures of the familiar's type (magical beast).

*Empathic Link (Su):* Ichærus has an empathic link with his familiar out to a distance of up to 1 mile. Ichærus cannot see through the familiar's eyes, but they can communicate empathically. Because of the limited nature of the link, only general emotional content can be communicated. Because of this empathic link, Ichærus has the same connection to an item or place that his familiar does.

*Deliver Touch Spells (Su):* Ichærus' familiar can deliver touch spells for him. If Ichærus and the familiar are in contact at the time Ichærus casts a touch spell, he can designate his familiar as the "toucher." The familiar can then deliver the touch spell just as Ichærus could. As usual, if Ichærus casts another spell before the touch is delivered, the touch spell dissipates.

*Speak with Master (Ex):* Ichærus and his familiar can communicate verbally as if they were using a common language. Other creatures do not understand the communication without magical help.

*Cleric Spells Prepared* (6/5+1/4+1/3+1/1+1; Save DC: 13 + spell level): 0 — cure minor wounds, light, detect magic, resistance, mending; 1st — shield of faith, protection from good, divine favor, inflict light wounds, disguise self*; 2nd — gift from above, inflict moderate wounds, bull's strength, invisibility*; 3rd — banish the wound, mass blessing, clairaudience/clairvoyance. *Domain spell

### Encounter 3: The High Council

The PCs are brought via teleportation circle to the capital of Myreth, stripped of their possessions, and hauled before the High Council in the court of Queen Tepheroth.

**Read aloud:** *Despite your claims to the contrary, your captors seem certain you are responsible for the death of the necromancer Damothien. You now stand in a large audience chamber, facing an Elven woman in diaphanous robes seated on a throne of bone. She would be beautiful were it not for the look of utter contempt on her face and the penchant for cruelty in her eyes. She refuses to look at you, speaking instead to the assembled Elven nobles. "These creatures face death for the murder of Damothien of Dythanus. By our law, each house has the right to interrogate them before their execution, should they so choose."*

#### Interrogations

**Elven nobles care little for the feelings, desires, or thoughts of anybody but themselves. Thus, each of the houses' representatives makes demands of the PCs without giving them much chance to respond.**

**The best way to make sure the PCs have a say in their situation is to let them discuss each house's offer (or threat) immediately after they make it. It should be increasingly apparent the PCs are going to need allies in order to make it out of this alive. Any dissension in the ranks will result in all of their deaths. Therefore, it behooves them to come to a unanimous decision about which house they will work with.**

**If any of the PCs are Elves, they stand a better chance of being able to negotiate with the house representatives because the stakes are not as extreme for them. The first rule among Elvenkind is Elves do not kill their own, ever. Therefore, Elven PCs have a little more bargaining power because they face banishment instead of execution.**

#### Calix

**Read aloud:** *After having stewed for what seems an eternity, someone finally enters. A tall Elven man, dressed regally, stands in the doorway and observes your surroundings. Satisfied all is as it should be, he steps aside as the woman from the throne glides into the room, wearing her regality as easily as she wears her robe. She forces herself to look at each of you, but even that appears to cause her pain.*

Choose the Human PC with the most hit points (in the absence of a Human, the non-Elven PC with the most hit points), and read the following to them: *The woman raises her hand and speaks a single arcane word. Pain flows through you, pain unlike anything you have ever felt before. The flesh burns on your bones, your blood freezes, and a thousand knives rip into your skin. Your throat rasps as you realize you have already screamed your voice out, when suddenly the pain stops. The tall Elf speaks in a calm monotone. "After the interrogation, you will be brought before the Council again. You will declare openly your affiliation with the traitorous Ichærus of House Netheryn. You will confess he arranged for you to kill the necromancer as a way of sowing disruption. If you do this convincingly, the High Queen may deign to spare your lives." She then turns and walks out, followed closely by her associate.*

#### Netheryn

**Read aloud:** *All is quiet, but you fear you are not yet finished with these Elven political games. To further reinforce your suspicions, Ichærus walks into the room, his strange aura glowing about him. He walks as one who knows power and is unafraid to wield it. He speaks in that unmistakably rich voice. "I can arrange for you to leave this forest alive, but you will do something for me in exchange. Soon, you will be brought back to the High Council, where they will ask if you have any last words. You will explain that you were hired by House Calix to kill the necromancer, because he represented a threat to High Queen Tepheroth. If you do this, I will arrange for you to escape this night. You have until you are brought in to consider." He then turns on his heel and leaves.*

Tepheroth's guards escort the PCs to the interrogation chamber, where they shackle them against the wall. Only Calix and Netheryn bother to send representatives to question them.

### Encounter 4: Decisions

Soon afterward (once they have had time to discuss their options), the PCs are brought back into the audience chambers. The guards force them to kneel (at sword point, if necessary).

**Read aloud:** *High Queen Tepheroth speaks again to the assembled Elves, refusing to acknowledge your existence. "The condemned are to be executed at dawn on the morrow, along with the Human chattel they attempted to steal. They will then be put into service in the eternal legions of the Elven nation. Before they are returned to their kennels to await their fate, Our Majesty will allow them to speak for Our amusement."*

The PCs have effectively three options at this point. They can maintain they were working against Calix on Netheryn's behalf, vice versa, or neither. If they accuse either house of conspiring, that house's head becomes outraged, denouncing the PCs as cowardly, deceitful Humans. If the PCs say something else, or nothing, they are sent back to their cells to await the dawn.

### Encounter 5: Escape (*map page 498*)

**Development:** During the night, agents of whichever house they sided with break into the PCs' cell. (If the PCs refused to blame either house, they're on their own.) They are there to free the PCs and earn their trust, at which point the agents attack the party (and blame it on the rival house). The agents are reluctant to kill the PCs while they are chained, for several reasons. First, the PCs might make noise, which would alert other Elves. Second, if any of the PCs are Elves, they might feel squeamish about killing a helpless Elf (although this does not stop them from attacking Elven PCs later). Finally, these agents are professionals, and consider it a matter of pride for their prey to be at least capable of fighting back.

The PCs are in a small jail that imprisons themselves and the villagers of Ventorston. Four guards are responsible for them and their equipment.

ENCOUNTER 5.1: RELEASED (EL 4)

**Read aloud:** *You awaken in the night to see Elves standing over you, holding thin needles over your chained arms. As you prepare to resist, they lower the needles... into the locks on your shackles. Soon, you hear the tumblers loosening and your arms are free. Your rescuers remain mute, but motion for you to go to the door.*

**Development:** The assassins have two good opportunities to attack the PCs. The first is when they go to rescue the villagers across the hall. The advantage to this tactic is the PCs are likely unarmed at the time, making them easy prey. The disadvantage is the villagers might alert them to the attack. The other opportunity is when the PCs engage the guards at the door (**Encounter 5.3**), advantageous because the PCs are already engaged. However, the PCs' weapons are near the guards, making it more likely they are armed and dangerous. The assassins, as professionals, base their final choice on whatever the PCs do, taking advantage as best they can.

**Assassins (2), Male Elf Asn 2:** CR 2; Medium humanoid (Elf); HD 2d6; hp 9, 10; Spd 30 ft.; Init +7; AC 15, touch 13, flat-footed 12; Base Atk +1; Grp +1; Atk +1 melee (1d6(19–20/x2), short sword); Full Atk +1 melee (1d6(19–20/x2), short sword); SA Sneak attack +1d6; SQ Elf traits, poison immunity and resistance +1, poison use, skilled brewer; AL CE; SV Fort +0, Ref +3, Will +0; Str 10, Dex 16, Con 11, Int 13, Wis 10, Cha 9.

*Skills and Feats:* Hide +5, Use Rope +5, Poison +5, Escape Artist +5, Sense Motive +5; Improved Initiative.

*Poison Immunity and Resistance:* The assassin has a +1 save bonus against all poisons and is immune to quicksilver poison.

*Poison Use:* The assassin is trained in the use of poison and never risks accidentally poisoning himself/herself when applying poison to a blade.

*Skilled Brewer:* The assassin is trained to brew poison and always has a +2 competence bonus to Poison skill checks.

*Sneak Attack:* Anytime the assassin's target is denied a Dexterity bonus to AC, or when he flanks a target, the assassin deals an additional 1d6 points of damage on a successful attack.

*Possessions:* Leather armor, short sword, 12 gp.

ENCOUNTER 5.2: THE VILLAGERS

**Development:** The villagers are not shackled, and the only thing keeping them from their freedom is a shoddy lock and their terror of the Elves. The lock is easy to pick or break (DC 10 to pick, 15 to break).

ENCOUNTER 5.3: GUARDS (EL 6)

**Development:** As soon as the PCs give any clear indication they have escaped their cell, the guards attack them. The assassins bribed the guards to get in, but the guards know nothing about the escape attempt and do their best to prevent it.

**Guards (4), Male Elf Ftr 2:** CR 2; Medium humanoid (Elf); HD 2d10; hp 12, 15, 17, 19; Spd 20 ft.; Init +6; AC 17, touch 10, flat-footed 17; Base Atk +2; Grp +3; Atk +5 melee (1d8+1(19–20/x2), longsword); Full Atk +5 melee (1d8+1(19–20/x2), longsword); SA Favored weapon (longsword); SQ Elven traits; AL LE; SV Fort +3, Ref +2, Will –1; Str 12, Dex 15, Con 10, Int 11, Wis 9, Cha 10.

*Skills and Feats:* Climb –1*, Jump –1*, Spot +0; Improved Initiative, Weapon Focus (longsword). *includes –7 armor check penalty

*Favored Weapon (longsword):* A guard gains a +1 competence bonus to attack and damage rolls with the longsword.

*Possessions:* Half-plate armor, longsword.

**Development:** Once the PCs have dealt with the guards and the assassins, they are home free, outside of the task of escorting two dozen terrified refugees out of Myreth forest. Luckily, the Andover border is only about 40 miles away. The PCs might still have the teleportation circle scroll from Damothien's study, which could make the task much easier.

## Part 3: The Stone of Fortune

**Read aloud:** *"Grasping the stone, at first you are convinced that something is wrong, as it unveils a shapeless vision of darkness. Then, you hear the sound of metal scraping against stone in a quick repetition. Sparks fly in the vision, revealing the strange and dark-skinned Elf who has crossed your path twice now. He lifts one of his strange daggers to inspect its edge, and then his eyes narrow at something beyond the weapon... almost as though he were glaring directly at you. The vision abruptly ends."*

## Part 4: Concluding the Adventure

- With a group of refugees in tow, the PCs' first priority is probably going to be getting them to safety, along with such concerns as stealthily getting out of Myreth and finding supplies. Water is common in the forest, food less so.
- If the PCs said that either Calix or Netheryn hired them, that choice can have dire consequences. Whichever house they implicated in Damothien's death is in for some political trouble, and has a good incentive for finding the PCs and exacting revenge.
- Ichærus, despite his treachery, may well respect the party's abilities at this point, and may attempt to contact the PCs again, though likely in a disguise or with some peace offering or other offer of aid.



# Siege of Kcal'den Fortress

## Introduction

Siegemaster Kcal'den, one of Nassiral Hate's feared lieutenants, has declared his independence from Hate and murdered all dignitaries dispatched to the infamous Kcal'den Fortress.

This is one of five adventures in Tier 6. It is meant for characters of levels 11–13.

## Adventure Background

Siegemaster Kcal'den has one of the greatest military minds in the Accordlands. His plans provided the underpinnings for Nassiral Hate's swift coup in Baraxton. His reputation for victory began over thirty years ago during an attack on the fortress he now rules. The small castle midway between Baraxton and Sharn Keep straddles Deverenia and the Nothrog lands.

Thirty-one years ago, Kcal'den, already called the Siegemaster by his legion and his defeated opponents, disappeared without a trace. As befitted the chief of a Nothrog Legion, Kcal'den produced an heir, Krun, who showed exceptional promise as a warrior and tactician even at a young age. Krun eventually earned a reputation in his own right as a capable warrior and commander, leading the Red Wolf successfully up until the day he bent the knee to Nassiral Hate.

The second of the legacies Kcal'den left is more famous. The Siegemaster kept extensive journals and notes from each campaign, and wrote treatises on warfare, leadership, and strategy, especially as they pertained to fortified targets. When Kcal'den left for the Shattered Lands, his officers compiled these documents into several books. Over the following thirty years, copies of these books made their

way across the Accordlands, and became the definitive works on strategy and tactics. Every warlord from Deverenia to Toris Kelt pursued copies, to the point where the current generation of generals has grown up reading the Siegemaster's works. By the time Kcal'den returned to the Accordlands, his name was not just legend among the Nothrog, but revered by human, Deverenian, and elf leaders as well.

One year to the day before the night of the Assassins' Strike, a lone figure walked out of the Shattered Lands, gaunt, skeletal, and misshapen. Four tentacles extended from his sides. After thirty years, the Siegemaster had returned no longer truly a Nothrog, but something much more.

Upon his return to Nothrog lands, Kcal'den sought out his son, now the renowned chief of the Red Wolf. Kcal'den, realizing he needed to learn more about the mysterious and ruthless new leader of the Nothrog people, also immediately swore fealty to Nassiral Hate, and in return received permission to fortify his old home.

Kcal'den has become instrumental to Hate's plans, and has grown to respect the albino Nothrog's cunning and foresight. Kcal'den's genius led to the nearly bloodless conquest of Baraxton. When Nassiral Hate ordered him to feign disobedience in order to entrap potential enemies near the Nothrog home, the Siegemaster obeyed.

Recently, Siegemaster Kcal'den has stopped communicating with Hate's headquarters in Baraxton, giving Hate's other warlords reason to believe he has betrayed them. The truth is more complicated. Kcal'den has deduced the existence of the Medusan Lords, and has decided that Hate is either one of them, or one of their chief lackeys. He has even learned something of their ultimate goal, and some of the requirements for reaching it.

## Adventure Synopsis

Any number of warlords may attempt to lay siege to Kcal'den Fortress, but the adventure works best if there is at least one attacking army present, with at least one warlord whom the party has previously met. Without the party's aid, these warlords are doomed to failure. The GM may elect to use other warlords provided (i.e. General Lund, from "Castle Blackthorn"), but such generals are unlikely to have met the party. The previous warlords, their listed adventure(s), motivations, and the strategies involved (both for and against them) are as follows:

- **Ichaerus** (*Ichaerus Rising*): The agent provocateur of the Elven Houses returns, this time scheming to force the other houses to accept Netheryn as a true equal. Ichaerus relies largely on surprise tactics, mixing his sizeable nimbic armies (over 300, Brb and Rog levels 4–9) with a variety of magical beasts (CR 7–10, another 200). He only attacks Kcal'den Fortress with the party's aid, however, knowing fully well that any strategy against Kcal'den is a mere distraction.
- **Kerebrus** (*The Shattered Lands*): Kerebrus comes to the fortress to avenge the death of his ambassador at Kcal'den's hands. Though he leads the largest, best-trained mercenary company in the Accordlands (the Dark Horsemen), his forces number only in the hundreds. He hopes that Kcal'den will underestimate his small army, but Kcal'den has heard of Kerebrus' own gift for discipline and tactics. Kcal'den would allow Kerebrus to enter the city, cut off his retreat with a concealed second army, and massacre the Dark Horsemen in the streets. Kerebrus' Dark Horsemen consist of over 300 troops of any class allowing lawful alignments, and of levels 9–13.
- **Lord Kestrel du Myerdeth** (*Believers*): Lord Kestrel was incensed that Kcal'den killed an agent of the Conspiracy of Light, and has used the murder to feign the loyal, honorable Deverenian that he wishes to pose as. His units are largely low-level shock troops (250, Ftr 2–5), but a number of illusionists and assassins lurk in the wings (50 of each, levels 9–12) to infiltrate the fortress. Unfortunately for Lord Kestrel, Kcal'den is actually leading the second, hidden army. If the party has completed "Believers," Lord Kestrel reminds them that they owe him their lives, and politely but firmly asks for their aid.
- **Modred of Carcius** (*Believers*): Modred took great personal offense at Kcal'den killing a Deverenian ambassador, a Genecourt with several generations of support for the Church of the Storm. Modred's army consists entirely of a small force of stormborn (no more than 200 of various types and CLs), but is perhaps the greatest threat to Kcal'den Fortress, as it rides upon the Storm itself. Kcal'den, unfazed, directs all his attention to Modred, demoralizing the stormborn troops by destroying the beloved Hierophant.
- **Sorceress Ygraine** (*Believers, The Terror of Condor Pass*): Ygraine follows the commands of Lord Gahid Rellion, and now she assaults an even more formidable outpost than the Aerie. Ygraine has no personal stake in this battle save for her honor, and throws hundreds of peasant militia (Ftr 1, over 400) at the fortress' defenses while leaving a corps of experienced knights (50, Ftr 9–13) and wizards (25, Wiz 8–12) to make more strategic attacks. Kcal'den pins her with his second, hidden army, destroying her reserves before targeting the shock troops.
- **Sir Rhawn d'Ilchant** (*Believers*): Sir Rhawn is here of his own accord, to punish Kcal'den for murdering those who approached him in good faith. Sir Rhawn's forces include a sizeable aerial cavalry of verdatha riders, and all are members of the Black Sun (200 troops, Pal 5–13; half have verdatha mounts and aerial riding feats). Sir Rhawn is accompanied by an agent of the Medusan Lords, Duke Blackthorne (see Castle Blackthorn, page 386), who hopes to goad Sir Rhawn close enough to the keep that Kcal'den can bring down the verdatha with chain netting.
- **Sorscha** (*Shadow of the Black Tower*): Of all those besieging Kcal'den, only Sorscha has any inkling that her foe is still in league with the Medusan Lords. Indeed, this is the very reason she may attack Kcal'den Fortress: she hopes to flush a Medusan Lord out of hiding. Sorscha only attacks if the Dimensional Confluence and/or Zil survived "Shadow of the Black Tower," and powered the Black Tower. If so, her army consists of hundreds of monsters, of CRs 8–12, all absolutely obedient to her will. Still, Kcal'den has prepared for such an assault, as a mass attack allows the fortress' siege weapons to make short work of the army.
- **The Terror of Sharn Keep** (*The Terror of Sharn Keep*): Unlike the other warlords, the Terror comes to conquer, not to destroy. Much as Sharn Keep was defensible, Kcal'den Fortress is a still greater prize, and the Terror brings nearly 500 slave troops of

mostly Deverenian and Nothrog backgrounds (levels 6–11), as well as 100 assorted monsters (CRs 8–12). Kcal'den reacts with a full legion of wizards and shamans, disorienting the Terror and slaughtering his befuddled forces the moment they approach the fortress' walls.

### After Lord of Baraxton

**If the PCs have already completed Lord of Baraxton, Kcal'den's ruse of secession has become hard truth. Even his son did not know that Kcal'den was acting on Hate's orders by slaying all ambassadors sent to the fortress, Nothrog or not. Kcal'den now fights for sheer survival.**

# Part 1: The Fortress

## Area 1: Kcal'den Fortress

**Development:** Kcal'den Fortress is every bit as impenetrable as its reputation suggests. Every aspect of the fortress is designed to hinder or kill intruders, while maximizing the defenders' ability to stay alive. While only 200 troops are stationed in the fortress, they can hold it against forces a hundred times their size, for weeks if they must. During the rebuilding, the Siegemaster oversaw every aspect of construction, ensuring there were no weaknesses to exploit.

The outer wall provides the primary defense for the keep. The 30-foot walls are angled slightly outwards from the ground, making climbing nearly impossible (DC 30). The 6-foot thick walls (Break DC 65, Hardness 8, hp 750/10 ft. x10 ft. section) are crenellated on either edge on top, allowing archers and crossbowmen to fire from the walls while taking three-quarters cover behind the crenellations.

There is only one gate into the fortress, blocked by an iron portcullis (grated iron door) that raises to allow passage. On the wall above the portcullis is another crenellated walkway. The portcullis is a work of genius. By a cunning system of pulleys and winches, even a child can pull the chain to raise it. However, the mechanism can be locked, requiring six different keys. Without those keys in the locks, the portcullis stays closed, and not even a giant can force it open. During normal operation, these keys stay in the locks, allowing supplies and personnel to easily enter and exit. When an attack is imminent the keys are scattered, one to each of the outer towers on the wall, and guarded by some of the deadliest traps ever devised. There are two copies of each key, and the Siegemaster carries one of each.

The outer towers consist of six guard towers and two gate towers. The 50-foot guard towers are each hollow, with a staircase leading to the roof. They each have one doorway, accessible from the courtyard. Each staircase has several landings, circular walkways around the inside of the tower, laden with traps and soldiers. The top landing, just below the roof, has a trapped alcove built into the wall, where one of the six portcullis keys is stored. Two turrets are mounted on the roof of each tower, one for a ballista, the other a catapult. Each turret can be turned to face any direction in one round, including inside the fortress (to shoot at invaders in the courtyard). Additionally, archers and crossbowmen man the roofs of the towers.

The gate towers are similar to the guard towers in most respects, though shorter and wider. While they also hold several traps, and artillery is mounted on their roofs, the roofs of the gate towers also house the locking mechanisms for the gate. The mechanism on each tower has three keyholes, matching three of the six portcullis keys. Next to the keyholes is a lever that can only be pulled when the keys are all in the locks. This lever releases one side of the locking mechanism, so when both are down, the gate can be opened from the ground.

If invaders breach the outer gate, their troubles are just beginning. The space between the towers of the inner keep and those of the outer wall is narrow, so defenders can pen an attacking army in the front courtyard while artillery on the towers and archers on the walls rain down death. On either side of the keep, attackers who manage to break through the "death corridors" still must run a nearly 700-foot gauntlet to reach the doors to the inner keep. Bracketed on both sides by defenders armed with artillery, missile weapons, and hot oil, an attacking army is easy prey while trying to reach the doors to the keep. Finally, the corridors in the keep itself are narrow and full of traps, and defenders can hold off attackers even in the heart of the fortress.

The keep consists of three floors and a basement. The basement contains the dungeons and storerooms, with supplies to feed a besieged army for weeks. The first two floors are nearly identical barracks. The third floor is the Siegemaster's private quarters.

**Kcal'den Fortress (hamlet):** Nonstandard (military dictatorship); LE; Population 194; Isolated (99.4% Nothrog, 0.6% Other: Kcal'den). Authority Figures: Siegemaster Kcal'den, male Nothrog Wiz 18, LE.

### Encounter 1: Entering the Fortress

**Read aloud:** *Kcal'den Fortress squats upon the horizon like a great unconquerable beast. [Attacking warlord and his/her/its] army are ready, and soon it will be up to you to do the impossible. [Warlord] will sound the attack at a moment's notice, but it is your job to give that notice. If you can reach Kcal'den before the armies collide, you can win the battle almost before it begins.*

**Development:** The PCs should realize they are best served entering at nightfall. Getting into the fortress is the first in a long series of nearly impossible tasks. There are three ways in to the fortress, not counting the front gate (which stays closed, without exception, during the possibility of an attack).

While it is difficult and dangerous, the PCs might wish to go over the walls. They are welcome to try. The Climb DC is 30, because of their outward slant. There is a sentry every 50 feet along the outer walls. They change positions every half-hour (300 rounds). An alarm bell hangs on the towers on each side of the wall, easily accessible to the sentries.

There is another way in, but only a careful inspection of the perimeter of the fortress reveals it. A small stream, not even 5 feet wide, passes through the courtyard on the north side. Kcal'den knows that letting the stream into the fortress posed a risk, but the value of a supply of fresh water during a siege outweighed it. A small iron grate on each side allows water into and out of the fortress, but not intruders. A Strength check (DC 20) bends the bars on the grate enough to wade through the stream into the fortress. The grate is only the visible defense. Directly underneath the

middle of the wall is a glyph of warding, hidden in the streambed. Anybody who passes over it triggers it, sending a lightning bolt into the stream. Because of the conductivity of water, everybody in the stream within 30 feet of the trap is affected by it.

**Lightning Bolt Trap**: CR 6; magic device; proximity trigger *(alarm)*; automatic reset; spell effect (*lightning bolt*, 10th-level wizard, 10d6 electricity, 30 ft. radius blast, DC 18 Reflex save half damage); Search DC 28; Disable Device DC 28.

ENCOUNTER 2: OPENING THE GATES

**Development**: The existence and locations of the six portcullis keys are not common knowledge, and it might take some investigating before the PCs learn what they need to look for. The chain to open the portcullis is located beside it, on the east side of the gate. However, as long as the two locks are engaged, the portcullis remains secure (Strength check DC 55 to break the lock). A Profession (engineer) check (DC 15) reveals from examining the winch mechanism that the gate must somehow be locked. Furthermore, the metal portcullis is magically reinforced to be immune to rust and have Spell Resistance 15.

### Hostages and the Trapped Towers

**It might occur to trap-weary PCs that capturing a hostage and using him to either point out the traps, or trigger them, might be advisable. However, this solution might present more problems than it solves.**

**First is the issue of capturing a hostage without alerting the fortress. Because the only sentries patrol the roofs of the towers and the outer walls, the PCs cannot merely grab somebody passing through the courtyard. The sentries on the wall are required to change positions every 30 minutes for this specific reason: if any are missing, the entire garrison will know in a maximum of a half-hour (300 rounds), giving the PCs a short time limit to accomplish their goal. This leaves the artillery crewmen on the roofs of the towers, which require that PCs navigate at least that tower in order to reach them.**

**Should the PCs capture a hostage, their troubles are not over. Every soldier in Kcal'den Fortress knows the location of every trap in the outer towers, in case they are called upon to retrieve or replace the keys, or man the roof. As far as Kcal'den is concerned, any soldier who accidentally triggers a trap is incompetent, and therefore saves Kcal'den the trouble of dismissing him. However, the soldiers are also trained to use the traps against hostage-takers, so they can deliberately trigger them in an effort to harm, distract, or slow down their captors. Any of the soldiers in Kcal'den Fortress that deliberately triggers a trap in the outer walls receives a +4 insight bonus to his save thanks to prior knowledge of the effects. PCs with him are not so lucky.**

Quick-thinking PCs might realize an unlocking mechanism is likely to be nearby, probably in one of the gate towers (which it is). More direct PCs might ambush one of the Nothrog sentries and Intimidate (DC 15) him into revealing the secrets to the portcullis.

No matter how the PCs learn how to open the gate, they must get keys from each of the six guard towers.

## Location 1: Kcal'den Fortress

## Location 1.1: The Courtyard

**Development**: Kcal'den Fortress has a large courtyard surrounding the keep. It is difficult to move across this open area unnoticed by the sentries on the walls and the roofs of the towers, especially if they are alert to the characters' presence. Darkness alleviates this problem, but once day breaks there are few places to hide in the courtyard. Moving across the courtyard at night without being seen requires a Hide check (DC 10 if the sentries are unaware of them; 20 if not). During the day the DC increases by 10.

The sentries are trained to listen for any unusual noises within the courtyard, requiring a Move Silently check (DC 10) each time the PCs try to sneak across the courtyard.

## Location 1.2: Guard Tower 1 *(map page 500)*

ENCOUNTER 3: GUARD DOGS (EL 10)

**Read aloud:** *This tower provides some cover from the prying eyes on the walls, and you duck inside. Your relief is short-lived, however, as several pairs of red eyes peer out at you from the darkness. You hear snarling, and clanking chains.*

There are 12 dire wolves chained to the base of the stairs in the tower. Their chains are 6 feet long, giving them enough slack to attack anybody trying to climb the stairs, but they cannot reach the doorway. The Nothrog in the keep use them to protect the bottom of the stairs, throwing them meat in order to get past. While the wolves snarl and make noise, the residents of the fortress have grown accustomed to it.

The stairs themselves, along with the walkways they lead to, are 3 feet wide, extending out from the side of the tower. The landings are roughly 20 feet above one another.

**Creatures**: Six dire wolves.

**Dire Wolves (6)**: CR 3; Large animal; HD 6d8+18; hp 45; Init +2; Spd 50 ft.; AC 14, touch 11, flat-footed 12; Base Atk +4, Grp +15; Atk +11 melee (1d8+10, bite); Full Atk +11 melee (1d8+10, bite); Space/Reach 10 ft./5 ft.; SA Trip; SQ Low-light vision, scent; AL N; SV Fort +8, Ref +7, Will +6; Str 25, Dex 15, Con 17, Int 2, Wis 12, Cha 10.

*Skills and Feats*: Hide +0, Listen +7, Move Silently +4, Spot +7, Survival +2 (+6 by scent)*; Alertness, Run, Track, Weapon Focus (bite). *A dire wolf has a +2 racial bonus on Hide, Listen, Move Silently, and Spot checks. It also has a +4 racial bonus on Survival checks when tracking by scent.

*Low-Light Vision*: A dire wolf can see twice as far as a human in starlight, moonlight, torchlight, and similar conditions of shadowy illumination. It retains the ability to distinguish color and detail under these conditions.

*Scent*: The dire wolf can detect opponents within 30 feet by sense of smell. If the opponent is upwind, the range increases to 60 feet; if downwind, it drops to 15 feet. Strong scents, such as smoke or rotting garbage, can be detected at twice the ranges noted above. Overpowering scents, such as skunk musk or troglodyte stench, can be detected at triple normal range. When a creature detects a scent, the exact location of the source is not revealed—only its presence somewhere within range. The creature can take a move action to note the direction of the scent.

Whenever the creature comes within 5 feet of the source, the creature pinpoints the source's location.

*Trip*: A dire wolf that hits with a bite attack can attempt to trip its opponent (+11 check modifier) as a free action without making a touch attack or provoking an attack of opportunity. If the attempt fails, the opponent cannot react to trip the dire wolf.

ENCOUNTER 4: SPEAR TRAP (EL 4)

There is a pressure plate along the walkway here. Stepping on it triggers a poisoned spear concealed in the wall. An astute PC might notice the slightly upraised portion of the floor indicating the pressure plate.

**Poison Spear Trap:** CR 6; mechanical; location trigger; automatic reset; Atk +12 ranged (1d8/x3 plus poison, longspear); poison (wyvern poison, DC 17 Fortitude save resists, 2d6 Con/2d6 Con); Search DC 20; Disable Device DC 22.

ENCOUNTER 5: WEAK FLOOR

This section of the floor is less reinforced than the rest of the walkway. While it easily holds the weight of the PCs, if the trapdoor directly above it is triggered, a PC falling onto this section of floor must make a Reflex save (DC 18) in order to prevent breaking through the walkway and continuing to fall to the ground.

ENCOUNTER 6: TRAPDOOR (EL 4)

A portion of the walkway (3 ft. x 3 ft.) is a trapdoor. Any weight placed on it causes it to give way, dropping the unfortunate victim 30 feet to the lower walkway (see #3 to determine if he keeps falling).

**Trap Door:** CR 2; mechanical; location trigger; automatic reset; DC 20 Reflex save avoids; 30 ft. deep (3d6, fall); single target (first target in 5-ft. square); Search DC 20; Disable Device DC 25.

ENCOUNTER 7: WHITE KEY (EL 10)

**Read aloud:** *You notice a small alcove in the wall. Resting in it is a white key, made of marble or porcelain, clean, dust-free, and apparently often-used, for it has a certain worn quality.*

A nearly invisible thread connects the key to a release valve. If the key is taken without the thread being cut, concentrated poisonous gas sprays into the face of the person taking the key.

**Burnt Othur Vapor Trap**: CR 10; mechanical; touch trigger; repair reset; cut thread bypass; gas; multiple targets (all targets in a 10-ft. by 10-ft. area); never miss; onset delay (1 rounds); poison (burnt othur fumes, DC 18 Fortitude save resists, 1 Con drain/3d6 Con); Search DC 21; Disable Device DC 25.

## Location 1.2.1: Roof (EL 7)

The roof has a ballista, a catapult, and the four Nothrog crewmen for the two siege weapons. The ballista and catapult are both mounted on turrets. The PCs might wish to ambush the crewmen and/or sabotage the artillery. Both prospects are risky — if the crewmen notice the PCs, or the PCs fail to kill them quickly enough, they might raise the alarm.

**Creatures**: Four crewmen, 3rd-level fighters.

**Crewmen (4), Male Nothrog Ftr 3:** CR 3; Medium humanoid (Nothrog); HD 3d10+6+3; hp 29; Init +4; Spd 30 ft.; AC 13, touch 10, flat-footed 13; Base Atk +3; Grp +5; Atk +6 melee (1d10+3/x3, halberd), or +3 ranged (1d10(19–20/x2), heavy crossbow); Full Atk +6 melee (1d10+3/x3, halberd), or +3 ranged (1d10(19–20/x2), heavy crossbow); SA Favored weapon (halberd); SQ Nothrog traits; AL LE; SV Fort +5, Ref +1, Will +0; Str 15, Dex 10, Con 14, Int 12, Wis 8, Cha 10.

*Skills and Feats*: Listen +3, Profession (siege engineer) +6, Spot +3; Improved Initiative, Power Attack, Toughness.

*Favored Weapon (halberd)*: A crewman gains a +1 competence bonus to attack and damage rolls with the halberd.

*Possessions*: Studded leather armor, halberd.

## Location 1.3: Guard Tower 2 (*map page 500*)

## Location 1.3.1: Ground Floor

**Read aloud:** *Entering this tower, you see a spiral wooden staircase extending from the floor across the way, along the wall, rising up above your heads all the way into the heights of the tower. Luckily, the ground floor seems pretty quiet, and you can only hope things stay that way.*

ENCOUNTER 8: PIT TRAP (EL 2)

At the base of the stairs, a false floor (made of plaster, rather than stone) hides a 20-foot pit lined with spikes. While the trap is perfectly functional on its own, its true deadliness only comes into play when combined with the devices on the stairs (see below).

Unless the pit is somehow covered, characters falling down the stairs are liable to fall in.

**False Floor Poison Spiked Pit Trap**: CR 8; mechanical; location trigger; repair reset (false floor); DC 20 Reflex save avoids; 20 ft. deep (2d6 fall); single target (first target to step onto/fall through false floor); pit spikes (Atk +10 melee, 1d4 spikes per target for 1d4+2 plus poison each); poison (Deathblade poison, DC 20 Fortitude save resists, 1d6 Con/2d6 Con); Search DC 20; Disable Device DC 20.

ENCOUNTER 9: ILLUSIONARY STEP (EL 2)

2–1/2 feet of stairway one turn above the spiked pit is illusionary. It looks just like any other stretch of stairs, but there is nothing solid there. Invaders are meant to fall through the hole in the stairway into the spiked pit. (The garrison soldiers know it's there and simply hop over it at shift changes.)

**Illusionary Step:** CR 4; magic, location trigger; automatic reset; spell effect (*illusory wall*, 9th-level wizard, DC 20 Reflex save avoids); 20 ft. deep (2d6 plus damage from false floor poison spiked pit trap, fall); Search DC 25; Disable Device DC 25.

ENCOUNTER 10: SLIDING STAIRS (EL 2)

There is a thin pressure plate on one of the stairs, which, if pressed, causes the staircase to turn into a ramp, causing the PCs to slide all the way down into the pit at the bottom of the stairs, again subjecting them to the poisoned spikes (Kcal'den prizes efficiency, such as a trap that can be deadly in three different ways.)

**Sliding Staircase:** CR 2; mechanical; location trigger; manual reset; hidden lever bypass (Search DC 20); never miss (slide to false floor poison spike trap, DC 25 Reflex save avoids); Search DC 25; Disable Device DC 28.

ENCOUNTER 11: RED KEY (EL 10)

**Read aloud:** *In the wall alongside the wooden staircase, an alcove holds three identical red keys, all in a row.*

The key on the left is the actual one, and is waiting to be taken. The middle and right keys are false keys which, if touched, trigger magical traps. The key on the right releases chain lightning targeting the character that touches it. The key in the middle triggers a fireball, centered on the character that touches it (possibly igniting the wooden stairway).

**Chain Lightning Trap:** CR 7; magic device; touch trigger (*alarm*); automatic reset; spell effect (*chain lightning*, 11th-level wizard, 11d6 electricity to target nearest center of trigger area plus 5d6 electricity to each of up to eleven secondary targets, DC 19 Reflex save half damage); Search DC 31; Disable Device DC 31.

**Fireball Trap:** CR 5; magic device; touch trigger (*alarm*); automatic reset; spell effect (*fireball*, 8th-level wizard, 8d6 fire, DC 14 Reflex save half damage); Search DC 28; Disable Device DC 28.

## Location 1.3.2: Roof (EL 7)

The roof has a ballista, a catapult, and the four Nothrog crewmen for the two siege weapons. The ballista and catapult are both mounted on turrets. The PCs might wish to ambush the crewmen and/or sabotage the artillery. Both of these prospects are risky — if the crewmen notice the PCs, or the PCs fail to kill them quickly enough, they might raise the alarm.

**Creatures**: Four crewmen, 3rd-level fighters (see Location 1.2.1 for stats).

**Crewmen (4)**: hp: 25, 32, 37, 30.



## Location 1.4: Guard Tower 3

Unlike the other towers, this guard tower has no stairs, and only one landing (near the top). Instead, it has a ladder attached to the wall, which can be climbed all the way up to the landing. Anybody who takes damage from a trap while climbing the ladder must succeed at a Reflex save (DC 18) or fall to the ground.

ENCOUNTER 12: TRAITORS (EL 9)

**Read aloud:** *As you enter this tower, the first thing you see is several Nothrog, apparently soldiers in this fortress. They seem to be discussing something, but abandon the discussion when you enter. They draw weapons, prepared to fight, but one of them raises his hand. He speaks to you in a low voice, obviously as concerned about being overheard as you are. "You aren't supposed to be here, but then, neither are we. Perhaps we have similar goals? There's only one way to find out, and that's not by killing each other needlessly. We can always do that later."*

**Development:** This Nothrog is Saranok, one of Kcal'den's top lieutenants and a canny tactician. Unfortunately, he is a little too canny for his own good, as he and his nine cronies are planning to kill Kcal'den and usurp his position under cover of the imminent attack. Any extended contact with Saranok reveals him to be as devious, power-hungry, and evil as Kcal'den. If the PCs wish to manipulate Saranok into assisting them during the attack, they might be able to, but he is obviously likely to betray them at the first opportunity. On the other hand, Saranok and his men know the locations of the traps in the outer towers, and he might be persuaded to send a guide with the PCs if they give him appropriate collateral. Saranok does not rest until the PCs are either dead or allied with him.

The only other objects of note on the ground are the ladder leading up to the alcove, and the hidden switch that disables the arrow trap (**Encounter 13**), which requires a Search check (DC 20) if the PCs actively search before ascending the ladder.

**Creatures**: Nine Nothrog fighters, 2nd-level fighters; Saranok, a 7th-level fighter.

**Saranok, Male Nothrog Ftr 7**: CR 7; Medium humanoid (Nothrog); HD 7d10+14+3; hp 54; Init +4; Spd 20 ft.; AC 16, touch 10, flat-footed 16; Base Atk +7; Grp +10; Atk +12 melee (1d8+6(19–20/x2), longsword); Full Atk +12 melee (1d8+6(19–20/x2), longsword); SA Favored weapon (longsword, battleaxe), improved damage (longsword); SQ Nothrog traits; AL LE; SV Fort +13, Ref +8, Will +7; Str 18, Dex 16, Con 16 (currently 13), Int 14, Wis 14, Cha 16.

*Skills and Feats*: Climb +3*, Intimidate +5, Sense Motive +5; Improved Initiative, Leadership, Power Attack, Toughness, Weapon Focus (longsword). *includes –7 armor check penalty.

*Favored Weapon (longsword, battleaxe)*: Saranok gains a +1 competence bonus to attack and damage rolls with the longsword and battleaxe.

*Improved Damage (longsword)*: Saranok does an additional +2 (+3 total) damage with the longsword.

*Possessions*: Splint mail, longsword.

**Nothrog Fighters (9)**, Male Nothrog Ftr 2: CR 2; Medium humanoid (Nothrog); HD 2d10+4+3; hp 21; Init +4; Spd 30 ft.; AC 13, touch 10, flat-footed 13; Base Atk +2; Grp +4; Atk +5 melee (1d10+3/x3, halberd) or +2 ranged (1d10(19–20/x2), heavy crossbow); Full Atk +5 melee (1d10+3/x3, halberd) or +2 ranged (1d10(19–20/x2), heavy crossbow); SA Favored weapon (halberd); SQ Nothrog traits; AL NE; SV Fort +5, Ref +0, Will –1; Str 15, Dex 10, Con 14, Int 12, Wis 8, Cha 10.

*Skills and Feats:* Listen +2, Profession (siege engineer) +5, Spot +2; Improved Initiative, Toughness.

*Favored Weapon (halberd)*: A Nothrog fighter gains a +1 competence bonus to attack and damage rolls with the halberd.

*Possessions:* Studded leather armor, halberd.

ENCOUNTER 13: ARROW BARRAGE (EL 10)

About 10 feet up the ladder, one of the rungs contains a pressure switch which causes hidden crossbows to fire from inside the walls of the tower. There are ten crossbows, all aimed at the rung with the switch.

**Bolt Trap:** CR 7; mechanical; proximity trigger; manual reset; hidden switch bypass (Search DC 20); Atk +15 ranged (1d8/x3 each, 10 bolts); Search DC 25; Disable Device DC 25.

ENCOUNTER 14: FLAME JET (EL 8)

Roughly 30 feet up, a magical flame jet is enchanted to burn any non-Nothrog that reaches it. The flame jet comes from just to the left of the ladder, and is aimed to burn the climber, not the ladder.

**Flame Strike Trap:** CR 6; magic device; proximity trigger *(glyph of warding)*; automatic reset; spell effect *(flame strike*, 9th-level cleric, 9d6 fire, DC 17 Reflex save half damage); Search DC 30; Disable Device DC 30.

ENCOUNTER 15: COLLAPSING LADDER (EL 5)

About 40 feet from the ground, a pressure switch in a rung of the ladder causes all of the rungs in the ladder to collapse, sending anybody climbing it on a one-way trip to the ground. Once the trap has been triggered, the only way to fix the ladder is by climbing it again, re-attaching each rung individually on the way up.

**Ladder Trap:** CR 3; mechanical; location trigger; manual reset; DC 25 Reflex save avoids; 40 ft. high (4d6, fall); Search DC 25; Disable Device DC 28.

ENCOUNTER 16: GREATER DISPEL MAGIC

Inscribed on the underside of the landing, nearly 50 feet up, an *alarm* spell is linked to a *greater dispel magic* spell. The *alarm* spell triggers when anybody rises to its height, and is designed to prevent magic-users from flying or levitating up to the landing. The *alarm* spell requires a Search check (DC 20) to find, but disabling it is nearly impossible, because it is over 10 ft. away from the ladder, and it is impossible to reach it magically (for obvious reasons). Should a PC somehow reach it, the Disable Device DC is 25.

**Greater Dispel Magic Trap:** CR 3; magic device; proximity trigger *(alarm)*; automatic reset; spell effect *(greater dispel magic*, Caster level 12th); Search DC 24; Disable Device DC 24.

ENCOUNTER 17: GREEN KEY (EL 10)

**Read aloud:** *After fighting your way up for what seems like ages, you finally reach a landing just below the roof of this tower. Off to the right, you see a small alcove and the glint of metal inside.*

The key rests on top of a pressure plate, which triggers its trap if the key is removed without disarming the trap. The trap releases a prismatic spray at the PCs, as cast by an 18th level wizard.

**Prismatic Spray Trap:** CR 8; magic device; touch trigger *(alarm)*; automatic reset; spell effect *(prismatic spray*, 13th-level wizard, DC 20 Reflex, Fortitude, or Will save, depending on effect); Search DC 32; Disable Device DC 32.

## Location 1.4.1: Roof (EL 7)

The roof has a ballista, a catapult, and the four Nothrog crewmen for the two siege weapons. The ballista and catapult are both mounted on turrets. The PCs might wish to ambush the crewmen and/or sabotage the artillery. Both of these prospects are risky — if the crewmen notice the PCs, or the PCs fail to kill them quickly enough, they might raise the alarm.

**Creatures**: Four crewmen, 3rd-level fighters (see Location 1.2.1 for stats).

**Crewmen (4)**: hp: 25, 32, 37, 30.

## Location 1.5: Guard Tower 4

ENCOUNTER 18: GRAVITY FLUX (EL 7)

**When the PCs enter, read aloud:** *Your first thought upon entering the tower is how bare it is. A single ladder next to the door seems to be the only way up, and indeed seems to be the tower's only feature. There are no landings or stairs to conceal traps, and thankfully, no visible occupants either. Perhaps this tower will not be so bad... Then you realize that despite having had both feet firmly on the floor as you walked in, you are now falling... up! Towards the ceiling, and the razor-sharp barbed spikes protruding from it, which you can now make out clearly as you approach.*

This part of the tower is under a *reverse gravity* spell, propelling characters who enter unprepared up 60 feet into the spikes on the ceiling. Characters who make their Reflex saves grab the ladder in time to catch themselves.

**Reverse Gravity Trap:** CR 10; magic device; proximity trigger (*alarm*, 10-ft. area); automatic reset; spell effect (*reverse gravity*, 13th-level wizard, 6d6 fall [upon hitting the ceiling of the 60-ft.-high room], then ceiling spikes (Atk +10 melee, 1d4 spikes per target for 1d4+5 each), then 6d6 fall [upon falling 60 ft. to the floor when the spell ends], DC 20 Reflex save avoids damage); Search DC 32; Disable Device DC 32.

ENCOUNTER 19: BLACK KEY (EL 10)

**Read aloud:** *Once you reach the ladder and haul yourselves to the landing at the top of the tower, gravity has returned to normal. In an alcove across the room from you, you can see a black key, waiting to be taken.*

This key has no lethal traps attached to it, no fireballs or lightning bolts. What it does have is a *teleportation circle* linked to it. When the key is removed from its alcove in the wall, the *teleportation circle* activates, sending anybody within 10 feet to the dungeon in the lower level of the inner keep (Location 3.3.3).

**Teleportation Circle Trap:** CR 9; magic device; touch trigger; automatic reset; spell effect (*teleportation circle*, 17th-level wizard, teleport to lower level of inner keep); Search DC 34; Disable Device DC 34.

## Location 1.5.1: Roof (EL 7)

The roof has a ballista, a catapult, and the four Nothrog crewmen for the two siege weapons. The ballista and catapult are both mounted on turrets. The PCs might wish to ambush the crewmen and/or sabotage the artillery. Both of these prospects are risky — if the crewmen notice the PCs, or the PCs fail to kill them quickly enough, they might raise the alarm.

**Creatures:** Four crewmen, 3rd-level fighters (see Location 1.2.1 for stats).

**Crewmen (4)**: hp: 25, 32, 37, 30.

## Location 1.6: Guard Tower 5

ENCOUNTER 20: BLADESTORM TRAP (EL 15)

**Read aloud:** *As you enter this room, you see a large wooden pillar stretching from the ground all the way up to the distant roof above you. Across the room, a set of spiral stairs winds its way up to a narrow walkway wrapping around the inside of the tower. You can see from here that the walkway leads to more stairs, forming a winding route up the inside of this tower.*

The pillar contains a complex, well-hidden trap. However, because the trigger for the trap is not in the pillar, there is no reason to think it is anything out of the ordinary. A Search check (DC 25) reveals a small switch in the pillar, along with several long slits in it, but nothing more. The switch is the disarming device for the trap (*see Encounter 20*).

**When the trigger for this trap is activated** (*see Encounter 20*), **read aloud:** *Suddenly, you hear a sharp slicing sound, as that of a sword being drawn. To your horror, a series of curved blades begin to extend from the central pillar, cleverly arranged so as not to intersect the landings or stairs. Once the blades are fully extended, almost to the walls of the tower, the pillar begins spinning.*

The Bladestorm trap cannot be deactivated once triggered (the disarming switch is useless once the blades have been extended). Each round, every character in the room is subject to attack from the trap. All movement speeds are halved while characters try to negotiate the blades. The trap functions for 20 rounds and then stops, its gigantic spring having finally wound down.

**Bladestorm Trap**: CR 4; mechanical; touch trigger; manual reset; hidden switch bypass (Search DC 25); Atk +12 melee (3d6/19–20, blades); multiple targets (one target in each 5-ft. square); Search DC 25; Disable Device DC 30.

ENCOUNTER 20: BLADESTORM TRIGGER

Just at the top of the first set of stairs, on the walkway, a pressure switch is hidden in the wooden floor. Unless the switch on the pillar has been thrown, any weight on the pressure plate causes the trap to trigger, extending the blades and shredding every character in the room.

ENCOUNTER 21: ADHESIVE FLOOR

The floor along this area of the walkway is sticky with a special alchemical adhesive, designed to hold trespassers in place for the Bladestorm to fillet them.

Anybody who touches this floor must make a Reflex save (DC 20) or be stuck to the walkway for 2d4 rounds.

ENCOUNTER 22: BROWN KEY (EL 10)

**Read aloud:** *On the alcove in front of you sits a key. Out of the corner of your eye you could swear you saw it move...*

The key is itself a trap with two components. Anybody who touches it causes everybody in the room to make a Reflex save (DC 25) or be magically shrunk to Fine size (roughly 1/8 their normal size), inside the alcove. The key itself then animates, becoming effectively Colossal relative to the shrunken characters. Only upon being "killed" does the key revert to inanimate status, and the spell of shrinking reverses. While the key is animated, the alcove magically seals itself with a *wall of force*, to prevent anybody who might have stayed normal-size from interfering.

**Animated Key (1)**: CR 10; Colossal construct; HD 32d10; hp 165; Init –3; Spd. 10 ft.; AC 11, touch 11, flat-footed 14; Base Atk +16; Grp +39; Atk +25 melee (4d6+13/x2, slam); Full Atk +25 melee (4d6+13/x2, slam); Space/Reach 30 ft./20 ft.; SA Trample; SQ Hardness 10; AL N; SV Fort +10, Ref +7, Will +5; Str 28, Dex 4, Con —, Int —, Wis 1, Cha 1.

*Trample (Ex)*: As a standard action, the animated key may trample a smaller standing opponent dealing 4d8+13 bludgeoning damage. The victim is allowed an attack of opportunity, suffering a –4 circumstance penalty. Alternately, he is allowed a DC 35 Reflex save to halve the damage. The save DC is Strength-based.

*Hardness 10 (Ex)*: Whenever the animated key takes damage, subtract 10 from the damage. Only damage in excess of its hardness is deducted from the animated key's hit points.

## Location 1.6.1: Roof (EL 7)

The roof has a ballista, a catapult, and the four Nothrog crewmen for the two siege weapons. The ballista and catapult are both mounted on turrets. The PCs might wish to ambush the crewmen and/or sabotage the artillery. Both of these prospects are risky — if the crewmen notice the PCs, or the PCs fail to kill them quickly enough, they might raise the alarm.

**Creatures**: Four crewmen, 3rd-level fighters (see Location 1.2.1 for stats).

**Crewmen (4)**: hp: 25, 32, 37, 30.

## Location 1.7: Guard Tower 6

ENCOUNTER 23: ENTRANCE (EL 4)

**Read aloud:** *As you walk into this tower, the first thing you notice is the floor, which is covered in short, barbed iron spikes, each roughly 2 feet long. A spiral staircase wraps around the inside of the wall of the tower, winding up into the heights and presumably, your goal.*

A Spot check (DC 15) indicates a PC notices the presence of bat guano on the spikes, in copious amounts. Many of the traps on the stairs in this tower are designed to push characters off of the steps, on to the spikes.

**Spike Trap**: CR 2; mechanical; various triggers (see Encounter 24 and Encounter 25 descriptions); 20 ft. deep (2d6, fall) or 30 ft. deep (3d6 fall); spikes (Atk +10 melee, 1d4 barbed spikes per target for 2d6+1/every 10 ft. fallen up to a maximum of +5 each, 1d4 points additional damage extricating from barbs).

ENCOUNTER 24: PRESSURE BLOCK (EL 3)

A pressure switch on this step, roughly 10 feet from the ground, triggers one of the blocks in the tower to be pushed outwards from the wall, bludgeoning the character and pushing them off the stairs.

**Pressure Block Trap:** CR 5; mechanical; location trigger; automatic reset; Atk +10 melee (3d6 bludgeoning damage, DC 20 Reflex save avoids fall to spikes below); Search DC 25; Disable Device DC 25.

ENCOUNTER 25: WIND FROM THE WALL (EL 3)

There is a *glyph of warding* tied into a *forceful hand* spell on the wall here. Anybody who passes by the *glyph* triggers the spell, causing a great force to try to push them off the stairs, falling 30 feet onto the spikes below.

**Forceful Hand Trap:** CR 3; magic device; proximity trigger (*alarm*); automatic reset; spell effect (*gust of wind*, 3rd-level wizard, DC 13 Fortitude save negates); Search DC 27;v Disable Device DC 27.

ENCOUNTER 26: BATS IN THE BELFRY (EL 9)

**When the PCs reach this point, read aloud:** *Above you, you hear a chittering, such as a rodent might make. However, there are few rodents whose chittering can shake the tower. Suddenly, several figures swoop out of the darkness at you.*

**Development:** These are dire bats, used to protect this tower. The soldiers traditionally force the lowest-ranked person in the fortress to retrieve or replace this key, and it is considered to be an initiation. Usually, the Nothrog who has to perform this duty uses meat or some other form of bait to distract the bats while he fetches the key, but more than one unfortunate soldier has had his life cut short trying to perform this task.

**Creatures:** Twelve dire bats.

**Dire Bats (12):** CR 2; Large animal; HD 4d8+12; hp 30; Init +6; Spd 20 ft., fly 40 ft. (good); AC 20, touch 15, flat-footed 14; Base Atk +3, Grp +10; Atk +5 melee (1d8+4/x2, bite); Full Atk +5 melee (1d8+4/x2, bite); Space/Reach 10 ft./5 ft.; SA —; SQ Blindsense 40 ft.; AL N; SV Fort +7, Ref +10, Will +6; Str 17, Dex 22, Con 17, Int 2, Wis 14, Cha 6.

*Skills and Feats:* Hide +4, Listen +12*, Move Silently +11, Spot +8*; Alertness, Stealthy. * Dire bats have a +4 racial bonus on Spot and Listen checks. These bonuses are lost if its blindsense is negated.

*Blindsense (Ex):* A dire bat uses echolocation to locate creatures within 40 feet. Opponents still have 100% concealment against a creature with blindsense.

ENCOUNTER 27:BLUE KEY (EL 12)

**Read aloud:** *After dealing with the bats, you can see across the tower, an alcove holding your prize: a blue-painted key.*

This key is trapped by possibly the most devious device in the guard towers. Unless the proper command word is spoken when the key is picked up, a delayed-blast fireball, centered on the key, is armed. The fireball detonates one minute (10 rounds) after the key is taken. The key is magically immune to the effects of the fireball, but odds are good its holder is not so lucky.

**Delayed Blast Fireball Trap:** CR 10; magic device; touch trigger (*alarm*); automatic reset; command-word bypass; spell effect (*delayed blast fireball*, 13th-level wizard, 13d6 fire after 10 rounds, DC 20 Reflex save half damage); Search DC 28; Disable Device DC 28.

## Location 1.7.1: Roof (EL 7)

The roof has a ballista, a catapult, and the four Nothrog crewmen for the two siege weapons. The ballista and catapult are both mounted on turrets. The PCs might wish to ambush the crewmen and/or sabotage the artillery. Both of these prospects are risky — if the crewmen notice the PCs, or the PCs fail to kill them quickly enough, they might raise the alarm.

**Creatures**: Four crewmen, 3rd-level fighters *(see Location 1.2.1 for stats)*.

**Crewmen (4)**: hp: 25, 32, 37, 30.

## Location 2: Gate Towers

The two gate towers that control the portcullis are laid out in the same way, and thus the same map is used for both. For the lock mechanisms, the white, green, and brown keys (from guard towers 1, 3, and 5, respectively) are used in the east tower, while the red, black, and blue keys (from guard towers 2, 4, and 6) go

in the west tower's mechanism. The only way to find this out, however, is to inspect the mechanisms themselves, which are color-coded to the keys.

ENCOUNTER 28: GUARDS (EL 10)

**When the PCs approach the gate tower, read aloud:** *In front of this wide but squat tower stand six Nothrog, apparently sentries, as their only movement is breathing. However, unlike most sentries, these seem eminently awake and aware of their surroundings, and sneaking past them could be difficult.*

Because the gate towers contain the only feasible way to open the great portcullis, Siegemaster Kcal'den makes sure the sentries guarding it are elite, alert, and competent. They are armed with halberds, and raise the alarm in the entire fortress if they notice intruders.

**Creatures**: Six Nothrog guards, 5th-level fighters.

**Nothrog Guards (6), Male Nothrog Ftr 5:** CR 5; Medium humanoid (Nothrog); HD 5d10+10+3; hp 48; Init +4; Spd 20 ft.; AC 16, touch 10, flat-footed 16; Base Atk +5; Grp +8; Atk +10 melee (1d10+6/x3, halberd) or +6 ranged (1d10+1(19–20/x2), heavy crossbow); Full Atk +10 melee (1d10+6/x3, halberd) or +6 ranged (1d10+1(19–20/x2), heavy crossbow); SA Favored weapon (halberd, heavy crossbow), improved damage (halberd); SQ Nothrog traits; AL LE; SV Fort +6, Ref +1, Will +0; Str 16, Dex 10, Con 14, Int 12, Wis 8, Cha 10.

*Skills and Feats*: Climb +1*, Listen +4, Spot +4; Improved Initiative, Toughness, Weapon Focus (halberd). *includes –7 armor check penalty

*Favored Weapon (halberd, heavy crossbow)*: A guard gains a +1 competence bonus to attack and damage rolls with the halberd and heavy crossbow.

*Improved Damage (halberd)*: A guard does an additional +2 (+3 total) damage with the halberd.

*Possessions*: Splint mail, halberd.

## Location 2.1: Common Room and Armory

**Read aloud:** *This large room contains many tables, chairs, and racked weapons. Luckily, the room appears to be empty at the moment. In the center of the room, a spiral staircase beckons.*

This room is one of the few in the fortress that is exactly what it seems — a common room for briefings and socializing, along with an armory for storing weapons in case of a siege. Any melee martial weapons the PCs want can be found here, all nonmagical.

## Location 2.2: Staircase

This spiral staircase leads up to the second floor, where the locking device for the portcullis is kept. A small tripwire on this staircase sets off an alarm bell to alert the crewmen on the roof, along with the guards of both towers. It also signals the general alarm inside the keep, waking up nearly 200 Nothrog.

**Tripwire**: Search (DC 25); Disable Device (DC 20).

## Location 2.3: Gate Lock (EL 12)

There are always at least 6 elite guardsmen guarding the locking mechanism at any time. Unless they have reason to believe the PCs are supposed to be there (difficult, since it is likely nighttime, they are expecting a siege, the PCs are probably not all Nothrog, and they are unfamiliar to the guards), they do not bother with threats or warnings but simply attack, first with missile weapons, then closing to melee.

**Creatures**: Six Nothrog guards, 5th-level fighters *(see Encounter 28 for stats)*.

**Nothrog guards (6)**: hp 48, 46, 49, 40, 45, 47.

**Development:** The locking mechanisms are straightforward, consisting of a large, sealed steel box with three keyholes (each labeled with a color corresponding to the appropriate key), and a lever. The lever has two positions, labeled clearly in Nothrog "Open" and "Closed." It is in the closed position.

If any of the PCs are foolish enough to try picking the most critical locks in Kcal'den Fortress, the Open Lock DC is 40. If the check fails by more than 5, or the wrong keys are placed in the lock, the trap triggers, sending a *chain lightning* spell through the lock into the character attempting to open it (likely fusing the lockpicks inside the lock, causing a mess ugly enough to be best left to the GM's discretion).

Once both locks are opened, the portcullis does not rise until the chain on the east side of the gate is hauled up.

**Lock Trap:** CR 10; 10d6 Damage; Ref save (DC 20) for half; Search (DC 30); Disable Device (DC 25). *Note: Finding and/or disabling the trap does not in any way weaken or open the lock, it merely negates the consequences of trying to pick it.

## Location 2.4: Roof (EL 8)

On the roofs of each Gate Tower are two ballistae and two catapults, along with the eight Nothrog who man them. If the PCs want to try to signal [Warlord], one of these roofs is probably the best place from which to do so. Unfortunately, any signal [Warlord] and [Warlord's] forces can see is also visible to the entire fortress.

**Creatures**: Eight crewmen, 3rd-level fighters (see Location 1.2.1 for stats).

**Crewmen (8)**: hp: 25, 32, 37, 30, 35, 28, 30, 32.

ENCOUNTER 29: HOLDING THE GATE

**Development:** Once the portcullis is unlocked, all that must be done to open it is to pull on the chain at the base of the eastern gate tower. The chain uses a complex winch and pulley system so that despite the weight of the massive portcullis, it takes only a Strength check (DC 5) to open it. Nevertheless, the time involved is considerable, taking a full 6 rounds to open the gate completely. If the PCs have somehow managed to acquire all six keys and open both locks while remaining undetected (unlikely, but possible), opening the gate alerts the fortress to their presence.

[Warlord] has the army ready to invade the moment the PCs signals them. It takes only 15 rounds for the first of his forces to reach the gate. Unfortunately for the PCs, the fortress needs only 10 rounds to mobilize. The PCs must hold the chain against the combined might of Kcal'den Fortress, unassisted, for 5 rounds.

The defenders attack in force, with 6 soldiers arriving to attack the PCs at first, followed by 1d6 each additional round. Furthermore, any soldiers on rooftops that remain active can begin firing missile weapons at them as soon as the PCs reveal their presence.

**Creatures**: (6+1d6/round for 5 rounds) Nothrog fighters, 2nd-level fighters (see **Location 1.2.1** for stats).

**Nothrog fighters (6+1d6/round for 5 rounds):** hp as rolled.

**Development**: Once the Warlord's forces arrive, they first engage the Nothrog attacking the PCs, but the PCs must still hold the gate, or somehow secure it, so the whole army can get through. Ten percent of the army can pass through each round, so it takes 10 rounds for the entire army to pass through the portcullis. During this time the PCs are engaged in the heaviest area of the fighting. Each turn they remain in the thick of battle, each PC takes 1d6 melee attacks at a +4 attack bonus, receiving 1d6 damage on each successful hit. The Warlord likely remains with a command group, a safe distance away from the battlefield.

**Shortly after the battle begins, read aloud:** *Around you, the battle rages on, [Warlord's] forces overwhelming the Nothrog defenders through sheer numbers. However, as you watch, you see a second army approach the attackers from behind — more of Kcal'dens troops, hidden somewhere in the rocky terrain outside the fortress. With many of [Warlord's] troops already in the fortress, the second army cuts off any possible escape. You must stop Kcal'den now, or all is lost.*

Kcal'den has returned to deep within the heart of the keep if he had been outside with the second, hidden army, surrounded by the strongest and most lethal defenses he is capable of summoning. Fortunately for the PCs, his army is occupied, so it is a relatively simple matter to disengage from the battle and move around the other side of the keep to the doors.

### The Assault on Kcal'den Fortress

Because the battle for the fortress is only tangential to the PCs' task, and they are not in command of any units, it is suggested that the battle be a backdrop to the PCs' attack on the keep. Furthermore, the complexity of the keep makes for difficulty in placing models and keeping track of them. How to best use the battle as a backdrop is left to the GM's discretion.

## Location 3: The Inner Keep

The PCs might wish to enter the inner keep before the battle begins. This is an unhealthy idea for several reasons. The first is that the only way in, the massive double doors on the north side, is guarded by four Nothrog guards, who are in the single best position to sound an alarm in the entire fortress (being within earshot of the entire sleeping army). The second is that the doors are barred from the inside. The third, and most compelling reason, is that roughly 150 well-trained and heavily-armed soldiers are asleep in the barracks inside the keep. These reasons should be sufficient to dissuade the PCs from entering without a suitable distraction (such as a massive battle at the front gates of the fortress...). If they insist on trying to get in, feel free to throw the entirety of Kcal'den's army at them, alongside the considerable innate defenses of the keep.

However, during the battle at the front gates, it is much easier to get into the keep. Because the soldiers expect to be able to fall back to it, the doors are wide open and unguarded. The army is already out in force, leaving only Kcal'den and the keep's defenses to deal with.

The keep's chief defense is the permanent *guards and wards* spell. While the spell is normally deactivated, Kcal'den raised it for the attack. Every door in the keep is *arcane locked*, raising the DC to break the doors from a 13 to a 23; *confusion* spells affect each corridor; and *webs* fill each stairway. While none of these obstacles threatens the PCs, they do slow them down.

The keep contains a minimum of built-in defenses, except for Kcal'den's personal chambers. This is so the soldiers may relax in their own barracks.

## Location 3.1: The Inner Keep — First Floor

This floor is one of the two floors of barracks, with twelve rooms (**Location 3.1.2**), each housing eight soldiers. The central room is a common room, used for taking meals by the soldiers who live on this floor. Like the other floors, stairwells are in each of the four towers in the corners. Because so little light gets in, torches light the floor, even during the day. While some soldiers complain the barracks have no windows, most prefer there be two walls and a corridor between their sleeping rooms and any attacking siege engines.

### Location 3.1.1: Common Room

There are many tables and chairs in this room, along with a small kitchen in the southeast corner. During the battle, this room is empty; otherwise, twelve soldiers are here.

**Creatures:** Twelve Nothrog fighters, 2nd-level fighters *(see Location 1.2.1 for stats)*.

**Nothrog fighters (12):** hp 48, 46, 49, 40, 45, 47, 40, 45, 47, 48, 46, 49.

### Location 3.1.2: Barracks Room

These rooms house eight soldiers apiece, each with a bed and footlocker. The footlockers contain 3d6 gp each, and assorted personal items. During the battle, these rooms are empty; otherwise, six soldiers are here.

**Creatures**: Six Nothrog fighters, 2nd-level fighters *(see Location 1.2.1 for stats)*.

**Nothrog fighters (6):** hp 40, 44, 40, 45, 47, 48.

## Location 3.2: The Inner Keep — Second Floor

This floor is identical to the first floor, housing an equal number of soldiers in the same layout. Use the **Location 3.1** descriptions and statistics.

## Location 3.3: The Inner Keep - Basement

This floor contains the storerooms and dungeons. Unless the PCs have given them some reason to come here, there are no soldiers on this floor.

## Location 3.3.1: Storeroom

These rooms enough foodstuffs — dried meat, grains, and other long-lasting supplies — to feed the garrison for several weeks. Most of these supplies were raided from villages in Deverenia that are suffering from the loss.

## Location 3.3.2: Cells

These are typical prison cells, used for keeping prisoners. They are all empty, because Kcal'den has had no reason to take prisoners lately. The cells consist of metal bars in the front, and stone walls separating them from the adjoining cells.

## Location 3.3.3: Teleportation Destination

This is the cell into which PCs caught by the trap on the Black Key (*see Encounter 18*) are transported. The bars require a Strength check (DC 24) to bend, and the DC to open the lock is 25.

## Location 3.4: The Inner Keep — Kcal'den's Quarters (Third Floor)

This floor is reserved for the Siegemaster, and the only areas into which he allows others are his study and war room. The ritual chamber, likely the PCs' destination, is in the back.

## Location 3.4.1: Kcal'den's Study

**When the PCs enter, read aloud:** *This is a sparsely furnished by functional study. A large desk dominates the room, upon which are stacks of papers. Two doors, one on the east side of the room, and the other on the south side, appear to be the only other exits.*

**Development**: Among the stacks of papers on the desk are several messages between Kcal'den and Nassiral Hate, discussing progress in Hate's campaign and Kcal'den's renovations of the fortress, but the most recent such letter dates from several months ago. Other, more recent letters are also there: etchings and magical duplicates of other messages, from Nassiral Hate to persons listed under obvious pseudoynms. Kcal'den has written several words in the margins of these letters: Adinerach, Malrog, Moonseed, Blackthorn, and K'Hallaek.

If this adventure takes place before the *Lord of Baraxton* adventure, these notes should help convince the PCs that they should follow Nassiral Hate's allies. Either way, the PCs should be intrigued that Kcal'den has apparently been following the same foes that they have.

The east door (leading to the war room) is unlocked (save for the *arcane lock* on all the doors in the fortress), but the south door is locked, and the physical lock must be dealt with (Open Locks, DC 20) in addition to the *arcane lock*.

## Location 3.4.2: Kcal'den's War Room

**Read aloud:** *This room contains a large wooden table, with several large maps spread upon it, and shelves containing many more.*

Other than the maps, there is little of importance in this room. The map collection is incredibly diverse, and there are detailed maps of nearly every settlement in the Accordlands.

## Location 3.4.3: Kcal'den's Living Quarters

This room contains a bed, closet, dressing table, and little else. After his time in the Shattered Lands, the Siegemaster has little need for luxuries.

There are two doors in this room, excluding the north door from which the PCs entered. Both are locked (in addition to the *arcane lock*), requiring Open Locks checks (DC 20 for the west door, 25 for the south) to open.

## Location 3.4.4: Treasure Room (EL 13)

**Read aloud:** *As you enter this room, you see myriad treasures nearly arranged on shelves, and your breath catches as you calculate the power and value of the items kept here. However, your breath catches even harder when the gigantic iron statue in front of you begins to move, the floor trembling with every step it takes, directly towards you, its sword beginning to swing.*

Kcal'den's most prized possession, his iron golem, is protecting his treasure room. It is instructed to attack any living creature entering the room, except him; however, it is also instructed to pursue them out of the room if need be to prevent them from entering his sanctum (Location 3.5).

**Creature**: One iron golem.

**Iron Golem (1):** CR 13; Large construct; HD 18d10+30; hp 129; Init –1; Spd 20 ft.; AC 30, touch 8, flat-footed 30; Base Atk +12, Grp +28; Atk +23 melee (2d10+11/x2, slam); Full Atk +23 melee (2d10+11/x2, 2 slams); Space/Reach 10ft./10ft.; SA Breath weapon; SQ Construct traits, damage reduction 15/adamantine, darkvision 60 ft., immunity to magic, low-light vision; AL N; SV Fort +6, Ref +5, Will +6; Str 33, Dex 9, Con —, Int —, Wis 11, Cha 1.

*Skills and Feats*: None; none.

*Breath Weapon*: 10-foot cube, cloud of poisonous gas lasting 1 round, free action once every 1d4+1 rounds; initial damage 1d4 Con, secondary damage 3d4 Con, Fortitude DC 19 negates. The save DC is Constitution-based.

*Construct traits:* A construct has the following traits:

- No Constitution score.
- Low-light vision.
- Darkvision out to 60 feet.
- Immunity to all mind-affecting effects (charms, compulsions, phantasms, patterns, and morale effects).
- Immunity to poison, sleep effects, paralysis, stunning, disease, death effects, and necromancy effects.
- Cannot heal damage on its own, but often can be repaired by exposing it to a certain kind of effect or through the use of the Craft Construct feat. A construct with the fast healing special quality still benefits from that quality.
- Not subject to critical hits, non-lethal damage, ability damage, ability drain, fatigue, exhaustion, or energy drain.
- Immunity to any effect that requires a Fortitude save (unless the effect also works on objects, or is harmless).
- Not at risk of death from massive damage. Immediately destroyed when reduced to 0 hit points or less.
- Since it was never alive, a construct cannot be raised or resurrected.
- Because its body is a mass of unliving matter, a construct is hard to destroy. It gains bonus hit points based on size, as shown in the Table on page 307 of the *Monster Manual*.
- Proficient with its natural weapons only, unless generally humanoid in form, in which case proficient with any weapon mentioned in its entry.
- Proficient with no armor.
- Constructs do not eat, sleep, or breathe.

*Darkvision, 60 ft. (Ex):* An iron golem can see in the dark with no light source at all, out to a range of 60 feet. Darkvision is black and white only (colors cannot be discerned). It does not allow the iron golem to see anything that it could not see otherwise—invisible objects are still invisible, and illusions are still visible as what they seem to be. Likewise, darkvision subjects the iron golem to gaze attacks normally. The presence of light does not spoil darkvision.

*Immunity to Magic (Ex):* An iron golem is immune to any spell or spell-like ability that allows spell resistance. In addition, certain spells and effects function differently against the creature, as noted below.

A magical attack that deals electricity damage slows an iron golem (as the *slow* spell) for 3 rounds, with no saving throw.

A magical attack that deals fire damage breaks any *slow* effect on the golem and heals 1 point of damage for each 3 points of damage the attack would otherwise deal. If the amount of healing would cause the golem to exceed its full normal hit points, it gains any excess as temporary hit points. For example, an iron golem hit by a *fireball* gains back 6 hit points if the damage total is 18 points. An iron golem gets no saving throw against fire effects.

An iron golem is affected normally by rust attacks, such as that of a rust monster or a *rusting grasp* spell.

*Low-Light Vision:* An iron golem can see twice as far as a Human in starlight, moonlight, torchlight, and similar conditions of shadowy illumination. It retains the ability to distinguish color and detail under these conditions.

*Treasure:* Kcal'den's treasure includes: 4 chests of 5,000 gp each, 1 chest of jewelry containing the following stones: 2 moss agates (6, 12 gp), 1 azurite (10 gp), 1 rhodocrosite (15 gp), 1 tiger eye turquoise (5 gp), 2 lapis lazuli (8 gp), 1 hematite (16 gp), 1 blue quartz (9 gp), 1 bloodstone (20 gp), 2 moonstones (40, 60 gp), 1 sardonyx (50 gp), 1 rose quartz (30 gp), 1 peridot (80 gp), 2 carnelians (30, 70 gp), 1 smoky quartz (40 gp), 1 iolite (20 gp), 1 tourmaline (90 gp), 1 red garnet (60 gp), 1 pink pearl (100 gp), 1 red spinel (120 gp), 1 jet (150 gp), 1 black pearl (300 gp), 1 alexandrite (500 gp), 1 black star sapphire (600 gp), 1 blue sapphire (1,200 gp), and 1 blue diamond the size of a woman's fist (7,000 gp), and the following items on shelves: a staff of healing (45 charges remaining), a longsword +3, and an instant fortress (which the Siegemaster uses as a mobile headquarters during campaigns).

## Location 3.5: The Inner Keep — The Inner Sanctum (EL 19)

**Read aloud:** *This sizeable room is lit only by candlelight, but even in the dim light, you can see enough to shock you. Sitting in the middle of an arcane diagram, light pulsing through its lines, is a creature that once, perhaps, might have been humanoid. Gaunt and pale, the being you can only assume is the Siegemaster looks up as you enter, his single eye pulsing red. In a low, watery voice he speaks clearly. "You are too late. Already, my forces have outmaneuvered your own. I have won."*

**If thev PCs have not completed the Lord of Baraxton adventure already, read aloud:** *"Well done, my friends. Few would have gotten anywhere near this far, but you have exceeded my expectations. I shall not repeat the mistake."*

**If they have completed the Lord of Baraxton adventure, and Nassiral Hate is already dead, read aloud:** *"Ah, life never ceases to outmaneuver even me. I pretended to be a traitor to prove that none could stand against Hate, and by that pretense, Hate fell and all know my treasons. So be it. I have faced the Shattered Lands and won, and conquered great cities with ease. You shall present little difficulty."*

**Development:** Siegemaster Kcal'den attackes the PCs using his massive spell arsenal first and, if necessary, physically attacks any PC who gets within his reach with his tentacles. If reduced to 52 or fewer hit points, Kcal'den *teleports* away. He did not become as powerful as he is by putting himself in unnecessary danger.

**Creature:** Siegemaster Kcal'den.

**Siegemaster Kcal'den:** CR 19; Medium monstrous humanoid; HD 16d8+32; hp 104; Init +6; Spd 30 ft.; AC 24, touch 16, flat-footed 16; Base Atk +16, Grp +20; Atk +17 melee (1d8+4/x2, tentacle); Full Atk +17 melee (1d8+4/x2, 4 tentacles); Space/Reach 5 ft./5 ft.; SA Spells; SQ Darkvision 60 ft., spell resistance 20, energy drain, resistance to cold, fire, and electricity 10, damage reduction 15/magic; AL LE; SV Fort +7, Ref +12, Will +14; Str 18, Dex 15, Con 14, Int 22, Wis 18, Cha 12.

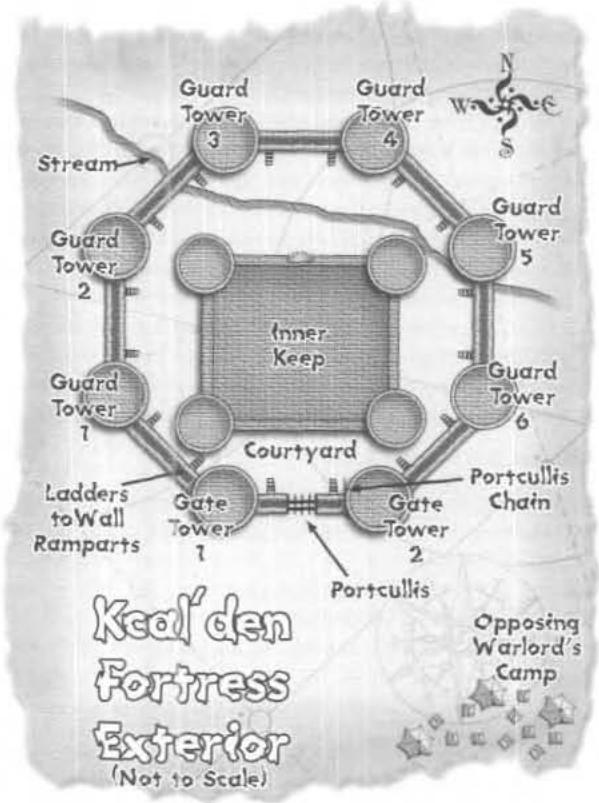
*Skills and Feats*: Alchemy +23, Bluff +12, Concentration +21, Knowledge (arcana) +23, Profession (strategist) +23, Search +14, Spellcraft +23, Spot +14; Combat Casting, Improved Initiative, Multiattack, Scribe Scroll, Spell Focus (Evocation), Spell Penetration (Evocation), Weapon Focus (Tentacle).

*Wizard Spells Prepared* (4/5/5/5/5/4/4/3/3/2): 0 — *detect magic, read magic, daze, ray of frost;* 1st — *shield, magic missile, cause fear, burning hands, mage armor;* 2nd — *acid arrow, see invisibility, ghoul touch, web, blur;* 3rd — *lightning bolt, vampiric touch, flame arrow, slow, fireball;* 4th — *fire shield, fear, enervation, lesser globe of invulnerability, crushing despair;* 5th — *cloudkill, feeblemind, wall of force, dominate person;* 6th — *chain lightning (x2), repulsion, true seeing;* 7th — *power word stun, spell turning, teleport without error;* 8th — *prismatic wall, protection from spells, iron body;* 9th — *time stop, meteor swarm.*

*Darkvision, 60 ft. (Ex)*: Siegemaster Kcal'den can see in the dark with no light source at all, out to a range of 60 feet. Darkvision is black and white only (colors cannot be discerned). It does not allow Siegemaster Kcal'den to see anything that it could not see otherwise—invisible objects are still invisible, and illusions are still visible as what they seem to be. Likewise, darkvision subjects Siegemaster Kcal'den to gaze attacks normally. The presence of light does not spoil darkvision.

*Energy Drain (Su)*: Living creatures hit by Siegemaster Kcal'den's tentacles gain one negative level. For each negative level bestowed, Siegemaster Kcal'den gains 5 temporary hit points. Siegemaster Kcal'den can use his energy drain ability once per round.

*Resistances (Ex)*: Siegemaster Kcal'den has resistance to cold 10, fire 10 and electricity 10.




# Part 2: Concluding the Adventure

It is possible but unlikely that the PCs will be able to kill Kcal'den outright.

- The attacking Warlord may accept the Nothrog surrender once Kcal'den is dead, depending on the Warlord's motives and alignment. The surviving defenders straggle back to Nothrog lands, rejoining whichever legions they originally came from. The victorious Warlord earns a great deal of prestige from his nation and respect from his enemies for taking Kcal'den Fortress.
- The victorious Warlord likely bestows great favor on the PCs for their aid, regardless of previous encounters.
- If the *Lord of Baraxton* adventure is as yet uncompleted, the PCs should realize (if they do not know already) Nassiral Hate is somehow involved with the Medusan Lords.

# Part 3: Stone of Fortune:

**If the party has completed Lord of Baraxton, read aloud:** *Almost of its own volition, the Stone of Fortune lets loose a series of whirling lights, finally coalescing as a foursome of figures: a demure woman, a hideously scarred Nothrog, a Deverenian knight, and the dark-skinned elf assassin you met so long ago. Each one turns away from the others, returning to shadows.*

**If the party has not completed Lord of Baraxton, read aloud:** *Suddenly, the Stone of Fortune lurches in your hands. You see an albino Nothrog on a throne, flanked by two canine creatures with a striking resemblance to the Nothrog. As he grips the armrests of his throne in mute fury, a long, white braid falls forward from his head. There can be no doubt that you have angered the most infamous Nothrog in the Accordlands, Nassiral Hate, the Lord of Baraxton.*



# Believers

## Introduction

In *Believers*, the PCs are approached by Modred of Carcius in an effort to convert them to the Church of the Storm, and "no, thank you" is not an acceptable response.

This is one of five adventures in Tier 6. It is meant for characters of levels 11–13.

## Adventure Background

*Believers* can take place after any Tier 6 adventure, or any Tier 5 adventure except *Abyssal Attack*. The opening scene occurs within the borders of Deverenia. Ideally it should follow an adventure in which the PCs have made a name for themselves, or their legend has grown in some way. This attracts the attention of Modred of Carcius, Hierophant of the Church of the Storm, who decides it is much better to have the PCs with him than against him.

To that end, he leads an expedition to locate the heroes and convert them to the Church of the Storm. It never crosses Modred's mind that the PCs may not be inclined to accept. He approaches them with an offer to host a feast in their honor. The PCs do not discover until later that the feast is to commemorate their conversion.

Modred plans to surround the conversion with great pomp, and he has already made his intentions known to some powerful Deverenians. Few are pleased with the PCs' conversion — voluntary or otherwise — and some are planning to sabotage Modred's plot. All will attend the feast, and all will make their opinions known through veiled threats and implication. Modred's ceremony may be ruined at the cost of the PCs' lives.

Their most formidable foe is Lord Morival du Ralick. The aged du Ralick was once a powerful general who commanded legions of Deverenian knights. After a crippling injury at the Battle of Peregrine Pass, he retired from military service and devoted his energies to advancing the fortunes of his family — until he was murdered six months ago. Now an assassin named Jurrani Baramos wears his identity. Baramos, who has maintained an impenetrable disguise for months, hails from the far southern nation of Isadran. For years he has sought the long-silent god of the Isadran people, Teufeltiger, and he believes he has finally found an answer. His years of traveling and research have revealed that Teufeltiger walks the earth, and divinations imply that he lurks somewhere near (or within) Luthlarius. After hearing of Modred's plans for the PCs, Baramos devised a scheme of his own: replace one of the PCs in the Trial of the Storm. The zealous Baramos will gladly sacrifice himself to the Storm, hoping to remake himself into a worthy vessel through which Teufeltiger can once more achieve apotheosis.

Teufeltiger actually *is* close at hand, disguised as the prominent Deverenian illusionist and knight, Lord Kestrel du Myerdeth, and has been keeping tabs on Baramos. He is quite aware of his precarious position, and worries that Baramos's plot will reveal him or his network. Through magic and spies, he knows what Baramos is up to. He also knows that Baramos is likely to botch the ritual, leaving Teufeltiger stranded in the Accordlands and blowing his cover as Kestrel in the process. Therefore, Teufeltiger has made arrangements to attend the festivities and foil Baramos's plot. Rather than risk revealing himself, he works through agents — some willing, some unwitting — including the PCs.

Further, some faithful envy the honor to be bestowed on the PCs, who are not only to be converted to the faith, but elevated as heroes. Many feel that this honor would be more appropriately bestowed upon those who have served Deverenia and the Church faithfully, a history the PCs cannot truly claim (despite possible earlier brushes with the Church; see below). Sir Rhawn d'Ilchant leads this faction. The Knights of the Black Sun have long been the Church's strong right arm, and he will not allow the PCs to be exalted over his own brotherhood. Similarly, the Sorceress Ygraine, a field commander of the Deverenian legions, is loath to see foreigners honored this way.

The PCs are not without allies. If they successfully rescued Cardinal Ulloft during *The Temple of the Storm* adventure, he may be an ally. Though not selfless, he does honor his debts; if he owes the PCs his life, he takes advantage of this opportunity to settle the debt. He is also all too aware of the consequences should Modred's heroes not convert to the Church, whether through their own deaths or simple refusal to cooperate. The Cathedral of the Storm is *not* the ideal place for one of Modred's furors, and Ulloft does everything in his power to aid the PCs and avert such an outcome.

Modred himself is quite solicitous of the PCs' needs and concerns throughout *Believers*, save for two problems. First, he simply cannot accept that the PCs do not desire the conversion. He brushes off refusals as false modesty and insists that they go through with the ritual. If the PCs disappear or are killed before the conversion, Modred takes it as a personal affront, and will stop at nothing to either avenge the PCs in the latter case, or revenge himself upon them in the former.

## Adventure Synopsis

*Believers* opens either in Deverenia proper or near its borders, as the PCs are on the road. They are immediately pitched into battle with a seemingly overwhelming force of fringe Nothrog barbarians that has been raiding local travelers. The PCs are simply the next victims. Whether the PCs attempt to fight or acquiesce to capture, the encounter ends when Modred appears at the head of a force of Deverenians, the Storm itself at his back. The Nothrog flee, leaving the PCs to confront Modred.

Modred greets the PCs warmly and declares that even now, such heroes as the PCs keep the borders of Deverenia secure against bandit incursion. He invites the PCs to a feast in their honor, and it is quite clear that they would be unwise to turn down the invitation.

He and his entourage escort the PCs back to the Grand Cathedral of the Storm in Aquileia, where they are offered the Cathedral's best guest quarters before the festivities begin, a few hours hence. Modred insists they surrender their weapons and equipment to be cleaned, polished, and otherwise made presentable for the event, which is a formal affair.

The feast is punctuated by a series of toasts and declarations of the PCs' valor while Modred formally recognizes their deeds. He also has a surprise announcement: the PCs' conversion to the Church of the Storm. Unfortunately, he did not bother to consult the heroes on the matter.

Though Modred's announcement takes some — the PCs included — off guard, many of the attendees are familiar with Modred's behavior, and either knew in advance or take the development in stride. Sorceress Ygraine and Lord Kestrel du Myerdeth both congratulate the PCs through gritted teeth and veiled threats, while Sir Rhawn d'Ilchant makes his excuses and stalks from the feast hall. Lord Morival du Ralick watches quietly, seeming to take the development in stride. Meanwhile, Modred gazes beatifically at his newly declared converts.

Canny PCs notice the subdued furor with which the announcement is greeted. Plots are already afoot, though their shape is unclear. The feast continues with speeches and insincere congratulations, until Modred toasts the heroes' health and newfound faith. Alas, the PCs' cups are laced with poison, and one or more succumb to its effects, prompting Modred to order all in attendance detained while the traitor is sought.

The heroes themselves are locked in their chambers, ostensibly for their protection, particularly considering they are still unarmed. While the PCs are imprisoned, they are visited by their old friend Cardinal Ulloft (or, if they have not completed *The Temple of the Storm*, Cardinal Kolus, a clergyman of some power and dubious reputation), who requests the PCs' forbearance in the matter of conversion: refusing Modred is good for no one, least of all the PCs. The Cardinal asks the heroes to find a solution other than simple escape.

Even when the heroes are allowed the run of the Cathedral, however, they — along with everyone else present for the feast — are required to stay on Cathedral grounds. Modred refuses to allow anyone to leave until the assassins are ferreted out and the conversion ceremony is complete. As the PCs snoop about the cathedral, they are set upon by all manner of problems: ambushes, overzealous attendants, and so forth.

The assassin, a lowly scullery maid, is apprehended, but her patron remains unknown, for she has been magically silenced. The PCs must contend with several direct assassination attempts as Baramos's minions attempt to strike them down. Though these attempts fail, Teufeltiger takes advantage of the confusion to aid the PCs indirectly.

Finally, with his minions spent and time growing short, Baramos confronts the PCs on the roof of the Cathedral. He reveals Modred's plan to subject the PCs to the Trial of the Storm, a ceremony that would inevitably ends in death or eternal life as a Stormwraith. Baramos intends to sacrifice one of the PCs during the ritual, and in so doing create a vessel through which Teufeltiger may ascend once more to his rightful place in the heavens.

Once the dust settles, the PCs must convince Modred to withdraw his offer of conversion without offending him. They may take any number of approaches to this task, but it is not going to be easy. He has publicly announced their conversion, so any deviance from his plan is likely to be perceived as weakness, something Modred cannot countenance.

# Character Hooks

*Believers* easily incorporates almost any character, as the opening encounter simply requires that the PCs be in or near Deverenia. It is helpful if they participated in *The Church of the Storm* adventure, as this gives Modred a specific instance of the PCs aiding the Church, but he is satisfied with more general feats of heroism, of which the PCs have accomplished plenty. Certain characters may have loyalties or obligations that make conversion awkward; others may consider it an honor truly earned!

- Deverenian PCs, particularly those loyal to the Church, the Empire, or both, likely consider Modred's offer a great honor. Most such heroes are already among the faithful. Modred insists that in the interest of solidarity, these characters accompany their companions in the ceremony. He reminds them that they will be declared heroes of the Church, and granted absolution for any sins committed during their adventures. Given the labyrinthine nature of Deverenian theological law, this should be sufficient inducement.
- For characters faithful to other religions, the conversion is problematic. Paladins and clerics of other faiths are aware that formal conversion to the Church of the Storm betrays their own beliefs. At the same time, once the announcement is made they are not in a position to refuse.
- Characters who are ideologically opposed to the Church of the Storm are caught in the same position.

## Location 1: The Cathedral of the Storm (*map page 502*)

The Grand Cathedral of the Storm is an imposing structure in the heart of Aquileia, the religious center of the Church of the Storm. The PCs will become intimately familiar with its grounds, as most of the encounters take place within its walls. Therefore, this adventure does not detail the surrounding city, as its events take place either outside the city or on the grounds of the Cathedral.

### Location 1.1: The Foyer

This is the only entrance to the Cathedral of the Storm. A series of seven immense, oaken double doors open directly into a sparsely furnished room that is blanketed in a rich, deep red carpet. When mass assembles, these doors are thrown open, and worshipers file into the foyer, where they are funneled into the single pair of double doors that leads into the chapel itself. Two additional doors at the east and west of this chamber open onto small rooms adjacent to the steeple stairwells; the small chamber to the west has a second exit other than the staircase door, leading into **Location 1.7**.

### Location 1.2: The Chapel

The chapel proper is richly furnished with rosewood pews, lush carpeting, and many ornate devices of worship. No natural light is allowed into the chapel. Instead, it is kept lit at all times by countless candelabras that stand at the ends of each pew, in the corners, near the altar, and at each exit. As a result, the air is warm and heavy with the smell of candles.

### Location 1.3: Preparation Room

This is a general preparation room used solely by clergy. It contains all sorts of small items that they carry into services.

### Location 1.4: Acolyte Cells

These tiny apartments are included for the use of young clergymen just beginning to walk the path of Signon and his faithful. The individual cells are nearly bare, as acolytes are permitted little in the way of material possessions. Each contains a cot, a small wardrobe, and a basin with a mirror.

### Location 1.5: Modred's Quarters/ Office

Though large, Modred's quarters are practically bare. The Hierophant, after all, has little need for the distractions of mortal life. Most of his effects, which are almost exclusively religious in nature, he leaves in **Location 1.3** while he is at the Cathedral.

### Location 1.6: Pantry

Though not often used, the Cathedral's pantry is amply stocked.

### Location 1.7: Hall

Unlike the second-story hall, this passage is unremarkable. Paintings on the wall depict famous scenes from the history of Deverenian faith, including Signon's ride into the Storm and his subsequent emergence, but little else adorns this hall.

### Location 1.8: Barracks

The Cathedral's guard contingent lives here, and a small section is set aside to double as the barracks' armories. Everything the guard needs, barring provisions, can be found herein.

## Location 1.9: Servant Quarters

The rooms are the servants' living quarters. Kitchen, custodial, and other staff all make their cramped homes here.

## Location 1.10: Cardinal's Office

Though once a storage room intended for general use, this room was converted to the cardinal's office when the Hierophant ousted him from **Location 1.5** and claimed it for his own. That was 300 years ago. The current cardinal bears Modred no ill will for imposing on him these depressing and shoddy quarters, since only Modred remembers that **Location 1.5** was once the cardinal's office.

## Location 1.11: Kitchen

This immense kitchen could prepare meals for a small army — or the large feast hall. A small storage area to the south allows the culinary staff to stash food that will be used in the upcoming meal, rather than being forced to trek across the feast hall to the storage area for each ingredient.

## Location 1.12: Feast Hall

This tremendous hall is designed to awe guests with the splendor of the Cathedral of the Storm. The north wall features immense stained glass windows of the saints, while the ceiling is painted to resemble the swirling, lightning-torn maelstrom of the Storm itself. When natural light fails, ornate wrought-iron candelabras loom overhead with hundreds of candles. Three immense fireplaces in the north wall provide warmth during the cold Deverenian winters. Against the south wall, a dais elevates the table of honor by several feet.

## Location 1.13: Halls of History

These halls, like the feast hall below, are intended to strike visitors dumb with wonder at the Church of the Storm's long and storied history. The great hall that circles the exterior of the cathedral features over two dozen stained glass murals, each depicting a different scene from the history of the Church. Notably, many of the windows on the west wall feature Modred's image, as well as those of other noteworthy stormwraiths, such as Master Caudecus and Ghed Mnettaor.

Each interior hallway that leads to the guest quarters is dedicated to a different period of the Church's existence: past, present, and future. The northernmost hall features busts of notable historical figures, suits of armor worn by the Church's greatest heroes, and the like. The middle hall features paintings and sculptures depicting current events in the Accordlands, and the church's part therein. Those who do not follow the Church of the Storm notice the exaggerated part played by the Church in each scene. The southernmost hall is dedicated to the future. It depicts scenes that have not yet occurred: the subjugation and enslavement of the Nothrog, the final fall of the Aroch Paladins, and similar events.

## Location 1.14: Guest Rooms

These rooms are reserved for the Church's most honored guests, including Sir Rhawn, Ygraine, Lord Kestrel/Teufeltiger, and Lord Ralick/Baramos. Each is lavishly furnished according to the guest's specifications. Servants and commoners are expected to find lodging outside the Cathedral proper, in Aquileia.

## Location 1.15: PC Rooms

These quarters are reserved for the PCs, though there was insufficient time to customize their furnishings properly. Instead, these rooms are decorated in the latest Deverenian style. There are six rooms set aside for the PCs on the map; increase or decrease this number according to the size of the party.

## Location 1.16: Roof

This is the location of the PCs' showdown in the final encounter of the adventure. It is featureless, though it is surrounded on all sides by a 4-foot stone rampart. The southwestern and southeastern corners are bound in by the Cathedral's steeples, and a door from each of the stairways therein provides access to the roof. The north wall stretches higher, 20 feet above the roof, and is peaked by the chimneys for the fireplaces in **Location 1.12.**

## Location 1.17: Basement Hallway

This dim hall stretches from the base of one steeple staircase to the other. At its center, a pair of double doors, blackened with dry rot and age, lead into the dungeon beneath the cathedral.

## Location 1.18: Dungeon Hall

This small hall is cheerless and devoid of decoration. Double doors at the north and south lead to the cell block and the basement hall.

## Location 1.19: Dungeon Storage

To the west of the dungeon hall lies the dungeon storage area. A large supply of hard tack, salt pork, and barrels of water are stored here, along with the miscellany of a dungeon, including manacles, chains, and other such items.

## Location 1.20: Warden's Office

The warden's office seems out of place in the dungeon of the cathedral. It is well lit, warm and comfortable. The portly warden spends most of his time seated behind the desk.

## Location 1.21: Cells

Twenty cells beneath the Cathedral of the Storm await heretics, penitents, and similar lost souls. Each features only a cot and a single dry basin. The rear wall of each cell holds two iron rings to chain unruly prisoners.

## Location 1.22: Interrogation Room

This torture chamber appears to be lifted straight out of a nightmare — or possibly Modred's own religious vision. It contains a staggering array of torture devices. Depending on when the PCs visit, some of these may show signs of recent use, or the warden may be whistling a cheerful tune while scrubbing away bits of gore.

# Part 7

ENCOUNTER 1: THE FRYING PAN (EL 15)

**Read aloud:** *The Nothrog archers rise up out of the brush at the roadside, while opposite them, their mounted compatriots bear down upon you. Dozens of them surround you. At the last moment, the thundering of hooves subsides, and the Nothrog cavalry surround you. Their apparent leader, a thickly scarred and muscled Nothrog mounted atop a midnight black dire wolf, breaks through the line and regards you with a flinty gaze.*

*"You have a choice," he declares curtly. "Fight and die, or surrender and live."*

Likely as not, the heroes choose the former. However, if battle is joined, it will become clear they are outmatched. There are 20 Nothrog fighters.

*Creatures:* Twenty Nothrog fighters, 8th-level fighters.

**Nothrog Raiding Party (20), Male Nothrog Ftr 8:** CR 8; Medium humanoid (Nothrog); HD 8d10+16; hp 67; Init +0; Spd 20 ft.; AC 22, touch 10, flat-footed 22; Base Atk +8; Grp +12; Atk +15 melee (1d10+8(19–20/x2), *+1 bastard sword*) or +10 ranged (1d8+5(19–20/x2), mighty (Str 16) masterwork composite longbow); Full Atk +15/+10 melee (1d10+8(19–20/x2), *+1 bastard sword*) or +10/+6 ranged (1d8+5(19–20/x2), might (Str 16) masterwork composite longbow); SA Favored weapon (bastard sword, longbow), improved damage (bastard sword); SQ Nothrog traits, race/class abilities; AL LE; SV Fort +9*, Ref +3*, Will +4*; Str 19, Dex 11, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 18. *includes *cloak of resistance +1*.

*Skills and Feats:* Climb +7*, Jump +7*, Swim +2*; Cleave, Exotic Weapon Proficiency (bastard sword), Improved Bull Rush, Power Attack, Toughness, Weapon Focus (bastard sword). *includes –6 armor check penalty

*Race/Class Abilities: Fighter.* Aptitude.

*Favored Weapon (bastard sword, longbow):* A Nothrog raider gains a +1 competence bonus to attack and damage rolls with the bastard sword and longbow.

*Improved Damage (bastard sword):* A Nothrog raider does an additional +2 (+3 total) damage with the bastard sword.

*Possessions: +1 full plate, +1 heavy steel shield, +1 bastard sword,* mighty (Str 16) masterwork composite long bow, 25 *+1 arrows, potion of cure moderate wounds, potion of endurance, cloak of resistance +1.*

**Development:** Just as the battle begins, Modred and the Storm enter the picture. At first, it appears as just a thunderhead on the horizon (Spot or Survival check, DC 25 to notice). As the battle wears on and the PCs weaken (or surrender), a chain of lightning rips across the sky, leaping from cloud to cloud and bursting from the thunderhead, which has resolved itself into a swirling dervish of storm, electricity playing across its breadth. This happens at the end of the round in which any PC is reduced to half his starting hp, and is noticed by all combatants. It hardly gives the Nothrog pause — that is, not until it begins to bear down upon them. In the following and each subsequent round, 25% of the surviving Nothrog break and flee from the onrushing Storm. A Spot check (DC 20) reveals that a cadre of riders gallops at the Storm's fore in the sky. After 4 rounds, the remaining Nothrog flee for the hills, just a few moments before the riders approach.

### Surrender is not an option...

**The Nothrog still flee before the Storm, leaving their new captives to fend for themselves. The desire for self-preservation convinces the Nothrog these prisoners are not worth facing down the onrushing Storm. They flee into the hills, leaving the PCs on the road to meet Modred. Unless Modred is convinced that the Nothrog were either honorable foes, or else that the party surrendered so as to live on for a greater end (Modred automatically assumes either of these if the party has done the Church a favor before, such as in *Church of the Storm*), Modred may simply abandon the party at this point in disgust, ending the adventure prematurely and possibly taking any Deverenians in the party with him to the Grand Cathedral to prove their courage by becoming a stormwraith. In such circumstances, the party instead must infiltrate the Cathedral to free and rescue their brethren, during a Deverenian holiday celebration. While the details of the adventure change quite severely in such a case, many of the encounters and events are still the same, skipping ahead to Part 2 of *Believers*. At this point, the party's bravery likely convinces Modred of their worth, and while he still views the non-Deverenians of the party as heretics, he rewards their honorable devotion to their friends by allowing them to leave without consequence.**

ENCOUNTER 2: THE FIRE

**Read aloud:** *The fury of thunder and rain subsides, and its scream subsides to a low wail. As the riders draw near, the Storm remains distant, riding through the sky on fiery verdatha dragonsteeds. The riders seem as unconcerned with the inclement weather as if it were a summer shower. Some riders are clearly men, but others are shimmering, as though their very essence is a question of faith. Their black steeds canter to a halt roughly 20 feet away and above you, and the lead rider raises an armored gauntlet in salute.*

*"Hail, heroes!" he calls, his hollow voice reverberating through his closed helm. "I am Modred of Carcius, and I would do you honor this day!"*

If the PCs bolt as Modred and his riders approach, he calls to them by name, and begs their forbearance, insisting that he means no harm. If the PCs ask, he waves off his entourage and approaches alone (though they are quick to ride to his assistance if the PCs prove hostile). Once they are willing to listen to what he has to say, he continues.

**Read aloud:** *"E'en now, you valiantly defend Deverenian borders against barbarian incursion, asking naught in return. Some would say you defend only yourselves, but your past deeds put the lie to that slur upon your honor! For months, you have struggled against the darkness in these lands, yet none do you the honor you deserve. That endeth now.*

*"I would have you as my guests, for a feast honoring your many accomplishments."*

**Development:** Modred has not even considered the possibility that the PCs might turn him down, and they would do well to accept his offer. In fact, upon making his pronouncement, Modred turns and rides back toward his escort. If the PCs are not mounted, several stormwraiths offer their verdatha for the journey. The stormwraiths skirt the edge of the Storm on the journey, so as not to prematurely expose the party to it.

**If they do not (or they make their refusal explicitly clear), read aloud:** *Modred's steel-shod hand throws back his face plate, revealing his skeletal features. His fiery eyes flash. "You would do well to consider the gesture in the spirit it is offered, lest you be accused of banditry and heresy." With that, he turns a meaningful gaze upon the unit of cavalry that accompanies him.*

*He lightens his tone as best he is able, as he turns back to you and continues, "Come, friends, this is a joyous occasion! Songs shall be sung of your deeds, and you shall be honored beyond measure. The Church of the Storm is a terrible foe—" he pauses for emphasis. "—but a steadfast ally."*

**Development:** A Sense Motive check (DC 15) reveals the threat implicit in Modred's words, and further informs the PC that he is willing to throw all of his resources into avenging the slight if the PCs were to refuse his offer. They would do well to accept.

Modred's statistics are provided at the end of this adventure.

### Persuasion

**Many PCs would be happy to attend a feast in their names, though some parties will not easily acquiesce to Modred's wishes. Should the party resist, Modred orders his company to subdue them.**

**He orders the heroes captured, not killed. They are not bound, but simply carried on the steeds as they fly. PCs who must be subdued in this fashion are stripped of weaponry while they are incapacitated. Modred apologizes profusely for the disrespectful treatment, but insists that the PCs will see their error in judgment soon enough.**

**Black Sun Paladins, Male Deverenian Pal 10:** CR 10; Medium humanoid (Deverenian); HD 10d8+10; hp 58; Init –1; Spd 20 ft.; AC 24, touch 10, flat-footed 24; Base Atk +10; Grp +12; Atk +16 melee (1d8+5 plus 1d6 vs. good(19–20/x2), *+3 consecrated (unholy) blessed longsword*) or +10 ranged (1d8+3(19–20/x2), *+1 mighty* (Str 14) *composite longbow*); Full Atk +16/+11 melee (1d8+5 plus 1d6 vs. good(19–20/x2) *+3 consecrated (unholy) blessed longsword*) or +10/+5 ranged (1d8+3(19–20/x2), *+1 mighty* (Str 14) *composite longbow*); SA Blessed armament (+3) (longsword), rebuke undead 11/day, spells; SQ Aura of courage, detect alignment, Deverenian traits, divine health, lay on hands, zeal, race/class abilities; AL LE; SV Fort +8, Ref +2, Will +5; Str 14, Dex 8, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 14, Cha 19.

*Skills and Feats*: Heal +11, Ride +7, Concentration +11; Extra Turning, Membership (Knights of the Black Sun), Mounted Combat, Weapon Focus (longsword), Mounted Archery.

*Race/Class Abilities: Paladin:* Mounted Combat Specialist

*Aura of Courage:* A paladin is immune to fear (magical or otherwise). Allies within 10 feet of the paladin gain a +4 morale bonus on saving throws against fear effects.

*Blessed Armament (longsword)*: A paladin's longsword is invested with the might of his deity and functions as a *+3 blessed* magic weapon that deals +1d6 points of damage against creatures opposite the paladin's alignment (*unholy*). In addition, the paladin may cast *dispel magic* once per day at a caster level equal to his paladin level.

*Detect Alignment:* At will, a paladin can detect the presence of the opposite alignment as a spell-like ability (detect good).

*Divine Health:* A paladin is immune to all diseases including magical ones.

*Lay On Hands:* A paladin may cure up to 40 hit points of damage per day.

*Rebuke Undead:* A paladin may rebuke undead 11 times per day as a cleric two levels lower than his paladin level.

*Zeal:* When a paladin is reduced to 0 or fewer hit points he may make a Fortitude save (DC 10 + the number of hit points below 0) to continue fighting as if he were at one hit point. Each time the paladin suffers additional damage, he must continue to make a Fortitude save to keep fighting. When the paladin is reduced to –10 hit points, he dies as normal.

*Paladin Spells Prepared* (0/2/2; save DC 12 + spell level): 1st — clarion call, detect undead; 2nd — battle cry, shield other.

*Possessions: +2 full plate, +2 large metal shield, +3 consecrated (unholy) blessed longsword, +1 mighty [Str 14] masterwork composite longbow,* 5 *+1 arrows, javelin of lightning* (2), 20 normal arrows, *potion of cure light wounds* (2), *potion of cure serious wounds* (2), *potion of flying, potion of tongues, potion of wisdom, scroll of magic weapon* (2), *scroll of protection from good* (2), *ring of protection +1.*

## Encounter 3: Heroes' Welcome

**Read aloud:** *You are greeted at the gates of Aquileia with great pomp. A brigade of trumpeters flanks the road leading to the Grand Cathedral of the Storm, and a rousing march accompanies the clop of hooves across stone. Soon the Grand Cathedral of the Storm, a majestic structure of stone and stained glass, towers before you.*

*Modred sighs, a wispy verbalization of emotion that seems foreign to such a creature. "Home again," he whispers, and then turns to you. "It is a thing of beauty, is it not?"*

If the PCs agree with Modred (nodding assent is enough), he is satisfied. Otherwise, he expounds on the power and glory of Deverenia and the Church of the Storm at some length, and reminds the heroes of the honor he is bestowing upon them.

**Read aloud:** *As you pass the massive gates into the Cathedral's courtyard, the doors swing closed behind you with a resounding boom. The stone path is flanked by well-tended gardens, and leads to the doors of the cathedral proper. As you enter, Modred holds up a hand to halt the procession.*

*"The feast is at sundown, my friends," he intones. "If you will turn your arms over to the Captain..." Several servants, led by a fully armed and ceremonially garbed paladin of the Black Sun, scurry to your side, arms outstretched and awaiting your equipment. "...they shall be cleaned and polished for the ceremony."*

**Development:** The PCs may be loath to surrender their equipment, but they clearly have little choice but to cooperate. The valets scurry off with the PCs' equipment, including weapons, armor, and any items, magical or otherwise, that require repair or polish.

The PCs should be left with little of their inventory. Their traveling gear is claimed by the servants, as are any weapons. The valets carry a change of clothes for each PC, so their traveling garb can be washed and mended, and armor polished to a high sheen. Even magic items are claimed for a spit and polish, unless the heroes take pains to conceal such items (this requires a Sleight of Hand check opposed by each respective valet's Spot skill, which has a +11 skill modifier; apply appropriate modifiers for the size of each item the PC attempts to hide on his person).

The heroes are led to a bath within the Cathedral (separated by gender, but otherwise public), where, once the heroes are bathing, their armor and clothing is whisked away for a cleaning, and replaced with garb selected by Modred for the occasion. These new clothes are the height of Deverenian fashion, and dominated by dark colors.

**Read aloud:** *Now that you are freshly bathed and garbed in Deverenian finery, the valet leads you through the corridors of the Cathedral to your quarters, and throws the doors wide. The lush apartments are richly furnished, and should prove more than comfortable for your short stay. Each room contains a thickly cushioned bed, an ornate writing desk with quill and ink, a wardrobe, nightstand, and a thick carpet laid across the cold stone. Sunlight filters in through a stained glass window, and a chandelier adorned with softly glowing candles hangs overhead.*

*"It is requested that you remain in your quarters until the feast," declares the valet. "The halls of the Cathedral will be busy with preparations. Should you require anything at all, I will be happy to provide it for you."*

The valet is true to his word, within reasonable limits. The heroes are free to congregate in one room if they wish, though the valet insists they do not roam beyond this corridor. Should they insist (or barge past the valet), he summons armed and armored guards to detain them, "for your own convenience."

### Encounter 4: An Old Friend

**Development:** If the PCs saved Cardinal Ulloft in *The Church of the Storm*, he pays them a visit now. Otherwise, the Cardinal in question is Kolus, who lives at the Cathedral. In the latter case, the following should be modified to account for Kolus's lack of personal familiarity with the heroes.

In either event, after the heroes arrive in their rooms, the Cardinal comes knocking on a door. If more than one PC is in any given room at the time, he visits the room with more of the PCs. Otherwise, he chooses a room at random.

**Read aloud:** *When you open the door, the Cardinal pushes you aside and hustles past. He stalks across the rich carpet for a few seconds, and each time you open your mouth to ask why he is here, he raises a hand to hush you. "Have you any idea how dangerous this place is for you right now?"*

Presumably, the PCs are somewhat confused by his pronouncement. They are, after all, the heroes of the hour, about to be honored by the Church of the Storm. When they protest, or question, the Cardinal silences them again, and goes on.

**Read aloud:** *"Yes, the Hierophant shall exalt you as heroes of the Church and the Empire. The Hierophant, however, is not the one with whom you need to be concerned... yet." He stops pacing, and regards you squarely. "You have few friends in this city at this moment, save myself and Modred. And with a friend like Modred, you have no need of enemies." He pauses. "I shall come to that soon enough.*

*"You are to be the guests of honor at the feast tonight, but you are not the only guests. Modred hath invited many that would rather see you dead than lionized. I cannot say whom for certain; not yet. Suffice to say that it would be best if you did not turn your backs on any this night.*

*"Worse, perhaps, is Modred. For now he is your staunchest ally, and he is a powerful ally, have no doubt. But he is fickle. Be he displeased or disappointed, your lives are forfeit. I know not why he hath brought you here, but I promise that it is not solely out of respect for your deeds. He hath an agenda, and if you thwart him, his fury will be terrifying. No shelter in the Accordlands can protect you from his hatred, nor the fury of the Storm.*

*"I tell you this now because I would not have you blinded by Modred's acclaim, and I would not have this city destroyed by his rage. Make no mistake, Modred is powerful, and if any can call the Storm, 'tis he. Should this be his chosen battleground, all of Aquileia shall pay for your folly. Do not let that happen.*

*"Now, I must go. I, too, have preparations to make for this evening."*

Any questions the PCs may have for the cardinal go unanswered. He has told them what he can. The PCs have been made aware of their precarious position, and that is all he can do for them.

### Encounter 5: Heroes' Feast

**Read aloud:** *The great feast hall of the Church is festooned with decorations of rich reds and deepest blacks, and the heady smell of Deverenian delicacies wafts into the hall. You have places of honor at Modred's left and right hands. Over the course of an hour, the guests are announced as they enter the hall, and they proceed to their seats.*

*Of the luminaries present, you recognize Sir Rhawn d'Ilchant, Knight of the Black Sun and leader of that brotherhood; the Sorceress Ygraine, a mighty wizard and general; Lord Kestrel du Myerdeth, head of Knightly Order Myerdeth; and Lord Morival du Ralick, a retired knight and wealthly patron. August company indeed.*

**Development:** Have each of the PCs make a Sense Motive check (DC 25). Success permits them to read each of the guests as they arrive, and they may not like what they see: Ygraine, Kestrel, and their respective entourages look on them with disdain and hate. D'Ilchant and du Ralick seem indifferent; the latter simply raises his glass in a silent salute to the PCs, while the former takes his place among his knights after giving them a cursory glance. The PCs' actions in previous adventures, like *The Terror of Condor*

*Pass* and *Siege of Kcal'den Fortress*, may affect how Sorceress Ygraine views the PCs.

Sir Rhawn's and Lord Morival's statistics are included below. See *The Terror of Condor Pass* and *Castle Blackthorn* for more information on these characters. For Teufeltiger/Kestrel's statistics, see the new monster entry at the end of the adventure.

**Creatures:** Lord Morival du Ralick, an 8th-level assassin/9th-level wizard; Sir Rhawn d'Ilchant, a 11th-level Paladin/5th-level Champion of the Storm; Sorceress Ygraine, a 7th-level fighter/7th-level wizard (see the adventure *Terror of Condor Pass* for her stats).

**Lord Morival du Ralick (Jurrani Baramos), Male Human Asn 8/Wiz 9:** CR 17; Medium humanoid (human); HD 8d6 plus 9d4; hp 53; Spd 30 ft.; Init +8; AC 22, touch 18, flat-footed 18; Base Atk +10; Grp +11; Atk +17 melee (1d6+3 plus 1 Con(18–20/x2), *+2 wounding rapier*); Full Atk +17/+12 melee (1d6+3 plus 1 Con(18–20/x2), *+2 wounding rapier*); SA Crippling strike (+1d2), sneak attack +5d6, spells; SQ Eidetic memory (*color spray, daze, light, sleep*), poison immunity and resistance +2, poison use, ruthless (attack action), skilled brewer, Human traits, race/class abilities; AL NE; SV Fort +5, Ref +13, Will +9; Str 12, Dex 18, Con 11, Int 18, Wis 13, Cha 16.

*Skills and Feats:* Bluff +18, Concentration +13, Disguise +18, Hide +16, Knowledge (arcana) +13, Listen +11, Move Silently +16, Pick Pocket +16, Poison +18, Scry +10, Sense Motive +9, Spellcraft +13, Spot +11; Combat Casting, Dodge, Improved Critical (Rapier), Quicken Spell, Scribe Scroll, Silent Spell, Spell Mastery (*magic missile, shadow bolts, ice bolt*), Weapon Finesse (Rapier), Weapon Focus (Rapier).

*Race/Class Abilities: Assassin*: Disguise Expert, Hide in Plain Sight (8); *Wizard*: Spell Mastery, Spontaneous Casting (Evocation).

*Crippling Strike*: When Lord Morival scores a critical hit in melee combat, rather than inflicting damage he may inflict normal damage (the hit point damage is not doubled as usual for a critical hit) plus 1d2 + his Intelligence modifier (+4) in temporary damage to the victim's Strength, Dexterity, or Constitution.

*Eidetic Memory*: Lord Morival may spontaneously cast *color spray, daze, light,* and *sleep* in place of a prepared spell of equal or higher level. This loses the prepared spell to fuel the memorized spell.

*Poison Immunity and Resistance*: Lord Morival has a +2 save bonus against all poisons and is immune to black lotus extract and deathblade poisons.

*Poison Use:* Lord Morival is trained in the use of poison and never risks accidentally poisoning himself when applying poison to a blade.

*Ruthless*: Lord Morival may make a coup de grace attack as a normal action (requiring only one of his melee strikes) per round.

*Skilled Brewer*: Lord Morival is trained to brew poison and always has a +2 competence bonus to Poison skill checks.

*Sneak Attack*: Anytime Lord Morival's target is denied a Dexterity bonus to AC, or when he flanks a target, Lord Morival deals an additional 5d6 points of damage on a successful melee attack.

*Assassin Spells Prepared* (0/2/1; save DC 14 + spell level): 1st — *disguise self, spider climb*; 2nd — *darkness*.

*Wizard Spells Prepared* (4/5/5/4/3/1; save DC 14 + spell level): 0 — *light, mage hand* x2, *ray of frost*; 1st — *charm person, heightened senses, magic missile x2, unnerve*; 2nd — *hideous laughter, quick and deadly, sharpen, to the ground, water weird*; 3rd — *premonition, shadow bolts (x2), vertigo*; 4th — *ice bolt* x2, *tidal blast*; 5th — *wave of pain*.

*Possessions: +2 wounding rapier, +4 ring of protection, +4 amulet of natural armor, +4 gloves of Dexterity, hat of disguise.*

**Sir Rhawn d'Ilchant, Paladin of the Black Sun, Male Deverenian Pal 11/Champion of the Storm 5:** CR 16; Medium humanoid (Deverenian); HD 11d8+33 plus 5d10+15; hp 128; Init +4; Spd 20 ft.; AC 23, touch 10, flat-footed 23; Base Atk +16; Grp +19; Atk +25 melee (1d8+7 plus life stealing plus 1d8 sonic plus 2d6 vs. good plus 3d6 vs. chaotic(17–20/x2), *Stormbrand*); Full Atk +25/+20/+15/+10 melee (1d8+7 plus life stealing plus 1d8 sonic plus 2d6 vs. good plus 3d6 vs. chaotic (17–20/x2), *Stormbrand*); SA Blessed armament (+5) (longsword), spells, rebuke undead 7/day (as a 14th-level cleric); SQ Aura of courage, detect alignment, Deverenian traits, divine health, fantastic mount, fearsome aura, first among equals, lay on hands, shadow of lies, zeal, race/class abilities; AL LE; SV Fort +19, Ref +9, Will +13; Str 16, Dex 11, Con 16, Int 16, Wis 18, Cha 18.

*Skills and Feats:* Concentration +27, Diplomacy +27, Handle Animal +28, Intimidate +14, Knowledge (religion) +27, Ride +24, Sense Motive +14; Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Leadership (leadership score: 26 (+2 great renown, +1 fairness and generosity, +1 special power, +2 stronghold), Lieutenant (Knights of the Black Sun), Membership (Knights of the Black Sun), Weapon Focus (longsword), Mounted Combat.

*Race/Class Abilities: Paladin*: Mounted-Combat Specialist, Special Mount (Nokhtkruger), Rebuke the Storm (Abyssals, storm creatures).

*Aura of Courage:* Sir Rhawn is immune to fear (magical or otherwise). Allies within 10 feet of Sir Rhawn gain a +4 morale bonus on saving throws against fear effects.

*Blessed Armament (longsword)*: Sir Rhawn's longsword is invested with the might of his deity and functions as a *+4 blessed* magic weapon that deals +1d6 points of damage against creatures opposite Sir Rhawn's alignment (*unholy*). In addition, Sir Rhawn may cast *dispel magic* once per day at a caster level equal to his combined paladin/champion levels (16).

*Detect Alignment:* At will, Sir Rhawn can detect the presence of the opposite alignment as a spell-like ability (*detect good*).

*Divine Health:* Sir Rhawn is immune to all diseases including magical ones.

*Fearsome Aura*: When drawing his favored weapon Sir Rhawn evokes *fear* in his foes (as per the spell) as if cast by a 5th level cleric. The effect lasts until the spell expires or Sir Rhawn sheathes his weapon, flees, or falls in combat. This ability may only be used once per encounter and not more than 5 times per day.

*First Among Equals*: Sir Rhawn may give a +1 morale bonus to one of his companions in his line of sight which the companion may then use for his next attack, saving throw, or skill check (Sir Rhawn's choice). This is a free action, but Sir Rhawn may only give this bonus up to 5 different companions and must perform this action in the first round of combat. Sir Rhawn may not give this bonus to the same person more than once per day and the bonus must be used within 4 rounds.

Sir Rhawn also receives a +5 bonus to his Leadership score.

*Lay On Hands*: Sir Rhawn may cure up to 36 hit points of damage per day.

*Rebuke Undead*: Sir Rhawn may rebuke undead 7 times per day as a 14th-level cleric.

*Shadow Of Lies*: Sir Rhawn can lose one of his prepared spells to attempt to force a good-aligned opponent to retreat from the champion's threatened area. The opponent must succeed at a Will save (DC 10 + lost spell's level) or move at his full movement rate directly away from Sir Rhawn on his next turn. Using this ability is a standard action that does not provoke an attack of opportunity.

*Summon Weapon*: Sir Rhawn can summon his favored weapon to his hand. If he can see his weapon, this is a partial move action. If he cannot see his weapon, he can summon it as a full round action that provokes attacks of opportunity. This ability fails if the weapon is on another plane or locking wards or spells prevent the weapon from arriving.

*Zeal*: When Sir Rhawn is reduced to 0 or fewer hit points he may make a Fortitude save (DC 10 + the number of hit points below 0) to continue fighting as if he were at 1 hit point. Each time Sir Rhawn suffers additional damage, he must continue to make a Fortitude save to keep fighting. When Sir Rhawn is reduced to –10 hit points, he dies as normal.

*Paladin Spells Prepared* (0/2/2/1; save DC 14 + spell level): 1st — *cure light wounds, divine favor; 2nd — concentrate, resist energy; 3rd — holy energy.*

*Possessions: Scales of the Storm, Black Sun Shield, Stormbrand*

**Fantastic Mount:** (Nokhtkruger)

**Nokhtkruger:** CR 3; Large Verdatha; HD 4d12+12 (36hp); Init +5; Spd 50 ft., fly 80 ft. (good); AC 19, touch 10, flat-footed 18; Base Atk +4; Grp +12; ATK +7 melee (1d6+4, hoof); Full Atk +7 melee (1d6+4, hoof); Space/Reach 10 ft./5 ft.; SA Breath weapon, spell-like abilities; SQ Immunities, Mount; AL LE; SV Fort +7, Ref +5, Will +6; Str 19, Dex 13, Con 17, Int 6, Wis 14, Cha 12.

*Skills and Feats*: Intimidate +8, Listen +11*, Spot +11*, Surivival +9, Alertness, Improved Inititative. *Verdatha receive a +4 bonus to Listen and Spot checks.

*Breath Weapon (Su)*: 25-foot cone, once every 1d4+2 rounds, damage 4d4 fire, Reflex DC 15 half. The save DC is Constitution-based.

*Immunities (Ex)*: Verdatha are immune to poison, sleep, paralysis, fear and death magic. They are immune to electricity and take half-damage from fire.

*Mount (Ex)*: The verdatha may carry Medium or smaller creatures into battle. The verdatha will always fight while carry a rider, but the rider must make a DC 15 Ride check to be able to attack as well. For ever size category less than Medium the rider is, the DC of this check rises by +5. Nokhtkruger will only carry Sir Rhawn.

*Spell-Like Abilities (Su)*: 3/day — *fear* (DC 15) and *obscuring mist.*

*Carrying Capacity*: A light load for a verdatha is up to 348 pounds; a medium load, 350–699 pounds; a heavy load, 700–1050 pounds. A verdatha can drag 5250 pounds. A verdatha may not fly with any load greater than light.

## Black Sun Shield

*Shield*

**This powerful shield is one of the three most venerated relics of the Black Sun paladins. Only a leader of the order may carry it. The *Black Sun Shield* looks like a circular steel shield with the symbol of the Black Sun emblazoned on its face. The *Black Sun Shield* is never left behind on the battlefield. If it is lost, the paladins of the Black Sun seek it relentlessly until it is retrieved.**

**In combat, the *Black Sun Shield* functions as a *large steel shield +2*, granting a total of +4 armor enhancement bonus to AC. In addition, the user gains a +5 enhancement bonus to all saves and skill checks.**

**Any character who is not an evil paladin suffers 4 negative levels for as long as he carries the *Black Sun Shield.***

***Caster Level:* 15th, *Prerequisites:* Craft Magic Arms and Armor, creator must be evil. *Market Price:* 66,500 gp. *Weight:* 15 lb.**

## Stormbrand

*Major Artifact*

**This legendary weapon was forged hundreds of years ago by the mysterious smith Ablung, on commission from a Deverenian hero of the time. Ablung imbued the sword with the power of the Storm, and its thunder roars in combat, even as its razor-keen edge slices the life from its foes.**

**In combat *Stormbrand* functions as a *+5 keen axiomatic unholy thundering longsword.* Every living creature slain by *Stormbrand* wielder gives up some of its life force to the wielder. Whenever a creature is slain outright (not merely dying) by *Stormbrand,* the wielder can make a Will save (DC 20 minus the victim's number of HD). If this save is successful, the wielder gains half of the victim's maximum number of hit points as temporary hit points for himself. If this occurs, the victim can never be resurrected or brought back to he makes a final Fortitude save (DC 20); his life force has been sucked away and bestowed upon the wielder.**

**Any character who is not an evil paladin suffers 4 negative levels for as long as he carries *Stormbrand.* When this incredible weapon is granted to a Black Sun paladin, it automatically becomes the blessed armament of the character, conferring all special abilities granted to blessed armaments, but with no attack and damage bonuses beyond those already possessed by the weapon.**

***Caster Level:* 20th. *Weight:* 2 lb.**

## Scales of the Storm

*Armor*

Like the *Black Sun Shield,* the Scales of the Storm are a symbol of the power and honor of the Black Sun paladins. Only the leader of the Order of the Black Sun may wear this dark suit of scale mail. Its metal is said to crackle with the power of the Storm itself, striking fear into the hearts of adversaries.

In combat, the *Scales of the Storm* functions as *+5 scale mail.* The wearer gains damage reduction 15/+4 versus ranged weapons.

Furthermore, up to three times per day, the wearer can call upon the fury of the Storm to strike terror into his enemies. This has the same effect as the spell fear cast by a 15th level wizard.

Any character who is not an evil paladin suffers 4 negative levels for as long as he wears the *Scales of the Storm.*

Caster Level: 15th, *Prerequisites:* Craft Magic Arms and Armor, *fear, protection from arrows,* creator must be evil. *Market Price:* 96,000 gp. Weight: 30 lb.

**Read aloud:** *More distinguished guests file in until the feast hall is fit to burst. Almost two hundred guests have arrived, and discussions and arguments echo through the usually austere hall. Modred looks on beatifically, his expression of pride alien to his ghostly features.*

*Once the hall is full, he rises, and his voice booms across the chamber. "Comrades and fellows of the faith, I welcome you to a celebration of glory without precedent in these times. All in the Accordlands are loyal servants of Deverenia and the Storm, though some doth stray through ignorance and pride. These heroes beside me, despite their ignorance of the true majesty of the Storm, nonetheless have traveled the Accordlands and lived lives that exemplify its virtues. Their capacity for honor and strength demonstrates their worthiness of the honors we shall bestow upon them."*

*Whispers surge around the hall, but Modred's thunderous voice drowns them before they can escalate. "SILENCE!" His fury abates as quickly as it arose, and he returns to his prepared remarks. "Though they have wandered far, these prodigals have at last returned home. A toast," he proposes, and raises a glass, "to the newest converts to the Church of the Storm, men and women who shall, in the momentous days to come, be Deverenia's greatest heroes!"*

*Silence falls over the feast hall, and for a moment, no one moves. Then, Sir Rhawn reaches for his glass, and raises it. "A toast," he agrees, "that they will be worthy of the blessings of the Storm." Slowly, the other guests raise their glasses to accompany Sir Rhawn.*

Once again, a Sense Motive check (DC 25) reveals to the PCs that this information does not come as a surprise to some guests. Sir Rhawn, Ygraine, Lord Kestrel, and Lord Morival clearly expected the announcement.

**Read aloud:** *Modred looks to you expectantly, hoping for a few words from his converts.*

**Development:** The PCs are doubtless in shock over the recent announcement, but wise PCs play along. Modred, after all, expects it, and considering their earlier warning, it would not do to disappoint him.

Even if the PCs merely drink to the toast, however, Modred is satisfied — for now. Unbeknownst to Modred, their drinks have been poisoned by agents of Baramos, in a first effort to remove one of the PCs.

As the poison's effects kick in, the PCs gradually weaken. However, as is customary at such functions, many of the attendees wish — or feel obligated — to congratulate the PCs. Throughout the meal, dignitaries and guests approach the PCs at their table of honor to offer congratulations, and in some cases veiled threats.

Sir Rhawn, Ygraine, Lord Morival, and Lord Kestrel bear particular mention. Sir Rhawn is indifferent. He is a paladin of the Black Sun, and though he may not agree with Modred's wishes in this case, his obligations to the Church mean he bears the situation with grace. He congratulates the PCs on their conversion, though he implies that they should be certain of their faith before they swear themselves to the Church. Ygraine, however, coldly dismisses the party if she has previously met them. Lord Morival du Ralick approaches them only after the poison begins to affect the PCs, and makes several references to the fact that they appear fatigued, or perhaps a bit ill. He seems solicitous, but a Sense Motive check (DC 25) reveals that he knows more than he is letting on. Finally, Lord Kestrel welcomes the PCs to Deverenia. He congratulates them on their upcoming conversion, then moves away. He secretly uses his *detect thoughts* ability on each member of the party in turn, looking for signs of duplicity. Later, if he can corner one of the PCs in a private conversation, he delivers a warning that all is not as it appears, and that they would do well to keep their guard up.

Once the first of the PCs collapses due to the effect of the Venom Sand, the entire feast hall erupts in chaos. Whispers of "poison," "murder," and "treachery" ripple through the assembled guests, and Modred quickly takes steps. He orders the feast hall doors sealed immediately, then tends to the fallen PC and any stricken comrades, casting first *detect poison,* then *neutralize poison,* then *cure* spells to return the PCs to health. They are then hustled from the feast hall at Modred's behest, and escorted to their guest chambers "for their own safety."

## New Poison: Venom Sand

Type: Ingested DC 18
Interval/D: 1 minute/1 hour
Initial Damage: 1d10 hp
Secondary Damage: 1d10 hp

Description: A fast-acting poison that Jarrani Baramos refines from ingredients found only in the distant south, Venom Sand is all but unknown in this part of the Accordlands. Until mixed with a liquid, the poison is easiy.

# Part 2

ENCOUNTER 6: THE CARDINAL REDUX (EL 14)

**Read aloud:** *There is a knock on your chamber door, accompanied by the Cardinal's voice. He enters, a bit flustered at the events of the last hour. "I warned you that Modred had an agenda, and now we see the shape of it."*

The PCs' first concern is probably the identity of their poisoner. The Cardinal waves off such inquiries, pleading ignorance.

**Read aloud:** *"The assassins have not yet been discovered," he says. "But Modred hath ordered the Cathedral sealed and an investigation conducted. This hath offended some guests, but in the Grand Cathedral Modred's word is law.*

*"I take it that your new-found faith is as much a surprise to you as to anyone?" He nods. "I thought as much. You have impressed Modred, and he doth wish your deeds to be associated with the Church. But I warn you: if your faith be not true, there shall be consequences. You are converts, not born of the faith, and he means to induct you through the Trial of the Storm. You shall not survive it. This will displease Modred, but matters shall be much worse an you refuse the honor he doth wish to bestow upon you. An you flee, he will hunt you to the ends of the Accordlands.*

*"Nay, you must convince him that he hath erred."*

**Development:** The PCs may seek the Cardinal's advice on how to go about this, but he has none to give. He reminds them of the value the Church places on strength, self-reliance, and honor. He also warns them that while failing to demonstrate such virtues is one possible route of escape, they should be wary of dishonoring themselves within the Cathedral, as Modred will take it as a personal affront.

When he goes, the guards lock and bar the door behind him.

ENCOUNTER 7: A SECOND ATTEMPT

Allow the PCs to discuss their situation for a short time. When the conversation lags, ask for a Listen check from each PC (DC 20). Success means the PC hears a quiet scuffle outside the door, and the bar being lifted away.

**Allow them a few moments to prepare, then read aloud:** *The heavy oak door bursts inward with a tremendous crash, and a group of black-garbed figures floods into your room, brandishing wickedly barbed daggers. They spring to the attack!*

**Creatures:** Four Isadran assassins, 14th-level assassins.

**Isadran Assassins (4), Male Human Asn 14:** CR 14; Medium humanoid (human); HD 14d6; hp 51; Spd 30 ft.; Init +8; AC 21, touch 16, flat-footed 17; Base Atk +10; Grp +12; Atk +16 melee (1d4+4 plus poison(17–20/x2), *+2 dagger*); Full Atk +16/+11 melee (1d4+4 plus poison(17–20/x2), *+2 dagger*); SA Improved crippling strike (+1d4), ruthless (move-equivalent), sneak attack +7d6, spells; SQ Poison immunity and resistance +4, poison use, skilled brewer, Human traits, race/class abilities; AL N; SV Fort +7, Ref +16, Will +8; Str 14, Dex 19, Con 10, Int 14, Wis 12, Cha8.

*Skills and Feats:* Hide +21, Listen +18, Move Silently +21, Open Lock +21, Poison +20, Spot +18; Dodge, Expertise, Improved Critical (dagger), Improved Initiative, Mobility, Weapon Finesse (dagger), Exotic Weapon Proficiency (sai), Exotic Weapon Proficiency (blowgun), Exotic Weapon Proficiency (bolas), Exotic Weapon Proficiency (nunchaku).

*Race/Class Abilities: Assassin*: Disguise Expert, Hide in Plain Sight (14), Efficient Killer (2/day).

*Improved Crippling Strike:* When an assassin scores a critical hit in melee combat, rather than inflicting damage he may inflict normal damage (the hit point damage is not doubled as usual for a critical hit) plus 1d4 + his Intelligence modifier (+2) in temporary damage to the victim's Strength, Dexterity, or Constitution.

*Poison Immunity and Resistance +4*: An assassin has a +4 save bonus against all poisons and is immune to storm mist, misear-an powder, quicksilver, and black lotus extract poison.

*Poison Use*: An assassin is trained in the use of poison and never risks accidentally poisoning himself when applying poison to a blade.

*Ruthless*: An assassin may make one coup de grace attack as a melee attack action once per round and an additional coup de grace action as either a melee attack action or as a move-equivalent action.

*Skilled Brewer*: An assassin is trained to brew poison and always has a +2 competence bonus to Poison skill checks.

*Sneak Attack:* Anytime an assassin's target is denied a Dexterity bonus to AC, or when he flanks a target, the assassin deals an additional 7d6 points of damage on a successful melee attack.

*Assassin Spells Prepared* (3/2/1; save DC 12 + spell level): 1st — *obscuring mist, spider climb* x2; 2nd — *darkness, pass without trace*; 3rd — *invisibility*.

*Possessions*: *+2 studded leather armor, +2 dagger* (poisoned; see text for modified venom sand poison below), *+2 ring of protection*.

Though the battle is probably noisy, no help arrives until after the PCs defeat the assassins. The assassins' blades are coated with a viscous admixture of Venom Sand and the sap of an Isadran daruba tree. This version of the poison's effects are described below.

**Modified Venom Sand:** Injury, Fortitude DC 22; initial damage 1d4 Constitution, secondary damage 1 Constitution. The save DC is Constitution-based.

**Development:** Once the PCs defeat their attackers, Cathedral guards rush into their chambers and take the assassins into custody. The PCs are once again secured within their chambers to wait out the investigation.

Most PCs will not be content to wait for someone else to solve their problems. Fortunately, they are easily accommodated. A message to Modred requesting an audience (one of the guards can deliver it) will summon Modred himself to their chambers within minutes. He is ecstatic that they have defeated the assassins on their own, and proclaims them the embodiment of the Deverenian virtues. Praise aside, he agrees to allow the PCs freedom to move about the Cathedral and conduct their own investigation, though he warns them that they cannot leave Cathedral

grounds until the investigation is concluded. Further, he informs the PCs that their poisoner, a scullery maid, has been apprehended, but she has been magically silenced, and cannot reveal the name of her employer. PCs who inquire further — or request the opportunity to interrogate her themselves — discover that she is dead, though Modred does not elaborate on the manner of her death. A Sense Motive check opposed by Modred's Bluff reveals that this point frustrates him. She died not under torture, but because the enchantment that bound her tongue killed her when she attempted to speak her master's name.

### Encounter 8: The Interrogation

The PCs probably start by visiting their would-be assassins in the dungeons below the Cathedral. This encounter assumes that at least one assassin survived the attempt.

**Read aloud**: *The Cathedral's dungeons are traditionally dank and unpleasant, and you hear rats squeaking in the walls. You make your way to the cells where the surviving assassins are bound in chains and manacles. They stand against the wall, their wrists chained above their heads. Some have lapsed into unconsciousness, but others are quite alert, and their eyes dart about with fear when you arrive.*

**Development:** The assassins are under the same enchantment as the scullery maid, and could not reveal the name of their master even if they wished — and they fear Baramos far too much to utter his name even if they could. The PCs' trip to the dungeon is not a complete waste of time, however. The assassins' possessions are stored in the warden's office. Though their black robes are without adornment of any kind, their daggers are all engraved with a tiger's visage.

The warden is happy to accommodate any request the heroes of the hour make. While they are examining the prisoners' possessions, a second visitor arrives: Baramos, disguised as Ygraine with his *hat of disguise* (augmenting his Disguise skill check). If the PCs inquire after her interest in the matter, she explains disdainfully that the sooner the mystery is solved, the sooner she can return to her duties. She brooks no delay on the part of the warden, and demands to interrogate the prisoners alone.

If the PCs act suspicious, as Ygraine is not a knight or a member of the clergy, however, this is false to anyone familiar with Deverenian law (Knowledge (law) check, DC 10 for Deverenians, 20 for all others). Nonetheless, she browbeats the warden into submission, and then proceeds into the cells, the warden's keys in hand. She locks the cellblock door behind her.

PCs who attempt to spy on her find it easy. In fact, Baramos is counting on it, to implicate Ygraine in the assassination. Once she reaches the prisoners' cells she proceeds to berate them for her failure, and executes them one by one. If a PC is spying on her, and reveals himself in an effort to stop her, she casts *teleport* at her first opportunity to escape (Baramos attempts to *teleport* to his guest quarters, which he is considered to have "seen casually" for the purposes of the spell). Remember, also, that this is not Ygraine, but Baramos, so the appropriate statistics should be used. At no point does Baramos reveal his true identity.

If, on the other hand, the PCs seek out another authority figure to report this matter, the events come to Modred's attention. If the PCs inform Modred, he asks them to accompany him, and stalks off to confront Ygraine. Otherwise, the PCs should be present when he arrives to denounce her. Fortunately for Ygraine, she was in the presence of not only her entourage, but also discussing the progress of the wars with Sir Rhawn at the time of the incident. He vouches for her, which is enough for Modred. Nonetheless, the PCs may remain suspicious.

Both Ygraine and Sir Rhawn are being honest in this regard. Her alibi is the truth.

### Encounter 9: Ygraine

**Development:** After the events of **Encounter 7**, the PCs might wish to interrogate Ygraine on their own. She is offended by the questioning and informs the PCs that if she wanted them dead, they would be dead by her own hand instead of a coward's poison. She endures their questions briefly before informing them that she will suffer no further suspicion in this matter. She had nothing to do with the assassination. If the PCs are wise, she tells them, they will for their own safety forget this foolish notion of converting to the Church. Sense Motive checks reveal Ygraine's honesty; she had no part in the assassination attempt.

### Encounter 10: Sir Rhawn

**Development:** Sir Rhawn is indifferent to the PCs' plight. Though he respects their reputation, and would be honored to serve beside them in the Church's cause, he knows that their conversion is as much a surprise to them as anyone else. He echoes the Cardinal's earlier comments regarding the dangers of conversion, as well as the dangers of disappointing Modred, and wishes the PCs luck in extricating themselves without arousing his wrath. Finally, he confirms Ygraine's alibi; Sense Motive checks reveal that he is telling the truth. Further, if a PC vocalizes any doubt in this, Rhawn takes offense at the slight to his honor. Though he can do little about it at the moment, he warns the PCs that — provided they survive the next few hours — he looks forward to deciding the question over crossed blades.

Lord Kestrel is lurking nearby, eavesdropping. A successful Spot check, opposed by Lord Kestrel's Bluff, means the successful PC not only notices him but is also aware of his eavesdropping. If the PCs point out Lord Kestrel's presence to Sir Rhawn, he shrugs, taking it in stride. Sir Rhawn comments that Lord Kestrel is a renowned illusionist, and had he meant to hide himself, he easily could have. If the PCs confront Lord Kestrel about it themselves, refer to **Encounter 11**.

### Encounter 11: Kestrel/Teufeltiger

At some point, the PCs encounter Teufeltiger. If they don't approach him during their investigation, he comes to them. Either way, he has lies to tell. Though he initially professes ignorance of Ygraine's location during the events of **Encounter 7**, he acts as if he is hiding something. This much is clear without a Sense Motive check, though a successful check (opposed by Teufeltiger's Bluff skill) reveals that he not only knows something, but is doing an intentionally poor job of hiding it.

When pressed even lightly, Teufeltiger is too happy to spill what he "knows," informing the PCs that while he is hesitant to doubt Rhawn's word of honor, he himself saw Ygraine stalking toward the dungeons while the PCs were there. If asked what he was doing in the area, he claims he was in the Cathedral's wor-

ship area when she passed through on her way. If the PCs press him regarding her alibi, he reminds them once more that *"not everything in the Cathedral truly is as it seemeth."* That said, he is unwilling to tell anyone other than the PCs what he saw; as he does not wish to tip his hand, and he further asks the PCs to keep this information to themselves.

If the PCs inquire about Teufeltiger's eavesdropping on their conversation with Rhawn, he protests his innocence. If pressed, however, he admits to the deed, and writes it off as simple curiosity. A successful Sense Motive check (opposed by Teufeltiger's Bluff) reveals that he is not being honest, but further questioning cannot draw the truth from him.

### Encounter 12: Ralick/Baramos

**Development:** PCs who ask Baramos about the past few hours find him to be an aging Deverenian noble who dreams of past glories and his better days. A Sense Motive check (opposed by Baramos's Bluff) reveals that the image of a doddering noble is a facade. Even if confronted, he maintains the charade. He professes ignorance as to the whereabouts of the other guests during any period the PCs care to inquire about, hiding behind his cover as an absent-minded old man.

If any PCs ask about his entourage (if they can get an accurate count of it, they notice it has shrunk by four attendees since his arrival), Ralick shrugs and brushes off the question. He seems to care little for their whereabouts or well-being, implying that a group of clients is the burden of nobility and prestige. A successful Sense Motive check reveals that the subject has put Ralick on the defensive, and there is something more going on than simple neglect.

### Encounter 13: Modred

Once the PCs have had some time to investigate, Modred gathers the Cathedral's guests in the feast hall once more. He has an announcement.

**Read aloud:** *"Despite the events of the last few hours, the Storm's will must be done. The conversion ceremony shall proceed as planned. At dawn, these heroes shall be faithful servants of the Storm, and be remade in Its name. You shall all be made welcome in this Cathedral to await the ceremony."*

**Development:** Of course, Modred's last statement means that the Cathedral will remain sealed overnight. The PCs' conversion will go on, and nothing they (or anyone else) can say will dissuade him unless and until they somehow convince Modred that they are not suitable for conversion.

In the meantime, Modred allows the PCs to continue their investigation, though he points out that they must be prepared for the ceremony at dawn. Their equipment should be worn at the ceremony, to present themselves at the peak of their power, and will be delivered to their rooms during the night.

The PCs are still free to continue their investigation. However, as they do so, events draw them toward a showdown with Baramos.

### Encounter 14: Forearmed and Forewarned

At some point when the PCs are relatively alone, the Cathedral's captain of the guard approaches them. This is actually Teufeltiger in disguise, but the PCs have no way of knowing this (though, with the appropriate rolls, they may suspect that not all is as it seems).

**Read aloud:** *"Sirs!" calls a voice. You turn to see the captain of the guard striding in your direction, flanked by valets laden with your equipment. "Considering the events of the day, I have been asked to deliver your equipment to you, that you might defend yourselves should the need arise." He comes to a halt a few feet in front of you, servants in tow. One by one, they step forward and hand over your gear, treating each item as if it were a priceless work of art.*

**Development:** If the PCs wonder aloud if there was enough time to adequately prepare their equipment for the ceremony, the captain huffs an indignant affirmative, offended by the implication that he was derelict in his duty. However, as the captain is actually Teufeltiger in disguise, his offense is for show. A Sense Motive check (opposed by Teufeltiger's Bluff) reveals the captain is largely indifferent to their concerns. Once the PCs are kitted out, he orders the valets to return to their duties and converses with the PCs in private.

**Read aloud:** *"Now that we have a moment alone, I would offer a warning. Your equipment has been returned to you, but be discreet. Some would be offended were it to become known that the purification rituals for the Trial had been performed so far in advance. However, I could not in good conscience deny you the ability to defend yourselves to the best of your abilities." The captain leans toward you and lowers his voice. "There are greater forces at work here than you realize, and we are each in more danger than you know. Not all is as it seemeth. Be prepared for anything, but do not let on that you know. Your survival depends on your discretion."*

Teufeltiger entertains no further questions, though the PCs might notice that his turn of phrase is similar to Kestrel's (particularly the phrase "not all is as it seemeth."). He offers a quick wink to the PCs before leaving the scene — so quick in fact, that a Spot check (DC 25) is required to notice it.

### Encounter 15: A Third Strike

**Development:** Though the PCs may feel they are a hair's breadth from unraveling the mystery (particularly after **Encounter 13**), Baramos has other plans. He gathers much of his remaining entourage for another attack on the PCs, which he plans to lead himself. However, their deaths are only part of his agenda. He plans to disguise himself as Sir Rhawn, not only implicating him in this attempt on the PCs' lives, but also confirming the idea that Sir Rhawn is complicit in Ygraine's scheme.

He waits for an opportunity to strike at the PCs when they are alone, though he cares little for the specific battleground. It could be in the feast hall itself, one of the cathedral's many hallways or stairwells, or failing all else, in the PCs' chambers when they retrieve their gear.

He carelessly sacrifices his followers during the battle; their lives are of no concern to him. During the combat, he foregoes the use of his magical ability to maintain the deception that he is Sir Rhawn. However, he does not go so far as to engage in

melee combat, as he is not yet willing to risk his own death. Once the last of his minions falls (or one of the PCs engages him in melee), he flees on foot. As soon as he is out of sight — either around a corner or through a door — he once more casts *teleport* to escape.

**Creatures:** Eight Mercenary fighters, 8th-level fighters.

**Mercenary Fighters (8), Male and Female Deverenian Ftr 8:** CR 8; Medium humanoid (Deverenian); HD 8d10+16; hp 64; Init +5; Spd 20 ft.; AC 23, touch 11, flat-footed 22; Base Atk +8; Grp +11; Atk +15 melee (1d10+7(19–20/x2), *+1 bastard sword*) or +11 ranged (1d8+5(19–20/x2), mighty (Str 16) masterwork composite longbow); Full Atk +15/+10 melee (1d10+7(19–20/x2), *+1 bastard sword*) or +11/+6 ranged (1d8+5(19–20/x2), mighty (Str 16) masterwork composite longbow); SA Favored weapon (bastard sword, longbow), improved damage (bastard sword); SQ Deverenian traits, race/class abilities; AL N; SV Fort +8, Ref +3, Will +3; Str 17, Dex 13, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 18.

*Skills and Feats:* Climb +3*, Jump +3*, Knowledge (architecture and engineering) +4, Knowledge (history) +4, Ride +6; Cleave, Exotic Weapon Proficiency (bastard sword), Improved Initiative, Improved Sunder, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (bastard sword). *includes –6 armor check penalty

*Class/Race Abilities: Fighter:* Luxury Training (bastard sword), Military History.

*Favored Weapon (bastard sword, longbow):* A mercenary gains a +1 competence bonus to attack and damage rolls with the bastard sword and longbow.

*Improved Damage (bastard sword):* A mercenary does an additional +2 (+3 total) damage with the bastard sword.

*Possessions: +1 full plate, +1 heavy steel shield, +1 bastard sword,* mighty (Str 16) masterwork composite long bow, 25 *+1 arrows.*

### Encounter 16: Danger Grows

After the battle, the PCs might feel they have new information for their investigation, or they might have taken to heart Teufeltiger's warnings regarding appearances and deceptions. Either way, they could present their information to Modred, or they may choose to confront Sir Rhawn, who seems to be the best suspect at the moment.

In the former case, Modred takes the news with a great deal of doubt. He protests that Sir Rhawn is a Knight of the Black Sun, his honor and faith beyond reproach. He agrees to take the matter under advisement, but does not act against Sir Rhawn without indisputable evidence. Further, if the PCs are fully equipped, he seems surprised that their gear has already been returned to them, and asks them if the rituals of purification have been completed. Regardless of the PCs' answer, he frowns slightly, making a mental note to discipline the quartermaster for either completing the purifications too early, or returning the PCs equipment without completing his task.

If the PCs confront Sir Rhawn directly, he coldly ignores them. He considers the suggestion that *he* attacked the PCs so outlandish as to be beneath contempt. Of course, if the PCs press the issue, or make the accusation in front of others, his mood shifts from entertained to offended. He does not bother offering an alibi (though if the PCs ask around, they find several witnesses who confirm that he was praying in the Cathedral's worship area at the time of the attack), nor defending himself. He demands the accusation be withdrawn. If the PCs refuse, Sir Rhawn declares that in another place, he would spill the PCs' blood for such an affront, but on this sacred ground, they are safe. Sir Rhawn does not forget the insult.

### Encounter 17: Modred, Again

When the PCs are alone, Modred approaches them for a private discussion. However, it is not Modred at all. Baramos, using *polymorph self,* has disguised himself as the Hierophant, and intends to deceive the PCs into a fateful meeting. He approaches them just before midnight, in order to leave them little time to confirm his request or consider the odd circumstances.

**Read aloud:** *"My friends," Modred intones, his voice grave. "It is clear that elements within Deverenia — indeed, within the walls of this Cathedral — do not wish you to survive long enough to join the faithful. Therefore, though I have publicly indicated that your conversion should take place at dawn, I would ask that you accompany me to the Cathedral's roof such that we might complete the rituals sooner than the announced hour. Once you are among the faithful, no Deverenian may raise his hand against you without arousing the wrath of the Storm Itself. You shall thereby be protected from the villains."*

**Development:** If the PCs have spoken with Modred since their equipment was returned, a Sense Motive check (opposed by Baramos's Bluff) nonetheless reveals that the Hierophant is surprised that they are once more equipped with their own gear, and perhaps a bit displeased. However, he does not take the time to chat about it: he immediately heads for the roof, encouraging the PCs to follow. He brooks neither questioning nor hesitation in this matter, though if pressed, he agrees to answer their questions (and discuss the matter of the conversion, should the PCs desire) on the roof, where the PCs are relatively safe.

### Encounter 18: Assassin Revealed (EL 17)

**Read aloud:** *You follow Modred onto the roof, and he gestures for you to move away from the door toward the center of the building. Then, behind you, he closes the door, and slides the bolt home with an ominous thud. His voice subtly shifts from the hollow tones of Hierophant Modred to a dulcet baritone. "You are more capable than I imagined," he declares, venom in his voice, "but it matters little. I will have to kill all of you."*

*You turn, and see not Modred of Carcius, but someone else. A lanky man stands before you, not quite as dark as a Narawati, garbed in a shadowy cloak. His white teeth glisten in the starlight, and hate-filled eyes bore into you.*

*"Morival du Ralick is long dead. For years, I have sought sign or word of our absent god, and now that I do feel him in this place I will return him to the heavens where he can answer the prayers of my people. Alas, it shall be at the cost of your lives." He snarls in amusement. "It matters little, I suppose, as I suspect you would not have survived Modred's conversion rituals. The Storm, after all, is unforgiving. It protects its own, but you — you would have been wiped from this existence as surely as an insect is swatted from the brow of a weary soldier."*

*"I, however, have need of the tremendous power that Modred shall bring to bear in the shape of the Storm. With the proper rituals, it will empower me, strengthen me, and I will become a vessel through which Lord Teufeltiger can reclaim his divinity. I needed only to kill and replace one of you."*

*"Alas, my minions proved inept, and time grows short. Now that you have forced me to show my hand, I must destroy all of you. Once I have done so, I will disguise myself." His form ripples, and you are staring into the face of [insert PC name]. "Or perhaps I will be you." His face shifts once more, into that of [insert PC name]. "Or you." He changes once more, into [insert PC name], then returns to his own shape. "The lone survivor of the valiant heroes who battled the villainous assassin."*

*"It is rather amusing, I think, that although Modred will believe he is rewarding the hero who struck me down, he will instead harness the power of the Storm to return to this world a god whose worship the Church considers heresy. A pity you will not be present to appreciate the irony."*

**Development:** And — assuming they have not cut short his peroration with an assault — Baramos attacks the PCs. Unlike their previous encounters, he pulls no punches this time. In order to complete his deception, he must kill all the PCs. That said, he is no fool, and if the battle turns against him he escapes magically, to pursue his goal another day. Baramos' spells are primarily distracting and disabling in nature, to better allow for his assassin attacks.

After 5 rounds of combat, a group of five guards burst through the locked door, drawn by the din of combat on the roof. The guards dive into the fray alongside the PCs. Unfortunately for them, they are far from up to the task of battling such a powerful wizard. They probably do not last long.

**Creatures:** Five cathedral guards, 2nd-level paladins.

**Cathedral Guard (5), Male Deverenian Pal 2:** CR 2; Medium humanoid (Deverenian); HD 2d8+2; hp 17; Init –1; Spd 20 ft.; AC 18, touch 9, flat-footed 18; Base Atk +2; Grp +4; Atk +6 melee (1d8+2(19–20/x2), *blessed masterwork longsword*) or +2 ranged (1d8+2/(19–20/x2), mighty (Str 14) masterwork composite longbow); Full Atk +6 melee (1d8+2(19–20/x2), *blessed masterwork longsword*) or +2 ranged (1d8+2(19–20/x2), mighty (Str 14) masterwork composite longbow); SA Blessed armament (bless) (longsword); SQ Aura of courage, detect alignment, Deverenian traits, divine health, lay on hands, race/class abilities; AL LE; SV Fort +4, Ref –1, Will +1; Str 14, Dex 8, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 13, Cha 15.

*Skills and Feats:* Heal +6, Ride +4; Weapon Focus (longsword).

*Aura of Courage:* A paladin is immune to fear (magical or otherwise). Allies within 10 feet of the paladin gain a +4 morale bonus on saving throws against fear effects; this is a supernatural abiity.

*Blessed Armament (longsword):* A paladin's longsword is invested with the might of his deity and functions as a *blessed* weapon.

*Detect Alignment:* At will, a paladin can detect the presence of the opposite alignment as a spell-like ability (*detect good*).

*Divine Health:* A paladin is immune to all diseases including magical ones.

*Lay On Hands:* A paladin may cure up to 4 hit points of damage per day.

*Possessions:* Half-plate, large metal shield, *blessed masterwork longsword*, mighty (Str 14) masterwork composite longbow.



## Part 3: Concluding the Adventure

After the PCs defeat Baramos, a second unit of Cathedral guards, led by the captain (still Teufeltiger in disguise — he has stashed the true captain of the guard in the dungeons, unconscious and *polymorphed*, so the guards don't recognize him) bursts through the locked door to find the PCs either alone, or standing over the body of Baramos, surrounded by fallen cathedral guards. It should become obvious that some of the PCs' encounters (with Modred, Sir Rhawn, and Ygraine) were merely shadow plays, examples of Baramos's deceptions.

The PCs must still deal with their impending conversion to the Church. Baramos's speech doubtless drew their attention to the fact that Modred intends to subject the PCs to the Trial of the Storm, a fate that is unlikely to appeal to the PCs; now it is doubly important that they do not participate in the conversion ritual.

The PCs may take several approaches in persuading Modred not to go through with the ritual, or they may choose to escape the Cathedral grounds and flee the city. The latter option, of course, leads to bad blood between the PCs and the Church of the Storm, so it is not the best choice.

The PCs have several options in convincing Modred they are not fit for conversion, including (but not limited to), the following:

- The PCs were in dire straits while battling Baramos, and only the timely intervention of the Cathedral guard, who fell valiantly in battle alongside the PCs, allowed them to triumph over the assassin. Clearly, the PCs cannot live up to the expectations of Deverenian faith regarding self-reliance, as they needed the assistance of these lowly soldiers to fend off Baramos. The captain of the guard timidly suggests to Modred that perhaps the PCs are not the heroes that everyone believed. Modred does not put much stock in his words (indeed, the true captain is likely to find himself in a remote post far from Luthlarius for his presumption, assuming Modred even remembers his name), but his words may suggest an argument to the PCs.
- Clearly, the prospect of the PCs' conversion is the source of much dissension within the Deverenian power structure, and pushing ahead with the ceremony would only increase the rift between the Church and the Knightly Orders. Though the PCs would be honored to undergo the Trial of the Storm, perhaps it would be best if the ceremony were postponed until the current troubles that wrack the Accordlands subside.
- PCs knowledgeable in the faith of the Storm may realize that bloodshed upon the site of a Trial of the Storm requires the site to be cleansed and purified, a ritual that may require many weeks. Recalling this information requires a Knowledge (religion) check (DC 20). Though Modred is aware of the ritual, he does not bring it up unless the PCs mention it. That said, once this is called to his attention (particularly if the PCs do so in front of other notables, such as Rhawn and Ygraine), he reluctantly agrees to the importance of this matter, though he expects the PCs to return in one month to take part in the Trial of the Storm. This should allow the PCs plenty of time to come up with a good excuse, or for Modred to fixate on a new fascination.

Once the PCs have extricated themselves from Modred's grasp, they are free to go. However, the following matters may require resolution down the road.

- If Baramos survived the adventure, he bears a grudge. His goals are now twofold: locate and empower Teufeltiger once more, and destroy the PCs.
- It is likely the PCs had cross words with Sir Rhawn, Ygraine, and perhaps even Modred during the course of Believers. Further encounters with these personalities are likely to be tense. That said, none of them is interested in venting their anger on the PCs immediately.
- If the PCs have not completed the adventure *Siege of Kcal'den Fortress* and their relationship with Sir Rhawn is still civil, this is the perfect opportunity for Sir Rhawn to talk to them about it. See that adventure for more details.
- Finally, the PCs are doubtless in Teufeltiger's debt to some degree. He will collect one day, but for now he is content that the PCs owe him. Some time after the events of *Believers*, he pays the PCs a visit to inform them of the favor due to him. As they travel on the road leading from Luthlarius to wherever their destiny is taking them, Teufeltiger accosts them.

**Read aloud:** *A lone rider canters to a halt a few feet in front of you. He is clearly a Deverenian knight from his manner of dress, though he appears to travel alone. After a moment, he tosses back his hood, revealing himself as Lord Kestrel du Myerdeth, one of the notables in attendance during the recent events at the Cathedral of the Storm.*

*"Greetings." His smile is broad, if a touch predatory. "I am glad to see you extricated yourselves from your recent troubles without too much harm."*

He exchanges brief pleasantries with the PCs, then proceeds past them. Once beyond the PCs, he brings his horse about, and calls their attention once more.

**Read aloud:** *"By the by, I should think that you owe me no small thanks for my assistance." A glint of steel gleams in his eyes, and his smile is perfectly predatory.*

If the PCs express confusion on the matter, or protest that they got themselves out of that particular mess, he chuckles.

**Read aloud:** *"Not so. Where would you be, after all, if a friendly captain of the guard had not returned your equipment moments before you needed it?"*

If the PCs express further confusion — after all, they probably believe the captain of the guard returned their gear — Kestrel fishes a coin out of his purse and tosses it to the nearest PC.

**Read aloud:** *"Not all, I think, was as it seemed, my friends. The coin is a gift. It is one of a very old pair, and I would rather they were not parted. They are a token — a marker, if you will — of a favor owed." His voice lowers to a threatening purr. "When I call upon you to collect that favor, I expect you will entertain my request. You will find that I slipped its mate into your possessions when I returned your other equipment."*

**Development:** If Teufeltiger (as the captain of the guard) suggested the PCs were not worthy of the Trial of the Storm, he reminds them of this, as well. With that, he canters off toward Luthlarius. Should the PCs attack him or attempt to detain him, he casts *teleport without error* to return to his manor in the Myerdeth domain.

As for the coin, the PC that received it finds an identical coin among his other currency. Both coins are ancient, and dark with tarnish and age. One face is so badly worn as to be unidentifiable, but the reverse bears the likeness of a humanoid tiger. An Appraise or Bardic Knowledge check (DC 25) reveals that this type of coin was last minted when Deverenia worshipped a pantheon of gods, rather than the Storm itself. Further, a Knowledge (religion) check (DC 25), which may only be attempted if the prior check is successful, reveals that the likeness is that of Teufeltiger, the long-defunct Deverenian god of treachery.

In the future, should Teufeltiger require the PCs' aid, he expects them to deliver. He may approach them himself, particularly if the matter is one he feels is of particular import. Otherwise, he contacts the PCs through the Conspiracy of Light, who request the PCs to act as their agents for a time. Whoever contacts the PCs in this case carries a third coin identical to the pair possessed by the PCs, in order to prove that Teufeltiger is calling in his favor. Should they refuse to help, they gain powerful enemies in Teufeltiger and his minions.

# Part 4: The Stone of Fortune

**Read aloud:** *Strangely, the* Stone of Fortune *does not react at all.*

# Part 5: New Monsters

### Modred of Carcius

Medium Outsider (Evil, Law, Stormborn)
*Hit Dice*: 20d8+60 (141 hp)
*Initiative*: +1
*Speed*: 30 ft. (6 squares)
*Base Attack/Grapple*: +20/+22
*Armor Class*: 27 (+1 Dex, +16 Armor)
*Attack*: Stormblade +25 melee (1d10+5+special/x2)
*Full Attack*: Stormblade +25/+20/+15/+10 melee (1d10+5+special/x2)
*Space/Reach*: 5 ft./5 ft.
*Special Attacks*: Spells, summon stormborn
*Special Qualities*: Astral, cold and fire resistance 30, fast healing 2, immunities
*Saves*: Fort +15, Ref +13, Will +19
*Abilities*: Str 14, Dex 13, Con 16, Int 16, Wis 20, Cha 15
*Skills*: Concentration +23, Diplomacy +22, Heal +25, Intimidate +22, Knowledge (arcana) +23, Knowledge (religion) +23, Listen +25, Ride +21, Scry +23, Spellcraft +23, Spot +25
*Feats*: Combat Casting, Exotic Weapon Proficiency (bastard sword), Iron Will, Maximize Spell, Mounted Combat, Divine Blessings: Electricity Resistance, Call Lightning, Summon Avatar (Tempest)
*Environment*: Special
*Organization*: Solitary
*Challenge Rating*: 16
*Treasure*: Standard
*Alignment*: Lawful Evil
*Advancement*: None

Modred of Carcius is the Hierophant of the Church of the Storm, arguably the most powerful being in Deverenia, second perhaps only to the Emperor himself. He commands legions of faithful and he can harness the Storm itself, albeit at great personal expense.

He has long since passed the threshold of death, having become a creature of the Storm himself over 600 years ago. At the time, he was but a child — all of 14 years — but Hierophant nonetheless. As with so many before, he underwent the Trial of the Storm to prove his faith. His psyche remained remarkably intact, but his body was irrevocably altered. He became a creature of the Storm, one of the first among the Ghed. He serves the Storm, but out of choice and out of faith, not out of enchantment.

Despite his advanced age, his mind is that of a brilliant teenage boy. His temper is quick and fickle, and he is stubborn in the extreme. He commands great power, and with it, he has struck down many who have angered him, both proud and pious alike.

#### Combat

*Astral (Ex):* Modred is an astral being. He exists simultaneously both in the world and the dark heart of the Storm. Any melee or ranged attack that targets him has a 50% miss chance, unless the attack is made with a +1 or better magical weapon (in the case of ranged attacks, only the projectile must bear the enchantment, not necessarily the weapon itself).

*Fast Healing (Ex):* Modred has the fast healing quality at 2, or at 6 when within the confines of the Storm.

*Immunities:* Modred is immune to electricity-based effects, and has cold and fire resistance 30.

*Spell-like Abilities*: Modred can *detect living* at will as a free action. 3/day — *cause light wounds, darkness, obscuring fog, lightning bolt*; 1/day — *cause moderate wounds, ice storm*.

*Spells:* Modred casts spells as a 20th level cleric of the Storm.

*Stormblade*: Each Hierophant of the Storm is invested with a *stormblade* upon his Trial, a blade forged of the very essence of the Storm. A *stormblade* functions as a *+3 shocking burst unholy bastard sword*. Any creature that attempts to wield such a blade suffers 1d10 points of electricity damage each round. (Modred himself suffers this damage, but he is immune to electrical effects and thus it inflicts no ill effects on him.)

*Summon Stormborn (Sp)*: Once per day, as a full round action, Modred may summon 3d6 HD of monsters with the Stormborn subtype. They arrive in 1d6+1 rounds, and serve him to the best of their ability. He may dismiss them as a free action.

### Teufeltiger

**Medium Outsider** (Evil, Lawful)
*Hit Dice:* 26d8+78 (195 hp)
*Initiative:* +6
*Speed:* 40 ft. (8 squares)
*Base Attack/Grapple*: +26/+27
*Armor Class:* 21 (+2 Dex, +9 natural)
*Attack:* Claw +27 melee
*Full Attack:* 2 claws +27 melee (1d4+1/x2), bite +25 melee (1d6/x2)
*Space/Reach*: 5 ft./5 ft.
*Special Attacks*: Detect thoughts, spells
*Special Qualities*: Alternate form, spell immunity, vulnerabilities, damage reduction 20/magic
*Saves:* Fort +12, Ref +11, Will +9
*Abilities:* Str 12, Dex 14, Con 16, Int 13, Wis 13, Cha 17
*Skills:* Bluff +21*, Disguise +21*, Listen +12, Move Silently +12, Perform (ballad, chant, drama, epic, +5) +12, Sense Motive +11, Spot +13
*Feats:* Combat Casting, Improved Initiative, Maximize Spell, Multiattack, Power Attack, Skill Focus (disguise), Skill Focus (bluff)
*Environment*: Special
*Organization:* Solitary
*Challenge Rating:* 17
*Treasure:* Standard coins; double goods; standard items
*Alignment:* Lawful evil
*Advancement:* None

Of all the gods in the ancient Deverenian pantheon, none evokes as much confusion as Teufeltiger. Even in Signon's days, none knew this god's origins, nor even when he entered the pantheon. The politicians whom Signon despised worshiped Teufeltiger even above Deverenus himself. Signon wanted to destroy the sect, but Teufeltiger's enemies foresaw this, and hid the major relics of their god. With the fall of the Emperor, the Teufelites approached Signon with an offer: he would accept Teufeltiger as one of the Védoszentek, or the old god's followers would become a constant menace to the new regime. Signon capitulated, but responded by creating the core of what would become the Inquisition. He feared the day that Teufeltiger's minions would undo everything he sought to create.

That day has come.

A group of Deverenians has formed what they call the Conspiracy of Light, opposed to the Emperor and the Church of the Storm. Although each member of the conspiracy was powerful, they found that the Church seers had anticipated their attacks. In a desperate bid to gain some power for their own sympathetic clergy, a group of the conspirators, a small cell of Myerdeth Védoszentek cultists, uncovered two items in their Order's archives: a statue of a tiger-headed god dressed in finery, and a partially-burned scrap of paper describing a ritual to call the deity. The cult, headed by Lord Kestrel du Myerdeth himself, botched the rite. At the spell's completion, the icon shattered. Its representative god was forever beyond the Storm's control, but now terribly limited in his own power. More shocking, however, was the physical appearance of the god himself. The spell had summoned and bound Teufeltiger, forcing him to remain on the material plane until he again had the power to leave. Teufeltiger murdered Kestrel, then disguised himself as the fallen knight. The surviving cultists serve Teufeltiger with a mix of awe and abject terror; though Teufeltiger has goals in common with the Conspiracy of Light, the cult had meant to summon a hero to lead them, not a new villain to drive them. The Inquisition is oblivious to this latest development.

Before the Conspiracy of Light hobbled him, Teufeltiger was a god of Evil, Law, and Trickery. Though he personally disdained weapons, his many worshipers wielded vicious daggers in his name. As Lord Kestrel, Teufeltiger now leads the Conspiracy of Light, and seeks a return to divinity. Many still revere his boundless capacity for treachery, though few would admit it.

In his natural form, Teufeltiger resembles a humanoid tiger He prefers to dress in the garb of nobility, adorning himself ostentatiously and living richly on Lord Kestrel's fortune. In his natural form he has a tiger-striped fur-covered human body with a feline head. The immortal Teufeltiger has had time to master virtually every language spoken in the Accordlands, including a few that are no longer spoken.

COMBAT

Teufeltiger prefers to manipulate matters from afar, but he is not averse to bloodying his claws on occasion. Whenever possible, he uses his skill at deceit and mastery of magic to avoid direct confrontation. When pressed in combat, he does not hesitate to retreat, though if cornered and tapped out of magical resources, he resorts to his claw and bite attacks.

*Alternate Form (Su):* Teufeltiger can assume any humanoid form, or revert to his natural form, as a standard action. This ability is similar to the *alter self* spell cast by an 18th level illusionist, but he can remain in the assumed form indefinitely.

*Detect Thoughts (Su):* Teufeltiger can continuously *detect thoughts* as the spell cast by an 18th level illusionist (save DC 13). He can suppress or resume this ability as a free action.

*Spell Immunity (Su):* Teufeltiger ignores the effects of spells and spell-like abilities of 8th level or less, just as if the spellcaster had failed to overcome spell resistance.

*Spells:* Teufeltiger can cast spells as a 7th level illusionist, and can also cast 1st level cleric spells as arcane spells.

*Vulnerabilities (Ex):* Teufeltiger is vulnerable to *blessed* crossbow bolts. Any hit scored with a *blessed* crossbow bolt slays Teufeltiger, unless he makes a Fortitude save (DC 10 + damage dealt).

*Skills:* Teufeltiger receives a +4 racial bonus to Bluff and Disguise checks. *When using an alternate form, he gains an additional +10 circumstance bonus to Disguise checks. If reading an opponent's mind, he receives an additional +4 circumstance bonus to Bluff and Disguise checks.



# Dragon Keep Festival

## Introduction

The heroes have been invited to return to the dragon's lair to celebrate the inauguration of the Shrine of Kor, but shortly after their arrival, their particular brand of talent is needed.

This is one of five adventures in Tier 6. It is meant for characters of levels 11–13.

## Adventure Background

In ancient times, the ruin where the heroes slew one dragon to avenge another held one of the most important temples to Kor. In those days, Human priests presided over this major place of worship, which was then simply a shrine of Kor, one among many. Following the creation of the Accord and the exile of the Dwarves underground, the shrine fell into obscurity, its history forgotten. The lost ruins of this ancient temple, hewn from the spine of the earth, lie deep in the mountain chain that separates Tyraniel from the Kingdom of Denska.

## Adventure Synopsis

In *Dragon Keep Festival*, the PCs return to the dragon's cave (*see The Dragon's Lair for further details*). To celebrate the rededication of the temple, the PCs are invited to join the festivities at Dragon Keep. Human priests and a handful of Dwarven clerics joined with pilgrims from all corners of the Accordlands.

During the event, the PCs are encouraged to participate to various games of chance, cunning, and skill. Because one or more of the PCs are known in these parts, people insist they take part in the games. At some point during the celebration, Lord Narcil, a skilled and noble knight from Andover, challenges one of the PCs to a friendly duel. If the duel is fought in an honorable manner, the Master of the Games awards the winner with a special item.

The celebrations continue, and as the last contest of the day unfolds, unnerving screams rise from within the temple. As the heroes investigate, they face a real challenge: three chuuls have found their way to the surface. Soon after, however, they discover a secret chamber leading to an underground dungeon below the Shrine.

The heroes are asked to investigate further and put a stop to the chuul menace that threatens the sanctity of the temple. They also learn (or are reminded) of legends telling that the tomb of an ancient king lies in a secret chamber in the catacombs under the Shrine of Kor. The tales also say this monarch was interred with great treasures — including a potent relic known as the *Axe of Gorek*, which is particularly useful against evil opponents.

The heroes discover most of the underground chambers have been run over by a pack of chuuls. They must cleanse the place in order to ensure the safety of the people who inhabit the Dragon Keep as well as all the pilgrims. In the course of the adventure, the heroes probably find the remains of the legendary King Gorek and his fabled weapon.

## Location 1: The Dragon Keep (Map Key) (map page 503)

Built around the entrance of the grotto leading to the ancient Shrine of Kor, the Dragon Keep is guarded by a militia of Dwarven and Human warriors.

1.1 **Entryway and Temporary Stables:** The area beneath the high plateau and fortified walls of the Dragon Keep accommodates horses and wagons during the celebration. An elaborate stone staircase, flanked by statues representing Kor as a Dwarven warrior, gives access to the Keep above.

1.2 **Fortified Walls and Watchtowers:** The Dragon Keep's palisades stand 30 feet high on the edge of the elevated plateau. Over 10 feet thick, these hard gray stone walls boast battlements and arrow slits. Four watchtowers loom another 30 feet above the walls. Militia guards stand watch upon the high towers and battlements, while others guard the sole entrance of the fortress and patrol the grounds.

1.3 **Temple Grounds:** The wide-open area inside the fortification is lined with small houses under construction, large tents to accommodate the many people who have come to celebrate the Shrine's reopening, and high wooden stands surrounding an arena of considerable size where the Great Games will take place. The houses serve as barracks and stores for the Dragon Keep militia. The arena and the tents are temporary.

1.4. **Communal Temple:** The foundation for a large building has been laid inside the fortified walls. Soon this temple will accommodate the many pilgrims expected to come to the Dragon Keep each year. Although the main shrine will open to the public, this communal temple will become an essential part of the visit.

1.5 **Golden Arch:** A thick, square, golden arch frames the entrance to the cavern complex leading to the Shrine of Kor. Like the arch over the double doors opening into the temple, the new arch symbolizes Kor's teachings, magnificence, and wisdom. Dwarven runes reading "May Kor, our blessed father, watch over us" are carved upon the great arch.

## Location 2: The Shrine of Kor (Map Key) (map page 503)

The natural grotto and Dwarven-carved chambers of this dungeon complex are known as the Shrine of Kor.

2.1 **Entrance Hall and Water Basin:** The first antechamber of the Shrine of Kor is devoid of furniture or decoration. The small side cave contains a large ivory basin filled with fresh water, where pilgrims can cleanse themselves before venturing farther into the holy place.

2.2 **Caves:** These caves are empty.

2.3 **Lake and Treasure:** The great lake in the midst of this large grotto is covered with an invisible force field. Visitors can walk onto the lake and gaze at the coins lying at its bottom.

2.4 **Main Shrine of Kor:** This is the main worship hall. A massive and wonderfully crafted statue of the deity, as well as a simple stone altar, adorns the room.

2.5 **Priests' Quarters:** These chambers are complete with bedchambers (5d), a kitchen (5c), a dining hall (5b), and an inner sanctum (5a) where the clerics can pray in solitude.

# Part 1: Kor's Great Games

ENCOUNTER 1: JOURNEY TO THE DRAGON KEEP

The adventure opens when the PCs reach the isolated plateau upon which they found the dragon's lair. The place has changed over the last few months.

**Read aloud:** *As you make your way through the familiar area, you realize the path you are traveling is broader than it once was. Wagons have carved deep furrows into the mud. You find evidence of several temporary campsites, complete with empty fire pits, remnants of dry woodpiles, and trampled underbrush where travelers slept.*

*Two days before you reach your destination, you spot a broken wagon wheel at the side of the road. Near it is a battered leather pouch containing crumbs of travel rations, as well as several booted tracks. After three more hours of travel, there are so many wagon tracks and boot prints upon the trail that you can no longer estimate how many people have passed. Things have changed since you last came to these parts.*

*A day and a half later, as you approach the steep ridge of the dragon's lair, you see a massive stone staircase, complete with elaborate statues and a solid-looking railing, in the place you once had to climb. As you look upon the finely carved Dwarven warriors, you notice that a wide area of the forested hills has been cleared to accommodate a score of wagons. Near the rock wall, to the left of the new staircase, is a large stable.*

*Looking up, you notice a massive stone structure near the edge of the steep hillock: a thick stone palisade, with several high towers standing watch above it. The staircase leads to the only visible opening in the new fortifications.*

*There are many people here, mostly Humans but a very few Dwarves, dressed in clean, simple garb. Most go about their business without sparing you a glance. A pair of Dwarven warriors with polished breastplates and long-handled axes guard the staircase, mirroring the statues above them. Their eyes are fixed upon you, but they do not seem alarmed by your presence.*

*"State your name and business at the Shrine of Kor," says one of the warriors as you approach.*

If the PCs have been invited to the temple or if they are accompanying a rich pilgrim or an official dignitary, the Dwarves welcome them, invite them to visit Moranen, the acting High Priest of the shrine, and step away from the stairs to let the travelers pass.

If the PCs came here on business of their own, the Dwarven guards question them further. Here, the heroes can either try to Bluff the Dwarves or use Diplomacy on them. The guards do not rebuke the PCs unless they are being either difficult or secretive about their reason for being here. Whatever the outcome of the conversation, there are good chances the Dwarves ask the PCs to meet Moranen, but if they are causing trouble, the warriors escort them to the acting high priest.

**Read aloud:** *You make your way up the wide stone stairway, impressed by the massive wall towering above you. After 30 feet you reach the plateau, which is no longer as you remember it. A massive fortification, complete with battlements and watchtowers, stands near the edge of the plateau. The grilled gate is flanked with arrow slits on either side.*

*As you clear the gate and enter the temple's ground, a small throng of fair Human maidens welcomes you to the temple, throwing flower petals above your head and saying things like "Bless the lord of the earth!" and "Enjoy the celebrations!" Once you pass them, you recognize the place and spot a newly-forged golden gate built over the cave mouth. The polished metal gleams in the late afternoon sun.*

*You also notice the fortress walls are not yet completed. A few parapets and stubby towers are still under construction, and many buildings inside the palisades need roofs. Stonecutters and sculptors are preparing the raw materials and decorations; carpenters and masons are raising the walls of small houses, tiling rooftops and working the grounds; still others are erecting great tents, to house the many pilgrims that already number in the hundreds. To the east are great wooden stands forming an almost complete circle around a makeshift arena.*

### Encounter 2: Moranen and the Master of the Games

**Read aloud:** *As you look about the temple's grounds, a kindly old Human garbed in simple white linen robes approaches. Accompanying him is a young Dwarf of impressive girth in elegant red and blue silks. "Welcome to the Shrine of Kor," says the old man, smiling. "I am Moranen, high priest of this place. I bid you to join in the festivities."*

*"As you can see," the Dwarf says, pointing towards the large wooden stands, "we are almost ready. I am eager to see how experienced adventurers like yourselves fare in the games..."*

**If Moranen recognizes the heroes as the ones who liberated the dragon's lair and uncovered the lost temple, he embraces them all in turn and bids them to have a glass of fine wine with him. If the PCs agree, Moranen leads them to an outdoor table and invites them to sit down with him. The old priest wants to hear about their experiences with the evil dragon.**

The Dwarf accompanying Moranen is Beraltan, the festival's appointed Master of the Games. The charismatic Beraltan greets the PCs warmly and suggests that they register their names for the various events set to begin the following day. He also invites them to stay in one of the large tents, alongside travelers and pilgrims from all over the Accordlands.

**Development:** Moranen, the acting high priest of the Shrine of Kor, is a kind and wise old man eager to hear about the PCs' adventures. He is generous with what he can offer: fine red wine and knowledge. Moranen knows his time as leader of the shrine is already drawing to an end, since the ceremonies will close with the official appointment of Koranos as High Priest of the temple. The heroes who cleansed the place a few months ago (see the adventure *The Dragon's Lair* for further details) rescued Koranos, who dedicated most of his life to the discovery of the lost Shrine of Kor. Koranos is devoted to his god, and contrary to rumor, Moranen supports him entirely. The old priest is happy to leave the leadership of one of the most important temples of Kor to someone as competent and trustworthy as Koranos.

When the PCs arrive, Koranos is meditating in his private chambers. The following day, during the celebrations, he may be seen watching the various games. If the PCs were his rescuers, he goes to them and thanks them again for their help.

Beraltan is more pragmatic. Although friendly to the PCs, his job is to ensure they participate in the games, and he does everything in his power to convince them to do so. Beraltan wants this event to be remembered for generations, in the same way that he grew up hearing the tales of the glorious festivals of old. He spent months organizing, making sure the games were authentic. The Master of the Games sees in the PCs the potential for great heroes of the festival — perhaps the greatest that have turned out so far — and he wants them to take part in the many trials.

If the PCs talk to Moranen and Beraltan, allow them to roll Diplomacy checks. If they tell Moranen their stories, or promise Beraltan that they will participate in his glorious games, add a +5 circumstance bonus to the checks. What the PCs learn depends on their check. According to the DC they meet, they learn the following information (higher DCs also yield information from all lower DCs; all rumors are true unless otherwise marked):

**DC 10**

- Now that the glorious shrine has been discovered and reopened, the clergy of Kor plans to commemorate the occasion with a great festival, just as they did in the ancient times. Tomorrow will be the first such celebration in centuries.
- People have come from all over the Accordlands for the festivities. Important Dwarven and Human dignitaries are among the hundreds of pilgrims, though sadly few Dwarves could make it.
- The Great Games, which last all day tomorrow, include five great trials. The winner of each trial will be honored in a short ceremony after each event. Winners receive mighty gifts.
- A high priest will be appointed at the conclusion of the Great Games.
- Moranen wants to be appointed the permanent high priest (this is false).

**DC 15**

- Lord Narcil, a noble knight from Andover, is among the favored of the event. Many expect him to win all the trials.
- Karas, a Dwarven hero, is Lord Narcil's fiercest competitor. A fervent follower of Kor, he has vowed to win all the events.
- The architects and engineers in charge of the construction believe the completion of the Dragon Keep should take five or six more weeks.
- The winner of the most trials, or the person who most impresses the judges, will be dubbed "Champion of the Games." This hero will receive a special reward.

DC 20

- Twelve judges, selected from the finest and wisest present, will decide who wins a particular trial. Members of the clergy are among the judges, but some have been chosen from the lower ranks of society.
- Legends tell of a hidden passageway leading to the catacombs of the temple. In these catacombs are interred the priests of ancient times.
- The tomb of an ancient king can be found in the catacombs under the Shrine of Kor. Great treasures may be found in the king's tomb.

DC 25+

- Moranen, the appointed high priest of the shrine, is happy to give up the leadership of the Shrine of Kor. In fact, the old cleric cannot wait to retire and live the rest of his life in peace, away from complicated ecclesiastical politics.
- None knows the way to the catacombs under the temple, but some believe the *Axe of Gorek* might be found there along with the remains of the king after which the weapon was named.

The PCs may instead acquire some of this information with a successful Knowledge (history), Knowledge (local), Gather Information, or Bardic Knowledge check.

# Part 2: Trials and Tribulations

The day of the festival begins with a simple breakfast at long tables in the Dragon Keep's courtyard. Beraltan, the Master of the Games, invites everyone to partake in the feast: cold slices of salty boar meat, rye and wheat breads, hard boiled eggs of various sizes and colors, spiced filets of trout, fine red wine, and hot mead that warms the belly.

After breakfast, the Master of the Games invites everyone to witness the first trial.

### Encounter 3: Trial One: Test of Strength

The first trial of the day begins after breakfast. After the heroes finish eating, Beraltan invites everyone to take their places in the wooden stands. While the throng moves towards the stands, participants are asked to follow Dastiron, a young Human priest of Kor, who informs them the first trial is about to begin:

**Read aloud:** *"Gentlemen, ladies," the young priest says, smiling at the participants gathered around him. "It has been hundreds of years since we have celebrated such a great occasion, and you have been chosen to participate in these sacred events." He regards each of you in turn. "The first trial is simple. It is a test of strength, will, and endurance... but I'm getting ahead of myself. First, I must ask you to form teams of four. Your teams will work together during the entire competition, so choose wisely."*

There are 40 participants. Everyone is free to choose with whom they wish to compete, so PCs who want to work together may do so. If there are more than four PCs in the party, however, they have to be separated in different teams. Heroes who wish to join Lord Narcil's team or Karas's band are free to do so; these two champions have not yet decided on team members and may be convinced to work with any of the PCs. Once the ten teams are formed, the Master of the Games addresses the crowd while other members of the clergy prepare the grounds.

**Read aloud:** *"To begin," Dastiron says, "two from each team will participate in the first event. Those who participate in this event may not enter the second trial, the test of agility."*

There are several volunteers among the people who have been chosen to participate in the event. Dastiron encourages the beefiest to participate, especially among the PCs. Half again as many NPCs as participating PCs join in, including Lord Narcilis and Karasis.

Meanwhile the Master of the Games welcomes the people to the event and invites the crowd to utter a short prayer with him while the participants get ready. The first trial begins after the prayer.

**Development:** Each participant must carry a boulder from one side of the arena to the next, a distance of 200 feet. These boulders are magically enhanced to become gradually heavier as the event unfolds.

The first round, participants must succeed at a Strength check (DC 15) in order to carry the boulder. The DC increases by 1 point every round. With a failed check, the participant cannot move forward and must make a Constitution check (DC varies as per the Strength check DC) to not drop the boulder. With a successful check, the contestant may keep the weight and continue forward the next round; he nevertheless loses one round of movement to the failed Strength check. A failed Constitution check means the participant drops the boulder and is disqualified from the event. When this happens, allow the contestant a Willpower save (DC equal to Strength check for that round) to avoid taking 4d4 points of subdual damage from the effort of dragging the magical boulder.

**Scoring:** The first contestant to reach the other side scores 10 points, the second, 8 points, the third 6, the fourth 4, and the fifth 2. Eliminated participants do not score any points, nor do participants arriving in sixth place or later. The team that accumulates the most points wins the trial. In case of a tie, the team with the contestant that finished earlier wins.

**Prize:** The team that wins this first trial is given a beautiful pair of spiked masterwork gauntlets. These are made of thick brown leather and laced with spiked strips of strong steel the color of shiny copper.

### Encounter 4: Trial Two: Test of Agility

**Read aloud:** *As the cheers of the crowd die down, Beraltan addresses the people again. "Only half of the team members participated to the first trial. Now, we will see what the others can do!" In the place of the magical boulders, small round targets painted white and red are set 100 feet away from the participants. Ten targets, one for each team, are lined up. Acolytes from the temple bring each participating duo a pair of light hammers, two javelins, a sling with two bullets, a shortbow with two arrows, and a medium crossbow with a pair of bolts.*

*"Every contestant," the Master of the Games continues, "must throw five different kinds of missile weapons at the targets. Each participant gets four tries, and every hit is worth one point."*

**Development:** For each contestant, the AC to hit the target (100 feet away) is 18. The range increment for each weapon is modified from normal: –16 for the light hammers, –12 for the javelins, –8 for the sling and bullets, –4 for the bow and arrows, and no penalties for the crossbow. Participants may notice these weapons are all ordinary, but the projectiles are slightly heavier than average; characters familiar with these weapons notice this and can assess that the range increments are different.

**Scoring:** Each weapon that hits the target earns 1 point. The team with the most points wins.

**Winners:** The winners of this event are given a masterwork bronze throwing hammer. Embedded in the butt end of the weapon is a fiery ruby worth 500 gp.

### Encounter 5: Trial Three: Test of Wits

**Read aloud:** *Ten rows of wooden doors framed in thick arches are set in the middle of the arena. As priests of Kor arrange the grounds for the next event, laying the heavy-looking doors in place, Dastiron hands each team two sets of square stone blocks. One set is comprised of 24 pieces, each one representing a different letter of the Common alphabet. In the other set of blocks are engraved numbers ranging from one to twelve.*

*"Ladies, gentlemen!" The voice of the Master of the Games echoes throughout the arena. "Our contestants will work as full teams for the first time. They must solve the riddles on three different doors. A wrong attempt will disqualify a member of their team. The member who attempts to solve the puzzle by placing the right blocks into the appropriate place in the doorframe." Beraltan pauses dramatically. "The team that passes through each door in the fastest time gains twelve points, the second team eight points, and the third four points. Disqualified members will be pulled away and will not be able to aid their team mates"*

**Development:** To win this event, participants must solve the riddle of each door. In order to solve the puzzles, they must place the appropriate cubes into the slots reserved for them. Inappropriate answers results in one participant from the team being disqualified for the rest of this trial.

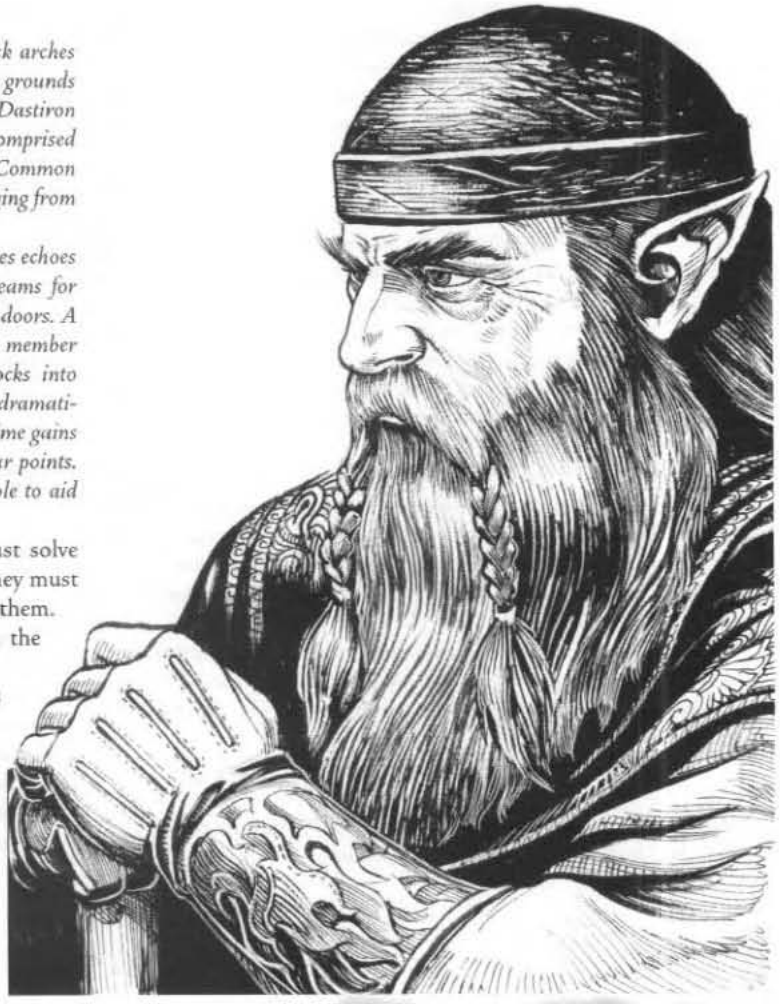
**Door 1:** Upon the first door, the following letters are carved in a circular fashion: H, D, O, U, N, T, O, Y. Following the letters is one empty box. Participants must determine which letter among the twenty-six that they have been given completes the chain. The answer is "R," since these letters represent "HONOR" and "DUTY". When the contestant places the "R" in the empty slot, the door unlocks.

**Door 2:** The second door has the words "Forward I'm heavy. Backwards I'm not," carved into it. There are three empty slots, each large enough for one letter. The answer to this riddle is "TON."

**Door 3:** Carved into the last door is the following phrase: "Magically enhanced dire rats reproduce themselves at an unearthly pace. Two rats are placed in the cage at noon. Every hour, the number of rats in the cage doubles. If the cage is full at 7 o'clock, at what time will the cage be half full?" The answer is "6" since the number of rats doubles every hour.

**Scoring:** The first team to complete the event wins 12 points, the second 8 points, and the third only 4 points. For every participant who makes it all the way to the end, add one point. The team that accumulates the more points wins the trial. Each team member may only try once, with an incorrect guess passing the turn in reverse order of the teams' ranks. A team only places if they have solved at least one door.

**Prize:** Each member of the winning team is given a glass vial containing a thick blue balm which equals three doses of an ointment of remove poison.



### Encounter 6: Trial Four: Test of Honor

**Development:** For the fourth trial, one contestant — usually one of the leading competitors — challenges another champion to a friendly duel. In the course of these games, either Karas or Lord Narcil might become the challenger, depending on who has ranked higher during the first three trials. If they are on the same team, they might even challenge an entire team to a friendly melee.

The duel or melee takes place in the central square of the arena after the challenger (either Karas or Narcil) makes a short speech to invite an opposing champion (one of the PCs or the PCs' entire team). The battle ensues with contestants striking subdual blows to one another until there is a clear winner.

**Scoring:** There is no official way of winning this trial, but contestants who prove to be honorable adversaries each score 1 point, even though they might not win. The winner of the event — or the winning team — gains 5 additional points. These are added to the team's total of the entire event.

**Prize:** There is no prize for this event. Honor is its own reward.

**Lord Narcil, Male Human Pal 11:** CR 11; Medium humanoid (Human); HD 11d8+33; hp 87; Init +4; Spd 20 ft.; AC 24, touch 10, flat-footed 24, Base Atk +11; Grp +15; Atk +20 melee (1d10+8 plus 1d6 vs. evil(19–20/x2), *+4 holy bastard sword*) or +11 ranged (1d10(19–20/x2), heavy crossbow); Full Atk +20/+15/+10 melee (1d10+8 plus 1d6 vs. evil(19–20/x2), *+4 holy bastard sword*) or +11 ranged (1d10(19–20/x2), heavy crossbow); SA Blessed armament (+4) (bastard sword), turn undead 7/day (as a 9th-level cleric), spells; SQ Aura of courage, detect alignment, divine health, lay on hands, zeal, Human traits, race/class abilities; AL LG; SV Fort +13, Ref +6, Will +8; Str 19, Dex 11, Con 17, Int 13, Wis 14, Cha 18.

*Skills and Feats:* Diplomacy +14, Handle Animal +12, Heal +12, Ride +10, Spot +6; Feats: Blind Fight, Exotic Weapon Proficiency (bastard sword), Follow Me (x2), Improved Initiative, Leadership Power Attack, Weapon Focus (bastard sword).

*Race/Class Abilities: Paladin*: Divine Vigilance, True Leader.

*Aura of Courage*: Lord Narcil is immune to fear (magical or otherwise). Allies within 10 feet of the paladin gain a +4 morale bonus on saving throws against fear effects; this is a supernatural ability.

*Blessed Armament (bastard sword)*: Lord Narcil's bastard sword is invested with the might of his deity and functions as a *+4 blessed* magic weapon that deals +1d6 points of damage against creatures opposite the paladin's alignment (*holy*). In addition, Lord Narcil may cast *dispel magic* once per day at a caster level equal to his paladin level.

*Detect Alignment:* At will, Lord Narcil can detect the presence of the opposite alignment as a spell-like ability (*detect good*).

*Divine Health*: Lord Narcil is immune to all diseases including magical ones.

*Lay On Hands*: Lord Narcil may cure up to 44 hit points of damage per day.

*Turn Undead:* Lord Narcil may turn undead 7 times per day as a cleric two levels lower than his paladin level.

*Zeal:* When Lord Narcil is reduced to 0 or fewer hit points he may make a Fortitude save (DC 10 + the number of hit points below 0) to continue fighting as if he were at one hit point. Each time Lord Narcil suffers additional damage, he must continue to make a Fortitude save to keep fighting. When Lord Narcil is reduced to –10 hit points, he dies as normal.

*Paladin Spells Prepared* (0/2/2; save DC 12 + spell level): 1st — *cure light wounds, divine favor;* 2nd — *bull's strength, zone of truth.*

*Possessions*: Masterwork full plate armor, *+4 large steel shield, masterwork blessed bastard sword, cloak of resistance +3.*

**Karas, Dwarven Champion, Male Dwarf Ftr 12:** CR 12; Medium humanoid (Dwarf); HD 12d10+51; hp 127; Init +5; Spd 20 ft.; AC 23, touch 11, flat-footed 22; Base Atk +12; Grp +16; Atk +20 melee (1d8+9(18–20/x3), *+1 battleaxe*) or +15 ranged (1d10+3(19–20/x2), masterwork heavy crossbow); Full Atk +20/+15/+10 melee (1d8+9(18–20/x3), *+1 battleaxe*) or +15 ranged (1d10+3(19–20/x2), masterwork heavy crossbow); SA Favored weapon (battleaxe, heavy crossbow, longsword), improved critical threat (battleaxe), improved damage (battleaxe, heavy crossbow); SQ Dwarf traits; AL LG; SV Fort +15, Ref +5, Will +6; Str 19, Dex 13, Con 19, Int 11, Wis 10, Cha 14.

*Skills and Feats:* Climb +12*, Jump +12*, Spot +5; Cleave, Dodge, Great Fortitude, Iron Will, Improved Bull Rush, Improved Initiative, Power Attack, Toughness, Weapon Focus (battleaxe). *includes –2 armor check penalty.

*Race/Class Abilities: Fighter*: Natural Born Warrior (battleaxe), Hardy (+1 Fort, +2 hp/lvl, +12 stability), Back-to-Back.

*Favored Weapon (battleaxe, heavy crossbow, longsword)*: Karas gains a +1 competence bonus to attack and damage rolls with the battleaxe, heavy crossbow, and longsword.

*Improved Critical Threat (battleaxe)*: Karas' critical threat range is increased by +2 (to 17–20) with the battleaxe.

*Improved Damage (battleaxe, heavy crossbow)*: Karas does an additional +2 (+3 total) damage with the battleaxe and heavy crossbow.

*Possessions: +2 chain shirt*, masterwork heavy steel shield, *+1 battleaxe*, masterwork heavy crossbow, 40 bolts, *amulet of natural armor +4, potion of bull's strength* (2 doses).

## Part 3: Chuul Attack (EL 12)

### Encounter 7: Trial Five: Test of Arms

**Read aloud:** *The Master of the Games raises his hands to quiet the cheers of the crowd, then smiles broadly. "We are now at our last trial of the day—" Suddenly a scream rips through the air. The crowd panics. You see a large creature with powerful pincers, squirming tentacles, and a wide tail emerge from the golden arch. An orange carapace streaked with black stripes covers its clumsy body. It shakes its lobster-like head as powerful teeth sink into the body of the priest it is holding in its jaw. An instant later, it discards the carcass and moves outside the gate towards the arena. As soon as the arch is empty another grotesque head emerges, then more.*

The three creatures panic the crowd. Only the most heroic NPCs, such as Karas and Lord Narcil, are willing to fight it, but most of them are busy helping Koranos, Moranen, and the Master of the Games control the crowd.

The aberrations are chuuls that have found their way out of the Shrine of Kor. They are part of a pack inhabiting the underground catacombs that were, until recently, sealed off. Workers restoring the Shrine have unknowingly trigged a mechanism that opened a secret passageway to the catacombs.

**Creatures:** Three chuuls.

**Chuul (3):** CR 7; Large aberration (aquatic); HD 11d8+44; hp 93; Init +7; Spd 30 ft., swim 20 ft.; AC 22, touch 12, flat-footed 19; Base Atk +8, Grp +17; Atk +12 melee (2d6+5/x2, claw); Full Atk +12 melee (2d6+5/x2, 2 claws); Space/Reach 10 ft./5 ft.; SA Constrict 3d6+5, improved grab, paralytic tentacles; SQ Amphibious, darkvision 60 ft., immunity to poison; AL CE; SV Fort +7, Ref +6, Will +9; Str 20, Dex 16, Con 18, Int 10, Wis 14, Cha 5.

*Skills and Feats:* Hide +13, Listen +11, Spot +11, Swim +13; Alertness, Blind-Fight,Combat Reflexes, Improved Initiative.

*Amphibious:* Although chuuls are aquatic, they can survive indefinitely on land.

*Constrict:* On a successful grapple check, a chuul deals 3d6+5 points of damage.

*Darkvision, 60 ft.:* A chuul can see in the dark with no light source at all, out to a range of 60 feet. Darkvision is black and white only (colors cannot be discerned). It does not allow the chuul to see anything that it could not see otherwise—invisible objects are still invisible, and illusions are still visible as what they seem to be. Likewise, darkvision subjects the chuul to gaze attacks normally. The presence of light does not spoil darkvision.

*Immunity to Poison:* A chuul is immune to any sort of poison.

*Improved Grab:* To use this ability, a chuul must hit with a claw attack. It can then attempt to start a grapple as a free action without provoking an attack of opportunity. If it wins the grapple check, it establishes a hold and can constrict or on its next turn transfer a grabbed opponent to its tentacles.

*Paralytic Tentacles:* A chuul can transfer grabbed victims from a claw to its tentacles as a move action. The tentacles grapple with the same strength as the claw but deal no damage. However, they exude a paralytic secretion. Anyone held in the tentacles must succeed on a DC 19 Fortitude save each round on the chuul's turn or be paralyzed for 6 rounds. The save DC is Constitution-based. While held in the tentacles, paralyzed or not, a victim automatically takes 1d8+2 points of damage each round from the creature's mandibles.

**Development:** The PCs are the only ones who can stand against the powerful chuuls, which charge toward the crowd, an obvious source of easy prey.

Once the creatures have been dealt with and the crowd is under control, a surviving priest tells the PCs that the creatures broke out of a secret passageway in the main worship area of the Shrine of Kor. They killed three priests and two Dwarven sculptors who were working in the shrine.

Koranos (the future high priest) and Moranen (the current acting high priest) beg for help in closing up the catacombs and sealing away the Abyssals. If the PCs are hesitant to take up the mission, the clerics tell them everything they find in the catacombs is theirs to keep; the priests are only interested in the safety of their shrine. The priests heal the PCs to full health before the party ventures into the dungeons. If Lord Narcil or Karas are in good health, they may accompany the party.

## Location 3: The Lost Catacombs

Most of the catacombs below the Shrine of Kor lie in ruins, as there have been many cave-ins over the centuries.

**Walls and Ceilings:** Most of the dungeon complex was carved out of the mountain rock. Ceilings in halls and most of the rooms are 20 feet high unless otherwise noted. A successful Knowledge (architecture or engineering) or Craft (masonry) check (DC 20) reveals the walls and ceilings are still solid and present no immediate danger to the party, even in areas where there have been cave-ins.

**Doors:** All doors in the complex are made of stone. All are 8 ft. high, 4 ft. wide and 8 inches thick.

**Stone Door:** 8 inches thick; Hardness 8; hp 60; Break DC 28.

**Illumination:** Unless otherwise mentioned, there are no lights anywhere in the temple. PCs without darkvision have to provide their own light source in order to explore the complex, which makes them visible to the many inhabitants.

**Random Encounters:** As the characters explore the catacombs, there is a 25% chance per hour of encountering 1 wandering chuul (*see above for statistics*).

## Location 3.1: The Long Way Down

The entrance to the catacombs is on the northern wall of the Shrine of Kor (*see area 4 of the Shrine of Kor map*) behind the massive statue of the deity.

**Read aloud:** *The shrine is exactly as you remember it, with an altar in the center and a magnificent statue of Kor in the guise of a stout warrior standing watch. Behind the great representation of the deity, part of the wall has shifted to reveal a passageway leading into darkness. Fresh blood stains the floor.*

**Development:** PCs investigating the secret door spot that part of the northern wall is in fact a sliding panel. PCs who succeed at a Search check (DC 20) find the mechanism that triggered the door is linked to the statue of Kor: one of the rings upon the statue's fingers can be turned 180 degrees, opening or closing the secret panel.

Two workers were killed in this room when the chuuls attacked. One of them inadvertently opened the door while he was cleaning the statue. The creatures, which heard the sliding door from the catacombs below, went up the long corridor to explore. They surprised both workers, and killed them before they could flee.

**Read aloud:** *The passageway is 10 feet wide and just as high, but seems to continue into the darkness for eternity. The floor slopes subtly downward.*

This corridor is almost 500 feet long and leads to the catacomb level, which is 100 feet deeper into the mountains.

## Location 3.2: Antechamber

**Read aloud:** *The long sloping passageway finally ends in a wide and ordinary-looking chamber. The only features in it are the massive stone double doors on the north walls, which bear sculpted runes in intriguing patterns. The doors are wide open.*

There is nothing of interest in this room. Heroes talking or making noises here, however, might alert the large ethereal filcher in Location 3.3.

## Location 3.3: Interconnecting Room (EL 5)

This area was once an interconnecting chamber leading to various parts of the catacombs. It is the home of powerful ethereal filcher that hunts for food in the dungeon complex.

**Read aloud:** *This square room is the intersection of three other corridors, excluding the one that brought you here. These passageways open into darkness.*

**Creature:** The ethereal filcher is not visible until it chooses to reveal itself, grabbing any piece of equipment it can carry and retreating to its plane of origin.

**Ethereal Filcher:** CR 5; Large aberration; HD 10d8+20; hp 64; Init +8; Spd 40 ft.; AC 17, touch 12, flat-footed 14; Base Atk +7, Grp +15; Atk +10 melee (1d6+6/x2, bite); Full Atk +10 melee (1d6+6/x2, bite); Space/Reach 5 ft./5 ft.; SA -; SQ Darkvision 60 ft., detect magic, ethereal jaunt; AL CE; SV Fort +1, Ref +5, Will +5; Str 18, Dex 16, Con 15, Int 7, Wis 12, Cha 10.

*Skills and Feats*: Listen +10*, Sleight of Hand +15*, Spot +10*; Dodge, Improved Initiative. *Ethereal filchers have a +8 racial bonus on Sleight of Hand checks, and a +4 racial bonus on Listen and Spot checks.

*Darkvision, 60 ft.*: An ethereal filcher can see in the dark with no light source at all, out to a range of 60 feet. Darkvision is black and white only (colors cannot be discerned). It does not allow the ethereal filcher to see anything that it could not see otherwise—invisible objects are still invisible, and illusions are still visible as what they seem to be. Likewise, darkvision subjects the ethereal filcher to gaze attacks normally. The presence of light does not spoil darkvision.

*Detect Magic*: Ethereal filchers can detect magic as the spell (caster level 5th) at will.

*Ethereal Jaunt:* An ethereal filcher can shift from the Ethereal Plane to the Material Plane as part of any move action, and shift back again as a free action. It can remain on the Ethereal Plane for 1 round before returning to the Material Plane. The ability is otherwise identical with the *ethereal jaunt* spell (caster level 15th).

## Location 3.4: Caved-In Corridor

This corridor is caved in. It once led to the burial chambers of various members of Kor's clergy.

**Read aloud:** *Rubble of crushed stone, broken rocks, and earth blocks this passageway.*

## Location 3.5: Clerical Tombs

These are the burial chambers of clerics that once served at the Shrine of Kor.

**Read aloud:** *Each of these small rooms have simple square walls and contains a single stone coffin. Letters in old Dwarven are carved upon each lid.*

The stone coffins are 5 feet long, 3 feet wide, and 3 feet high. From **Location 3.5.1 to 3.5.5,** the inscriptions upon them read: "Racir," "Nobi," "Forti," "Kurn," and "Buros." These are the names of the priests within. If the PCs open the coffins, they find dusty bones and tiny bits of clothes that have not yet disintegrated. All the lids open easily and none are trapped.

*Treasure:* In addition to the remains of the clerics, the coffin in area 5c contains a white linen robe in perfect condition. It is a *robe of protection +1.*

## Location 3.6: Preparation Chamber (EL 7)

**Read aloud:** This small chamber has three low stone tables containing clay jars, strips of rotten cloth, and bundles of dried herbs.

This is where dead priests and nobles were washed and sanctified before they were taken to their crypts.

A chuul sleeps in this room, waking when the PCs enter. It attacks them on sight, targeting the largest hero first.

**Creature:** One chuul *(see Encounter 7 for stats).*

**Chuul (1):** hp 93.

*Treasure:* The cloth and herbs fall to dust when touched, but one jar contains four doses of an *ointment of remove disease.*

## Location 3.7: Temple (EL 8)

This is where the priests of Kor recited funeral rites over those interred in the catacombs.

The ceiling in this area is 50 feet high.

**Read aloud:** A massive statue carved from gray stone representing Kor in Human form is the first thing you notice as you enter this large temple. At the base of the 30-foot statue is a stone altar filled with burning candles. Upon the altar is a golden box encrusted with fiery rubies and an opened book bound in thick brown leather.

The statue of Kor is an animated object. It remains still until anyone other than a Dwarf disturbs the items on the altar. There is no "magical phrase" that prevents this creature from attacking if the altar is disturbed by anyone but a Dwarf character. However, if at any time during the encounter the items are put back into place and someone utters: "May Kor, our blessed father, watch over us" in Narawati, the construct returns to its original position. It remains inanimate until either someone strikes it or the items on the altar are taken again.

**Creature:** One statue of Kor.

**Statue of Kor:** CR 5; Gargantuan construct; HD 16d10+60; hp 148; Init –2; Spd 20 ft.; AC 12, touch 4, flat-footed 12; Base Atk +12, Grp +31; Atk +15 melee (2d8+10/x2, slam); Full Atk +15 melee (2d8+10/x2, slam); Space/Reach ft.20 ft/20 ft.; SA Trample ; SQ Construct traits, darkvision 60 ft., hardness 8, low-light vision; AL N; SV Fort +5, Ref +3, Will +0; Str 24, Dex 6, Con —, Int —, Wis 1, Cha 1.

*Skills and Feats:* None; none.

*Construct traits:* A construct has the following traits:

- No Constitution score.
- Low-light vision.
- Darkvision out to 60 feet.
- Immunity to all mind-affecting effects (charms, compulsions, phantasms, patterns, and morale effects).
- Immunity to poison, sleep effects, paralysis, stunning, disease, death effects, and necromancy effects.
- Cannot heal damage on its own, but often can be repaired by exposing it to a certain kind of effect or through the use of the Craft Construct feat. A construct with the fast healing special quality still benefits from that quality.
- Not subject to critical hits, non-lethal damage, ability damage, ability drain, fatigue, exhaustion, or energy drain.
- Immunity to any effect that requires a Fortitude save (unless the effect also works on objects, or is harmless).
- Not at risk of death from massive damage. Immediately destroyed when reduced to 0 hit points or less.
- Since it was never alive, a construct cannot be raised or resurrected.
- Because its body is a mass of unloving matter, a construct is hard to destroy. It gains bonus hit points based on size, as shown in the Table on page 307 of the *Monster Manual*.
- Proficient with its natural weapons only, unless generally humanoid in form, in which case proficient with any weapon mentioned in its entry.
- Proficient with no armor.
- Constructs do not eat, sleep, or breathe.

*Darkvision, 60 ft.*: The statue of Kor can see in the dark with no light source at all, out to a range of 60 feet. Darkvision is black and white only (colors cannot be discerned). It does not allow the statue of Kor to see anything that it could not see otherwise—invisible objects are still invisible, and illusions are still visible as what they seem to be. Likewise, darkvision subjects the statue of Kor to gaze attacks normally. The presence of light does not spoil darkvision.

*Hardness*: The statue of Kor subtracts 8 points of damage from any attacks against it.

*Trample:* The statue of Kor can trample creatures of size Large or smaller, dealing 2d8+10 points of damage. Opponents who do not make attacks of opportunity against the statue can attempt Reflex saves (DC 25) to halve the damage.

*Treasure:* The twelve candles on the altar are imbued with a permanent continual flame spell and cannot be extinguished through normal means. The book is The Book of Kor and contains ancient rituals and prayers to honor the deity. Three loose pages from this book are scrolls containing the following divine spells: divine power, greater magic weapon, and heal. The golden box is worth 5000 gp and holds three glass vials. The first contains a potion of charisma (2 doses), the second a potion of bull's strength (4 doses), and the third a potion of cure serious wounds (3 doses).

## Location 3.8: Caved-In Burial Chamber

**Read aloud:** *Most of what lied in this chamber was crushed under the weight of an important cave-in. The room is filled with crushed stone and broken boulders, but the corner of a stone coffin can be seen from under the rubbles.*

This large room was once the tomb of an important Dwarven cleric and ardent follower of Kor. If the PCs clear up the rubble, they can open the dignitary's coffin. Clearing the rubbles takes four people two full hours. Alternatively, they may break the side of the coffin:

*Stone Coffin:* 8 inches thick; Hardness 10; hp 60; Break DC 30.
*Treasure:* Within the coffin is a +1 warhammer.

## Location 3.9: Norwen's Tomb (EL 4)

**Read aloud:** *This simple square room holds a massive stone coffin. The tomb is similar to all the others, but the engraved words upon its lid have been scratched into illegibility.*

The coffin is trapped with a poison needle. As soon as the lid is moved, the needle trap is triggered.

**Poison Needle Trap:** CR 4; mechanical; touch trigger; manual reset; Atk +12 ranged (1 plus poison/x2, needle); poison (giant wasp poison DC 18 Fortitude save resists (poison only), 1d6 Dex/1d6 Dex); Search DC 22; Disable Device DC 20.

*Treasure:* Inside the hero's coffin are a *+2 chain shirt*, a *+2 shortspear*, and 500 pp.

## Location 3.10: Underground Stream and Nest (EL 13)

**Read aloud:** *A natural stream passes through this chamber, 2 feet below what remains of the long-collapsed floor. The underground river seems to be deep and wider than the opening, with smooth currents. A pile of broken tree limbs and rubble from the ruined floor is amassed in a corner.*

The rubble is the chuul pack's nest. The river is 20 feet deep and runs out of the mountains one mile away from this chamber. PCs who wish to exit the catacombs via this stream need to find a way to breathe underwater; otherwise, they drown.

*The chuul pack entered the catacombs through this room. Because this is the only chamber with access to water, they nest here. They get their regular supply of food from the water.*

If a chuul was encountered as a wandering monster, there is one fewer found here.

**Creature:** One chuul *(see Encounter 7 for stats)*.

**Chuul (9):** hp 93 (all chuuls).

*Treasure:* The chuul nest contains twelve pieces of amber (each worth 200 gp), a tarnished silver necklace (worth 150 gp), as well as 256 ep, 240 cp, 147 sp, and 238 gp.

## Location 3.11: False Burial Chamber (EL 2)

**Read aloud:** *An elaborate bronze coffin lies upon a 10-foot square dais at the heart of this simple looking room. The tomb's sides are straight and smooth, but its lid is shaped in the form of a muscular Human wearing what looks like a short skirt and laced sandals. The figure's arms are crossed upon its massive chest and the features of the man's face are so beautifully crafted they seem almost real.*

*This is the false tomb of King Gorek.*

PCs who succeed at a Search check (DC 15) discover a panel in the northern wall that is different from the rest of the stone structure. Further searching may (DC 25) turn up a small round opening, 6 inches in diameter, on the west side of the room. Within this hole is the lever that opens the secret door. A PC must reach a hand inside the hole to pull on the mechanism.

*Trap:* The lever in the small opening is trapped. Anyone pulling on it activates the blade of a miniature guillotine inside.

**Guillotine Trap:** CR 5; mechanical; touch trigger; automatic reset; Atk +15 melee (3d6/x3); Search DC 28; Disable Device DC 30.

Pulling this lever opens the secret door in the wall.

*Lock:* The sarcophagus is locked by an intricate internal mechanism. A successful Open Lock (DC 30) is required to open it. Neither the tomb nor the lock is trapped. Alternatively, PCs may try to break down the sarcophagus.

*Kingly Sarcophagus:* 10 inches thick; Hardness 15; hp 90; Break DC 35.

*Treasure:* Inside the tomb is what remains of the bones of a Human (once a loyal servant of King Gorek) and a tarnished silvered masterwork battleaxe. A secret panel at the bottom of the coffin (Search DC 15) opens into a secret compartment containing 5,000 electrum pieces enchanted (with magic similar to *fool's gold*) to look like platinum.

## Location 3.12: Kingly Burial Chamber (EL 10)

The real burial chamber of King Gorek is identical to the false one, but with no secret panel on the northern wall. The sarcophagus is like the false one, but is trapped and contains different treasure.

**Falling Grate Trap:** CR 3; mechanical; timed trigger; manual reset; Atk +10 melee (6d6); Search DC 10; Disable Device DC 25. *Note:* Damage applies only to those underneath the falling grate. Falling grate blocks passageway.

**Burnt Othur Vapor Trap:** CR 8; mechanical; touch trigger; repair reset; gas; multiple targets (all targets in the burial chamber); never miss; onset delay (3 rounds); poison (burnt othur fumes, DC 18 Fortitude save resists, 1 Con drain/3d6 Con); Search DC 21; Disable Device DC 25.

*Treasure:* The kingly tomb holds the remains of the great monarch, shrouded in strips of white cloth. The corpse holds a mighty looking axe: the *Axe of Gorek (see Part 6)*. There is no other treasure hidden here.

# Part 4: Concluding the Adventure

Once the PCs have secured the catacombs, they can return to the shrine and receive the accolades of the priests and pilgrims. In a great ceremony, the Master of the Games declares them the winners of the event, and each receives an amulet of the symbol of Kor. These amulets confer a +2 luck bonus to Fortitude saves on the wearer. Any priest of Kor considers someone wearing one of these items as a friend and hero.

After a great banquet in the heroes' honor, Moranen announces that the priesthood has named Koranos high priest of the Shrine of Kor.

# Part 5: Stone of Fortune:

**Read aloud:** *The Stone of Fortune gives off very little light this time, but you see an immense warrior striding over the horizon before the vision abruptly ends.*

This is Sceth Hellbringer, who soon returns to the keep.

# Part 6: New Magic Item

AXE OF GOREK

*Minor Artifact*

This great artifact has intricate designs in the center of the wide blade that evoke triangular mountain peaks. Its razor edge never needs sharpening. Dark blue leather straps are tightly woven upon the long wooden handle. An elegantly polished amber stone is set into the butt of the axe. When a spell is stored in the relic, this stone becomes deep blue.

The *Axe of Gorek* acts as a sentient *+3 keen battleaxe of spell storing* with the ability to *detect evil* in a 100-ft. radius. When in the presence of evil, the blade of the axe shines blue, illuminating the area as a torch would. If used to defend Dwarves or Dwarven territory, the wielder gains a +2 luck bonus to all saving throws, a +2 deflection bonus to AC, and spell resistance 15. The axe is sentient, with ability scores Int 16, Wis 12, Cha 8. It uses empathic means to communicate with the wielder (wielder feels urges or emotions), and has an Ego of 14.

*Caster Level:* 20th; *Weight:* 7 lb.



# The Lord of Baraxton

## Introduction

In **The Lord of Baraxton**, the party finds itself opposed to Nassiral Hate, the first of the Medusan Lords they will meet.

This is one of five adventures in Tier 6. It is meant for characters of levels 11–13.

## Adventure Background

The city of Baraxton functions much as it did before the Nothrog took over. Nassiral Hate kidnapped most of the Senate members, seizing the city with threats of force and manipulation of the merchants' greed. The invading legions faced little resistance at first, but have since engaged in skirmishes with a resistance movement. Ultimately, however, the major figures in Baraxton cared more for money than for their city. Hate foresaw this, and cut tariffs after his rise to power, putting the city back to business right away.

The people of Baraxton quickly rallied behind Hate. His public works programs did not end with repairing the damage wrought in his invasion, but expanded and renovated decaying sections of the city. The criminal justice system has similarly evolved under Hate's care, and both capital punishment and class favoritism disappeared literally overnight. While Hate has his detractors, most are criminals, castoffs of the Thieves' Guild, and two of Hate's lieutenants, Krun and Rreg'jen, captured most of these insurgents in a virtually bloodless series of stings in a single night. To all outward appearances, Hate is the very model of a benevolent dictator.

Behind the scenes, the city is just as drastically changed. Merchants still buy, sell, and pay taxes, but now those taxes outfit Hate's legions. Hate's men have slain accused resisters without trial, while Hate plans for bigger conquests beyond Baraxton.

The truth, however, is far more chilling than any of Hate's captains dare to guess: Nassiral Hate is one of the Medusan Lords. Though more public than any of his co-conspirators, Hate's role in the cadre is vital: he controls Baraxton, one of the most important cities in the Accordlands, and through its trade can dictate policy in other nations. Cear Adinerach organized the Assassins' Strike, but Nassiral Hate arranged for many of the nightwalkers' unquestioned passages into otherwise impregnable lairs under the guises of traders or ambassadors, false identities that not even the Thieves' Guild could duplicate.

Baraxton may hold the answers to the most crucial questions facing the Accordlands, but it also holds as many ways to die.

## Adventure Synopsis

The city of Baraxton is completely detailed in the **World Atlas**. The PCs may spend many sessions just investigating, deciding on a course of action to take against Nassiral Hate and how to infiltrate his temple. Enemies and allies made in the city can make the party's job much harder or easier. The key factor for the adventure is whether the PCs can find someone who can get them into the temple. If the party is here specifically to assassinate Hate, they should eventually find allies in the local Cathedral of the Storm. The cathedral is considered a Deverenian sanctuary by the terms of Hate's non-aggression pact with Deverenia, but is also home to Deverenia's plan for betraying that pact: it is a secret hideout for resistance members, and a group of Dwarves are digging a secret passage from the basement into the sewers (*see sidebar Trespass's Dwarves for stats*).

The PCs could plan other ways into the temple. Creating a diversion to draw the guards away might work. The remaining members of the Cartwrights' (Thieves') Guild could get them into the sewers. The focus of the adventure should not be in entering the temple, but what happens once the party does so.

Another party is subtly exerting her influence on the events in this adventure -- Sorscha, possibly an old enemy of the party (*see the adventure Shadow of the Black Tower for more on Sorscha and her motives*). Whatever her previous feelings toward the party, Sorscha is well aware that the Medusan Lords are a greater threat to her. Though she cannot afford to aid the party directly, she does use her **Staff of Secrets** here to blunt Hate's powerful seer abilities. If Sorscha survived her previous run-in with the party, Hate cannot use his seer class abilities or divination spells for the duration of the party's stay in Baraxton. He is, however, too canny to fall for her suggestions with the **Staff of Secrets**, and placed his temple on full alert as soon as he realized that someone else was interfering with his powers. While this may irritate the party, they should prefer this risk to Hate being able to anticipate their every move.

### Trespass's Dwarves

**These are not merely Dwarves with a grudge against Hate, but some of Xod's finest assassins, here to seal an alliance with Deverenia by proving Dwarven strength. The Dwarves have one assassin for every two members of the party. Their leader, Trespass, is a 15th level neutral evil assassin. The Dwarves do not divulge their motives for this mission, but readily accept aid from proven Dwarven or Deverenian heroes. They are cautiously suspicious of any Nothrog in the party, especially evil Nothrog, but only refuse to cooperate with the party if they find the PCs untrustworthy (e.g. the party has a history of belligerence toward Dwarves) or too brash for such a secretive mission. During the actual attack on Hate's temple, Trespass and his assassins separate from the party, intending to attack Hate themselves. Trespass is not in the habit of betraying others without cause. He does not truly abandon the party unless the party first either betrays his people to the Nothrog, or else draws too much attention for his assassins to save the party without compromising their mission.**

**Trespass, Male Dwarf Asn 15:** CR 15; Medium humanoid (Dwarf); HD 15d6+75; hp 120; Init +3; Spd 20 ft; AC 22, touch 13, flat-footed 19; Base Atk +11; Grp +13; Atk +26 melee (1d3+11/x2, unarmed strike) or +14 melee (1d8(19–20/x2), repeating light crossbow); Full Atk +26/+21/+16 melee (1d3+11/x2, unarmed strike) or +14/+9/+4 melee (1d8(19–20/x2), repeating light crossbow); SA Sneak attack +8d6, improved crippling strike (+1d4), ruthless (move-equivalent), spells; SQ Dwarf traits, poison immunity and resistance +4, poison use, skilled brewer, damage reduction 2/—, race/class abilities; AL NE; SV Fort +10, Ref +15, Will +10; Str 15, Dex 16, Con 20, Int 16, Wis 14, Cha 10.

*Skills and Feats*: Balance +13, Climb +12, Disguise +3, Escape Artist +8, Gather Information +5, Hide +18, Jump +9, Listen +9, Move Silently +18, Open Lock +6, Poison +20, Search +13, Sense Motive +7, Spot +12, Tumble +15; Improved Unarmed Strike, Weapon Finesse (unarmed strike), Weapon Specialization (unarmed strike), Blind-Fight, Maim, Sneak.

*Race/Class Abilities: Assassin*: Killer's Hands (unarmed strike: Atk +7/damage +2), Thick Skin (+3 natural armor, damage reduction 2/–).

*Improved Crippling Strike*: When Trespass scores a critical hit in melee combat, rather than inflicting damage he may inflict normal damage (the hit point damage is not doubled as usual for a critical hit) plus 1d4 + his Intelligence modifier (+3) in temporary damage to the victim's Strength, Dexterity, or Constitution.

*Poison Immunity and Resistance*: Trespass has a +4 save bonus against all poisons and is immune to black lotus extract, deathblade, Miseran powder, and crypt wine poisons.

*Poison Use*: Trespass is trained in the use of poison and never risks accidentally poisoning himself when applying poison to a blade.

*Ruthless*: Trespass may make one coup de grace attack as a melee attack action once per round and an additional coup de grace action as either a melee attack action or as a move-equivalent action.

*Skilled Brewer:* Trespass is trained to brew poison and always has a +2 competence bonus to Poison skill checks.

*Sneak Attack:* Anytime Trespass's target is denied a Dexterity bonus to AC, or when he flanks a target, Trespass deals an additional 8d6 points of damage on a successful melee attack.

*Assassin Spells Prepared* (0/3/2/2/1; save DC 13 + spell level): 1st — *ghost sound, obscuring mist, spider climb*; 2nd — *alter self, darkness*; 3rd — *deeper darkness, invisibility*; 4th — *greater invisibility.*

*Amulet of mighty fists +5, cloak of resistance +3, necklace of adaptation, +3 studded leather armor of greater silent moves,* light crossbow, 20 bolts, vial with deathblade poison (4 applications), vial with crypt wine poison (4 applications), vial with black lotus extract poison (4 applications).

**Trespass's Dwarves (1 for every 2 members of PC party), Male Dwarf Asn 9:** CR 9; Medium humanoid (Dwarf); HD 9d6+27; hp 65; Init +2; Spd 20 ft; AC 22, touch 13, flat-footed 19; Base Atk +6; Grp +7; Atk +12 melee (1d3+5/x2, unarmed strike) or +9 melee (1d4+3(19–20)/x2, *+2 dagger*) or +9 ranged (1d8+1(19–20/x2), repeating light crossbow); Full Atk +12/+7 melee (1d3+11/x2, unarmed strike) or +9/+4 melee (1d4+3(19–20)/x2, *+2 dagger*) or +9/+4 ranged (1d8+1(19–20/x2), repeating light crossbow); SA Sneak attack +5d6, crippling strike (+1d2), ruthless (attack action), spells; SQ Dwarf traits, poison immunity and resistance +2, poison use, skilled brewer, race/class abilities; AL N; SV Fort +5, Ref +8, Will +3; Str 13, Dex 15, Con 17, Int 12, Wis 12, Cha 9.

*Skills and Feats:* Balance +9, Climb +6, Gather Information +4, Hide +7, Jump +8, Listen +6, Move Silently +7, Poison +13, Search +6, Spot +6, Tumble +9; Improved Unarmed Strike, Weapon Finesse (unarmed strike), Weapon Specialization (unarmed strike), Point Blank Shot.

*Race/Class Abilities: Assassin:* Killer's Hands (unarmed strike: Atk +4/damage +2).

*Crippling Strike:* When Trespass's Dwarf scores a critical hit in melee combat, rather than inflicting damage he may inflict normal damage (the hit point damage is not doubled as usual for a critical hit) plus 1d2 + his Intelligence modifier (+1) in temporary damage to the victim's Strength, Dexterity, or Constitution.

*Poison Immunity and Resistance:* Trespass's Dwarf has a +2 save bonus against all poisons and is immune to black lotus extract and deathblade poisons.

*Poison Use:* Trespass's Dwarf is trained in the use of poison and never risks accidentally poisoning himself when applying poison to a blade.

*Ruthless:* Trespass's Dwarf may make one coup de grace attack as a melee attack action once per round.

*Skilled Brewer:* Trespass's Dwarf is trained to brew poison and always has a +2 competence bonus to Poison skill checks.

*Sneak Attack:* Anytime Trespass's Dwarf's target is denied a Dexterity bonus to AC, or when he flanks a target, Trespass's Dwarf deals an additional 5d6 points of damage on a successful melee attack. (0/1; save DC 11+ spell level): 1st — *obscuring mist.*

*Possessions: +1 studded leather armor, +2 dagger,* light crossbow, 20 bolts, vial with deathblade poison (4 applications), vial with black lotus extract poison (4 applications).

### Temple History

**Hate's temple is one of the oldest buildings in Baraxton. Before it was the Senate building, it was an ancient temple of the Storm from the earliest days of Signon's Deverenia. It has always held as much religious significance as municipal, and while the government was increasingly secular before Hate's arrival, the local clergy of Neus always had full run of the grounds. Those who lived in the temple when Hate seized power either died or faced imprisonment, but even the new Nothrog inhabitants often refer to the building's rooms by their previous, religious significance.**

# Part 7: Nassiral Hate's Temple

## Inside the Temple

Getting to Hate once inside the temple is not easy. Hate remembers how he himself simply walked in and captured the Senate, and has no intention of suffering a similar fate. Hate has Nothrog guards stationed all over the temple, answering either to Hate himself or to his closest aide, Krun.

Once Krun realizes that the PCs are a threat to Nassiral Hate, Krun orders his guards out of the temple to patrol the city. If the PCs eliminate Hate, Krun knows that the city is his to control.

**Humans in the Temple:** Unless otherwise noted, all non-mercenary Humans in the temple work for the Nothrog, either as slaves or for hire. They neither help the party nor alert the Nothrog to the party's presence unless threatened. If the PC's succeed at a DC 30 Diplomacy check, the Humans impart one piece of information about the area of the temple they are in (guard schedule, number of men in an upcoming room, directions, etc.)

**Mercenary Humans:** These mercenaries are Hate's emergency additions to his guards. Should all the Nothrog they fight alongside die, the mercenaries flee.

## Location 7: Nassiral Hate's Temple — Lower Level (Map Key)

**Note:** If the PCs sneak in through the sewers, they must follow a guide until they reach the choppers (**Location 1**) or the main sewer line. Otherwise, they have little hope of finding the entrance to Hate's temple from the labyrinthine Baraxton sewer system. Both Trespass' Dwarves and any surviving members of the Cartwrights' Guild can guide the party. In a pinch, however, the party can hire guides from among the city's underclass at the exorbitant price of 50 gp.

## Temple Troops

**The following stats are common to the troops throughout the Temple, except where noted:**

**Elite Hate Guard, Male and Female Nothrog Ftr 10:** CR 10; Medium humanoid (Nothrog); HD 10d10+10; hp 65; Init +5; Spd 20 ft.; AC 18, touch 12, flat-footed 16; Base Atk +10; Grp +13; Atk +17 melee (1d8+8(18–20/x2), *+2 Nothrog longblade*); Full Atk +17/+12 melee (1d8+8(18–20/x2), *+2 Nothrog longblade*); SA Favored weapon (Nothrog longblade, longsword, longbow), Spot +3, Swim +0*; Cleave, Combat Expertise, Dodge, Great Cleave, Iron Will, Improved Initiative, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (Nothrog longblade). *includes –4 armor check penalty

*Race/Class Abilities: Fighter:* Aptitude, Rage (1/day).

*Favored Weapon (Nothrog longblade, longsword, longbow):* A guard gains a +1 competence bonus to attack and damage rolls with the Nothrog longblade, longsword, and longbow.

*Improved Critical Threat (Nothrog longblade):* A guard's critical threat range is increased by +2 (to 18–20) with the Nothrog longblade.

*Improved Damage (Nothrog longblade, longsword):* A guard does an additional +2 (+3 total) damage with the Nothrog longblade and longsword.

*Rage (1/day):* While an Elite Hate Guard rages, his statistics change as follows: HD 10d10+30; hp 85; AC 16, touch 10, flat-footed 14; Grp +15; Atk +19 melee (1d8+10/x2), *+2 Nothrog longblade*); Full Atk +19/+14 melee (1d8+10/x2), *+2 Nothrog longblade*); SV Fort +10, Will +5; Str 21, Con 16. His fit of rage lasts for 6 rounds. At the end of the rage the Elite Hate Guard is fatigued (–2 to Strength, –2 to Dexterity, can't charge or run).

*Possessions: +1 chainmail, +2 Nothrog longblade.*

**Krun's Legionnaires, Male and Female Nothrog Ftr 8:** CR 8; Medium humanoid (Nothrog); HD 8d10+8; hp 65; Init +5; Spd 20 ft.; AC 18, touch 12, flat-footed 16; Base Atk +8; Grp +11; Atk +15 melee (1d8+8/x2), *+2 Nothrog longblade*); Full Atk +15/+10 melee (1d8+8/x2), *+2 Nothrog longblade*); SA Favored weapon (Nothrog longblade, longbow), improved damage (Nothrog longblade); SQ Nothrog traits, race/class abilities; AL LE; SV Fort +7, Ref +3, Will +2; Str 17, Dex 13, Con 12, Int 15, Wis 11, Cha 8.

*Skills and Feats:* Bluff +4, Climb +5*, Jump +5*, Listen +5, Sense Motive +5, Swim +0*; Cleave, Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Improved Initiative, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (Nothrog longblade). *includes –4 armor check penalty

*Race/Class Abilities: Fighter:* Aptitude.

*Favored Weapon (Nothrog longblade, longsword):* A legionnaire gains a +1 competence bonus to attack and damage rolls with the Nothrog longblade and longbow.

*Improved Damage (Nothrog longblade):* A legionnaire does an additional +2 (+3 total) damage with the Nothrog longblade.

*Possessions: +1 chainmail, +2 Nothrog longblade.*

**Mercenary Guardsmen, Male Human Ftr 6:** CR 6; Medium humanoid (Human); HD 6d10; hp 33; Init +7; Spd 30 ft; AC 19, touch 16, flat-footed 13; Base Atk +6; Grp +7; Atk +13 melee (1d6+5(18–20/x2), *+2 rapier*); Full Atk +13/+8 melee (1d6+5(18–20/x2), *+2 rapier*; SA Favored weapons (rapier, longbow), improved damage (rapier); SQ Human traits, race/class abilities; AL NE; SV Fort +5, Ref +5, Will +2; Str 13, Dex 17, Con 11, Int 13, improved critical threat (Nothrog longblade), improved damage (Nothrog longblade, longsword); SQ Nothrog traits, race/class Wis 11, Cha 11.

*Skills and Feats:* Bluff +4, Handle Animal +6, Jump +8, Ride +10, Sense Motive +4; Combat Expertise, Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Improved Initiative, Improved Disarm, Weapon Finesse (rapier), Weapon Focus (rapier).

*Race/Class Abilities: Fighter:* Courage (+1 Will/+4 vs. fear), Evade (+2).

*Favored Weapon (longsword, longbow):* A guardsman gains a +1 competence bonus to attack and damage rolls with the rapier and longbow.

*Improved Damage (longsword):* A guardsman does an additional +2 (+3 total) damage with the rapier.

## Location 1.1: The Choppers

The PCs know they are getting close to the choppers by the sound of crashing water and grinding metal. There are six choppers in the Baraxton sewer system. Waste flows through one of the choppers before going into a main sewer line. The choppers are a series of blades and gears that chop everything into bits. PCs may attempt to leap through the blades (Reflex save or Tumble check, DC 25 for each blade), attempt to disable the blades (Disable Device check, DC 20 for each blade) or jam something into the blades (a jammed blade sunders the jamming object for 4d6 damage every round; if the jamming object is destroyed, anyone presently trying to cross the blades gets hit as well). The blades are moving too quickly to sunder, and anyone attempting it is disarmed in the process. Anyone falling into the choppers takes 4d6 damage per round until dead. The party also has to remove the containment grates keeping refuse inside the choppers to gain access to the main sewer line. A secret grate (Search DC 30) above the choppers leads to **Location 2.22**.

**NOTE: Locations 2.22 (2.22.1–2.22.5) and Location 2.23** can only be accessed through this entrance. There are clues to their existence inside the temple. If the PCs find this area first, they have the main treasure of the temple to use against Hate, but less payoff at the end.

## Location 1.2: The Main Sewer Line

The PCs can gain access into the temple through sewer lines **A** into **Location 1.15**, **B** into **Location 2.23**, or **C** into **Location 2.6**. These are 5-foot-wide shafts that lead straight up into the temple, so the PCs must make Climb checks (DC 18) to use these routes. They may also gain access to the temple secret door C into the prison.

## Location 1.3: The War Room

The war room is full of maps and charts, not only of the areas surrounding Baraxton, but also the entire Accordlands. Sethusk (**Location 1.5**) being one of the Nothrog' foremost strategists, has personally detailed most of these maps with suggested plans for attack. The information found in this room would be invaluable to anyone fighting against the Nothrog.

## Location 1.4: Storage Rooms

These rooms are littered with supplies, maps, and other odds and ends. There is a 50% chance that PCs find any mundane item they are looking for in one of these rooms, decreasing by 10% each time they succeed.

## Location 1.5: Sethusk's Chamber

Sethusk has set up his personal chambers here close to the war room. He has also created an escape tunnel for himself, just in case. Sethusk is not afraid to fight, but he tries negotiation if confronted by a powerful group of PCs. Sethusk's personal belongings include three very rare and expensive chess sets. He is a master player, and uses this to his advantage if the PCs let him. If forced to fight, Sethusk flees at the earliest opportunity.

**Creature:** Sethusk, a 10th-level fighter.

**Sethusk, Male Nothrog Strategist Ftr 10:** CR 10; Medium humanoid (Nothrog); HD 10d10; hp 55; Init +3; Spd 20 ft; AC 22, touch 14, flat-footed 18; Base Atk +10; Grp +10; Atk +15 melee (1d8+7(18–20/x3), *+4 warhammer*); Full Atk +15/+10 melee (1d8+7(18–20/x3), *+4 warhammer*); SA Favored weapon (warhammer, light crossbow, dagger), improved damage (warhammer, light crossbow), improved critical threat (warhammer); SQ Nothrog traits, race/class abilities; AL NE; SV Fort +7, Ref +6, Will +6; Str 10, Dex 17, Con 10, Int 20, Wis 18, Cha 16.

*Skills and Feats:* Bluff +9, Craft (carving) +8, Handle Animal +9, Knowledge (battle) +14, Knowledge (games) +14, Knowledge (geography) +14, Knowledge (history) +14, Ride +9, Sense Motive +10; Combat Expertise, Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Leadership (15), Skill Focus (Knowledge (battle), Knowledge (games), Knowledge (geography), Knowledge (history)).

*Race/Class Abilities: Fighter:* Aptitude, Rage (1/day).

*Rage (1/day):* While Sethusk rages, his statistics change as follows: HD 10d10+20; hp 75; AC 20, touch 12, flat-footed 16; Grp +12; Atk +17 melee (1d8+9(18–20/x3), *+4 warhammer*); Full Atk +17/+12 melee (1d8+9(18–20/x3), *+4 warhammer*); SV Fort +9, Will +8; Str 14, Con 14. His fit of rage lasts for 5 rounds. At the end of the rage Sethusk is fatigued (–2 to Strength, –2 to Dexterity, can't charge or run).

*Favored Weapon (warhammer, light crossbow, dagger):* Sethusk gains a +1 competence bonus to attack and damage rolls with the warhammer, light crossbow, and dagger.

*Improved Damage (warhammer, light crossbow):* Sethusk does an additional +2 (+3 total) damage with the warhammer and light crossbow.

*Improved Critical Threat (warhammer):* Sethusk's critical threat range is increased by +2 (to 18–20) with the warhammer.

*Possessions: +4 warhammer, +2 scale mail.*

## Location 1.6: Prison

The prison has 60 cells, most of which are occupied. None of the prisoners are in any condition to try a fighting escape. The PCs can help one or two escape, but the Nothrog notice and sound the alarm if more than that vanish. The prison guards from **Locations 1.7 and 1.8** check the cells about once per hour.



## Location 1.7: Guard Room

Chairs, tables and barrels are set up in this room for the Nothrog prison guard. There are 4 members of Krun's Legion here at all times.

**Creatures:** Four Krun's legionnaires, 8th-level fighters *(see sidebar Temple Troops for stats)*.

**Krun's Legionnaires (4):** hp 60, 58, 70, 65.

## Location 1.8: Guard Room

Chairs, tables and barrels are set up in this room for the Nothrog prison guard. There are 6 of Krun's Legionnaires here at all times.

**Creatures:** Six Krun's legionnaires, 8th-level fighters *(see sidebar Temple Troops for stats)*.

**Krun's Legionnaires (6):** hp 68, 60, 55, 58, 70, 65.

## Location 1.9: Guard Barracks

There is a 33% chance that each of these rooms has a shift of Nothrog sleeping here. Each room can have up to 2d8 Krun Legionnaires and their personal belongings (mundane weapons and 2d20 gold worth of goods) at any one time.

**Creatures:** (2d8) Krun's legionnaires, 8th-level fighters *(see sidebar Temple Troops for stats)*.

**Krun's Legionnaires (2d8):** hp as rolled.

## Location 1.10: Torture Chamber

This fully stocked torture chamber sits unused. The Nothrog know better than to trust information obtained by torture. If necessary, the party may rest in this room indefinitely without notice, or up to 2d4 hours if a Nothrog has sounded the alarm.

## Location 1.11: Holding Cell

This room was specially designed to hold prisoners to be taken to the torture chamber, and as such, is in disuse. An **electric shock rune trap** on the exit deals 1d12 damage to any who leave the room if they entered it in chains.

## Location 1.12: Guard Area

Nassiral Hate keeps all of the stairwells and entry rooms amply guarded. Four Elite Hate Guard are here.

**Creatures:** Four Elite Hate Guard, 10th-level fighters *(see sidebar Temple Troops for stats)*.

**Elite Hate Guard (4):** hp 68, 57, 70, 65.

## Location 1.13: Chapel

Nassiral Hate has ordered that none but his priests be allowed into the chapel and beyond. Two of the Elite Hate Guard watch over this entrance, and do not let anyone but Nassiral or his priests pass. The chapel was once the private prayer area for the temple priests and patriarchs. It is now the centermost focus point for contact with Cynophontis, Hate's totem. Divine spellcasters may not cast or regain spells in this room unless they serve Cynophontis.

**Creatures:** Two Elite Hate Guard, 10th-level fighters *(see sidebar Temple Troops for stats)*.

**Elite Hate Guard (2):** hp 68, 65.

## Location 1.14: Guard Office/ Chambers

These rooms house two Nothrog from Krun's legion.

## Location 1.15: Temple Sewage

This was the original temple trash room. The room has not been cleaned out, and houses rotting garbage waiting to be dumped into sewer shaft A.

## Location 1.16: Sewer Prison Guard House

Hate has placed two Elite Hate Guard in charge of the sewer prison. They take great pleasure in torturing the prisoners in **Location 1.17**.

**Creatures:** Two Elite Hate Guard, 10th-level fighters *(see sidebar Temple Troops for stats)*.

**Elite Hate Guard (2):** hp 68, 65.

### Unclean Spirit

**Unclean Spirit: CR 8**, Medium Undead (incorporeal); HD 3d12 (hp 18); Init +7; Spd 30 ft., fly 40 ft. (good); AC 17, touch 17, flat-footed 14; Base Atk +1; Grp —; Atk: +5 melee (unclean fire plus 1d6 Wisdom, incorporeal touch); Full Atk +5 melee (unclean fire plus 1d6 Wisdom, incorporeal touch) or +4 melee (unclean fire plus 1d6 Charisma, incorporeal bite); Space/Reach 5 ft./5 ft.; SA Create spawn, unclean fire; SQ Aura of hate, hatred, incorporeal subtype, soul theft, +2 turn resistance, undead traits; AL E; SV Fort +1, Ref +4, Will +4; Str —, Dex 16, Con —, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 13.

*Skills and Feats:* Hide +9, Listen +7, Move Silently +9, Spot +7; Improved Initiative, Weapon Focus (touch attack).

*Aura of Hate (Su):* Unclean spirits radiate an aura of hate that causes all lawful or good living creatures within 30 ft. to become shaken. There is no save against this effect.

*Hatred (Su):* Unclean spirits are filled with and sustained by their eternal hatred for all living creatures other than Elves. Whenever an unclean spirit sees a living non-Elf, it must make a DC 15 Will save or fly into an insane rage. Enraged spirits can do nothing other than attack the offensive creature until the creature escapes or dies. Any being controlling an unclean spirit is allowed a Will save (DC 20) to maintain control over the spirit and prevent it from becoming enraged. As long as the spirit can

see the living non-Elf, it must make the Will save every round. Similarly, the controller must make a Will save every round to maintain control.

*Soul Theft (Sp)*: As a full round action, an unclean spirit may target any creature it has dealt Wisdom damage to with a ranged touch attack. This attack causes the target to *rage* (per the spell), suffering 1 point of Wisdom drain each round he remains enraged. The target may attempt to resist this rage at the beginning of each round with a DC 12 Will save. Every point of Wisdom drained in this manner grants the unclean spirit 2d6 temporary hit points. The save DC is Charisma-based.

*Unclean Fire (Su)*: Living creatures hit by an unclean spirit's touch or bite attack suffer one negative level (Fortitude save to remove, DC 14). The save DC is Charisma-based. Non-Elves who fail the Fortitude save also suffer 1 point of Wisdom drain. For each such negative level bestowed, the unclean spirit gains 5 temporary hit points.

*Incorporeal Subtype:* Due to its incorporeal nature, an unclean spirit has the following traits:

- An incorporeal creature has no physical body. It can be harmed only by other incorporeal creatures, magic weapons or creatures that strike as magic weapons, and spells, spell-like abilities, or supernatural abilities.
- It is immune to all nonmagical attack forms. Even when hit by spells or magic weapons, it has a 50% chance to ignore any damage from a corporeal source (except for positive energy, negative energy, force effects such as *magic missile*, or attacks made with *ghost touch* weapons). Although it is not a magical attack, holy water can affect incorporeal undead, but a hit with holy water has a 50% chance of not affecting an incorporeal creature.
- An incorporeal creature has no natural armor bonus but has a deflection bonus equal to its Charisma bonus (always at least +1, even if the creature's Charisma score does not normally provide a bonus).
- An incorporeal creature can enter or pass through solid objects, but must remain adjacent to the object's exterior, and so cannot pass entirely through an object whose space is larger than its own. It can sense the presence of creatures or objects within a square adjacent to its current location, but enemies have total concealment (50% miss chance) from an incorporeal creature that is inside an object. In order to see farther from the object it is in and attack normally, the incorporeal creature must emerge. An incorporeal creature inside an object has total cover, but when it attacks a creature outside the object it only has cover, so a creature outside with a readied action could strike at it as it attacks. An incorporeal creature cannot pass through a force effect.
- An incorporeal creature's attacks pass through (ignore) natural armor, armor, and shields, although deflection bonuses and force effects (such as *mage armor*) work normally against it.
- Incorporeal creatures pass through and operate in water as easily as they do in air.
- Incorporeal creatures cannot fall or take falling damage.
- Incorporeal creatures cannot make trip or grapple attacks, nor can they be tripped or grappled. In fact, they cannot take any physical action that would move or manipulate an opponent or its equipment, nor are they subject to such actions.
- Incorporeal creatures have no weight and do not set off traps that are triggered by weight.
- An incorporeal creature moves silently and cannot be heard with Listen checks if it doesn't wish to be. It has no Strength score, so its Dexterity modifier applies to both its melee attacks and its ranged attacks. Nonvisual senses, such as scent and blindsight, are either ineffective or only partly effective with regard to incorporeal creatures.
- Incorporeal creatures have an innate sense of direction and can move at full speed even when they cannot see.

*Undead Traits:* The unclean spirit has the following traits:

- No Constitution score.
- Darkvision out to 60 feet.
- Immunity to all mind-affecting effects (charms, compulsions, phantasms, patterns, and morale effects).
- Immunity to poison, sleep effects, paralysis, stunning, disease, death effects, and necromancy effects.
- Negative energy (such as an *inflict* spell) can heal undead creatures. The fast healing quality works regardless of the creature's Intelligence score.
- Not subject to critical hits, non-lethal damage, ability damage, ability drain, fatigue, exhaustion, or energy drain. Immune to damage to its physical ability scores (Strength, Dexterity, Constitution), as well as to fatigue and exhaustion effects.
- Immunity to any effect that requires a Fortitude save (unless the effect also works on objects, or is harmless).
- Uses its Charisma modifier for Concentration checks.
- Not at risk of death from massive damage. Immediately destroyed when reduced to 0 hit points or less.
- Not affected by *raise dead* and *reincarnate* spells or abilities. *Resurrection and true resurrection* can be affect undead creatures. These spells turn undead creatures back into the living creatures they were before becoming undead.
- Proficient with its natural weapons, all simple weapons, and any weapon mentioned in its entry.

## Location 1.17: Sewer Prison

These cells hold Baraxton's most dangerous or hated criminals from before Hate's coming, including a few even Hate does not want to deal with. Most of the cells house prisoners from the era before Hate that are dead or near dead. There are two cells of note.

A. Frederick Lahr. Frederick Lahr is a 5th-level cleric of Neus. The middle-aged priest has been terribly tortured and had no time to prepare spells. He is unarmed, and has only 1 hit point remaining. If rescued, Lahr warns the party that Hate is far more powerful than anyone believes, and his duplicity has cost Baraxton its freedom.

B. An Elven prisoner so tortured in life that he has returned as an unclean spirit. It is unclear why the spirit has refused to attack Lahr, though their mutual suffering may have brought an alien sense of kinship to the spirit. The spirit refuses to leave until the Elite Hate Guard at **Location 1.16** and Destin the Sighted (**Location 1.18**) have died. The unclean spirit helps the PCs if they fight the guardsmen, but in its madness turns on the party afterward.

## Location 1.18: Priest Chambers

The Nothrog wizard Destin the Sighted watches over the reavers in **Location 1.22.** He stays in this room when not tending to them or helping the priests in the chapel. Destin received his training in Deverenia, and Deverenian wizards who speak with him find him willing to abandon Hate if the party swears to harm neither him nor the reavers in his care. Surprisingly, he is not enslaved to the reavers' will, but simply considers them his friends. Destin does not parley with the party if they are widely known to have associated with jackals of Mourn.

**Creature:** Destin the Sighted, a 7th-level wizard.

**Destin the Sighted, Male Albino Nothrog Wiz 7:** CR 8; Medium humanoid (Nothrog); HD 2d4–4 plus 5d6–10; hp 14; Init +3; Spd 30 ft.; AC 13, touch 13, flat-footed 10; Atk +3 melee (1d6/x2, quarterstaff); Full Atk +3 melee ((1d6/1d6)/x2, quarterstaff); SA Spells; SQ Albino Nothrog traits, eidetic memory *(magic missile, acid arrow, invisibility)*, disgorge magic, summon familiar (toad), race/class abilities; AL NE; SV Fort +0, Ref +6, Will +9; Str 10, Dex 16, Con 6, Int 19, Wis 14, Cha 12.

*Skills and Feats:* Concentration +8, Knowledge (arcana) +14, Knowledge (Bascaron) +14, Knowledge (reavers) +14, Knowledge (the Shattered Lands) +14, Spellcraft +14; Bascaron Ascending, Combat Casting, Dodge, Iron Will, Scribe Scroll, Alertness.

*Race/Class Abilities: Wizard*: Increased Hit Die (d6).

*Eidetic Memory:* Destin may spontaneously cast *magic missile, acid arrow, and invisibility* in place of a prepared spell of equal or higher level. This loses the prepared spell to fuel the memorized spell

*Familiar (toad)*: Destin's toad familiar has the following statistics:

*Familiar (toad):* CR —; Diminutive magical beast; HD 7; hp 5; Init +1; Spd 5 ft; AC 19, touch 19, flat-footed 18; Base Atk +3; Grp –9; Atk —; Full Atk —; Space/Reach 1 ft./0 ft.; SA -; SQ low-light vision, amphibious, empathic link, share spells, improved evasion, deliver touch spells, speak with master, speak with animals of its kind; AL N; SV Fort +2, Ref +3, Will +7; Str 1, Dex 12, Con 11, Int10, Wis 14, Cha 4.

*Skill and Feats:* Hide +21*, Listen +4, Spot +4; Alertness.

*A toad's coloration gives it a +4 racial bonus on Hide checks.

*Low-Light Vision:* A toad can see twice as far as a Human in starlight, moonlight, torchlight, and similar conditions of shadowy illumination. It retains the ability to distinguish color and detail under these conditions.

*Familiar Ability Descriptions:* All familiars have special abilities (or impart abilities to their masters) depending on Destin's combined level in classes that grant familiars. The abilities are cumulative.

*Alertness (Ex):* While his familiar is within arm's reach, Destin gains the Alertness feat.

*Improved Evasion (Ex)*: When subjected to an attack that normally allows a Reflex saving throw for half damage, a familiar takes no damage if it makes a successful saving throw and half damage even if the saving throw fails.

*Share Spells:* At Destin's option, he may have any spell (but not any spell-like ability) he casts on himself also affect his familiar. The familiar must be within 5 feet at the time of casting to receive the benefit. If the spell or effect has a duration other than instantaneous, it stops affecting the familiar if it moves farther than 5 feet away and will not affect the familiar again even if it returns to Destin before the duration expires. Additionally, Destin may cast a spell with a target of "You" on his familiar (as a touch range spell) instead of on himself. Destin and his familiar can share spells even if the spells normally do not affect creatures of the familiar's type (magical beast).

*Empathic Link (Su):* Destin has an empathic link with his familiar out to a distance of up to 1 mile. Destin cannot see through the familiar's eyes, but they can communicate empathically. Because of the limited nature of the link, only general emotional content can be communicated. Because of this empathic link, Destin has the same connection to an item or place that his familiar does. Deliver Touch Spells (Su): Destin's familiar can deliver touch spells for him. If Destin and the familiar are in contact at the time Destin casts a touch spell, he can designate his familiar as the "toucher." The familiar can then deliver the touch spell just as Destin could. As usual, if Destin casts another spell before the touch is delivered, the touch spell dissipates.

*Speak with Master (Ex):* Destin and his familiar can communicate verbally as if they were using a common language. Other creatures do not understand the communication without magical help.

*Speak with Animals of Its Kind (Ex):* Destin's familiar can communicate with amphibians (including dire varieties). Such communication is limited by the intelligence of the conversing creatures.

*Disgorge Magic (Su):* Destin's familiarity with the reavers is so strong that he has learned to mimic their peculiar digestion, and can disgorge magic as though he himself were a reaver. Destin may spew out these energies, duplicating any supernatural or spell-like ability of any creature he has eaten (including spellcasters' spells). Each time Destin uses this ability, roll 1d20; if the result is less than Destin's HD, Destin gains 1 negative level and loses the ability to duplicate that specific ability.

When Destin disgorges, he becomes nauseated and must make a Fortitude save (DC equal to his current hit points) or suffer 1d4 damage. Destin has kept this ability secret from the other Nothrog, and has not had much need of it before now. As such, he may only disgorge three 1st-level wizard spells of the GM's choosing. He is immune to the reavers' maddening presence.

*Wizard Spells Prepared* (4/5/4/3/2): 0 — acid splash, dancing lights, daze, detect magic; 1st — charm person, hypnotism, magic missile, obscuring mist, sleep. 2nd — daze monster, flaming sphere, acid arrow, invisibility; 3rd — clairaudience/clairvoyance, deep slumber, lightning bolt; 4th — charm monster, dimension door.

*Possessions:* Spellbook, quarterstaff.

## Location 1.19: Priest Chambers

The entry door to this chamber door is under the effects of an **antipathy** spell (as cast by a level 20 wizard; this **antipathy** has no effect on good-aligned creatures), activated by a potential ally of the party. It is locked (Open Lock DC 50). Inside is one of the few surviving clerics of Neus from the days before Hate, who has spent most of his time praying or **creating food and water** for himself. Father Nicodemus is a 10th-level Human cleric of Neus, but is old and weak. He spent much of his youth uncovering secrets such as this and other hidden rooms. The cleric knows that Hate is a powerful seer, and refuses to divulge his name to the party — if Hate captures them, the old man reasons, his own life is forfeit. The old cleric knows much of the temple if the PCs meet him, but he is in no shape to help them. He believes that his prayers keep the souls in **Location 1.21** from rising and joining Hate's legions, so he wants to stay in this room until the temple is safe. If Hate animates the Dukaults, and any of the three survive this adventure, the undead eventually discover this room and slay the poor cleric.

## Location 1.20: Front Chamber

While the priest in **Location 1.19** believes it is his prayers that keep the dead in the tombs (**Location 1.21**) from rising from the dead, it is actually this front room that is responsible. The tombs are twice blessed, first by the Paladins of the Black Sun, and later by the Aroch Paladins. Anyone entering this room must make a Will save (DC 40 — paladins automatically succeed) or feel remorse for those laid to rest here, and desire to protect them. Nassiral Hate is the only Nothrog in the temple to have entered these rooms and not fallen victim to this spell. He decided this was the perfect place to hide his reaver and its young.

## Location 1.21: Tombs of the Chosen

These tombs house the bodies of priests and warriors from the era when the temple was a Church of the Storm, and later a temple of Neus. The dead here have always been protected by the paladins' spells. **NOTE:** If the PCs shake off the spell and choose to loot the tombs, they face deadly traps, cursed items, and powerful undead of the GM's design.

## Location 1.22: Lair of the Terror of Baraxton

Unknown to the other Nothrog warlords, Nassiral has a reaver pawn granted to him by the other Medusan Lords. This reaver has a brood of seven young, isolated in their own caves by their parent and Nassiral Hate. The young will be gifts for his warlords, when the time is right. The reaver and its young assume anyone approaching is Destin the Sighted from **Location 1.18** bringing food. The parent is weak from taking care of the young, but attacks and calls on its children to join it if pressed in combat. The reavers are atypical of their kind, having fed primarily on local clerics, druids, seers, shamans, and wizards that have displeased Hate.

**Creatures:** Terror of Baraxton, a reaver; seven reaver spawn, reavers.

**Terror of Baraxton, Reaver:** CR 14; Large aberration (Bascaron); HD 18d8+54 (126 hp); Init +5; Spd 5 ft., fly 30 ft. (good), swim 15 ft.; AC 37, touch 9, flat-footed 36; Base Atk +13; Grp +25; Atk +15 melee (1d8+4/x2, tentacle); +15 melee (1d8+4/x2, 4 tentacles); Space/Reach 15 ft./10 ft.; SA Devour, disgorge magic, maddening presence; SQ Blindsense, enhanced advancement, telepathy, tremorsense 120 ft.; AL LE; SV Fort +9, Ref +7, Will +15; Str 19, Dex 13, Con 17, Int 20, Wis 15, Cha 15.

*Skills and Feats: Knowledge (arcana) +25, Knowledge (Baraxton) +25, Knowledge (religion) +25, Listen +23, Search* +25, Spot +23; Cleave, Flyby Attack, Follow Through, Hover, Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Power Attack.

*Devour (Ex)*: Reavers are voracious, their fiendish appetites limited only by their narrow feeding tendrils. They can drain a body of its fluids and smaller organs with surprising ease (1 round for Fine creatures, 2 for Diminutive creatures, doubling again for each size category thereafter). Reavers may devour only helpless victims, but once finished, nothing short of a *wish* or *miracle* can raise their prey from the dead.

*Disgorge Magic (Su)*: While reavers' efficient biologies digest most substances completely, inherent magical energies remain behind. Reavers may spew out these energies, duplicating any supernatural or spell-like ability of any creature they have eaten (including spellcasters' spells). Each time a reaver uses this ability, roll 1d20 and compare it to the reaver's HD. If the result is less than the reaver's HD, the reaver loses 1 HD and the ability to duplicate that specific ability until the reaver regains it through a feeding. Reavers may not be reduced below their base HD in this manner.

*Enhanced Advancement (Su)*: Unlike most creatures, reavers' advancement is not limited to steady growth. By glutting themselves on magical power, reavers may rapidly grow in size and power. This is a painful process, but one reavers indulge in for the associated benefits. Whenever a reaver devours a creature with one or more supernatural or spell-like abilities (including spellcasters), it advances one HD.

*Maddening Presence (Su)*: The reaver's most basic defense is its unsettling effect on lesser minds. Reavers are the very essence of Bascaron's corruption, and the taint of their species' creation lingers still. Any other creature that looks upon a reaver for the

first time must make a Will save (DC equal to the reaver's HD) or become a slavering minion of that reaver. Creatures may attempt another save each day they are not in the reaver's presence. While enthralled, creatures believe the reaver to be something other than what it truly is, such as a Nothrog totem or a powerful stormborn.

*Telepathy (Su)*: A reaver can initiate telepathy with any sentient being, allowing it to give orders to dominated servants without interrupting its spellcraft. The reaver must have the target individual in sight in order to initiate contact for the first time; once it 'knows the mind' of a target in this manner, the range on its telepathy is one mile. While a reaver has at least three of its servants nearby, it may not be flanked.

*Blindsense (Ex)*: Using nonvisual senses, a reaver maneuvers and fights as well as a sighted creature. The reaver usually does not need to make Spot or Listen checks to pinpoint the location of a creature within range of its blindsense ability, provided that it has line of effect to that creature. Any opponent the reaver cannot see still has total concealment against the reaver, and the reaver still has the normal miss chance when attacking foes that have concealment. A reaver is still denied its Dexterity bonus to Armor Class against attacks from creatures it cannot see. A reaver's blindsense has a range of 120 feet.

*Tremorsense (Ex)*: A reaver is sensitive to vibrations in the ground and can automatically pinpoint the location of anything that is contact with the ground. A reaver's tremorsense has a range of 120 feet.

**Reaver Spawn (7), Reaver:** CR 7; Medium aberration (Bascaron); HD 9d8+18 (64 hp); Init +2; Spd 5 ft., fly 30 ft. (good), swim 15 ft.; AC 28, touch 9, flat-footed 28; Base Atk +7; Grp +14; Atk +8 melee (1d8+2/x2, tentacle); +8 melee (1d8+2/x2, 4 tentacles), +3 melee (1d8+1/x2, bite); Space/Reach 5 ft./5 ft.; SA Devour, disgorge magic, maddening presence; SQ Blindsense, enhanced advancement, telepathy, tremorsense 120 ft.; AL LE; SV Fort +5, Ref +4, Will +10; Str 14, Dex 11, Con 15, Int 16, Wis 12, Cha 12.

*Skills and Feats*: Knowledge (arcane) +12, Knowledge (local) +10, Knowledge (religion) +10, Search +5, Spot +15; Cleave, Flyby Attack, Hover, Power Attack.

*Devour (Ex)*: Reavers are voracious, their fiendish appetites limited only by their narrow feeding tendrils. They can drain a body of its fluids and smaller organs with surprising ease (1 round for Fine creatures, 2 for Diminutive creatures, doubling again for each size category thereafter). Reavers may devour only helpless victims, but once finished, nothing short of a *wish* or *miracle* can raise their prey from the dead.

*Disgorge Magic (Su)*: While reavers' efficient biologies digest most substances completely, inherent magical energies remain behind. Reavers may spew out these energies, duplicating any supernatural or spell-like ability of any creature they have eaten (including spellcasters' spells). Each time a reaver uses this ability, roll 1d20 and compare it to the reaver's HD. If the result is less than the reaver's HD, the reaver loses 1 HD and the ability to duplicate that specific ability until the reaver regains it through a feeding. Reavers may not be reduced below their base HD in this manner.

*Enhanced Advancement (Su)*: Unlike most creatures, reavers' advancement is not limited to steady growth. By glutting themselves on magical power, reavers may rapidly grow in size and power. This is a painful process, but one reavers indulge in for the associated benefits. Whenever a reaver devours a creature with one or more supernatural or spell-like abilities (including spellcasters), it advances one HD.

*Maddening Presence (Su)*: The reaver's most basic defense is its unsettling effect on lesser minds. Reavers are the very essence of Bascaron's corruption, and the taint of their species' creation lingers still. Any other creature that looks upon a reaver for the first time must make a Will save (DC equal to the reaver's HD) or become a slavering minion of that reaver. Creatures may attempt another save each day they are not in the reaver's presence. While enthralled, creatures believe the reaver to be something other than what it truly is, such as a Nothrog totem or a powerful stormborn.

*Telepathy (Su)*: A reaver can initiate telepathy with any sentient being, allowing it to give orders to dominated servants without interrupting its spellcraft. The reaver must have the target individual in sight in order to initiate contact for the first time; once it 'knows the mind' of a target in this manner, the range on its telepathy is one mile. While a reaver has at least three of its servants nearby, it may not be flanked.

*Blindsense (Ex)*: Using nonvisual senses, a reaver maneuvers and fights as well as a sighted creature. The reaver usually does not need to make Spot or Listen checks to pinpoint the location of a creature within range of its blindsense ability, provided that it has line of effect to that creature. Any opponent the reaver cannot see still has total concealment against the reaver, and the reaver still has the normal miss chance when attacking foes that have concealment. A reaver is still denied its Dexterity bonus to Armor Class against attacks from creatures it cannot see. A reaver's blindsense has a range of 120 feet.

*Tremorsense (Ex)*: A reaver is sensitive to vibrations in the ground and can automatically pinpoint the location of anything that is contact with the ground. A reaver's tremorsense has a range of 120 feet.

## Location 1.23: Escape Route

This apparent dead-end chamber is actually a magical portal to the Nest of Vipers (**World Atlas, Baraxton Location 110**) in the city.

# Location 2: Nassiral Hate's Temple — Main Level

## Location 2.1: Hate's Hill Giant Guard

The Nothrog priests used a **potion of shrinking** to get a hill giant guard into this room, where they keep him fed and happy. He guards the stairway to the main temple, and follows strict orders to kill anyone who enters unescorted by a Nothrog.

**Creature:** Grisk of Clan Manaka, a 3rd-level hill giant fighter.

**Grisk of Clan Manaka, Hill Giant Ftr 3:** CR 10; Huge giant; HD 12d8+48 plus 3 d10+12; hp 141; Init –1; Spd 40 ft.; AC 19, touch 7, flat-footed 19; Base Atk +12; Grp +27; Atk +19 melee (2d6+11/x2, greatclub); Full Atk +19/+14 melee (2d6+11/x2, greatclub) or +6 ranged (3d6+7/x2, rock); Space/Reach 15 ft./15 ft.; SA Favored weapon (greatclub); SQ Giant traits; AL NE; SV Fort +12, Ref +3, Will +4; Str 25, Dex 8, Con 19, Int 6, Wis 10, Cha 17.

*Skills and Feats:* Climb +8*, Jump +8*, Spot +7; Cleave, Collateral Damage, Great Cleave, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (greatclub), Run. *includes –3 armor check penalty

*Favored Weapon (greatclub):* Grisk gains a +1 competence bonus to attack and damage rolls with the greatclub.

*Giant traits:* A giant has the following traits:

- *Bellow (Ex):* All giants have the ability to bellow, causing great windy gusts to burst forth from their lungs. Anyone caught within the 20-ft. cone of this bellow must make a Reflex save (DC 19) or fall back onto the ground, and be hurled 1d4 × 10 ft. away from the giant. Giants frequently send opponents careening off a cliff with a well-timed shout.
- *Earth Bond (Su):* Giants are inextricably bound to the earth. So long as a giant is in direct contact with the earth, be it with dirt or with stone, he gains the Regenerate 1 special quality.
- Rock Catching (Ex): A giant can catch Small, Medium, or Large rocks (or projectiles of similar shape). Once per round, a giant that would otherwise be struck by such a rock can attempt a Reflex save to catch it as a free action. The DC is 15 for a Small rock, 20 for a Medium rock, and 25 for a Large rock. If the projectile has a magical bonus to the attack roll, the DC of the Reflex save is increased by an equal amount. A giant who is flat-footed (or otherwise denied his Dexterity bonus to AC) may not attempt this action, nor may a giant who is unaware of the attack.
- *Rock Throwing (Ex):* Adult giants are accomplished rock and caber throwers, and can hurl boulders or trees long distances. A full-grown giant can hurl rocks weighing 40 to 50 pounds each with ease. Such projectiles have a range increment of 10 feet and a maximum range of 50 feet, and inflict 3d6 damage (plus the giant's Strength modifier) on opponents. Most giants carry one or two such boulders with them while traveling, and often refresh their supplies from the side of a road.

*Possessions:* Hide armor, greatclub, sack with 1d6 rocks.

## Location 2.2: Temple Garden Entance

The garden entrance to the temple level has been magically sealed (**wizard lock**, caster level 15th), and guarded by patrols outside the temple. If the PCs have some way to distract the guards, or plan on making a frontal assault on the temple, this is the most likely location.

**Creatures:** Four Elite Hate Guard, 10th-level fighters *(see sidebar Temple Troops for stats)*.

**Elite Hate Guard (4):** hp 68, 57, 70, 65.

## Location 2.3: Entry Walkway

Statues once stood here, but Hate ordered them removed. Six of Krun's legionnaires quarter themselves here.

**Creatures:** Six Krun's legionnaires, 8th-level fighters *(see sidebar Temple Troops for stats)*.

**Krun's Legionnaires (6):** hp 68, 60, 55, 58, 70, 65.

## Location 2.4: Audience Chamber

Temple guests met with the clergy and Senators here. There are closets for coats and other personal effects. The Nothrog have not discovered the secret door leading to **Location 2.12**. There are four of Krun's legionnaires here.

**Creatures:** Four Krun's legionnaires, 8th-level fighters *(see sidebar Temple Troops for stats)*.

**Krun's Legionnaires (4):** hp 68, 60, 55, 58.

## Location 2.5: Meeting Room

The clergy and Senate met with regular visitors here, a more comfortable setting. The room is luxuriously furnished with tables, couches, and oil portraits. Hate negotiates with ambassadors from other factions in this room.

## Location 2.6: Garderobe

This leads straight to the sewers, and the PCs may come up this way.

## Location 2.7: Library

This is neither a wizard's nor a sage's library, but a legal and ecclesiastical one. Though dull reading, the books here detail Baraxton's legal precedents before Hate's arrival.

## Location 2.8: The Long Walk

Powerful illusions protect this room, making the hallway appear to go on forever even though a glance behind reveals that the entry door is still right there. The secret to getting to the room is to stand still until the door moves to the party. This is a wizard's room that is currently occupied by the low-level Nothrog wizard, Draljaca Tar. He discovered the room's secret, and has not shared it with anyone else. Tar surrenders quickly in a fight, and offers up his treasures as a bribe if necessary.

**Creature:** Draljaca Tar, a 1st-level wizard.

**Draljaca Tar, Male Nothrog Wiz 1:** CR 1; Medium humanoid (Nothrog); HD 1d4; hp 3; Spd 30 ft.; Init –1; AC 9, touch 9, flat-footed 9; Base Atk +0; Grp –1; Atk –1 melee (1d6–1, quarterstaff); Full Atk –1 melee ((1d6–1/1d6–1)), quarterstaff); SA Spells; SQ Summon familiar (rat), Nothrog traits, race/class abilities; AL CE; SV Fort +0, Ref –1, Will +4; Str 8, Dex 8, Con 10, Int 17, Wis 14, Cha 11.

*Skills and Feats:* Concentration +4, Decipher Script +3, Knowledge (arcana) +5, Profession (scribe) +3, Spellcraft +5; Alertness, Combat Casting, Improved Initiative, Scribe Scroll.

*Race/Class Abilities: Wizard:* —.

*Wizard Spells Prepared* (3/2; save DC 13 + spell level): 0 — *ghost sound, open/close, ray of frost*; 1st — *hold portal, obscuring mist.*

*Possessions:* Spellbook, quarterstaff.

*Treasure:* A few of the room's contents include a book on spell theory, fresh herbs of all kinds hanging from the ceiling, a masterwork magnifying glass, some shiny rocks in a leather pouch, 3 thunderstones, colored glass, and a *potion of gaseous form.*

*Familiar (rat):* Tar's rat familiar has the following statistics:

**Rat (Familiar)** CR —; Tiny magical beast; HD 3; hp 1; Init +2; Spd 15 ft, climb 15 ft, swim 15 ft; AC 15, touch 14, flat-footed 13; Base Atk +0; Grp –12; Atk +2 melee (1d3–4/x2, bite); Full Atk +2 melee (1d3–4/x2, bite); Space/Reach 2–1/2 ft./0 ft.; SA —; SQ low-light vision, scent, empathic link, share spells, improved evasion; AL N; SV Fort +2, Ref +4, Will +3; Str 2, Dex 15, Con 10, Int 6, Wis 12, Cha 2.

*Skill and Feats:* Balance +10, Climb +12, Hide +14, Move Silently +10, Swim +10; Weapon Finesse (bite).

*Low-Light Vision:* A rat can see twice as far as a Human in starlight, moonlight, torchlight, and similar conditions of shadowy illumination. It retains the ability to distinguish color and detail under these conditions.

*Scent:* A rat can detect opponents within 30 feet by sense of smell. If the opponent is upwind, the range increases to 60 feet; if downwind, it drops to 15 feet. Strong scents, such as smoke or rotting garbage, can be detected at twice the ranges noted above. Overpowering scents, such as skunk musk or troglodyte stench, can be detected at triple normal range. When a rat detects a scent, the exact location of the source is not revealed—only its presence somewhere within range. The rat can take a move action to note the direction of the scent.

Whenever the rat comes within 5 feet of the source, the creature pinpoints the source's location.

*Familiar Ability Descriptions:* All familiars have special abilities (or impart abilities to their masters) depending on the wizard's combined level in classes that grant familiars. The abilities are cumulative.

*Alertness (Ex):* While his familiar is within arm's reach, Tar gains the Alertness feat.

*Improved Evasion (Ex):* When subjected to an attack that normally allows a Reflex saving throw for half damage, a familiar takes no damage if it makes a successful saving throw and half damage even if the saving throw fails.

*Share Spells:* At Tar's option, he may have any spell (but not any spell-like ability) he casts on himself also affect his familiar. The familiar must be within 5 feet at the time of casting to receive the benefit. If the spell or effect has a duration other than instantaneous, it stops affecting the familiar if it moves farther than 5 feet away and will not affect the familiar again even if it returns to the wizard before the duration expires. Additionally, the wizard may cast a spell with a target of "You" on his familiar (as a touch range spell) instead of on himself. The wizard and his familiar can share spells even if the spells normally do not affect creatures of the familiar's type (magical beast).

*Empathic Link (Su):* Tar has an empathic link with his familiar out to a distance of up to 1 mile. The wizard cannot see through the familiar's eyes, but they can communicate empathically. Because of the limited nature of the link, only general emotional content can be communicated. Because of this empathic link, the wizard has the same connection to an item or place that his familiar does.

## Locations 2.9 (Locations 2.9.1 – 2.9.8): Ambassadors' Alley

The Nothrog have spared no expense in creating rooms for the ambassadors of the other Accordlands powers, treating them like royalty, always leaving them with the feeling that the Nothrog (especially Hate) favors their people over all others. The furnishings in each room are worth thousands of gps.

## Location 2.9.1: Kaballite Ambassador Room

This room is set up for the Kaballite ambassador, Bektor Elshemeer. It has rugs and a large veiled bed, and the smell of cinnamon incense fills the room. There is no chance that Elshemeer is here, as Elshemeer has all but abandoned his ambassadorial duties in favor of plundering Baraxton's secrets. Unless the party somehow arranges for him to be present (such as by gaining entrance to the temple with the aid of the Kabal), Bektor is absent. Bektor Elshemeer is a neutral evil Halfbreed (Elf-Human) 9th-level wizard, with a penchant for divination and torture spells. Even if somehow present, Bektor is a terrible coward, and surrenders rather than fight.

**Creature:** Bektor Elshemeer,a 9th-level wizard (not present).

**Bektor Elshemeer:** hp 23.

## Location 2.9.2: Guard Room

The Elite Hate Guard has four members stationed here for each ambassador currently in residence. Though nominally for the ambassadors' protection, the guardsmen are equally responsible for monitoring their charges' activities.

**Creatures:** Four Elite Hate Guard, 10th-level fighters *(see sidebar Temple Troops for stats).*

**Elite Hate Guard (4):** hp 68, 57, 70, 65.

## Location 2.9.3: Deverenian Ambassador Room

This room is decorated in the finest Deverenian trappings, including an entire wall dedicated to its occupant's many trophies and honors. Lord Theissen, the Deverenian ambassador to the Nothrog, has a 20% chance of being present. He does not react kindly to any force that does not have a Deverenian in it, but does not force a confrontation, fleeing instead. Theissen never lets on that he knows why the party is present. His part in the plan is to cover up any hint of Deverenian involvement. As such, he neither offers nor grants any aid, and sounds the alarm himself if the

party has botched the mission, calling his guards from **Location 2.9.2** — the guards are already paid off, and gladly help Theissen execute the party. Lord Theissen is a lawful evil Deverenian 5th-level fighter/1st-level rogue. At Hate's insistence, he has received absolutely no training as a demagogue, but maintains close ties to Father Ignatius of the local Deverenian cathedral, who has long since mastered that prestige class' abilities.

**Creature:** Lord Thiessen, a 5th-level fighter/1st-level rogue (20% chance present).

**Lord Thiessen:** hp 35.

## Location 2.9.4: Elven Ambassador Room

This room is decorated in the finest ivory work in the city. All of the furnishings are bone, and the bed is a magnificent work of art made of Human skulls and bone parts. There is a 30% chance that the Elven ambassador, Laurle, is here, though he often stays at his home in the city proper. The Elves actually have a working alliance with the Nothrog, and while Laurle understands that he is being "handled," he enjoys the time away from combat. He neither hinders nor helps the party unless an Elf is with them, in which case he cautions the Elf or Elves against attacking Hate. Laurel is a 9th-level wizard. While he is not in the room, he animates the bed. It is a bone golem that attacks any non-Elf that approaches 5 feet of it.

**Creature: Laurle**, a 9th-level wizard (30% chance present); one bone golem.

**Laurle:** hp 25.

**Bone Golem:** CR 10, Large construct; HD 11d10+30 (90hp); Init –1; Spd 20 ft.; AC 22, touch 8, flat-footed 22; Base Atk +8; Grp +19; Atk +14 melee (2d10+7 plus cursed wound/x2, slam); Full Atk +14 melee (2d10+7 plus cursed wound/x2, 2 slams); Space/Reach 10 ft./10 ft.; SA Berserk, cursed wound; SQ Construct traits, damage reduction 10/good, immunity to magic, low-light vision; AL N; SV Fort +3, Ref +2, Will +3; Str 25, Dex 9, Con —, Int —, Wis 11, Cha 1.

*Skills and Feats:* None; none.

*Berserk (Ex):* When a bone golem enters combat, there is a cumulative 1% chance each round that its elemental spirit breaks free and the golem goes berserk. The uncontrolled golem goes on a rampage, attacking the nearest living creature or smashing some object smaller than itself if no creature is within reach, then moving on to spread more destruction. Once a bone golem goes berserk, no known method can reestablish control.

*Cursed Wound (Ex):* The damage a bone golem deals resists healing spells. A character attempting to cast a conjuration (healing) spell on a creature damaged by a bone golem must succeed on a DC 26 caster level check, or the spell has no effect on the injured character.

*Low-Light Vision:* A bone golem can see twice as far as a Human in starlight, moonlight, torchlight, and similar conditions of shadowy illumination. It retains the ability to distinguish color and detail under these conditions.

*Immunity to Magic (Ex):* Bone golems are immune to all spells, spell-like abilities, and supernatural effects that allow spell resistance. In addition, certain spells and effects function differently against a bone golem. Fire- and cold-based effects stun a bone hound for 1d4 rounds. *Animate dead* deals 1d6 points of damage per caster level of the caster (maximum 5d6) to the bone golem. *Speak with dead* causes confusion for 1d6 rounds.

*Construct Traits:* A bone golem possesses the following traits:

- Immunity to all mind-affecting effects (charms, compulsions, phantasms, patterns, and morale effects).
- Immunity to poison, sleep effects, paralysis, stunning, disease, death effects, and necromancy effects.
- Cannot heal damage on its own, but can be repaired by exposing it to a certain kind of effect (see the Immunity to Magic for details) or through the use of the Craft Construct feat.
- Not subject to critical hits, nonlethal damage, ability damage, ability drain, fatigue, exhaustion, or energy drain.
- Immunity to any effect that requires a Fortitude save (unless the effect also works on objects, or is harmless).
- Not at risk of death from massive damage. Immediately destroyed when reduced to 0 hit points or less.
- Since it was never alive, a construct cannot be raised or resurrected.
- Constructs do not eat, sleep, or breathe.

## Location 2.9.5: VoTaurr Ambassador Room

Though ShiLara is the official ambassador (*see page 144, World Atlas,* **Baraxton location 18B**), it is her distant cousin KoVarth who maintains the tie between Nassiral Hate and the foremost chieftain of the VoTaurr, Mekk'iah. KoVarth is only here 10% of the time (his duties usually keep him in the VoTaurr lands, far to the south), but is absolutely dedicated to his people's alliance with Hate. KoVarth attempts to sound the alarm personally if the party attempts to recruit him, then joins his Nothrog allies in attacking the party. KoVarth's room is sparsely decorated, with some tanned hides and battle-axes mounted on the wall over a fireplace. KoVarth is a lawful neutral VoTaurr 1st level fighter/5th-level wizard, and perfectly capable of wielding the room's axes in combat.

**Creature:** KoVarth, a 1st-level fighter/5th-level wizard.

**Lord Thiessen:** hp 35.

## Location 2.9.6: Free Kingdoms Ambassador Room

Senator Maltus is an ex-assembly head from Baraxton, and has appointed himself ambassador from the Free Kingdoms to the Nothrog. He is a politician taking advantage of his situation. Not only has he retained control of his lands, he eagerly works with the Nothrog to maintain a pretense of a strong alliance between the Free Kingdoms and Hate. Maltus is more cunning than most suspect, and was among the first to join Krun's secret conspiracy to overthrow Hate. While he does not fight even in self-defense (he is a coward), if the party asks for his aid, he eagerly offers to "arrange" for fewer patrols — in truth, he simply informs Krun of the party's presence, and Krun then orders his troops outside to counter a decoy threat. Senator Maltus is always in his chambers, or else engaged in spirited debate with another ambassador in their quarters. Senator Maltus is a neutral evil Human 3rd-level aristocrat/2nd-level rogue.

**Creature:** Senator Maltus, a 3rd-level aristocrat/2nd-level rogue.

**Senator Maltus:** hp 20.

## Location 2.9.7: Giant Ambassador Chambers

Varin is a Nothrog in service to the giant Sceth Hellbringer. Hellbringer's Legion is one of the strongest Nothrog legions, and as such, Varin's role is largely ceremonial. In truth, he is little more than a lackey, a talented siege engineer, and has no actual political power. He is only present if the following conditions are met: the party did not enter the temple by sabotaging the choppers (**Location 1.1**; if they did, Varin is repairing them by this point), the party has not killed Sorscha (if they did, Hate foresees Varin being more useful elsewhere), and the party has not completed the *Siege of Kcal'den Fortress* adventure (if they have, Varin is among Hate's people that investigate the fallen fortress). Varin is a short, unimposing Nothrog, and incapable of defending himself from the party if they choose to fight him. Varin is a lawful evil Nothrog 4th-level fighter. He is unaware of Krun's alliance with Sceth, and though he might promise to keep quiet about the party's presence, he sounds the alarm the moment he feels safe in so doing.

**Creature:** Varin, a 4th-level fighter *(conditional presence — see above)*.

**Varin:** hp 32.

## Location 2.9.8: Kothkah's Chambers

Kothkah is not truly an ambassador, but rather the head of the Lion Legion, one of Hate's armies back in the heart of the Nothrog homelands. Kothkah is something akin to a seneschal for Hate, ruling in Hate's absence. As such, Kothkah is hardly ever present (5% chance). Though he is a proud barbarian, he despises the stereotypes of barbarians as ignorant simpletons, and eagerly picks a fight with anyone who treats him that way, or even speaks slightingly of barbarians. Kothkah is a powerful combatant, and troublesome for any who expect him to be as weak as the others on Ambassadors' Alley. Kothkah is loyal to Hate, and will not ally with the party. If Kothkah survives this adventure, he is suspicious of Krun, but accepts Krun's offer to remain in the same duties as under Hate. Kothkah is literate.

**Creature:** Kothkah, a 15th-level barbarian.

**Kothkah, Male Nothrog Warlord Bar 15:** CR 15; Medium humanoid (Nothrog); HD 15d12+45; hp 180; Spd 45 ft.; Init +6; AC 19, touch 16, flat-footed 17; Base Atk +15; Grp +20; Atk +24 melee (1d8+9(19–20/x3), battleaxe); Full Atk +24/+19/+14 melee (1d8+9(19–20/x3), battleaxe); SA Furious charge, greater rage 4/day, mighty blow; SQ Fast movement, illiteracy, non-magical bonus +4, Nothrog traits, resist magic +4, totem animal (lion), uncanny dodge (+1 vs. traps), undying fury (1d12 hp/round), damage reduction 2/—, race/class abilities; AL CE; SV Fort +13, Ref +7, Will +8; Str 20, Dex 14, Con 18, Int 15, Wis 16, Cha 17.

*Skills and Feats:* Climb +15*, Intimidate +21, Jump +15*, Listen +21; Fury, Feat of Strength, Improved Critical (battleaxe), Improved Initiative, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (battleaxe), Improved Trip. *includes –3 armor check penalty

*Race/Class Abilities: Barbarian*: Improved Trip, Damage Reduction (damage reduction 2/-), Induce Fear (Will save DC 20 or panicked).

*Fast Movement*: Kothkah has a speed faster than the norm for his race by +10 feet when wearing no armor, light armor, or medium armor (and not carrying a heavy load).

*Furious Charge:* While raging Kothkah may make two attacks during a charge action.

*Greater Rage (6/day)*: While Kothkah rages, his statistics change as follows: HD 15d12+90; hp 225; AC 17, touch 14, flat-footed 15; Grp +23; Atk +27 melee (1d8+12(19–20/x3), battleaxe); Full Atk +27/+22/+17 melee (1d8+12(19–20/x3), battleaxe); SV Fort +16, Will +11; Str 26, Con 24. His fit of rage lasts for 13 rounds. At the end of the rage Kothkah is fatigued (–2 to Strength, –2 to Dexterity, can't charge or run).

*Illiteracy:* Kothkah cannot read nor write.

*Mighty Blow:* Any time Kothkah scores a critical hit while raging he has an opportunity to knock his opponent senseless. The victim must make a Fortitude save (DC 10 + damage inflicted) or be stunned for the next round.

*Non-Magical Bonus:* Kothkah receives a +4 bonus to his attack and damage rolls when not using a magical weapon and Armor Class when not wearing magical armor or carrying an enchanted shield. Attacks made by Kothkah ignore damage reduction as if his/her weapon were enchanted with an enhancement bonus of the same amount.

*Resist Magic:* Kothkah gains a +4 morale bonus to saves against effects generated by spells, spell-like abilities and magic items. A +2 morale bonus also extends to any of a Kothkah 's allies within 10 feet of the barbarian that suffers the same spell or effect as the barbarian. Kothkah also reduces additional damage inflicted against him by enhancement bonuses by the same amount.

*Totem Animal (lion)*: Bonus Ability — Speed of the Lion: Kothkah's base speed increases by +5 ft.

*Uncanny Dodge:* Kothkah retains his Dexterity bonus to AC (if any) even if he is caught flat-footed or struck by an invisible attacker. However, he still loses his Dexterity bonus to AC if immobilized. Kothkah also gains a +1 bonus on Reflex saves made to avoid traps and a +1 dodge bonus to AC against attacks made by traps.

*Undying Fury:* Kothkah may prolong his rages. For every 1d12 hit points he chooses to lose he may rage an additional round.

*Possessions:* Hide armor, battleaxe, heavy wooden shield.

## Location 2.10: Head Priest Private Receiving Room

This was once the receiving room of the patriarch of this level of the temple. It is now quarters for two of Hate's shamans. The room is furnished with fine furniture from across the Accordlands, and the priests have grown accustomed to these luxuries. They are poor combatants, and attempt to summon the physical manifestations of their totems (which takes 1 round if both are present, or 2 rounds otherwise) to defend themselves if necessary, then flee to their respective rooms. If they fail the summoning, or the party destroys their summoned totems, the priests surrender. They are only functionaries, and know nothing of value beyond directions.

**Creatures:** Two Nothrog shamans, 15th-level shaman; two totem huge scarab beetles.

**Nothrog Shamans (2), Female Albino Nothrog Sha 15:** CR 15; Medium humanoid (Nothrog); HD 15d4+35; hp 65; Init +1; Spd 30 ft; AC 16, touch 16, flat-footed 14; Base Atk +7; Grp +8; Atk +9 melee (1d6+2(18–20/x2), *+3 scimitar of wounding*); Full Atk +9/+4 melee (1d6+2(18–20/x2), *+1 scimitar of wounding*); SA Spells; SQ Albino Nothrog traits, beast bond, familiar (giant scarab beetle), favored terrain (hill, mountain, forest, marsh), race/class abilities; AL NE; SV Fort +7, Ref +7, Will +12; Str 12, Dex 15, Con 14, Int 16, Wis 16, Cha 12.

*Skills and Feats:* Concentration +19, Craft (leatherworking) +23, Hide +5, Knowledge (nature) +23, Knowledge (arcana) +23, Move Silently +10, Spellcraft +23, Spot +12, Survival +20; Totemic Familiar (giant scarab beetle), Craft Wand, Craft Metamagic Fetish, Tap Metamagic Fetish, Magic Shifting, Craft Rod, Combat Casting, Alertness.

*Race/Class Abilities: Shaman (Scarab Totem)*: Scarab Carapace (+3), Scarab's Quickness, Scarab's Bite.

*Beast Bond:* A Nothrog shaman may share her consciousness with her familiar, allowing her to share her familiar's perceptions. While using this ability, a Nothrog shaman is unaware of herself, and is considered helpless. She may not move, speak, or act in any way. However, she is in full control of her familiar's actions

*Favored Terrain (hill, mountain, forest, marsh):* While in hill, mountain, forest or marsh terrain, a Nothrog shaman's shaman caster level is considered to be 16th and she does not need to have access to her medicine bag to prepare fetishes.

*Totem Animal (scarab beetle):* A 1st-level shaman may begin play with an animal companion. The animal selected determines the druid's totem animal. The effects of Nothrog shaman's totem animal are described below.

*Shaman Spells Prepared* (6/7/7/7/6/6/6/4; Save DC: 13 (15 in favored terrain) + spell level): 0 — *read magic, detect magic, flare, ghost sound, daze, disrupt undead;* 1st — *begone, curse of the lady, stone hands, mage armor, blast, magic missile, power bolt;* 2nd — *shard storm, words of woe, acid arrow, web, push, see invisibility, hideous laughter;* 3rd — *acid spittle, cloak of fear, hail of thorns, premonition, tremor, war rune, wilderness stride;* 4th — *acid storm, banish the wound, claws of ash, soul binding, decay, inferno;* 5th — *clinging miasma, greater bull's strength, hermetic armor, howling rain, hate, permanency;* 6th — *exposure, strangulation, acid fog, summon monster VI, repulsion, prismatic surge;* 7th — *acid burst, choking cloud, despair, greater ethereal drain.*

*Possessions:* Medicine bag, fetishes, *+4 ring of protection, +1 scimitar of wounding.*

**Familiar (giant scarab beetle*):** *Bonus Ability:* Fast Healing 1. Scarab provides the ability to heal at an accelerated rate and the character regains 1 hit point per round. Fast healing does not allow a creature to regrow or reattach lost body parts. *Familiar/Animal Companion Special Abilities:* A Nothrog shaman gains a +2 competence bonus to Hide and Move Silently checks.

A Nothrog Shaman's scarab totem animal familiar has the following statistics:

**Giant Scarab Beetle (Totemic Familiar)** CR 4; Large Animal; HD 14d8; hp 85; Init +2; Spd 20 ft.; AC 27, touch 9, flat-footed 27; Base Atk +7; Grp +17; Atk +13 melee (4d6+9/x2, bite); Full Atk +13 melee (4d6+9/x2, bite); Space/Reach 10 ft./5 ft.; SA Trample 2d8+3; SQ Darkvision 60 ft., vermin traits, empathic link, share spells, improved evasion, deliver touch spells, speak with master, speak with animals of its kind, scry on familiar, spell resistance 20; AL N; SV Fort +8, Ref +4, Will +9; Str 23, Dex 10, Con 17, Int 13, Wis 10, Cha 9.

*Skill and Feats:* None; none.

*Familiar Ability Descriptions:* All familiars have special abilities (or impart abilities to their masters) depending on a Nothrog shaman's combined level in classes that grant familiars. The abilities are cumulative.

*Alertness (Ex):* While a familiar is within arm's reach, a Nothrog shaman gains the Alertness feat.

*Improved Evasion (Ex):* When subjected to an attack that normally allows a Reflex saving throw for half damage, a familiar takes no damage if it makes a successful saving throw and half damage even if the saving throw fails.

*Share Spells:* At the Nothrog shaman's option, she may have any spell (but not any spell-like ability) she casts on herself also affect her familiar. The familiar must be within 5 feet at the time of casting to receive the benefit. If the spell or effect has a duration other than instantaneous, it stops affecting the familiar if it moves farther than 5 feet away and will not affect the familiar again even if it returns to a Nothrog shaman before the duration expires. Additionally, a Nothrog shaman may cast a spell with a target of "You" on her familiar (as a touch range spell) instead of on herself. A Nothrog shaman and her familiar can share spells even if the spells normally do not affect creatures of the familiar's type (magical beast).

*Empathic Link (Su):* A Nothrog shaman has an empathic link with her familiar out to a distance of up to 1 mile. A Nothrog shaman cannot see through the familiar's eyes, but they can communicate empathically. Because of the limited nature of the link, only general emotional content can be communicated. Because of this empathic link, a Nothrog shaman has the same connection to an item or place that her familiar does.

*Deliver Touch Spells (Su):* A Nothrog shaman's familiar can deliver touch spells for her. If a Nothrog shaman and the familiar are in contact at the time a Nothrog shaman casts a touch spell, she can designate his familiar as the "toucher." The familiar can then deliver the touch spell just as a Nothrog shaman could. As usual, if a Nothrog shaman casts another spell before the touch is delivered, the touch spell dissipates.

*Speak with Master (Ex):* A Nothrog shaman and her familiar can communicate verbally as if they were using a common language. Other creatures do not understand the communication without magical help.

*Speak with Animals of Its Kind (Ex):* A Nothrog shaman's familiar can communicate with insects (including dire varieties). Such communication is limited by the intelligence of the conversing creatures.

*Spell Resistance (Ex):* A Nothrog shaman's familiar gains spell resistance equal to the master's level + 5 (20). To affect the familiar with a spell, another spellcaster must get a result on a caster level check (1d20 + caster level) that equals or exceeds the familiar's spell resistance.

*Scry on Familiar (Sp):* A Nothrog shaman may scry on her familiar (as if casting the *scrying* spell) once per day.

**Giant Scarab Beetle (Totem Manifestation) (2):** CR 10; Huge Magical Beast (Vermin); HD 15d8+60; hp 150; Init +0; Spd 30 ft.; AC 18, touch 8, flat-footed 18; Base Atk +5; Grp +20; Atk +10 melee (6d6+10/x2, bite); Full Atk +10 melee (6d6+10/x2, bite); Space/Reach 15 ft./10 ft.; SA Trample 3d6+3, poison; SQ Darkvision 60 ft., vermin traits; AL N; SV Fort +9, Ref +4, Will +9; Str 25, Dex 10, Con 19, Int 13, Wis 10, Cha 9.

*Skill and Feats:* None; none.

*Trample (Ex):* 3d6+3 damage, Reflex half DC 19. The save DC is Strength-based.

*Poison (Ex):* Crippling Poison, save DC 17. Initial damage 1d6 Dex, secondary damage 1d6 Dex.

*Vermin Traits:* Nothrog shaman's totem manifestation possesses the following traits:

- Immunity to all mind-affecting effects (charms, compulsions, phantasms, patterns, and morale effects).
- Darkvision out to 60 feet.

## Location 2.11: Private Library

One of Hate's priests has pulled his bed into the middle of this chamber. The priest spends most of his time poring through the texts here, so the room is a mess of books and papers. The books are old religious and mythological texts. They hint at the magic items stored in **Location 2.22.5**.

## Location 2.12: Bedroom

This nicely furnished bedroom is home to one of Hate's priests, but is empty now.

## Location 2.13: Sanctum

This is a private prayer room. Its pews are empty.

## Location 2.14: General Library

This is the library where the priests stored their records and copies of many important historical works.

## Location 2.15: Study Chamber

This was a private study chamber with two sets of desks and chairs. The room is empty.

## Location 2.16: Meditation Room.

Created for quiet time and reflection for the priests, this room is soundproof (–10 circumstance penalty on any Listen checks to hear into the room from outside, and vice versa). The Nothrog use this as their interrogation room. 50% of the time, four of Krun's legionnaires are questioning a prisoner here.

**Creatures:** Four Krun's legionnaires, 8th-level fighters *(see sidebar Temple Troops for stats).*

**Krun's Legionnaires (4):** hp 60, 55, 58, 65.

## Location 2.17: Scriptorium

This is the room where the Senate's aides would copy and research books. The Nothrog presently use it for a similar purpose — to research strategies for Hate's warlords. Four of Krun's Legionnaires are on duty, keeping watch over four Humans working on the plans. Krun's Legion is among the most strategically advanced of the Nothrog, so the Humans present cannot forge, hide, or misrepresent any of their discoveries. The Humans are scholars, not warriors, but if freed can reveal that Hate has sent orders to Kcal'den Fortress recently, and before that he helped arrange many of the trades to Ghostwood Keep. They helped set up an attack on a ruined temple in Denska, but have no idea why it was necessary *(see the adventure The Dragon's Lair for more information).*

## Location 2.18: Stair Guards Room

Four of Krun's Legionnaires are here.

**Creatures:** Four Krun's legionnaires, 8th-level fighters *(see sidebar Temple Troops for stats).*

**Krun's Legionnaires (4):** hp 60, 55, 58, 65.

## Location 2.19: Lounge

This is a comfortable room with couches, throw rugs, and pillows. It is an informal den for entertaining close friends or family.

## Location 2.20: Bath House

These are makeshift showers and baths, designed by the Nothrog. If the party disabled the choppers (**Location 1.1**), entering this room forces the PCs to make a Fortitude save (DC 14) or be nauseated by the stench. Around an hour after the party disables the choppers, the waste backs up into this room.

## Location 2.21: Relaxation Chambers

These private bathing chambers are empty.

## Location 2.22: Entrance to the Hollow

This is the secret entrance from the sewers, known only to some of the ranking senators and the Cartwrights' (Thieves') Guild (who eventually shared this knowledge with the Cathedral of the Storm). The hidden door is directly above the choppers under the temple. The party must overcome three Open Lock checks (DC 20, 25, and 30, consecutively) to open it; attempting to bash down the door results in a series of steel rods falling into place inside the stone door, rendering it impossible to open. Once inside, the hollow is further guarded by a series of secret doors, and then traps protecting the items within.

## Location 2.22.1: Private Treasury

This area is the private treasury of an embezzling senator (now dead). Loot includes 50,000 gp worth of coins, gems, and jewelry, none of which is magical.

## Location 2.22.2: Chopper Pit Traps

The floor to this room is a false floor, and drops into the choppers (**Location 1.1**) once someone sets foot inside. A Spot check (DC 35) shows that the center of the floor dips slightly, with visible cracks meeting up precisely in the room's middle. A Knowledge (architecture) or Knowledge (stonemasonry) check (DC 20 either way, +5 synergy bonus if the character has both) outright reveals the nature of the false floor, though the party must closely examine the room (or succeed in the Spot check) to reveal this.



### Iron Golem

**Iron Golem:** CR 13, Large construct; HD 18d10+30 (129hp); Init –1; Spd 20 ft.; AC 30, touch 8, flat-footed 30; Base Atk +12; Grp +28; Atk +23 melee (2d10+11, slam); Full Atk +23 melee (2d10+11/x2, 2 slams); Space/Reach 10 ft./10 ft.; SA Breath weapon; SQ Construct traits, damage reduction 15/adamantine, darkvision 60 ft., immunity to magic, low-light vision, weakness to Kor; AL N; SV Fort +6, Ref +5, Will +6; Str 33, Dex 9, Con -, Int -, Wis 11, Cha 1.

*Skills and Feats:* None; none.

*Breath Weapon (Su):* 10-foot cube, cloud of poisonous gas lasting 1 round, free action once every 1d4+1 rounds; initial damage 1d4 Con, secondary damage 3d4 Con, Fortitude DC 19 negates. The save DC is Constitution-based.

*Immunity to Magic (Ex):* An iron golem is immune to any spell or spell-like ability that allows spell resistance. In addition, certain spells and effects function differently against the creature, as noted below.

A magical attack that deals electricity damage slows an iron golem (as the *slow* spell) for 3 rounds, with no saving throw

A magical attack that deals fire damage breaks any slow effect on the golem and heals 1 point of damage for each 3 points of damage the attack would otherwise deal. If the amount of healing would cause the golem to exceed its full normal hit points, it gains any excess as temporary hit points. An iron golem is affected normally by rust attacks, such as that of a rust monster.

*Weakness to Kor:* Priests of Kor may attempt to turn an iron golem as if it were undead. The golem gains +3 to resist these turn attempts.

## Location 2.22.3: Treasures of King Dukault

This entire room is full of some of Hate's most beloved trophies, the plundered family heirlooms of King Dukault. Dukault's family line dated back to Laurel's break from Deverenia, and Hate had initially intended to use Laurel as a staging ground to conquer Deverenia itself. Unfortunately, while Laurel had been a conquered nation since before Dukault's birth, the king had no desire to trade one tyrant for another. He paid for his intransigence with his life during the Assassins' Strike. Hate had originally intended to bribe Dukault with this room's contents. The treasures include the royal jewels and crown, an extensive family history (naming the surviving heirs), and the stolen throne. Taken at market value, these are little more than brass trinkets and baubles (Laurel had to fight with Deverenia almost constantly for centuries, and could not afford luxuries), but to Deverenian or Laurel partisans, they are priceless.

## Location 2.22.4: Treasury Rooms.

These are the treasury holds of Baraxton. Uncountable amounts of gold and jewelry are here, easily worth millions of gp. Stealing from this room is an unconscionably villainous act, however, as these are the public funds, not Hate's personal treasures. Its theft would bankrupt Baraxton and send most of the Accordlands into a depression, in turn leading to further Deverenian expansion against its newly impoverished neighbors. One iron golem watches over each room, and an **alarm** (cast by a level 20 wizard) sounds when the golems leave their pedestals.

**Creatures:** Iron golems *(see sidebar The Golem Guardians for stats).*

## Location 2.22.5: Artifact Rooms

These rooms hold artifacts that Hate has stolen. Each has its own trap protecting it.

THE BLACK JOURNAL
*Major Artifact*

This is the powerful Elven necromancer Dythanus' original treatise on his discoveries, a surprisingly thin tome bound in bone. As the seminal work on a new form of magic designed to extend the lives of the short-lived Elves, the Black Journal is itself intelligent, and actively wishes to impart its magic to any who read it, though only arcane spellcasters may do so. Non-evil characters that read the tome suffer two permanent negative levels for their curiosity, as the terrifying nature of the text tears away their sanity, but all others gain necromancer as a favored class. The book itself contains all spells available to the necromancer class, but copying spells from the text causes permanent Wisdom or Charisma drain (GM's choice) equal to the spell's level.

*Trap:* This room is not trapped — the Black Journal is itself the trap.

BOW OF FARSIGHT
*Minor Artifact*

The Bow of Farsight is a relic of the Elven House Glyn. Though not, as popularly thought, wielded by the original Glyn, the Bow of Farsight remained a valued artifact of the house until Hate acquired it for an ally, his fellow Medusan Lord Cear Adinerach, who wanted it for his apprentice Mithglyn. The Bow of Farsight is not magical at all, but simply a bow of impossibly perfect craftsmanship. It is a masterwork longbow that ignores range increment penalties.

*Caster level:* —, *weight:* 3 lbs., *Market Price:* 2,000 gp.

*Trap:* An arrow trap triggers if the PCs lift the bow off the pedestal in this room.

**Arrow Trap:** CR 1; mechanical; touch trigger; manual reset; Atk +10 ranged (1d6/x3, arrow); Search DC 20; Disable Device DC 20.

### Doombringer

*Minor Artifact*

Three of these artifacts exist, all stolen by Anton Cyldragen from the abyssal trio guarding the Temple of Katal. This is one of two that the Nothrog bartered from Cyldragen. It is a simple *+2 quarterstaff* to most eyes, although it forks at one end. Striking it on the ground and pointing it causes it to emit two mighty *fireballs* (as per the spell of the same name, cast by a wizard of the wielder's level + the wielder's total levels of shaman and wizard). Anton knew too well the origin of its name — information he did not share with the relic's buyers. Wielders of the **Doombringers** inevitably have their ambitions and hopes turn against them.

Taoth, warlord of the Legion of Scarab, wields the other Doombringer the Nothrog own. The third one's location is unknown.

*Caster level:* —, *weight:* 4 lbs.

*Trap:* 25 vipers crawl freely around and over the Doombringer.

**Creature:** Twenty-five large vipers.

**Snake, Large Viper (1):** CR 2; Large animal; HD 3d8; hp 13; Init +7; Spd 20 ft., climb 20 ft., swim 20 ft.; AC 15, touch 12, flat-footed 12; Base Atk +2, Grp +6; Atk +4 melee (1d4 plus poison/x2, bite); Full Atk +4 melee (1d4 plus poison/x2, bite); Space/Reach 10ft./5ft.; SA Poison; SQ Scent; AL N; SV Fort +3, Ref +6, Will +2; Str 10, Dex 17, Con 11, Int 1, Wis 12, Cha 2.

*Skills and Feats:* Balance +11, Climb +11, Hide +8, Listen +5, Spot +6, Swim +8; Improved Initiative, Weapon Finesse.

*Poison:* A viper has a poisonous bite that deals initial and secondary damage of 1d6 Con. The save DC is 11 and is Constitution-based.

*Scent:* The viper can detect opponents within 30 feet by sense of smell. If the opponent is upwind, the range increases to 60 feet; if downwind, it drops to 15 feet. Strong scents, such as smoke or rotting garbage, can be detected at twice the ranges noted above. Overpowering scents, such as skunk musk or troglodyte stench, can be detected at triple normal range. When a creature detects a scent, the exact location of the source is not revealed—only its presence somewhere within range. The creature can take a move action to note the direction of the scent.

Whenever the creature comes within 5 feet of the source, the creature pinpoints the source's location.

### Mail of Virtue

*Major Artifact*

Anton Cyldragen acquired this artifact in his youth by secretly replacing it with an exact duplicate in the Temple of Katal, where it had resided for centuries. The *geased* abyssals guarding it do not suspect a thing, believing instead that Cyldragen returned it after thieves had stolen it. The *Mail of Virtue* is a subtle artifact, appearing no more magical than any other breastplate. The armor is as strong as the faith of its wearer, a sign of its origin in Athanaes. It is a *+5 breastplate* that renders its wearer immune to critical hits, and automatically stabilizes him if he is reduced to below 0 hit points. Additionally, divine spellcasters who strictly maintain their religion's code of conduct have damage reduction 5/–. If the wearer ever betrays his religion or breaks its code of conduct without atoning, the *Mail of Virtue* summarily imposes three permanent negative levels.

*Caster level:* —, *weight:* 10 lbs.

*Trap:* 20 exact replicas of the armor are in this room. Touching the wrong armor activates a *lightning bolt* trap.

**Lightning Bolt Trap:** CR 4; magic device; proximity trigger (alarm); automatic reset; spell effect (lightning bolt, 5th-level wizard, 5d6 electricity, DC 14 Reflex save half damage); Search DC 28; Disable Device DC 28.

### Mindripper

*Major Artifact*

This is a light mace with a spherical crystalline head surrounded by leathery tendrils. When grasped, the head apparently electrifies, but that is not entirely accurate. In truth, the *Mindripper* draws upon its wielder's mental energies to power itself. It is a *+5 light mace of shocking burst*. Once per combat, its wielder may decide that his next hit automatically threatens a critical hit, but for the remainder of the day, all his skills are reduced to 0 ranks.

Unknown even to Hate himself, the *Mindripper* is an artifact from before the First War, a powerful weapon of an entity akin to a psychic plague that is now imprisoned in the Plane of Secrets. The residual psychic charge has long since faded from the *Mindripper*, but the first person to touch it suffers crippling migraines for 1d6 hours (–10 competence penalty to any Int, Wis, or Cha-based skill checks, as well as any skill requiring concentration).

*Caster level:* —, *weight:* 3 lbs.

*Trap:* There is no trap. The *Mindripper* itself is a cursed item.

### Staff of War

*Minor Artifact*

This appears to be a simple wooden quarterstaff, but is actually a specialized *staff of defense*. In addition to the normal abilities such a staff offers, the **Staff of War** gives enhanced awareness while wielded. The wielder is never surprised or caught flat-footed, and cannot be outflanked.

*Caster level:* —, *weight:* 5 lbs.

*Trap:* Seven skulls sit around the staff. They animate and circle the weapon as anyone enters. If someone attempts to touch the staff, all seven skulls cast a *flame strike* spell targeting the entire room (as cast by a 20th level wizard). The skulls crumble after suffering 10 hits, and suffer double damage from crushing attacks.

## Location 2.23: Sewer Dump

The refuse and waste from the temple are dumped into the sewers in this room. The PCs can gain entrance to the temple here.

## Location 2.24: Quartermaster

A recent hire, the Human Donovan Che'har, earned both his Nothrog naming honorific and his new job by revealing the true heritage of a recent prisoner, Keziah (see the adventure **The Final Showdown** for more on her fate). He is responsible for maintaining and supplying arms and armor. He is a master combatant, and fairly loyal to Hate, surrendering only if reduced to 10% of hit total hit points. He knows that Hate transferred Keziah from the prison, but not why or to where. If Donovan survives this adventure, either Krun or Hate transfers him back to Uthanak's Legion for his failure to aid Hate against the party.

**Creature:** Donovan Che'har, a 12th-level barbarian.

**Donovan Che'har, Male Human Brb 12:** CR 9; Medium humanoid (Human); HD 12d12; hp 86; Init –2; Spd 40 ft; AC 15, touch 9, flat-footed 14; Base Atk +12; Grp +15; Atk +18 melee (1d10+6/x2, heavy flail); Full Atk +18/+13 melee (1d10+6/x2, heavy flail); SA Barbarian rage 4/day; SQ Dwarf traits, fast movement, illiteracy, uncanny dodge non-magical bonus +3, resist magic +3 (+2 allies), totem animal (snake), undying fury, race/class abilities; AL CG; SV Fort +8, Ref +2, Will +3; Str 17, Dex 6, Con 10, Int 10, Wis 9, Cha 9.

*Skills and Feats:* Handle Animal +11, Intimidate +11, Ride +11, Survival +10; Blind-Fight, Dodge, Lightning Reflexes, Run, Snakeblood, Track.

*Race/Class Abilities: Barbarian*: Leadership, Great Renown.

*Barbarian Rage (4/day)*: While Donovan rages, his statistics change as follows: HD 9d12+24; hp 110; AC 13, touch 7, flat-footed 12; Grp +17; Atk +20 melee (1d10+8/x2, heavy flail); Full Atk +20/+15 melee (1d10+8/x2, heavy flail); SV Fort +10, Will +5; Str 21, Con 14. His fit of rage lasts for 5 rounds. At the end of the rage Donovan is fatigued (–2 to Strength, –2 to Dexterity, can't charge or run).

*Fast Movement (Ex)*: Donovan has a speed faster than the norm for his race by +10 feet when wearing no armor, light armor, or medium armor (and not carrying a heavy load).

*Illiteracy*: Donovan cannot read nor write.

*Non-Magical Bonus:* Donovan receives a +2 bonus to his attack and damage rolls when not using a magical weapon and Armor Class when not wearing magical armor or carrying an enchanted shield. Attacks made by Donovan ignore damage reduction as if his/her weapon were enchanted with an enhancement bonus of the same amount. Donovan's sheer force of will can diminish the consequences of a spell affecting him. Any time one or more of Donovan's allies within 10 feet is affected by the same spell or effect as the barbarian, each of them gains a +2 morale bonus to his own save.

*Resist Magic (Ex)*: Donovan gains a +2 morale bonus to saves against effects generated by spells, spell-like abilities and magic items. Donovan also reduces additional damage inflicted against him/her by enhancement bonuses by the same amount.

*Totem Animal (snake)*: Bonus Ability — Skin Shed: Donovan can bring himself back from the brink of death a limited number of times. When he is between 0 and –10 hit points, his body splits open and he, fully healed, emerges from the shell of his former self. This process takes 2 rounds and is not without side effects: Donovan loses 1d3 points from every ability score. If this loss would cause any ability score to drop below 1, Donovan is permanently dead and cannot benefit from this ability.

*Undying Fury*: At 6th level, Donovan may prolong his rages. At any time when a rage would normally end, Donovan may lose 1d12 hit points to extend the rage for an additional round. This ability may be used multiple times per rage, provided Donovan spends the requisite hit points for each use of this ability.

*Possessions:* Heavy flail, masterwork studded leather.

## Location 2.25: Armory

This room is a makeshift armory for the Nothrog in the temple. They can bring armor and weapons here for replacements commissioned by Donovan Che'har. There are two mercenaries here at all times.

## Location 2.26: Guard Room

Four of Krun's legionnaires are here at all times.

**Creatures:** Four Krun's legionnaires, 8th-level fighters *(see sidebar Temple Troops for stats)*.

**Krun's Legionnaires (4):** hp 60, 55, 58, 65.

## Location 2.27: Acolytes' Chambers

The party may attempt to sneak past these rooms, but any fight here raises the alarm. The acolytes' chambers now are each home to two of Krun's Legionnaires. There is 50% chance they are in their rooms.

**Creatures:** Two Krun's legionnaires, 8th-level fighters *(see sidebar Temple Troops for stats; 50% chance present)*.

**Krun's Legionnaires (2):** hp 60, 65.

## Location 2.28: Brothers' Chambers

These cells once housed monks, but now three of the Elite Hate Guard live here. There is 50% chance they are in the room.

**Creatures:** Three Elite Hate Guard, 10th-level fighters *(see sidebar Temple Troops for stats; 50% chance present)*.

**Elite Hate Guard (3):** hp 68, 65, 66.

## Location 2.29: Priests' Chambers

These rooms house three of Krun's Legionnaires. There is a 50% chance they will be in the room.

**Creatures:** Three Krun's legionnaires, 8th-level fighters *(see sidebar Temple Troops for stats; 50% chance present)*.

**Krun's Legionnaires (3):** hp 60, 65, 65.

## Location 2.30: Patriarchs' Chambers

These rooms house four Elite Hate Guards. There is a 50% chance they are in the room.

**Creatures:** Four Elite Hate Guard, 10th-level fighters *(see sidebar Temple Troops for stats)*.

**Elite Hate Guard (4):** hp 68, 65, 56, 58.

## Location 2.31: Kitchen

Large cooking pots hang over fire pits, and three ovens line the back wall (one in front of the secret door that the Nothrog do not know about). Tables with pots, pans, and cooking utensils fill the rest of the room. Ten Human cooks from the city prepare food around the clock for the Nothrog in the temple.

**Creatures:** Ten cooks, 3rd-level commoners.

**Cooks (10), Male Human Com 3:** CR 2; Medium humanoid (Human); HD 3d4+3+3; hp 13; Spd 30 ft.; Init +2; AC 12, touch 12, flat-footed 10; Base Atk +1; Grp +3; Atk +3 melee (1d6+2/x2, club); Full Atk +3 melee (1d6+2/x2, club); SA —; SQ Human Traits; AL LN; SV Fort +2, Ref +3, Will +4; Str 14, Dex 14, Con 12, Int 15, Wis 13, Cha 10.



*Skills and Feats:* Climb +2, Handle Animal +6, Listen +5, Profession (cook) +6, Rope Use +4, Spot +4, Swim +3; Alertness, Iron Will, Toughness.

*Possessions:* Club.

## Location 2.32: Storage

Barrels of food, casks of ale, and other cooking supplies fill this small room. Supplies are brought in daily.

## Location 2.33: Mess Hall

This room has been set up as buffet line to serve the many Nothrog that take meals here. One long table runs the length of the room, and Human cooks replenish food from the kitchen (**Location 2.31**).

## Location 2.34: Feast Hall

Three large rectangular wooden tables and their benches fill this entire room. There 2d12 Nothrog Elite Hate Guard and 1d12 Mercenary Humans are in this room at any time.

**Creatures:** (2d12) Elite Hate Guard, 10th-level fighters *(see sidebar Temple Troops for stats)*; (1d12) Mercenary Guardsmen, 6th-level fighters *(see sidebar Temple Troops for stats)*.

**Elite Hate Guard (2d12):** hp as rolled.

**Mercenary Guardsmen (1d12):** hp as rolled.

## Location 2.35: Gambling Room

4d6 off-duty Elite Hate Guards are here. They use this room to play cards and shoot dice, but they are not expecting a fight, and are unarmed and unarmored.

**Creatures:** (4d6) Elite Hate Guard, 10th-level fighters *(see sidebar Temple Troops for stats)*.

**Elite Hate Guard (2d12):** hp as rolled.

## Location 2.36: Shrine to Neus

This is a small shrine to Neus, a token to the Humans who live and work in Hate's temple.

## Location 2.37:Guard Room

Two groups of three Elite Hate Guards each are in this room at all times. The room is otherwise empty.

**Creatures:** Six Elite Hate Guard, 10th-level fighters *(see sidebar Temple Troops for stats)*.

**Elite Hate Guard (6):** hp 65 (all guards).

## Location 3 – The Main Temple

### Location 3.1 – The Main Temple

Before the Nothrog occupation of Baraxton, commoners and lobbyists would crowd into this hall whenever the Senate was in session. Nassiral Hate has opened the doors to the city only once since taking charge, to announce his supremacy and to lower tariffs. Even though the temple is closed, two units of eight Elite Hate Guards patrol this room.

### Location 3.2: The Great Doors

The walls to the temple push open to create an open-air theatre style temple, though it takes 100 strong men to do so. The doors are locked from the inside (DC 55).

### Location 3.3: Stage

This curtained-off area of the temple was a stage when the ambassadors met here. If the Elite Hate Guard from **Location 3.4** suspect that the PCs are coming up into the temple from **Location 2.2**, one group of three hides in this area, planning to surprise the party once the other group of three engages them in combat. If the PCs come from **Location 3.5**, then they have a chance to surprise the Nothrog in **Location 3.4**.

### Location 3.4: Temple Guard Room

This room was originally a guard post. The room is currently empty, save for five full suits of plate armor that stand in alcoves of the room.

### Location 3.5: Chamber

The doors here are locked (TN 40) and boarded from the inside. The secret doors into **Location 3.7** are well hidden (Search check, TN 28).

### Location 3.6: Storage Area:

This chamber had been cleared out before the Nothrog even arrived. One unit of eight Elite Hate Guards is always on duty here.

**Creatures:** Eight Elite Hate Guard, 10th-level fighters *(see sidebar Temple Troops for stats)*.

**Elite Hate Guard (8):** hp 65 (all guards).

### Location 3.7: Hall of Prophecy

Seven small alcove rooms adjoin this larger, central chamber, though a thick stone door blocks off each room. A metallic pressure plate before each door unlocks these rooms, and each must be opened in turn. A tablet in this central chamber outlines the room's purpose, but is written in ancient Athanaean (Decipher Script check DC 30).

> "A warning:
> Fate is neither fickle nor kind, and though it may sometimes be cheated, it may never be denied. Your fates are tied to the figures hidden in these rooms; else you would not have survived the journey to read these words. Only you may face the challenges these rooms reveal, and only these fates reveal themselves only once. Fail, and the world falters as the enemies you must challenge arise to claim that which the gods themselves forbid mortals. They are traitors — to the world, to their peoples and their gods, and to each other. They live only to betray.
> Do not fail."

**Development:** Despite the comments about the Medusan Lords betraying each other, this is not as accurate as the party (or Hate) might believe. These Medusan Lords are not in competition with each other, and know that their odds of success are greater if they stand together. Still, they have betrayed the other Medusan Lords (those whom Malrog gathered to unwittingly aid in his schemes), and they have no intention of upholding their promises to Nassiral Hate.

### Locations 3.8.1–3.8.7: Prophecy Rooms

Each of these rooms reveals part of a prophecy surrounding the Medusan Lords' upcoming ritual. Only one character may enter each room to read the prophecy within. If two enter, the statue and its plaque are blank. Similarly, if a character revisits an already revealed room, or enters another room after reading one of the prophecies, the statue and plaque are featureless. Some rooms open only for certain people. Only the PCs in the party may enter these rooms; allied NPCs, including familiars, cohorts, and rescued prisoners, find that the pressure plates do not open the doors.

### Location 3.8.1: Blank Statue

The contents of the other rooms change to mirror this one, as described above. Whoever enters this room first may enter another room if they wish. Nassiral Hate has already investigated this room.

**Read aloud:** *"This statue is weathered and ruined, little more than an abstract sculpture. The plaque at its base is blank."*

**Development:** Hate has only recently discovered these rooms, and is still attempting to puzzle out the meaning of his own statue and its alcove. He is, however, wise enough to understand that that he is doomed, whether because his fellow Medusan Lords betray him, or because someone else lays him low before the Medusan Lords achieve their ultimate destiny. Hate suspects that the other rooms speak of his allies' true plans, and should he believe that the party has visited these statues, he demands to know what the party has learned.

Hate's own prophecy, which he has not shared with anyone, is as follows:

**Read aloud:** *"The Pawn. Ambition is its own price, and gifts without cost are the costliest of all. A fool earns a fool's demise."*

## Location 3.8.2: Malrog's Statue

**Read aloud:** *"This room contains an immense marble statue of an almost demonically disfigured Nothrog standing on a pedestal. Horrific burns cover his face. The figure is poised as though about to leap at you."*

The statue's plaque is written in ancient Athanaean (Decipher Script check DC 30):

**Read aloud:** *"Behold the Destroyer, the first, last, and most terrible of his kind."*

Though the inscription is far more cryptic than the others, the meaning is simple enough: Malrog is the greatest of the foes the party faces, and they should prepare to destroy everyone else before attempting to bring about his defeat.

## Location 3.8.3: Cear's Statue

If Cear Adinerach has killed and raised a member of the party, only that person may enter this room, and that person may not enter any other rooms.

**Read aloud:** *"The statue of this room depicts a man all too familiar to you: the nightmarish Elf you first met at Ghostwood Keep, and who still haunts your dreams. Even now, as you gaze into the statue's unseeing eyes, you feel as though a piece of your soul is missing."*

The statue's plaque is written in ancient Athanaean (Decipher Script check DC 30):

**Read aloud:** *"The Assassin's blood calls to you, as yours does to him."*

This is a clue as to how to lure Cear into a trap, using the character's lingering tie to the Elven assassin.

## Location 3.8.4: Majeral's Statue

Only one of Elven or Nimbic blood may enter this room.

**Read aloud:** *"The statue of a desiccated corpse stands before you, held aloft by dozens of chains instead of the pedestal squatting nearly a foot below the statue's feet."*

The statue's plaque is written in ancient Athanaean (Decipher Script check DC 30):

**Read aloud:** *"The Damned. Damned beyond life, damned beyond death. Immortal, he dies daily, both master of and slave to his victims."*

This is a clue to Majeral's destruction — he cannot survive without constantly absorbing the life force of those chained to him.

## Location 3.8.5: Cassica's Statue

The person who used the *Stone of Fortune* the most is the only one who can enter this room, and that person may not enter any other room. If more than one person used Cassica's artifact often, or if the only wielder of the **Stone** is a party member who is bound to Cear Adinerach, any party member may enter this room.

**Read aloud:** *"For a moment, you thought you recognized this statue, but now you cannot imagine why. Before you is a sculpture of the most hideous woman you have ever seen, a foul creature beside whom hags and harpies would be as beauteous as a VoTaurr maiden. How strange, as you could have sworn it was a handsome woman when first you glanced its way."*

The statue depicts Cassica Moonseed's true face: that of a mortal woman twisted into a monster by Bascaron's magic. The statue's plaque is written in ancient Athanaean (Decipher Script check DC 30):

**Read aloud:** *"Fear not the strings, puppet, but the Mistress who pulls them."*

The true clue here is not the plaque, but rather the brief familiarity of the statue. The character knows this woman, though not her face or true name. The denotation of Cassica as a "mistress" is a small hint, as she has frequently acted as the party's patroness.

## Location 3.8.6: Blackthorn's Statue

**Read aloud:** *"This is a magnificent marble statue depicting an armored Deverenian warrior on a rampant verdatha. Etched into both his shield and his breastplate are finely cut pieces of obsidian, revealing a frighteningly familiar symbol: a black circle in the center of a spiral, the mark of the Paladins of the Black Sun."*

The statue's plaque is written in ancient Athanaean (Decipher Script check DC 30):

**Read aloud:** *"Beware he who seeks mastery over both earth and sky, but who bows to none. His greatest weapon and shield is neither his sword nor his faith, but fate perverted against itself."*

This plaque is the most revealing. While the statue is clearly that of a traitorous Deverenian paladin, the plaque's script warns both of the knight's motivations, and of the most fearsome weapon he intends to wield against the party.

The first sentence refers to Signon's ancient prophecy that Blackthorn believes his ascension would fulfill, that of a mortal man conquering both the Accordlands and the Storm, thereby ushering in the "Black Sun," the foretold era of perfect order that the Deverenian paladins dedicated themselves to bringing about. The remark about Blackthorn bowing to none is a warning that he is not, as he believes, fulfilling the prophecy, but upending everything he holds dear for his own pride.

The second sentence foretells Blackthorn holding hostage the lives of four heroes of the Accordlands; as the combat against Blackthorn progresses, these heroes live or die as the party does.

## Location 3.8.7: The Mural

This door opens only after all the others in this room have. Any number of people may enter this room without changing the appearance of its contents, or the "prophecy" the mural depicts.

**Read aloud:** *"The far wall of this room is an immense, immaculately designed mural. Six standing figures bathe in beams of light cascading down from the sky above. Demonic and skeletal corpses litter the ground about their feet. The sky is full of broken and jagged lines, with pieces raining down."*

**If the party looks closer, read aloud:** *"On closer examination, you find yourself doubting your original assessment. You can see tiny people falling from the broken 'sky', and the textured stonework of the ground below suggests not irregular rocks or earth, but a pattern of immense, interlocking scales."*

If the party touches the mural, it crumbles away.

The left wall is a series of carved text, apparently in every language of the Accordlands:

**Read aloud:** *"Behold the Medusan Lords. Do not fail. — Ablung"*

This mural is one of Ablung's finest works, and perhaps the only one he did without a contract. Though Syneri commissioned Ablung to create the infamous blade bearing the Archmage's name, Ablung knew that it would not be Syneri who would one day wield the weapon for its purpose of slaughtering the Dragon. Baraxton's histories make no mention whatsoever of Ablung visiting the city.

## Location 3.9: Wizard's Quarters

The albino Nothrog shaman Padrig killed the wizard who lived in these quarters before Hate's invasion. He has trapped the wizard's essence in a *soul gem*. Padrig is not a member of the Elite Hate Guard, but of Hate's original legion. Padrig's *soul gem* grants him a limited ability to see into the future. He knows that he finds a great secret in the Nothrog homelands in the coming weeks, and has already departed to find it. Hate is dead by the time he returns. He did not leave behind any items or papers of interest to the party.

## Location 3.10: Meditation Chamber

This small room has a permanent *levitate* effect in it. Anyone entering the room becomes weightless, and floats about 5 feet off the floor.

## Location 3.11: Royal Guard

The royal guard used to stand watch in this lonely hall, though now six Elite Hate Guardsmen protect it.

**Creatures:** Six Elite Hate Guard, 10th-level fighters *(see sidebar Temple Troops for stats)*.

**Elite Hate Guard (6):** hp 65 (all guards).

## Location 3.12: Patriarch's Entry Hall

This huge domed room has paintings on the ceiling and intricate mosaic tile floors. It is unoccupied.

## Location 3.13: Cleansing Hall

The rare visitors to the patriarch's private chambers ritually cleansed themselves here, under the unassuming attention of the Neus clerics. Good characters entering this room heal 3d10 hit points, and have a +2 sacred bonus to the ability of their choice for the next 24 hours. Evil characters feel uneasy and want to leave the room. The door to the treasure chamber is locked (Open Lock check DC 28).

## Location 3.14: Secret Patriarchs' Guard Chamber

This room was known only to the patriarchs and their most trusted guards. When Hate took the Temple, the six Human guards who were in this room stayed here, knowing that they would have a chance to strike at Hate. Unfortunately for them, Hate's seer abilities revealed their presence, and he had the room spiked shut. The PCs see spikes sticking in the wall, and realize that there is a concealed door here. The guards' remains are still here, but there is nothing of value.

## Location 3.15: Guard Room

Four Elite Hate Guardsmen quarter here.

**Creatures:** Four Elite Hate Guard, 10th-level fighters *(see sidebar Temple Troops for stats)*.

**Elite Hate Guard (4):** hp 65 (all guards).

## Location 3.16: Rro'gan's Chamber

This is the personal chamber of Rro'gan. Among Nassiral Hate's most trusted and powerful guards, Rro'gan keeps close watch over his master and the Elite Hate Guard in the temple. Rro'gan is a student of war and combat, and uses all of his abilities and knowledge when engaged. He does not underestimate any opponent that has made it this far into the temple.

## Location 3.17: Receiving Room

Rro'gan is waiting in this room for the PCs when they enter. If possible, he issues a challenge to the party's leader in an attempt to force the PC into single combat. He has no plans of letting the other PCs escape. He uses his **potion of healing** to heal himself after the first combat.

**Creature:** Rro'gan, a 15th-level fighter.

**Rro'gan, Male Nothrog Ftr 15:** CR 15; Medium humanoid (Nothrog); HD 15d10+45; hp 140; Init +1; Spd 20 ft; AC 19, touch 11, flat-footed 18; Base Atk +13; Grp +17; Atk +23 melee (1d12+13(18–20/x4), *+4 wounding greataxe*); Full Atk +23/+18/+13 melee (1d12+13(18–20/x4), *+4 wounding greataxe*); SA —; SQ Nothrog traits, Favored weapon (greataxe, Nothrog s'sike, greatsword, halberd), improved damage (greataxe, Nothrog s'sike, greatsword), improved critical threat (greataxe, Nothrog s'sike), improved critical multiplier (greataxe), race/class abilities; AL NE; SV Fort +12, Ref +5, Will +7; Str 18, Dex 12, Con 17, Int 14, Wis 17, Cha 11.

*Skills and Feats:* Climb +11*, Jump +11*, Ride +11, Swim +2*; Weapon Focus (greataxe), Power Attack, Combat Expertise, Viscous Block, Exotic Weapon Proficiency (Nothrog s'sike), Tearing Weapon, Improved Trip, Hunger for Death, Improved Bull Rush, Weapon Specialization (greataxe). *includes –5 armor check

*Race/Class Abilities: Fighter:* Aptitude, Rage (1/day), Magical Immunity.

*Rage (1/day):* While Rro'gan rages, his statistics change as follows: HD 15d10+60; hp 140; AC 17, touch 9, flat-footed 16; Grp +19; Atk +25 melee (1d12+15(18–20/x3), *+4 wounding greataxe*); Full Atk +25/+20/+15 melee (1d12+15(18–20/x3, *+4 wounding greataxe*); SV Fort +14, Will +9; Str 22, Con 21. His fit of rage lasts for 8 rounds. At the end of the rage Rro'gan is fatigued (–2 to Strength, –2 to Dexterity, can't charge or run).

*Favored Weapon (greataxe, Nothrog s'sike, greatsword, halberd):* Rro'gan gains a +1 competence bonus to attack and damage rolls with the greataxe, Nothrog s'sike, greatsword, and halberd.

*Improved Damage (greataxe, Nothrog s'sike, greatsword):* Rro'gan does an additional +2 (+3 total) damage with the greataxe, Nothrog s'sike, and greatsword.

*Improved Critical Threat (greataxe, Nothrog s'sike):* Rro'gan's critical threat range is increased by +2 (to 18–20) with the greataxe and Nothrog s'sike.

*Improved Critical Multiplier (greataxe):* Rro'gan's critical multiplier is increased by 1 (to x4) when wielding his greataxe.

*Possessions: +4 wounding greataxe, +2 banded mail, potion of healing (Caster level 15th).*

## Location 3.18: Familiar Room

Hate's familiars Canis and T'ndala (*see sidebar Nassiral Hate, Medusan Lord*) stay in this room when they are not with him.

## Location 3.19: Hate's Bedchamber

Like the temple audience chamber, Nassiral Hate has decorated this room to reflect his opulent tastes. The room is more like a funeral parlor than a bedroom, but it suits the Medusan Lord.

## Location 3.20: Summoning Chamber

This room has a *summoning circle* for calling and binding avatars. As with most other things in the temple, Hate has twisted this to his own ends. If Hate reaches this room, he may summon totem manifestations of Cynophontis (up to five of them) as a standard action (even though he is not a shaman) due to his favored status with the totem. After Hate's death, the wards Hate placed here to keep the totem manifestations in check fail, and they burst through the circle, destroying it as they flee east to the Shattered Lands. The totem manifestations of Cynophontis attack the party only if they stand in the way, and even flattening themselves against the wall keeps them free of the manifestations' frenzied charge.

**Creatures:** Five yeth hounds (totem manifestations of Cynophontis).

**Cynophontis (totem manifestation) (5):** CR 3; Diminutive animal; HD 3d8+6; hp 19; Init +9; Spd 40 ft., fly 60 ft. (good); AC 20, touch 12, flat-footed 18; Base Atk +3, Grp +6; Atk +9 melee (1d8+7/x2, bite); Full Atk +9 melee (1d8+7/x2, bite); Space/Reach 5 ft./5 ft.; SA Bay, trip; SQ Damage reduction 10/silver, darkvision 60 ft., flight, scent; AL N; SV Fort +5, Ref +8, Will +5; Str 23, Dex 21, Con 15, Int 6, Wis 14, Cha 10.

*Skills and Feats:* Listen +11, Spot +11, Search +7, Survival +11 (+15 following tracks)*; Improved Initiative, Track. *A yeth hound has a +4 racial bonus on Survival checks when tracking by scent.

A yeth hound's natural weapons, as well as any weapons it wields, are treated as evil-aligned for the purpose of overcoming damage reduction.

*Bay (Su):* When a yeth hound howls or barks, all creatures except other evil outsiders within a 300-foot spread must succeed on a DC 11 Will save or become panicked for 2d4 rounds. This is a sonic mind-affecting fear effect. Whether or not the save is successful, an affected creature is immune to the same hound's bay for 24 hours. The save DC is Charisma-based.

*Trip (Ex):* A yeth hound that hits with its bite attack can attempt to trip the opponent (+3 check modifier) as a free action without making a touch attack or provoking an attack of opportunity. If the attempt fails, the opponent cannot react to trip the yeth houn

*Flight (Su):* A yeth hound can cease or resume flight as a free action.

## Location 3.21: Crystal Prison

This is a dimensional prison, its walls covered in colored crystals. It is presently empty.

## Location 3.22: Hate's Treasury

This is Hate's personal treasury, where he stores the wealth he accumulated before taking Baraxton. This consists almost entirely of crude jewelry depicting the totems of subjugated tribes and legions. The treasure is virtually worthless on the common market (thousands of trinkets worth as much as 1 gp each), but to their original tribes, they are beyond price.

If the party realizes that Krun has no intention of aiding Hate, they may wish to scour this room in a search for totems depicting Red Wolf (Krun's former totem, before Fenris replaced it), Scarab (the totem of Taoth, Krun's greatest rival for control over the Nothrog post-Hate), or Viper (the totem of Sav'rukk, the warlord of the largest Nothrog legion that Hate did not conquer, and secretly Krun's ally). The party may use these trinkets to blackmail or bribe Krun in future encounters with him, but though Krun commands Sceth Hellbringer's loyalty during the events of the **Dragon Keep Festival** adventure, Hellbringer's orders in that adventure override any bribery attempt by the party. Instead, Hellbringer offers to allow the party or the inhabitants of Dragon Keep to leave unmolested in exchange for the proffered totems.

## Location 3.23: False Treasury

This room is virtually overflowing with gold coins, gems, jewels, and magical items, none of which are real. A Spot check (DC 35, with the following giving cumulative +10 competence or synergy bonuses, as the case may be: Dwarves, illusionists, Appraise skill (10 ranks), Spellcraft skill (20 ranks), Spell Focus (illusion)) reveals that the glittering light does not change based on perspective, the sign of a *silent image* spell. Touching any

treasure not only causes the illusion to fade, it sounds the alarm throughout the temple, betraying the party's precise location to the Elite Hate Guard. For the remainder of the adventure, 3d4 Elite Hate Guardsmen arrive at the party's location at the end of every other round. If the party has remained hidden for more than 10 rounds, the alarm falls silent. If the party has not killed Hate by the time the alarm stops, he flees the temple before they can find him, ending the adventure.

# Location 4 – The Main Temple Audience Chamber

## Location 4.1: Temple Walkways

These high walkways, 30 feet above the floor of the temple, have two Nothrog snipers on them.

**Creatures:** Two Nothrog marksmen, 8th-level assassins.

**Nothrog Marksmen (2), Male Nothrog Asn 8:** CR 8; Medium humanoid (Nothrog); HD 8d8+16; hp 65; Init +3; Spd 30 ft.; AC 15, touch 13, flatfooted 12; Base Atk +6; Grp +9; Atk +9 melee (1d6+3(19–20/x2), shortsword) or + 10 ranged (1d8+1(19–20/x2), repeating light crossbow); Full Atk +9/+4 melee (1d6+3(19–20/x2), shortsword) or +10/+5 ranged (1d8+1(19–20/x2), repeating light crossbow); SA Spells, poison; SQ Nothrog traits, poison use, skilled brewer, sneak attack +4d6, poison immunity and resistance +2, crippling strike (+1d2), ruthless (attack action), race/class abilities; AL LE; SV Fort +4, Ref +9, Will +3; Str 17, Dex 17, Con 15, Int 14, Wis 13, Cha 10

*Race/Class Abilities: Assassin:* Increased Hit Die (d8), Two-Weapon Fighting.

*Skills and Feats:* Balance +10, Climb +7, Escape Artist +9, Hide +8, Listen +6, Jump +10, Sleight of Hand +4, Poison +8, Ride +9, Search +9,Sense Motive +6; Dodge, Far Shot, Point Blank Shot, Two-Weapon Fighting.

*Crippling Strike:* When a Nothrog marksman scores a critical hit in melee combat, rather than inflicting damage he may inflict normal damage (the hit point damage is not doubled as usual for a critical hit) plus 1d2 + his Intelligence modifier (+3) in temporary damage to the victim's Strength, Dexterity, or Constitution.

*Poison Immunity and Resistance:* A Nothrog marksman has a +2 save bonus against all poisons and is immune to arsenic and crypt wine poisons.

*Poison Use:* A Nothrog marksman is trained in the use of poison and never risks accidentally poisoning himself when applying poison to a blade.

*Ruthless:* A Nothrog marksman may make a coup de grace attack as a normal action (requiring only one of his melee strikes) per round.

*Skilled Brewer:* A Nothrog marksman is trained to brew poison and always has a +2 competence bonus to Poison skill checks.

*Sneak Attack:* Anytime a Nothrog marksman's target is denied a Dexterity bonus to AC, or when he flanks a target, the marksman deals an additional 4d6 points of damage on a successful melee attack.

*Assassin Spells Prepared* (0/2/1, Save DC 13 + spell level): 1st — *spider climb, obscuring mist;* 2nd — *darkness.*

*Possessions:* Shortsword, vial of arsenic poison (3 applications), repeating light crossbow.

## Location 4.2: Tomb of King Dukault

This room contains three glass sarcophagi containing desiccated bodies in royal regalia. This is the final resting place of King Dukault, a noble hero slain in the Assassins' Strike, and an early enemy of the Medusan Lords. His sons, both of them adventurers in their own right, investigated their father's death, and have more recently joined him. Nassiral Hate has quietly enchanted the king's tomb with powerful necromancy magic, but the trigger for animating the king and his sons is not present. See **Part 3** at the end of the adventure for more information.

## Location 4.3: Temple Audience Chamber

Nassiral Hate has transformed this once humble audience hall into a grand vision of the Nothrog nation's power. Mounted on the walls are exotic weapons from around the world, and expensive rugs and finery from across the Lands of the Accord carpet the room. The centerpiece is a giant bone throne of Elven make, where Nassiral Hate sits, awaiting the PCs' final move. He is already plotting his revenge on those who have aided them in confronting a Medusan Lord.

By the time the PCs have reached the third floor, Nassiral Hate knows that they have come for him, and he and his guard have chosen this room to make their stand. They have covered the glass floor (ceiling to room **Location 3.7**) with rugs as a trap.

### A. Room Corner

Nassiral Hate has strategically placed two Nothrog marksmen and a Nothrog shaman in the corner of the room to draw the PCs' attention away from the throne when they enter the room.

**Creatures:** Two Nothrog marksman, 8th-level assassins *(see Location 2.55 for stats)*; one Nothrog shaman, an 11th-level shaman.

**Nothrog Marksmen (2):** hp 65, 65.

**Nothrog Shaman, Male Albino Nothrog Sha 11:** CR 11; Medium humanoid (albino Nothrog); HD 11d4; hp 28; Spd 30 ft.; Init +4; AC 16, touch 12, flat-footed 15; Base Atk +5; Grp +7; Atk +9 melee (1d6+4(18–20/x2), *+2 scimitar*); Full Atk +9 melee (1d6+4(18–20/x2), *+2 scimitar*); SA Spells; SQ Albino Nothrog traits, beast bond, familiar (bat), favored terrain (mountains, hill, urban), race/class abilities; AL CE; SV Fort +4, Ref +6, Will +8; Str 15, Dex 15, Con 12, Int 16, Wis 13, Cha 17.

*Skills and Feats:* Concentration +12, Craft (alchemy) +9, Knowledge (totems) +11, Listen +3, Spellcraft +13, Spot +3, Survival +5; Alertness, Improved Initiative, Lightning Reflexes, Quicken Spell, Maximize Spell.

*Race/Class Abilities: Shaman (Scarab Totem):* Scarab Carapace (+1), Scarab's Quickness.

*Favored Terrain (mountains, hill, urban):* While in mountainous, hill, or urban terrain, the shaman's shaman caster level is considered 12th and he does not need to have access to his medicine bag to prepare fetishes.

*Beast Bond:* The shaman may share his consciousness with his familiar, allowing him to share his familiar's perceptions and be in full control of his familiar's actions. While using this ability the shaman is unaware of himself and is considered helpless; he may not move, speak, or act in any way.

*Low-Light Vision:* The Nothrog shaman can see twice as far as a Human in starlight, moonlight, torchlight, and similar conditions of shadowy illumination. The Nothrog shaman retains the ability to distinguish color and detail under these conditions.

*Familiar (bat): Bonus Ability:* Echolocation. For five rounds a day (they do not need to be consecutive), the shaman can use the blindsight ability to a range of 60 feet. This ability works through echolocation (emitting high-frequency sounds inaudible to most creatures). Blindsight allows the shaman to maneuver and fight targets within range, ignoring invisibility and darkness effects. The shaman gains a +2 circumstance bonus to all Spot and Listen checks to detect creatures within 60 feet. The shaman may not use this ability if you cannot speak.

*Shaman Spells Per Day* (6/7/7/7/6/4; save DC 13 + spell level)**:** 0 — *resistance, daze, ray of frost (2), mending, open//close; 1st — begone, expeditious journey, foxfire, manacles of might, stone hands, endure elements, protection from good; 2nd — clumsiness, phantom touch, tail strike, fog cloud, see invisibility, memory's flame, wizard's duel; 3rd — cloak of fear, firebombs, hail of thorns, lone wolf, tremor, object read, wilderness stride; 4th — acid storm, fiery whip, inferno, primal fear, spectral advisor, weakness won; 5th — clinging miasma, greater bull's strength, howling rain, ethereal drain.*

*Possessions: +2 scimitar, bracers of armor +4.*

The Nothrog shaman's bat familiar has the following statistics:

**Bat (Familiar):** CR 1; Diminutive animal; HD 11; hp 14; Init +2; Spd 5 ft., fly 40 ft. (good); AC 22, touch 16, flat-footed 20; Base Atk +5, Grp –12; Atk—; Full Atk—; Space/Reach 1ft./0ft.; SA —; SQ Blindsense 20 ft., low-light vision, improved evasion, speak with master, speak with animals of its kind, share spells, empathic link, deliver touch spells, spell resistance 16; AL N; SV Fort +3, Ref +4, Will +7; Str 1, Dex 15, Con 10, Int 11, Wis 14, Cha 4.

*Skills and Feats:* Hide +14, Listen +8*, Move Silently +6, Spot +8*; Alertness. * A bat has a +4 racial bonus on Spot and Listen checks. These bonuses are lost if its blindsense is negated.

*Familiar Ability Descriptions:* All familiars have special abilities (or impart abilities to their masters) depending on Nothrog shaman's combined level in classes that grant familiars. The abilities are cumulative.

*Alertness (Ex):* While his bat is within arm's reach, the Nothrog shaman gains the Alertness feat.

*Low-Light Vision (Ex):* A bat can see twice as far as a Human in starlight, moonlight, torchlight, and similar conditions of shadowy illumination. A bat retains the ability to distinguish color and detail under these conditions.

*Blindsense (Ex):* A bat notices and locates creatures within 20 feet. Opponents still have 100% concealment against a creature with blindsense.

*Improved Evasion (Ex):* When subjected to an attack that normally allows a Reflex saving throw for half damage, a familiar takes no damage if it makes a successful saving throw and half damage even if the saving throw fails.

*Share Spells:* At the Nothrog shaman's option, he may have any spell (but not any spell-like ability) he casts on himself also affect his familiar. The familiar must be within 5 feet at the time of casting to receive the benefit. If the spell or effect has a duration other than instantaneous, it stops affecting the familiar if it moves farther than 5 feet away and will not affect the familiar again even if it returns to the master before the duration expires. Additionally, Nothrog shaman may cast a spell with a target of "You" on his familiar (as a touch range spell) instead of on himself. Nothrog shaman and his familiar can share spells even if the spells normally do not affect creatures of the familiar's type (magical beast).

*Empathic Link (Su):* The Nothrog shaman has an empathic link with his familiar out to a distance of up to 1 mile. Nothrog shaman cannot see through the familiar's eyes, but they can communicate empathically. Because of the limited nature of the link, only general emotional content can be communicated. Because of this empathic link, Nothrog shaman has the same connection to an item or place that his familiar does.

*Deliver Touch Spells (Su):* The Nothrog shaman's familiar can deliver touch spells for him. If the Nothrog shaman and the familiar are in contact at the time shaman casts a touch spell, he can designate his familiar as the "toucher." The familiar can then deliver the touch spell just as the shaman could. As usual, if the Nothrog shaman casts another spell before the touch is delivered, the touch spell dissipates.

*Speak with Master (Ex):* The Nothrog shaman and his familiar can communicate verbally as if they were using a common language. Other creatures do not understand the communication without magical help.

*Speak with Animals of Its Kind (Ex):* The Nothrog shaman's familiar can communicate with bats (including dire varieties). Such communication is limited by the intelligence of the conversing creatures.

*Spell Resistance (Ex):* The Nothrog shaman's familiar gains spell resistance equal to the master's level + 5 (16). To affect the familiar with a spell, another spellcaster must get a result on a caster level check (1d20 + caster level) that equals or exceeds the familiar's spell resistance.

### B. The Glass Floor

This glass floor was once marked by a rope, but it is now covered with rugs. If the PCs were in room **3.7** and noticed the glass ceiling they get a Search check (DC 25) to realize that the ceiling in room **3.7** is the floor to this room. If they do, they can avoid the glass floor during combat. The Elite Hate Guard attempts to outmaneuver (a series of opposed checks between the guardsmens' Bluff and the party's Sense Motive skills) or bull rush the party to force the characters onto the trap anyway. PCs falling through the floor take 6d6 falling damage.

C. The Throne:

Ten Elite Hate Guards surround Nassiral Hate and his familiars, Canis and T'ndala (if present).

**Creatures:** Nassiral Hate, an 18th-level seer (see sidebar *Nassiral Hate, Medusan Lord* for stats); Canis and T'ndala, serods (see sidebar *Nassiral Hate, Medusan Lord* for stats); ten Elite Hate Guard, 10th-level fighters (see sidebar *Temple Troops* for stats); possibly three Dukault undead *(see Part 3 for stats)*.

**Elite Hate Guard (10):** hp 65 (all guards).

**Nassiral Hate:** hp 63.

**Canis and T'ndala:** hp 42, 42.

**Dukault Undead:** hp 65, 65, 65.

**Development:** Hate prefers to remain out of range of combat, using his spells to bolster his guardsmen and Canis and T'ndala, and attempting to flee if he believes the party to be

## Nassiral Hate, Medusan Lord

**Physically, Hate is not as intimidating as Cear Adinerach or Tiberius Blackthorn. He is an albino Nothrog with chalk-white skin. He wears his white hair in a single braid from the top of his head down past his waist.**

**Canis and T'ndala, his familiars, are always by his side. In actuality, both Canis and T'ndala are Hate's cousins, polymorphed into serods and robbed of their intelligence. Like any dogs, they are loyal to their master, and in combat do Hate's bidding.**

**Nassiral Hate, Medusan Lord, Male Nothrog Seer 18:** CR 18; Medium humanoid (albino Nothrog); HD 18d4+18; hp 63; Spd 30 ft.; Init +3; AC 22, touch 14, flat-footed 18; Base Atk +13; Grp +14; Atk +17 melee (1d8+4/x2), *+3 defending heavy mace);* Full Atk +17/+12/+7 melee (1d8+4/x2), *+3 defending heavy mace);* SA Spells; SQ Albino Nothrog traits, glimpse (3/week; +4/+2 ally), twist fate (3/week; +1, party), race/class abilities; AL LE; SV Fort +7, Ref +14, Will +16; Str 13, Dex 16, Con 12, Int 20, Wis 20, Cha 16.

*Skills and Feats:* Craft (alchemy) +15, Concentration +14, Diplomacy +13, Heal +15, Listen +12, Knowledge (arcana) +21, Knowledge (religion) +10, Sense Motive +16, Spellcraft +11, Spot +12; Combat Casting, Gloried, Dodge, Forewarning, Leadership (25), Maximize Spell, Quicken Spell, Wise Leadership.

*Race/Class Abilities: Seer:* Psychometry (18 facts/day), Totem Sense (wolf, 23/day), Astrologer (1/day).

*Glimpse:* As a full action, the seer may gain a glimpse of the future. The seer immediately becomes flat-footed until his next action. At the beginning of his next action, the seer rolls 1d20 a number of times equal to his Charisma modifier (3), noting down the results individually and in order. The next number of times equal to his Charisma modifier (3) the caster is required to roll a d20, he instead uses each successive roll he noted down. This applies to every roll of a d20, whether it be for an attack roll, a saving throw, or even damage (should the caster be required to roll a d20 to generate a damage total). At 4th, 8th, 12th, 16th, and 20th levels, the caster rolls and applies an additional d20 result. At 8th level, the seer may use this ability on another character. If the target is willing, this functions exactly as if the seer had targeted himself, except his ally rolls 1d20 a number of times equal to the seer's Charisma modifier (3), and applies the rolls in the same fashion. If the seer uses this ability on an unwilling target, the victim may make a Will save (DC 22) to negate the effect. Glimpse may be used a 3/week. A target already under the effects of glimpse or twist fate *(see below)* may not be affected.

*Twist Fate:* At 11th level, the seer can not only see the future, he can change it to an extent. This ability functions exactly as the glimpse ability, above, except the seer may choose to rearrange the order of the results. He may use this ability 3/week. At 15th level, the seer may affect multiple targets with this ability, though all such targets must be willing — if any character attempts a save, this ability fails. The seer may affect up to six (6) targets. Each target makes a number of d20 rolls equal to the seer's Charisma modifier (3), adding one roll if the seer is at least 15th level, and two if the seer is at least 19th. The seer then assigns each result to an affected character in any order he chooses; no character may be assigned more results than the seer's Charisma modifier (3), and all of the results must be assigned. This ability may be used only once per week, and counts as one of the seer's uses of twist fate.

*Seer Spells Prepared* (6/7/6/6/6/5/4/3/3/2, Save DC: 15 + spell level): *0 — cure minor wounds, detect poison, guidance, inflict minor wounds, light, appraisal; 1st — bane, doom, inflict light wounds, insight, know history, remove fear; 2nd — cloak of destiny, death knell, hold person, mind's eye, penetrate the veil, premonition; 3rd — bestow curse, contagion, fortune favors the bold, greater identify, telepathy, weakness won; 4th — aggression, armor of faith, greater premonition, riddle's bane, sinful dreams, turn of the wheel;5th — blindsight, flamestrike, greater command x2, prophecy; 6th — anger, anti-life shell, hate, the weight of ages; 7th — blasphemy, divine intervention, war chant;8th — despair, earthquake, firestorm; 9th — storm of vengeance, true resurrection.*

*Posessions: +3 defending heavy mace; bracers of armor+8; ring of freedom of movement; ring of mind shielding; boots of teleportation; incense of meditation; iron bands of Bilarro; necklace of adaptation.*

**Canis and T'ndala, Serod (polymorphed) (2):** CR 5; Medium magical beast; HD 8d10+20; hp 42; Init +2; Spd 50 ft.; AC 17, touch 12, flat-footed 15; Base Atk +5; Grp +7; Atk +7 melee (1d8+2 plus petrification/x2, bite); Full Atk +7 melee (1d8+2 plus petrification/x2, bite); Space/Reach 5 ft./5 ft.; SA Petrification, trip; SQ Darkvision 60 ft., fall to ashes, pyrophobia, scent; AL N; SV Fort +6, Ref +5, Will +0; Str 15, Dex 14, Con 17, Int 6, Wis 10, Cha 8.

*Skills and Feats:* Hide +7, Listen +6*, Move Silently +8, Spot +6*; Alertness, Weapon Finesse (bite). *Serods receive a +4 racial bonus to all Listen and Spot skill checks.

*Fall to Ashes (Su):* When a serod is killed it turns into a solid statue of stone, crumbling into dust in a single evening. The remnants of a serod are extremely useful to wizards and other students of alchemy, being composed of pure earthen matter.

This matter is useful when casting earth-based spells, nature spells, or creating earth-based potions or items, and if used properly, grants an additional +2 to all rolls (attack, damage, creation, etc) involved with these spells.

*Petrification (Ex):* A serod's bite causes the victim to instantly turn into stone unless he succeeds at a DC 12 Fort save. The save DC is Constitution-based.

*Pyrophobia (Su):* Serods fear flames, though they have no particular vulnerability to them. A serod must make a DC 12 Will save or become shaken at the sight of flame. A serod that suffers fire damage must make a DC 15 Will save or become frightened. A serod that catches fire must make a DC 18 Will save or become panicked.

*Trip (Ex):* A serod that hits with a bite attack can attempt to trip its opponent as a free action without making a touch attack or provoking an attack of opportunity. If the attempt fails, the opponent cannot react to trip the serod.

*Darkvision, 60 ft.:* A serod can see in the dark with no light source at all, out to a range of 60 feet. Darkvision is black and white only (colors cannot be discerned). It does not allow a serod to see anything that it could not see otherwise—invisible objects are still invisible, and illusions are still visible as what they seem to be. Likewise, darkvision subjects a serod to gaze attacks normally. The presence of light does not spoil darkvision.

*Scent (Ex):* A serod can detect opponents within 30 feet by sense of smell. If the opponent is upwind, the range increases to 60 feet; if downwind, it drops to 15 feet. Strong scents, such as smoke or rotting garbage, can be detected at twice the ranges noted above. Overpowering scents, such as skunk musk or troglodyte stench, can be detected at triple normal range. When a serod detects a scent, the exact location of the source is not revealed—only its presence somewhere within range. The serod can take a move action to note the direction of the scent. Whenever the serod comes within 5 feet of the source, the serod pinpoints the source's location.

gaining the upper hand. Otherwise, he gloats and casts offensive spells throughout the combat. Strangely, every divination spell he casts is countered and he cannot use his seer class abilities, and even he does not know why (Spellcraft checks, DC 30, only reveal powerful forces lingering nearby. Though she cannot afford to aid the party directly, Sorscha does use her **Staff of Secrets** here to blunt Hate's powerful seer abilities and Hate cannot use his seer class abilities or divination spells for the duration of the party's stay in Baraxton). If the battle goes poorly for Hate (he has expended all his spells, half or more of the guardsmen are dead, the party stops him from fleeing, and/or the party has wounded him, whichever comes first), he summons King Dukault and his undead sons from **Location 2.56**, who arrive in 3 rounds.

The secret door behind Hate's throne is his preferred escape route, but he may attempt to leave through any exit, including the glass floor trap if necessary.

# Part 3: New Monsters

## The Dukault Undead

*Medium Undead* (Good)
*Hit Dice:* 10d12 (65 hp)
*Initiative:* +4
*Speed:* 30 ft., fly 30 ft. (perfect)
*Armor Class:* 17 (+4 deflection, +3 natural), touch 10, flat-footed 17
*Base Attack/Grapple:* +5/+8
*Attack:* +12 +3 *unholy greatsword* (2d6+9/x2)
*Full Attack:* +12/+7 +3 *unholy greatsword* (2d6+9/x2)
*Space/Reach:* 5 ft./5 ft.
*Special Attacks:* —
*Special Qualities:* Blasphemous, caged souls, undead traits
*Saves:* Fort +7, Ref +7, Will +14
*Abilities:* Str 16, Dex 10, Con —, Int 16, Wis 16, Cha 20
*Skills:* Hide +10, Intimidate +10, Listen +12, Search +10, Sense Motive +7, Spot +8
*Feats:* Combat Expertise, Flyby Attack, Improved Initiative, Weapon Focus (greatsword)
*Environment:* Hate's Temple (after this adventure, Laurel)
*Organization:* Solitary or Family (2–3)
*Challenge Rating:* 12
*Treasure:* None
*Alignment:* Chaotic Evil
*Advancement:* None
*Level Adjustment:* —

King Dukault and his two sons were the last of Laurel's noble line in the wake of Deverenian conquest of their homeland. Each of the three was an adventurer in his own right, noble champions who stood fast against imperial advancement. They journeyed alternately together and apart, and claimed allies in almost every nation in the world. They also had guessed at the Medusan Lords' identities and plans, which meant they were among the first targets of the Assassins' Strike. Tricked into Baraxton by an offer of alliance with Nassiral Hate, the Dukaults found an ambush instead. They died well, slaying over a dozen assassins each, but they died all the same.

Seizing the opportunity to impress his allies, Nassiral Hate suggested an experiment on the Medusan Lords' fallen foes. Under the collective guidance of Cassica Moonseed, Cear Adinerach, and Majeral, Hate oversaw the rebirth of his victims as a new form of powerful undead. Like most undead, the Dukaults no longer resemble the people they were in life, their heroism eroded into cruelty. They exist only to protect Nassiral Hate and the Medusan Lords, and delight in the torture of innocents. Unlike other undead, however, their souls remain pure and intact, locked inside their rotting corpses but otherwise impervious to the Medusan Lords' corruptive magic. Their existence is made worse by the knowledge that Hate has perverted their virtue into a weapon against other heroes. Hate rarely employs them, preferring to let the trio contemplate their past and future sins.

The three Dukaults are King Heralt, Crown Prince Daniel, and Prince Sebastian. All appear identical, skeletons swathed in black rags wielding their ancestral swords and floating in golden light. They are unique creatures. Only the combined power and abilities of the Medusan Lords could possibly have created them, and then only through the deliberate desecration of such noble souls. If any of Cassica, Cear, Hate, or Majeral dies, it is impossible to create more undead of this kind.

COMBAT

The Dukaults as they exist now are sadistic mockeries of their former selves, and take great delight in torturing their victims. They fly about quickly and cunningly, and often perform feint maneuvers to draw out their enemies. Fortunately, they are also disorganized, with each son seeking to prove himself superior to his brother and father.

*Blasphemous (Sp):* The magic animating the Dukaults is fouler than the darkest necromancy known to the Elves. Though the Dukaults themselves are continually bathed in apparently holy light, their corruption suffuses the surrounding area. Whenever the Dukaults are conscious, they have the following spell-like abilities in continuous effect around them: *blasphemy, unhallow, unholy aura, unholy blight.* These effects are continuously in effect, but multiple Dukaults' effects do not stack.

In addition, each has a separate effect ability tied to his *unhallow* spell-like ability (as per the effects of *unhallow*): Sebastian emits a constant *invisibility purge*, Daniel *dispels magic*, and King Heralt himself *causes fear*. All of these abilities only affect creatures of good alignments.

All the benefits of this ability operate as though cast by a 20th level cleric of the Evil domain. If some effect cancels one or more of the above spell-like abilities, the affected Dukault has all of these other abilities canceled for a similar duration. The benefits of this ability have already been included in the Dukaults' statistics.

*Caged Souls (Su):* Though the Dukault undead are among the most villainous creatures in the Accordlands, rivaling the Medusan Lords themselves in corruption if not power, the Medusan Lords' magic trapped the heroes' pure souls in their rotting bodies. This has split the Dukaults' spirits, leaving their darker impulses free rein to commit atrocity after atrocity while their nobler aspects remain untouched and untouchable. While the Dukaults remain vulnerable to many common weapons against the undead, such as positive energy and turning, they are immune to many other effects. Holy water and the *holy* enchantment do not affect the Dukaults at all, protected as they are by their hidden virtues. Similarly, effects that normally damage or hinder creatures of evil alignment (such as *hallow, holy aura*, or *holy word* spells), or provide other benefits against such creatures (such as the *antipathy* spell at **Location 1.18**), are useless against the Dukaults. At the GM's discretion, intelligent, good-aligned weapons might balk at striking the "great champions of justice," turning magical bonuses into penalties during an attack against the Dukaults. The Dukaults are, however, vulnerable to similar effects against good-aligned creatures. Additionally, the Dukaults do not register to *detect evil*, but do to *detect good*.

This magic is experimental and unique to the Dukaults, and has a side-effect that even the Medusan Lords themselves could not guess. The Dukaults' souls seek to undermine and destroy the necromancy that imprisons them. The following spells and effects therefore automatically deal maximum damage to the Dukaults: *disrupt undead, disruption* weapons (though the Dukaults may make the save as normal), *ghost touch* weapons (which strike at the soul as well as the body), *ki focus* weapons (which temporarily unite the wielder's will with the Dukault's), *slaying arrows* or similar missiles, any damage inflicted by a successful turning attempt, *undead bane* weapons, and any spell or effect that inflicts negative levels (which affect the soul, rather than the body; this overrides the normal undead immunity to negative levels).

Additionally, if a spellcaster attempts to *speak with dead* with one of the Dukaults (something not normally allowed), this temporarily brings the imprisoned soul to the fore. While still bound to protect the Medusan Lords and not to attack the other Dukaults, the Dukault is otherwise free to do as he wishes during the spell's duration. The Dukaults' dark sides actively resist the effects of this spell, and the spell's long casting time and the Dukaults' high Spellcraft skills may render the point moot.

Though the magic involved is theoretical, any character with Knowledge (arcana) may make a skill check (DC 60) to realize that the Dukaults' souls are intact and present in their bodies (which, in turn, would reveal the Dukaults' unique weaknesses and the potential to *speak with dead*). If the character making the check has Spellcraft of 15 or more ranks; has access to the Evil, Good, Healing, Knowledge, Magic, and/or Sun Domains; or has access to Spell Focus (necromancy), he has a +5 synergy bonus to this check. Similarly, if the character is a necromancer, he has a competence bonus equal to his necromancer levels to this check. Finally, if the character is himself undead, or has discovered the Dukaults' unique immunity to anti-evil spells and/or its vulnerability to good spells, the character has a +15 competence bonus to this check. These bonuses are cumulative — a severed vampire that is a $10^{th}$-level necromancer/$5^{th}$-level cleric of Blood (Evil domain) whose anti-good spells have proven remarkably effective against the Dukaults while his allies' failed, would have a total bonus of +45 (+5 for the Evil domain, +10 for his necromancer levels, +15 for being undead, and +15 for noting the Dukaults' vulnerabilities and immunities), and an excellent chance to guess the Dukaults' true nature.

*Undead Traits:* The Dukault Undead have the following traits:

- No Constitution score.
- Darkvision out to 60 feet.
- Immunity to all mind-affecting effects (charms, compulsions, phantasms, patterns, and morale effects).
- Immunity to poison, sleep effects, paralysis, stunning, disease, death effects, and necromancy effects.

- Negative energy (such as an *inflict* spell) can heal undead creatures. The fast healing quality works regardless of the creature's Intelligence score.
- Not subject to critical hits, non-lethal damage, ability damage, ability drain, fatigue, exhaustion, or energy drain. Immune to damage to its physical ability scores (Strength, Dexterity, Constitution), as well as to fatigue and exhaustion effects.
- Immunity to any effect that requires a Fortitude save (unless the effect also works on objects, or is harmless).
- Uses its Charisma modifier for Concentration checks.
- Not at risk of death from massive damage. Immediately destroyed when reduced to 0 hit points or less.
- Not affected by *raise dead and reincarnate* spells or abilities. *Resurrection and true resurrection* can be affect undead creatures. These spells turn undead creatures back into the living creatures they were before becoming undead.
- Proficient with its natural weapons, all simple weapons, and any weapon mentioned in its entry.
- Proficient with whatever type of armor (light, medium, and heavy) it is described as wearing, as well as all lighter types.

Undead do not eat, sleep, or breathe.



# Tier 7

Accomplished heroes now, the party must yet contend with the Medusan Lords' agents before at last moving to the endgame, and bringing Malrog and his companions to justice. Two adventures, suitable for characters of 14th–16th level, await before the final hunts begin.

## Sir Tython's Last Stand

A valiant hero of the human lands has gone mad, laying waste to all in his path. Is his madness all-encompassing, or does something yet remain of the noble hero? A brief adventure, "Sir Tython's Last Stand" may be appropriate for including as an encounter in another adventure.

## Sceth Hellbringer's Dragon Keep

Once again Dragon Keep is in peril, this time by the giant who masterminded the original attack in the "Dragon's Lair" adventure. Sceth Hellbringer, a fire giant, siege engineer, and prominent Nothrog warlord seeks to claim the keep. It falls to the party to stop him; if they fail, the Shrine of Kor is destroyed.

## Campaign Notes:



# Sir Tython's Last Stand

## Introduction

The PCs must contend with a great hero from the Free Kingdoms who has been driven insane — but by what?

This is one of two adventures in Tier 7. It is meant for characters of levels 14–16.

## Adventure Background

Some time ago, Sir Tython Albrett of Corinth was a young hero in the first war against the Elves. He met his lady wife, Katherine, after leading the detachment that broke a siege on her family's keep. They were wed within weeks, but the war raged on and Tython was often far afield in their early years. Both survived the first war with the Elves and went on to found one of the most celebrated families in the Accordlands.

Sir Tython's family did not survive the second war with the Elves.

In the first hours of the lightning raid against Human lands, while Sir Tython was on his way to meet with King Michael, the Albrett lands were overrun and everyone slaughtered. Upon reaching Andover, Tython learned of the invasion and that there was little hope for his family. Leading one of the few small forces left to Andover, as Sir Robert commanded, Sir Tython eventually returned to his own lands to find them barren, and held by a force of Elves. He launched a well-planned assault on the Elven forces, successfully driving them back into the woods. What he did not tell his men was that among the Elven undead forces were his own wife and sons, now eternally bound to fight for their murderers.

When Sir Tython returned, victorious, Sir Robert noticed a brooding darkness about him, and, not having time himself, asked his wife to speak with the knight about what had happened. Cassandra did so, and found that Sir Tython's soul was poisoned by his experiences. She gave him a ring, and sealed his fate.

Sir Robert's wife Cassandra is actually Cassica Moonseed, the Medusan Lord, a wizard in the service of the cult of Bascaron. She believed Sir Tython would make a useful agent, and the ring she gave him bears a powerful curse that eventually twists even the strongest of wills to the service of the Blood Moon. Tython quickly succumbed, having lost his will to fight, and became Cassica's devoted servant, betraying the Free Kingdoms in a thousand small ways in their early days. Sir Tython does not know he is under her influence, as the *Bascarite Ring* leaves him open to manipulation through her magic with little chance of resistance.

After the fight in Toris Kelt gave new hope to Sir Robert and his allies, Cassica decided that it was time to demoralize them once again. She had Tython kill certain sentries and allowed a retaliatory strike from the Elves to get within inches of Sir Robert's own tent before raising the alarm herself. Sir Robert remains useful to her for the moment, but the betrayal of one of his trusted lieutenants has dimmed his newfound confidence, which is enough.

After the betrayal, Cassica allowed Sir Tython to succumb fully to the madness she had been keeping at bay, so as to keep her secrets from leaving his lips. Sir Tython's mind is broken, and he marches east like an unstoppable juggernaut, killing everyone he encounters. Three detachments of soldiers have already been beaten badly in attempting to capture him, and Sir Robert is desperate to keep him out of the hands of the Elves.

Cassica has convinced Sir Robert to seek out the PCs and hire their services in destroying Sir Tython. The PCs have become something of an irritation to the Medusan Lords, and she expects some of them to die in the attempt. Regardless, though, the elimination of one person who could possibly be traced back to her, however unlikely, is her real priority, and the PCs have proven their competence in such matters.

# Adventure Synopsis

*Sir Tython's Last Stand* is a short adventure for characters of 14th–16th level. The PCs are met by a messenger bearing a request from Sir Robert the Vigilant. One of Andover's greatest heroes has betrayed her, and now he's begun a silent march to the east. No one knows his current intent, but he has ended the lives of any who tried to stop him. Unfortunately, Sir Tython was a close ally of many of the new Free Kingdoms leaders, and he now is walking directly into the hands of the Elves of Myreth. Even if he is not inclined to help the Elves, they literally shoot first and ask questions later, after they reanimate the corpse.

# Message of Import

ENCOUNTER 1: THE MESSAGE

The adventure opens with the PCs receiving a messenger, Byron Cullen, bearing the newly created seal of the Free Kingdoms, the Reforged Crown. The PCs probably do not yet recognize the symbol, and the messenger does not expect them to do so. Instead, he announces his presence and presents a scroll bearing the official seal of Andover; PCs who have met Sir Robert personally should recognize it immediately, but anyone can do so with a Knowledge (nobility and royalty) or Intelligence check, DC 10. Byron cannot stay long, but does know that whatever is inside is urgent, and believes that Sir Robert cares personally about it.

The message, **read aloud:**

*Friends, your reputation has preceded you, and I have a task at hand which I am advised requires your personal attention. Please meet me at Toris Kelt with all haste, and more will be explained upon your arrival. You will be well compensated for your time.*

Sir Robert of Andover

Along with the message, the PCs receive a scroll of *teleport without error* (caster level 15th) with instructions to use it to enter a certain tent, whose description is given to them by the messenger. Byron has general knowledge about the state of the Free Kingdoms, and of course knows of Sir Tython's betrayal. He does not know the contents of the message, and does not know that Tython is in any way related to it. He mentions the betrayal if the PCs ask for news, but otherwise is on his way as soon as possible.

ENCOUNTER 2: TORIS KELT

Provided one of them can use the scroll, the PCs should arrive in Toris Kelt very quickly. Regardless, the resources of a party of this level should make travel negligible. Refer to the *World Atlas* for a detailed description of the city-state of Toris Kelt. Upon arrival, they meet runners posted outside unless they take precautions against such. Upon noticing the party, one runner hurries to tell Sir Robert, and shortly thereafter a guide escorts the PCs to the foyer of the manor house in which Sir Robert has set up his headquarters.

**Read aloud:** *The walls of the room are shrouded in beautiful tapestries, most bearing floral designs. A railed balcony on the upper floor surrounds the room, with a stately staircase leading up to it. Hanging from the lofty ceiling is a large brass chandelier, sparkling with oil lamps. The floor is a beautiful mosaic of the family's coat of arms, a noble stag facing a flaming dragon.*

After a few minutes in the foyer, the PCs are approached by Sir Robert's chamberlain, an elderly man in scribe's robes, and asked to proceed to his study.

**Read aloud:** *This cozy room has several comfortable chairs and low tables. The walls are decorated by their owner's history of warfare. Exotic and antique weapons, shields, and armor hanging on walls or from stands, all meticulously maintained. A large writing desk is situated in one corner of the room. Beside it stands the Duke of Andover, as tall as ever, but worn and tired where once he was a forbidding presence.*

Sir Robert looks up as the PCs enter, and a Sense Motive check (DC 15) allows them to note the look of pain that crosses his face as he ponders what is about to happen. Sir Robert then speaks:

*"This is a difficult subject to discuss, so I will cut straight to the point. One of my lieutenants has betrayed us, and left us open to an attack by the Elves. Due to my wife's watchfulness, the attack was repulsed, but in the confusion Sir Tython escaped and now makes his way east. We do not know his intentions, but we cannot allow him to fall into the Elves' hands with the knowledge he holds. I am in need of thief-catchers, and I need them now. My wife has suggested your names to me, and you are known to be competent in what you do.*

*"If you agree, I will provide you with one thousand gold crowns each, with a like amount upon completion. You may take whatever you find on his person, as well. I cannot ask you to bring him back alive [see below], but I do ask that you bring his remains back with you."*

If the PCs pass another Sense Motive check (DC 18), they notice that while Sir Robert may not be able to ask them to bring Tython back alive, he would like to.

The PCs can be provided with mounts, and with an expert tracker if necessary. The point at which Sir Tython left the encampment is known, and as sorties have been sent twice now to bring him in the trail is quite easy to find and follow. Sir Tython is making no attempt to cover his tracks; anyone with the Track feat may follow him with a Survival check (DC 10), which they may take 10 on. Sir Tython's trail is obvious, only curving to go around truly immobile obstacles, and is periodically littered with dead creatures left to rot that stepped into the old knight's path.

### Encounter 3: The Last Stand

The PCs catch sight of Sir Tython after almost two days' hard riding. While Tython is on foot and in plate, he marches day and night, not stopping for anything. Upon their approach, read the following description aloud:

**Read aloud:** *Before you is a haggard and tarnished knight, his shining plate mail gone matte with crusted dirt and blood. The man's shock of white hair is wild and unkempt, and in his eyes you see no sign of humanity. He carries an axe in either hand. A ring on his left hand glows blood-red in the light, matching his eyes.*

If the PCs attempt to approach Sir Tython stealthily, allow him the standard opposed Listen or Spot checks to catch them in the attempt, then resolve the fight as appropriate if the PCs catch Sir Tython by surprise. Otherwise, as soon as Sir Tython sees them he roars a wordless challenge and charges.

If the PCs attempt to strike the ring on his hand, let them. Striking the *Bascarite Ring* requires the attacker to hit an AC of 27 (+8 size, +5 for being in hand, +2 Dex, +2 deflection), 25 if Sir Tython is flat-footed. The *Bascarite Ring* has a hardness of 10 and 25 hit points. If it is destroyed, the glow leaves his eyes and Sir Tython drops his weapons. He is still nearly insensible until his Wisdom is restored.

**Creature:** Sir Tython, a 16th-level fighter.

**Sir Tython, Male Human Ftr 16:** CR 17*; Medium humanoid (Human); HD 16d10; hp 170; Init +6; Spd 20 ft.; AC 31, touch 17, flat-footed 26; Base Atk +16; Grp +22; Atk +26 (+28 vs. Humans) melee (1d8+12 (1d8+14 plus 2d6 vs. Humans)/18–20 x4, *+1 bane (Human) battle axe*); Full Atk +24/+19/+14/+9 (+26/+21/+16/+11 vs. Humans) melee (1d8+12(1d8+14 plus 2d6 vs. Humans)(18–20/x4), *+1 bane (Human) battle axe*) and +25/+20/+15 melee (1d6+10(18–20/x3), *+2 hand axe*); SA Favored weapon (battleaxe, handaxe, longsword, greatsword), improved critical multiplier (battleaxe), improved critical threat (battleaxe, handaxe), improved damage (battleaxe, handaxe, longsword); SQ Human traits, fast healing 3*, immunity to enchantment*, irrevocable insanity*, spell turning (9 levels of spells per hour)*, race/class abilities; AL LE; SV Fort +13, Ref +7, Will +4; Str 22, Dex 15, Con 16, Int 12, Wis 15 (currently 2), Cha 10. *see *Bascarite Ring*.

*Skills and Feats:* Diplomacy +11, Heal +10, Knowledge (warfare) +14, Ride +10, Spot +12, Listen +11; Cleave, Great Cleave, Greater Weapon Focus (battleaxe), Greater Two-Weapon Fighting (–10), Improved Initiative, Improved Two Weapon Fighting (–5), Power Attack, Two-Weapon Fighting, Weapon Focus (battleaxe), Weapon Focus (handaxe), Weapon Specialization (battleaxe), Weapon Specialization (handaxe).

*Race/Class Abilities: Fighter:* Courage (+3 Will/immune to fear), Evade (+4), Resist (2/day).

*Favored Weapon (battleaxe, handaxe, longsword, greatsword):* Sir Tython gains a +1 competence bonus to attack and damage rolls with the battleaxe, handaxe, longsword and greatsword.

*Improved Critical Multiplier (battleaxe):* Sir Tython's critical multiplier is increased by 1 (to x4) with the battleaxe.

*Improved Critical Threat (battleaxe, handaxe):* Sir Tython's critical threat range is increased by +2 (to 18–20) with the battleaxe and handaxe.

*Improved Damage (battleaxe, handaxe, longsword):* Sir Tython does an additional +2 (+3 total) damage with the battleaxe, handaxe and longsword.

*Possessions: +3 full plate, +1 animated large steel shield, +1 bane (Human) battle axe, +2 hand axe, belt of giant strength +4, amulet of health +2, ring of protection +2, Bascarite Ring.*

Sir Tython's CR is boosted by one to account for the effects of the *Bascarite Ring.* He is a killing machine, attacking anything that gets within his reach. If the PCs destroy the ring, award them XP for a CR 18 creature instead.

With the ring destroyed, and once his Wisdom reaches 3, Sir Tython is appalled at what he has done, and insists on returning to stand trial. He does not know where the curse came from, and cannot remember where he received the ring. His alignment does not change — Sir Tython had become evil all on his own, before Cassica took control. His lawful nature, however, compels him to stand for the punishment before him. Before he is taken into custody, he gives his remaining equipment to the PCs, along with an oath to repay the favor that they have done him. Sir Tython

is jailed by Sir Robert on his return, and will not be released for some years. Sir Robert pays them the remainder of the gold, as promised, but does not want to speak with them at length as they remind him of how his friend has fallen.

If the PCs kill Sir Tython, they may return his corpse to Sir Robert for the reward. The money is brought to them by Sir Robert's chamberlain, who informs them that Sir Robert cannot see them himself, but that they have his gratitude. Sir Robert avoids contact with the PCs until they leave Toris Kelt. If one of the PCs puts on the *Bascarite Ring*, they suffer the effects as listed below.

BASCARITE RING

**Major Artifact**

This is the ring Cassica had sent to Tython, and the thing that fuels his insanity. It is an artifact of indeterminate age, and thus has no gp cost associated with it. While priceless to the right collector, the ring is extremely dangerous. It was forged during an eclipse of the Gods' Eye, so divination spells reveal nothing about its nature or origin.

When examined, the ring appears to be a modified *ring of spell turning*, which will turn nine levels of spell directed at the wearer each hour. It also acts as an improved *ring of sustenance*, and while it is worn the character requires no food or sleep and is immune to subdual damage from forced marches. However, once it is placed upon the finger the wearer must make a Will save (DC 18) or become enamored with it and refuse to take it off under any level of duress. At this point, the wearer may be freed with a remove curse spell.

Every day thereafter, when Bascaron rises, the wearer must make a Will save (DC 22) or suffer one point of Wisdom drain. At the first point of drain suffered, he gains 2 hit points per level as his body begins to warp and strengthen. For every point of drain suffered, the wearer suffers a cumulative –1 penalty to saves vs. spells cast by worshippers of Bascaron, or characters with the Bascaron Ascending feat. Such characters gain an equivalent bonus to Charisma checks vs. the wearer. At this point, the curse may only be broken by a wish, limited wish, or miracle.

When the wearer's Wisdom reaches 2, he becomes almost irrevocably insane. He develops an intense bloodlust and will attempt to kill anything in his path. He begins to march toward Mourn from wherever he currently stands. The character enjoys complete immunity to spells of the enchantment school not cast by worshipers of Bascaron or those with the Bascaron Ascending feat. While on the march, he gains fast healing 3. Nothing short of the direct intervention of a deity can remove the ring from the character intact. Sir Tython has reached this state; nothing except the destruction of the ring will save him, and he opposes attempts to damage it with all of his considerable might.

Hardness of 10; hp 25. *Price: N/A, Caster Level: 23rd*



# Sceth Hellbringer's Dragon Keep

## Introduction

The PCs return once again to the Dragon Keep, this time to prevent the warlord Sceth Hellbringer and his mighty army from invading the place.

This adventure is designed to take place some time after the *Dragon Keep Festival* scenario. Although it is not necessary for the PCs to have played this adventure, heroes familiar with the Dragon Keep and the Shrine of Kor dungeon complex might have an easier time defending the fortress.

This is one of two adventures in Tier 7. It is meant for characters of levels 14–16.

## Adventure Background

It has been some time since the reopening of the Shrine of Kor and the completion of its fortifications. With the work on the Dragon Keep over, a small legion of men was appointed to garrison the place. Lord Narcil, a noble knight of the Free Kingdoms and a dedicated follower of Kor, leads them.

The enemies of the Dwarves and Free Kingdoms fear the residents of the Dragon Keep might accelerate the peace process between Dwarves and the Free Kingdoms. Sceth Hellbringer has now gathered a mighty army and sent it against the Dragon Keep, which he wants to capture for himself.

No one knows what Sceth really wants. The location is not strategically vital, or else it would not have been forgotten for so many years, but it is highly defensible and could be used as a stronghold if his efforts in Lukkot fall apart. Hellbringer wants several things from this

venture; one is access to the catacomb levels. Since both the *Blade of Syneri* and the *Axe of Gorek* were found in this ancient place, Sceth Hellbringer believes there is more to be found. He also wishes to destroy any chance of a peace treaty between the Dwarves and the Free Kingdoms. Finally, he wants revenge for the disruption of his plans in *The Dragon's Lair*.

### Krun and the Medusan Lords

**Behind Sceth Hellbringer's personal motivations for taking over the Dragon Keep is the fact that Krun ordered him to do it. After Nassiral Hate's death, Krun took control of his powerful legions. Krun wants to make a show of strength to force the Medusan Lords to remain far away, and taking the Dragon Keep qualifies. He ordered Sceth Hellbringer to conquer the place, and the fire giant was happy to oblige for reasons of his own.**

## Adventure Synopsis

The PCs must stop an evil warlord from conquering the fortress that protects the ancient and holy Shrine of Kor. The adventure opens when the heroes meet a weary emissary from the Dragon Keep. He begs for their help, saying that Koranos, Lord Narcil, and all the inhabitants of the Dragon Keep are in dire peril. A powerful Nothrog legion is moving towards the fortress and the garrison cannot fend off the attackers alone.

If the heroes agree to help, the emissary bids them farewell and continues on his mission to find more help. During their journey, the PCs confirm that a large host is moving toward the place. They encounter a contingent of Human and Nothrog mercenaries working for the Hellbringer and have a chance to defeat and interrogate them.

With stealth and cunning, the heroes should be able to reach the Dragon Keep before Hellbringer's Legion. When they reach the keep, the soldiers are on high alert and the small town at the foot of the fortress has been abandoned. Koranos, the shrine's high priest, and Lord Narcil, the commander of the guard, welcome them. A few hours later, the Nothrog arrive and begin their siege.

In order to prevent the fall of the Dragon Keep, the heroes have to stop each new threat, take command of the fortress's small army, and find a way to protect the non-combatants who took shelter within the fortified walls. In a final showdown, they face the warlord Sceth Hellbringer himself.

## The Dragon Keep

The Dragon Keep stands around the entrance of the grotto leading to the ancient Shrine of Kor. The priests of Kor wanted a strong keep to defend their holy place. Now Lord Narcil, a Human knight dedicated to Kor, leads the legion responsible for its safekeeping.

With the growing importance of the shrine, a village accreted around it as some of the pilgrims that came here decided to stay. Now the buildings that housed the cobblers, brewers, semesters, and other artisans are empty: the small population of the village has taken refuge inside the fortified walls of the Dragon Keep.

**Dragon Keep (village):** Nonstandard; AL LG; 800 gp limit; Assets 50,000 gp; Population 680; Mixed (Human 90%, Dwarf 9%, half-elf 1%). *Authority Figures:* High Priest Koranos, male Dwarf Clr12, LG; Lord Narcil, male Human Pal11, LG.

**Current Armed Forces:**

**120 Dragon Keep troops, "The Dragons"** — Human Ftr 3

**10 elite warriors** — Dwarf Ftr 5

**8 clerics of Kor** — 6 Dwarven Clr 5, 2 Human Clr 5

**22 acolytes of Kor** — 3 Dwarf Clr 2, 2 Human Clr 3, 9 Dwarf Clr 1, 8 Human Clr 1

**Others:** 7 Human scouts

**Koranos, High Priest of the Shrine of Kor, Male Dwarf Clr 12:** CR 12; Medium humanoid (Dwarf); HD 12d8+60; 119; Spd 20 ft.; Init +1; AC 26, touch 11, flat-footed 25; Base Atk +9; Grp +12; Atk +15 melee (1d8+5/x3, *+2 warhammer*); Full Atk +15/+10 melee (1d8+5/x3, *+2 warhammer*); SA Spells, turn undead 10/day; SQ Cleric domains (Earth, Good), Dwarf traits, *spontaneous casting, divine blessings, race/class abilities*; AL LG; SV Fort +13, Ref +5, Will +12; Str 17, Dex 12, Con 21, Int 13, Wis 19, Cha 16.

*Skills and Feats*: Concentration +14, Diplomacy +15, Heal +12, Knowledge (religion) +15, Spellcraft +7; Brew Potion, Combat Casting, Endurance, Extra Turning, Weapon Focus (warhammer), Weapon Proficiency (warhammer), Weapon Specialization (warhammer).

*Race/Class Abilities*: *Cleric*: Warrior Training, Saintly Zeal.

*Spontaneous Casting*: Koranos can "lose" a prepared spell (except for a domain spell) in order to cast any *cure* spell of the same level or lower.

*Turn Undead:* Koranos can attempt to turn undead 10 times per day.

*Cleric Spells Prepared* (6/6+1/5+1/5+1/4+1/3+1/2+1; save DC 14 + spell level): 0- *create water, guidance, light, resistance, virtue* (x2); 1st — *bless, divine favor, endure elements, magic stone*, magic weapon, protection from evil, sanctuary*; 2nd — *bear's endurance, bull's strength, enthrall, hold person, lesser restoration, soften earth and stone**; 3rd — *dispel magic, magic circle against evil*, magic vestment, prayer, protection from energy, wind wall*; 4th — *death ward, greater magic weapon, holy smite*, restoration, spell immunity*; 5th — *break enchantment, dispel evil*, raise dead, righteous might*; 6th — *blade barrier, stoneskin*, summon monster VI*. *Domain spell

*Possessions*: *+2 full plate armor of heavy fortification, +3 heavy steel shield, +2 warhammer, periapt of wound closure*, 100 gp.

**Lord Narcil, Commander of the Dragons, Male Human Pal 11:** CR 11; Medium humanoid (Human); HD 11d8+33; hp 87; Init +4; Spd 20 ft.; AC 24, touch 10, flat-footed 24; Base Atk +11; Grp +15; Atk +20 melee (1d10+8 plus 1d6 vs. evil(19–20/x2), *+4 blessed armament bastard sword*) or +11 ranged (1d10(19–20/x2), heavy crossbow); Full Atk +20/+15/+10 melee (1d10+8 plus 1d6 vs. evil(19–20/x2), *+4 blessed armament bastard sword*) or +11 ranged (1d10/19–20, heavy crossbow); SA Blessed armament (+4) (bastard sword), turn undead 7/day (as a 9th-level cleric); SQ Human traits, aura of courage,

detect alignment, divine health, lay on hands, spells, zeal, race/class abilities; AL LG; SV Fort +13, Ref +6, Will +8; Str 19, Dex 11, Con 17, Int 13, Wis 14, Cha 18.

*Skills and Feats:* Diplomacy +14, Handle Animal +12, Heal +12, Ride +10, Spot +6; Blind Fight, Exotic Weapon Proficiency (bastard sword), Follow Me, Improved Initiative, Leadership, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (bastard sword).

*Race/Class Abilities: Paladin*: Divine Vigilance, True Leader.

*Aura of Courage:* Lord Narcil is immune to fear (magical or otherwise). Allies within 10 feet of the paladin gain a +4 morale bonus on saving throws against fear effects; this is a supernatural ability.

*Blessed Armament (+4) (bastard sword):* Lord Narcil's bastard sword is invested with the might of his deity and functions as a *+4 blessed* magic weapon that deals +1d6 points of damage against creatures opposite the paladin's alignment (*holy*). In addition, Lord Narcil may cast *dispel magic* once per day at a caster level equal to his paladin level.

*Detect Alignment*: At will, Lord Narcil can detect the presence of the opposite alignment as a spell-like ability (*detect evil*).

*Divine Health:* Lord Narcil is immune to all diseases including magical ones.

*Lay On Hands:* Lord Narcil may cure up to 44 hit points of damage per day.

*Turn Undead:* Lord Narcil may turn undead 7 times per day as a cleric two levels lower than his paladin level.

*Zeal:* When Lord Narcil is reduced to 0 or fewer hit points he may make a Fortitude save (DC 10 + the number of hit points below 0) to continue fighting as if he were at one hit point. Each time Lord Narcil suffers additional damage he must continue to make a Fortitude save to keep fighting. When Lord Narcil is reduced to –10 hit points, he dies as normal.

*Paladin Spells Prepared* (2/2; save DC 12 + spell level): 1st — *cure light wounds, lesser restoration*; 2nd — *bull's strength, zone of truth.*

*Possessions*: Masterwork full plate armor, *+4 large steel shield,* masterwork bastard sword (increased to +4 and *holy* by blessed armament ability), *cloak of resistance +3v*

## Location 1: The Dragon Keep (Map Key) *(map page 505)*

### Location 1.1: Abandoned Village

A small thorp grew up on the high plateau upon which the stone palisades of the Dragon Keep rest. These buildings are single-story wooden houses with thatched roofs. A wide area of the woods surrounding this place was cleared to accommodate the houses and their thriving vegetable gardens.

### Location 1.2: Main Gate

The main gate comprises two parts. An elaborate stone staircase decorated with statues representing Kor leads from the plateau to the keep. The stairs are 30 feet wide and just as high, unguarded and unfortified. They end at a thick iron portcullis flanked by watchtowers. The portcullis blocks the 20-foot square area between the towers. Two pairs of massive bronze doors can also close off this area: one near the exterior of the gate, just inside the portcullis, and the other where the gate's passage leads into the Dragon Keep. The towers are 40 feet high, connected by a wide battlement from which soldiers can guard the entrance. This structure is 20 feet above the ground and its floor is riddled with murder holes. Likewise, the inner wall of each tower is pierced with thin arrow slits.

### Location 1.3: Fortified Walls

The Dragon Keep sits upon an elevated plateau 30 feet above the new village. Its stone palisades, 10 feet thick and 30 feet high, were built near the edge of this plateau. At the 25-foot level, there is a 5-foot-wide battlement, protected by the 4-foot-thick crenellations. This battlement goes all the way around the fortification and gives access to the watchtowers. Every 100 feet, a wooden ladder joins the inner courtyard and the battlement.

**Superior Masonry Wall:** Thickness 10 ft.; Break DC 65; Hardness 16; hp 700 (per 10-ft. square section); Climb DC 20.

### Location 1.4: Watchtowers

Four high watchtowers loom 30 feet above the wall, 60 feet above the plateau and 90 feet above the village. The towers are accessible at ground level and open onto the battlement. Wooden staircases run from the plateau to the upper level of the tower, where guards are posted. At various places in the towers' walls are arrow slits. The interior tower floors were built 15 feet apart, so there are four different interior levels: ground level, one 15 feet above the rocky ground, another 30 feet up, and the last 45 feet above ground level. The upper or "roof" level of the tower is made of stone and surrounded by a 5-foot-high battlement.

### Location 1.5: Inner Courtyard

The inner courtyard is wide open. Small wooden houses line its walls. A large stone building covers most of the western part of the grounds, and large tents here accommodate the Dragon Keep's refugees.

### Location 1.6: Barracks, Stores, and Commander's Office

All wooden buildings inside the walls house the men of the legion and their equipment.

### Location 1.6.1: Barracks

These long barracks are filled with bunk beds, long tables, and a cooking area.

### Location 1.6.2: Stores

These small square houses are filled with dried meats, salted fish, vegetables, and other supplies. Military equipment such as armor and weapons is also kept here.

### Location 1.6.3: Commander's Office

Garrison commander Lord Narcil lives in this small single-story building that also serves as his office.

### Location 1.7: Communal Temple

The large stone building near the westernmost wall is a temple of Kor. Built to serve as an extension of the shrine, the temple is a solid structure of considerable size.

### Location 1.8: Well

A stone well almost 10 feet in diameter near the temple provides most of the Dragon Keep's water. Several rooms in the Shrine of Kor provide access to running water (from a stream passing under the mountain), so even if the well were lost the keep could replenish its water.

### Location 1.9: Golden Arch

This thick square arch is made of gold and gives access to the cavern complex that leads to the Shrine of Kor. "May Kor, our blessed father, watch us," is carved in Dwarven runes upon the beautifully crafted arch.

### Location 2: The Shrine of Kor (Map Key) *(map page 505)*

The sacred shrine is composed of natural grottos as well as chambers hewn from the mountain by the Dwarves of old.

### Location 2.1: Entrance Hall and Water Basin

The first antechamber of the Shrine of Kor is devoid of furniture and decoration. The small cave to the east contains a large ivory basin filled with fresh water. Under normal circumstance, one of Kor's acolytes would be here to welcome pilgrims to the shrine and invite them to cleanse themselves before venturing farther into the complex. The entrance hall is now vacant.

### Location 2.2: Empty Caves

These caves might be a useful place to safely stash the villagers during attacks.

### Location 2.3: Lake and Treasure

The largest grotto in the cavern complex holds a wide lake. The still waters of this lake are covered with an invisible force field, allowing visitors to walk upon the lake's surface. A great heap of coins, once a dragon's treasure hoard, lies at the bottom of the lake. The secret passage on the southern wall, unknown to Kor's worshipers (unless ferreted out by the PCs during a former visit), leads to former clerics' chambers.

### Location 2.4: Wide Grotto

Once the dragon's nest, this is now a worship hall. Sometimes the priests of Kor gather here to commune in the company of their brethren.

### Location 2.5: Main Shrine of Kor

The ancient Shrine of Kor contains a massive statue of the deity and a simple stone altar. A secret passage upon the eastern wall leads to the priest's quarters. All the acolytes of Kor know its location.

### Location 2.6: Priest's Quarters

These chambers house the priests of the shrine. This area is complete with bedchambers (**6d**), a kitchen (**6c**), a dinning hall (**6b**), and an inner sanctum (**6a**) where the clerics can pray in solitude. Although it is doubtful the heroes will visit these quarters, knowledge of them might become useful at some point.

## Part 1: A Call to Arms

ENCOUNTER 1: THE MESSENGER

**Development:** This encounter can happen at virtually any time. If the heroes recently completed an adventure that made them famous, the messenger will have learned about their whereabouts and followed their trail. If they have been inactive for a while or if they have kept their notoriety in check, the messenger will have had to investigate to track down the PCs.

The event described here could take place almost anywhere. If the heroes are in an establishment or town when the messenger catches up to them, he approaches the PCs readily. If they are in the wilderness, the messenger is on horseback but approaches cautiously. If the adventurers participated in the Great Games at the Dragon Keep, the messenger recognizes them.

**Read aloud:** *A Human male, dressed in buckskins and wearing a short-bladed sword, approaches you. His face is dirty and haggard. He has not shaved in days, and gray speckles his ruffled dark hair. "Pardon me, but the High Priest Koranos and the inhabitants of the Dragon Keep need your help." He pauses dramatically before adding, "It is a matter of life and death."*

**Development:** This is Ronan Cody, a member of Lord Narcil's legion posted at the Dragon Keep. Several days ago, Ronan and

five of his companions left their posts in search of anyone who could help them save Dragon Keep from an approaching Nothrog legion. Like most members of the Dragons, the keep's troops, Ronan is a veteran warrior dedicated to his commanding officer and the protection of the keep he now considers his home.

He can give the PCs the following information:

•Koranos, the high priest of the Shrine of Kor, has had a troubling vision: he has foreseen the fall of the Dragon Keep.

•Communications between the Dragon Keep and the Free Kingdoms was cut off about two weeks ago. Several scouts were sent to investigate but none returned.

•A band of Dwarven adventurers recently arrived at the fortress. They informed Koranos and Lord Narcil that a Nothrog legion was moving toward Dragon Keep. Although the Dwarves did not investigate further, fearing they might be taken prisoner by the army, they confirmed that both Humans and Nothrog were part of it.

•Lord Narcil, the commander of the legion at the Dragon Keep, led a patrol that confirmed the fact an army was moving towards their position.

•Fearing the worst, Koranos meditated. Kor revealed to him that the Dragon Keep and the people living near it were in great danger.

•Koranos ordered the residents of the small village at the foot of the fortress to abandon their homes and take refuge inside the barricaded walls.

•As far as Lord Narcil can tell, the Nothrog legion has left other villages in the area untouched. It appears to be moving as stealthily as is possible for a large army. Narcil is convinced their ultimate goal is to take control of the Dragon Keep.

•Six men from the keep's guard were sent out to seek help. Ronan is one of them.

•If the PCs know Koranos, the high priest, specifically requested that the messengers locate the heroes and ask them for aid. He believes only the PCs might tip the odds in the keep's favor.

If the PCs show little interest in aiding Dragon Keep, Ronan promises that the high priest will reward them. Ronan cannot himself negotiate anything, but he boasts of the opulent treasures of the priesthood of Kor. He also swears that Lord Narcil is a rich man and his legion has accumulated a fair amount of gold, and mentions that those who help prevent the fall of the Dragon Keep might also receive high honors in the Free Kingdoms.

After the party agrees to lend a hand, Ronan thanks them before continuing to search for help. If the PCs need help to reach the fortress, he offers to point out the way. If the PCs are familiar with the Dragon Keep, they should have no trouble finding their way to it. If they demand that Ronan show them the way, he complies; he wants their help above all else and will disobey orders if he must. He also wants to get back to the Dragon Keep himself, since he would rather take a stand against the enemy at the fortress than search the land for help.

### Encounter 2: Sceth Hellbringer's Scouting Party (EL 12)

**Development:** The time it takes the PCs to reach their destination depends on where the adventure started and their mode of travel. On their way to the Keep, when they are within the sparse forest covering the area, they discover a Nothrog scouting party the day before arriving. If the PCs were careful in their approach and took time to observe the terrain, a successful Wilderness Lore check (DC 20) or Search check (DC 25) reveals obvious signs of the scouts' passage, such as footprints and horse tracks.

If the PCs find the scout band's trail, they can follow it with a successful Wilderness Lore check (DC 18) made by a character with the Track feat. If they proceed with stealth, they may surprise the scouts at their camp. If, on the other hand, the heroes walked or rode carelessly, they might be taken by surprise. Allow the scouts to roll Listen checks to determine if they notice the PCs approaching their position. Because they are camping close to the road and keep a look out upon the path, the two Nothrog guards might Spot them after the PCs enter visual range (about 200 feet if they are traveling upon the forest trail). If the PCs are discovered, the scouts begin with a volley of arrows. After that, they charge ahead, forcing the heroes into melee.

This scouting party was ordered to patrol the area to ensure no one other than members of Sceth Hellbringer's army would approach the keep. These scouts know the attack on the Dragon Keep is scheduled to begin in two days. They do not anticipate taking part of the first wave of attack; until they receive further orders, their job is to hamper any reinforcements to the fortress.

Two Nothrog sentries are keeping an eye on the trail that cuts through the forest. They hide 20 feet from the path. The rest of their group is resting 500 feet away in a small clearing. If the Nothrog notice the PCs, they shoot arrows at them and begin to shout an alarm. The following round, they draw their battleaxes and charge. Meanwhile, their companions get up and begin to run towards their position. It takes them 6 full rounds to reach the path. Martimor, the leader of this group, lets his men engage the PCs while he remains behind, hiding about 100 feet away from the action. From his position, Martimor uses his crossbow (his favored weapon). If forced into melee, he fights until he has lost three-quarters of his total hit points before dropping to his knees and begging for mercy. His men fight to the death or until they see their leader cower in fear. When this happens, they scatter through the forest, hoping to avoid the PCs. Martimor knows Sceth Hellbringer is the warlord behind the attack upon the Dragon Keep, and that the main force should be ready to attack in two days. If the PCs promise to spare his life, he is willing to share anything that he knows.

**Creatures:** Four Nothrog advance scouts, 4th-level barbarians; seven Nothrog rangers, 4th-level rangers; Matrimor, a 9th-level fighter.

**Nothrog Advance Scouts (4), Male Nothrog Bar 4:** CR 4; Medium humanoid (Nothrog); HD 4d12+8; hp 36; Spd 40 ft.; Init +2; AC 16, touch 13, flat-footed 14; Base Atk +4; Grp +8; Atk +10 melee (1d8+5/x3, battleaxe) or +7 ranged (1d6+1/x3, shortbow); Full Atk +10 melee (1d8+5/x3, battleaxe) or +7 ranged (1d6+1/x3, shortbow); SA Barbarian rage 2/day, wolverine rage 1/day; SQ Fast movement, illiteracy, non-magical bonus +1, Nothrog traits, resist magic +1, totem animal (wolverine), race/class abilities; AL CE; SV Fort +6, Ref +3, Will +1; Str 18, Dex 14, Con 15, Int 8, Wis 10, Cha 7.

*Skills and Feats*: Climb +5*, Listen +5; Improved Sunder, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (battleaxe). *includes –1 Armor Check penalty

*Race/Class Abilities: Barbarian*: Improved Sunder/Trip.

*Barbarian Rage (2/day)*: While a barbarian rages, his statistics change as follows: HD 4d12+16; hp 44; AC 14, touch 11, flat-footed 12; Grp +10; Atk +12 melee (1d8+7/x3, battleaxe); Full Atk +12 melee (1d8+7/x3, battleaxe); SV Fort +8, Will +3; Str 22, Con 19. His fit of rage lasts for 7 rounds. At the end of the rage the barbarian is fatigued (–2 to Strength, –2 to Dexterity, can't charge or run).

*Fast Movement:* A barbarian has a speed faster than the norm for his race by +10 feet when wearing no armor, light armor, or medium armor (and not carrying a heavy load).

*Illiteracy*: A barbarian cannot read nor write.

*Non-Magical Bonus*: A barbarian receives a +1 bonus to his/her attack and damage rolls when not using a magical weapon and Armor Class when not wearing magical armor or carrying an enchanted shield. Attacks made by a barbarian ignore damage reduction as if his/her weapon were enchanted with an enhancement bonus of the same amount.

*Resist Magic:* A barbarian gains a +1 morale bonus to saves against effects generated by spells, spell-like abilities and magic items. A barbarian also reduces additional damage inflicted against him by enhancement bonuses by the same amount.

**Totem Animal (wolverine):** Bonus Ability — Wolverine Rage (1/day): While the barbarian rages, his statistics change as follows: HD 4d12+8; hp 36; AC 11, touch 8, flat-footed 9; Grp +9; Atk +11 melee (1d8+7/x3, battleaxe); Full Atk +11 melee (1d8+7/x3, battleaxe); SV Fort +9, Will +3; Str 24, Con 21. His fit of rage lasts for 8 rounds. At the end of the rage the barbarian is fatigued (–2 to Strength, –2 to Dexterity, can't charge or run).

*Possessions:* Studded leather armor, battleaxe, shortbow, 20 arrows, 4d8 sp.

**Nothrog Advanced Rangers (7), Male Nothrog Rgr 4:** CR 4; Medium humanoid (Nothrog); HD 4d8+8; hp 26; Init +3; Spd 30 ft.; AC 16, touch 13, flat-footed 13; Base Atk +4; Grp +6; Atk +6 melee (1d8+2(19–20/x2), longsword), or +8 ranged (1d8/x3, longbow); Full Atk +6 melee (1d8+2(19–20/x2), longsword), or +8 ranged (1d8/x3, longbow); SA —; SQ Favored terrain (hill), Nothrog traits, race/class abilities; AL NE; SV Fort +6, Ref +4, Will +2; Str 15, Dex 16, Con 15, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 8.

*Skills and Feats:* Climb +8, Hide +9, Knowledge (nature) +6, Listen +9, Move Silently +9, Spot +9, Survival +7; Alertness, Dodge, Lightning Reflexes, Track, Weapon Focus (longbow).

*Race/Class Abilities: Ranger*: Totem Ability (elephant).

*Favored terrain (hill):* A ranger gains a +3 circumstance bonus to Climb, Hide, Listen, Knowledge (nature), Move Silently, Ride, Search, Spot, Swim, Use Rope, and Survival checks as well as a +2 circumstance bonus to all attack rolls in hill terrain.

*Possessions:* Leather armor, longsword, longbow, 20 arrows, 6d6 cp, 3d4 sp.

*Ranger Spells Prepared* (0/1; save DC 11 + spell level): 1st — *pass without trace*.

**Martimor, Lieutenant of Sceth Hellbringer, Male Nothrog Ftr 9:** CR 9; Medium humanoid (Nothrog); HD 9d10+18; hp 67; Init +5; Spd 20 ft.; AC 18, touch 11, flat-footed 17; Base Atk +9; Grp +13; Atk +15 melee (1d8+7(19–20/x2), longsword) or + 12 ranged (1d10+1(18–20/x2), heavy crossbow); Full Atk +15/+10 melee (1d8+7(19–20/x2), longsword) or + 12 ranged (1d10+1(18–20/x2), heavy crossbow); SA Favored weapon (longsword, heavy crossbow), improved damage (longsword), race/class abilities; SQ Nothrog traits; AL LE; SV Fort +8, Ref +6, Will +3; Str 19, Dex 13, Con 15, Int 11, Wis 11, Cha 15.

*Skills and Feats:* Handle Animal +8, Listen +5, Ride +7, Spot +5; Alertness, Blind Fight, Cleave, Dodge, Improved Initiative, Lightning Reflexes, Power Attack.

*Race/Class Abilities: Fighter*: Aptitude, Rage (1/day).

*Favored Weapon (longsword, heavy crossbow)*: Martimor gains a +1 competence bonus to attack and damage rolls with the longsword and heavy crossbow.

*Improved Damage (longsword)*: Martimor does an additional +2 (+3 total) damage with the longsword.

*Rage (1/day)*: While Martimor rages, his statistics change as follows: HD 9d10+36; hp 85; AC 16, touch 9, flat-footed 15; Grp +15; Atk +17 melee (1d8+9(19–20/x2), longsword); Full Atk +17/+12 melee (1d8+9(19–20)/x2, longsword); SV Fort +10, Will +5; Str 23, Con 19. His fit of rage lasts for 7 rounds. At the end of the rage Martimor is fatigued (–2 to Strength, –2 to Dexterity, can't charge or run).

*Possessions: +2 chain shirt*, masterwork light steel shield, masterwork longsword, *+2 dagger*, masterwork heavy crossbow, 20 bolts, *potion of cure serious wounds*, gold medallion (worth 450 gp), 102 gp, 28 sp, 52 cp.

### Encounter 3: Abandoned Village (EL 14)

**Read aloud:** *The forest path leads you to an abandoned village at the foot of the Dragon Keep's elevated plateau. Above you tower the battlements of the fortress, shadowing the empty wooden houses of this tiny community.*

*As you make your way towards the keep, you notice most of the doors and windows of the buildings here have been barricaded.*

There is a family of extremely large and hungry dire bears in the small village. They are searching every house and garden they can find, desperate to scavenge any scraps of food. When they see the PCs, they roar in hunger and attack without hesitation.

**Creatures:** Five dire bears.

**Dire Bears (5):** CR 8; Large animal; HD 16d8+64; hp 136; Init +1; Spd 40 ft.; AC 17, touch 10, flat-footed 16; Base Atk +12, Grp +27; Atk +23 melee (2d6+12/x2, claw); Full Atk +23 melee (2d6+12/x2, 2 claws) and +17 melee (2d8+6/x2, bite); Space/

Reach 10 ft./5 ft.; SA Improved Grab; SQ Low-light vision, scent; AL N; SV Fort +14, Ref +10, Will +10; Str 33, Dex 13, Con 19, Int 2, Wis 12, Cha 10.

*Skills and Feats:* Listen +11, Spot +11, Swim +15; Alertness, Endurance, Improved Natural Attack (claws), Run, Toughness, Weapon Focus (claw).

*Improved Grab:* To use this ability, a dire bear must hit with a claw attack. It can then attempt to start a grapple as a free action without provoking an attack of opportunity.

*Low-Light Vision:* A dire bear can see twice as far as a Human in starlight, moonlight, torchlight, and similar conditions of shadowy illumination. It retains the ability to distinguish color and detail under these conditions.

*Scent:* The dire bear can detect opponents within 30 feet by sense of smell. If the opponent is upwind, the range increases to 60 feet; if downwind, it drops to 15 feet. Strong scents, such as smoke or rotting garbage, can be detected at twice the ranges noted above. Overpowering scents, such as skunk musk or troglodyte stench, can be detected at triple normal range. When a dire bear detects a scent, the exact location of the source is not revealed—only its presence somewhere within range. The dire bear can take a move action to note the direction of the scent. Whenever the dire bear comes within 5 feet of the source, the creature pinpoints the source's location.

### Encounter 4: The Dragon Keep

**Read aloud:** At the end of the village, you finally lay eyes upon the massive stone staircase that leads to the fortified gate 30 feet above you. A pair of Dwarven warriors sculpted from dark gray stone in the image of the god Kor stand guard on either side of the staircase. You see movement up on the high battlement, and a voice cries out: "Who goes there?"

**Development:** The voice belongs to one of Lord Narcil's men. Several others guard the main gate and the various watchtowers. There are some soldiers walking upon the battlement. Most of these men are experienced soldiers, but they are on edge, anticipating the imminent attack upon their home. If the PCs identify themselves as friends of Koranos or Narcil, or if they inform the guards that Ronan asked them to come to the Dragon Keep to lend a hand, they are invited to climb up the stairs and come inside the fortress; otherwise, the guards interrogate them to make sure they are not spies for the enemy army.

**When the PCs arrive at the top of the stairs, if they are friends of Koranos and/or Lord Narcil, read aloud:** *The main gate of the Dragon Keep was designed to withstand a great assault. The bulky towers on either side are riddled with thin arrow slits so the guards can cover the gate. A thick battlement connects both towers, covering the passageway with a stone floor filled with murder holes.*

*A massive pair of bronze doors and a portcullis of black iron protect the outer gate. Similar doors close the inner part of the passage, but they are opening as you make your way inside the great keep.*

*"My friends!" Koranos greets you warmly. "It has been too long." Lord Narcil stands at his side.*

**Development:** Koranos and Lord Narcil are eager to see the PCs and hope their involvement in the upcoming combat will tip the odds to their side. The PCs have a chance to hear all about the event that led to this moment. Lord Narcil's scouts have confirmed that the bulk of the enemy legion, now camped just a few miles to the west, should be upon them tomorrow.

There are close to 600 people inside the Keep, most of them refugees. Supply and communication lines were cut several days ago. Koranos estimates there is enough food to last them another five, perhaps six, days. Any siege must be broken quickly, or they risk starvation.

The PCs have one night to conceive a plan. The keep is guarded by Lord Narcil's legion of 120 men. The 20 Dwarven warriors who recently arrived at the keep have also offered their help. Aside from the High Priest, there are 8 clerics and 22 acolytes of Kor at the shrine. Five dozen villagers are willing to help in the defense, from young teenage peasants to elderly artisans. There are also 450 non-combatant Humans, mostly women, children, and elderly folks from the village at the base of the keep.

## Part 2: The Siege

The siege of the Dragon Keep could last for several days, but Sceth Hellbringer plans to take the place in under twenty-four hours. The first attack takes place before dawn on the day after the PCs reach the fortress.

### Encounter 5: Wave One — Burning Skies (EL 14)

**Read aloud:** *The sun has not yet shown itself when you are awakened by several high-pitched screams. The attack has begun! An early morning mist lingers upon the ground, masking the earth. Although it is still dark, there is a dim red light low upon the eastern horizon.*

*Then the darkness is suddenly split by a torrent of fire.*

**Development:** Sceth has rallied a dozen ballistae to the scene, and orders his men to fire in rapid succession. Sceth is purposefully targeting only sentry towers, barracks, stables, and armories, intending to cripple rather than destroy the keep. The keep's soldiers are confused by the attack, unsure where to report, but the party may have some luck sneaking up to the ballistae before dawn, or else using fire or acid attacks, which destroy the ballistae's base.

**Creatures:** Ten ballista crewmen, 4th-level fighters; twelve ballistae.

**Ballista Crew (10), Male Nothrog Ftr 4:** CR 4; Medium humanoid (Nothrog); HD 4d10+12; hp 34; Init +2; Spd 30 ft.; AC 15, touch 12, flat-footed 13; Base Atk +4; Grp +5; Atk +6 melee (1d6+2(19–20/x2), shortsword), or +6 ranged (1d6/x3, shortbow); Full Atk +6 melee (1d6+2(19–20/x2), shortsword), or +6 ranged (1d6/x3, shortbow); SA Favored weapon (shortsword); SQ Nothrog traits, race/class abilities; AL NE; SV Fort +9, Ref +3, Will +1; Str 13, Dex 15, Con 16, Int 11, Wis 10, Cha 7.

*Skills and Feats:* Climb +5*, Jump +5*, Ride +6; Cleave, Dodge, Great Fortitude, Power Attack. *includes –1 armor check penalty

*Race/Class Abilities: Fighter:* Aptitude.

*Favored Weapon (shortsword):* A crewman gains a +1 competence bonus to attack and damage rolls with the shortsword.

*Possessions:* Studded leather, shortsword, shortbow, 20 arrows.

*Ballista (12):* A huge crossbow. Three rounds to load, aim, and cock, with a crew of 1. Atk +12 ranged (3d6/x3 piercing, 120 ft. range increment).

## Encounter 6: Wave Two — The Great Gathering / First Charge

As the ballistae continue to fire, the main host of Sceth Hellbringer's army moves into position.

**Read aloud:** *Over the steady thrum of the ballistae, cries from the main gate alert you of another threat. A large force has moved to the foot of the plateau. The enemy legion is divided in two distinct forces.*

*The larger portion has taken over the abandoned village. Hundreds of Nothrog wearing chain armor and bearing tower shields stand at the edge of the last houses, 200 feet from the main gate. Behind them, some distance away, is a regiment of mounted warriors in black leather armor, accompanied by a number of mighty giants.*

The second, smaller force is comprised of Nothrog warriors following a tall siege engine trailing a yellow banner. This band seems disorganized, as each of these men stands alone or in small clusters of four of five to the west of the castle. Most of them have taken cover in the wooded hills to the west.

**Development:** The bulk of Sceth Hellbringer's army positioned itself shortly after dawn, but most of the warriors involved had been ordered to await further instructions before storming the fortress. With the exception of the Nothrog force to the west, the soldiers wait patiently until the siege engines move into position. If the PCs observe what happens to the south, they might spot two things: first, siege towers and more ballistae are coming their way; second, the cavalry move away from the Dragon Keep, disappearing behind the hills to the east. The infantry, meanwhile, follow their own orders and attack the western wall of the fortress.

There are 411 men in the infantry force to the west. They charge in four groups of 100 troops. Each group is led by a lieutenant (increasing the total to 101 in each wave). Six sappers are equipped with magical explosives, which they plan to set near the palisade while the other waves storm the wall and distract the defenders. Zarohar Niel commands this assault.

Zarohar's first wave storms the keep's wall shortly after the earliest ballistae volleys. Meanwhile, the other infantry stay behind. The second wave is to charge when half the men from the first group have died or fallen back. The sappers then move to the wall and set their charges. When the explosives detonate, a large section of the wall falls, and the two last groups are to charge the breach. Zarohar and his men follow the fourth group about five minutes later. The third and fourth groups are equipped with a total of ten 40-foot high wooden ladders. This is the battle plan.

PCs can take position upon the battlement or in one of the western towers. Those making Spot checks (DC 20) notice the sappers carrying small glowing, orbs move towards the keep's wall. These 1-foot radius orbs are set to detonate 1 minute after being placed, causing 20d6 points of damage in a 20-foot square area (Ref save for half). Any damage dealt to one of the orbs automatically causes it to explode prematurely, so heroes targeting them might cause a lot of damage among the attacking troops. If the PCs fell a sapper, there is a 10% chance per wave someone from that group will be cunning (or foolish) enough to pick the orb up and try to set it at the foot of the fortress wall himself; otherwise the orb stays in place until it detonates.

If the wall is breached, the archers from the main host near the gate begin to send volleys of arrows into the keep (see **"Wave Five"** below) to cover the advance of their assault troops.

**Creatures:** 300 Nothrog infantry, 1st-level fighters; 100 Nothrog shock infantry, 1st-level barbarians; four Nothrog lieutenants, 4th-level rangers; four Nothrog sappers, 4th-level fighters; Zarohar Niel, a 9th-level shaman.

**Nothrog Infantry (300), Male Nothrog Ftr 1:** CR 1; Medium humanoid (Nothrog); HD 1d10+1; hp 6; Init +0; Spd 30 ft.; AC 12, touch 10, flat-footed 12; Base Atk +1; Grp +2; Atk +3 melee (1d6+2(19–20x2), shortsword) or +1 ranged (1d6/x3, shortbow); Full Atk +3 melee (1d6+2(19–20/x2), shortsword) or +1 ranged (1d6/x3, shortbow); SA Favored weapon (shortsword); SQ Nothrog traits, race/class abilities; AL LE; SV Fort +3, Ref +0, Will –1; Str 13, Dex 11, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 8, Cha 9.

*Skills and Feats:* Climb +5, Jump +5; Power Attack.

*Race/Class Abilities: Fighter:* None.

*Favored Weapon (shortsword):* An infantryman gains a +1 competence bonus to attack and damage rolls with the shortsword.

*Possessions:* Leather armor, shortsword, shortbow, 20 arrows.

**Nothrog Shock Infantry (100), Male Nothrog Bar 1:** CR 1; Medium humanoid (Nothrog); HD 1d12+2; hp 8; Spd 30 ft.; Init +1; AC 14, touch 11, flat-footed 13; Base Atk +1; Grp +4; Atk +5 melee (1d8+3/x3, battleaxe) or +2 ranged (1d6/x3, shortbow); Full Atk +5 melee (1d8+3/x3, battleaxe) or +2 ranged (1d6/x3, shortbow); SA Barbarian rage 1/day, wolverine rage 1/day; SQ Illiteracy, Nothrog traits, totem animal (wolverine), race/class abilities; AL CE; SV Fort +4, Ref +1, Will +0; Str 16, Dex 13, Con 14, Int 11, Wis 10, Cha 6.

*Skills and Feats:* Climb +6*, Survival +4; Weapon Focus (battleaxe). *includes –1 armor check penalty

*Race/Class Abilities: Barbarian:* None.

*Barbarian Rage (1/day):* While a barbarian rages, his statistics change as follows: HD 1d12+4; hp 10; AC 12, touch 9, flat-footed 11; Grp +6; Atk +7 melee (1d8+5/x3, battleaxe); Full Atk +7 melee (1d8+5/x3, battleaxe); SV Fort +6, Will +2; Str 20, Con 16. His fit of rage lasts for 6 rounds. At the end of the rage the barbarian is fatigued (–2 to Strength, –2 to Dexterity, can't charge or run).

*Illiteracy:* A barbarian cannot read nor write.

*Totem Animal (wolverine):* Bonus Ability — Wolverine Rage (1/day): While the barbarian rages, his statistics change as follows: HD 1d12+5; hp 11; AC 10, touch 7, flat-footed 9; Grp +7; Atk +8 melee (1d8+6/x3, battleaxe); Full Atk +8 melee (1d8+6/x3, battleaxe); SV Fort +7, Will +2; Str 22, Con 18. His fit of rage lasts for 7 rounds. At the end of the rage the barbarian is fatigued (–2 to Strength, –2 to Dexterity, can't charge or run).

*Possessions:* Studded leather armor, battleaxe, shortbow, 20 arrows.

**Nothrog Lieutenants (4), Male Nothrog Rgr 4:** CR 4; Medium humanoid (Nothrog); HD 4d8+8; hp 26; Init +2; Spd 20 ft.; AC 20, touch 12, flat-footed 18; Base Atk +4; Grp +7; Atk +9 melee (1d8+3(19–20/x2), masterwork longsword) or +6 ranged (1d8/x3, longbow); Full Atk +9 melee (1d8+3(19–20/x2), masterwork long-

sword) or +6 ranged (1d8/x3, longbow); SA —; SQ Favored terrain (hill), Nothrog traits, race/class abilities; AL LE; SV Fort +6, Ref +3, Will +2; Str 16, Dex 14, Con 15, Int 10, Wis 13, Cha 8.

*Skills and Feats:* Handle Animal +6, Knowledge (nature) +6, Listen +9, Spot +9, Survival +7; Alertness, Point Blank Shot, Precise Shot, Track, Weapon Focus (longsword).

*Race/Class Abilities: Ranger:* Totem Ability (elephant).

*Favored terrain (hill):* A ranger gains a +3 circumstance bonus to Climb, Hide, Listen, Knowledge (nature), Move Silently, Ride, Search, Spot, Swim, Use Rope, and Survival checks as well as a +2 circumstance bonus to all attack rolls in hill terrain.

*Possessions:* Chainmail, heavy steel shield, masterwork longsword, light crossbow, 20 bolts.

*Ranger Spells Prepared* (0/1; save DC 11 + spell level): 1st — *resist energy*.

**Nothrog Sapper (6), Male Nothrog Ftr 4:** CR 4; Medium humanoid (Nothrog); HD 4d10+12; hp 34; Init +2; Spd 30 ft.; AC 15, touch 12, flat-footed 13; Base Atk +4; Grp +5; Atk +7 melee (1d6+2(19–20/x2), shortsword) or +6 ranged (1d6/x3, shortbow); Full Atk +7 melee (1d6+2(19–20/x2), shortsword) or +6 ranged (1d6/x3, shortbow); SA Favored weapon (shortsword); SQ Nothrog traits, race/class abilities; AL LE; SV Fort +7, Ref +3, Will +1; Str 13, Dex 15, Con 16, Int 11, Wis 10, Cha 7.

*Skills and Feats:* Climb +5*, Jump +5*, Ride +6; Cleave, Dodge, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (shortsword). *includes –1 Armor Check penalty

*Race/Class Abilities: Fighter:* Aptitude.

*Favored Weapon (shortsword):* A sapper gains a +1 competence bonus to attack and damage rolls with the shortsword.

*Possessions:* Studded leather armor, shortsword, shortbow, 20 arrows.

**Zarohar Niel, Infantry Commander, Male Albino Nothrog Sha 11:** CR 11; Medium humanoid (albino Nothrog); HD 11d4+22; hp 54; Spd 30 ft.; Init +5; AC 15, touch 14, flat-footed 14; Base Atk +5; Grp +7; Atk +7 melee (1d8+5/x3, *+3 wounding longspear*); Full Atk +7 melee (1d8+5/x3, *+3 wounding longspear*); SA Spells; SQ Albino Nothrog traits, beast bond, familiar (bat), favored terrain (mountains, hill, forest), race/class abilities; AL LE; SV Fort +7, Ref +4, Will +10; Str 14, Dex 13, Con 15, Int 16, Wis 12, Cha 16.

*Skills and Feats:* Concentration +12, Craft (alchemy) +8, Knowledge (totems) +11, Listen +5, Spellcraft +8, Spot +5, Survival +5; Alertness, Improved Initiative, Combat Casting, Great Fortitude, Iron Will.

*Race/Class Abilities: Shaman (Mammoth Totem):* Mammoth Charge (3/day), Mammoth's Wisdom.

*Favored Terrain (mountains, hill, forest):* While in mountainous, hill, or forest terrain, the shaman's shaman caster level is considered 12th and he does not need to have access to his medicine bag to prepare fetishes.

*Beast Bond:* Zarohar Niel may share his consciousness with his familiar, allowing him to share his familiar's perceptions and be in full control of his familiar's actions. While using this ability the shaman is unaware of himself and is considered helpless; he may not move, speak, or act in any way.

*Low-Light Vision:* Zarohar Niel can see twice as far as a Human in starlight, moonlight, torchlight, and similar conditions of shadowy illumination. The crazed shaman retains the ability to distinguish color and detail under these conditions.

**Familiar (bat):** *Bonus Ability:* Echolocation. For five rounds a day (they do not need to be consecutive), Zarohar Niel can use the blindsight ability to a range of 60 feet. This ability works through echolocation (emitting high-frequency sounds inaudible to most creatures). Blindsight allows Zarohar Niel to maneuver and fight targets within range, ignoring invisibility and darkness effects. Zarohar Niel gains a +2 circumstance bonus to all Spot and Listen checks to detect creatures within 60 feet. You may not use this ability if you cannot speak.

*Shaman Spells Per Day* (6/7/7/7/6/4; save DC 13 + spell level): 0 — *resistance, daze, ray of frost (2), mending, open//close*; 1st — *begone, expeditious journey, foxfire, manacles of might, stone hands, endure elements, protection from good*; 2nd — *clumsiness, phantom touch, tail strike, fog cloud, see invisibility, memory's flame, wizard's duel*; 3rd — *cloak of fear, firebombs, hail of thorns, lone wolf, tremor, object read, wilderness stride*; 4th — *acid storm, fiery whip, inferno, primal fear, spectral advisor, weakness won*; 5th — *clinging miasma, greater bull's strength, howling rain, ethereal drain*.

*Possessions:* Medicine bag, fetishes, *+3 wounding longspear, ring of protection +4*, amber necklace (worth 300 gp), silver brooch (worth 150 gp).

Zarohar Niel's bat familiar has the following statistics:

**Bat (Familiar):** CR 1; Diminutive animal; HD 11; hp 26; Init +2; Spd 5 ft., fly 40 ft. (good); AC 22, touch 16, flat-footed 20; Base Atk +5, Grp –12; Atk —; Full Atk —; Space/Reach 1ft./0 ft.; SA —; SQ Blindsense 20 ft., low-light vision, improved evasion, speak with master, speak with animals of its kind, share spells, empathic link, deliver touch spells, spell resistance 16; AL N; SV Fort +3, Ref +4, Will +9; Str 1, Dex 15, Con 10, Int 11, Wis 14, Cha 4.

*Skills and Feats:* Hide +14, Listen +8*, Move Silently +6, Spot +8*; Alertness. * A bat has a +4 racial bonus on Spot and Listen checks. These bonuses are lost if its blindsense is negated.

*Familiar Ability Descriptions:* All familiars have special abilities (or impart abilities to their masters) depending on crazed shaman's combined level in classes that grant familiars. The abilities are cumulative.

*Alertness (Ex):* While his bat is within arm's reach, Zarohar Niel gains the Alertness feat.

*Low-Light Vision (Ex):* A bat can see twice as far as a Human in starlight, moonlight, torchlight, and similar conditions of shadowy illumination. A bat retains the ability to distinguish color and detail under these conditions.

*Blindsense (Ex):* A bat notices and locates creatures within 20 feet. Opponents still have 100% concealment against a creature with blindsense.

*Improved Evasion (Ex):* When subjected to an attack that normally allows a Reflex saving throw for half damage, a familiar takes no damage if it makes a successful saving throw and half damage even if the saving throw fails.

*Share Spells:* At Zarohar Niel's option, he may have any spell (but not any spell-like ability) he casts on himself also affect his familiar. The familiar must be within 5 feet at the time of casting to receive the benefit. If the spell or effect has a duration other than instantaneous, it stops affecting the familiar if it moves

farther than 5 feet away and will not affect the familiar again even if it returns to Zarohar Niel before the duration expires. Additionally, Zarohar Niel may cast a spell with a target of "You" on his familiar (as a touch range spell) instead of on himself. Zarohar Niel and his familiar can share spells even if the spells normally do not affect creatures of the familiar's type (magical beast).

*Empathic Link (Su):* Zarohar Niel has an empathic link with his familiar out to a distance of up to 1 mile. Zarohar Niel cannot see through the familiar's eyes, but they can communicate empathically. Because of the limited nature of the link, only general emotional content can be communicated. Because of this empathic link, Zarohar Niel has the same connection to an item or place that his familiar does.

*Deliver Touch Spells (Su):* Zarohar Niel's familiar can deliver touch spells for him. If Zarohar Niel and the familiar are in contact at the time Zarohar Niel casts a touch spell, he can designate his familiar as the "toucher." The familiar can then deliver the touch spell just as Zarohar Niel could. As usual, if Zarohar Niel casts another spell before the touch is delivered, the touch spell dissipates.

*Speak with Master (Ex):* Zarohar Niel and his familiar can communicate verbally as if they were using a common language. Other creatures do not understand the communication without magical help.

*Speak with Animals of Its Kind (Ex):* Zarohar Niel's familiar can communicate with bats (including dire varieties). Such communication is limited by the intelligence of the conversing creatures.

*Spell Resistance (Ex):* Zarohar Niel's familiar gains spell resistance equal to its master's level + 5 (16). To affect the familiar with a spell, another spellcaster must get a result on a caster level check (1d20 + caster level) that equals or exceeds the familiar's spell resistance.

### Encounter 7: Wave Three (Optional) — The Dragon Returns

This encounter is optional. It can confound PCs for whom the battle is going too smoothly, and satisfy those who played *The Dragon's Lair* and routed the evil dragon out of its den, but who did not have the satisfaction of eliminating the beast. If Varanir is dead, this encounter can instead feature a young adult or adult black dragon.

The dragon attacks in one of two ways.

*Option One:* The dragon finds its way into the Shrine of Kor by swimming against the current of the underground stream leading to **Location 2.3**. Once it reaches the lake, it bursts through the force field (obliterating it) and attacks every person in sight.

**Read aloud:** *You are suddenly aware of the screams of terror from beyond the golden gate that leads to the Shrine of Kor. A moment later, a cleric in bloodied robes lurches out of the sacred place shouting, "The dragon has returned! The dragon has returned!"*

**Development:** The dragon takes its time emerging from the Shrine of Kor. Before moving out of the cavern complex, it wants to make sure it leaves no survivors behind.

*Option Two:* The dragon flies above the keep and attacks.

**Read aloud:** *As the battle upon the western wall continues, you hear fresh screams from the watchtowers to the east. A black hulk swoops low over the keep on leathery wings.*

**Development:** The dragon attacks the strongest looking warriors standing upon the battlement or one of the high watchtowers to the east. It fights until it is destroyed.

If the dragon is Varanir, it uses its shadow blend ability and tries to exact revenge upon the PCs, targeting them with its breath weapon and engaging them in melee whenever possible.

**Creature:** Varanir, a Darkness dragon (see sidebar in the *The Dragon's Lair* adventure entitled *Varanir, Darkness Dragon* for stats).

### Encounter 8: Wave Four: The Burrowers

Sceth Hellbringer has recruited Mordicar the Bald, an evil druid from the Broken Plains of Sarakia. With the Hellbringer's help, Mordicar devised a plan to tunnel his way into the Dragon Keep. This tunnel will allow a mounted regiment of knights to enter the fortification. A few months ago Mordicar took control of a bulette, which has been burrowing toward the fortress.

**Read aloud:** *Suddenly, a huge creature bursts out from the ground in the middle of the Dragon Keep. The dreadful beast's green-blue scales are encrusted with dirt, and its ferocious, shark-like head snaps at the nearest victim. A moment after that, a frail old man in brown rags emerges from the hole. The man's head is bald but his face is hidden behind a flowing black beard.*

**Development:** The bulette attacks everything it sees, moving away from the tunnel. The old man behind the bulette is Mordicar, who followed to ensure that his pet throws confusion into the heart of the Dragon Keep. He also uses spells to great effect.

Mordicar emerges from the tunnel on the round following his pet bulette. Five rounds after that, mounted cavalrymen charge out of the hole. Each round, three of them appear until all of them are inside or the PCs find a way to block the passageway. These men are fearless in battle. Their mission is to storm the front gate. If they are successful and take control of the gate, they open it to admit Hellbringer's Legion.

**Creatures:** Mordicar, a 9th-level druid; one bulette; thirty Nothrog cavalry, 1st-level fighters; thirty heavy warhorses.

**Mordicar the Bald, Male Human Drd 9:** CR 9; Medium humanoid (Human); HD 9d8+9; 51; Spd 30 ft.; Init +2; AC 17, touch 12, flat-footed 15; Base Atk +6; Grp +7; Atk +9 melee (1d6+2/x2, *+2 shortspear*); Full Atk +9/+4 melee (1d6+2/x2, *+2 shortspear*); SA —; SQ Animal speech (silent), nature sense, sense totem, spells, totem animal (bear), totem's vision, trackless step, venom immunity, wild shape (3/day), woodland stride, race/class abilities; AL NE; SV Fort +9, Ref +5, Will +11; Str 13, Dex 14, Con 12, Int 12, Wis 21, Cha 15.

*Skills and Feats:* Concentration +11, Craft (woodworking) +9, Handle Animal +15, Knowledge (nature) +13, Spellcraft +11, Survival +17, Swim +11; Dodge, Endurance, Great Fortitude, Run, Track.

*Race/Class Abilities: Druid:* Favored Terrain (subterranean), Scent, Master Druid.

*Animal Speech (silent):* Mordicar may communicate telepathically with an animal of his totem (bears).

*Nature Sense:* Mordicar can identify plants and animals and determine whether water is safe to drink with perfect accuracy.

*Sense Totem:* Mordicar can sense the location of animals of his totem (bears) within a 500-foot radius.

*Totem Animal (brown bear):* A 1st-level druid may begin play with an animal companion. The animal selected determines the druid's totem animal. *Bonus Ability:* Hibernation — Mordicar can enter into a hibernating sleep. Mordicar designates how long he wishes to sleep and while asleep cannot be disturbed or otherwise awakened. The hibernating sleep allows him to heal 1 hit point per hour and he does not require food or water during this time.

*Totem's Vision:* Mordicar may make a Knowledge (nature) check (DC 20) as a full round action to shift his consciousness into any totem animal (bear) within range of his sense totem ability. Mordicar has full use of the animal's senses, but gains no control over the animal's actions. While using this ability, Mordicar has only a vague sense of his body and is effectively helpless, although he can always end use of this ability as a free action.

*Trackless Step:* Mordicar leaves no trail in natural surroundings and cannot be tracked.

*Venom Immunity:* Mordicar is immune to all organic poisons, including monstrous varieties, but not mineral or magical poisons or poison gas.

*Wild Shape (3/day):* Mordicar has the spell-like ability to *polymorph self* into a Small or Medium animal (but not a dire animal) or his totem shape (bear) and back again. Unlike the standard form of the spell, Mordicar may assume only one form. He regains hit points as in the spell description and does not risk being disoriented.

*Woodland Stride:* Mordicar may move through natural thorns, briars, overgrown areas and other similar terrain without suffering damage or impairment.

*Scent (Ex):* Mordicar can detect opponents within 30 feet by sense of smell. If the opponent is upwind, the range increases to 60 feet; if downwind, it drops to 15 feet. Strong scents, such as smoke or rotting garbage, can be detected at twice the ranges noted above. Overpowering scents, such as skunk musk or troglodyte stench, can be detected at triple normal range. When Mordicar detects a scent, the exact location of the source is not revealed—only its presence somewhere within range. Mordicar can take a move action to note the direction of the scent.

Whenever Mordicar comes within 5 feet of the source, he pinpoints the source's location.

*Druid Spells Prepared (6/6/5//4/3/2; save DC 15 + spell level):* 0 — *detect magic, flare, guidance, know direction, read magic, virtue;* 1st — *charm animal, detect snares and pits, endure elements, entangle, faerie fire, obscuring mist;* 2nd — *barkskin, cat's grace, chill metal, flame blade, summon nature's ally II;* 3rd — *call lightning, contagion, meld into stone, sleet storm;* 4th — *dispel magic, flame strike, ice storm;* 5th — *baleful polymorph, wall of thorns.*

*Possessions:* Leather armor, *+2 halfspear, +5 bracers of armor,* 321 sp, 98 gp, 34 pp.

Mordicar's bear totem animal has the following statistics:

**Brown Bear (totem animal):** CR 4; Large Animal; HD 6d8+24; hp 55; Init +1; Spd 40 ft; AC 15, touch 10, flat-footed 14; Base Atk +4; Grp +16; Atk +11 melee (1d8+8, claw); Full Atk +11 melee (1d8+8, 2 claws), +6 melee (2d6+4, bite); Space/Reach 10 ft./5 ft.; SA Improved Grab; SQ Low-light vision, scent; AL N; SV Fort +9, Ref +6, Will +3; Str 8, Dex 17, Con 11, Int 1, Wis 12, Cha 2.

*Skills and Feats:* Listen +4, Spot +7, Swim +12*; Endurance, Run, Track. *A brown bear has a +4 racial bonus on Swim checks.

*Improved Grab (Ex):* To use this ability, a brown bear must hit with a claw attack. It can then attempt to start a grapple as a free action without provoking an attack of opportunity.

*Scent (ex):* A brown bear can detect opponents within 30 feet by sense of smell. If the opponent is upwind, the range increases to 60 feet; if downwind, it drops to 15 feet. Strong scents, such as smoke or rotting garbage, can be detected at twice the ranges noted above. Overpowering scents, such as skunk musk or troglodyte stench, can be detected at triple normal range. When a brown bear detects a scent, the exact location of the source is not revealed—only its presence somewhere within range. The brown bear can take a move action to note the direction of the scent.

Whenever the brown bear comes within 5 feet of the source, the brown bear pinpoints the source's location.

**Bulette (1):** CR 7; Huge magical beast; HD 9d10+45; hp 94; Init +2; Spd 40 ft., burrow 10 ft.; AC 22, touch 10, flat-footed 20; Base Atk +9, Grp +25; Atk +16 melee (2d8+8/x2, bite); Full Atk +16 melee (2d8+8/x2, bite), +10 melee (2d6+4/x2, 2 claws); Space/Reach 15 ft./10 ft.; SA Leap; SQ Darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision, scent, tremorsense 60 ft.; AL N; SV Fort +11, Ref +8, Will +6; Str 27, Dex 15, Con 20, Int 2, Wis 13, Cha 6.

*Skills and Feats:* Jump +18, Listen +9, Spot +3; Alertness, Iron Will, Track, Weapon Focus (bite).

*Darkvision, 60 ft.:* A bulette can see in the dark with no light source at all, out to a range of 90 feet. Darkvision is black and white only (colors cannot be discerned). It does not allow the bulette to see anything that it could not see otherwise—invisible objects are still invisible, and illusions are still visible as what they seem to be. Likewise, darkvision subjects the bulette to gaze attacks normally. The presence of light does not spoil darkvision.

*Leap (Ex):* A bulette can jump into the air during combat. This allows it to make four claw attacks instead of two, each with a +15 attack bonus, but it cannot bite.

*Low-Light Vision (Ex):* A bulette can see twice as far as a Human in starlight, moonlight, torchlight, and similar conditions of shadowy illumination. It retains the ability to distinguish color and detail under these conditions.

*Tremorsense (Ex):* A bulette can detect and pinpoint any creature or object within 60 feet in contact with the ground.

*Scent (Ex):* The bulette can detect opponents within 30 feet by sense of smell. If the opponent is upwind, the range increases to 60 feet; if downwind, it drops to 15 feet. Strong scents, such as smoke or rotting garbage, can be detected at twice the ranges

noted above. Overpowering scents, such as skunk musk or troglodyte stench, can be detected at triple normal range. When a bulette detects a scent, the exact location of the source is not revealed—only its presence somewhere within range. The bulette can take a move action to note the direction of the scent.

Whenever the bulette comes within 5 feet of the source, the creature pinpoints the source's location.

**Nothrog Cavalry (30), Male Nothrog Ftr 1:** CR 1; Medium humanoid (Nothrog); HD 1d10+1; hp 7; Init +0; Spd 30 ft.; AC 12, touch 10, flat-footed 12; Base Atk +1; Grp +3; Atk +4 melee (1d6+3(19–20/x2), shortsword) or +1 ranged (1d6/x3, shortbow); Full Atk +4 melee (1d6+3(19–20/x2), shortsword) or +1 ranged (1d6/x3, shortbow); SA Favored weapon (shortsword); SQ Nothrog traits, race/class abilities; AL LE; SV Fort +4, Ref +0, Will –1; Str 15, Dex 11, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 8, Cha 9.

*Skills and Feats:* Jump +6, Ride +4; Power Attack.

*Race/Class Abilities: Fighter:* none.

*Favored Weapon (shortsword):* A cavalryman gains a +1 competence bonus to attack and damage rolls with the shortsword.

*Possessions:* Leather armor, shortsword, shortbow, 20 arrows.

**Heavy Warhorse (30):** CR 2; Large animal; HD 4d8+12; hp 30; Init +1; Spd 50 ft.; AC 14, touch 10, flat-footed 13; Base Atk +3, Grp +11; Atk +6 melee (1d6+4/x2, hoof); Full Atk +6/+6 melee (1d6+4/x2, 2 hooves) and +1 melee (1d4+2/x2, bite); Space/Reach 10 ft./5 ft.; SA —; SQ Low-light vision, scent; AL N; SV Fort +7, Ref +5, Will +2; Str 18, Dex 13, Con 17, Int 2, Wis 13, Cha 6.

*Skills and Feats:* Listen +5, Spot +4; Endurance, Run.

*Low-Light Vision:* A warhorse can see twice as far as a Human in starlight, moonlight, torchlight, and similar conditions of shadowy illumination. It retains the ability to distinguish color and detail under these conditions.

*Scent:* The warhorse can detect opponents within 30 feet by sense of smell. If the opponent is upwind, the range increases to 60 feet; if downwind, it drops to 15 feet. Strong scents, such as smoke or rotting garbage, can be detected at twice the ranges noted above. Overpowering scents, such as skunk musk or troglodyte stench, can be detected at triple normal range. When a warhorse detects a scent, the exact location of the source is not revealed—only its presence somewhere within range. The warhorse can take a move action to note the direction of the scent.

Whenever the warhorse comes within 5 feet of the source, the warhorse pinpoints the source's location.

### Encounter 9: Wave Five — The Great Breach / Final Showdown

The main army storms the front gate a few minutes after the explosive spheres detonate, not long after the dragon, bulette, and cavalry attacks.

**Read aloud:** *Not long after the many blasts that breached the western wall — and only moments after the eruption of the great land shark and the mounted warriors into the keep — the soldiers upon the battlements are assailed by a wave of arrows. Some of the arrows are blazing with red fire, but most of them aren't. After the initial volley, you realize another will soon come, as the main enemy force begins to move towards the castle.*

*Many men from the great host run in the direction of the southern wall, carrying 80-foot-long ladders that they slam up against the walls. A smaller group of these soldiers begin to escalate the stairs leading to the main gate, undoubtedly in an effort to create a gap in the fortified doors (or perhaps enter the keep — if the cavalry were successful in taking control of the gate). A large humanoid dressed in chainmail armor and carrying a massive club accompanies these men.*

*Behind them, great square towers with large wheels are pushed towards the wall. These are filled with armed soldiers. You also see ballistae, 150 feet away from the fortress, one on either side of the gate. The eight hill giants and three fire giants stay with them, probably awaiting further orders.*

**Development:** This is the main force of Sceth Hellbringer's army. In an effort to take the fortress in a single day, the warlord sends everything he has available in the area against the Dragon Keep.

The giant humanoid charging the gate is an athach loyal to Sceth. The warlord ordered him to use his great strength to rip open the gate, so he is accompanying the elite warriors moving towards it in case Mordicar and the cavalry failed. Once the gate is opened, the athach charges inside and tries to kill as many of Sceth's enemies as he can.

There are twenty available ladders for the main host. Twenty men are attached to each of them. The towers are slow moving and it takes a while for the beefy men pushing them to reach the castle wall — 10+1d10 rounds after the archers' attack — which should give the PCs enough time to react to the various menaces threatening the Dragon Keep. The towers are made of wood and burn easily. The same thing is true for the ballistae. Five men handle each of these. It takes one full round to reload a ballista and one full round to use it.

The hill and fire giants stay behind and wait for Sceth to give them the go-ahead. The warlord sends them into the fray as soon as he sees a weakness in the Dragon Keep's defenses, hoping the giants' brute strength will breach the fortress's wall where the defenders have difficulty protecting the place.

Sceth Hellbringer himself leads this attack. A group of elite soldiers protects him, but as soon as there is a breach in the fortress he charges forward (with his loyal personal guard by his side). Hellbringer retreats as soon as all his siege engines or half his giants fall, or if he is reduced to fewer than 117 hp.

**Creatures:** One athach; two siege towers; 600 Hellbringer's soldiers, 1st-level fighters; twelve Hellbringer's personal guards, 4th-level fighters; eight hill giants; three fire giants; Sceth Hellbringer, 16th-level fighter.

**Athach:** CR 8; Huge aberration; HD 14d8+70; hp 133; Init +1; Spd 35 ft.; AC 20, touch 9, flat-footed 19; Base Atk +10, Grp +26; Atk +12 melee (3d6+8/x2, morningstar) or +9 ranged (2d6+8/x2, rock); Full Atk +12/+7 melee (3d6+8/x2, morningstar), +12 melee (3d6+4/x2, 2 morningstars), +12 melee (2d8+4 plus poison/x2, bite) or +12/+12 melee (3d6+4/x2, 2 morningstars), +12 melee (2d8+4 plus poison/x2, bite) or +5 ranged (2d6+4/x2, 2 rocks); Space/Reach 15 ft./15 ft.; SA Poison; SQ Darkvision 60 ft.; AL CE; SV Fort +9, Ref +5, Will +10; Str 26, Dex 13, Con 21, Int 7, Wis 12, Cha 6.

*Skills and Feats:* Climb +9, Jump +18, Listen +7, Spot +7; Alertness, Cleave, Multiweapon Fighting, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (bite).

*Darkvision, 60 ft.:* An athach can see in the dark with no light source at all, out to a range of 90 feet. Darkvision is black and white only (colors cannot be discerned). It does not allow the athach to see anything that it could not see otherwise—invisible objects are still invisible, and illusions are still visible as what they seem to be. Likewise, darkvision subjects the athach to gaze attacks normally. The presence of light does not spoil darkvision.

*Poison (Ex):* Injury, Fortitude DC 22, initial damage 1d6 Str, secondary damage 2d6 Str. The save DC is Constitution-based.

*Possessions:* Hide armor, two (2) morningstars.

*Siege Towers (2):* Large wooden towers on wheels that can be rolled up against a wall to allow attackers to climb the tower under cover and emerge on top of the wall. The wooden walls are 1 ft. thick. Needs 10 crewmen to move 15 ft. per round. Each three crewmen lost reduces speed by 5 ft. per round.

**Hellbringer's Soldiers (600), Male Nothrog Ftr 1:** CR 1; Medium humanoid (Nothrog); HD 1d10+1; hp 6; Init +0; Spd 30 ft.; AC 12, touch 10, flat-footed 12; Base Atk +1; Grp +2; Atk +3 melee (1d6+2(19–20/x2), shortsword) or +1 ranged (1d6/x3, shortbow); Full Atk +3 melee (1d6+2(19–20/x2), shortsword) or +1 ranged (1d6/x3, shortbow); SA Favored weapon (shortsword); SQ Nothrog traits, race/class abilities; AL LE; SV Fort +3, Ref +0, Will –1; Str 13, Dex 11, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 8, Cha 9.

*Skills and Feats:* Climb +5, Jump +5; Power Attack.

*Race/Class Abilities: Fighter:* none.

*Favored Weapon (shortsword):* A soldier gains a +1 competence bonus to attack and damage rolls with the shortsword.

*Possessions:* Leather armor, shortsword, shortbow, 20 arrows.

**Hellbringer's Personal Guards (12), Male Nothrog Ftr 4:** CR 4; Medium humanoid (Nothrog); HD 4d10+12; hp 34; Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; AC 16, touch 11, flat-footed 15; Base Atk +4; Grp +7; Atk +9 melee (1d6+4(19–20/x2), shortsword), or +5 ranged (1d6/x3, shortbow); Full Atk +9 melee (1d6+4(19–20/x2), shortsword) or +5 ranged (1d6/x3, shortbow); SA Favored weapon (shortsword); SQ Nothrog traits, race/class abilities; AL LE; SV Fort +7, Ref +2, Will +1; Str 17, Dex 12, Con 16, Int 11, Wis 10, Cha 7.

*Skills and Feats:* Climb +5*, Jump +5*, Ride +5; Cleave, Dodge, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (shortsword). *includes –3 Armor Check penalty.

*Race/Class Abilities: Fighter:* Aptitude.

*Favored Weapon (shortsword):* A guard gains a +1 competence bonus to attack and damage rolls with the shortsword.

*Possessions:* Chain shirt, light steel shield, shortsword, shortbow, 20 arrows, 4d4 sp.

**Hill Giants (4):** CR 7; Huge giant; HD 12d8+48; hp 96; Init –1; Spd 40 ft.; AC 19, touch 7, flat-footed 19; Base Atk +9; Grp +24; Atk +15 melee (2d6+10/x2, greatclub); Full Atk +15/+10 melee (2d6+10/x2, greatclub) or +6 ranged (3d6+7/x2, rock); Space/Reach 15 ft./15 ft.; SA —; SQ Giant traits; AL NE; SV Fort +12, Ref +3, Will +4; Str 25, Dex 8, Con 19, Int 6, Wis 10, Cha 17.

*Skills and Feats:* Climb +9, Jump +9, Spot +5; Cleave, Collateral Damage, Great Cleave, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (greatclub).

**Giant traits:** A giant has the following traits:

- *Bellow (Ex):* All giants have the ability to bellow, causing great windy gusts to burst forth from their lungs. Anyone caught within the 20-ft. cone of this bellow must make a Reflex save (DC 19) or fall back onto the ground, and be hurled 1d4 × 10 ft. away from the giant. Giants frequently send opponents careening off a cliff with a well-timed shout.
- *Earth Bond (Su):* Giants are inextricably bound to the earth. So long as a giant is in direct contact with the earth, be it with dirt or with stone, he gains the Regenerate 1 special quality.
- *Rock Catching (Ex):* A giant can catch Small, Medium, or Large rocks (or projectiles of similar shape). Once per round, a giant that would otherwise be struck by such a rock can attempt a Reflex save to catch it as a free action. The DC is 15 for a Small rock, 20 for a Medium rock, and 25 for a Large rock. If the projectile has a magical bonus to the attack roll, the DC of the Reflex save is increased by an equal amount. A giant who is flat-footed (or otherwise denied his Dexterity bonus to AC) may not attempt this action, nor may a giant who is unaware of the attack.
- *Rock Throwing (Ex):* Adult giants are accomplished rock and caber throwers, and can hurl boulders or trees long distances. A full-grown giant can hurl rocks weighing 40 to 50 pounds each with ease. Such projectiles have a range increment of 10 feet and a maximum range of 50 feet, and inflict 3d6 damage (plus the giant's Strength modifier) on opponents. Most giants carry one or two such boulders with them while traveling, and often refresh their supplies from the side of a road.

*Possessions:* Hide armor, greatclub, sack with 1d6 rocks.

**Giant, Firefall (3):** CR 10; Gargantuan giant (Fire); HD 15d8+90; hp 157; Init –1; Spd 30 ft.; AC 18, touch 5, flat-footed 18; Base Atk +11; Grp +33; Atk +17 melee (2d8+15 plus 2d6 fire(19–20/x2), huge greatsword) or +6 ranged (3d6+10 plus 2d6 fire/x2, rock); Full Atk +17/+12/+7 melee (2d8+15 plus 2d6 fire(19–20/x2), huge greatsword) or +6 ranged (3d6+10 plus 2d6 fire/x3, rock); Space/Reach 20 ft./20 ft.; SA Animate fire; SQ Giant traits, fire subtype; AL LE; SV Fort +17, Ref +4, Will +5; Str 31, Dex 9, Con 22, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 11.

*Skills and Feats:* Climb +17, Listen +12, Spot +12; Cleave, Follow Through, Great Cleave, Great Fortitude, Improved Sunder, Power Attack.

*Animate Fire (Su):* A fire giant may control flame within 100 ft., commanding it to rise into a great torrent, or to extinguish itself

completely. The giant may cause the fire to spread across open terrain so long as there is some source of food for its flame, thereby increasing the size of the fire by twice its current square footage per round. This ability does not grant the giant any special attacks, though characters caught within the newly expanded flames suffer fire damage as normal.

**Giant traits:** A giant has the following traits:

- *Bellow (Ex):* All giants have the ability to bellow, causing great windy gusts to burst forth from their lungs. Anyone caught within the 20-ft. cone of this bellow must make a Reflex save (DC 18) or fall back onto the ground, and be hurled 1d4 × 10 ft. away from the giant. Giants frequently send opponents careening off a cliff with a well-timed shout.
- *Earth Bond (Su):* Giants are inextricably bound to the earth. So long as a giant is in direct contact with the earth, be it with dirt or with stone, he gains the Regenerate 1 special quality.
- *Rock Catching (Ex):* A giant can catch Small, Medium, or Large rocks (or projectiles of similar shape). Once per round, a giant that would otherwise be struck by such a rock can attempt a Reflex save to catch it as a free action. The DC is 15 for a Small rock, 20 for a Medium rock, and 25 for a Large rock. If the projectile has a magical bonus to the attack roll, the DC of the Reflex save is increased by an equal amount. A giant who is flat-footed (or otherwise denied his Dexterity bonus to AC) may not attempt this action, nor may a giant who is unaware of the attack.
- *Rock Throwing (Ex):* Adult giants are accomplished rock and caber throwers, and can hurl boulders or trees long distances. A full-grown giant can hurl rocks weighing 40 to 50 pounds each with ease. Such projectiles have a range increment of 10 feet and a maximum range of 50 feet, and inflict 3d6 damage (plus the giant's Strength modifier) on opponents. Most giants carry one or two such boulders with them while traveling, and often refresh their supplies from the side of a road.

*Fire Subtype:* A creature with the fire subtype has immunity to fire. It has vulnerability to cold, which means it takes half again as much (+50%) damage as normal from cold, regardless of whether a saving throw is allowed, or if the save is a success or failure.

*Possessions: +5 chainmail*, greatsword, backpack with 4 rocks.

**Sceth Hellbringer, Warlord, Male Fire Giant Ftr 7**: CR 16; Gargantuan giant (Fire); HD 15d8+90 plus 7d10+30; hp 235; Init +0; Spd 30 ft.; AC 24, touch 7, flat-footed 23; Base Atk +14; Grp +36; Atk +24 melee (2d8+20 (19–20/x2), huge greatsword) or +10 ranged (3d6+11 plus 2d6 fire/x2, rock); Full Atk +24/+19/+14 melee (2d8+20 (19–20/x2), huge greatsword) or +10 ranged (3d6+11 plus 2d6 fire/x3, rock); Space/Reach 20 ft./20 ft.; SA Animate fire, Favored weapon (greatsword, greataxe), improved damage (greatsword, greataxe); SQ Giant traits, fire subtype; AL NE; SV Fort +23, Ref +6, Will +9; Str 31, Dex 11, Con 22, Int 16, Wis 12, Cha 11.

*Skills and Feats:* Climb +14*, Jump +1*, Listen +12, Knowledge (architecture and engineering) +3, Profession (siege engineer) +2, Spot +12; Battle Plans, Breach the Wall, Cleave, Dodge, Great Cleave, Great Fortitude, Iron Will, Point Blank Shot, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (greatsword). *includes –5 Armor Check penalty

*Animate Fire (Su):* Sceth Hellbringer may control flame within 100 ft., commanding it to rise into a great torrent, or to extinguish itself completely. He may cause the fire to spread across open terrain so long as there is some source of food for its flame, thereby increasing the size of the fire by twice its current square footage per round. This ability does not grant Hellbringer any special attacks, though characters caught within the newly expanded flames suffer fire damage as normal.

*Favored Weapon (greatsword, greataxe)*: Sceth Hellbringer gains a +1 competence bonus to attack and damage rolls with the greataxe and greatclub,.

*Improved Damage (greatsword, greataxe)*: Sceth Hellbringer does an additional +2 (+3 total) damage with the greatsword.

**Giant traits:** A giant has the following traits:

- *Bellow (Ex):* All giants have the ability to bellow, causing great windy gusts to burst forth from their lungs. Anyone caught within the 20-ft. cone of this bellow must make a Reflex save (DC 18) or fall back onto the ground, and be hurled 1d4 × 10 ft. away from the giant. Giants frequently send opponents careening off a cliff with a well-timed shout.
- *Earth Bond (Su):* Giants are inextricably bound to the earth. So long as a giant is in direct contact with the earth, be it with dirt or with stone, he gains the Regenerate 1 special quality.
- *Rock Catching (Ex):* A giant can catch Small, Medium, or Large rocks (or projectiles of similar shape). Once per round, a giant that would otherwise be struck by such a rock can attempt a Reflex save to catch it as a free action. The DC is 15 for a Small rock, 20 for a Medium rock, and 25 for a Large rock. If the projectile has a magical bonus to the attack roll, the DC of the Reflex save is increased by an equal amount. A giant who is flat-footed (or otherwise denied his Dexterity bonus to AC) may not attempt this action, nor may a giant who is unaware of the attack.
- *Rock Throwing (Ex):* Adult giants are accomplished rock and caber throwers, and can hurl boulders or trees long distances. A full-grown giant can hurl rocks weighing 40 to 50 pounds each with ease. Such projectiles have a range increment of 10 feet and a maximum range of 50 feet, and inflict 3d6 damage (plus the giant's Strength modifier) on opponents. Most giants carry one or two such boulders with them while traveling, and often refresh their supplies from the side of a road.

*Fire Subtype:* A creature with the fire subtype has immunity to fire. It has vulnerability to cold, which means it takes half again as much (+50%) damage as normal from cold, regardless of whether a saving throw is allowed, or if the save is a success or failure.

*Possessions:* Masterwork full plate armor, *+2 greatsword, bracers of natural armor +3, potion of cat's grace*, four emeralds (500 gp each), platinum brooch with effigy of Mammoth (1,350 gp).

## Part 3: Concluding the Adventure

With the help of Kor's clergymen, the Dragon Keep's guards, the small contingent of experienced Dwarven warriors, High Priest Koranos, and Lord Narcil, the PCs might be able to defeat Sceth Hellbringer's host, especially if they take the reins of the small army themselves and order the priests and acolytes to dispense healing in a calculated manner. If the PCs defeat the army, they are once again hailed as heroes of the Dragon Keep. This time, Koranos offers them a permanent home within the fortress's walls, promising to arrange the first, second, and third levels of one of the watchtowers to house them. He might even be persuaded to have Dwarven masons prepare accommodations within one of the unused natural cavern chambers of the dungeon complex at the Shrine of Kor (and other rooms could be slowly hewn from the rock of the mountain).

Lord Narcil also grants them the honorary title of "Commanders of the Dragons," giving them nominal command over the keep's troops and commemorating it with a silver brooch in the form of a dragon's head. This title is not to be taken lightly. The Dragons pledge themselves to defending Dragon Keep, and are flush with success.

In the weeks after the attack, fighters from the Free Kingdoms as well as a larger contingent of Dwarven warriors come to help secure the Dragon Keep. The ranks of the Dragons double, stone barracks are constructed to accommodate the new personnel, and a constabulary is built. The tiny town at the foot of the fortress grows into a modest village comprised of both Humans and Dwarves. A militia, under the Dragons, is formed to protect it. City walls are raised to enclose the growing town, which is destined to become a major center of spiritual and military importance.

If the PCs fail to protect the Dragon Keep and the place falls into Sceth Hellbringer's hands, the warlord desecrates the Shrine of Kor and pillages its valuables. He has the catacomb levels cleared of rubble, and spends the great treasure at the bottom of the lake on enlarging his legion, which he posts at the Dragon Keep: now one of his permanent military outposts.

## Part 4: The Stone of Fortune

**Read aloud:** *You see Nassiral Hate's former throne room, now held by one of his former vassals, Krun. The new Lord of Baraxton is in audience with a number of the other ranking Nothrog generals and leaders, and speaking in quiet tones to a thin Human woman in motley armor who carries a flail. Krun says something that angers her, but then she suddenly collapses. Another Nothrog, one you had not seen in the room before that moment, has just run the woman through with a sword. The image fades.*

Krun has found his show of strength after all, by arranging for the death of one of the Medusan Lords, Lady Bhaine.



# Tier 8

The final battle looms, and the Medusan Lords send one of their most powerful agents to destroy the party. This time their pawn is Al'drich von Grossynkiir, the self-proclaimed Dragon Lord. If the party defeats this new threat, they claim one of the most potent artifacts in the Accordlands, the *Orb of La Hashan.*

## The Dragon Lord

For once, the battle begins before the party is even aware, as a dragon roars out of the sky to attack. The PCs must quickly subdue this new enemy before he calls down every dragon in the Accordlands. The Dragon Lord is one of the most powerful figures in the Accordlands, though he has yet to show his true power. Most of the Accordlands considers dragons a rarity. Most people will live their entire lives without even seeing a bone of one of the mighty creatures. But the Dragon Lord commands the beasts through the power of the Dragon Orb. The dragons are held against their will, and should the Dragon Lord ever lose the Dragon Orb, they would make him pay dearly for his arrogance.

## Campaign Notes:



# The Dragon Lord

## Introduction

In The Dragon Lord, the party begins to threaten the Medusan Lords in earnest, and they are beset by the Lords' most powerful servant: Al'drich von Grossynkiir, the Dragon Lord.

This is the only adventure in Tier 8. It is meant for characters of levels 16–18.

## Adventure Background

The PCs' fame and word of their growing power has reached the ears of the Medusan Lords. Perceiving the party as a threat for the first time, and unwilling to have their plan's delicate timing disrupted by interlopers, the Medusan Lords contact Al'drich von Grossynkiir, known as the Dragon Lord. He has been bewitched by the Medusan Lords' tales of the power that will soon be theirs, and has willingly thrown in his lot with them. The Dragon Lord possesses one of the fabled Dragon Orbs, the Orb called La Hashan, and with it he can control these powerful, near-legendary creatures. The Medusan Lords have assured him that, should he deal with the troublesome PCs, he can join their conspiracy to remake and rule the world.

## Adventure Synopsis

The opening scene of the adventure can take place almost anywhere. Wherever the PCs happen to be, Glimmerscale tracks them down. She issues neither warning nor threat, swooping into combat silently and with deadly intent. The PCs must fight this sudden foe.

After the PCs fight Glimmerscale, she falls to the ground, heavily wounded. She begins to tell them of Al'drich, but unknown to the PCs, this is all part of Al'drich's plan to bring the PCs to him. Glimmerscale pretends to be free of Al'drich's influence now, and begs the PCs to free her child from Al'drich. She even offers to fly the PCs to Castle Grossynkiir.

Provided the PCs accede to her demands, she carries them most of the way to Castle Grossynkiir. As they approach the keep, two dragons fly forth to meet them in battle. The Dragon Lord knows of Glimmerscale's approach, and has sent them to perpetuate the facade.

After a brutal battle, Glimmerscale informs the PCs that she can approach no closer — for now — lest the Dragon Lord claim her. They must penetrate the Dragon Lord's fortress on their own.

The PCs must then breach Castle Grossynkiir. Eventually, they find the Dragon Lord on the roof atop his chambers, which occupy the upper reaches of the citadel. Grossynkiir mocks the party's hubris, calling his two remaining "pets" to battle.

# Part 1: Castle Grossynkiir Region

## Location 1: Castle Grossynkiir *(page 512)*

**Development:** Though the PCs do not begin in — or even near — Castle Grossynkiir, it is a location central to the course of events during The Dragon Lord. It is a nigh-impregnable Deverenian stronghold, constructed to safeguard the border against Nothrog incursions. It fulfills the purpose admirably. The fortress straddles the entire pass.

The keep has defenses of its own, so even once an army breaches the outer walls, it must lay siege to the keep within. It is surrounded by a moat, as well as a stone wall 10 feet thick at its weakest point. Though a force that simply wishes to bypass the keep and travel into Deverenian lands proper may do so, it faces constant harrying by the forces in the keep, as the road passes directly alongside it. Further, the exterior gate control may be reached (and disabled) from within the keep, preventing the invader from simply raising the portcullis. Invading Nothrog armies have been slaughtered on the grounds of Castle Grossynkiir, unable to advance through the second gate.

The grounds north of the road are clear and often used for drill, but lately have fallen into disrepair. Incessant Nothrog attacks have wearied the garrison to the point that further exercises are unnecessary. Further, the dragons that circle overhead prevent effective drills, as the soldiers are invariably edgy beneath the watchful eyes of the awesome creatures. Most of the area south of the road is dedicated to travelers and their needs, as well as a banquet hall for the personal use of Lord von Grossynkiir. This area features stables (intended primarily for the keep's garrison, but rentable for a nominal fee), a traveler's hostel, a small market, and other amenities.

The interior of the keep is stark. The first floor houses the barracks (though additional soldiers can be housed in the hostel on the south side of the fortress), along with a block of cramped cells sufficient to hold a large number of temporary prisoners. The second floor of the keep houses the armory and general store. In case of a long siege, both of these locations are kept well stocked. The squat structure is only two stories. The roof features sturdy ramparts and siege defenses, including built-in cauldrons to heat boiling oil.

The majority of the keep's citadel is a relatively recent construction, having been built at the command of Castle Grossynkiir's lord, Al'drich von Grossynkiir. Once it was merely a partition of the keep proper, and no taller than the adjacent structure. A spiral staircase led to the second floor, where the keep commander maintained his office. Now, the office is a barracks for the commander's personal bodyguard. Another staircase leads from this room further up into the citadel, which looms over 100 feet above the keep proper. Von Grossynkiir's office is at the very pinnacle of the citadel, and he is often spotted atop the citadel's ramparts with his new draconic allies.

The rank and file of the garrison consists of 120 6th-level Deverenian soldiers. Von Grossynkiir's personal guard, his five most elite warriors, can be found within (see **Location 1.22**). Inside the keep proper there is a 25% chance every 5 minutes that the PCs encounter 1d6+2 Deverenian soldiers on duty. Outside of the keep, this chance falls to 5% every hour. In the southern area of the fortress (**Locations 1.3–1.9**), this chance is further reduced to 5% every 2 hours. If the keep is alerted to the PCs' presence (as described in Encounter 2, for example), all of these percentages double (though the frequency of the check remains the same). Further, the number of soldiers present at each location (except **Locations 1.15, 1.21,** and **1.22**) is doubled. At **Locations 1.15** and **1.21,** on the other hand, this number is halved. Regardless of the above circumstances, the 5 elite guard always remain at **Location 1.22.**

Though the PCs need not fear coming to the attention of the garrison while in **Locations 1.3–1.9,** they are not entirely out of harm's way. The dragons that circle overhead may spot them as they cross open ground. Once each hour the PCs are at any of these locations, there is a 5% chance that one of the two dragons notices the PCs and recognize them for the Dragon Lord's foes (if the PCs remain undercover for the entire period of time, ignore this chance). In this case, the dragon swoops to the attack. It attacks once with its breath weapon before returning to its patrol. That however, is enough to alert the garrison that something is amiss, and 2d4+3 Deverenian soldiers arrive to confront the PCs in 3d6+3 rounds.

**Creatures**: Deverenian soldiers.

**Deverenian Soldier, Male Deverenian Ftr 6**: CR 6; Medium humanoid (Deverenian); HD 6d10+12+3; hp 51; Init +5; Spd 20 ft.; AC 22, touch 11, flat-footed 21; Base Atk +6; Grp +9; Atk +13 melee (1d10+6(19–20/x2), bastard sword) or +7 ranged (1d8+4(19–20/x2), mighty (Str 16) composite longbow); Full Atk +13/+8 melee (1d10+6(19–20/x2), bastard sword) or +7/+1 ranged (1d8+4(19–20/x2), mighty (Str 16) composite longbow); SA Favored weapon (bastard sword, longbow), improved damage (bastard sword); SQ Deverenian traits, race/class abilities; AL LE; SV Fort +8, Ref +4, Will +4; Str 16, Dex 13, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 8.

*Skills and Feats:* Knowledge (architecture and engineering) +4, Knowledge (history) +4, Listen +3, Ride +9, Spot +4; Cleave, Exotic Weapon Proficiency (bastard sword), Improved Initiative, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (bastard sword), Toughness. *includes –7 armor check penalty

*Race/Class Abilities: Fighter*: Luxury Training (bastard sword), Military History.

*Favored Weapon (bastard sword, longbow):* A soldier gains a +1 competence bonus to attack and damage rolls with the bastard sword and longbow.

*Improved Damage (bastard sword):* A soldier does an additional +2 (+3 total) damage with the bastard sword.

*Possessions: +1 full plate armor*, large metal shield, masterwork bastard sword, mighty (Str 16) composite longbow.

**Development:** Only 120 soldiers man the garrison at Castle Grossynkiir, so keep track of how many the PCs eliminate. They may decimate the garrison during the course of this adventure, depending on their approach. While the immediate result of this is that the PCs have run of the keep, the ramifications of leaving Castle Grossynkiir bereft of defenders may be dire.

Even if the PCs are discovered, the fortress gates at **Locations 1.1, 1.3,** and 1.11 remain open. They are secured only if a battle is imminent.

## Location 1.1: Main Gates (E/W)

**Development:** The main gates of Castle Grossynkiir are, like the outer walls, nearly 20 feet thick. They consist of two elements. First, the exterior doors are constructed of wood, shod with iron to buttress them against attack. They are heavy enough that nearly a score of men is required to draw them open, even if they stand unbarred. Each door has two bolts that may be slid into a metal setting built into the ground below, which keeps them from being forced during a siege. When the interior portcullis is released (see below), an iron bar drops into place across the doors. Unless the fortress is under attack, these gates stand open, allowing travelers free access through the pass.

The second element of these gates is the interior portcullises. As with the exterior doors, these are normally open. With a simple turn of a lever, they can be slammed shut from the adjacent gatehouses, which are built into the fortress walls. Once dropped, these gates are nigh impossible to lift except with siege machinery, or the gate control in the adjacent gatehouse.

Though not currently under siege, the fortress garrison is aware that the conflicts that rage across the Accordlands could arrive at their doorstep at any moment. The exterior gates usually stand open, though one of each pair of double doors remains bolted at all times, so the fortress might be secured more quickly.

Each of the main gates has a regular guard of two 6th-level Deverenian fighters who stand just inside the gate. As the road through the fortress is heavily traveled, these guards usually allow travelers to pass without comment. However, they are under specific instructions to watch for the PCs. Most likely, the PCs can easily get away with disguising minor details only (which grants a +5 circumstance modifier to the Disguise check). If they simply attempt to Bluff their way past, the guards receive a +5 circumstance modifier to their Sense Motive checks; they know that if the PCs slip past, their lives are at risk. If the PCs approach by night, the guards are particularly suspicious, and receive a +2 circumstance modifier on any Sense Motive or Spot checks made to ferret out the PCs identities. Should the PCs attack or be found out, the guards call for help, and 2d4+3 additional Deverenian fighters arrive in 1d6+1 rounds.

## Location 1.2: Road

This is the only road through this range for 50 miles in any direction, so it sees heavy traffic even now. Travelers, warriors, and pilgrims all use it, and many stay in the hostel within the keep's walls (see **Location 1.5**).

## Location 1.3: Village Gate

Though not as impregnable as the fortress' main gates, the village gate is nonetheless a formidable obstacle. It features a portcullis that operates in identical fashion to the main gate portcullises, though it lacks the exterior doors. Though the walls flanking this gate have no ramparts, they do feature an arrow slit every 10 feet. In recent months, this gate has stood open and abandoned; the garrison has little reason to guard it.

## Location 1.4: Market Square

A slipshod array of vendor's stalls and small supply stores, the market square stands largely deserted, its shanty structures abandoned after the first dragon was spotted overhead. Not a single vendor remains in business.

## Location 1.5: Traveler's Hostel

Lacking a name with any panache, the Traveler's Hostel nonetheless does a lively business; it is the only inn along this road for some distance. The rooms are small and cramped, the cots uncomfortable, and the blankets threadbare, but at least the stone roof does not leak. The rooms are drastically overpriced: 5 sp buys one night's stay.

## Location 1.6: Stables

The quarters reserved for horses are arguably more comfortable than those for their riders. The stables also serve the keep's garrison, quartering the steeds intended for use by the keep's small cavalry contingent. Therefore, the stables house 10 heavy war horses (though when a patrol ranges outside the keep, these animals are not present). The proprietor does a healthy side business renting out the remaining stalls for travelers to sleep in when the hostel is full — or when the renter in question decides the stalls actually are more comfortable, if more aromatic. The same 5 sp that buy a room for the night can instead cover the cost of a stall for the same period of time.

## Location 1.7: Hall

This is the keep's banquet hall. Though it stands unused at the moment, thanks to Grossynkiir's preoccupation with his "pets," this building has hosted dignitaries, diplomats, and kings both foreign and Deverenian. Frequently, it was the site of victory celebrations after conflicts in which Castle Grossynkiir proved integral to victory. When not in use, the hall is a common room and eatery for travelers. The hall's seats of honor are at a table on the west side of the room, which stands on a slightly raised platform. The remainder of the hall is occupied by several long tables stretching east to west, each with a pair of equally long benches.

## Location 1.8: Prep Area

From here, the hall's servants serve its patrons (and, on increasingly rare occasions, honored guests).

## Location 1.9: Kitchen

The kitchen of Grossynkiir Hall has produced delicacies beyond count, though now its primary output is a thin stew for which travelers are routinely overcharged at 3 sp per bowl.

## Location 1.10: Moat

Though Castle Grossynkiir's exterior walls lack a moat, the interior keep maintains one. Thanks to the fortress's lofty altitude, its waters are incredibly cold. Characters who enter the moat unprotected from the chill must make a Fortitude save (DC 15 + 1 per previous check) every round spent in the waters or suffer 1d6 subdual damage.

## Location 1.11: Keep Gate

The keep gate is largely identical to the castle's exterior gates (see **Location 1.1**), though it also features a drawbridge that can be lowered over the moat to allow entry. Unless an invading army breaches the exterior gates, the drawbridge is left down. One of the tremendous double doors is kept secured at all times. As at the exterior gates, two Deverenian soldiers (to whom the same rules apply) guard the keep gate.

## Location 1.12: Parade Grounds

Once used for drills and training, the parade grounds have been abandoned. The sod is broken and torn up, and weeds sprout through the thick mud.

## Location 1.13: Interior Keep Gates

The interior gates consist of two pairs of double doors, separated by a 10 ft. x 20 ft. room of bare stone. Overhead, the room is open to the sky. Unknown to visitors (or invaders), the cauldron installed on the roof nearby can be adjusted to pour boiling oil down into this chamber. The interior keep gates are unmanned, unless the fortress is aware of the PCs' intrusion. In that case, four guards stand watch here, and follow the same rules as those in **Location 1.1.**

## Location 1.14: Keep Hall

This wide hallway is largely bare. A single locked door to the west leads to the keep's prison block, while a double door to the east stands before the keep's barracks. A wide staircase leads up to the second floor at the north end of this corridor.

## Location 1.15: Barracks

This room features row upon row of bunks and foot lockers for the keep's garrison. There are enough bunks here to sleep 50 soldiers, and a weapons rack along the south wall holds swords for the same number, in case of emergency. 15 Deverenian soldiers can always be found here. They are not in battle dress, though they can easily grab their swords and shields from the weapon rack. They are unarmored.

## Location 1.16: Prison

The prison chambers are cramped and uncomfortable, and not intended for long-term use. Criminals and prisoners of war are held here until they can be transported to Luthlarius for trial and, if necessary, incarceration. Grossynkiir has not seen fit to transfer or release any prisoners, and his cells are overfull. This area is usually devoid of guards, though if the PCs' intrusion has been discovered, four soldiers walk through the area every 15 minutes.

## Location 1.17: Gate Houses (1.17.1 and 1.17.2)

A spiral staircase leads up to each of these gatehouses, which contain the controls for their respective gates. Each of these houses holds a lever which, when thrown, drops the portcullis for the adjacent gate. The pulley and chain system that raises the portcullis requires three men to operate. The portcullis controls in gatehouse 1.17.1 double as the drawbridge control. When the portcullis is released, the weight of the falling portcullis slams the drawbridge shut. Similarly, when the portcullis is raised (as described above) the drawbridge opens once more. Gatehouse 1.17.2, unlike the others, cannot be reached from the ground, as it is built directly into the wall. Instead, a passage leads from the second floor of the keep, through the wall and into the gatehouse. This design allows the portcullis to be secured even when an invading army has breached the exterior walls, without extraordinary risk to the operator. A single soldier usually mans each gatehouse.

## Location 1.18: Keep Hall (2nd Floor)

The keep's second-story hall is virtually identical to the one below it. The only difference is that two sets of stairs occupy the north end: one leads down to the first floor hall, while the other leads to a door allowing roof access.

## Location 1.19: Armory

The keep's armory supplies a large garrison. Weapons of all varieties line the walls and racks, accompanied by two dozen suits of plate armor and five dozen chain mail shirts.

## Location 1.20: Food Stores

The food stores are amply stocked with preserved foodstuffs, including dried meat, hardtack, and other nonperishable items. Barrels of water are stacked along the south wall. There is enough here to feed the keep's standard garrison of 125 for a month.

## Location 1.21: Barracks

This bunk room is somewhat larger than its mate on the first floor, and routinely garrisons 70 soldiers. Otherwise, it is identical. 25 soldiers are always present here, and they follow the same rules as those in **Location 1.15.**

## Location 1.22: Guard Chambers

When the citadel stood only two stories, these were the chambers of the keep's commander. They are now the quarters of the Dragon Lord's elite personal guards, four hardened mercenaries. Any who wish to reach the Dragon Lord's chambers must either pass through this room, or ascend the exterior of the citadel. For more on this location, see **Encounter 3.**

## Location 1.23: Von Grossynkiir's Office

Von Grossynkiir's office occupies the width and length of the citadel. He spends less time here of late, leaving the daily operation of the keep in the hands of his personal guards.

An immense desk dominates the north end of the room, opposite which a bench rests against the wall. Four uncomfortable wooden chairs stand directly in front of the desk; von Grossynkiir's high backed chair, the only other furniture in the room, is richly upholstered. The desk's surface is completely clear of any paperwork or other clutter, though reams of paper fill the drawers. A Search check (DC 20) reveals documents that indicate von Grossynkiir's involvement with unspecified parties who may be of further interest to the PCs (see sidebar A Letter). The stone floor is thickly carpeted. A locked door bars the way to the stairs leading up to **Location 1.24**; it requires an Open Lock check (DC 35) or a Break check (DC 23) to open.

### A Letter

**Near the top of a stack of papers is a scrawled parchment, drawn in a strange, rusty-brown ink. The parchment reads:**

**These people have grown troublesome. They must be eliminated without delay, or our final plans may be in jeopardy. Send your pets against them. Fulfilling this task will give your request a great deal of weight. When you bring us their heads, you may join us.**

***(The letter then lists each PC by name, and gives a brief description.)***

**— M.**

## Location 1.24: Von Grossynkiir's Chambers

Plush and richly furnished, the Dragon Lord's chambers occupy the summit of his citadel. A lavish-four poster bed stands in one corner, flanked by a wardrobe against one wall, and a nightstand on the opposite side. Other than these concessions to his own Humanity, von Grossynkiir lives largely without accouterment, barring his peculiar taste in art. The room is dominated by dragon-related art pieces, including sculptures, paintings, and small tapestries. A successful Appraise check (DC 12) estimates the market value of the accumulated collection at roughly 75,000 gp. Hidden behind one tapestry is a small safe, already unlocked, holding several hidden maps.

### Hidden Map

**Hidden within of the dragon sculptures is a freshly drawn map on piece of parchment. It is scorched and spattered with bloodstains, but still legible. The Dragon Lord has done his own investigation into the activities of the Medusan Lords, and this map is his insurance should they betray him.**

**The map is a rough representation of the Accordlands and the western reaches of the Shattered Lands. It indicates several prominent places, the locations of the strongholds of several of the Medusan Lords, including the keeps of Majeral the Ghoul Lord in Markappal, Tiberius Blackthorn on the eastern fringe of Deverenia, and Malrog's Pit deep in the Shattered Lands. Another, smaller map leads to the Elven lands, with a note in the margins that one of Al'drich's dragons had gone missing there.**

## Location 7.25: The Citadel Summit

Though little is here barring bare stone and high winds, it is nonetheless where Grossynkiir spends the lion's share of his time, holding congress with his "pets" that circle over Castle Grossynkiir. This is also the location of the Dragon Lord's final reckoning, and the climax of the adventure. When the PCs arrive at this location, proceed to **Encounter 4.**

ENCOUNTER 1: GLIMMERSCALE

*This event* can occur just about anywhere. For maximum chaos it should take place in an urban area, but a wilderness encounter suffices in a pinch. The **read aloud** section below assumes the PCs are in a public market in the heart of a city.

**Read aloud:** *The chaos of the market square ebbs and flows around you, and the warbling cry of vendors hawking their wares rises over the din. Business is booming. The sounds and smells of the city wash over you, and it is all you can do to keep from being swept up in the confusion of shoppers, cutpurses and businessmen.*

*Gradually, the noise fades from a cacophony to a roar, then to a dull rumble. Then, slowly, silence falls over the throng like a burial shroud. A few faces turn skyward, then more. Almost of their own accord, your gazes rise to the heavens, just in time to see a shimmering shape disappear into a wispy cloud bank overhead. Whispers begin to rise in the market square: a dragon above?*

*The immense creature breaks from the cloud cover, swooping toward the market. The dragon dives at the market like a sea hawk hunting fish. Many onlookers break and flee for nearby alleys and buildings, though the majority simply gazes in awe at the magnificent beast. Then, accompanied by a murderous roar, a gout of flame erupts from the dragon's jaws, and dozens are killed in an instant.*

*The survivors erupt into panic, and rush for the relative safety of surrounding buildings, caring little that the dragon's fire already licks at the structures. Meanwhile, the dragon's dark, hate-filled eyes fix on you, and it dives to attack.*

The market square is far from an ideal battleground (particularly for good-aligned heroes). The potential for loss of innocent life and property damage is enormous. The dragon, Glimmerscale, does not care, and presses the attack. She is here at the Dragon Lord's command, and her will is not her own.

**Glimmerscale:** CR 19; Huge red dragon (Fire); HD 25d10+150; hp 325; Init +4; Spd 40 ft., fly 150 ft. (poor); AC 32, touch 8, flat-footed 32; Base Atk +25, Grp +44; Atk +34 melee (2d8+11 (19–20/x2), bite); Full Atk +34 melee (2d8+11 (19–20/x2), bite), +29 melee (2d6+5/x2, claw), +29 melee (1d8+5/x2, wing), +29 melee (2d6+16/x2, tail slap), +29 melee (2d8+16/x2, crush); Space/Reach 15 ft./10 ft. (15 ft. with bite); SA Spells, breath weapon, crush, frightful presence, snatch, spell-like abilities; SQ Damage reduction 15/magic, spell resistance 23, immunities, blindsense 60 ft., scent; AL CE; SV Fort +20, Ref +14, Will +18; Str 33, Dex 10, Con 23, Int 18, Wis 19, Cha 18.

*Skills and Feats*: Appraise +21, Bluff +14, Concentration +27, Diplomacy +21, Intimidate +24, Jump +32, Knowledge (arcana) +25, Listen +25, Sense Motive +21, Spellcraft +25, Spot +25, Survival +25, Use Magic Device +25; Cleave, Follow Through, Flyby Attack, Hover, Improved Critical (bite), Improved Initiative, Improved Sunder, Power Attack, Snatch.

*Breath Weapon (Su)*: Using a breath weapon is a standard action. Once Glimmerscale breathes, she can't breathe again until 1d4 rounds later. A blast from a breath weapon always starts at any intersection adjacent to Glimmerscale and extends in a direction of the dragon's choice, with an area of a 50 ft. cone. If the breath weapon deals damage, creatures caught in the area can attempt a Reflex save (DC 30) to take half damage. The save DC against a breath weapon is DC 28. Glimmerscale's breath deals 14d10 fire damage.

*Crush (Ex):* This special attack allows Glimmerscale to land on opponents as a standard action, using her whole body to crush them. Crush attacks are effective only against opponents three or more size categories smaller than Glimmerscale (though she can attempt normal overrun or grapple attacks against larger opponents).

A crush attack affects as many creatures as can fit under Glimmerscale's body (15 ft. by 15 ft.). Creatures in the affected area must succeed on a Reflex save (DC 28) or be pinned, automatically taking bludgeoning damage during the next round unless Glimmerscale moves off them. If Glimmerscale chooses to maintain the pin, treat it as a normal grapple attack. Pinned opponents take damage from the crush each round if they don't escape.

A crush attack deals 2d8+16 bludgeoning damage.

*Immunities:* Glimmerscale is immune to *sleep* and paralysis effects, as well as to electricity and fire. Glimmerscale also has a vulnerability to cold.

*Frightful Presence (Ex)*: A dragon can unsettle foes with its mere presence. The ability takes effect automatically whenever Glimmerscale attacks, charges, or flies overhead. Creatures within a radius of 150 feet are subject to the effect if they have fewer HD than Glimmerscale. A potentially affected creature that succeeds on a Will save (DC 23) remains immune to that Glimmerscale's frightful presence for 24 hours. On a failure, creatures with 4 or less HD become panicked for 4d6 rounds and those with 5 or more HD become shaken for 4d6 rounds. Glimmerscale ignores the frightful presence of other dragons.

*Grappling:* Dragons do not favor grapple attacks, though their crush attack (and Snatch feat, if they know it) uses normal grapple rules. Glimmerscale can always use her breath weapon while grappling, as well as her spells and spell-like or supernatural abilities, provided she succeeds on Concentration checks.

*Blindsense (Ex)*: Glimmerscale can pinpoint creatures within a distance of 60 feet. Opponents Glimmerscale can't actually see still have total concealment against Glimmerscale.

*Keen Senses (Ex)*: Glimmerscale sees four times as well a Human in shadowy illumination and twice as well in normal light. She also has darkvision out to 120 feet.

*Spell-Like Abilities (Ex)*: 5/day — locate object; 3/day — suggestion; 1/day — blink, charm monster, gaseous form. Caster level 11th; save DC 14 + spell level. All spell-like abilities are usable once per day unless otherwise noted.

*Spells*: 11th-level wizard.

*Wizard Spells Prepared (4/6/5/5/4/3/1; save DC 15 + spell level)*: 0 — *detect magic, flare, light, read magic*; 1st — *heightened senses, magic missile* (x2), *protection from good, ray of enfeeblement, true strike*; 2nd — *flame arrow* (x3), *invisibility, shatter*; 3rd — *fireball* (x2), *imperviousness, lesser whirlwind, locate hoard*; 4th — *stoneskin, wall of fire* (x3); 5th — *greater bull's strength, hold monster, teleport*; 6th — *disintegrate*.

**Development:** If the PCs stand and fight, Glimmerscale neither asks nor gives quarter. She does not speak, nor acknowledge any entreaties or pleas from the PCs (or any innocent bystanders). She battles to the death. Glimmerscale has no concern for innocent lives and uses her breath weapon with abandon, likely slaying scores and setting nearby buildings, stalls, and booths ablaze.

If the PCs do over 200 hp of damage to Glimmerscale, she falls to the ground, but does not die. Instead, her eyes clear and she groans, then calls out to the PCs. She entreats their aid, claiming to have been magically controlled by Al'drich, the Dragon Lord, who still holds her son captive in his castle. This is all true, but she is still under the control of Al'drich. (Since everything she says is true, it is very hard for the PCs to detect any lies, even with Sense Motive or divinations or the like. At best, they would find she was not telling the whole story. If questioned further about matters which would require a lie (such as still being controlled by Al'drich), rather than lie she attempts to change the subject or ignore the question.

### Encounter 2: Flame and Thunder

**Read aloud:** *Glimmerscale maneuvers among the peaks of the mountains with familiarity born of long years among these dizzying heights. She is clearly at home; you are less fortunate. You grasp desperately for purchase along the smooth scales of her back, and often slip dangerously close to a lethal fall. You have long since given up asking her to mind her passengers, as the wind tears the words from your lips as soon as they are uttered.*

*In the distance, the citadel of Castle Grossynkiir dips in and out of sight behind intervening slopes, gradually growing from a tiny speck in the distance to an intimidating stone edifice. Somewhere within is Al'drich von Grossynkiir and the Orb. Even from here, you can make out a pair of winged, reptilian shapes swooping and circling around the citadel and the surrounding mountains, keeping a watchful eye for approaching intruders.*

*Abruptly, Glimmerscale swoops to her left and dives toward a lonely plateau. Upon alighting, she tilts her body to one side, dumping you to the stony ground without ceremony or comment. "Make ready," she hisses. "His servants approach. If they can, they will take me alive, so that von Grossynkiir might again exert his will over me as well." Her serpentine neck twists until she is looking directly at you. "If that happens, I ask that you press onward regardless of my fate. If I fall under his control, kill me if you must." She vaults into the sky, prepared to meet the foe. Seconds later, two dragons — one blue and one red — crest the nearest rise. The larger red one peels off and swoops after Flametongue, while the blue dives to attack you.*

Flametongue leads the red dragon away from the PCs, taking him out of the combat, where in the distance she defeats him. For now, she is gone, but she returns in **Encounter 4.** Of more immediate concern is Thunderhead, the blue dragon that attacks the PCs.

**Thunderhead**: CR 19; Huge Blue Dragon (Earth); HD 27d12+192; hp 340; Init +7; Spd 40 ft., fly 150 ft. (poor), burrow 20 ft.; AC 38, touch 11, flat-footed 35; Base Atk +27, Grp +46; Atk +34 melee (2d8+9(19–20/x2), bite); Full Atk +34 melee (2d8+9(19–20/x2), bite), +29 melee (2d6+4/x2, claw), +29 melee (1d8+4/x2, wing), +29 melee (2d6+13/x2, tail slap), +29 melee (2d8+13/x2, crush); Space/Reach 15 ft./10 ft. (15 ft. with bite); SA Spells, breath weapon, crush, frightful presence, snatch, spell-like abilities; SQ Damage reduction 15/magic, spell resistance 29, immunities, blindsense 60 ft., sound imitation; AL LE; SV Fort +20, Ref +14, Will +18; Str 28, Dex 17, Con 25, Int 19, Wis 18, Cha 18.

*Skills and Feats:* Bluff +19, Concentration +30, Craft (alchemy) +19, Diplomacy +19, Gather Information +22, Hide +21, Listen +30, Knowledge (arcana) +19, Knowledge (geography) +19, Move Silently +28, Search +30, Sense Motive +20, Spellcraft +19, Spot +20, Survival +20, Use Magic Device +21; Cleave, Follow Through, Endurance, Great Cleave, Hover, Improved Critical (bite), Improved Initiative, Improved Sunder, Power Attack, Snatch.

*Breath Weapon (Su):* Using a breath weapon is a standard action. Once Thunderhead breathes, he can't breathe again until 1d4 rounds later. A blast from his breath weapon always starts at any intersection adjacent to Thunderhead and extends in a direction of his choice in either a 100 ft line or two 60 ft. lines. If the breath weapon deals damage in the 100 ft. line, creatures caught in the area can attempt a Reflex save (DC 29) to take half damage. If the breath weapon deals damage in either of the 60 ft. lines, creatures caught in the area can attempt a Reflex save (DC 30) to take half damage. The save DC against a breath weapon is DC 28. Thunderhead's breath deals 16d8 electricity damage for a 100 ft. line or 8d8 electricity damage per each 60 ft. line.

*Crush (Ex):* This special attack allows Thunderhead to land on opponents as a standard action, using his whole body to crush them. Crush attacks are effective only against opponents three or more size categories smaller than Thunderhead (though he can attempt normal overrun or grapple attacks against larger opponents).

A crush attack affects as many creatures as can fit under Thunderhead's body (15 ft. by 15 ft.). Creatures in the affected area must succeed on a Reflex save (DC 30) or be pinned, automatically taking bludgeoning damage during the next round unless Thunderhead moves off them. If Thunderhead chooses to maintain the pin, treat it as a normal grapple attack. Pinned opponents take damage from the crush each round if they don't escape.

A crush attack deals 2d8+12 bludgeoning damage.

*Immunities:* Thunderhead is immune to sleep and paralysis effects, as well as to electricity and sonic damage. Thunderhead also has fire resistance 10.

*Frightful Presence (Ex):* A dragon can unsettle foes with its mere presence. The ability takes effect automatically whenever Thunderhead attacks, charges, or flies overhead. Creatures within a radius of 180 feet are subject to the effect if they have fewer HD than Thunderhead. A potentially affected creature that succeeds on a Will save (DC 26) remains immune to Thunderhead's frightful presence for 24 hours. On a failure, creatures with 4 or less HD become panicked for 4d6 rounds and those with 5 or more HD become shaken for 4d6 rounds. Thunderhead ignores the frightful presence of other dragons.

*Grappling:* Dragons do not favor grapple attacks, though their crush attack (and Snatch feat, if they know it) uses normal grapple rules. Thunderhead can always use his breath weapon while grappling, as well as his spells and spell-like or supernatural abilities, provided he succeeds on Concentration checks.

*Sound Imitation (Ex):* Thunderhead can mimic any voice or sound he has heard, any time he likes. Listeners must succeed on a Will save (DC 26) to detect the ruse.

*Blindsense (Ex):* Thunderhead can pinpoint creatures within a distance of 60 feet. Opponents Thunderhead can't actually see still have total concealment against Thunderhead.

*Keen Senses (Ex):* Thunderhead sees four times as well a Human in shadowy illumination and twice as well in normal light. He also has darkvision out to 120 feet.

*Spell-Like Abilities (Ex):* 3/day—create/destroy water, ghost sound, daylight, permanent image, ventriloquism; 1/day—hallucinatory terrain, searing light. Caster level 13th; save DC 14 + spell level. All spell-like abilities are usable once per day unless otherwise noted.

*Spells:* 13th-level wizard.

*Wizard Spells Prepared (4/6/5/5/4/3/1; save DC 15 + spell level):* 0 — *detect magic, flare, light, read magic;* 1st — *heightened senses, magic missile (x2), protection from good, ray of enfeeblement, true strike;* 2nd — *flame arrow (x3), invisibility, shatter;* 3rd — *lightning bolt (x2), lesser whirlwind, wind wall (x2);* 4th — *stoneskin, solid fog (x3);* 5th — *mind fog, prying eyes, teleport;* 6th — *chain lightning*

**Development:** Like Glimmerscale, Thunderhead fights with no concern for his own safety, being under the complete control of the Dragon Lord. He battles the PCs until either they are all dead, or he must flee to preserve his life (at 80 hp or fewer). Dragons are far too rare and valuable for Al'drich to throw one away just to further Glimmerscale's ploy.

The plateau is fairly level, though covered with loose rocks and gravel. It is about 20 feet wide by 100 feet long, and flanked on one long side by a sheer cliff. Opposite the cliff is a sharp drop with a slope of roughly sixty degrees. The natural platform is depressed into the mountain side, so a sturdy stone wall cradles either end.

Once the PCs defeat Thunderhead, they can either wait for Glimmerscale to return, or start the trek toward Castle Grossynkiir. In either case, she returns a few minutes after Thunderhead's flight. Her scales are torn loose in several places, revealing messy wounds gouged into her flesh, and her right wing is bloodied and torn.

**Read aloud:** *"You must make the remainder of the journey to the keep alone. It should be no more than a half day's journey on foot. I dare not approach any closer, lest von Grossynkiir again claim my will as his own." She raises a claw to silence any protest.*

*She coils her hind legs to spring once more aloft, then hesitates. She relaxes her crouch, lowers her head slightly, assuming an almost conciliatory posture. "Before I leave you, there is one important matter we must discuss: Lightshard, my offspring. He, too, is in thrall to von Grossynkiir." She hesitates, pain overcoming pride in her voice. "I implore you not to harm him. He is a red dragon, like me. You will know him when you see him." Her gaze strays to the distant citadel — or more likely one of the creatures that circle about it — and she continues, almost in a whisper. "I would have him free once more."*

*With that, she takes flight, glistening in the sun for scant moments before disappearing over a nearby ridge.*

Glimmerscale leaves the characters about four hours' hike from Castle Grossynkiir, a couple hours shy of dusk. The Dragon Lord is aware of their imminent arrival, so they would be wise to travel by night, though the mountainous terrain slows their progress. A path from the plateau leads the PCs down to the main thoroughfare of the pass. The trail is steep but not dangerously so, and a careful descent takes about a quarter-hour. Once the PCs reach the road, they are likely to encounter Deverenian patrols ordered into the pass to track them down. For each hour the PCs travel, they have a 25% chance of encountering a Deverenian patrol of 10 mounted soldiers. Traveling by night doubles the travel time to 8 hours.

**Creatures:** Ten Deverenian cavalrymen, 6th-level fighters; ten heavy warhorses.

**Deverenian Cavalryman (10), Male Deverenian Ftr 6:** CR 6; Medium humanoid (Deverenian); HD 6d10+12+3; hp 51; Init +1; Spd 20 ft.; AC 22, touch 11, flat-footed 21; Base Atk +6; Grp +9; Atk +13 melee (1d10+6(19–20/x2), bastard sword), or +7 ranged (1d8+4(19–20/x2), mighty (Str 16) composite longbow); Full Atk +13/+8 melee (1d10+6(19–20/x2), bastard sword), or +7/+1 ranged (1d8+4(19–20/x2), mighty (Str 16) composite longbow); SA Favored weapon (bastard sword, longbow), improved damage (bastard sword); SQ Deverenian traits, race/class abilities; AL LE; SV Fort +8, Ref +4, Will +4; Str 16, Dex 13, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 8.

*Race/Class Abilities: Fighter:* Luxury Training (bastard sword), Military History.

*Skills and Feats*: Knowledge (architecture and engineering) +4, Knowledge (history) +4, Listen +3, Ride +9, Spot +4; Cleave, Exotic Weapon Proficiency (bastard sword), Mounted Combat, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (bastard sword), Toughness.
*includes –7 armor check penalty

*Favored Weapon (bastard sword, longbow)*: A cavalryman gains a +1 competence bonus to attack and damage rolls with the bastard sword and longbow.

*Improved Damage (bastard sword)*: A cavalryman does an additional +2 (+3 total) damage with the bastard sword.

*Possessions*: +1 *full plate armor*, large metal shield, masterwork bastard sword, mighty (Str 16) composite longbow.

**Heavy Warhorse (10)**: CR 2; Large animal; HD 4d8+12; hp 30; Init +1; Spd 50 ft.; AC 14, touch 10, flat-footed 13; Base Atk +3, Grp +11; Atk +6 melee (1d6+4/x2, hoof); Full Atk +6/+6 melee (1d6+4/x2, 2 hooves) and +1 melee (1d4+2/x2, bite); Space/Reach 10 ft./5 ft.; SA -; SQ Low-light vision, scent; AL N; SV Fort +7, Ref +5, Will +2; Str 18, Dex 13, Con 17, Int 2, Wis 13, Cha 6.

*Skills and Feats:* Listen +5, Spot +4; Endurance, Run.

*Low-Light Vision:* A warhorse can see twice as far as a Human in starlight, moonlight, torchlight, and similar conditions of shadowy illumination. It retains the ability to distinguish color and detail under these conditions.

*Scent:* The warhorse can detect opponents within 30 feet by sense of smell. If the opponent is upwind, the range increases to 60 feet; if downwind, it drops to 15 feet. Strong scents, such as smoke or rotting garbage, can be detected at twice the ranges noted above. Overpowering scents, such as skunk musk or troglodyte stench, can be detected at triple normal range. When a warhorse detects a scent, the exact location of the source is not revealed—only its presence somewhere within range. The warhorse can take a move action to note the direction of the scent.

Whenever the warhorse comes within 5 feet of the source, the warhorse pinpoints the source's location.

**Development:** The patrols simply move up and down the pass road, keeping an eye out for travelers that match the PCs' description (provided by the Dragon Lord, as seen through an *arcane eye* spell carried by Glimmerscale). The PCs might simply hide at the side of the road, or they may elect to bluff their way past the patrols by posing as just another band of travelers. This may work, as the description provided to the patrol is not specific. The PCs can get away with disguising minor details only (which grants a +5 circumstance modifier to the Disguise check). If they simply attempt to Bluff their way past, the patrolmen receive a +5 circumstance modifier to their Sense Motive checks, knowing that if the PCs slip past their very lives are at risk.

There is only one patrol on the road, so if the PCs wipe it out, they need not fear further encounters outside of Castle Grossynkiir. If the patrol fails to return on schedule (which requires it to check in at the keep every two hours), the fortress enters a heightened state of alert, as described in **Location 1.**

ENCOUNTER 3: THE CITADEL

This encounter takes place as soon as the PCs reach **Location 1.22** of Castle Grossynkiir.

**Read aloud:** *You emerge into a chamber that occupies most of the citadel's width and breadth, confined only by the exterior walls and the stairwells leading down behind you, and up on the opposite side of the room. As you enter, a smoothly dressed man with an oiled mustache and slicked hair rises and smiles. Three rough-looking companions stand up behind him. His teeth glimmer in the shadowed room; his appearance vaguely reminds you of a shark. "Welcome," he greets you extravagantly. "We were told to expect guests." His eyes fall distastefully to your booted feet. "Please, wipe your feet."*

**If the PCs wipe their feet as instructed, read aloud:** *"Thank you." He says amiably. The man then draws a rapier from his hip, and it hisses malignantly against its sheath. "I suppose it matters little. Mud is, after all, much easier to clean from a carpet than blood."*

**If the PCs refuse to wipe their feet, read aloud:** *"A pity," he chides, frowning slightly. "No one should die with mud on their boots." He springs to the attack.*

**Development:** This is Jude Nightbane, the leader of the four mercenaries in the pay of the Medusan Lords, commissioned to protect the Dragon Lord. Though this task is their first priority, they are also under instructions to be certain that von Grossynkiir does not in any way jeopardize the Medusan Lords' scheme. When the time comes, they are to wrest the Orb from his grasp and return it to the Medusan Lords, if Al'drich has not knelt to them. Beyond that, these four are entirely in the dark regarding the true scope of the Medusan plot. They carefully destroy all correspondence and other evidence that may lead to their masters.

## Creature: Mercenary Band

**Jude Nightbane, Male Human Asn 15:** CR 15; Medium humanoid (Human); HD 15d6+15; hp 70; Spd 30 ft.; Init +9; AC 22, touch 17, flat-footed 17; Base Atk +11; Grp +12; Atk +18 melee (1d6+3(17–20/x2), +2 rapier), or +17 ranged (1d4+1(19–20/x2), +1 hand crossbow); Full Atk +18/+13/+8 melee (1d6+3(17–20/x2), +2 rapier) or +17 ranged (1d4+1(19–20/x2), +1 hand crossbow); SA Improved crippling strike (+1d4), ruthless (move-equivalent), sneak attack +8d6, spells; SQ Poison immunity and resistance +4, poison use, skilled brewer, Human traits, race/class abilities; AL NE; SV Fort +8, Ref +17, Will +9; Str 13, Dex 21, Con 10, Int 14, Wis 12, Cha 8.

*Skills and Feats*: Hide +22, Listen +19, Move Silently +22, Open Lock +22, Poison +23, Spot +19; Dodge, Expertise, Improved Critical (rapier), Improved Initiative, Mobility, Spring Attack, Weapon Finesse (rapier), Exotic Weapon Proficiency (loris dagger, jointblade, sai, angel's tears, bolas).

*Race/Class Abilities: Assassin:* Disguise Expert (+7), Hide in Plain Sight, Efficient Killer (3/day).

*Improved Crippling Strike:* When Jude scores a critical hit in melee combat, rather than inflicting damage he may inflict normal damage (the hit point damage is not doubled as usual for a critical hit) plus 1d4 + his Intelligence modifier (+2) in temporary damage to the victim's Strength, Dexterity, or Constitution.

*Poison Immunity and Resistance* +4: Jude has a +4 save bonus against all poisons and is immune to black lotus extract, wyvern-steed poison, dragonkin saliva, and chlorine mist poisons.

*Poison Use*: Jude is trained in the use of poison and never risks accidentally poisoning himself when applying poison to a blade.

*Ruthless*: Jude may make one coup de grace attack as a melee attack action once per round and an additional coup de grace action as either a melee attack action or as a move-equivalent action.

*Skilled Brewer*: Jude is trained to brew poison and always has a +2 competence bonus to Poison skill checks.

*Sneak Attack*: Anytime Jude's target is denied a Dexterity bonus to AC, or when he flanks a target, Jude deals an additional 8d6 points of damage on a successful melee attack.

*Assassin Spells Prepared* (3/2/1/1; save DC 12 + spell level): 1st — *ghost sound, obscuring mist, spider climb;* 2nd — *alter self, undetectable alignment;* 3rd — *invisibility;* 4th — *freedom of movement.*

*Possessions: +2 studded leather armor, +2 rapier, +1 hand crossbow, ring of protection +2, bag of holding, cloak of resistance +3, gloves of dexterity +4, slippers of spider climbing, wand of darkness (15 charges).*

**Johann Corman, Male Human Ftr 15:** CR 15; Medium humanoid (Human); HD 15d10+30; hp 117; Init +1; Spd 20 ft.; AC 30, touch 15, flat-footed 26; Base Atk +15; Grp +19; Atk +24 melee (1d10+10(15–20/x3), *+3 bastard sword*), or +18 ranged (1d8+8(18–20/x3), *+1 mighty* (Str 18) *composite longbow*); Atk +24/+19/+14 melee (1d10+10(15–20/x3), *+3 bastard sword*), or +18/+13/+8 ranged (1d8+8(18–20/x3), *+1 mighty* (Str 18) *composite longbow*); SA Favored weapon (bastard sword, longbow, greatsword, heavy mace), improved critical multiplier (bastard sword), improved critical threat (bastard sword, longbow), improved damage (bastard sword, longbow, greatsword); SQ Human traits, race/class abilities; AL LE; SV Fort +13, Ref +8, Will +11; Str 18, Dex 13, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 8.

*Skills and Feats*: Climb +9*, Jump +9*, Ride +3; Cleave, Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Exotic Weapon Proficiency (bastard sword), Great Cleave, Improved Bull Rush, Improved Critical (bastard sword), Improved Overrun, Improved Sunder, Mounted Combat, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (bastard sword).
*includes –6 armor check penalty

*Race/Class Abilities: Fighter*: Courage (+3 Will/immune to fear), Evade, Resist (1/day).

*Favored Weapon (bastard sword, longbow, greatsword, heavy mace)*: Johann gains a +1 competence bonus to attack and damage rolls with the bastard sword, longbow, greatsword and heavy mace.

*Improved Critical Multiplier (bastard sword)*: Johann's critical multiplier is increased by 1 (to x3) with the bastard sword.

*Improved Critical Threat (bastard sword, longbow)*: Johann's critical threat range is increased by +2 (to 17–20) with the bastard sword and longbow.

*Improved Damage (bastard sword, longbow, greatsword)*: Johann does an additional +2 (+3 total) damage with the bastard sword, longbow and greatsword.

*Possessions: +2 full plate armor, +2 large metal shield, +3 bastard sword, +1 mighty (Str 18) composite longbow, amulet of natural armor +2, boots of speed, cloak of resistance +2, eyes of the eagle, potion of cure moderate wounds, potion of endurance, potion of heroism, ring of protection +1.*

**Kreech Darkweaver, Male Human Nec 15:** CR 15; Medium humanoid (Human); HD 15d4+3; hp 45; Spd 30 ft.; Init +7; AC 20, touch 15, flat-footed 17; Base Atk +7; Grp –6; Atk +6 unarmed (1d8+1, life drain), or +11 ranged (1d8/19–20, masterwork light crossbow); Full Atk +6 unarmed (1d8+1, life drain), or +11 ranged (1d8/19–20, masterwork light crossbow); SA Human traits, Steal life (1d8+1), spells, rebuke undead 4/day (as a 10th-level cleric); SQ Cheat death (no level loss), death's threshold (sleep, poison, disease, mind-influencing effects), spontaneous casting, race/class abilities; AL NE; SV Fort +7, Ref +11, Will +13; Str 8, Dex 16, Con 10, Int 22, Wis 12, Cha 13.

*Skills and Feats*: Concentration +19, Gather Information +7, Intimidate +5, Knowledge (arcana) +24, Knowledge (the planes) +24, Listen +7, Search +12, Sense Motive +7, Spellcraft +24, Spot +7; Combat Casting, Heighten Spell, Improved Initiative, Lightning Reflexes, Quicken Spell, Scribe Scroll, Toughness.

*Race/Class Abilities: Necromancer:* Improved Rebuke (+6), Speak with Dead (7/day), Create Undead.

*Cheat Death*: Kreech has prepared for his own death. Should he be killed he can attempt a Will save (DC 20) at the moment of his death. If successful, Kreech returns to life exactly 13 hours later at a pre-determined location. If he returns, Kreech suffers one negative level that he can remove (DC 20).

*Death's Threshold*: Kreech does not need to sleep and is immune to sleep effects. In addition, he is immune to poison, disease, and mind-influencing effects.

*Rebuke Undead*: Kreech may attempt to rebuke undead 4 times per day as a 10th level cleric.

*Spontaneous Casting*: Kreech may expend one of his memorized spells to cast any necromancy spell of equal or lower level.

*Steal Life*: Kreech's unarmed attacks deal 1d8+1 lethal damage. Any damage dealt by this attack is added as hit points to Kreech's total; any excess hit points are lost at the rate of one per round. Attacking in this manner is still considered an unarmed attack and draws attacks of opportunity.

*Necromancer Spells Prepared* (4/5/5/5/5/5/4/2/1; save DC 16 + spell level): 0 — *necromancy, inflict pain, read magic, ray of frost;* 1st — *blood rite, drain soul, bleeding, unnerve, cause fear;* 2nd — *limb disruption, necromancer's minor blessing, song of blood, words of woe, bone spikes;* 3rd — *death stench, shard storm, soul knife, undead attraction, necromantic regeneration;* 4th — *lifetap, necromancer's blessing, twice-fatal blast, soul link, fear;* 5th — *leech life, greater bull's strength, release the lifeblood, necromantic channel, gaze of the infinite;* 6th — *create undead, deathshriek, eyebite, the weight of ages;* 7th — *necromancer's great blessing, control undead;* 8th — *create greater undead.*

*Possessions*: Masterwork light crossbow, *amulet of natural armor +2, bracers of armor +3, cloak of resistance +3, gloves of dexterity +2, headband of intellect +4, potion of cure serious wounds, ring of protection +2, scroll of domination, wand of magic missile* (9th level caster, maximized).

**Ulf Graystoke, Male Human Bar 15:** CR 15; Medium humanoid (Human); HD 15d12+30; hp 132; Spd 40 ft.; Init +2; AC 26, touch 18, flat-footed 24; Base Atk +15; Grp +18; Atk +24 melee (1d12+7(19–20/x3), masterwork greataxe) or +21 ranged (1d8+7/x3, mighty (Str 16) composite longbow); Full Atk +24/+19/+14 melee (1d12+7(19–20/x3), masterwork greataxe) or +21/+16/+11 ranged (1d8+7/x3, mighty (Str 16) composite longbow); SA Furious charge, Human traits, greater rage 4/day, mighty blow; SQ Fast movement, illiteracy, non-magical bonus +4, resist magic +4, totem animal (elephant), uncanny dodge (+1 vs. traps), undying fury, race/class abilities; AL CE; SV Fort +12, Ref +8, Will +7; Str 17, Dex 14, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 8.

*Skills and Feats*: Climb +8*, Jump +8*, Survival +8; Blind-Fight, Cleave, Dodge, Improved Critical (greataxe), Power Attack, Track, Weapon Focus (greataxe), Leadership (10). *includes –3 armor check penalty

*Race/Class Abilities*: *Barbarian:* Leadership, Great Renown.

*Fast Movement*: Ulf has a speed faster than the norm for his race by +10 feet when wearing no armor, light armor, or medium armor (and not carrying a heavy load).

*Furious Charge*: While raging Ulf may make two attacks during a charge action.

*Greater Rage (4/day)*: While Ulf rages, his statistics change as follows: HD 15d12+60; hp 162; AC 24, touch 16, flat-footed 22; Grp +20; Atk +26 melee (1d12+9(19–20/x3), masterwork greataxe) or +21 ranged (1d8+7/x3, mighty (Str 16) composite longbow); Full Atk +26/+21/+16 melee (1d12+9(19–20/x3), masterwork greataxe), or +21/+16/+11 ranged (1d8+7/x3, mighty (Str 16) composite longbow); SV Fort +14, Will +9; Str 21, Con 18. His fit of rage lasts for 7 rounds. At the end of the rage Ulf is fatigued (–2 to Strength, –2 to Dexterity, can't charge or run).

*Illiteracy*: Ulf cannot read nor write.

*Mighty Blow*: Any time Ulf scores a critical hit while raging he has an opportunity to knock his opponent senseless. The victim must make a Fortitude save (DC 10 + damage inflicted) or be stunned for the next round.

*Non-Magical Bonus*: Ulf receives a +4 bonus to his/her attack and damage rolls when not using a magical weapon and Armor Class when not wearing magical armor or carrying an enchanted shield. Attacks made by Ulf ignore damage reduction as if his/her weapon were enchanted with an enhancement bonus of the same amount.

*Resist Magic*: Ulf gains a +4 morale bonus to saves against effects generated by spells, spell-like abilities and magic items. A +2 morale bonus also extends to any of Ulf's allies within 10 feet of the barbarian that suffers the same spell or effect as the barbarian. Ulf also reduces additional damage inflicted against him by enhancement bonuses by the same amount.

*Totem Animal (elephant)*: Bonus Ability — Tough Hide. Ulf gains a +1 natural armor bonus to AC.

*Uncanny Dodge:* Ulf retains his Dexterity bonus to AC (if any) even if he is caught flat-footed or struck by an invisible attacker. However, he still loses his Dexterity bonus to AC if immobilized. Ulf also gains a +1 bonus on Reflex saves made to avoid traps and a +1 dodge bonus to AC against attacks made by traps.

*Undying Fury:* Ulf may prolong his rages. For every 1d12 hit points lost he may rage an additional round.

*Possessions*: Masterwork breast plate, masterwork greataxe, mighty (Str 16) masterwork composite longbow, *amulet of natural armor +2, boots of striding and springing, cloak of resistance +1, potions of cure serious wounds (4), potions of haste (4), potions of heroism (2), potions of neutralize poison (2), ring of protection +2.*

### Encounter 4: The Reckoning

As soon as the PCs reach the roof of the Dragon Lord's citadel, the final encounter occurs. If the PCs breached the keep during the night, they emerge just as the sun rises over the mountains.

**Read aloud:** *As you emerge onto the roof of the citadel of Castle Grossynkiir, you immediately spot your quarry. Al'drich von Grossynkiir, the Dragon Lord, awaits you calmly. He stands ready for battle, his intricately engraved full plate armor glistening brightly in the dawn sun. His right hand rests upon the pommel of a tremendous greatsword, and cradled in his left is a sphere no larger than your fist: the Orb of La Hashan. It glows brightly with unnatural energy. A crimson red cloak billows behind him, seemingly granted life of its own by the winds that whip across the citadel's summit. Steel gray hair flows from beneath his helm, which shrouds his face in shadow.*

*His voice is heavy with malice. "So, these are the heroes that have struck fear into my masters. I must admit that you are more capable than I had first imagined. You have thus far persevered against odds that would have destroyed lesser men [and women], and for that I applaud you. But my task is to end your lives." Slowly, he relaxes his grip on the Orb of La Hashan, and releases it to float in place. "Doubtless you are here for the Dragon Orb. If you would have it, come and claim it. I will stand against you, but I do not stand alone."*

*Without turning, he calls out, his voice ringing with the tone of command. "Lightshard! Icewing! To me!"*

*To your left, overhead, a tremendous roar bellows forth from the far side of the ridge line, soon joined by a second. Moments later, a pair of dragons breaks into view, both diving at the citadel. The first, a white, is somewhat smaller than his fellow, but no less intimidating for it. His jaw stretches in an unholy scream of fury as he swoops down upon you. The second can only be Lightshard. He is tremendous, easily matching Glimmerscale pound for pound. His eyes, like those of Glimmerscale, are inky black.*

The battle is joined. The citadel's summit is flat and featureless, surrounded on all four sides by a five-foot rampart. As soon as von Grossynkiir releases it, the Dragon Orb floats under its own power, orbiting just above the Dragon Lord's head. There it remains until the Dragon Lord falls, at which point its glow fades, and it tumbles to the stone floor.

**Creatures:** Al'drich von Grossynkiir, a 19th level Human fighter; Lightshard, a red dragon; Icewing, a white dragon.

**Al'drich von Grossynkiir**, The Dragon Lord, Male Human Ftr 19: CR 19; Medium humanoid (Human); HD 19d10+76; hp 181; Init +5; Spd 20 ft.; AC 32, touch 17, flat-footed 29; Base Atk +19; Grp +24; Atk +30 melee (2d6+14(15–20/x3), +4 defending greatsword); Full Atk +30/+25/+20/+15 melee (2d6+14(15–20/x3), +4 defending greatsword); SA Favored weapon (greatsword,

greataxe, greatclub, heavy flail), improved damage (greatsword, greataxe, greatclub), improved critical threat (greatsword, greataxe), improved critical multiplier (greatsword), Human traits, race/class abilities; SQ —; AL LE; SV Fort +15, Ref +9, Will +11; Str 21, Dex 16, Con 18, Int 14, Wis 15, Cha 12.

*Skills and Feats*: Bluff +7, Climb +9*, Handle Animal +15, Jump +9*, Ride +17, Sense Motive +8; Cleave, Combat Reflexes, Critical Strike, Devastating Attack, Dodge, Feat of Strength, Follow Through, Great Cleave, Improved Critical (greatsword), Improved Initiative, Mighty Blow, Mounted Combat, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (greatsword). *includes –5 armor check penalty

*Race/Class Abilities*: Fighter: Courage (+3 Will/immune to fear), Evade, Resist (2/day).

*Favored Weapon (greatsword, greataxe, greatclub, heavy flail)*: Al'drich gains a +1 competence bonus to attack and damage rolls with the greatsword, greataxe, greatclub, and heavy flail.

*Improved Critical Multiplier (greatsword)*: Al'drich's critical multiplier is increased by 1 (to x3) with the greatsword.

*Improved Critical Threat (greatsword, greataxe)*: Al'drich's critical threat range is increased by +2 (to 17–20) with the greatsword and greataxe.

*Improved Damage (greatsword, greataxe, greatclub)*: Al'drich does an additional +2 (+3 total) damage with the greatsword, greataxe, and greatclub.

*Possessions*: +5 full plate armor, +4 defending greatsword, amulet of natural armor +2, cloak of resistance +2, gauntlets of ogre power +4, ring of protection +4.

**Lightshard:** CR 19; Huge red dragon (Fire); HD 25d10+150; hp 325; Init +6; Spd 40 ft., fly 150 ft. (poor); AC 34, touch 10, flat-footed 32; Base Atk +25, Grp +44; Atk +34 melee (2d8+11(19–20/x2), bite); Full Atk +34 melee (2d8+11(19–20/x2), bite), +29 melee (2d6+5/x2, claw), +29 melee (1d8+5/x2, wing), +29 melee (2d6+16/x2, tail slap), +29 melee (2d8+16/x2, crush); Space/Reach 15 ft./10 ft. (15 ft. with bite); SA Spells, breath weapon, crush, frightful presence, snatch, spell-like abilities; SQ Damage reduction 15/magic, spell resistance 23, immunities, blindsense 60 ft., scent; AL CE; SV Fort +20, Ref +16, Will +18; Str 32, Dex 14, Con 23, Int 18, Wis 19, Cha 16.

*Skills and Feats*: Appraise +21, Bluff +14, Concentration +27, Diplomacy +21, Intimidate +24, Jump +32, Knowledge (arcana) +25, Listen +25, Sense Motive +21, Spellcraft +25, Spot +25, Survival +25, Use Magic Device +25; Cleave, Follow Through, Flyby Attack, Hover, Improved Critical (bite), Improved Initiative, Improved Sunder, Power Attack, Snatch.

*Breath Weapon (Su)*: Using a breath weapon is a standard action. Once Lightshard breathes, he can't breathe again until 1d4 rounds later. A blast from a breath weapon always starts at any intersection adjacent to Lightshard and extends in a direction of the dragon's choice, with an area of a 50 ft. cone. If the breath weapon deals damage, creatures caught in the area can attempt a Reflex save (DC 30) to take half damage. The save DC against a breath weapon is DC 28. Lightshard's breath deals 14d10 fire damage.

*Crush (Ex)*: This special attack allows Lightshard to land on opponents as a standard action, using his whole body to crush them. Crush attacks are effective only against opponents three or more size categories smaller than Lightshard (though he can attempt normal overrun or grapple attacks against larger opponents).

A crush attack affects as many creatures as can fit under Lightshard's body (15 ft. by 15 ft.). Creatures in the affected area must succeed on a Reflex save (DC 28) or be pinned, automatically taking bludgeoning damage during the next round unless Lightshard moves off them. If Lightshard chooses to maintain the pin, treat it as a normal grapple attack. Pinned opponents take damage from the crush each round if they don't escape.

A crush attack deals 2d8+16 bludgeoning damage.

*Immunities:* Lightshard is immune to sleep and paralysis effects, as well as to electricity and fire. Lightshard also has a vulnerability to cold.

*Frightful Presence (Ex)*: A dragon can unsettle foes with its mere presence. The ability takes effect automatically whenever Lightshard attacks, charges, or flies overhead. Creatures within a radius of 150 feet are subject to the effect if they have fewer HD than Lightshard. A potentially affected creature that succeeds on a Will save (DC 23) remains immune to that Lightshard's frightful presence for 24 hours. On a failure, creatures with 4 or less HD become panicked for 4d6 rounds and those with 5 or more HD become shaken for 4d6 rounds. Lightshard ignores the frightful presence of other dragons.

*Grappling:* Dragons do not favor grapple attacks, though their crush attack (and Snatch feat, if they know it) uses normal grapple rules. Lightshard can always use its breath weapon while grappling, as well as his spells and spell-like or supernatural abilities, provided he succeeds on Concentration checks.

*Blindsense (Ex)*: Lightshard can pinpoint creatures within a distance of 60 feet. Opponents Lightshard can't actually see still have total concealment against Lightshard.

*Keen Senses (Ex)*: Lightshard sees four times as well a Human in shadowy illumination and twice as well in normal light. He also has darkvision out to 120 feet.

*Spell-Like Abilities (Ex)*: 5/day—locate object; 3/day—suggestion; 1/day—blink, charm monster, gaseous form. Caster level 11th; The save DC is 14 + spell level. All spell-like abilities are usable once per day unless otherwise noted.

*Spells:* 11th-level wizard.

*Wizard Spells Prepared* (4/6/5/5/4/3/1; save DC 15 + spell level): 0 — *detect magic, flare, light, read magic;* 1st — *heightened senses, magic missile (x2), protection from good, ray of enfeeblement, true strike;* 2nd — *flame arrow (x3), invisibility, shatter;* 3rd — *fireball (x2), imperviousness, lesser whirlwind, locate hoard;* 4th — *stoneskin, wall of fire (x3);* 5th — *greater bull's strength, hold monster, teleport;* 6th — *disintegrate.*

**Icewing:** CR 14; Huge white dragon (Cold); HD 23d12+150; hp 325; Init +0; Spd 40 ft., fly 150 ft. (poor); AC 34, touch 8, flat-footed 34; Base Atk +27, Grp +44; Atk +33 melee (2d8+9/x2, bite); Full Atk +33 melee (2d8+9/x2, bite), +28 melee (2d6+4/x2, claw), +28 melee (1d8+4/x2, wing), +28 melee (2d6+13/x2, tail slap), +28 melee (2d8+13/x2, crush); Space/Reach 15 ft./10 ft. (15 ft. with bite); SA Spells, breath weapon, crush, frightful presence, snatch, spell-like abilities; SQ Damage reduction 5/—, spell resistance 29, icewalking, immunities, blindsense 60 ft., scent; AL CE; SV Fort +21, Ref +15, Will +16; Str 29, Dex 10, Con 23, Int 14, Wis 12, Cha 14.

*Skills and Feats*: Alchemy +30, Appraise +29, Bluff +23, Concentration +35, Decipher Script +29, Hide +15, Intimidate +30, Intuit Direction +23, Knowledge (arcana) +36, Listen +30, Sense Motive +25, Spellcraft +29, Spot +30, Use Magic Device +29; Cleave, Endurance, Flyby Attack, Hover, Improved Sunder, Power Attack, Snatch, Run, Run Like Hell.

*Breath Weapon (Su)*: Using a breath weapon is a standard action. Once Icewing breathes, he can't breathe again until 1d4 rounds later. A blast from a breath weapon always starts at any intersection adjacent to Icewing and extends in a direction of the dragon's choice, with an area of a 50 ft. cone. If the breath weapon deals damage, creatures caught in the area can attempt a Reflex save (DC 29) to take half damage. The save DC against a breath weapon is DC 28. Icewing's breath deals 9d6 cold damage.

Once per day, Icewing can deliver a blast from his breath weapon in a 120 ft. cone, dealing 12d6 cold damage. If the breath weapon deals damage, creatures caught in the area can attempt a Reflex save (DC 28) to take half damage.

*Crush (Ex)*: This special attack allows Icewing to land on opponents as a standard action, using his whole body to crush them. Crush attacks are effective only against opponents three or more size categories smaller than Icewing (though he can attempt normal overrun or grapple attacks against larger opponents).

A crush attack affects as many creatures as can fit under Icewing's body (15 ft. by 15 ft.). Creatures in the affected area must succeed on a Reflex save (DC 28) or be pinned, automatically taking bludgeoning damage during the next round unless Icewing moves off them. If Icewing chooses to maintain the pin, treat it as a normal grapple attack. Pinned opponents take damage from the crush each round if they don't escape.

A crush attack deals 2d8+16 bludgeoning damage.

*Immunities:* Icewing is immune to sleep and paralysis effects, as well as to cold effects. Icewing also has an electricity resistance 20 and a vulnerability to fire.

*Frightful Presence (Ex)*: A dragon can unsettle foes with its mere presence. The ability takes effect automatically whenever Icewing attacks, charges, or flies overhead. Creatures within a radius of 150 feet are subject to the effect if they have fewer HD than Icewing. A potentially affected creature that succeeds on a Will save (DC 23) remains immune to that Icewing's frightful presence for 24 hours. On a failure, creatures with 4 or less HD become panicked for 4d6 rounds and those with 5 or more HD become shaken for 4d6 rounds. Icewing ignores the frightful presence of other dragons.

*Grappling*: Dragons do not favor grapple attacks, though their crush attack (and Snatch feat, if they know it) uses normal grapple rules. Icewing can always use his breath weapon while grappling, as well as his spells and spell-like or supernatural abilities, provided he succeeds on Concentration checks.

*Blindsense (Ex)*: Icewing can pinpoint creatures within a distance of 60 feet. Opponents Icewing can't actually see still have total concealment against Icewing.

*Keen Senses (Ex)*: Icewing sees four times as well a Human in shadowy illumination and twice as well in normal light. He also has darkvision out to 120 feet.

*Spell-Like Abilities (Ex)*: 3/day—acid arrow, fog cloud, freezing fog, glyph of warding, gust of wind; 1/day—cone of cold, freezing sphere, ice storm, simulacrum, wall of ice. Caster level 15th; save DC 12 + spell level.

*Spells:* 11th-level wizard.

*Wizard Spells Prepared (4/6/5/5/4/3/1; save DC 14 + spell level):* 0 — *detect magic, flare, light, read magic;* 1st — *heightened senses, magic missile (x2), protection from good, ray of enfeeblement, true strike;* 2nd — *blur (x2), invisibility (x2), shatter;* 3rd — *lesser whirlwind, sleet storm (x2), wind wall (x2);* 4th — *stoneskin, ice storm (x3);* 5th — *cone of cold, teleport (x2);* 6th — *repulsion.*

**Development:** Icewing begins the combat 1000 feet from the citadel, and Lightshard begins 3000 feet from the citadel. Both close on their actions. The Dragon Lord himself does not close with the PCs, but instead waits for them to come to him.

Once the Dragon Lord is killed, his control over Icewing and Lightshard is broken, but the battle does not end. Though Icewing is once again in command of his own will, the spiteful dragon continues to battle the PCs to avenge any injury they inflicted on him during the battle. Lightshard is grateful for his freedom and wary of those powerful enough to slay Al'drich, and flies away.

When Al'drich falls, the Orb of La Hashan falls from the air where it was circling, and rolls off the edge of the roof. No matter how much they search, the PCs cannot find it. One of the minions of the Medusan Lords was there, waiting.

## Part 2: Concluding the Adventure

Though the party has lost the Orb of La Hashan, they likely have the maps leading to the Medusan Lords. The time has come to confront the Lord themselves.

## Part 3: The Stone of Fortune

**Read aloud:** *The stone glows hot again, and nearly falls from your fingers before you regain your grip. The vision takes you far lower than any Dwarven city you have ever heard of, beyond the lip of a great precipice, and into a roiling pool of magma. Partially submerged in molten rock you see a giant, glazed eye. It blinks once, and the Stone shatters.*

This is the first sign of how close the Medusan Lords are to victory: already, the Dragon stirs in Its grave.

With the recovery of the Dragon Lord's maps, the party may now strike the enemy directly. Now among the mightiest of heroes, levels 18–20, the party approaches even footing with the Medusan Lords. Soon those felled during the Assassins' Strike will be avenged. Whichever party member Cear killed and raised intuitively finds the remaining Medusan Lords resonating with the wound that Cear left.

# Tier 9

## The Darkness of Castle Blackthorn

The true villain behind the destruction of the Aroch paladins stands revealed: Blackthorn, a traitorous member of the Black Sun order. As old friends and enemies race to defeat him, the PCs may find themselves risking more than just their own lives.

## A Touch of Power

If the party investigates the map and note about Al'drich's dragon, they find a holding of House Tansiq, and a blasphemous rite. Al'drich had nearly uncovered one of Cear's servants attempting to reenact the ritual that made Cear immortal. If the party intervenes, they discover how to weaken Cear's powers over life and death, and may lure him into a trap.

## The Traitor

The disappearance of Duchess Cassandra leads to a series of revelations, culminating in the realization that Cassica Moonseed has been manipulating the party all along.

## The Ghoul Lord

A distant swamp is home to the eldest of the Medusan Lords, but it also conceals the secret of tracking the vile group's leader to his lair. Majeral's dark magic awaits in Markappal.

## Campaign Notes:



# The Darkness of Castle Blackthorn

## Introduction

*The Darkness of Castle Blackthorn* pits the party against Tiberius Blackthorn, one of the powerful Medusan Lords.

This is one of four adventures in Tier 9. It is meant for characters of levels 18–20.

## Adventure Synopsis

To face Blackthorn, the party must reach his castle near the terrifying Shattered Lands. Once there, the PCs find an army already besieging the castle: it is led by Sir Rhawn d'Ilchant, who has come to destroy Blackthorn for the honorless deaths of the noble Aroch paladins. While Sir Rhawn may not care for the party (depending on previous adventures' outcomes), his army is predominately mercenary, as Sir Rhawn did not wish to force the others of his brotherhood to choose between loyalties. In any case, to face Blackthorn the party must first overcome the castle's formidable defenses, not breached in decades.

The party has a choice. They may attempt to destroy the castle outright, ending their quest with a strong message to their enemies, but exposing themselves to retribution. Or they may resolve their quest with little fanfare, maintaining a low profile, with Sir Rhawn's army taking the credit.

# Part 1: Across the Mountains

**Development:** The information discovered in earlier adventures should set the party on Blackthorn's trail. They may choose to abandon their search once they discover the true threat their opponent represents. Eventually, Blackthorn will find them, no matter where they run.

More likely, however, the PCs seek out their nemesis and confront him on their own terms. The characters may possess the ability to divine Blackthorn's location, either through magic or some enchantment at their disposal. If this is the case, or if the party chooses to use *teleport* or some similar effect to reach Blackthorn's castle immediately (although there are wards in place to prevent anyone from teleporting directly into the castle, see below), then they may skip to **Area 2**. Otherwise, they have to cross the Deverenian lands, likely without passports or other leave to do so.

## Table 21-1: Deverenian Mountains Random Encounters

| d% | Encounter |
|---|---|
| 01–25 | Deverenian scouts (2d4 10th-level scouts) |
| 26–50 | Deverenian patrol (3d6 8th-level fighters) |
| 51–55 | Dwarf Expeditionary Party (2d6 10th-level fighters and 1d6 10th-level Deverenian fighters and/or wizards; while not immediately hostile to the party, these NPCs only tolerate each other due to superiors' orders, and may turn upon each other if cobat breaks out) |
| 56–60 | Fire Giant gang (1d6, CR 10, **see Monsters and Lairs, p. 96**) |
| 61–65 | Famine Harpies (2d6+4, CR 4, **see Monsters and Lairs, p. 106**) |
| 66–70 | Mountain trolls (2d4, CR 7, **see Monsters and Lairs, p. 194**) |
| 71–80 | Banshee Hounds (12, CR 5, see **Part 4** for stats) |
| 81–87 | Stoneblight Cyclopes (2d6, CR 3, **see Monsters and Lairs, p. 42**) |
| 88–95 | Sarakian Giant (CR 6, **see Monsters and Lairs, p. 97**) |
| 96–99 | Bascaron cultists (3d6 clerics of 1d8 levels each; may be of any race, including monstrous ones) |
| 00 | The Quest Beast (CR 19, **see Monsters and Lairs, p. 148**) |

### Encounter 1: A Stranger Approaches

**Read aloud:** *Still far from Castle Blackthorn, a man in brown robes hails you from around a rust-colored Deverenian hill. The man is unquestionably young, but visibly shaking and smiling, he is so glad to see you.*

*"Ho, there, friends! These are harsh roads, and I'd welcome company for a while — for all our protection, of course."*

Any member of the Wizards' Guild instantly recognizes Anton Cyldragen, that group's informal leader. Anton feigns disinterest in any serious conversation about himself or the destination (he, too, is journeying generally towards Castle Blackthorn). If a party member demands to know why he is here, he finally relents, and says that he journeys to bear witness to a great tragedy. He warns the party that it is their destiny, not his or anyone else's they might meet today, to put an end to the villainous paladin. As they falter, so too will others. Anton refuses to say more, and wanders away from the party at first opportunity. As he said, he only bears witness to the battle that comes, and does not participate.

### Encounter 2: The Plateau, and Sir Rhawn's Army

**Read aloud:** *As you approach the plateau's base, you can more clearly see the castle's attackers: a motley group of armored soldiers and archers from all the known races, including a few monstrous troops. They have set enormous steel plates at the plateau's sides, beneath which a dozen men can stand without fear should Blackthorn employ the castle's archers or boiling oil. Though the infantry has apparently yet to face any of the castle's troops, the men maintain ranks, and follow their commanders' orders without delay. Siege engineers quickly assemble*

### Siege

**The descriptions offered for the various portions of Castle Blackthorn are written with the assumption that the PCs attempt to infiltrate it without drawing attention to themselves or, less likely, assault the gates themselves. If the characters can draw on substantial resources or join with Sir Rhawn d'Ilchant, they may attempt to lay siege to the castle. The siege of Castle Blackthorn would surely become an epic tale throughout the Accordlands. The castle's relatively small size and the few troops stationed there would theoretically make it an easy task, but the heavily enchanted castle hides explosive defenses. In addition, the castle has a well-populated stable of verdatha, enabling its garrison to strike at attackers from the air. Finally, the huge chasm behind the castle limits attack fronts, and allows an open escape path.**

### Master K'Hallaek

**Though unquestionably one of the most powerful Medusan Lords, Master K'Hallaek is also the least trusted by his brethren. While Blackthorn and K'Hallaek are cordial none of the other Medusan Lords truly trust him, as he has steadfastly refused to share his true identity and powers. While Malrog had hoped that Nassiral Hate's potent abilities as a seer could reveal K'Hallaek's nature, the wizard was apparently immune to almost all of Hate's spells. Given K'Hallaek's undeniable power and penchant for complete secrecy, Malrog chose not to directly involve K'Hallaek in any of the major events leading up to the Medusan Lords' great ritual, and K'Hallaek himself remains largely ignorant of the events of the campaign until the party slays Blackthorn.**

**Still, K'Hallaek is undeniably resourceful and capable, and his enchantments on Castle Blackthorn are among the least of his great feats. It was he who discovered the Dragon Lord's orb, and he has called upon allies and servants from across the planes to create the Medusan Lords' teleportation and communication magic.**

Similarly, what little the Medusan Lords do know of K'Hallaek has convinced them that he is unlikely to move against them without cause. He claims to be many centuries old; his knowledge of ancient and obscure subjects is undeniably extensive, and he provides vivid details that he could only know from personal experience. He takes personal affront when other Medusans operate in Deverenia proper without first speaking to him, although he understands consultation such is not always possible, and that Blackthorn's occasionally public role forces him to be an exception (K'Hallaek is apparently unaware of Majeral's pawns in Order Loth). He fiercely resents the Church of the Storm, which has led to bitter arguments with Blackthorn, though the two still work together better than K'Hallaek does with any of the other Medusan Lords.

At the end of the campaign, K'Hallaek takes a more active role in the Medusan Lords' following the deaths of so many of their number, making a bid to succeed Malrog as leader if Malrog dies. While he quickly discovers that the Medusan Lords participating in Malrog's rite had evidently betrayed him by not sharing the power with him, he neither condemns any survivors, nor forgives the party for killing any of his fellows.

Under K'Hallaek, the Medusan Lords are a decidedly more secular group, focusing more on controlling the world than on any grandiose plans of godhood, and recruits new members of a similar mind.

Master K'Hallaek is a powerful wizard, at least level 20, lawful evil, and presumably a Deverenian by race. On the rare occasions he deigns to directly speak with anyone instead of using proxies or spells, Master K'Hallaek wears flowing orange and red robes and a masked crown, hiding every trace of his visage. K'Hallaek has apparently limitless reserves of spells memorized, able to cast far more than any wizard ever known without preparing new ones, and often combines them with metamagic feats, especially Quicken Spell. He automatically succeeds (as though he had rolled a natural 20) on any Knowledge check involving Deverenia's history or its ancient pre-Storm religion. His contacts within Deverenian society are as yet unknown, though the Conspiracy of Light has a similarly low opinion of the Church of the Storm.

Not even K'Hallaek's fellow Medusan Lords consider that Signon might not have actually slain Emperor Cahalleus. Master K'Hallaek is traveling the planes during the course of this campaign, and does not personally appear until after its conclusion.

*ladders and pulleys, their trained eyes and hands searching their equipment for flaws or signs of sabotage. Several archers stand at attention, their arrows drawn and pointing directly to the sky.*

*Looking up, you see why. The fight has already broken out in the heavens. Verdatha cut through the air, breathing flame upon giant birds of prey and wyvernsteeds, even as their riders joust against each other with lances. Dozens of them, perhaps over a hundred, charge through the air, a battle punctuated by falling bodies every few moments.*

**Development:** The party now has several options. The coming battle is a perfect cover for stealthy attempts to infiltrate the castle, though the PCs are unlikely to scale the plateau without being noticed by either side. If they circle around the castle, they discover the chasm, and from there, Blackthorn's secret entrance (leading to the base of the verdathv a spire, **Location 1.2.3**). If ten or more people attempt to flank the plateau, Blackthorn's troops notice and seal off the passage from within.

Alternately, the party may attempt to hide among the army's ranks, infiltrating as the invaders do. This plan only works if the party waits until after the engineers have set up the pulley elevators to scale the plateau's sides, which takes another hour. If the party tries to join the army before the ground battle begins, they are automatically noticed. Though the mercenaries have chosen not to show their colors or standards, they are Dark Horsemen, and recognize unfamiliar faces. A squad of mercenaries confronts them and demands their immediate surrender. Even if the party fights and kills some of the mercenaries, the soldiers seek only to capture them. If the PCs kill any mercenaries, the soldiers lock the party in irons and confiscate their equipment. As the army has over a hundred troops on the ground and more in the sky, the party's eventual capture is assured. The soldiers bring captured party members before their leaders, General Lund and Kerebrus.

**Creatures:** Twenty Mercenary Dark Horsemen, 6th-level fighters; one Mercenary Dark Horseman squad leader, a 13th-level fighter/1st-level Dark Horseman Elite.

**Mercenary Dark Horsemen (20), Male Human Ftr 6:** CR 6; Medium humanoid (Human); HD 6d10+18; hp 55; Init +1; Spd 20 ft.; AC 20, touch 10, flat-footed 20; Base Atk +6; Grp +9; Atk +11 melee (1d8+7(19–20/x2), *+1 longsword*) or +8 ranged (1d10+1(19–20/x2), heavy crossbow); Full Atk +11/+6 melee (1d8+7(19–20/x2), *+1 longsword*) or +8 ranged (1d10+1(19–20/x2), heavy crossbow); SA Favored weapon (longsword, heavy crossbow), improved damage (longsword, heavy crossbow); SQ Human traits, race/class abilities; AL LN; SV Fort +7, Ref +3, Will +4; Str 16, Dex 12, Con 14, Int 13, Wis 12, Cha 12.

*Skills and Feats:* Climb –4*, Jump –3, Handle Animal +4, Listen +6, Ride +2, Spot +6; Cleave, Combat Reflexes, Critical Strike, Improved Initiative, Leadership, Power Attack, Great Cleave.
*includes –8 armor check penalty

*Race/Class Abilities: Fighter:* Courage (+1 Will/+4 vs. fear), Evade (+2).

*Favored Weapon (longsword, heavy crossbow):* A Mercenary Dark Horseman gains a +1 competence bonus to attack and damage rolls with the longsword and heavy crossbow.

*Improved Damage (longsword):* A Mercenary Dark Horseman does an additional +2 (+3 total) damage with the longsword.

*Possessions: +1 half plate*, heavy steel shield, *+1 longsword*, heavy crossbow.

**Gondorus, Mercenary Dark Horsemen Squad Leader, Male Human Ftr 13/Dark Horseman Elite 1:** CR 14; Medium humanoid (Human); HD 14d10+28; hp 125; Init +7; Spd 20 ft.; AC 24, touch 11, flat-footed 23; Base Atk +14; Grp +17; Atk +20 melee (1d8+8(17–20/x2), *+2 longsword*); Atk +20/+15/+10 (1d8+8(17–20/x2), *+2 longsword*); SA Favored weapon (longsword, heavy crossbow, battleaxe), improved critical threat (longsword),

improved damage (longsword, heavy crossbow); SQ Human traits, cadence, commission, race/class abilities; AL LN; SV Fort +12, Ref +7, Will +6; Str 17, Dex 16, Con 15, Int 12, Wis 11, Cha 13.

*Skills and Feats:* Climb +4*, Diplomacy +5, Handle Animal +7, Jump +2*, Listen +3, Ride +9, Sense Motive +7, Spot +2; Cleave, Great Cleave, Improved Bull Rush, Improved Initiative, Improved Sunder, Lieutenant (Dark Horsemen), Weapon Focus (longsword), Mounted Combat, Power Attack, Combat Reflexes. *includes –6 armor check penalty

*Race/Class Abilities: Fighter:* Courage (+2 Will/+6 vs. fear), Evade (+4), Resist (1/day).

*Favored Weapon (longsword, heavy crossbow, battleaxe):* The squad leader gains a +1 competence bonus to attack and damage rolls with the longsword, heavy crossbow and battleaxe.

*Improved Critical Threat (longsword):* The squad leader's critical threat range is increased by +2 (to 17–20) with the longsword.

*Improved Damage (longsword, heavy crossbow):* The squad leader does an additional +2 (+3 total) damage with the longsword and heavy crossbow.

*Possessions: +2 full plate, +1 heavy steel shield, +2 longsword.*

**Development:** If the party seeks out the army's commanders, they find Kerebrus and General Lund on horseback. While they do not identify themselves to any strangers (especially not Deverenians), any fighter over 10th level instantly recognizes the two men as the leaders of the Accordlands' premier mercenary band, the Dark Horsemen. Assuming the party has not previously met either man, or that none of the members are Dark Horsemen themselves, then Lund politely but tersely demands to know their intentions on the battlefield. Should the party offer their names, Lund recognizes them as the heroes of Dragon Keep, and believes them if they say that they are here to attack Blackthorn themselves. While Lund declines to share his employer's name or reasons for the siege, he acknowledges that the party might be useful in the attack.

Kerebrus hangs back and says nothing, but he is Lund's superior, and the final judge on whether the party can expect any aid from the mercenaries. If the PCs have a reputation for disruptive behavior, show no discipline during the conversation, or have attacked a Dark Horseman already this adventure, he speaks only to overrule Lund's offer of alliance, telling the party to leave the field at once. If they refuse, Kerebrus orders them taken prisoner, clapping them in iron hand and leg shackles (hardness 10, 10 hp (5 hp for the chains), DC 26 to break or unlock) and confiscating their equipment (a guard with a Search skill of 13 ranks searches each member looking for hidden equipment). While in shackles, spellcasters cannot cast spells with a somatic component, and are considered to be staggered until freed. This likely removes the party from the battle, and dooms the attacking army to defeat, as it is the party's destiny alone to defeat Blackthorn (*see Facing Blackthorn, below*).

If the players take more than five minutes' time to discuss matters with Kerebrus and Lund, Sir Rhawn d'Ilchant notices them while leading the mercenary troops in the sky. After yielding command to a lieutenant, Sir Rhawn lands his verdatha near the party, and demands to know what is so important as to distract his army from preparing for the assault. While he is clad in plate mail and full helm rather than his usual *Scales of the Storm*, he still wields his trademark sword *Stormbrand*, and the party may well recognize him by it. If the party has ever shown Sir Rhawn, the Church of the Storm, or the Black Sun any disrespect, he sternly refuses to work with them, though he does not order the mercenaries to take them prisoner unless t hey have behaved dishonorably around him before. Sir Rhawn may not like the party, but if they hold to their own sense of honor, he does not shame them by treating them like criminals.

If, however, the party has aided Sir Rhawn in the past, and been respectful, he accepts their aid, and even agrees to spearhead a decoy attack if the party wants to sneak in. As Blackthorn has proven himself dishonorable by murdering the Aroch, Sir Rhawn says, Deverenian honor says that no one should show him honor in return, not even an honorable death. While Sir Rhawn would prefer to destroy the traitor himself, he contents himself with Blackthorn's death at others' hands. Sir Rhawn refuses to share his motives except with other paladins, however (*see Sir Rhawn, sidebar*).

If the party can approach from the air (through spells, or by their own aerial mounts, or some other method), they can attack Castle Blackthorn directly. This tactic precludes surprise, but none of the presently engaged aerial units break off to intercept the party. Sir Rhawn's air troops are concerned with keeping the enemy occupied, not pressing the fight, so the party fights only Blackthorn's troops listed in each location below. Blackthorn realizes that Sir Rhawn is only stalling the battle while the land troops prepare to take the castle, and has kept several verdatha troops in reserve for the actual battle.

Assuming the party gains the trust of either the two Dark Horsemen generals or Sir Rhawn, Lund points out (if the party themselves does not realize it) that the castle has what appears to be a too-obvious flaw: it has narrow passages along the plateau, but no stable escape route. Clearly, there is some secret passage along the plateau, and the Dark Horsemen are willing to keep Blackthorn's men busy while the party searches for it.

# Part 2: Assault on Castle Blackthorn

## Area 1: Castle Blackthorn (*map page 507*)

While not large enough to warrant classification as a city, Castle Blackthorn is nevertheless an impressive monument to Blackthorn's power and arrogance. It holds both a military barracks, and a temple of the Black Sun.

Castle Blackthorn is not the most impregnable stronghold in the Accordlands, but it is certainly in the top ten. Mostly granite and marble, its foundation contains a large amount of heavily enchanted blackiron, which deflects the warping effects of Bascaron's passing. The castle is a bastion of order and permanence in a land poisoned by the Blood Moon's madness.

The castle also has a permanent *greater planar binding* effect that protects it from extraplanar infiltration. A similar effect prevents the use of *teleport* spells unless the caster has knowledge of specific rituals to allow such an entry (which the characters do not automatically possess, though they may have discovered

### Sir Rhawn

Already disturbed by the deaths of his noble foes in the Aroch order of paladins, Sir Rhawn has recently concluded that no mere bandits could defeat them without help, a fact borne out by the outright slaughter the Black Sun visited upon the killers. Though he was certain of the bandits' guilt, the Deverenian paladins slew them and took no casualties. The cause, Sir Rhawn felt, was obvious: someone had trained the bandits specifically against the Aroch, but not against the similar methods of the Black Sun. Someone had decided that the Black Sun would destroy the Aroch's killers, even before the Aroch had lost a man.

There was a traitor in their midst.

Sir Rhawn has taken a sabbatical from the Black Sun, wishing to take a more objective view of his men, while simultaneously being beyond their direct gaze. He soon discovered that not only had Blackthorn been the man to find the bandits, he had also been the only man present at the battle that had attacked foes from behind. He did not want anyone to recognize him.

Sir Rhawn is not sure what to do after the battle against Blackthorn. Not only did Sir Rhawn not expect to find his enemy so quickly, but he is surprised that it was a man he and the Church had trusted so completely. Unfortunately, to ensure that the Black Sun did not further slide into shame, he chose as his replacement Ghed Mnettaor, a powerful paladin in her own right, a Stormwraith, and the chosen Voice of the Storm. In exchange for fulfilling Sir Rhawn's duties, Sir Rhawn swore to allow her to ready the world for the final coming of the Storm: effectively, the end of the world. While Sir Rhawn had once embraced this ideal, Blackthorn has made him question the Church's infallibility for the first time in his life. While he still has faith in the Storm and in himself, he is not willing to doom honorable men by bringing about the apocalypse before he has purged the Church of its traitors.

For now, he contents himself with avenging the Aroch paladins upon Blackthorn.

one in another adventure). *Alarm* spells abound throughout the castle, and the sentries who defend it can defuse only those within their assigned sections. Tiberius Blackthorn may not believe there is any being in the Accordlands who can best him, but that has not dulled his instinct to defend his home.

## Area 2: The Surrounding Area

**Read aloud:** *The blasted plains of the Shattered Lands roll on forever to the east, each twisted rise giving way to another. Finally, when it seems the silent horror of this place will drive you mad, a plateau on the horizon breaks the monotony. Rising above the landscape like a defiant spire of obsidian is the forbidding Castle Blackthorn, dominating even these sinister surroundings with its quiet, sullen power, and the last marker of Deverenia's iron rule before the near-formless chaos of Bascaron's domain.*

*At first you think it a trick of the light, but as you draw closer, you realize the truth. Specks fly about Castle Blackthorn's skies, and a dark mass surrounds the plateau's base. The castle is already under siege.*

Castle Blackthorn sits atop a lone plateau in the midst of open plains just outside the Shattered Lands. Normally, no sizeable force can approach without alerting the castle sentries long before they arrive. In fact, any group numbering more than a dozen runs the risk of alerting the guards hours before they reach the plateau's base. Should the party wish to enter on their own, Sir Rhawn's army of mercenaries is enough of a distraction to provide cover. The PCs must still find an entrance.

Although not immediately obvious to those approaching the castle from the west or south, a vast chasm splits the plain immediately behind the plateau. The chasm protects the castle from ground attack by one direction, ensuring there is always an avenue of escape for Blackthorn should that prove necessary. Despite his arrogance, Blackthorn sought the aid of fellow Medusan Lord and Deverenian, Master K'Hallaek, in placing powerful enchantments upon the chasm. The Shattered Lands' mercurial nature never changes the chasm's size, and a command word can cause a massive gout of *obscuring mist* to jet forth from the chasm, providing cover for anyone fleeing the castle.

## Location 1: The Castle

Castle Blackthorn is a three-level hexagon, with a tower on each of the six corners, and a seventh tower in the building's exact center. It is not possible to approach the castle without being in direct view of at least two towers, and most of the time there are three with a full view of would-be attackers. The castle was designed from foundation to parapet by Blackthorn to serve as his impregnable base of power. One of the castle's few real weaknesses is the hidden exit leading to the seventh tower (see 1d below).

## Location 1.1: The Castle Gates

**Read aloud:** *The front gates of Castle Blackthorn are as intimidating as any in the Accordlands. No seams exist to indicate that the gates are anything but a single huge piece of flawless blacksteel.*

The castle gates are nearly impossible to approach without being spotted by a sentry (Hide check, DC 40). The gates are sealed with a powerful ward and cannot be opened unless those inside the castle choose to open it, or if someone speaks the com-

### Breaching the Walls

Castle Blackthorn's walls are only lightly manned, with two soldiers and two workers every twenty feet, but they are just short of impregnable. The sheer walls are 50 feet tall, requiring several DC 25 Climbing checks to climb (automatic if the party climbs one of the ladders the Dark Horsemen send up the pulleys for just this task, though either of the soldiers on the ramparts can push the ladder away in one round's time). Every five rounds, the workers pour boiling oil (splashing everyone in a 10-ft. radius below them with the equivalent of alchemist's fire, and destroying any ladders). Those who are over 25 ft. up a ladder must make a Reflex save (DC 30) to avoid falling off the plateau to their deaths if a soldier pushes the ladder away, or if they are splashed by boiling oil, regardless of how far up the wall they are or whether they are using a ladder.

mand word. Only Blackthorn and his most trusted lieutenants are familiar with the command word, but there a lesser enchantment opens a normal door-sized entrance inside the gate. This also requires a command word, but one that is known to the sentries stationed near the castle's front facing.

The gates have a hardness of 15 with 360 hit points. In addition, heavy enchantments confer damage resistance 20/magic and spell resistance 35 on the gates.

## Location 1.2: The Castle — First Floor

## Location 1.2.1: The Great Hall

**Read aloud:** *Just beyond the gates is a large open chamber you could easily imagine serving either to receive guests or to repel attackers. The ceiling arches 20 feet overhead, making even the softest sounds echo strangely. Guests greeted in this chamber must find themselves ill at ease. A crest, that of a blackiron blade entwined with blood-drenched rose thorns, adorns the left and right walls. Hallways lead away to the left and right, and another looms directly ahead, with strange sounds and a distinctive scent coming from the hallway ahead.*

Blackthorn's greeting room is designed to impress and intimidate anyone who enters the castle. If the alarm has been sounded, a dozen fully-equipped soldiers and four of Blackthorn's Black Sun paladins (see sidebar *Black Sun Paladins*) await the PCs.

There are always at least four sentries stationed here, and there are *alarm* spells inscribed upon the walls that any of them may activate using a move-equivalent action.

The sounds coming from the hallway ahead are identifiable with a Survival check (DC 25, DC 20 for Deverenians) as being from verdatha, the strange winged reptilian steeds the Black Sun paladins often ride.

**Creatures:** If no alarm: Four Blackthorn's guards, 10th-level fighters (see sidebar *Blackthorn's Guards* for stats). If alarm has sounded: Twelve Blackthorn's guards, 10th-level fighters (see sidebar *Blackthorn's Guards* for stats); four Black Sun paladins, 12th-level paladins (see sidebar *Black Sun Paladins* for stats).

**Blackthorn's Guards (if no alarm: 4; if alarm: 12):** hp 80, 82, 75, 77 (if no alarm) or 85, 92, 68, 78, 74, 83, 86, 76, 85, 82, 84, 75 (if alarm).

**Black Sun Paladins (4):** hp 78, 74, 82, 75.

### Blackthorn's Guards

**The men who defend Castle Blackthorn are a hardy and determined lot. They realize their lord holds the power of the Shattered Lands at bay. Their reverence for his power is only matched by their fear of his wrath should they fail. Blackthorn has banished those unworthy of his patronage into the Shattered Lands, and killed others with his bare hands.**

**Blackthorn's Guards, Male Deverenian Ftr 10:** CR 10; Medium humanoid (Deverenian); HD 10d10+30; hp 85; Init +2; Spd 30 ft.; AC 22, touch 11, flat-footed 21; Base Atk +10; Grp +14; Atk +19 melee (1d10+11(17–20/x2), *+2 bastard sword*) or +14 ranged (1d10+3(19–20/x2), masterwork heavy crossbow); Full Atk +19/+14 melee (1d10+11(17–20/x2), *+2 bastard sword*) or +14 ranged (1d10+3(19–20/x2), masterwork heavy crossbow); SA Favored weapon (bastard sword, heavy crossbow, longsword), improved critical threat (bastard sword), improved damage (bastard sword, heavy crossbow); SQ Deverenian traits, race/class abilities; AL LE; SV Fort +10, Ref +5, Will +5; Str 19, Dex 15, Con 16, Int 12, Wis 14, Cha 10.

*Skills and Feats:* Climb +11*, Jump +11*, Knowledge (architecture and engineering) +5, Knowledge (history) +5, Ride +15, Swim +4*; Dodge, Cleave, Combat Reflexes, Improved Critical (bastard sword), Power Attack, Skilled Positioning, Weapon Focus (bastard sword), Weapon Specialization (bastard sword). *includes –6 armor check penalty.

*Race/Class Abilities: Fighter:* Luxury Training (bastard sword), Military History.

*Favored Weapon (bastard sword, heavy crossbow, longsword):* A Blackthorn's guard gains a +1 competence bonus to attack and damage rolls with the bastard sword, heavy crossbow and longsword.

*Improved Critical Threat (bastard sword):* A Blackthorn's guard's critical threat range is increased by +2 (to 17–20) with the bastard sword.

*Improved Damage (bastard sword, heavy crossbow):* A Blackthorn's guard does an additional +2 (+3 total) damage with the bastard

*Possessions: +2 full plate, +2 bastard sword, masterwork heavy crossbow, amulet of natural armor +1, (3) potions of cure serious wounds.*

## Location 1.2.2: The Verdatha Stable

**Read aloud:** *The strange noises become louder as you cross the hallway to the first floor's centermost chamber, and the bizarre smell intensifies until you emerge into a huge chamber that vaguely resembles a cavern. Gigantic stable stalls line the left and right walls, each one several times larger than a normal stall. Even in the dim light, you can see huge forms in the shadows of each stall, moving with a sinuous grace. As they notice you, the beasts hiss and salivate in anticipation of a meal.*

This enormous chamber houses the verdatha ridden by Blackthorn's Black Sun paladins. These are greater verdatha, a species with truer dragon blood giving way to more magical and offensive abilities. These creatures are more intelligent than normal steeds, and attack anyone attempting to handle them inappropriately (Handle Animal check, DC 30).

The easternmost section of the chamber includes two small rooms where the stable masters are quartered. These two men are responsible for the well-being of the two dozen creatures living here, and defend them with their lives. These men are Blackthorn's guards (see sidebar *Blackthorn's Guards* for stats), but with an emphasis on animal care skills and cavalry feats.

**Creatures:** Two Blackthorn's guards, 10th-level fighters (see sidebar *Blackthorn's Guards* for stats).

**Blackthorn's Guards (2):** hp 80, 82.

**Greater Verdatha (24):** hp 100 (all twelve).

## Location 1.2.3: The Verdatha Spire

**Read aloud:** *The center of this chamber, and indeed the center of the entire castle, is dominated by a huge hollow column with four open archways. Pale light filters through open top of the column, allowing access to the sky for the winged verdatha stabled here. The bottom of the covlumn is a giant drain that leads down into darkness with no bottom in sight.*

The verdatha spire is perhaps the only weakness in the design of Castle Blackthorn. It is open to the sky at the castle's peak, providing a straight shot through to the tower's base. The spire does not provide access to any of the other levels, and the peak is protected via numerous *alarm* spells, but by the time they were triggered and Blackthorn's men could respond, the intruders would already be inside. It also holds the castle's secret escape route through the chasm behind it, allowing the party to enter and bypass the castle's primary defenses.

## Location 1.2.4: Supply Towers

**Read aloud:** *The chamber at the base of this tower is filled with weapons, equipment, and rations. The equipment is well maintained and easily accessible, but does not appear to have been used recently. Long swords, bastard swords, axes, hammers, chainmail, half-plate, and full plate are the most common pieces, but there are doubtless other options available deeper within the chamber.*

The two westernmost towers contain resupply points for Blackthorn's forces. The equipment here is of lesser quality than the gear carried by the soldiers throughout the tower, but is good enough to serve in an emergency.

In addition to the equipment described above, there is a 60% chance any martial weapon can be found somewhere in the supply room, although it may be time consuming to locate (Search check, DC 20). Specific exotic weapons are not as common, with only a 20% chance of locating such items (Search check, DC 30).

## Location 1.2.5: Soldiers' Quarters

**Read aloud:** *This small chamber is strikingly similar to a dungeon cell, and is comparable to the barracks one might find at a large military outpost. These quarters provide two people with meager accommodations. The master of the castle apparently does not permit many personal effects, as nothing in the room identifies its occupants.*

Blackthorn's soldiers are mostly stationed on the first floor, with room for ninety-six men on this floor alone. There are a handful of soldiers' quarters on the second floor as well, but the upper levels are largely reserved for the Black Sun paladins and Blackthorn's personal use. The soldiers here are fanatics who require little in the way of downtime or recreation.

## Location 1.2.6: Transport Towers

**Read aloud:** *The base of this tower is filled with a strange system of pulleys and levers that strings rope all across the chamber. The entrance is a double door, unlike any other chamber you have seen on this floor. The left and right sides of the chamber both have a recessed alcove that appears to contain a box open on one side attached to numerous ropes at the top.*

### Duke Blackthorne

**The man called Duke Blackthorne cannot remember his real name. His life before Tiberius Blackthorn subjected him to the Doom of Souls is a series of vague images and half-remembered associations. His memory now contains things he knows he never did: his past is his master's past, and he has no identity of his own beyond that of his master's.**

**Duke Blackthorne was responsible for the destruction of the Aroch paladins. He secretly and anonymously aided the bandit group that destroyed the paladin order, giving them the information and equipment they needed. Even though Aroch's destruction was his master's command, he enjoyed the manipulation solely on its own merits. Whoever or whatever Duke Blackthorne was before Tiberius remade him, he is now a creature of darkness and cruelty just like his master.**

The northern and southern towers transport materials efficiently to the upper levels with a revolutionary dumbwaiter system developed by Duke Blackthorne, Blackthorn's chief lieutenant. The dumbwaiters allow the sentries on the bottom floor, who are not directly involved in any fight ing unless it penetrates the castle, to constantly resupply the defenders on the higher levels.

Each dumbwaiter can support up to 300 lbs. It requires a Strength check (DC 25) to raise a fully loaded dumbwaiter from the ground floor. Up to three characters may participate in this action.

## Location 1.2.7: Dungeon Towers

**Read aloud:** *The bases of the easternmost towers are each locked and guarded by a pair of sentries. The thick steel doors are among the sturdiest in the castle, and no sound penetrates them. The sentries are alert, but appear to be deadened from hour after hour of staring at a bare stone wall.*

The easternmost towers are secure points where Blackthorn imprisons those who arouse his ire but are not killed outright. The sentries stationed here are those who are least among Blackthorn's men, and are often oblivious to their surroundings thanks to hours of mind-numbing duty.

It takes a full round for the sentries to react to anyone obviously not belonging in the castle. The locks on the doors require a difficult Open Lock check (DC 35). The sentries do not have keys to the doors. There are *alarm* spells inscribed upon the walls the sentries may activate as a move-equivalent action.

The north tower contains three of Blackthorn's men who spent too much time outside the castle walls and succumbed to Bascaron's corrupting influence. These pathetic, defeated, and insane creatures offer neither information nor resistance to anyone who enters the dungeon. They do not attempt to leave. The southern tower is empty.

**Creatures:** Four Blackthorn's guards, 10th-level fighters (see sidebar *Blackthorn's Guards* for stats); Three insane Blackthorn's Guards, 10th-level fighters *(see sidebar Blackthorn's Guards for stats, but no possessions and these men are insane).*

**Blackthorn's Guards (4):** hp 80, 82, 75, 77.

**Insane Blackthorn's Guards (3):** hp 65, 67, 80.

## Location 1.3: The Castle — The Second Floor

Castle Blackthorn's second floor serves a largely utilitarian function. The rooms necessary to maintain Blackthorn's forces are here, as are the so-called "guest quarters." The towers on this level are defensive, with crossbowmen prepared to pick off attackers who draw near the base of the castle.

**Creatures:** Six Blackthorn's guards, 10th-level fighters *(see sidebar Blackthorn's Guards for stats)*.

**Blackthorn's Guards (6):** hp 80, 82, 75, 77, 79, 81.

## Location 1.3.1: The Bottleneck

**Read aloud:** *The stairs open up into a larger chamber, exposing anyone on the stairs to the sentries in this room. It would be simple for even a small number of guards to hold off superior numbers here because of the stairwell bottleneck. The stairs continue up, and the chamber has hallways leading away to the north, south, and west.*

There are always two sentries on duty in this chamber. If the alarm has been raised or the sentries on the towers have spotted an approaching enemy, six more sentries and a pair of Black Sun paladins join them. The sentries have heavy crossbows that can punch through virtually any armor; in close quarters the sentries fight with long swords and bastard swords. They can effectively restrict the number of enemies able to exit the staircase to two.

**Creatures:** If no alarm: Two Blackthorn's guards, 10th-level fighters (see sidebar *Blackthorn's Guards* for stats). If alarm has sounded: Six Blackthorn's guards, 10th-level fighters *(see sidebar Blackthorn's Guards for stats)*; two Black Sun paladins, 12th-level paladins *(see sidebar Black Sun Paladins for stats)*.

**Blackthorn's Guards (if no alarm: 2; if alarm: 6):** hp 80, 82 (if no alarm) or 85, 92, 68, 78, 74, 83 (if alarm).

**Black Sun Paladins (2):** hp 78, 75.

## Location 1.3.2: Soldiers' Quarters

**Read aloud:** *These tiny rooms are virtually identical to the soldiers' quarters on the bottom floor. Each seems to house two people. There are virtually no amenities beyond the beds, footlockers, a single small table, and two chairs.*

There are quarters for sixteen more soldiers on this level, typically the most experienced and highest-ranking members of Blackthorn's legion of defenders. Unless the alarm has been raised, there is always a 30% chance a room holds a single sleeping occupant. Sleeping occupants are not wearing armor, but have their primary weapon immediately at hand.

**Creatures:** 30% chance of one sleeping Blackthorn's guard, a 10th-level fighter *(see sidebar Blackthorn's Guards for stats)*.

**Blackthorn's Guard (1):** hp 81.

## Location 1.3.3: The Verdatha Spire

**Read aloud:** *The hallway leads to an enormous column that supports the castle's seventh, central tower. There are no points of entry into the tower, but a hallway runs a complete circle around it, with halls leading to the north, south, east, and west. A stairway is visible through the eastern hall, and the sounds of combat can be heard from the north and south.*

The verdatha spire runs through the core of the castle, but is not accessible save at the roof and at the verdatha stable at its base. There are rarely sentries in this section unless the alarm has been raised or there are guests in the guest chambers to the west (**Location 1.3.7**).

## Location 1.3.4: Combat Training Rooms

**Read aloud:** *The sound of ringing metal reaches you before you can see into this large chamber. The air is heavy with the smell of oiled metal and exertion. The walls are cushioned with straw mats, but the bare stone floor bears ancient stains that can only be blood. Sparring soldiers circle one another like predators, searching for any weakness. Perforated archery targets line the walls, and a handful of soldiers stand idly by, urging their sparring comrades on.*

Combat training is the sole "recreation" Blackthorn allows his men. These rooms are designed to allow the soldiers here a wide variety of combat readiness exercises, including weapons training, unarmed combat, and most forms of ranged combat. With little else to distract them, the men here have become hardened killers.

During the day there are typically 8 soldiers training in each room, but that number increases to 16 soldiers at night. The men are accustomed to frequent comings and goings, and often do not notice newcomers right away (Spot check, DC 20). Each of the two rooms contains a small supply room with padded and normal martial weapons. There is also a small quartermaster's apartment near each chamber. The two quartermasters of this section are not only responsible for the weapons in the training room, but for all weapons in the castle. They are typically gone from the rooms during the day, inspecting weapons elsewhere in the castle. At night, they return to supervise their comrades to make certain their weapons are not mistreated.

**Creatures:** Daytime: 8 Blackthorn's guards, 10th-level fighters *(see sidebar Blackthorn's Guards for stats)*. Nighttime: 16 Blackthorn's guards, 10th-level fighters *(see sidebar Blackthorn's Guards for stats)*; two quartermasters, 1st-level commoners.

**Blackthorn's Guards (daytime: 8; nighttime: 16):** hp 80, 82, 85, 92, 68, 78, 74, 83 (daytime) or 80, 82, 85, 92, 68, 78, 74, 83, 80, 82, 85, 92, 68, 78, 74, 83 (nighttime).

**Quartermasters (2):** hp 4, 5.

## Location 1.3.5: The Mess Hall

**Read aloud:** *This large chamber is bare stone save for the impressive table that dominates the room. Dozens of chairs surround it, and the numerous food stains identify this room as the mess hall. It is surprisingly neat for a mess hall, but you have little time to appreciate that as the men eating here suddenly take a marked interest in you.*

It is virtually impossible to enter this chamber without arousing the attention of the men eating (Move Silently/Hide check, DC 50). The meal schedule is fairly rigid, and there is little traffic through the mess hall during meals. There is an *alarm* spell inscribed on the wall here that any of the men can activate by touch once intruders appear.

During the day, there are 12 men eating here. This number increases to 25 at night. Soldiers typically eat immediately after coming off duty, and most are still armed and armored.

**Creatures:** Daytime: 12 Blackthorn's guards, 10th-level fighters *(see sidebar Blackthorn's Guards for stats)*. Nightime: 25 Blackthorn's guards, 10th-level fighters *(see sidebar Blackthorn's Guards for stats)*.

**Blackthorn's Guards (daytime: 8; nighttime: 16):** hp 80, 82, 85, 92, 68, 78, 74, 83, 85, 92, 68, 78 (daytime) or 80, 82, 85, 92, 68, 78, 74, 83, 80, 82, 85, 92, 68, 78, 74, 83, 85, 92, 68, 78, 74, 83, 80, 82, 85 (nighttime).

## Location 1.3.6: The Kitchen

**Read aloud:** *The kitchen adjoining the mess hall shows none of the mess hall's stark cleanliness. This room is a nightmare of plates in varying stages of cleaning, scraps of food bundled up for unknown purposes, and cooking implements scattered across the room.*

The hopelessly cluttered kitchen is perhaps the sole center of chaos in Castle Blackthorn. Two small rooms adjoin it, a crowded and haphazard pantry and a small room that houses the two overworked soldiers who cook for their comrades.

**Creatures:** Two Blackthorn's guards, 10th-level fighters *(see sidebar Blackthorn's Guards for stats)* — these men are unarmored and carrying only daggers.

**Blackthorn's Guards (2):** hp 75, 81.

## Location 1.3.7: Guest Quarters

**Read aloud:** *These chambers, while far from opulent, far outstrip any other chambers you have seen here. They are furnished with the amenities that Blackthorn's men do without. While comfortable, these rooms are unremarkable and do not appear to have been recently used.*

The guest quarters are for Deverenian officers or even the occasional Medusan Lord that visits Blackthorn. He makes no pretense of being a warm host, however, and these rooms are sparsely furnished. During times when Blackthorn has guests, he posts a sentry at each door.

## Location 1.3.8: Archer Towers

**Read aloud:** *The middle levels of Castle Blackthorn's towers are defended by ever-watchful sentries. The doors are closed but not barred, and seem to be more for avoiding distraction than security. Inside, four men stand watch at evenly spaced viewports, constantly surveying the distance for any sign of Blackthorn's enemies.*

The guards in this room are well aware of scheduled duty changes, and respond with immediate suspicion and hostility to anyone who arrives off schedule. Alarm spells are inscribed upon the walls here, and any of the guards can activate them as a move-equivalent action. The northern and southern towers contain the dumbwaiter system evident on the lower floors.

**Creatures:** Four Blackthorn's guards, 10th-level fighters *(see sidebar Blackthorn's Guards for stats)*.

**Blackthorn's Guards (4):** hp 82, 75, 77, 81.

## Location 1.3.9: Paladin Quarters

**Read aloud:** *These chambers are the same size as the ones elsewhere in the castle, but seem larger because they appear to house only a single occupant. There is a bed, a stand for weapons and armor, a footlocker, and a small shrine to the Storm.*

Blackthorn's paladin followers are treated far better than his soldiers, but they still suffer the same basic existence as their subordinates. Their rooms are identical to the soldiers' quarters save that they are allowed individual rooms rather than being quartered with another. There are two dozen paladins stationed at Castle Blackthorn, divided into two shifts of twelve. If the alarm has not been raised, there is a 25% chance any given room will be occupied during the day, and a 50% chance it will be occupied at night, up to a maximum of twelve paladins sleeping at any given time.

### Black Sun Paladins

**Blackthorn stationed a small number of paladins here before Sir Rhawn discovered his treachery. These warriors are Blackthorn's elite guard, serving him at his castle and on the battlefield. They are honor-bound to fight for Blackthorn to the death, unless they are shown proof of his treachery or Sir Rhawn openly accuses him.**

**Black Sun Paladins, Male Deverenian Pal 12:** CR 12; Medium humanoid (Deverenian); HD 12d8+24; hp 78; Init +0; Spd 20 ft.; AC 25, touch 10, flat-footed 25; Base Atk +12; Grp +15; Atk +20 melee (1d8+7 plus 1d6 fire plus 1d6 vs. good plus 1d6 vs. chaotic(19–20/x2), *+4 flaming longsword*) or +13 ranged (1d8/x3, masterwork longbow); Full Atk +20/+15/+10 melee (1d8+7 plus 1d6 fire plus 1d6 vs. good plus 1d6 vs. chaotic(19–20/x2), *+4 flaming consecrated (unholy) blessed longsword*) or +13/+8/+3 ranged (1d8/x3, masterwork longbow); SA Blessed armament (+4) (longsword), rebuke undead 6/day (as a 10th-level cleric), spells; SQ Aura of courage, detect alignment, Deverenian traits, divine health, lay on hands, zeal, race/class abilities; AL LE; SV Fort +12, Ref +6, Will +8; Str 16, Dex 10, Con 14, Int 13, Wis 15, Cha 17.

*continued next page*

### Black Sun Paladins continued

*Skills and Feats*: Handle Animal +18, Heal +9, Knowledge (religion) +16, Ride +15; Cleave, Mounted Combat, Power Attack, Ride-By Attack, Weapon Focus (longsword), Mounted Archery.

*Race/Class Abilities*: *Paladin*: Mounted Combat Specialist, Special Mount (verdatha, HD 12).

*Aura of Courage*: A paladin is immune to fear (magical or otherwise). Allies within 10 feet of the paladin gain a +4 morale bonus on saving throws against fear effects; this is a supernatural ability.

*Blessed Armament (longsword)*: A paladin's longsword is invested with the might of his deity and functions as a *+4 blessed* magic weapon that deals +1d6 points of damage against creatures opposite the paladin's alignment (*unholy*). In addition, the paladin may cast *dispel magic* once per day at a caster level equal to his paladin level.

*Detect Alignment*: At will, a paladin can detect the presence of the opposite alignment as a spell-like ability (*detect good*).

*Divine Health*: A paladin is immune to all diseases including magical ones.

*Lay On Hands*: A paladin may cure up to 36 hit points of damage per day.

*Rebuke Undead*: A paladin may rebuke undead 6 times per day as a cleric two levels lower than his paladin level.

*Zeal*: When a paladin is reduced to 0 or fewer hit points he may make a Fortitude save (DC 10 + the number of hit points below 0) to continue fighting as if he were at one hit point. Each time the paladin suffers additional damage, he must continue to make a Fortitude save to keep fighting. When the paladin is reduced to –10 hit points, he dies as normal.

*Paladin Spells Prepared* (0/2/2/1; save DC 12 + spell level): 1st — *endure elements, summon object*; 2nd — *battle cry, remove paralysis*; 3rd — *holy energy*.

*Possessions*: *+2 full plate, +2 large steel shield, +1 flaming longsword* (increased to +4 by blessed armament ability), masterwork longbow, *ring of sustenance, cloak of resistance +2, amulet of natural armor +1*.

## Location 1.4: The Castle — Third Floor

The final floor of Castle Blackthorn is dominated by the personal quarters of Tiberius Blackthorn, Medusan Lord and Black Sun paladin. The paladins who serve him can often be found on this level and on the roof above, as can any guests who may be within the castle.

## Location 1.4.1: The Audience Chamber

**Read aloud:** *The stairway emerges from the lower floors into this room, a wide, regal chamber dominated by a throne near the western wall. The furniture is tasteful, if bleak. If one took a king's court and drained it of happiness, filling it instead with fear and unwavering discipline, this room would be the result.*

Blackthorn's audience chamber is where he meets with guests and colleagues. He rarely has a need to do so; few are willing to visit him in this barren wasteland. The furniture here is sparse, with most of the chamber devoted to room for others to move about and converse. The 'throne' at the other end of the room is exactly that: a seat where Blackthorn can demonstrate his obvious superiority.

There are four sentries on guard in this room at all times. There is an *alarm* spell inscribed on the wall that any guard can activate with a move-equivalent action.

**Creatures:** Four Blackthorn's guards, 10th-level fighters *(see sidebar Blackthorn's Guards for stats)*.

**Blackthorn's Guards (4):** hp 82, 75, 77, 81.

## Location 1.4.2 The Verdatha Spire

**Read aloud:** *The now familiar column that forms the castle's spine appears exactly the same as elsewhere in the castle: smooth, unbroken, with no apparent points of entry or exit. There is a faint sound of whistling wind, although no breeze is evident. The hallway circles the massive circular column, with separate hallways leading to the north, east, south, and west. The hallway leading west is barred by two enormous doors that appear to be made from the same black steel that constitutes the castle's front gates. The crest of Blackthorn is emblazoned boldly upon each door face.*

Unlike other portions of the spire, this section can be accessed through a ritual only Blackthorn knows. With a particular gesture and command word he can part the stones, allowing him and his personal steed to escape to the roof or down to the verdatha stable in seconds.

The doors to the south lead to Blackthorn's chambers, and are heavily enchanted. They have the same properties as the castle gates, and are equipped with a *lightning bolt* trap. There is also an *invisibility purge* effect centered upon the door that extends for 50 feet in all directions. This effect is triggered by the doors opening.

**Lightning Bolt Trap:** CR 6; magic device; proximity trigger (*alarm*); automatic reset; spell effect (*lightning bolt*, 10th-level wizard, 10d6 electricity, DC 14 Reflex save half damage); Search DC 28; Disable Device DC 28.

## Location 1.4.3: Shrine to the Storm

**Read aloud:** *The scent of incense grows stronger as you approach this door. It opens to reveal a temple unlike any you have ever seen. Even compared to the normally sinister Deverenian shrines, this room is an ominous place. The walls are crafted from obsidian, with images of great Deverenian heroes spilling blood in the name of the Storm. Altars, statues, and other paraphernalia throughout the room depict death and destruction.*

*One paladin is stationed in each shrine at all times, and it is common for off-duty paladins to be found here as well, lost in prayer and meaningful meditation. Any outsiders who enter these shrines enrage the paladins, as they are not worthy to be in the presence of the Storm's greatness.*

**Creatures:** One Black Sun paladin , 12th-level fighter *(see side bar Black Sun Paladins for stats)*.

**Black Sun Paladin (1):** hp 90.

## Location 1.4.4: Blackthorn's Quarters

**Read aloud:** *You find yourself on the threshold of a most disturbing chamber. Weapons and strange relics adorn virtually every wall like bloodied war trophies. A large altar to the Storm dominates the western wall, and the entire southern portion of the room is dominated by a huge verdatha, chained to the wall. Near the great beast is a vaguely luminescent rune circle etched deep into the stone floor. The room's furnishings are more lavish than those in the soldiers' chambers. Perhaps the most terrible feature of the room are the skeletons that decorate the northern wall. There is one from each of the major Accordlands races, and many more you cannot immediately identify.*

If the players have been stealthy in their approach and infiltration of the castle, then Blackthorn is within his chambers when they arrive. He does not hesitate to attack with every weapon at his disposal (see the notes on combat with Blackthorn below). His verdatha — asleep if no alarms have been raised — awakens at the first sign of combat and is utterly relentless in its attempts to destroy intruders. If he gains a momentary reprieve from the PCs, Blackthorn can free the beast as a move-equivalent action if he is within 5 feet of it.

The runic circle is a *teleportation circle* that is part of a magical network linking the headquarters of various Medusan Lords. These circles cannot be activated without conducting particular rituals that the Lords developed to prevent others from accessing them. The papers explaining the ritual are hidden in a secret compartment within the altar in Blackthorn's quarters (Search check, DC 45). A second ritual transports the circle's users to the lair of Malrog, the Lord of Lords among the Medusans. Blackthorn has this scroll hidden on his person *(see below)*.

**Creatures:** Tiberius Blackthorn, 20th-level paladin; a greater verdatha.

**Tiberius Blackthorn:** hp 170.

**Greater Verdatha (1):** hp 160 *(see page 45)*.

## Location 1.4.5: Ballista Towers

**Read aloud:** *The towers on this level have larger openings that allow the two sentries stationed within to train their weapons on advancing troops. This small room is dominated by a compact ballista aimed at the plains below. The large bolt loaded into the ballista is covered with runes, casting doubt on its status as a simple projectile.*

Two men are stationed in these towers at all times, and one of them is always one of Blackthorn's paladins. The ballista bolts possess the *flaming burst* enchantment, and would cause massive damage to the ranks of any army that dared to challenge Castle Blackthorn.

**Creatures:** One Blackthorn's guard, a 10th-level fighters *(see sidebar Blackthorn's Guards for stats)*; one Black Sun paladin, a 12th-level paladin *(see sidebar Black Sun Paladins for stats)*.

**Blackthorn's Guards (4):** hp 90.

**Black Sun Paladin (1):** hp 100.

## Location 1.4.6: Supply Rooms

**Read aloud:** *These small unlocked rooms are akin to large closets, storing a large number of ballista bolts and other siege equipment. There are even stacks of large rocks that could, in desperation, be shoved out of the tower windows to crush raiders at its base.*

Each supply room holds roughly five dozen bolts for small ballistae and a dozen rocks weighing between 50 and 100 pounds each.

### Tiberius Blackthorn

**Tiberius Blackthorn, Medusan Lord, Male Deverenian Pal 20:** CR 20; Medium humanoid (Deverenian); HD 20d8+80; hp 170; Init +1; Spd 20 ft.; AC 29, touch 11, flat-footed 28; Base Atk +20; Grp +28; Atk +34 melee (1d10+13 plus 3d6 vs. good plus 3d6 vs. chaotic(17–20/x2), *Night's Talon* with blessed armament) or +21 ranged (1d8/x3, longbow); Full Atk +34/+29/+24/+19 melee (1d10+13 plus 3d6 vs. good plus 3d6 vs. chaotic(17–20/x2), *Night's Talon* with blessed armament) or +21/+16/+11/+6 ranged (1d8/x3, longbow); SA Blessed armament (+5) (bastard sword), rebuke undead 8/day (as an 18th-level cleric)s, spells; SQ Aura of courage, detect alignment, Deverenian traits, divine health, lay on hands, zeal, race/class abilities; AL LE; SV Fort +19, Ref +12, Will +13; Str 26, Dex 12, Con 18, Int 14, Wis 16, Cha 20.

*Blessed Armament (bastard sword):* Blackthorn's bastard sword *Night's Talon* is invested with the might of his deity and in addition to its already impressive powers, functions as a *+5 blessed* magic weapon that deals +1d6 points of damage against creatures opposite the paladin's alignment (*unholy*) and +1d6 points of damage against chaotic creatures (*lawful*). In addition, Blackthorn may cast *dispel magic* once per day at a caster level equal to his paladin level. With the exception of the *+5 enhancement bonus*, these qualities stack with the qualities of *Night's Talon*, Blackthorn's blade.

*Detect Alignment:* At will, Blackthorn can detect the presence of the opposite alignment as a spell-like ability (*detect good*).

*Divine Health:* Blackthorn is immune to all diseases including magical ones.

*Lay On Hands:* Blackthorn may cure up to 100 hit points of damage per day.

*Rebuke Undead:* Blackthorn may rebuke undead 8 times per day as a cleric two levels lower than his paladin level.

*Zeal:* When Blackthorn is reduced to 0 or fewer hit points he may make a Fortitude save (DC 10 + the number of hit points below 0) to continue fighting as if he were at one hit point. Each time Blackthorn suffers additional damage he must continue to make a Fortitude save to keep fighting. When Blackthorn is reduced to –10 hit points, he dies as normal.

*Paladin Spells Prepared* (0/4/4/4/3; save DC 13 + spell level): 1st — *blind faith, bless arms, clarion call, summon object;* 2nd — *battle cry x2, resist elements, remove paralysis;* 3rd — *discern lies, dispel magic, holy energy, mass blessing;* 4th — *conversion, cure serious wounds x2.*

*Possessions: +5 full plate, Shield of the Storm, Doom of Souls, Night's Talon, +4 flaming heavy lance, Helm of Resolve, ring of sustenance, ring of evasion, bracelet of friends, horseshoes of the zephyr, glove of storing, amulet of proof against detection and location, rod of negation, belt of giant's strength (+6), cloak of resistance +2.*

### Encounter 3: Facing Blackthorn

Combat with Tiberius Blackthorn is an almost inevitable conclusion of this adventure. Blackthorn is an incredibly dangerous man with powerful magical weapons at his disposal that render him nearly invincible. Any party will be hard-pressed to defeat him.

He is difficult to surprise because of the enchantments throughout his castle and in his private quarters. In combat, he immediately uses his armor's *called* ability to equip it, then retrieves his weapons. He attacks the strongest fighter first, taking care to position them between himself and any obvious spellcasters. As soon as the primary threat is ended, he attempts to eliminate any spellcaster he can reach.

If Blackthorn finds himself losing, he mentally commands his verdatha steed to use its obscuring mist ability. He then leaps atop it and flees through the doors and into the verdatha spire, which he can open with a gesture and a command word.

The *teleportation circle* within Blackthorn's quarters possesses a secret enchantment that allows a user to *teleport* to Malrog's lair. The scroll containing the written component of these rituals is kept within a *glove of storing* Blackthorn wears at all times.

After the fight has lasted for at least five rounds, a portion of the room caves in under several verdatha falling through it at once. The party can now clearly see outside, where the Dark Horsemen are overrun with Abyssals and Bascarite monsters. Blackthorn takes a brief moment to goad the party, and note that those outside are faring just as poorly as the PCs are. Indeed, this is literally true. The fate of all those outside lies with the party, and for each party member that falls, one of the leaders outside follows suit: first General Lund, then Kerebrus, then Anton Cyldragen, and at last Sir Rhawn himself.

## Part 3: Concluding the Adventure

Assuming they survive their confrontation with Blackthorn, the PCs have likely learned important information regarding the Medusan Lords. If they chose to act with stealth and discretion, they may well remain unnoticed. If they chose to assault Castle Blackthorn directly, then the other Medusan Lords know of their presence by the time Blackthorn falls in battle. Although Blackthorn may not be liked by many of his fellow Medusan Lords, they see his demise as a great threat and act accordingly. No matter where they go, the party cannot escape the Lords' vengeance.

Blackthorn and the characters may both survive. In this case, the party has made a terrible enemy. Blackthorn neither forgives nor forgets an intrusion into his personal estate, and spares no effort in exacting his vengeance. He may have developed a grudging respect for the party's abilities and prepares for them carefully.

If the party discovered the documents in Blackthorn's personal chambers, they know the location of his *teleportation circle* and the means to use it to reach other Medusan Lords in the Accordlands. If they were fortunate enough to discover the second set of papers on Blackthorn's person, they can use the *circle* to reach Malrog's lair. Blackthorn's scrolls do not contain any mention of where this last set of incantations lead. The characters would be entering Malrog's lair blind if they were to use them, an almost guaranteed death sentence.

**If Cyldragen still lives, read aloud:** *After the victory, the Dark Horsemen count their dead and dying, and are stunned to find their leaders among them. General Lund is dead from many wounds. He had refused healing when others needed it.*

*Direr news, however, is that of Kerebrus himself.*

*"The wound is deep," Cyldragen says. "The swordtip nicked his heart." Kerebrus bleeds freely from his mouth and nose, and coughs horribly. "There is little time. Act quickly — you [Anton points to a healthy PC] — go to Blackthorn's study. Beneath a desk leg you will find an old book. Bring it to me."*

Presumably the party member complies. If not, a Dark Horseman does, but the other mercenaries sneer at the casual cruelty of the party. Upon the book's recovery, Anton smiles, tucks it into his robe, and says, *"A little light reading for the trip. Stand back."*

**Read aloud:** *Anton gently cradles Kerebrus' head, then turns and winks at [a female PC; otherwise, a female mercenary]. With that, his skin takes on an ashen tone, and his head flies back. His arms and legs stretch impossibly forward, but still, he holds the comparatively tiny Kerebrus with the utmost care. Soon glimmering wings and a tail unfold, and the thing that had been Anton takes flight.*

*"Do not worry, friends," he says with a roar and a chuckle. "The gods aren't through with this one."*

*And then dragon and horseman are gone, lost to the sky.*

If Anton or even Sir Rhawn have fallen, there is no sign of any of them. The Dark Horsemen that survived this battle speak of it in only the somberest tones, remembering the day when their every third friend fell to evils greater than any the Dark Horsemen had ever known.

## Part 4: New Monsters

### Banshee Hounds

**Medium Magical Beast**

*Hit Dice:* 8d10+16 (60 hp)
*Initiative:* +6
*Speed:* 30 ft. (6 squares)
*Armor Class:* 16 (+2 Dex, +4 natural), touch 12, flat-footed 14
*Base Attack/Grapple:* +8/+12
*Attack:* Bite +12 melee (1d6+6/x2)
*Full Attack:* Bite +12 melee (1d6+6/x2)
*Space/Reach:* 5 ft./ 5 ft.
*Special Attacks:* Wail, Trip
*Special Qualities:* Darkvision 60 ft., damage reduction 10/ magic, low-light vision, pack tactics, sonic immunity
*Saves:* Fort +8, Ref +8, Will +0
*Abilities:* Str 19, Dex 15, Con 14, Int 4, Wis 12, Cha 6
*Skills:* Jump +9, Listen +5, Spot +5, Survival +2*
*Feats:* Alertness, Improved Initiative, Track
*Environment:* Any Shattered Lands
*Organization:* Solitary, pairs, packs (4–16)
*Challenge Rating:* 5
*Treasure:* None
*Alignment:* Always neutral
*Advancement:* 9–10 HD (Medium), 11–12 HD (Large)

Banshee hounds were once mundane creatures, but have been warped and twisted by the corrupting influence of the Shattered Lands and the Banshee Moon. Such creatures are created whenever any canine survives in the Shattered Lands long enough for that realm's dark power to affect and change it. They are scattered across the plains, but several large packs patrol the region immediately surrounding Blackthorn Castle. These unique creatures were deliberately created by exposing the largest, strongest Deverenian hunting dogs to the Banshee Moon's corrupting influence, then forcing them through a brutal training and obedience program.

Banshee hounds are easily recognizable as once having been mundane canines. They are larger and more muscular, however, and seem somehow wrong to even a casual observer. Their build is asymmetrical, warped with surging muscles and tumors.

### Combat

Banshee hounds use pack tactics, often employing hit and run or feint tactics against foes they cannot simply overrun. Although savage, the hounds are not mindless. If confronted with a foe they cannot defeat, or with numbers that are not in their favor, they withdraw to observe their foe from a distance, looking for weaknesses to exploit. Then they attack again, with renewed savagery.

*Damage Reduction 10/magic*: A banshee hound ignores blows from any weapons without at least a magical +1 enhancement bonus.

*Darkvision, 60 ft. (Ex)*: A banshee hound can see in the dark with no light source at all, out to a range of 90 feet. Darkvision is black and white only (colors cannot be discerned). It does not allow the banshee hound to see anything that it could not see otherwise—invisible objects are still invisible, and illusions are still visible as what they seem to be. Likewise, darkvision subjects the banshee hound to gaze attacks normally. The presence of light does not spoil darkvision.

*Low-Light Vision (Ex)*: A banshee hound can see twice as far as a human in starlight, moonlight, torchlight, and similar conditions of shadowy illumination. It retains the ability to distinguish color and detail under these conditions.

*Pack Tactics (Ex)*: Banshee hounds are pack predators, and gain a +1 intuitive bonus to all attack rolls for every hound beyond three attacking a single target. For example, six hounds attacking a single target would all receive a +3 bonus to all attack rolls.

*Sonic Immunity*: Banshee hounds are immune to all sonic damage and effects.

*Trip (Ex)*: A banshee hound that hits with a bite attack can attempt to trip the opponent (+4 check modifier) as a free action without making a touch attack or provoking an attack of opportunity. If the attempt fails, the opponent cannot react to trip the banshee hound.

*Wail (Su)*: Banshee hounds can unleash a terrifying wail that afflicts their victims with a sense of fear and panic. Those who hear it must make a successful Will save (DC 25) or suffer 3d8 sonic damage and be shaken for a period of fifteen minutes. Those who make their save cannot be affected by the same banshee hound's wail unless they are injured by the hound between the wails.

*Skills*: Banshee hounds have a +4 racial bonus on Jump checks.

*Banshee hounds have a +4 racial bonus on Survival checks when tracking by scent.

### Greater Verdatha

**Large Dragon**

*Hit Dice*: 10d12+40 (100 hp)
*Initiative*: +6
*Speed*: 50 ft., fly 80 ft. (good)
*AC*: 22 (–1 size, +2 Dex, +11 natural), touch 11, flat-footed 20
*Attack*: Claw +10 melee (1d8+7 plus 2d6 fire/x2)
*Full Attack*: 2 claws +10 melee (1d8+7 plus 2d6 fire/x2), bite +5 melee (1d8+2/x2)
*Space/Reach*: 10 ft./5 ft.
*Special Attacks*: Breath weapon, spell-like abilities
*Special Qualities*: Immunities, scent
*Saves*: Fort +8, Ref +6, Will +6
*Abilities*: Str 25, Dex 14, Con 19, Int 8, Wis 14, Cha 12
*Skills*: Intimidate +10, Listen +13, Spot +12, Survival +10
*Feats*: Cleave, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (claws), Improved Natural Attack (claws)
*Environment*: Any land
*Organization*: Solitary or Herd (6–11)
*Challenge Rating*: 6
*Treasure*: None
*Alignment*: Always lawful evil
*Advancement*: 11–15 HD (Large)

Greater verdatha are identical to normal verdatha except for the stat changes above and the following abilities *(see Monsters and Lairs, page 199 for more information on normal verdatha)*:

*Breath Weapon (Su)*: 20-foot cone, once every 2d4 rounds, damage 2d6+8 fire, Reflex DC 22 half. The save DC is Constitution-based.

*Mount (Ex)*: The greater verdatha may carry Medium or smaller creatures into battle. The greater verdatha can always fight while carrying a rider, but the rider must make a DC 15 Ride check to be able to attack as well. For every size category less than Medium the rider is, the DC of this check rises by +5.

*Flaming Claws (Su)*: A greater verdatha can cause its feet to burst into flame, causing an additional 2d6 fire damage on all claw attacks. This effect lasts for ten rounds, and requires an hour between uses.

*Immunities (Ex)*: Greater verdatha are immune to poison, *sleep*, paralysis, fear and death magic. They are immune to electricity and take half-damage from fire.

*Spell-Like Abilities (Su)*: 3/day—*fear* (DC 15), *obscuring mist*, *stinking cloud*.

*Skills*: Greater verdatha receive a +4 racial bonus to Listen and Spot checks.

# Part 5: New Magic Items

### Night's Talon, Blackthorn's Blade

*Minor Artifact*

Blackthorn's blade is an impressive weapon, and has brought low more champions of good than even Blackthorn can remember. He never sets it aside, even during sleep or religious ceremonies. The blade is crafted from blacksteel with a silver-plated edge that allows the weapon's terrible effects to be unleashed on many supernatural creatures that would normally be immune. The blade's tip is forked, extending the cutting surface. The grip is as dark as the blade, with a gigantic black pearl clutched in a dragon's claw making up the pommel.

*Night's Talon* is a *+5 spell storing lawful unholy bastard sword*. The blade also allows any paladin who wields it to use the smite ability a number of times per day equal to half his total class level. These bonus smites can target any alignment, and as such can take the form of Smite Good, Smite Evil, Smite Law, or Smite Chaos. Possession of this blade allows the owner to take feats or other abilities that have the ability to smite as a prerequisite.

*Caster Level:* 20th; *Weight:* 10 lb.

### The Shield of the Storm, Blackthorn's Shield

*Minor Artifact*

This powerful shield recently replaced Blackthorn's previous shield. What befell the sacred Black Sun relic he carried is unknown, for when he returned from questing for the Storm he bore the *Shield of the Storm* in its place. The *shield's* origins are likewise unknown, and neither Blackthorn nor the survivors of the men who accompanied him on his quest ever speak of it. The *Shield of the Storm* is slightly larger than a standard steel shield with a sun-like corona around the outer edge. The *shield* is red and black, colors that swirl strangely as one looks at them.

The *Shield of the Storm* is a *+3 large steel shield*. It protects its wielder as per the *shield* spell so long as he holds it. It can cast *inflict critical wounds* as a ranged touch attack a number of times per day equal to its wielder's class level. This spell immediately restores a number of hit points to its wielder equal to the amount of damage inflicted by the attack. If the wielder is at full health, it instead confers temporary hit points that last for six hours or until the shield is removed.

*Caster Level:* 20th; *Weight:* 15 lb.

### Helm of Resolve, Blackthorn's Helm

*Minor Artifact*

Another of Blackthorn's acquisitions, the *Helm of Resolve* was taken decades ago from a powerful artificer he executed on behalf of the Deverenian Empire for treason. It was early in his career, and the *helm* was one of the first times he claimed the spoils of war for himself. The battle with the wizard was an arduous one, and would the Storm not wish to reward its faithful servant?

The *helm* confers several immunities upon its wearer. The wearer is immune to all attacks that depend upon inhalation or contact with the skin — contact or ingestion poisons, gas-based spells, and the like — and to all mind-affecting spells and effects, including all *charm* spells and any psionic abilities. Finally, the helm grants its wearer SR 25 versus all other spells.

*Caster Level:* 20th; *Weight:* 5 lb.

### Doom of Souls

*Major Artifact*

A gift from Blackthorn's infernal benefactors, the Doom of Souls is unquestionably the most powerful tool at his disposal. It appears to be a dagger of blood-red crystal, with an ornate hilt and handle of obsidian. The weapon is a *+5 unholy dagger of wounding* that deals 2d10 damage in addition to the normal damage such a weapon would inflict. The Doom of Souls is invulnerable to damage, and cannot be destroyed by any known means.

The dagger has another powerful ability, but since it was a gift to Tiberius Blackthorn alone, only he can use it. The Doom of Souls can destroy the soul of a sentient being. This ability must be mentally activated by Blackthorn. When activated, the blade forces a duplicate of Blackthorn's mind and personality into the target. The target must succeed at a Will save (DC 30), or over the course of the next seven days, his personality becomes an exact duplicate of Blackthorn's. The target essentially becomes Blackthorn, only eight character levels lower. Furthermore, the target is bound to obey Blackthorn under any circumstances so long as the wielder lives. This may only be broken if Blackthorn dies or if the Doom of Souls is used on another individual, at which point the first target gains free will and regains memories of his previous life.

*Caster Level:* 20th; *Weight:* 1 lb.



# A Touch of Power

## Introduction

When a kidnapped Elf escapes from the ancient catacombs under the city of Syranis, where a secret organization practices strange necromantic rituals, the PCs must risk their lives to save thousands of innocent victims.

This is one of four adventures in Tier 9. It is meant for characters of levels 18–20.

## Adventure Synopsis

The adventure begins in Syranis, a large Elven settlement on the southern edge of the Tyraniel forest. When the party reaches the city, a group of thugs lets them know they are not welcome. A battle ensues, alerting the town's authorities, and the city guard rushes to the scene. If they catch the PCs fighting, the city guards provide more trouble, especially if the party kills the men who provoked the fight.

A short time thereafter, the party finds the Roaring Wyvern, where they meet a wounded Elf who begs for their help. This is Adoramus Te, a noble of House Syneri, and secretly a halfbreed. He tells them that the catacombs under the city hide a mysterious group of outcast Elves, part of the banished Elven House Tansiq. These Elves are plotting to drain the essences of all living creatures in the city, killing everyone and making the members of the organization immortal.

To enact the ritual, the villains need the blood of a dragon. The villains kidnapped Adoramus Te when he discovered their plot, but the wizard escaped. Now that he knows of the group's plans, he urges the PCs to take action against them.

With Te's help, the heroes find a secret passage leading to the ancient catacombs. In the abandoned building that leads to the underground base, a group of elite assassins ambush the party. If the heroes interrogate defeated attackers, they find them fanatically loyal to their dread master, preferring to die rather than reveal any secrets. Once inside the catacombs, the PCs must avoid deadly traps, defeat House Tansiq's minions, fight Karek Noradir, and prevent the necromancer from completing the deadly ritual.

Thwarting the necromancer's plans is only the beginning, for Noradir's notes on the ritual come from his investigations into his master, Cear Adinerach himself. So armed, the party may lure their old foe into a trap, and ward themselves against his terrible powers.

## Area 1: Syranis (Map Key)

This large town was built on the ruins of a city destroyed by the cataclysm that reshaped the lands of the Accord. Relying on trade with the Elves from Tyraniel and raiding the various Human cities of the environs, Syranis is relatively cosmopolitan for an Elven settlement, tolerating if not always welcoming all races.

**Syranis (large town):** Conventional; AL NE; 3,000 gp limit; Population 3,691; Mixed (Elf 89%, Human 5%, half-Elf 4%, Nothrog 2%). *Authority Figures*: Lord Sherdin, male Elf Rog 11 (head of the city council), LE; Sobel, female Elf Wiz 9, LE (city councilor); Rania, female Elf Clr 8, LE; Filaris, Human Rog 7 (proprietor of the Roaring Wyvern), CN.

### Location 1: City Gates, Fortified Wall, and Watchtowers

When Syranis was founded, a strong stone palisade was erected to protect its citizens from danger. The city wall is 20 feet high. The watchtowers are 60 feet tall, and manned by lookouts who warn the city guard of approaching threats. There are three different ways of entering the city: the North Gate (1a), the South Gate (1b), and the Trader's Gate to the east (1c), where most merchant caravans pass through.

### Location 2: Market Square

Close to the Trader's Gate, this portion of town is filled with merchants' boutiques and artisans' workshops. An apothecary, a gambling house, and two inns offering comfortable accommodations are also in this district, where most trading goods can be found. During the summer months, merchants from all over the Accordlands raise great pavilions in the central square where they trade with the local populace as well as with the many visitors passing through town.

### Location 3: The Roaring Wyvern

This small stone building is a shady tavern. The establishment is two stories high and offers beds at modest prices. It is here Vighan awaits the PCs' arrival.

### Location 4: Beggars' Quarters

This section of town, commonly called Beggars' Quarters or Beggars' Corner, is run down. Ruins and old buildings are mostly abandoned. The city's respectable inhabitants refuse to go there. The area is said to have been destroyed by a failed magical experiment years ago.

### Location 5: Secret Entrance to the Catacombs:

The entrance to the hidden catacombs, where Cear Adinerach's group is based, is in an abandoned building on the outskirts of Beggars' Quarters (**Location 6**).

# Part 1: The Threat to the Elven Community

ENCOUNTER 1: THE JOURNEY TO SYRANIS

The trek to Syranis might take a few days or many, depending on the party's previous adventures. Although there are no set encounters to lengthen the journey, feel free to include wandering monsters of appropriate challenge ratings taken from *Monsters and Lairs*.

**Read aloud:** *In the distance, you finally see the outline of the city wall surrounding Syranis. As you approach, you see the splendid white towers of the Elven town shining under the light of the dying sun. The town's gate is opens, and four members of the guard stand watch over it. One of them moves to stop you.*

The guard who greets the PCs at the gate asks each of them to state their name and business in Syranis, but does not seem alarmed or suspicious even though they are probably not all Elves. After the formalities are completed, the soldier welcomes the PCs to Syranis and invites them to enjoy the town's hospitality, and recommends the Roaring Wyvern as a well-run inn.

ENCOUNTER 2: THUGS IN THE NIGHT (EL 16)

As the PCs make their way to the Roaring Wyvern, a band of thugs confronts them. The group has surveyed every new arrival in town. Their leader, Kitian, wants to learn more about the heroes, and prevent them from getting involved in his master's affairs. The impatient youth does not hesitate to use force against the PCs if he must.

**Read aloud:** *As you approach an intersection, a group of armed men confronts you. Most are Elves, but one is a young Human male with a long, forked beard. "Strangers," the Human mutters indignantly, brandishing a serrated blade. "It has been a while since we had great heroes in our town."*

At first, he tries to intimidate them and orders them to leave town. Should they refuse, Kitian orders his men to attack. Four of the rogues attack immediately, while the others try to flank the PCs to use their sneak attack ability. Kitian, who is always eager for a fight, charges the strongest-looking PC.

**Creatures:** Kitian, a 15th-level fighter; eight Kitian's thugs, 6th-level rogues.

**Kitian, Male Human Ftr 15:** CR 15; Medium humanoid (Human); HD 15d10+45; hp 129; Init +6; Spd 20 ft.; AC 23, touch 15, flat-footed 18; Base Atk +15; Grp +19; Atk +23 melee (1d8+9(17–20/x3), *+2 longsword*), or +20 ranged (1d6+7(18–20/x2), masterwork javelin); Full Atk +23/+18/+14 melee (1d8+9(17–20/x3), *+2 longsword*) or +20/+14/+9 ranged (1d6+7(18–20/x2), masterwork javelin); SA Favored weapon (longsword, javelin, dagger, short sword), improved critical multiplier (longsword), improved critical threat (longsword, javelin), improved damage (longsword, javelin, dagger); SQ Human traits, race/class abilities; AL NE; SV Fort +14, Ref +9, Will +9; Str 19, Dex 15, Con 17, Int 13, Wis 12, Cha 16.

*Skills and Feats*: Climb +15*, Intimidate +11, Jump +15*, Listen +8, Ride +18, Spot +8; Alertness, Blind Fight, Cleave, Great Fortitude, Improved Initiative, Lightning Reflexes, Mobility, Power Attack, Quick Draw, Spring Attack, Weapon Focus (javelin), Weapon Focus (longsword). * includes –4 armor check penalty.

*Race/Class Abilities*: *Fighter*: Courage (+3 Will/immune to fear), Evade (+4), Resist (1/day).

*Favored Weapon (longsword, javelin, dagger, short sword)*: Kitian gains a +1 competence bonus to attack and damage rolls with the longsword, javelin, dagger and short sword.

*Improved Critical Multiplier (longsword)*: Kitian's critical multiplier is increased by 1 (to x3) with the longsword.

*Improved Critical Threat (longsword, javelin)*: Kitian's critical threat range is increased by +2 with the longsword and javelin.

*Improved Damage (longsword, javelin, dagger)*: Kitian does an additional +2 (+3 total) damage with the longsword, javelin, and dagger.

*Possessions*: *+3 chainmail, +2 longsword*, 2 masterwork javelins, *potion of cure serious wounds* (5 doses), silver armband (worth 250 gp), 202 gp, 38 sp, and 12 cp.

**Kitian's Thugs (8), Male Elf Rog 6:** CR 6; Medium humanoid (Elf); HD 6d6+6; hp 39; Spd 30 ft.; Init +7; AC 16, touch 13, flat-footed 13; Base Atk +4; Grp +7; Atk +9 melee (1d6+3(19–20/x2), masterwork short sword) or +7 ranged (1d4+3(19–20/x2), dagger); Full Atk +9 melee (1d6+3(19–20/x2), masterwork short sword) or +7 ranged (1d4+3(19–20/x2), dagger); SA Sneak attack +2d6; SQ Catfall, Elf traits, evasion, hide in plain sight, improved nightsight, race/class abilities; AL NE; SV Fort +5, Ref +8, Will +2; Str 16, Dex 17, Con 13, Int 11, Wis 10, Cha 10.

*Skills and Feats:* Appraise +9, Climb +12, Gather Information +9, Listen +11, Move Silently +12, Open Lock +12, Search +11, Spot +11; Great Fortitude, Improved Initiative, Weapon Focus (short sword), Quick Draw.

*Race/Class Abilities: Rogue:* Quick Draw.

*Hide In Plain Sight:* Each time a thug makes a Hide check, he may reduce the total penalty (if any) to his skill check by his rogue class level (6), to a minimum of 0.

*Evasion:* If a thug makes a successful Reflex saving throw against an attack that normally deals half damage on a successful save, he instead takes no damage. Evasion can be used only if the mercenary is wearing light armor or no armor. A helpless rogue does not gain the benefit of evasion.

*Improved Nightsight:* A thug can see half again as far as normal in conditions of low light.

*Sneak Attack:* Anytime a thug's target is denied a Dexterity bonus to AC, or when he flanks a target, the thug deals an additional 2d6 points of damage on a successful melee attack.

*Possessions:* Masterwork studded leather armor, masterwork short sword, 2 daggers, 4d4 gp each.

### Encounter 3: The Town Guard / Pyrotechnics (EL 14)

This encounter is optional. If the PCs deal quickly with Kitian and his thugs, they might avoid trouble with the town guard altogether. If combat lasts for at least 8 rounds, however, a contingent from the city guard arrives 2d6+6 rounds after the fight begins.

**Read aloud:** *As the battle rages on, you hear the sound of footsteps upon the cobbled ground. A moment later a group of Elven soldiers from the town guard is fanning out to surround you.*

Lieutenant Seriel, an Elf warrior in league with Cear Adinerach, leads these soldiers. Seriel knows Kitian and most in his band, so he accuses the PCs of disturbing the peace. He then orders his men to place them under arrest. If the PCs resist, they risk alienating the people of the town they have come to help. If they reveal what they know about the danger threatening the city, Seriel calls them raving lunatics and insists that they follow him to the constabulary (near the Trader's Gate). If the PCs refuse to obey and try to escape, Seriel orders his men to attack.

Regardless of the heroes' reaction, Adoramus Te intervenes in their favor. By using his *wand of pyrotechnics*, the wizard turns the flames from the torches carried by the guards into blinding fireworks. He tries to lead the PCs away from the city guard, and avoids trouble at all cost. Since he does not know of Seriel's involvement with Adinerach's group, he does not wish to cause any harm to him or his men. If seen, Adoramus Te uses his *potion of invisibility* to stay out of harm's way. He does not reveal his position at any time during the encounter.

**Creatures:** Sariel, a 12th-level fighter; twelve town guards, 5th-level fighters.

**Seriel, Lieutenant of the City Guard, Male Elf Ftr 12:** CR 12; Medium humanoid (Elf); HD 12d10+24; hp 92; Init +3; Spd 20 ft.; AC 23, touch 13, flat-footed 20; Base Atk +12; Grp +17; Atk +20 melee (1d8+8(17–20/x2), *+1 keen longsword*) or +20 ranged (1d6+8(19–20/x2), *+2 mighty (+2 Str) composite shortbow*); Full Atk +20/+15/+10 melee (1d8+8(17–20/x2), *+1 keen longsword*) or +20/+15/+10 ranged (1d6+8(19–20/x2), *+2 mighty (+2 Str) composite shortbow*); SA Favored weapon (longsword, rapier, shortbow), improved critical threat (longsword), improved damage (longsword, rapier); SQ Elf traits, race/class abilities; AL LE; SV Fort +10, Ref +7, Will +7; Str 20, Dex 17, Con 14, Int 12, Wis 12, Cha 15.

*Skills and Feats*: Diplomacy +6, Handle Animal +12, Ride +14, Listen +8, Spot +8; Alertness, Blind Fight, Dodge, Far Shot, Iron Will, Point Blank Shot, Precise Shot, Weapon Focus (longsword), Weapon Focus (shortbow), Improved Critical (longsword).

*Race/Class Abilities: Fighter:* Improved Critical, Hit and Run Tactics.

*Favored Weapon (longsword, rapier, shortbow):* Seriel gains a +1 competence bonus to attack and damage rolls with the longsword, rapier, and shortbow.

*Improved Critical Threat (longsword):* Seriel's critical threat range is increased by +2 (to 17–20) with the longsword.

*Improved Damage (longsword, rapier):* Seriel does an additional +2 (+3 total) damage with the longsword and rapier.

*Possessions: +3 breastplate armor, +1 keen longsword, +2 mighty (+2 Str) composite shortbow,* 40 masterwork arrows, *potion of detect thoughts,* amber brooch (worth 250 gp), 150 gp.

**Town Guards (12), Male Elf Ftr 5:** CR 5; Medium humanoid (Elf); HD 5d10+5; hp 33; Init +3; Spd 20 ft.; AC 19, touch 13, flat-footed 16; Base Atk +5; Grp 7; Atk +9 melee (1d8+5(19–20/x2), longsword) or +9 ranged (1d6(19–20/x2), shortbow); Full Atk +9 melee (1d8+5(17–20/x2), longsword) or +9 ranged (1d6(19–20/x2), shortbow); SA Favored weapon (longsword, shortbow), improved damage (longsword); SQ Elf traits, race/class abilities; AL LE; SV Fort +5, Ref +4, Will +1; Str 14, Dex 16, Con 12, Int 11, Wis 10, Cha 10.

*Skills and Feats:* Listen +7, Ride +7, Spot +7; Alertness, Cleave, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (longsword), Improved Critical (longsword).

*Race/Class Abilities: Fighter:* Improved Critical.

*Favored Weapon (longsword, shortbow):* A guard gains a +1 competence bonus to attack and damage rolls with the longsword and shortbow.

*Improved Damage (longsword):* A guard does an additional +2 (+3 total) damage with the longsword.

*Possessions:* Scale mail, heavy steel shield, longsword, dagger, shortbow, 20 arrows, 2d6 gp.

## Location 3: The Roaring Wyvern

Once the PCs have moved away from the thugs and the city guard, they can go to the Roaring Wyvern.

**Read aloud:** *A fire illuminates the place. Most of the customers are Humans, but some patrons still stare at you.*

[**If the party rents a room**]: *A servant girl — her skin shining so that she must be a nimbic — quietly steps forward to help with your luggage. She leads you upstairs into a five-foot wide hallway with three doors on either side. "Your rooms, gracious guests." She gives you the key, and leaves you to your own devices.*

[**The following happens either immediately after the nimbic leaves, if the party lingers in the tavern room, or if they attempt to leave.**]

*A moment later, a frail-looking Elf wrapped in a black cloak greets you. "You have made it!" he says, excitement in his voice. His tired eyes stare at you like blue flames from the darkness of his large hooded cloak. "Please," he begs you. "Follow. Quickly."* [The then either takes the party to his room or enters theirs. If pressed, he admits that it was he who summoned them to the city.]

The small room is simply furnished with a bed, a chest, a tiny table, and two wooden stools. The Elf sits on the bed, and you notice for the first time his dark blue robes are stained with blood.

**Development:** Adoramus Te, down to 1/4 of his maximum hit points, greets the PCs. He seems tired but extremely grateful the heroes answered his call. He reveals everything he knows about Karek Noradir, his group, the hidden catacombs, and the imminent threat to the city. Te does not know exactly how the group acquired the power to kill everyone in the city, but he reveals the following information:

- A group led by the Elven renegade Karek Noradir is planning a powerful ritual that will steal the life essence of everyone in town.
- Karek Noradir is a fugitive Elf feared for his repulsive necromantic practices and his blatant disregard of Elven life. Te does not know him personally, but he has heard rumors about his strange experiments, which cost the lives of many Elves over the years.
- An abandoned stone building leads to the underground complex where the group is based. Te knows where it is because he escaped from the catacomb base earlier today.
- While Te is an accomplished wizard and cleric, the ritual's outline is entirely unfamiliar to him. Though Te never saw the notes himself, he saw enough of the preparations to realize that this was a slapdash ceremony.
- Given Karek's infamous practices, Te does not believe this is a mere experiment. However Karek discovered this magic, he did not do so on his own.
- By completing his ritual, Karek will kill everyone in Syranis.
- Te gladly shows the heroes how to get to the underground catacombs. Although fearful, he is determined to see Karek fail and does his best to help the heroes. However, he does not offer to accompany the PCs and declines if they ask. Te is horribly weakened at present, and would only slow the party down. The following are changes to the stats presented below for the purposes of this adventure:
- Te used all of his spells fleeing.
- Te is down to ¼ of his hit points (currently hp 21).
- Te has lost his spellbook.
- Te cannot prepare his spells before the ritual's completion.

**Creature:** Adoramus Te, an 7th-level cleric/5th-level wizard/3rd-level Priest of Bone.

**Adoramus Te, Male Elf Wiz 5/Clr 7/Priest of Bone 3:** CR 15; Medium humanoid (Elf); HD 5d4+10 plus 10d8+20; hp 85 (currently 21); Init +2; Spd 30 ft; AC 15, touch 12, flat-footed 13; Base Atk +9; Grp +10; Atk +12 melee (1d8+3/x2, *+2 heavy mace*); Full Atk +12/+7 melee (1d8+3/x2, *+2 heavy mace*); SA Spells, rebuke undead 9/day (as a 7th level cleric); SQ Elf traits, cleric domains (Destruction, Evil), spontaneous casting, eidetic memory (*cause fear, command undead*), summon familiar (rat), vigor born of death, chill of the grave, unliving focus, damage reduction 1/—, race/class abilities; AL N; SV Fort +11, Ref +7, Will +14; Str 13, Dex 15, Con 14, Int 17, Wis 18, Cha 15.

*Skills and Feats:* Concentration +17, Knowledge (religion) +18, Knowledge (arcana) +18, Knowledge (the planes) +18, Listen +6, Search +5, Spellcraft +22, Spot +6, Diplomacy +5, Heal +5; Iron Will, Scribe Scroll, Innate Ability (3/day — *cause fear*), Craft Staff, Divine Right, Pledged Oath, Extra Turning, Alertness.

*Race/Class Abilities: Wizard*: Range Touch (+10 ft.); *Cleric (Elf Elemental — Bone)*: Damage Reduction (damage reduction 1/—).

*Eidetic Memory:* Adoramus Te may spontaneously cast *cause fear* and *command undead* in place of a prepared spell of equal or higher level. This loses the prepared spell to fuel the memorized spell.

*Spontaneous Casting:* Adoramus Te can "lose" a prepared spell (except for a domain spell) in order to cast any *inflict* spell of the same level or lower.

*Rebuke Undead:* Adoramus Te can attempt to rebuke undead 9 times per day.

*Vigor Born of Death*: Adoramus Te's body has taken on an emaciated appearance, and he has begun to gain the advantages of the undead. He is immune to disease, paralysis, poison, and stunning.

*Chill of the Grave*: Adoramus Te has complete immunity to cold.

*Unliving Focus:* Adoramus Te has a +4 competence bonus to mind-influencing effects *charms*, compulsions, phantasms, patterns, and morale effects).

*Wizard Spells Prepared* (4/4/3/2; Save DC: 13 + spell level): 0 — *mending, read magic, arcane mark, mage hand*; 1st — *unnerve, mage armor, power spike, cause fear*; 2nd — *weakness, Melf's acid arrow, command undead*; 3rd — *dispel magic, wall of bone*.

*Cleric Spells Prepared* (6/5+1/4+1/3+1/2+1; Save DC: 14 + spell level): 0 — *inflict pain, inflict minor wounds, guidance, detect magic, read magic, resistance*; 1st — *inflict light wounds*, begone, curse of the lady, minor necromantic regeneration, protection from good, divine favor*; 2nd — *phantom touch, scourge of dythanus, silent guardian, inflict moderate wounds, desecrate**; 3rd — *mass blessing, divine senses, animate dead, contagion**; 4th — *rally of the damned, inferno, unholy blight**, *Domain Spell.

*Possessions*: Spellbook; scrolls *(vampiric touch, lightning bolt, fireball, arcane sight, inflict moderate wounds, shatter, death knell, raise dead, summon monster v); staff of abjuration; wand of unholy blight.*

**Familiar (rat):** Adoramus Te's rat familiar has the following statistics:

**Rat (Familiar):** CR —; Tiny magical beast; HD 15; hp 42; Init +2; Spd 15 ft, climb 15 ft, swim 15 ft; AC 17, touch 14, flat-footed 15; Base Atk +11; Grp –1; Atk +11 melee (1d3–4/x2, bite); Full Atk +11 melee (1d3–4/x2, bite); Space/Reach 2–1/2 ft./0 ft.; SA —; SQ low-light vision, scent, empathic link, share spells, improved evasion, deliver touch spells, speak with master; AL N; SV Fort +9, Ref +6, Will +13; Str 2, Dex 15, Con 10, Int 8, Wis 12, Cha 2.

*Skill and Feats*: Balance +10, Climb +12, Hide +14, Move Silently +10, Swim +10; Weapon Finesse (bite).

*Low-Light Vision (Ex)*: A rat can see twice as far as a Human in starlight, moonlight, torchlight, and similar conditions of shadowy illumination. It retains the ability to distinguish color and detail under these conditions.

*Scent (Ex)*: A rat can detect opponents within 30 feet by sense of smell. If the opponent is upwind, the range increases to 60 feet; if downwind, it drops to 15 feet. Strong scents, such as smoke or rotting garbage, can be detected at twice the ranges noted above. Overpowering scents, such as skunk musk or troglodyte stench, can be detected at triple normal range. When a rat detects a scent, the exact location of the source is not revealed—only its presence somewhere within range. The rat can take a move action to note the direction of the scent. Whenever the rat comes within 5 feet of the source, the rat pinpoints the source's location.

*Familiar Ability Descriptions*: His familiar has special abilities (or imparts abilities to its master) depending on Adoramus Te's combined level in classes that grant familiars. The abilities are cumulative.

*Alertness (Ex)*: While his familiar is within arm's reach, Adoramus Te gains the Alertness feat.

*Improved Evasion (Ex)*: When subjected to an attack that normally allows a Reflex saving throw for half damage, a familiar takes no damage if it makes a successful saving throw and half damage even if the saving throw fails.

*Share Spells*: At Adoramus Te's option, he may have any spell (but not any spell-like ability) he casts on himself also affect his familiar. The familiar must be within 5 feet at the time of casting to receive the benefit. If the spell or effect has a duration other than instantaneous, it stops affecting the familiar if it moves farther than 5 feet away and will not affect the familiar again even if it returns to Adoramus Te before the duration expires. Additionally, Adoramus Te may cast a spell with a target of "You" on his familiar (as a touch range spell) instead of on himself. Adoramus Te and his familiar can share spells even if the spells normally do not affect creatures of the familiar's type (magical beast).

*Empathic Link (Su)*: Adoramus Te has an empathic link with his familiar out to a distance of up to 1 mile. Adoramus Te cannot see through the familiar's eyes, but they can communicate empathically. Because of the limited nature of the link, only general emotional content can be communicated. Because of this empathic link, Adoramus Te has the same connection to an item or place that his familiar does.

*Deliver Touch Spells (Su):* Adoramus Te's familiar can deliver touch spells for him. If Adoramus Te and the familiar are in contact at the time Adoramus Te casts a touch spell, he can designate his familiar as the "toucher." The familiar can then deliver the touch spell just as Adoramus Te could. As usual, if Adoramus Te casts another spell before the touch is delivered, the touch spell dissipates.

*Speak with Master (Ex)*: Adoramus Te and his familiar can communicate verbally as if they were using a common language. Other creatures do not understand the communication without magical help.

## Location 6: Abandoned Building (EL 17)

This simple one-story stone house has a single room, which is roughly 30 feet square. The windows are all barricaded with bricks and mortar. The only entrance to this place is a solid-looking oaken door. The door has no lock and is not barred, so the PCs may enter the building easily.

**Read aloud:** *As you push open the thick oak door, you realize this stone house is a single large room. The stone roof stands 15 feet above the battered and dusty tile floor. In the middle of the place is a large hole in the ground, amidst the debris of the shattered floor. A rope of black silk loops through a hole in the wall and dangles into the dark hole.*

The hole in the ground, which is accessible through the broken tiles upon the stone floor, leads to the entrance pit of the catacombs (*see Location 7*). Three trained House Tansiq assassins are hiding in the shadows and wait until all the members of the party are inside the house before attacking. These proud and loyal experts never bother to parley with the PCs.

**Creatures:** Three elite assassins, 13th-level assassins.

**Elite Assassins (3), Male Elf Asn 13:** CR 13; Medium humanoid (Elf); HD 13d6+26; hp 73; Spd 30 ft.; Init +9; AC 18, touch 18 (15), flat-footed 13; Base Atk +9; Grp +12; Atk +16 melee (1d4+5(19–20/x2), *+2 dagger of venom*) or +15 ranged (1d4+3 plus dragon bile poison(19–20/x2), masterwork dagger); Full Atk +16/+11 melee (1d4+5(19–20/x2), *+2 dagger of venom*) or +15/+10 ranged (1d4+3 plus dragon bile poison(19–20/x2), masterwork dagger); SA Improved crippling strike (+1d4), sneak attack +8d6, spells; SQ Elf traits, poison immunity and resistance +3, poison use, ruthless (move-equivalent), skilled brewer, race/class abilities; AL CE; SV Fort +6, Ref +13, Will +5; Str 17, Dex 21, Con 14, Int 15, Wis 12, Cha 10.

*Skills and Feats*: Balance +13, Climb +11, Disguise +8, Hide +17, Jump +11, Listen +13, Move Silently +17, Poison +12, Search +12, Spot +11, Tumble +13; Feats: Alertness, Blind Fight, Improved Initiative, Quick Draw, Weapon Finesse (dagger).

*Race/Class Abilities: Assassin*: Improved Sneak Attack, Memory Phase (2/day).

*Improved Crippling Strike*: When an assassin scores a critical hit in melee combat, rather than inflicting damage he may inflict normal damage (the hit point damage is not doubled as usual for a critical hit) plus 1d4 + his Intelligence modifier (+2) in temporary damage to the victim's Strength, Dexterity, or Constitution.

*Poison Immunity and Resistance:* An assassin has a +3 save bonus against all poisons and is immune to dragon bile, quicksilver, and Misearan poisons.

*Poison Use:* An assassin is trained in the use of poison and never risks accidentally poisoning himself/herself when applying poison to a blade.

*Ruthless (Move-Equivalent)*: An assassin may make one coup de grace attack as a melee attack action once per round and an additional coup de grace action as either a melee attack action or as a move-equivalent action.

*Skilled Brewer:* An assassin is trained to brew poison and always has a +2 competence bonus to Poison skill checks.

*Sneak Attack:* Anytime an assassin's target is denied a Dexterity bonus to AC, or when he flanks a target, an assassin deals an additional 8d6 points of damage on a successful melee attack.

*Assassin Spells Prepared* (0/2/2/1; save DC 12 + spell level): 1st — *obscuring mist, spider climb*; 2nd — *darkness, pass without trace*; 3rd — *invisibility*.

*Possessions*: Each assassin is armed with a *+2 dagger of venom* and four masterwork daggers (for throwing). Each carries a vial of dragon bile poison (contact poison (Fort save DC 26) for 3d6 points of temporary Strength damage) with 1d3+1 applications left. They wear no armor, relying instead on their high Dexterity score. However, two of them have *rings of protection +3* and the other wears an *amulet of natural armor +3*. One carries a platinum bracelet encrusted with dark blue precious stones (worth 500 gp), a white pearl (1,000 gp), and 120 gp. The second has a *bag of holding* filled with 20 iron rations, five flasks of a fine red wine, two hunks of goat cheese, a golden chandelier (worth 200 gp), silver cutlery for eight people (300 gp) stolen from his last victim, 20 pp, 33 gp, and 15 sp. The last man wears a necklace made of perfectly round ivory beads (worth 350 gp), a gold bracelet chain (100 gp), a beautifully well-made silvered masterwork dagger with a large ruby completing the butt-end (750 gp), and a pouch with 78 gp, 16 sp, and 7 cp.

# Part 2: The Catacombs

## Location 7: The Catacombs of the Undercity

The hole in the floor of the abandoned house is roughly 10 feet in diameter. The rope is solidly tied and leads into a dark and empty corridor 50 feet below. PCs making their way down the hole must succeed at Climb checks (DC 12) or fall.

All doors in the complex are 6 feet wide by 8 feet tall and made out of stone.

**Stone Door:** 8 inches thick; Hardness 8; hp 60; Break DC 28.

Unless otherwise mentioned, there is no illumination in the dungeon, and heroes without darkvision must provide their own light.

## Location 7.1: Entrance Pit

**Read aloud:** *You shinny down the rope into the dark hole. The rough walls of this opening seem to have been hewn from sheer rock. Fifty feet beneath the house, you find yourself into a 10-foot-wide corridor. It is as dark down here as it was in the house.*

The southern end of this corridor is blocked by an old cave-in. To the north is a solid stone door. PCs examining the door can confirm it is unlocked and not trapped. A successful Search check (DC 28) also reveals the tiniest hint of light on the other side of the door. The light filters through little imperfections in the stone doorway.

## Location 7.2: Guard Chamber (EL 16)

This room is Tansiq's stronghold in Syranis. Although the House is not strong, it has good contacts with the outside (notably the previously-encountered lieutenant of the city guard). For the most part, these men are mercenaries loyal to Karek because he pays them more than they would earn working for another employer.

**Read aloud:** *Several beds line the western wall of this room, which is half in ruins from a collapsed ceiling on the eastern portion of the chamber. There is also a long table in the middle of the place with several lanterns upon it. Their light reveals several Humans clad in heavy armor who do not seem happy to see you.*

The three assassins who ambushed the party in the abandoned house sleep here during the day, when three of the Human mercenaries take their places in the house above. The eight guards attack the PCs on sight. If interrogated, these men might reveal they are working for Karek, if the PCs promise not to kill them. They know Karek is a necromancer and he has been working on a ritual for the past few weeks. They do not realize the ritual will kill everyone in town, including themselves.

**Creature**: Eight Mercenaries, 10th-level fighters.

**Mercenaries (8), Male Human Ftr 10:** CR 10; Medium humanoid (Human); HD 10d10+30; hp 85; Init +1; Spd 20 ft.; AC 19, touch 11, flat-footed 18; Base Atk +10; Grp +14; Atk +17 melee (1d8+7(18–20/x3), masterwork battleaxe) or +14 ranged (1d10+3(19–20/x2), heavy crossbow); Full Atk +17/+12 melee (1d8+7(18–20/x3), masterwork battleaxe) or +14 ranged (1d10+3(19–20/x2), heavy crossbow); SA Favored weapon (battleaxe, heavy crossbow, spear), improved critical threat (battleaxe), improved damage (battleaxe, heavy crossbow); SQ Human traits, race/class abilities; AL LE; SV Fort +10, Ref +4, Will +3; Str 19, Dex 12, Con 17, Int 11, Wis 11, Cha 8.

*Skills and Feats*: Climb +9*, Jump +9*; Blind Fight, Cleave, Dodge, Great Cleave, Improved Bull Rush, Improved Sunder, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (battleaxe), Weapon Focus (heavy crossbow). * includes –8 armor check penalty.

*Race/Class Abilities*: *Fighter*: Courage (+2 Will/+6 vs. fear), Evade (+2).

*Favored Weapon (*battlaxe, *heavy crossbow, spear)*: A mercenary gains a +1 competence bonus to attack and damage rolls with the battleaxe, heavy crossbow, and spear.

*Improved Critical Threat (battleaxe)*: A mercenary's critical threat range is increased by +2 (to 18–20) with the battleaxe.

*Improved Damage (battleaxe, heavy crossbow)*: A mercenary does an additional +2 (+3 total) damage with the battleaxe and heavy crossbow.

*Possessions*: Each of these men carries a masterwork battleaxe and a masterwork heavy crossbow with 20 bolts. They are armored with banded mail and heavy steel shields. Additionally, one holds a *+3 battleaxe* (adding +3 to his attack and damage rolls), a second has a *+4 dagger* (+18/+13 melee for 1d4+8 damage, or +15/+10 ranged for 1d4+6 damage), a third has eleven *+3 bolts* (adding +3 to his attack and damage rolls), a fourth holds a *periapt of proof against poison*, and a fifth carries a *potion of cure critical wounds* (3 doses). Also, each man possesses 5d20 gp.

## Location 7.3: Trapped Corridors and Intersection (EL 14)

The intersection leads into three different corridors. Both the southern and northern passages are trapped. These traps were originally built to guard treasure in area 6. This treasure, along with the tomb the chamber once held, is long gone. The necromancer's henchmen have revamped the traps, which are carefully maintained and extremely effective.

**A. Southern Corridor Trap:** The first trap encountered by the PCs is a hidden pit triggered by 100 lb. or more.

*Poisoned Spiked Pit Trap:* CR 10; mechanical; location trigger; manual reset; DC 25 Reflex save avoids; 100 ft. deep (10d6, fall); pit spikes (Atk +15 melee, 2d4 spikes per target for 1d4+5 plus poison each); poison (dragon bile poison, DC 26 Fortitude save resists, 3d6 Str/0); Search DC 25; Disable Device DC 25.

**B. Northern Corridor Trap 1:** The first trap encountered in the northern corridor is a crushing wall. As soon as 100 lbs. or more is applied to this 10-ft. square area, a 10-ft. wide portion of the wall on either side comes crashing in. The walls move swiftly until they reach each other. Then, the pressure is released, and they retract into position.

*Crushing Wall Trap:* CR 10; mechanical; location trigger; automatic reset; no attack roll required (20d6, crush); Search DC 20; Disable Device DC 25.

*C. Northern Corridor Trap 2:* This trap is situated in the last 10 ft. of the corridor. It can be especially deadly as the poisonous fumes fill the entire 50-ft. long hallway. The poisonous gas does not affect PCs standing in the central intersection of area 3 or in any of the other corridors, but all in the northern hall suffer the consequences of the gas. The trap is activated as soon as someone weighing more than 100 lbs. steps upon the last 10 ft. of corridor. The gas is released through tiny holes in the stone ceiling.

*Burnt Othur Vapor Trap:* CR 8; mechanical; location trigger; repair reset; gas; multiple targets (all targets within the 50 ft. hallway); never miss; onset delay (3 rounds); poison (burnt othur fumes, DC 18 Fortitude save resists, 1 Con drain/3d6 Con); Search DC 21; Disable Device DC 25.

## Location 7.4: Crypt Gaunts' Pen (EL 16)

**Read aloud:** *This room has been destroyed by a massive cave-in. Stone blocks, crushed rocks, and dirt take up most of the chamber. When you enter, however, you see that several corpses lie in the darkness.*

This room is where Karek keeps his beloved pets. The corpses are crypt gaunts that obey Karek and do not tolerate anyone in their private chamber other than the necromancer. The gaunts attack the PCs as soon as they enter the room.

**Creatures:** Two crypt gaunts.

**Crypt Gaunts (2):** CR 8; Medium undead; HD 12d12+3; hp 78; Init –1; Spd 20 ft.; AC 17, touch 9, flat-footed 17; Base Atk +3, Grp +6; Atk +7 melee (1d4+3/x2, slam); Full Atk +7 melee (1d4+3/x2, 2 slams); Space/Reach 5 ft./5 ft.; SA Despair, poison

cloud; SQ damage reduction 5/magic, vulnerability to fire, resistant to blows, undead traits; AL LE; SV Fort +4, Ref +3, Will +10; Str 17, Dex 8, Con —, Int 6, Wis 14, Cha 15.

*Skills and Feats:* Hide +14, Listen +17, Move Silently +14, Spot +17; Alertness, Power Attack, Cleave, Toughness, Weapon Focus (slam).

*Despair (Su)*: At the mere sight of a crypt gaunt, the viewer must make a Will save (DC 15) or be paralyzed with fear for 1d4 rounds. Regardless of whether the save is successful, that opponent cannot be affected by the gaunt's despair ability for one day. The save DC is Charisma-based.

*Vulnerability to Fire (Ex)*: A crypt gaunt takes half again as much (+50%) damage as normal from fire, unless a save is allowed for half damage. In these cases, a successful save halves damage and a failure doubles it. Further, fire damage bypasses the gaunt's usual damage reduction.

*Poison Cloud (Ex)*: Each time a crypt gaunt is struck, a cloud of noxious gas erupts from its rotting funeral garb. Any character adjacent to the gaunt when it suffers damage from a physical attack must make a Fortitude save (DC 15) or be affected as by the *stinking cloud* spell. The save DC is Charisma-based.

*Resistant to Blows (Ex)*: Physical attacks of all types deal only half damage to gaunts. Apply this effect before damage reduction.

*Undead Traits:* A crypt gaunt has the following traits:

- No Constitution score.
- Darkvision out to 60 feet.
- Immunity to all mind-affecting effects (charms, compulsions, phantasms, patterns, and morale effects).
- Immunity to poison, sleep effects, paralysis, stunning, disease, death effects, and necromancy effects.
- Negative energy (such as an inflict spell) can heal undead creatures. The fast healing quality works regardless of the creature's Intelligence score.
- Not subject to critical hits, non-lethal damage, ability damage, ability drain, fatigue, exhaustion, or energy drain. Immune to damage to its physical ability scores (Strength, Dexterity, Constitution), as well as to fatigue and exhaustion effects.
- Immunity to any effect that requires a Fortitude save (unless the effect also works on objects, or is harmless).
- Uses its Charisma modifier for Concentration checks.
- Not at risk of death from massive damage. Immediately destroyed when reduced to 0 hit points or less.
- Not affected by raise dead and reincarnate spells or abilities. Resurrection and true resurrection can affect undead creatures. These spells turn undead creatures back into the living creatures they were before becoming undead.
- Proficient with its natural weapons, all simple weapons, and any weapon mentioned in its entry.
- Proficient with whatever type of armor (light, medium, and heavy) it is described as wearing, as well as all lighter types.
- Undead do not eat, sleep, or breathe.

## Location 7.5: Karek's Private Chamber (EL 13)

This large and lavishly furnished room is home to Karek Noradir. When he is not in area 6, he sleeps and meditates in solitude.

**Read aloud:** *A comfortable-looking bed on the northern wall of this room is flanked by two chests: one large, wooden, and inlaid with black iron, the other much smaller and made entirely of a shiny silvery alloy. On the southern wall, there is a small oak table with two wooden chairs. Five unlit candles of dark blue wax rest upon the table. There is a dark corridor on the western wall.*

Both chests are locked and trapped. They contain Karek's most precious possessions. The mattress on the bed is made of feathers and the bedding is thick, woolen, and good quality. The western corridor leads to a stone door, which is blocked and impossible to open because of a cave-in on the other side.

*Wooden Chest:* Karek always wears the heavy iron key that unlocks this chest. Alternately, an Open Lock check (DC 25) does the work. As soon as the lid of this chest is lifted, the magical trap is activated. There is a well-hidden lever on the back of the chest that can be pressed in order to temporarily prevent the trap from activating. It only works in combination with the key, so characters opening the chest with a successful Open Lock check rather than the key must face the consequences of its trap. A rogue character may try to disable it.

**Phantasmal Killer Trap:** CR 5; magic device; proximity trigger *(alarm)*; automatic reset; lever and key bypass, spell effect (*phantasmal killer*, 17th-level wizard, DC 20 Will save disbelieves, DC 20 Fortitude partial); single target; Search DC 29; Disable Device DC 29.

*Silvery Chest:* This chest is locked, but like its counterpart, the small silver key opening it can be found on the necromancer. A successful Open Lock check (DC 28) bypasses the lock. Aside from a successful Disable Device check, there is no way of preventing the needle trap from springing. Karek is aware of this and knows how to avoid the needles when he opens the sturdy box. He also figured out how the simple mechanism works and replaces the needles every time he uses the chest (which is not often, since it contains the wealth he has accumulated over the years).

*Poison Needle Trap (3 needles)*: CR 10; mechanical; touch trigger; manual reset; Atk +16 ranged (1 plus poison); poison (purple worm poison, DC 24 Fortitude save resists, 1d6 Str/2d6 Str); Search DC 27; Disable Device DC 25.

*Treasure:* The silver chest contains Karek's spellbook as well as three glass vials with the following potions: *fire breath* (3 doses), *glibness* (2 doses), and *hiding* (5 doses). There is also a scroll with the following necromancy spells: *animate dead, control undead, magic jar,* and *horrid wilting.* The chest itself, which is entirely made of a silver and white gold alloy, is worth 1,200 gp. The large wooden chest contains five emeralds (worth 500 gp, 300 gp, 250 gp, 200 gp, and 150 gp), three rubies (400 gp each), as well as 50 pp, 2,000 gp, and 1,000 sp.

## Location 7.6: Ritual Chamber (EL 18)

This large room was once the sepulcher of an important member of Elven society, but the tomb was raided long ago. Now, upon the large dais that once bore a coffin, rests a vial of blood and the scrolls that will grant Karek immortality.

**Read aloud:** *The first thing you notice when you enter this large room is the massive crystal vial lying upon an elevated dais near the north wall. Beside the crystal, which glows with an eerie inner light, you see several scrolls. An Elven male clad in dark robes recites strange words in a guttural tongue. To your right and left are immense stone statues of Elven warriors in chain armor and baring long-bladed swords made of the same dark stone.*

The statues in this chamber are huge constructs. They once protected the noble's tomb, but Karek now controls them.

Karek has no intentions of talking to the PCs. Furious about the intrusion and insulted by the PCs' unwanted presence, he stops his ritual and attacks with the many spells from his repertoire. His goal is to prevent anyone from stealing the blood or scrolls. He also wants to return to the ritual as soon as possible, to insure his immortality. Of course, Karek is taking great risks; even if he succeeds in the ritual, Cear Adinerach's rage might cost him more than he can imagine. If Karek successfully completes the ritual — killing all of Syranis — he will have to face Adinerach's wrath, but he believes that then he would be strong enough to face the master assassin.

**Creatures:** Karek Noradir, a 17th-level necromancer; two greater stone golems.

**Karek Noradir, Male Elf Nec 17:** CR 17; Medium humanoid (Elf); HD 17d4+17; hp 60; Spd 30 ft.; Init +4; AC 20, touch 14, *flat-footed 16*; Base Atk +8; Grp +8; Atk +8 melee (1d6, *staff of defense*); Full Atk +8/+3 melee (1d6, *staff of defense*); SA Steal life (1d10+3), spells, rebuke undead 6/day (as an 11th-level cleric); SQ Cheat death (no level loss), death's threshold (sleep, poison, disease, mind-influencing effects), Elf traits, spontaneous casting, race/class abilities; AL CE; SV Fort +6, Ref +9, Will +13; Str 11, Dex 18, Con 13, Int 19, Wis 16, Cha 17.

*Skills and Feats:* Alchemy +19, Bluff +13, Concentration +21, Diplomacy +13, Knowledge (arcana) +19, Scry +14, Spellcraft +24; Brew Potion, Craft Wondrous Item, Dodge, Extend Spell, Heightened Spell, Silent Spell.

*Race/Class Abilities:* Improved Rebuke (+6), Speak with Dead (7/day), Create Undead.

*Cheat Death:* Noradir has prepared for his own death. Should he be killed he can attempt a Will save (DC 20) at the moment of his death. If successful, Noradir returns to life exactly 13 hours later at a pre-determined location. If he returns, Noradir suffers one negative level that he can remove (DC 20).

*Death's Threshold:* Noradir does not need to sleep and is immune to sleep effects. In addition, he is immune to poison, disease, and mind-influencing effects.

*Rebuke Undead:* Noradir may attempt to rebuke undead 6 times per day as an 11th level cleric.

*Spontaneous Casting:* Noradir may expend one of his memorized spells to cast any necromancy spell of equal or lower level.

*Steal Life:* Noradir's unarmed attacks deal 1d10+3 lethal damage. Any damage dealt by this attack is added as hit points to Noradir's total; any excess hit points are lost at the rate of one per round. Attacking in this manner is still considered an unarmed attack and draws attacks of opportunity.

*Necromancer Spells Prepared* (4/5/5/5/5/4/4/3/2/1/0; save DC 14 + spell level): 0 — *detect magic, disrupt undead, mage hand, ray of frost*; 1st — *cause fear, chill touch, color spray, ray of enfeeblement, sleep*; 2nd — *ghoul touch, hypnotic pattern, scare, see invisibility, spectral hand*; 3rd — *blink, halt undead, protection from element, vampiric touch* (x2); 4th — *contagion, enervation, fear, minor glob of invulnerability, solid fog*; 5th — *animate dead, cloud kill, magic jar, telekinesis*; 6th — *acid fog, circle of death, greater shadow evocation, mass haste*; 7th — *control undead, finger of death, power word stun*; 8th — *clone, horrid wilting*; 9th — *wail of the banshee.*

*Possessions: bracers of armor +6, staff of defense* (20 charges), *ring of shooting stars,* large and heavy black iron key (that unlocks the wooden chest in **Location 7.5**), small silver key (unlocking the silver chest in **Location 7.5**).

**Greater Stone Golem (2):** CR 16; Huge construct; HD 42d10+40; hp 271; Init –2; Spd 20 ft.; AC 27, touch 6, flat-footed 27; Base Atk +31, Grp +52; Atk +42 melee (4d8+13/x2, slam); Full Atk +42 melee (4d8+13/x2, 2 slams); Space/Reach 15 ft./15 ft.; SA Slow; SQ Construct traits, damage reduction 10/—, darkvision 60 ft., immunity to magic, low-light vision; AL N; SV Fort +14, Ref +12, Will +14; Str 37, Dex 7, Con —, Int —, Wis 11, Cha 1.

*Skills and Feats:* None; none.

*Slow (Su):* A stone golem can use a slow effect, as the spell, as a free action once every 2 rounds. The effect has a range of 10 feet and a duration of 7 rounds, requiring a DC 31 Will save to negate. The save DC is Constitution-based.

*Immunity to Magic (Ex):* A stone golem is immune to any spell or spell-like ability that allows spell resistance. In addition, certain spells and effects function differently against the creature, as noted below.

A *transmute rock to mud* spell slows a stone golem (as the *slow* spell) for 2d6 rounds, with no saving throw, while *transmute mud to rock* heals all of its lost hit points.

A *stone to flesh* spell does not actually change the golem's structure but negates its damage reduction and immunity to magic for 1 full round.

*Damage Reduction (Su)*: A stone golem ignores the first 10 points of damage from any attack, natural or with a weapon (even if it has an enchantment bonus). The stone golem takes normal damage from energy attacks (even nonmagical ones), spells, spell-like abilities, and supernatural abilities (see Immunity to Magic).

*Darkvision, 60 ft. (Ex)*: A stone golem can see in the dark with no light source at all, out to a range of 60 feet. Darkvision is black and white only (colors cannot be discerned). It does not allow the stone golem to see anything that it could not see otherwise—invisible objects are still invisible, and illusions are still visible as what they seem to be. Likewise, darkvision subjects the stone golem to gaze attacks normally. The presence of light does not spoil darkvision.

*Low-Light Vision (Ex)*: A stone golem can see twice as far as a Human in starlight, moonlight, torchlight, and similar conditions of shadowy illumination. It retains the ability to distinguish color and detail under these conditions.

*Construct traits:* A stone golem has the following traits:

- No Constitution score.
- Low-light vision.
- Darkvision out to 60 feet.
- Immunity to all mind-affecting effects (charms, compulsions, phantasms, patterns, and morale effects).
- Immunity to poison, sleep effects, paralysis, stunning, disease, death effects, and necromancy effects.
- Cannot heal damage on its own, but often can be repaired by exposing it to a certain kind of effect or through the use of the Craft Construct feat. A construct with the fast healing special quality still benefits from that quality.
- Not subject to critical hits, non-lethal damage, ability damage, ability drain, fatigue, exhaustion, or energy drain.
- Immunity to any effect that requires a Fortitude save (unless the effect also works on objects, or is harmless).
- Not at risk of death from massive damage. Immediately destroyed when reduced to 0 hit points or less.
- Since it was never alive, a construct cannot be raised or resurrected.
- Because its body is a mass of unloving matter, a construct is hard to destroy. It gains bonus hit points based on size.
- Proficient with its natural weapons only, unless generally humanoid in form, in which case proficient with any weapon mentioned in its entry.
- Proficient with no armor.
- Constructs do not eat, sleep, or breathe.

# Part 3: Concluding the Adventure — Adventure Hooks

If the PCs spoil Karek's grab for immortality, there are several ways of building upon the events and NPCs presented in this scenario.

- If Karek survived, the necromancer is bound to want to take his revenge upon the PCs — provided he has kept his actions secret from Cear and the Ten, either of whom would destroy him for what he knows.
- Adinerach might suspect or know about the necromancer's treachery. If so, the threatened Karek sees potential allies in the heroes, who also have an enemy in Cear Adinerach. The treacherous necromancer tries to strike a bargain with the PCs, hoping they might rid him of Adinerach.
- Assuming the party treated Adoramus Te well, he becomes an ally with good contacts among the Elves.
- If the PCs' actions against Karek become known, the people of Syranis — and perhaps even the Elves at large — now regard them as heroes and potential allies.
- If the party recovered Karek's notes and made their contents relatively public knowledge (such as by turning them over to the Wizards' Guild), they may well draw the wrath of Cear Adinerach and the others of the Ten, the immortal elders of the Elven people and true rulers of that race, depending on whether they specifically ask others to help slay Cear.

## Dragon's Blood

*Minor artifact*

**The vial contains the heart's blood of a dragon, quite possibly one the party themselves slew in a previous adventure. Though almost as dark as ink, the blood burns with a red light, and bubbles when someone touches the vial. To collect the blood is no mean task, as only fresh heart's blood will do, collected no more than a quarter hour after the dragon's death. Harvested hearts of wyrmlings contain one dose of dragon's blood, and the doses double for each age category afterward. Naturally, some conditions may prevent this altogether, such as a dragon dying from *horrid wilting* or *implosion* spells. Similarly, if something has destroyed the dragon's soul, the blood is useless.**

**Dragon's blood is an old and dangerous spell component, offering a tiny portion of the Great Dragon's own power to aid in the casting. Any spellcaster may use the blood as an additional material component during a spell's casting, sacrificing a number of doses of blood to enhance the spell. For every dose lost, the caster casts the spell at +2 levels, or reduces by 2 the level penalty from any metamagic feats used. The caster may use these benefits when crafting items or scribing scrolls.**

**The heart's blood draws its power from the soul of the slain dragon. Using dragon's blood forever taints the caster, and any dragon can smell the blood upon him.**

- Most importantly, if the party recovers Karek's notes, they have newfound insight into Cear's abilities. The time has come to destroy their old foe. With Karek's notes, the party has at last discovered Cear's true nature and power. More importantly, however, they have discovered his limits. With some research (a Knowledge (arcana) check followed by a Spellcraft check, both DCs at 30, or automatic if the party shares the notes with Adoramus Te or the Wizards' Guild the party can discover a counter-ritual that allows them to turn Cear's powers over life and death to their own advantage. The ritual requires both a prepared environment and a small circle of spellcasters (one for each member of the party, with each ritualist concentrating on one character's life, and another caster overseeing the ritual) dedicated to its performance for the duration of the fight against Cear. This is the party's chance to take the fight directly to the Medusan Lords, and to the man most personally responsible for the Assassins' Strike.

This rite exploits the very ritual that granted Cear his immortality. Not only does the rite temporarily strip Cear of his *life and death* supernatural ability, but it twists its nature against him. While the ritual is active, it protects the party against him. The first time during the ritual that Cear kills any given character, the ritual fully heals each member of the party. This comes at a high price, however, as one of the ritual's participants falls in their stead.

The party can (and should be encouraged to) seek out contacts from previous adventures to provide the bait, the battleground, or the casters for the ritual. If they succeed, then they have avenged the deaths of countless heroes and innocents, and struck a telling blow against the Medusan Lords. If they fail, then Cear knows better than to fall for the rite next time, and hounds the party's allies in retaliation.

If the PCs could not stop Karek from completing the dreadful ritual, several things happen. First, most of the population of Syranis dies. If the PCs are anywhere near the town when this happens, some of them might be killed. But the world has not seen the last of the immortal Karek or the vengeful Cear Adinerach.

- With the tremendous power he has gained, Karek fears no mortal man. He must, however, still deal with Cear Adinerach — perhaps even trying to take his place among the Medusan Lords. The great heroes that almost thwarted his plans might be the perfect weapons against him.
- Cear Adinerach now wants to capture Karek and ensure that he dies horribly, repeatedly, and eternally. Cear may even view him as a greater threat than the party.
- Similarly, the authorities of the surrounding cities — and perhaps even the government of some important nations — might hire the PCs to pursue the man responsible for the genocide in Syranis. Not knowing what transpired in the Elven settlement, the authorities fear the necromancer might magically slay their own towns.

### The Ritual

Karek's ritual is the product of his investigations into Cear's past. Though Karek has kept these details secret from his master, the information is surprisingly accurate, if missing a few key details. In effect, the ritual's completion would remake Karek as a dragon-souled Elf, the first new one since Artheon joined the Ten (see *The World Atlas* for information about the Ten, who rule the Elves). Karek's skin would take a golden luster, and he would have the ability to raise the dead without penalty, at will. Eventually, he would gain other powers as well, unique to himself, but it is highly unlikely that either Cear or the others of the Ten would allow him that luxury.

Unfortunately for any would-be gods in the party, the notes are incomplete. Although daring, Karek is no fool, and memorized most of the ritual before destroying the detailed description of its casting. The notes *do* contain Karek's analysis of the powers Cear has shown him (including both his *life & death* abilities, and his apparent immortality). Should the party recover these notes, they will have gained a valuable weapon against Cear Adinerach.






# The Traitor

## Introduction

In this adventure, the party discovers thata one of the people they have considered a valuable ally is not just allied with the Medusan Lords, but a Lord herself.

This is one of four adventures in Tier 9. It is meant for characters of levels 18–20.

## Adventure Synopsis

This adventure begins when Sir Robert and his wife, Cassandra, disappear from their rooms in Toris Kelt, shortly after the Free Kingdom armies defeat the Elven siege. Iam Hotelen, the captain of Toris Kelt's Prince-Regent, reports that Sir Robert was last seen in his chambers shortly after an evening meal attended by the leaders of the Free Kingdoms. While the search will continue for Sir Robert in Toris Kelt, Hotelen requests the PCs go to Sir Robert's estates in Andover. His aide, the summoner Maxmilian, may be able to narrow down the list of suspects that would wish to kidnap Sir Robert and provide valuable assistance in recovering the duke. With the current state of Andover, and the presence of the retreating Elven armies, Hotelen wishes to send a group capable of handling themselves to deliver the news and work with Maxmilian.

Unfortunately for the PCs, they have more to worry about than Elven armies. A group of gray-clad rogues tries to kidnap the party as well. How the adventure progresses depends on whether the PCs escape this attempt to kidnap them. If they are captured, they must try to escape; if they elude capture, they may wish to determine who these would-be kidnappers are, and what, if any, connection they have to the disappearance of Sir Robert and his wife. In either case the news of Sir Robert's disappearance follows them from Toris Kelt. The peasants of Andover fear for their lives, while the remaining nobles

either lose hope or try to increase their power. While the Elven armies will hear of Sir Robert's disappearance, the bulk of their forces are retreating, so few units will be left to capitalize on the burgeoning chaos.

## Character Hooks

The PCs can be brought into this adventure in three ways.

- They are in Toris Kelt, either as part of the Free Kingdoms forces, or new arrivals to the now freed city-state. If part of the forces already stationed there, Iam Hotelen sends them to Andover to ask for Maxmilian's aid. If they are new arrivals, they soon hear of Sir Robert's disappearance and offer their assistance.
- If they are in distant parts of the Accordlands, Maxmilian teleports to them and asks for help after messengers arrive from Toris Kelt to inform him of Sir Robert's disappearance.
- A group of rogues, all clad in gray, attempt to kidnap the party. Either they are kidnapped and brought to a secret lair, or they evade capture and wish to investigate exactly what is after them.

# Area 1: Toris Kelt

Toris Kelt has recently been freed from a long siege. The city-state's three counties are brimming with new arrivals, from the armies of the Free Kingdoms to refugees from the southern countries. Days are spent strengthening weakened defenses, tending to the wounded and making plans for the future. Nights are spent in revelry, celebrating their victory and respite from the war. Things change once news of Sir Robert's disappearance reaches the masses. Doubt of the city's safety increases and the leaders of the assembled armies are momentarily fractured, as all relied upon Sir Robert to bind them together. What would have been careful debates in the presence of the Duke of Andover now become verbal battles, as the future of the alliance is decided.

Whether they were part of the armies or are new arrivals, the PCs have plenty of opportunity to gather supplies and information in Toris Kelt. Due to high demand, goods and services have a 25–50% mark up, depending on the scarcity of the item.

Refer to *The World Atlas* for a more detailed description of the city-state of Toris Kelt.

### Rumors in Toris Kelt

The PCs may attempt to gather information in the city-state of Toris Kelt. The city is filled with residents, soldiers, and refugees. Each rumor requires a Gather Information check (DC 20). Some of these rumors are untrue.

- Sir Robert and his wife disappeared from their chambers. (True.)
- The Elves are retreating to their forests, with Sir Robert as their prisoner. (True and false; the Elven armies do not have Sir Robert, though they are retreating.)
- Sir Robert's army is worried for their leader, but is respecting the chain of command and has not panicked. Sir Robert's second-in-command, Lieutenant Dunbar, is now in charge. (True.)
- The people worry what will happen to the Free Kingdoms alliance if something has happened to Sir Robert. (True.)
- The people of Toris Kelt feel their Prince-Regent, Gaalus Lanrunnel, should lead the new Free Kingdoms, while the refugees from the south do not full trust the mysterious northern ruler. (True.)
- Captain Dukat, leader of the Toris Kelt army, has been distant and rarely seen since the Elven occupation force has withdrawn. (True.)
- Without Sir Robert the other Free Kingdoms leaders are slowly fracturing and many feel a civil war will occur. (Partly true. The leaders disagree, bit none wish to war against each other).
- Sir Robert has tired of conflict and fled on his own. (False.)
- Rabinous Zon is the cause of Sir Robert's disappearance, as he did not wish for a strong warrior to lead the new Free Kingdoms. (False.)
- Terak Justicebringer killed Sir Robert, declaring him a heretic. (False.)
- The Prince-Regent has killed or imprisoned Sir Robert in response to the death of his only son and heir. (False.)

# Area 2: Andover

Andover is a kingdom on the verge of destruction. The insatiable blood lust of the Elves has devastated the north and east. Corinth, ancestral home of Sir Robert the Vigilant, has been destroyed, so the few remaining soldiers and land owners are struggling to maintain some semblance of their former lives. Sir Robert's country house, is thirty miles from the ruins of Corinth, and has been spared from the harshest destruction. The remaining peasants claim that Sir Robert's chief steward, Maxmilian, has been crucial to the area's survival.

Since King Michael's death and the destruction of Corinth, Andover has split into autonomous duchies. While the dukes and duchesses who remain are greedy and fractious, they were wise enough to know that the most capable leader for Andover was Sir Robert. The Andoveran armies rallied to him, but with Sir Robert's disappearance and the bulk of Andover's forces away in Toris Kelt, a power vacuum threatens to destroy what little stability Andover has left.

For every six hours PCs spend in the war-ravaged land of Andover, they have a 10% chance of having an encounter (*see Table 23–1*).

### Table 23-1: Andover Random Encounters

| d% | Encounter |
|---|---|
| 01–10 | Andoveran refugees (10d6 peasants) |
| 11–20 | Andoveran scouting party (1 Captain (CR 10), 2d4 Sergeants (CR 5), 10d10 Warriors (CR 3)) |
| 21–30 | Andoveran patrol (under orders from one of Andover's remaining dukes) (1 Commander (CR 12), 1 Captain, 2d4 Sergeants (CR5) 2d6 Warriors) |
| 31–40 | Elf scouting party (1 Captain (CR 10), 2d4 Sergeants (CR 5), 10d10 Warriors (CR 3)) |
| 41–45 | Elf patrol (Commander (CR 12), 1 Captain, 2d4 Sergeants (CR5) 2d6 Warriors) |
| 46–55 | Sarakian Manticore (CR 6, see p. 160 Monsters and Lairs) |
| 55–60 | Fiendling Horde (10d10 fiendlings, CR 1, see p. 13 Monsters and Lairs) |
| 61–65 | Ghost Bog (12d6 ghost bogs, CR 4, see p. 88 Monster and Lairs) |
| 66–70 | Skeleton (10d8 skeletons, CR 1, see p. 167 Monster and Lairs) |
| 71–80 | Sarakian Giant (CR 6, see p. 156 Monsters and Lairs) |
| 81–85 | Sanguicorn (CR 4, see p. 193 Monsters and Lairs) |
| 86–90 | Stirges (2d6 stirges, CR 1/2, see p. 193 Monster Manual™) |
| 91–95 | Forest Troll (CR 5, see p. XX Monsters and Lairs) |
| 96–00 | Unclean Spirits (2d6 unclean spirits, CR 8, see p. 197 Monsters and Lairs) |

## Area 3: Corinth

The city of Corinth has been destroyed, but the province of Corinth remains. Most of its smaller towns and villages have also been razed, and its people have fled. A few villages and hamlets remain in the western portion, but the rest of the province is in the hands of the Elves. Sir Robert's country house lies near the western border of the province, relatively untouched by the attacks. Aside from a western sliver where the hardiest refugees still cling to the land, Corinth is deserted. With nothing left to fight for here, the Elven armies had turned their attention to the north, though most now retreat back to their forests.

Rumors of a duke seeking to exchange the land of Corinth for peace with the Elves flourish in western Andover. According to rumor the only reason and offer has not been made was fear of reprisal from Sir Robert. With his recent disappearance, it appears a few of the nobles left in Andover are becoming bolder. Refer to *The World Atlas* for a more detailed description of the city of Corinth.

### Rumors in Corinth

The PCs may attempt to gather information in the province of Corinth. The Corinthian people are timid but desperate, and they are wary of Elves. Each rumor requires a Gather Information check (DC 20). Some of these rumors are untrue.

- Sir Robert and the Lady Cassandra have disappeared. (True.)
- The number of elf patrols in the area has drastically increased since Sir Robert's disappearance. (False. With the news of Sir Robert's disappearance the remaining refugees are jumping at shadows out of fear.)
- Sir Robert's army is staying at Toris Kelt. (True.)
- The people fear what will happen to Andover if something has happened to Sir Robert. (True.)
- The other duchies will not follow any leader who is not from Andover. (Debatable.)
- The Duke of Treyntis intends to offer Corinth to the Elves as a means of capitulation. He has the support of some of the other nobles. (True.)
- The other nobles will do nothing, for a while, until they believe that Sir Robert is dead. (True.)
- Sir Robert was on the way home from the front when he was attacked and kidnapped by an Elven raiding party. (False.)
- Sir Robert's country estate was attacked by a band of marauding Elves the night Sir Robert went missing. Maxmilian and Cassandra barely managed to escape with their lives. (False.)
- Sir Robert was struck dead by Elven magic in a last-ditch attempt at revenge for their defeat at Toris Kelt. (False.)
- A group of Sir Robert's most devoted followers left the army in Toris Kelt to try to rescue Sir Robert from the Elves, but they have not been heard from since. (Unknown. The rumor could refer to the party itself or to another group that has gone off on its own.)

### The Elves

The Elven armies have heard rumors of Sir Robert's disappearance, and some of the more ambitious squads are preparing to act. While the majority of the Elven forces are retreating back to their forests, these few squads are performing rear-guard actions, and look to gain glory and prestige by taking advantage of the current situation.

They did not abduct him, and they do not know who did or even if the stories are true. They steadfastly (and truthfully) deny any involvement.

# Part 1: Emergency in Andover

The encounters listed below do not correspond to any map. Introduce them when they seem dramatically appropriate. The encounters should occur in this order to present the PCs with an unfolding picture of the situation. If the PCs are arrived in Andover from Toris Kelt, begin with **Encounter 1**. If the PCs are elsewhere, begin with **Encounter 2 or 3**, depending on whether Maxmilian would seek out the PCs or not.

### Encounter 1: A Chance Meeting

This encounter takes place somewhere in the war-ravaged countryside of Corinth.

**Read aloud:** *War and death have been so commonplace since you entered Corinth that you have nearly become accustomed to it. So many burned villages, so much scorched earth, so many dead and mutilated bodies, and so few living people, save for scattered refugees and the occasional scout party. As you pass by a large bush, a furtive rustling snags your attention, along with a soft moan of pain.*

**Development:** Hiding in the bush is a Human scout in Andover colors. His name is Sam, and he is barely conscious (0 hp), with two arrows embedded in his gut. The arrows look like they are made of bone, with fletching of dry, stiffened skin. He will die within minutes unless the PCs help him. If he is healed, he thanks his saviors sincerely, and swears to help them in any way he can — unless there are Elves in the party, causing him to immediately clam up.

Sam has heard rumors of Sir Robert's disappearance. He has been patrolling the area for Maxmilian, gathering information on the Elven army's movements. Sam was just on his way back to report that the Elves are still in retreat when he was ambushed by a small group of Elven rangers. He knows nothing about the circumstances of Sir Robert's disappearance, though he is pleased the PCs have been sent to investigate the situation.

**If Sam believes the PCs to be honorable and resourceful, read aloud,** *"Thank you for saving my life. Please, follow me, and I shall lead you to Maxmilian. I can get you through the wards guarding Sir Robert's estate."*

**If there are Elves in the party, or if Sam does not trust the PCs, read aloud,** *"Leave me. I thank you for your assistance, but I must continue my patrols of this area. Maxmilian can be found southeast of here."*

Sir Robert's estates are located due west, however, and Sam is trying to mislead the PCs. Sam does not return to the estate himself, but travels in circuitous routes leading nowhere in particular, in case the PCs attempt to follow him.

If the PCs follow Sam to Sir Robert's estate, proceed to **Encounter 4.**

**Creature:** Sam, a 6th-level ranger.

**Sam, Andoveran Scout, Male Human Rgr 6:** CR 6; Medium humanoid (Human); HD 6d8+12; hp 44 (currently 0); Init +6; Spd 30 ft.; AC 16, touch 12, flat-footed 14; Base Atk +6; Grp +8; Atk +8 melee (1d8+2(19–20/x2), longsword) or +9 ranged (1d8+3/x3, composite longbow); Full Atk +8/+3 melee (1d8+2(19–20/x2), longsword) or +9/+4 ranged (1d8+3/x3, composite longbow); SA -; SQ Favored terrain (forest, hill), Human traits, race/class abilities; AL NG; SV Fort +7, Ref +4, Will +3; Str 14, Dex 14, Con 14, Int 12, Wis 12, Cha 12.

*Skills and Feats*: Handle Animal +10, Hide +13*, Knowledge (nature) +10, Listen +10, Move Silently +9*, Ride +13, Spot +10, Survival +10; Cutting Reminder, Improved Initiative, Improved Track, Quick Draw, Toughness, Track, Treetalk. *includes –2 armor check penalty

*Race/Class Abilities*: *Ranger*: Cover Bonus.

*Favored terrain (forest, hill)*: Sam gains a +3 circumstance bonus to Climb, Hide, Listen, Knowledge (nature), Move Silently, Ride, Search, Spot, Swim, Use Rope, and Survival checks as well as a +2 circumstance bonus to all attack rolls in forests and hill terrain.

*Possessions*: Chain shirt, longsword, composite longbow, 10 +1 *arrows*.

*Ranger Spells Prepared* (0/2; save DC 11 + spell level): 1st — *entangle, speak with animals*.

### Encounter 2: A Plea for Help

This encounter can take place anywhere, and is thus the universal means of bringing the PCs into this adventure. The GM may even use this encounter to save the PCs from some other tight situation, such as imprisonment. Maxmilian knows where to find them, as he has *scried* their whereabouts. He has a single *scroll of teleportation circle* to return himself and the PCs to Sir Robert's estate.

The PCs' only warning may be detecting his *scrying* just before he *teleports* to their location.

**Read aloud:** *Suddenly before you appears a tall thin man with a raven perched on his shoulder. He wears loose robes of various shades of brown and yellow. He simply steps out of nowhere, and the air around him ripples and shifts. "Do not be alarmed," he says. "My name is Maxmilian. I am the chief steward of Sir Robert the Vigilant, Duke of Corinth, in the Kingdom of Andover. I have sought you out because tales of your prowess and power have spread the length and breadth of the Accordlands. Your exploits will become legend, and bards will sing songs about you — but perhaps not in Andover. The kingdom of Andover needs the help of heroes like you. Doubtless you have heard of the troubles Andover has had with the Elves. Our people are scattered and lands ravaged. What forces we have are now in the city of Toris Kelt, where the people of the west have finally struck a blow against the Elves. Sad news follows the good though. Our greatest leader, Sir Robert, and his wife the Lady Cassandra, have gone missing. Without them our fragile alliance may shatter and our armies lose their courage. We need him back, and I believe you alone are capable of assisting us with this task. What say you?"*

**Development:** If the PCs agree, Maxmilian *teleports* them directly to Sir Robert's country estate in Corinth. There is no time to be wasted.

If they refuse, he tries to convince them of the desperation of Andover's plight. He even offers them great rewards for finding Sir Robert and returning him safely. If they still refuse, he resorts to begging. Sense Motive checks (DC 20) at this point reveal that Maxmilian's feelings are not as simple as wishing for the return of his lord. There is something deeper than mere loyalty to his friend and duke.

**If they still stubbornly refuse, Maxmilian grows contemptuous, read aloud:** *"So be it. The 'great heroes' have consigned an entire kingdom to slaughter and torture. Rest easy," he sneers. With arcane words and a wave of his hand, he disappears.*

There is no further attempt to secure the PCs help. Go to Part 3.

## Encounter 3: Ambush!

This encounter can take place in one of two ways. Either it happens while the PCs are traveling from Toris Kelt to Andover on the quest given to them by Iam Hotelen, or it can happen as a random encounter designed to draw the PCs into the adventure.

While the PCs are on a deserted stretch of road running through a forest, they are ambushed by a group of 10 Humans dressed in all gray. A successful Spot check (DC 25) can alert the PCs to the danger. Whether the PCs spot the ambushers or not, the group attempts to capture the PCs alive. They are not, however, averse to killing the PCs if they must. The rogues attempt to subdue one PC at a time, using swarm tactics. Four of the ambushers are armed with short bows and arrows. The arrow tips are covered in a poison that causes paralysis (Injury DC 17 Will save to negate). The other six use weighted nets to snare the PCs.

If the PCs are captured they are brought to the manor of Sir Robert, Duke of Corinth. Go to **Encounter 4**.

If the PCs subdue their ambushers, they can attempt to question them. The prisoners all ingest poison and die before the PCs can get anything useful out of them. A Search check (DC 20) of the bodies reveals a scroll. A Spellcraft check (DC 20) can determine that it is a *scroll of teleportation circle*, and the PCs can infer that this is how were to be taken away. They can choose to use the scroll to see where it will take them, or do nothing with it. If they do nothing go to **Part 3**.

**Creatures:** Ten ambushers, 10th-level rogues.

**Ambush Party (10), Male Human Rog 10:** CR 10; Medium humanoid (Human); HD 10d6+10; hp 45; Spd 30 ft.; Init +7; AC 13, touch 13, flat-footed 10; Base Atk +7; Grp +8; Atk +10 ranged (net) or +11 ranged (1d6 plus poison/x3, shortbow); Full Atk +10/+1 ranged (net, –4 penalty for not being properly folded) or +11/+6 ranged (1d6 plus poison/x3, shortbow); SA Sneak attack +4d6; SQ Catfall, evasion, hide in plain sight, improved evasion, improved nightsight, whisperstep. Human traits, race/class abilities; AL LE; SV Fort +4, Ref +12, Will +5; Str 12, Dex 16, Con 13, Int 14, Wis 11, Cha 13.

*Skills and Feats*: Climb +6, Gather Information +3, Hide +9, Jump +6, Knowledge (local) +4, Listen +6, Move Silently +7, Rope Use +5, Spot +6, Tumble +7; Improved Initiative, Lightning Reflexes, Point Blank Shot, Precise Shot, Weapon Focus (shortbow).

*Race/Class Abilities*: *Rogue*: Street Smarts.

*Catfall*: On a successful Reflex save (DC 10 + 1 for every 10 feet fallen), the rogue takes only half normal damage from a fall.

*Hide In Plain Sight*: Each time a rogue makes a Hide check, he may reduce the total penalty (if any) to his skill check by his rogue class level (10), to a minimum of 0.

*Improved Evasion*: If a rogue makes a successful Reflex saving throw against an attack that normally deals half damage on a successful save, he instead takes no damage. If he fails the save, he takes only half damage. Improved evasion can be used only if the mercenary is wearing light armor or no armor. A helpless rogue does not gain the benefit of evasion.

*Improved Nightsight*: A rogue can see half again as far as normal in conditions of low light.

*Sneak Attack*: Anytime a rogue's target is denied a Dexterity bonus to AC, or when he flanks a target, the mercenary deals an additional 4d6 points of damage on a successful melee attack.

*Whisperstep*: A rogue may move his full speed while attempting to Move Silently with no penalty. If the rogue is running, he suffers only half the normal penalty (–10) to his Move Silently check

*Possessions:* Shortbow, 20 arrows, net.

### Maxmilian

**Maxmilian and Sir Robert have been friends since they were the young sons of adjacent noble families. When Sir Robert became the Duke of Corinth in such troubled times, Maxmilian joined him. Maxmilian, Sir Robert's trusted friend, has also been in love with Sir Robert's wife Cassandra since the moment he first saw her, and knows that she returns his affection. Sir Robert is a good man, a devoted husband, but he is never there. Maxmilian's disloyalty shames him to his core, but he cannot help it. Thoughts of Cassandra consume every idle moment, so he keeps himself busy, sometimes taking on more tasks than he can perform to help him assuage the desire in his heart. This has become even more difficult in the recent months since they secretly consummated their love.**

If the PCs question Maxmilian about the circumstances surrounding Sir Robert's disappearance, he gives them the following bits of information, which he has heard from Toris Kelt as well as gathered with his own *scrying* powers.

- It happened late at night. Sir Robert and Cassandra had just returned to their quarters that evening from a dinner of Free Kingdoms leaders. When morning came, his disappearance was discovered.
- Maxmilian is wracked with grief and guilt. He was away when his lord needed him most. While Sir Robert sent him to Andover after the victory over the Elves at Toris Kelt, he still feels responsible.
- Sir Robert, at Cassandra's urging, sent Maxmilian back to Andover to keep an eye on the fractious duchies and to gather information regarding the troop movements of the Elves to the south.

*continued next page*

- None in the castle, nor anyone in Toris Kelt for that matter, saw Sir Robert or Cassandra leave or anyone enter their chambers.
- He believes powerful magic was used to spirit the duke and duchess away, with no one the wiser.
- While most saw Sir Robert as the clear choice to lead the Free Kingdoms, most of the natives of Toris Kelt felt their own Prince-Regent would be better suited.
- His attempts at *scrying* have not yielded anything more than a sense of powerful magic at work. Something is blocking his ability to dig deeper.
- He does not believe it to be the work of the Elves, as they would rather kill Robert and raise him as an undead. It would demoralize the Free Kingdoms far more than merely kidnapping him. Also the Elves are still retreating, which they would not do if they had the military leader of the Free Kingdoms in their grasp.

If he is questioned about any of the information given by the servants (see sidebar *What the Servants Know*), he shrugs and says he does not know what they are talking about. They are merely servants, after all.

**Maximilian, Advisor to Sir Robert, Male Human Sum 12:** CR 12; Medium humanoid (Human); HD 12d4+12; hp 42; Spd 30 ft.; Init +1; AC 16, touch 11, flat-footed 15; Base Atk +6; Grp +6; Atk +7 melee (1d6+1/x2, *+1 quarterstaff*) or +8 ranged (1d8+1(19–20/x2), *+1 light crossbow*); Full Atk +7/+2 melee (1d6+1/x2, *+1 quarterstaff*) or +8 ranged (1d8+1(19–20/x2), *+1 light crossbow*); SA Spells; SQ Beast friend (2 steps), bond, spontaneous casting, tame (x2), Human traits, race/class abilities; AL LG; SV Fort +5, Ref +5, Will +9; Str 11, Dex 12, Con 12, Int 17, Wis 13, Cha 14.

*Skills and Feats*: Appraise +6, Concentration +16, Craft +18, Diplomacy +17, Intimidate +17, Knowledge (aracana) +18, Spellcraft +18; Combat Casting, Craft Wondrous Item, Leadership, Maximize Spell, Quicken Spell, Scribe Scroll, Alertness.

*Race/Class Abilities: Summoner*: Shield Self, Absorb Special Ability (1/day).

*Bond*: Maximilian may bond a creature he has summoned to accomplish a specific task that can be stated in a single simple sentence. Bonding a creature in this manner extends the duration of the summoning until the task is completed.

*Beast Friend:* Maximilian may communicate telepathically with any living being within two steps of his alignment (Lawful Good).

*Familiar (raven)*: Maxmilian's raven familiar has the following statistics:

*Summoner Spells Prepared* (4/5/5/4/3/2; save DC 13 + spell level): 0 — all; 1st — *charm person, comprehend languages, mage armor, magic missile, mount, summon monster I, unseen servant;* 2nd — *fog cloud, hideous laughter, shatter, summon monster II, summon swarm, web;* 3rd — *flame arrow, hold person, phantom steed, summon monster III;* 4th — *charm monster, Leomund's secure shelter, solid fog, summon monster IV,* 5th — *summon monster V, teleport.*

*Possessions: +1 quarterstaff, +1 light crossbow,* 20 bolts, *ring of wizardry III, potion of jump, potion of levitate, scroll of vision,* spellbook.

**Cyrus (Raven Familiar):** CR —; Tiny magical beast; HD 12; hp 21; Init +2; Spd 10 ft., fly 40 ft. (average); AC 20, touch 20, flat-footed 18; Base Atk +6; Grp –6; Atk +8 melee (1d2–5/x2, claw); Full Atk +8 melee (1d2–5/x2, 2 claws); Space/Reach 2–1/2 ft./0 ft.; SA -; SQ low-light vision, empathic link, share spells, improved evasion, deliver touch spells, speak with master, speak with animals of its kind, spell resistance 17, speak language; AL N; SV Fort +4, Ref +6, Will +10; Str 1, Dex 15, Con 10, Int 11, Wis 14, Cha 6.

*Skill and Feats*: Listen +3, Spot +3; Weapon Finesse (claws).

*Low-Light Vision:* A raven can see twice as far as a Human in starlight, moonlight, torchlight, and similar conditions of shadowy illumination. It retains the ability to distinguish color and detail under these conditions.

*Speak Language*: Cyrus can speak Common

*Familiar Ability Descriptions*: All familiars have special abilities (or impart abilities to their masters) depending on Maxmilian's combined level in classes that grant familiars. The abilities are cumulative.

*Alertness (Ex)*: While his familiar is within arm's reach, Maxmilian gains the Alertness feat.

*Improved Evasion (Ex):* When subjected to an attack that normally allows a Reflex saving throw for half damage, a familiar takes no damage if it makes a successful saving throw and half damage even if the saving throw fails.

*Share Spells*: At Maxmilian's option, he may have any spell (but not any spell-like ability) he casts on himself also affect him familiar. The familiar must be within 5 feet at the time of casting to receive the benefit. If the spell or effect has a duration other than instantaneous, it stops affecting the familiar if it moves farther than 5 feet away and will not affect the familiar again even if it returns to Maxmilian before the duration expires. Additionally, Maxmilian may cast a spell with a target of "You" on him familiar (as a touch range spell) instead of on himself. Maxmilian and him familiar can share spells even if the spells normally do not affect creatures of the familiar's type (magical beast).

*Empathic Link (Su):* Maxmilian has an empathic link with his familiar out to a distance of up to 1 mile. Maxmilian cannot see through the familiar's eyes, but they can communicate empathically. Because of the limited nature of the link, only general emotional content can be communicated. Because of this empathic link, Maxmilian has the same connection to an item or place that him familiar does.

*Deliver Touch Spells (Su):* Maxmilian's familiar can deliver touch spells for him. If Maxmilian and the familiar are in contact at the time Maxmilian casts a touch spell, she can designate his familiar as the "toucher." The familiar can then deliver the touch spell just as Maxmilian could. As usual, if Maxmilian casts another spell before the touch is delivered, the touch spell dissipates.

*Speak with Master (Ex):* Maxmilian and his familiar can communicate verbally as if they were using a common language. Other creatures do not understand the communication without magical help.

*Speak with Animals of Its Kind (Ex):* Maxmilian's familiar can communicate with birds (including dire varieties). Such communication is limited by the intelligence of the conversing creatures.

*Spontaneous Casting:* Maximilian may "lose" any memorized spell to cast a summoning (a spell with "summon" in its name) spell of equal or lesser level. The summoning spell must be one known (i.e. in the summoner's spellbook) to the summoner. He may cast such spells without the use of a focus or material components.

*Tame:* Maximilian may exert mental control over four summoned creatures that he himself has summoned. Each summoned creature he attempts to exert control over receives a Will save (DC 22) to resist. Creatures controlled by Maximilian are completely subservient to his will; they effectively have no minds of their own and their actions are decided solely by Maximilian.

# Part 1: The Estate *(map page 510)*

## Location 1: Sir Robert the Vigilant's Country Estate

**Development:** How the PCs enter the estate depends on how they entered the adventure. If they *teleport* to the estate with Maxmilian, he brings them directly into the foyer (**Location 1.1**). If they come to the estate with Sam or by following his directions, they approach via the front gate (**Location 1.2**).

If Maxmilian did not bring them himself, or if they are not with Sam (who can bypass the estate's security), they trip a magical alarm Maxmilian has set up, and Maxmilian stops what he is doing to intercept them. The summoner is wary of thieves, and tries to drive the PCs away with his magic. Once the PCs either subdue Maxmilian or convince him they are not hostile, he becomes morose as he learns of Sir Robert's disappearance. He leads them to the guest rooms to refresh themselves (**Location 1.11**).

If the PCs subdued the ambushers and used the scroll, they appear in Sir Robert's private study (**Location 1.13**). Within minutes Maxmilian arrives with four guards, demanding to know why the PCs have broken into his lord's manor. Once the situation is sorted out, Maxmilian dismisses the guards, informs the PCs of his lord's disappearance from Toris Kelt, and asks for their help in finding him. See **Encounter 2** for details on Maxmilian's plea to the PCs.

### Cassandra's Tapestries

**On walls throughout the house are Cassandra's hand-stitched tapestries. They are intricate and beautiful, and each has several small gems sewn into its design, one of which is a *seeing stone* (see Part 5), which Maxmilian requested she sew into the tapestries. At will, Maxmilian can spy upon every room in the house using these *seeing stones*.**

The house is a two-story fortified structure of rusty-brown stone. The only openings in the walls are arrow slits. These are opened on warm days to admit light and fresh air, but they are tightly shuttered during darkness and cold. There are only two ways into the house, through the front doors, and through the door to the garden (**Location 1.6**).

## Location 1.1: Manor House — Foyer *(map page 509)*

**Read aloud:** *The walls of the room are shrouded in beautiful tapestries, most bearing floral designs. A railed balcony on the upper floor surrounds the room, with a stately staircase leading up to it. Hanging from the lofty ceiling is a large brass chandelier, sparkling with oil lamps. The floor is a beautiful mosaic of the family's coat of arms, a noble stag facing a flaming dragon.*

If Maxmilian brings the characters to the estate, he brings them to this room.

The front door is made from thick hardwood planks strapped with iron bars.

**Front Door:** 2 in. thick, hardness 8, hp 40, Break DC 22.

## Location 1.2: Manor House — Sir Robert's Study

**Read aloud:** *This cozy room has several comfortable chairs and low tables. The walls are decorated by their owner's history of warfare. Exotic and antique weapons, shields, and armor hanging on walls or from stands, all meticulously maintained. A large writing desk is situated in one corner of the room.*

*Treasure:* The weapons found here are all of different styles and makes. All items in this room are masterwork items, unless noted otherwise. There are three longswords, two battle axes, one scimitar, one Nothrog waraxe, one *greatsword +2*, one rapier, one large steel *shield +1*, one tower shield, one large wooden shield, one suit of splint mail, and one suit of full plate armor.

## Location 1.3: Manor House — Cassandra's Drawing Room

**Read aloud:** *This brightly decorated room has several comfortable chairs. A half-finished tapestry is stretched on a large loom in one corner of the room, along with several spools of different colored thread. Tastefully arranged throughout the room are pedestals supporting sculptures of crystal, pewter, and alabaster. The sculptures depict*

### What the Servants Know

If the PCs question the servants, they give mostly the same information as Maxmilian. A few bits differ slightly from Maxmilian's recollection. Servants notice everything, though some of their conclusions are outlandish. Gather Information checks (DC 15) uncover the following information.

- Maxmilian is an honorable, trustworthy man who treats the servants well. He is completely devoted to Sir Robert.
- Sir Robert loves his wife greatly, and whenever he is home, he does not leave her side.
- Cassandra is a loyal, devoted wife to the duke. There is other information that the PCs can only uncover with more thorough questioning. These bits require Gather Information checks (DC 20).
- There was a commotion in the Cassandra's chambers the night Sir Robert and Cassandra disappeared from Toris Kelt. When the servants investigated they found nothing unusual.
- Maxmilian has been acting strangely for the past two weeks. He is unusually forgetful.
- Before they left for Toris Kelt, both Maxmilian and Cassandra seemed to forget everyday things, like the fact that they had already ordered a specific dish to be served at a meal, or ordered a servant to perform some duty.
- Cassandra is usually a kind, considerate, and forgiving mistress. However, there was an incident where she personally flogged a kitchen maid who spilled hot soup on her. This occurred shortly before her departure for the north, and was an isolated incident. It is being attributed to worry over the war and the lengthy absence of Sir Robert undertook securing Andover against the Elves.
- One of the kitchen maids, a young woman named Merina, steadfastly believes she saw Sir Robert in the manor the night he disappeared from Toris Kelt. The other servants think she is mad. Merina is the only servant who knows what really happened the night Sir Robert disappeared from Toris Kelt. She is plain, and accustomed to being inconspicuous. As a result, only she was in a position to discover the truth. She is tired of being tongue-lashed into silence by the others whenever she attempts to recount that night's events. She is happy to provide the following information to anyone who talks to her privately. She might make furtive attempts to gain their attention if they appear to take the word of the other servants at face value, without digging deeper.
- Merina suspects that something is going on between Maxmilian and Cassandra. Maxmilian was in the duke's chamber most of the day, something he never does. She knows this without a doubt, because she saw Maxmilian entering the chamber at various points of the day. If asked about this, Maxmilian denies it utterly. None of the other servants can recall Maxmilian even near Sir Robert's chambers, let along entering them.
- Late that night, as she was returning to her rooms, Merina saw Maxmilian bring Sir Robert into the duke's chambers. The duke was bound and gagged, and did not look healthy. She does not think she was noticed, because Maxmilian has not mentioned the incident.
- Merina heard Sir Robert cry out in surprise when he entered his chamber, then nothing after that.
- Merina did not hear anything else for the rest of the night, and she did not see Sir Robert, or Maxmilian for the rest of the night.
- When Merina got up the next morning, Cassandra and Maxmilian were meeting with each of the servants alone in turn. The rest of the servants were confused — something must have happened during the night, but no one saw or heard anything. After the things she had seen and heard the night before, she was afraid and hid in the garden shed (**Location 1.7**), where she was apparently overlooked. Later she was shocked to discover the other servants not remembering Cassandra's presence or the questioning at all.

*several types of animals, like a stag standing defiant and noble, a lion pursuing a gazelle, and a soaring condor. The walls of the room are decorated with frescoes depicting prominent events in Andover's history and legend, like the ancient war with Deverenia, the defeat of the Dragon, and the apotheosis of Neus.*

*Treasure:* Cassandra spent most of her time here, weaving for countless hours the beautiful tapestries that grace the walls throughout the house. Each of the finished tapestries is worth 750 gp. The statues are well made, and would fetch 500 gp each from an art dealer.

## Location 1.4: Manor House — Servants' Quarters

These simple rooms are where the house servants live. There are four servants to a room, with men on the left side of the house, women on the right side. The rooms contain little more than beds, simple wardrobes, and a few modest possessions. Their rooms are clean and tidy.

## Location 1.5: Manor House — Storage

**Read aloud:** *The air in this room is cold and stale, as if it has been shut up for many months. The only light spills in through the open doorway. The darkness is filled with motionless bulks, and smells of dust and mice.*

This large room houses miscellaneous junk: old furniture, supplies, a few simple melee weapons for the servants to use during an emergency, plus four light crossbows and a stockpile of 400 crossbow bolts in bundles. The weapons are locked in a large wooden chest to which only Maxmilian and Sir Robert have keys. The chest can be opened with an Open Lock check (DC 20).

## Location 1.6: Manor House — Garden

**Read aloud:** *Enclosed by a 12-foot wall, the garden is a scene of tranquil elegance. The shrubs and fruit trees are neatly trimmed. The large pool is like a sheet of glass. All throughout the greenery are bursts of flowering color. A thick blanket of ivy climbs the wall all the way to the roof. Beside the pool is a stone well with a much-used winch and bucket. Several narrow paths meander through the foliage.*

Cassandra has always had a passion for plants. She demands that this garden be meticulously maintained, and she could often be found here during daylight hours, and occasionally at night. Several of these plants can be rendered into poisons; characters who make a successful Poison or Knowledge (herbalism) check (DC 20) spot this fact. If Maxmilian or the servants are asked about them, they claim Cassandra keeps them because she thinks they are pretty.

The doors to the garden are heavy wooden doors.

**Garden Doors:** 2 in. thick, hardness 8, 40 hp, Break DC 22.

## Location 1.7: Manor House — Garden Shed

This small building is a sturdy wooden structure with a single wooden door. Inside are a wealth of well-used garden tools like rakes, shovels, buckets, and shears. In one corner is an upside-down bucket. A Spot check (DC 20) reveals the abundance of breadcrumbs littering the floor around the bucket. Merina, the kitchen maid, sometimes eats stolen food out here.

## Location 1.8: Manor House — Dining Hall

This room looks much like every other noble's dining hall. There is a long wooden table with three large brass candelabra and a dozen high-backed chairs. The walls are covered with more of Cassandra's tapestries.

In the hallway near the dining room is a closet containing tablecloths and dinnerware.

## Location 1.9: Manor House — Garden Balcony

About fifteen feet above the garden is a stone balcony. The balcony doors are good wooden doors. People on the balcony can look over the garden wall and see the fields of Sir Robert's estate.

**Balcony Doors:** 1–1/2 in. thick, hardness 5, hp 15, Break DC 18.

## Location 1.10: Manor House — Maxmilian's Room

**Read aloud:** *This room is tidy, even though the abundance of spell components and books lining the shelves make it appear a bit cramped. The room is comfortable, but not richly appointed.*

There is a perch for Cyrus, Maxmilian's raven familiar, in one corner of the room. At the foot of the bed is an iron chest, protected by a *glyph of warding* with the glyph *hold person.*

*Treasure:* Iron Chest: 2,500 gp, 10 gems worth 250 gp each, and an ancient silver dagger worth 250 gp that is a family heirloom.

## Location 1.11: Manor House — Guest Room

**Read aloud:** *A thick forest-green rug covers the floor. There are two large canopied beds and a spacious wardrobe. The walls are covered with more of the beautiful tapestries so plentiful throughout the house.*

This room is the meant for honored guests, like the PCs. Guests of lower status can expect to stay in the Guest House (*see Location 1.4*).

## Location 1.12: Manor House — Robert's and Cassandra's Chamber

**Read aloud:** *The luxurious trappings of an Andoveran nobleman fill the chamber, from the huge, canopied feather bed, to the thick rugs, to the finely crafted and polished furniture, to the large cupboard filled with wine racks, to the porcelain bath near the huge fireplace.*

*Everything has been carefully cleaned and arranged. There is a large portrait of Sir Robert and Cassandra, painted shortly after their marriage.*

*Treasure:* A *cone of silence (see Part 6)* rests on a small table in the middle of the room; it looks like any of the other finely wrought trinkets in the room and requires a Spot check (DC 20) to notice it specifically. A Spellcraft check (DC 15) reveals that it is enchanted. Another Spellcraft check (DC 30) reveals the nature of the enchantment.

## Location 1.13: Manor House — Private Study

This room is Sir Robert's private refuge from the burdens of war and destruction. The door is locked at all times (DC 25) unless Sir Robert is inside.

There is a small writing desk, three chairs, and a small cache of arms and armor for Sir Robert to use in an emergency. This is also where Sir Robert keeps much of his wealth. Under the thick rug is a well-hidden secret compartment in the floor (Search check, DC 25).

*Treasure:* In the compartment there is a *+2 longsword,* a suit of *+2 half-plate,* and a *+1 large steel shield,* and a *rod of alertness,* along with 45,000 gp in coins and a sack full of gems worth 20,000 gp.

## Location 1.14: Manor House — Pantry

This dark and dry room stores all of the house's food: barrels of pickled meat and fruit, sacks of flour and grain, dried meat and herbs — everything necessary to feed a noble household, even in wartime.

## Location 1.15: Manor House — Kitchen

This is a standard kitchen for a noble manor house, containing a cavernous fireplace, large carving tables, washtubs, and cooking utensils. During daylight hours, 2d4 servants can be found here.

**Creatures:** 2d4 servants, 1st-level commoners.

**Typical Servant (2d4), Male and Female Human Com 1:** CR 1/2; Medium humanoid (Human); HD 1d4; hp 4; Spd 30 ft.; Init +0; AC 10, touch 10, flat-footed 10; Base Atk +0; Grp +0; Atk +0 melee (1d3/x2, unarmed strike); Full Atk +0 melee (1d3/x2, unarmed strike); SA —; SQ Human traits; AL LN; SV Fort +0, Ref +0, Will +1; Str 10, Dex 11, Con 11, Int 12, Wis 12, Cha 10.

*Skills and Feats:* Craft +4 (various), Heal +3, Listen +4, Profession (various) +6; Alertness, Skill Focus (Profession (various).

*Possessions:* None.

## Location 2: Manor Gate (map page 510)

**Read aloud:** *The path leads straight up to a stout wooden gate, flanked on both sides by small stone houses. The houses have small windows opening toward the road. Hidden among thick bushes and overhanging trees is a long straight wall of rusty-brown stone about 15 feet high.*

The gate is made from thick wooden planks strapped with iron bars.

**Manor Gate:** 4 in. thick, hardness 5, hp 40, Break DC 25.

Two guards are usually posted inside each guardhouse at all times. With the lack of troops and the need to scout the Elven positions there are many times these days when the guardhouses are empty. At these times the manor relies on Maxmilian's wards and his magic for protection. If present, they have trumpets to sound the alarm if anything is amiss, immediately alerting the guards in the other watchtowers.

**Creatures:** Two Andoveran guards, 8th-level fighters.

**Andoveran Guards (2), Male Human Ftr 8:** CR 8; Medium humanoid (Human); HD 8d10+16; hp 60; Init +5; Spd 20 ft.; AC 17, touch 11, flat-footed 16; Base Atk +8; Grp +11; Atk +13 melee (1d8+6(19–20/x2), longsword) or +10 ranged (1d10+1(19–20/x2), heavy crossbow); Full Atk +13/+8 melee (1d8+6(19–20/x2), longsword) or +10 ranged (1d10+1(19–20/x2), heavy crossbow); SA Favored weapon (longsword, heavy crossbow), improved damage (longsword); SQ Human traits, race/class abilities; AL LG; SV Fort +8, Ref +3, Will +4; Str 16, Dex 13, Con 15, Int 11, Wis 14, Cha 11.

*Skills and Feats:* Climb +1*, Handle Animal +8, Jump +5*; Cleave, Combat Reflexes, Improved Bull Rush, Improved Initiative, Power Attack, Quick Draw, Weapon Focus (longsword). *includes –6 armor check penalty

*Race/Class Abilities:* *Fighter:* Courage (+1 Will/+4 vs. fear), Evade (+2).

*Favored Weapon (longsword, heavy crossbow):* A guard gains a +1 competence bonus to attack and damage rolls with the longsword and heavy crossbow.

*Improved Damage (longsword):* A guard does an additional +2 (+3 total) damage with the longsword.

*Possessions:* Banded mail, longsword, heavy crossbow, 20 bolts.

## Location 3: Watchtowers

Spaced evenly around the entire perimeter of the estate are numerous watchtowers. These are wooden structures with an enclosed platform 20 feet high, accessible by a ladder on the side. Each watchtower usually has two guards at all times, though again, many are out on patrols and are not able to stand station at the manor watchtowers.

**Creatures:** Two Andoveran guards, 8th-level fighters *(see Location 1.2 for stats).*

**Andoveran Guards (2 per watchtower):** hp 55, 60.

### Questioning the Guards

**The PCs may wish to talk to the guards about anything they may have seen on the night of Sir Robert's disappearance. None of the perimeter guards saw anything.**

**Most of the guards could provide some information about the Elven positions, but nothing the PCs already know. None noticed anything out of the ordinary the night Merina supposedly saw Sir Robert brought back to the manor by Maxmilian.**

## Location 4: Guest House

**Read aloud:** *This building is not at all fortified like the manor house, although it is made of the same rusty-brown stone and has a stout wooden door. The windows are large and shuttered. It is a long, single-story structure, clean and in good repair.*

*The interior is divided into two large rooms, a broad living area with a large fireplace, a table and several chairs, and a sleeping area with several clean, comfortable beds. A wooden wall divides the rooms.*

## Location 5: Stable

The stable holds at least 2d6 riding horses and 1d4 draft horses at any given time, along with tack and saddle, hay, and sacks of coarse grain.

## Location 6: Guard Barracks

This building consists of a single large room for all the Sir Robert's guards. The guards are on duty for 12 hours at a time. At any given time, there are 10d6 Andoveran troops here.

**Creatures:** 10d6 Andoveran guards, 8th-level fighters *(see Location 1.2 for stats).*

**Andoveran Guards (10d6):** hp as rolled.

## Confronting Maxmilian

**Development:** If the PCs confront Maxmilian regarding the events relayed to them by Merina, one of two outcomes is possible, depending on their method.

If the PCs are cautious, and bring up what they have uncovered as a possible explanation while not accusing Maxmilian of any conscious wrongdoing, Maxmilian can be swayed with a successful Diplomacy check (DC 20). He concedes that Merina may have seen Sir Robert bound and gagged by someone that looked like him, but he denies that he has any hand in this. A second Diplomacy check (DC 20) draws out Maxmilian, and he admits that he has been unusually forgetful lately. He cannot account for certain time periods, but has ascribed his lapses to exhaustion. A final Diplomacy check (DC 20) gets Maxmilian to reveal that he has discovered a *scroll of teleportation circle* he did not know he had. He planned on using it to see where it led, and invites the PCs along to help him get to the bottom of this business. A Sense Motive check (DC 15) proves that Maxmilian is being sincere. If the PCs choose to go with Maxmilian, proceed to Part 2. If the PCs choose not to go with Maxmilian, he uses the scroll by himself. There is nothing more the PCs can learn at the manor, and it is impossible to track where Maxmilian has gone. Go to **Part 3.**

If the PCs are accusatory, Maxmilian grows defensive, eventually attacking the PCs with his magic. He bends his efforts toward delaying the PCs while he can escape with the *scroll of teleportation circle*. (His destination is **Location 7.**) If the PCs subdue him, a successful Intimidate check (DC 30) forces him to admit his part in the abduction of Sir Robert, claiming that his love for Cassandra drove him to betray his friend. Maxmilian feels that Sir Robert, while a good man, is not worthy of Cassandra and ignores her. A further Intimidate check (DC 20) gets Maxmilian to reveal that he took Sir Robert to a hidden lair. At this point, shamed by his own actions, Maxmilian leads the PCs to Sir Robert. A Sense Motive check (DC 20) reveals that he is telling the truth, but may have ulterior motives for bringing to PCs to Sir Robert. While the PCs may suggest they suspect a trap, Maxmilian denies it; he tells them that only by trusting him can they free Sir Robert. If the PCs kill Maxmilian, they can discover the *scroll of teleportation circle* on his corpse with a Search check (DC 15). If they use the scroll, the PCs are sent instantly to the lair Maxmilian described (go to **Part 2**). If the PCs choose not to use the scroll, they remain at the manor and can learn no more. Go to **Part 3**.

# Part 2: The Lair of Cassica Moonseed

## Location 7: The Lair *(map page 508)*

This lair is nowhere near the kingdom of Andover; it lies in a cave in the Shattered Lands. Anyone traveling to the lair must *teleport* to and from it, because reaching it on foot is arduous. It is about 3 days' march from this lair to the Medusan Lords' Pit.

If Maxmilian is with the PCs he mentions that he has never been here before. He wonders at the trappings of the cave and what people created them. Unknown to the PCs or Maxmilian, this is the domain of the Medusan Lord Cassica Moonseed.

## Location 7.1: Entrance

The entrance to the lair is an open cave mouth about 10 feet wide and 8 feet tall, hidden in the cleft between two rocky hills. Finding the opening from outside requires a Spot check (DC 20) unless the character is within 50 feet.

Scribed into the stone floor of the cave entrance is a large magical circle, all but obscured by dozens of bones. The bones are the result of the circle's deadly magical trap, and they are from many different types of creatures, large and small. Cassica's ogre guards know the password to this trap.

**Finger of Death Trap:** CR 8; magic device; visual trigger (*true seeing*); automatic reset; spell effect (*finger of death*, 20th-level wizard, slay one living creature, Fortitude save DC 21 reduces damage to 3d6+20); Search DC 32; Disable Device DC 32.

Inside the opening, beyond the magical circle, is a long broad passageway, sloping downward, about 10 feet wide and 6 feet high. This passageway slopes downward for 120 yards, deep into the earth, before it opens into the main cavern *(see Location 7.2)*.

## Location 7.2: Main Cavern

**Read aloud:** *The walls of the cavern are pale gray stone, naturally smooth, and the high ceiling is domed. The walls are covered with primitive paintings depicting Humans, Dwarves, Elves, Nothrog, and animals, all in various situations; at war, at peace, fighting savage battles, sitting together eating, dancing in celebration.*

*Hanging from the ceiling are several cylindrical iron cages, suspended by heavy chains from large pulleys. The chains stretch toward several winches along one wall, apparently so the cages can be raised and lowered. The cages hang 10 to 15 feet above the floor of the cavern. Heavy padlocks secure the doors. Some of the cages are occupied, but none of the occupants appears to be moving.*

*Running through the middle of the cavern floor is a 5-foot-wide fissure. Its walls are rough and a fierce heat pours from its depths, warming the air. The cavern reeks of death and decay, and the source of the stench is evident after a second glance at some of the occupants of the cages.*

### Sir Robert the Vigilant

**Sir Robert has been living a nightmare since the moment he stepped into his chamber and saw his beloved wife and his most trusted advisor together. He remembers the progression of shock, hurt, and rage with exquisite clarity. He fully recognized his assailant save for her eyes, eyes filled with a twisted resolve he had never seen before. He remembered her voice, like an avalanche in his mind. He awoke in this cage.**

**Since his capture, the Blood Moon Shard has been used on him twice, warping his body. The statistics given here are his normal statistics. He is suffering the following effects: –3 Constitution, –6 Charisma, his left hand is missing, and his eyes are blood-red, giving him darkvision 60 ft. See Part 6.**

**Sir Robert the Vigilant, Male Human Ftr 16:** CR 16; Medium humanoid (Human); HD 16d10+48; hp 140 (currently 108); Init +7; Spd 30 ft.; AC 17, touch 17, flat-footed 10; Base Atk +16; Grp +20; Atk +22 melee (1d8+8(15–20/x3), longsword) or +15 ranged (1d10+3(17–20/x2), heavy crossbow); Full Atk +22/+17/+13/+9 melee (1d8+8(15–20/x3), longsword) or +15 ranged (1d10+3(17–20/x2), heavy crossbow); SA Favored weapon (longsword, heavy crossbow, battleaxe, heavy lance), improved critical multiplier (longsword), improved critical threat (longsword, heavy crossbow), improved damage (longsword, heavy crossbow, battleaxe); SQ —; AL LG; SV Fort +13, Ref +8, Will +10; Str 18, Dex 16, Con 16 (currently 13), Int 14, Wis 14, Cha 16.

*Skills and Feats*: Climb +7, Diplomacy +11, Jump +12, Handle Animal +12, Intimidate +5, Listen +3, Ride +20, Sense Motive +8, Spot +4; Cleave, Combat Reflexes, Great Cleave, Improved Bull Rush, Improved Critical (longsword), Improved Initiative, Leadership, Mounted Combat, Power Attack, Spirited Charge, Trample, Weapon Focus (longsword).

*Race/Class Abilities*: *Fighter*: Courage (+3 Will/immune to fear), Evade (+4), Resist (2/day).

*Favored Weapon (longsword, heavy crossbow, battleaxe, heavy lance)*: Sir Robert gains a +1 competence bonus to attack and damage rolls with the longsword, heavy crossbow, battleaxe, and heavy lance.

*Improved Critical Multiplier (longsword)*: Sir Robert's critical multiplier is increased by 1 (to x3) with the longsword.

*Improved Critical Threat (longsword, heavy crossbow)*: Sir Robert's critical threat range is increased by +2 (to 17–20) with the longsword and heavy crossbow.

*Improved Damage (longsword, heavy crossbow, battleaxe)*: Sir Robert does an additional +2 (+3 total) damage with the longsword, heavy crossbow, and battleaxe.

*Possessions*: Longsword, heavy crossbow, 20 bolts.

**Development:** The locks on the cages all have an *arcane lock*. These locks are normally DC 25; with the *arcane lock* they are DC 35. The winches along the wall raise and lower each cage individually.

**Cage Bars:** 2 in. thick, hardness 8, hp 20, Break DC 25.

Sir Robert is imprisoned in one of the cages, and any captured PCs are also caged here. All have been stripped of weapons and equipment, along with any clothing that could conceal lock picks or weapons. Sir Robert is unconscious. The last few days have been hard, and he is hardly recognizable. Someone has used powerful magic on him (*see the Blood Moon Shard in Part 6. It has been used on Sir Robert twice*).

The fissure in the floor opens into a pool of lava some 500 feet below. Scattered bones and rags clinging to the sides of the fissure indicate that prisoners and refuse have been dumped into the fissure.

## Location 7.3: Shelf

**Read aloud:** *The far end of the main cavern rises a few feet, and steps have been carved into the wall. The steps lead up to a natural stone shelf protruding from the cavern wall. Resting upon this shelf is a silken divan with lush red cushions, with a polished wooden table bearing crystal decanters and goblets in easy reach. The divan is positioned to command an excellent view of the cages.*

Under the divan in its black lacquered box is the *Blood Moon Shard* (*see Part 6*). The shelf is angled so that the box cannot be seen from the cavern floor.

*Treasure*: *Blood Moon Shard (see Part 6).*

## Location 7.4: Holding Cell

**Read aloud:** *The mouth of this room is blocked by a set of iron bars with a strong iron door. Just beyond the bars, the floor drops off sharply, making the entire room 10 feet lower than the floor of the main cavern. The floor is covered in ominous, rusty-brown stains.*

This is a holding cell where Cassica throws victims she is not yet ready to deal with, or "pets" she is finished "playing with."

*Bars and Door*: 2 in. thick, hardness 8, hp 20, Break DC 25.

### Teleporting from Other Lairs

**If the PCs have discovered another Medusan Lord lair and *teleport* from it using the *teleportation circles*, they arrive in Location 7.5. This changes the entire structure of this adventure, effectively skipping Part 1. If they save Sir Robert, he can fill in background information.**

**At some point while the PCs are exploring her lair, Cassica returns, and is outraged to discover that her home has been violated.**

## Location 7.5: Pool Chamber

**Read aloud:** *A shallow pool of water, formed in a natural hollow in the stone, lies placidly in the center of the room. Barely discernible ripples dance on its surface, fed by a trickle of water from the wall, and flowing away again through a crack in the floor. Along the back wall of the room is a glittering mound of gold and jewels. A few splintered bones lie haphazardly in the corners.*

This pool is the water source for Cassica's lair. She also performs much of her *scrying* with this pool.

## Location 7.6: Cassica's Chamber

**Read aloud:** *This chamber would be cozy were it not for the stench leaking in. There is a bed, a comfortable-looking divan, a writing desk covered in documents, shelves piled with spell components and ancient tomes, and a large bathtub. In the corner of the chamber is a magical circle scribed into the stone floor. The symbols around its circumference pulse faintly with green light, and the air above the circle ripples like heat waves. The walls of the chamber are covered in ancient paintings like those in the large cavern.*

Cassica's private refuge is walled off from **Location 7.2**. The wall is made of mortared stone blocks, with a stout wooden door. The door has a special *arcane lock* that may only be opened by the command word, known only to Cassica. *Knock* spells do not work. If the *arcane lock* is somehow removed, the Break check becomes DC 22.

**Wooden Door:** 2 in. thick, hardness 5, hp 20, Break DC 22 (32 with *arcane lock*).

**Development:** The circle in the floor is a permanent teleportation circle keyed to the strongholds of other Medusan Lords, and has several functions. By stepping into the circle and speaking the correct command word, the user is teleported to the location of his choice. For example, speaking the command word corresponding to Malrog transports the user to his stronghold. Most of the other Medusan Lords have circles like this one in their lairs. This circle can be opened or closed by speaking the proper command word. When it is closed, no one can teleport to or from the circle.

The scrolls and texts include a wealth of information for the PCs regarding the plans of the Medusan Lords. Among the scrolls and tomes are the following items. All of them are written in an ancient dialect, and each requires a Decipher Script check (DC 30) and 10 minutes to read, unless otherwise specified.

- Discussions of the nature of the Storm and the Dragon.
- Several scrolls describing a ritual to harness the power of the Storm and force it back into the Dragon's corpse. These scrolls describe roughly how such a thing might be done, but not how to perform the ritual itself. The ritual requires the blood of hundreds of living sacrifices, all slain with ritual weapons on the same night, and the blood must be the blood of those who slew the Dragon.
- Cassica's personal journals. These reveal that Cassica has masqueraded as Sir Robert's wife, Cassandra, for years. They record how she gained knowledge of the secret cabal called the Medusan Lords, earning their respect with the complete success of her deception. They also record her careful manipulations of Maxmilian, making him fall in love with her. He amuses her, but both he and Sir Robert are nothing more than useful tools.
- A list of names, with strange words beside each name. These are the names of the other Medusan Lords. The strange word is the command word for each destination for the *teleportation circle* in her chamber. One word does not appear to correspond to any of the names. This is the command word to open or close the *circle*. This scroll is written in a unique cipher, which can be decoded with a Decipher Script check (DC 40) that takes one hour.
- Cassica's spellbook, containing all the spells listed in her statistics.
- Several incredibly ancient tomes written in Athanaean, some dating from the time of the Dragon.
- A simple note that the ritual will be finished soon.
- Some scrolls discussing how to steal the power of the Dragon, and re-channel it somehow.
- A document mentioning a place in the Shattered Lands known as the Pit.
- *Arcane scroll of true form*
- *Arcane scroll of fading memory*

Cassica keeps her accumulated wealth in a large black chest at the foot of the bed. Anyone other than Cassica touching the chest sets off a hidden magical warding glyph (*power word: kill* trap: CR 15; as per the spell *power word: kill* cast by 20th level wizard; Search (DC 26); Disable Device (DC 30)).

*Treasure:* The chest contains the following treasure:

- 4,000 gp.
- 2,000 pp.
- Ten necklaces and bracelets worth 3,000 gp each, 8 gems worth 1,000 gp each, and 25 gems worth 50 gp.
- A pair of gilded bracers made by the ancient medusan race, with images of a medusan with his tentacles outstretched. They are worth 500 gp.
- *Bracers or armor +5*
- *Potion of harm*
- *Potion of regeneration*
- *Potion of healing*
- *Arcane scroll of fireball*
- *Divine scroll of resurrection*

## Location 7.7: Cassica's Minions

**Read aloud**: *The air in this chamber reeks of ogre. The floor is littered with refuse and debris, sleeping furs, and gnawed bones.*

**Development:** Cassica's ogre guards stay here. They feed and water the "pets" while Cassica is away. Any disturbance in the main cavern immediately draws their attention. They attack anyone loose in the cavern who is not Cassica. She has *dominated* the ogres so completely that they are fiercely loyal to her.

1d20 minutes after the first of the ogre guards has engaged the PCs, Cassica returns to her lair and is outraged that her plans have been discovered. Any remaining ogre guards are summoned and she joins in the attack against the PCs (*see Part 5 for details on Cassica and her combat tactics*). If the PCs did not decipher her personal journals it is now revealed that she has been posing as Sir Robert's wife Cassandra, whom the party met in the aftermath of *The Ghostwood Treaty* and who gave them the *Stone of Fortune*. Maxmilian takes this revelation especially hard (*see sidebar Maxmilian's Downfall*).

If all her ogre guards are slain and Cassica believes she is losing the battle with the PCs, she simply *teleports* away, abandoning her lair. The PCs now have as much time as they need to explore the caves.

If the PCs are losing and decide to flee, Cassica pursues them, not wishing her position to be compromised by meddlers. If any PCs escape she contacts the other Medusan Lords, and the group hunts the PCs until they are captured or dead.

If the PCs have already left the lair before Cassica arrives, she uses her scrying abilities to find them so she can eliminate them.

**Ogre Guards (5), Male Ogre Ftr 12:** CR 14; Large giant (ogre); HD 12d10+48 plus 4d8+16; hp 131; Init +5; Spd 30 ft.; AC 23, touch 10, flat-footed 22; Base Atk +15; Grp +24; Atk +20 melee (3d6+11 plus 1 point Constitution damage (bleeding) (18–20/x2), *+2 keen wounding large greataxe*); Full Atk +20/+15/+10 melee (3d6+11 plus 1 point Constitution damage (bleeding) (18–20/x2), *+2 keen wounding large greataxe*); SA Favored weapon (greataxe, greatclub, greatsword), improved critical threat (greataxe), improved damage (greataxe, greatclub); SQ Darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; AL CE; SV Fort +13, Ref +6, Will +5; Str 27, Dex 13, Con 19, Int 7, Wis 12, Cha 3.

Skills and Feats: Climb +1*, Jump+2*, Swim +1*, Survival +5; Power Attack, Cleave, Great Cleave, Improved Sunder, Combat Reflexes, Collateral Damage. *includes –6 armor check penalty.

### Maxmilian's Downfall

**Maxmilian has twice inadvertently discovered that he as been manipulated by a powerful wizard, the Medusan Lord Cassica Moonseed. On both occasions, she successfully wiped his memory. When the PCs or Sir Robert reveal these manipulations a third time, she probably does not have time to wipe his memory. He is shocked, and paralyzed by shame for 4d6 minutes. He can move, but can perform no actions. When he recovers, he hates her with a white-hot passion, and throws himself into battle with her until one of them is dead. Should he survive, he offers to help the PCs in any way he can.**

*Darkvision, 60 ft.*: An ogre guard can see in the dark with no light source at all, out to a range of 60 feet. Darkvision is black and white only (colors cannot be discerned). It does not allow the ogre guard to see anything that it could not see otherwise—invisible objects are still invisible, and illusions are still visible as what they seem to be. Likewise, darkvision subjects the ogre guard to gaze attacks normally. The presence of light does not spoil darkvision.

*Low-Light Vision (Ex)*: An ogre guard can see twice as far as a Human in starlight, moonlight, torchlight, and similar conditions of shadowy illumination. It retains the ability to distinguish color and detail under these conditions.

*Favored Weapon (greataxe, greatclub, greatsword)*: An ogre guard gains a +1 competence bonus to attack and damage rolls with the greataxe, greatclub, and greatsword.

*Improved Critical Threat (greataxe)*: An ogre guard's critical threat range is increased by +2 (to 18–20) with the greataxe.

*Improved Damage (greataxe, greatclub)*: An ogre guard does an additional +2 (+3 total) damage with the greataxe and greatclub.

*Possessions*: *+2 keen wounding large greataxe, +2 half-plate.*

# Part 3: Concluding the Adventure

The PCs may end this adventure knowing a great deal more about the Medusan Lords and their plans, or they may have barely escaped with their lives.

If the PCs never arrived at the lair (for whatever reason), they cannot rescue Sir Robert and their mission ends in failure. If sent by Iam Hotelen, they can report back to him or simply leave him hanging. If the rogues in gray accosted them, they can pursue other means of tracking their assailants, but Andover is a dead end. If at any point they use another Medusan Lord's lair to *teleport* to Cassica's, they can complete this adventure and bring Sir Robert back home.

If Sir Robert survives and is returned to Toris Kelt or Andover, news of his return eases tensions, and stability returns to the fledgling Free Kingdoms alliance. If he is not returned to his true form, however, he no longer has the charisma and influence to unite the fractious Andoveran nobles, and the country continues its slide into anarchy. If he is restored to his original shape, he will ultimately become the next king of Andover, and the country has a chance of banding together to repeal future Elven attacks. The government of Toris Kelt and the other Free Kingdoms will benefit from his experience and wisdom either way, as they are not as petty as the Andover dukes, giving the Free Kingdoms a chance to solidify. If his true form is not restored, Sir Robert lives in Toris Kelt as an advisor, never returning to Andover.

If Maxmilian survives, he cannot bear the shame of his misdeeds, and leaves Andover forever.

# Part 4: New Monsters

CASSICA MOONSEED, MEDUSAN LORD

**Medium humanoid (Bascaron)**

*Hit Dice*: 20d4+100 hp (150 hp)
*Initiative*: +2
*Speed*: 30 ft.
*Armor Class*: 22 (+2 Dex, +8 natural, +2 *shattered eye*)
*Base Attack/Grapple*: +10/+11
*Attack*: +11 melee (1d4+1/x2, slam)
*Full Attack*: +11/+6 melee (1d4+1/x2, 2 slams)
*Space/Reach*: 5 ft./5 ft.
*Special Attacks*: Spells (20th-level wizard)
*Special Qualities*: Regeneration, damage reduction 10/magic, spell resistance 31, eidetic memory (*mage armor, magic missile, web, dispel magic, hold person, greater invisibility, dominate person, fading memory*, Moonseed's touch*, true form**), summon familiar (rat)
*Saves*: Fort +18, Ref +12, Will +19
*Abilities*: Str 12, Dex 14, Con 20, Int 20, Wis 16, Cha 18
*Skills*: Appraise +18, Bluff +11, Concentration +21, Craft (alchemy) +15, Diplomacy +20, Disguise +20, Intimidate +18, Knowledge (history) +10, Knowledge (arcana) +20, Knowledge (nature) +13, Knowledge (the planes) +13, Sense Motive +20, Spellcraft +20
*Feats*: Brew Potion, Craft Wand, Craft Wondrous Item, Combat Casting, Empower Spell, Enlarge Spell, Extend Spell, Forge Ring, Maximize Spell, Silent Spell, Still Spell, Scribe Scroll, Alertness, Grasp the Power
*Environment*: Special
*Organization*: Solitary
*Challenge Rating*: 21
*Treasure*: Special
*Alignment*: Lawful Evil
*Advancement*: None

The Medusan Lord Cassica Moonseed appears to be a beautiful young woman, but she is no longer human. She has been touched by Bascaron, and is now a unique creature. She has not aged since the days she devoted herself to the Banshee Moon. She does not know if she is immortal or simply very long-lived. The statistics listed here take into account her experience as a 20th-level wizard, but not her powerful collection of magic items.

COMBAT

In combat, Cassica has tremendous magical power, which she uses to maximum effect. She enjoys toying with her prey before destroying it.

*Regeneration (Su)*: Cassica's flesh regenerates whenever she is wounded. She regains 5 hp per round as long as she has at least 1 hp. She can even regenerate severed limbs and organs as long as she has at least 1 hp.

*Resilience (Su)*: Her supernatural vigor also gives her a powerful resistance to magic and damage. She has spell resistance 31, damage reduction 10/magic, and a +4 profane bonus to all saves.

*Eidetic Memory*: Cassica may spontaneously cast *mage armor, magic missile, web, dispel magic, hold person, greater invisibility, dominate person, fading memory*, Moonseed's touch* and true form** in place of a prepared spell of equal or higher level. This loses the prepared spell to fuel the memorized spell.

*Wizard Spells Prepared* (4/6/5/5/5/5/4/4/4/4; Save DC 15+ spell level): 0 — *detect magic (2), read magic, ghost sound*; 1st — *mage armor, shield, expeditious retreat, true strike, magic missile (x2)*; 2nd — *acid arrow, web, mirror image, cat's strength, bull's grace*; 3rd — *acid spittle, dispel magic, vampiric touch, hold person, haste*; 4th — *greater invisibility, dimensional anchor, claws of ash, ice bolt, primal fear, ice storm, rainbow pattern, soul knife, fear, confusion*; 5th — *feeblemind, dominate person, teleport, cone of cold, magic jar*; 6th — *quickened invisibility, globe of invulnerability, disintegrate, flesh to stone*; 7th — *forcecage, fading memory*, finger of death, Moonseed's touch**; 8th — *charm monster (mass), iron body, blight person, choking cloud*; 9th — *evil eye, power word kill, time stop, true form**. *New spells, see **Part 5** for descriptions.

*Possessions*: Spellbook (see notes), *crown of wizardry*, shattered eye, ring of teleportation*, ring of freedom of movement, major cloak of displacement, elixir of fire breath, eyes of charming, periapt of proof against poison, golembane scarab*.

**Familiar (rat)**: Cassica's rat familiar has the following statistics:

**Rat (Familiar)**: CR —; Tiny magical beast; HD 20; hp 75; Init +2; Spd 15 ft, climb 15 ft, swim 15 ft; AC 24, touch 16, flat-footed 22; Base Atk +10; Grp –2; Atk +12 melee (1d3–4/x2, bite); Full Atk +12 melee (1d3–4/x2, bite); Space/Reach 2–1/2 ft./0 ft.; SA —; SQ low-light vision, scent, empathic link, share spells, improved evasion, deliver touch spells, speak with master, speak with animals of its kind, scry on familiar, spell resistance 25; AL N; SV Fort +6, Ref +8, Will +13; Str 2, Dex 15, Con 10, Int 15, Wis 12, Cha 2.

*Skill and Feats*: Balance +10, Climb +12, Hide +14, Move Silently +10, Swim +10; Weapon Finesse (bite).

*Low-Light Vision (Ex)*: A rat can see twice as far as a Human in starlight, moonlight, torchlight, and similar conditions of shadowy illumination. It retains the ability to distinguish color and detail under these conditions.

*Scent (Ex)*: A rat can detect opponents within 30 feet by sense of smell. If the opponent is upwind, the range increases to 60 feet; if downwind, it drops to 15 feet. Strong scents, such as smoke or rotting garbage, can be detected at twice the ranges noted above. Overpowering scents, such as skunk musk or troglodyte stench, can be detected at triple normal range. When a rat detects a scent, the exact location of the source is not revealed—only its presence somewhere within range. The rat can take a move action to note the direction of the scent.

Whenever the rat comes within 5 feet of the source, the rat pinpoints the source's location.

*Familiar Ability Descriptions*: All familiars have special abilities (or impart abilities to their masters) depending on Cassica's combined level in classes that grant familiars. The abilities are cumulative.

*Alertness (Ex)*: While her familiar is within arm's reach, Cassica gains the Alertness feat.

*Improved Evasion (Ex)*: When subjected to an attack that normally allows a Reflex saving throw for half damage, a familiar takes no damage if it makes a successful saving throw and half damage even if the saving throw fails.

*Share Spells*: At Cassica's option, she may have any spell (but not any spell-like ability) she casts on herself also affect her familiar. The familiar must be within 5 feet at the time of casting to receive the benefit. If the spell or effect has a duration other than instantaneous, it stops affecting the familiar if it moves farther than 5 feet away and will not affect the familiar again even if it returns to Cassica before the duration expires. Additionally, Cassica may cast a spell with a target of "You" on her familiar (as a touch range spell) instead of on herself. Cassica and her familiar can share spells even if the spells normally do not affect creatures of the familiar's type (magical beast).

*Empathic Link (Su)*: Cassica has an empathic link with her familiar out to a distance of up to 1 mile. Cassica cannot see through the familiar's eyes, but they can communicate empathically. Because of the limited nature of the link, only general emotional content can be communicated. Because of this empathic link, Cassica has the same connection to an item or place that her familiar does.

*Deliver Touch Spells (Su)*: Cassica's familiar can deliver touch spells for her. If Cassica and the familiar are in contact at the time Cassica casts a touch spell, she can designate her familiar as the "toucher." The familiar can then deliver the touch spell just as Cassica could. As usual, if Cassica casts another spell before the touch is delivered, the touch spell dissipates.

*Speak with Master (Ex)*: Cassica and her familiar can communicate verbally as if they were using a common language. Other creatures do not understand the communication without magical help.

*Speak with Animals of Its Kind (Ex)*: Cassica's familiar can communicate with rodents (including dire varieties). Such communication is limited by the intelligence of the conversing creatures

*Spell Resistance (Ex)*: Cassica's familiar gains spell resistance equal to its master's level + 5 (25). To affect the familiar with a spell, another spellcaster must get a result on a caster level check (1d20 + caster level) that equals or exceeds the familiar's spell resistance.

*Scry on Familiar (Sp)*: Cassica may scry on her familiar (as if casting the *scrying* spell) once per day.

**Notes:** Cassica has access to nearly any magic item or spell. The ones listed here are what she carries on her or typically has memorized.

# Part 5: New Spells

FADING MEMORY
Enchantment [Mind-Affecting]

*Level*: Wiz 7
*Components*: V, S
*Casting Time:* 1 action
*Range:* Close (25 ft. + 5 ft./2 levels)
*Target:* One living creature
*Duration*: Permanent
*Saving Throw*: Will negates
*Spell Resistance:* Yes

This spell allows the spellcaster to sift through the target's memories and selectively remove or alter them. It happens at the speed of thought, in the space of an eye blink.

The target of this spell must make a Will save or the spellcaster gains a telepathic bridge with the target. Once this bridge is in place, the spellcaster can begin to alter memories. For each memory altered, the target is allowed a Will save, or the attempt to alter that memory is unsuccessful. The spellcaster must be part of the affected memories; the caster must use himself as a reference while searching through someone else's mind. For example, the spellcaster could not erase the target's childhood memories if they just met, but he could erase any memory of their meeting.

MOONSEED'S TOUCH
*Enchantment (Compulsion) [Mind-Affecting]*

*Level*: Wiz 7
*Components*: V, S, M
*Casting Time*: 1 action
*Range*: Close (25 ft. + 5 ft./2 levels)
*Target*: One living creature
*Duration*: 2 rounds/level (D)
*Saving Throw*: Fortitude negates
*Spell Resistance:* Yes

This horrid spell was created by the Medusan Lord Cassica Moonseed. It was named after the moonseed plant because it emulates the effects of that plant's poison on a living creature.

The target of this spell must make a Fortitude save or lose all muscle control for the duration of the spell. This even affects breathing, and the victim begins to suffocate because his lungs cannot draw air. Only the heart is unaffected. The victim immediately collapses, and is unable to move, speak, or perform any actions. His Strength score is reduced to 0. This spell works against water-breathing creatures as well, because they can no longer move through the water to use their gills.

Since the victim is no longer able to breathe, he is immediately subject to the rules for drowning. After a number of rounds equal to twice his Constitution score, he must make Constitution checks every round, as per those rules.

*Arcane Material Component:* A bit of lung from a drowned creature.

TRUE FORM
*Transmutation*

*Level:* Wiz 9
*Components:* V, S, M
*Casting Time:* 1 action
*Range:* Close (25 ft. + 5 ft./2 levels)
*Target:* One living creature
*Duration:* Permanent
*Saving Throw:* No
*Spell Resistance:* No

This spell undoes the effects of transmutation magic. When cast at a target creature, it instantly nullifies the effects of any transmutation spells or spell-like effects on the target creature.

*True form* nullifies effects imposed by magic items, supernatural abilities, and artifacts that cause any physical transformation, such as the *Blood Moon Shard*. It also negates any permanent or temporary modifications to ability scores and any negative levels acquired within the previous day, such those caused by the attack of a vampire or wraith. It changes a *polymorphed* creature or a lycanthrope to his original form.

*Arcane Material Component:* A few drops of pure water.

# Part 6: New Magic Items

CROWN OF WIZARDRY
*Major Wondrous Item*

Sir Robert the Vigilant gave this golden circlet set with glittering diamonds to his bride Cassandra as a wedding gift. It was purely mundane then, but Cassica Moonseed turned his gift into something with powerful magical abilities.

The *crown of wizardry* is useful only to arcane spellcasters. The wearer's number of 4th-level arcane spells per day is doubled. Bonus spells from high ability scores or school specialization are not doubled.

*Caster Level:* 20th; *Market Price:* 100,000 gp; *Prerequisites:* Craft Wondrous Item, *limited wish; Weight:* 1 lb.

BLOOD MOON SHARD
*Major Artifact*

This artifact is a heat-blackened, slightly melted stone about the size of a human fist, with an unwholesome reddish tinge. It was found by Cassica Moonseed and remains in her possession. She keeps it in a black lacquered box on a bed of red velvet.

It has the power to change the flesh of living creatures, warping them permanently into bizarre aberrations.

To activate the power of the *Blue Moon Shard*, the user must hold it in his hand, succeed at a melee touch attack on the target, and make a Concentration check (DC 25). If the user succeeds, the target must make a Fortitude save (DC 25) or suffer the *Blue Moon Shard's* effects. Roll 1d4 to determine the number of effects, and roll on **Table 23–2** once for each effect. All effects are permanent, and can only be reversed by the effects of a *wish* or *miracle*, or by the special spell *true form* that Cassica created for this purpose (*see Part 5*). Many of the effects listed in the table are game mechanic effects. Descriptions may be improvised for physical changes that approximate these effects. For example, a character loses Strength because his limbs shrivel, or he loses Charisma because the flesh of his face begins to slough off.

*Caster Level:* 20th. *Weight:* 12 lb.

## Table 23-2: Blood Moon Shard Effects

| d% | Encounter |
|---|---|
| 01–04 | –1d6 Strength |
| 05–06 | +1d3 Strength |
| 07–11 | –1d6 Dexterity |
| 12–13 | +1d3 Dexterity |
| 14–17 | –1d6 Constitution |
| 18–19 | +1d3 Constitution |
| 20–23 | –1d6 Intelligence |
| 24–25 | +1d3 Intelligence |
| 26–29 | –1d6 Wisdom |
| 30–31 | +1d3 Wisdom |
| 35-35 | –1d6 Charisma |
| 36–37 | +1d3 Charisma |
| 38–39 | –2d6 inches to total height |
| 40–41 | +2d6 inches to total height |
| 42–44 | Hard, scaly skin (–4 Charisma, +4 natural AC bonus) |
| **d%** | **Encounter** |
| 45–47 | Bloated, distended abdomen |
| 48–50 | Gaunt, grotesquely sunken abdomen |
| 51–52 | One extremity (hand or foot, chosen at random) shrivelsinto useless, fleshy stub |
| 54–58 | +2d6 inches to the length of one arm |
| 59–63 | –2d6 inches to the length of one arm |
| 64–68 | +2d6 inches to the length of one leg 1(movement reduced to 1/2 normal) |
| 69–73 | –2d6 inches to the length of one leg (movement reduced to 1/2 normal) |
| 74–77 | Gain one eye in location of GM's choice. +5 competence bonus to Spot checks |
| 78–80 | Monstrous ears. +5 competence bonus to Listen checks. –2 Charisma |
| 81–83 | Eyes turn blood red. Gain darkvision 60 ft. –2 Charisma |
| 84–86 | Skin turns white. Direct sunlight causes 1d3 hp per round of exposure |
| 87–90 | **Lose one limb. Roll 1d4 to determine which limb disappears** |
| 91–94 | Gain one extra limb. Randomly determine arm or leg. Leg increases base movement by 10 ft. Arm gives additional melee attack. –2 Charisma. Location of this new limb is up to the GM |
| 95–97 | GM's choice. Use any of the above or create a new effect |
| 98–00 | Roll twice more on this table |

### Cone of Silence

*Minor Wondrous Item*

A *cone of silence* appears to be a simple cone of snowflake obsidian about six inches tall. It is highly polished, with no marks or features except for the magical runes carved on the bottom of the cone. Speaking the command word activates its power. When activated, the stone is affected as by the spell *silence*, creating an area of complete silence centered on the stone.

Once a *cone of silence* has been activated, the effect lasts for 5 minutes.

*Caster Level:* 5th; *Market Price:* 18,000; *Prerequisites:* Craft Wondrous Item, *silence; Weight:* 5 lb.

### Ring of Teleportation

*Ring*

Any character wearing this ring can *teleport* up to three times per day, as if casting the spell of the same name.

*Caster Level:* 10th; *Market Price:* 18,000 gp; *Prerequisites:* Forge Ring, *teleport.*

### Seeing Stone

Wondrous Item

A *seeing stone* can be made from any precious or semi-precious stone worth at least 50 gp, and can be used by anyone who knows the command word. The user needs only to speak the command word for a particular *seeing stone* and he can spy upon the stone's vicinity as if affected by the spell *clairaudience/clairvoyance.* The user can both see and hear through the stone. Cassica, as Cassandra, allowed Maxmilian to believe he created these stones and had her sew them into the tapestries of Sir Robert's manor as a precaution. He believes he is the only one who can use their power, but Cassica has full access to them.

Once a *seeing stone* has been activated, the effect lasts for 5 minutes.

*Caster Level:* 7th; *Market Price:* 37,800; *Prerequisites:* Craft Wondrous Item, *clairaudience/clairvoyance; Weight:* 12 lb.

### Shattered Eye

*Artifact*

The *shattered eye* is an item of untold antiquity, and its origins are unknown. Its anti-divination properties are among the most powerful in the world. It is a polished black gem the shape of an egg sliced neatly in half. Close inspection of the gem reveals hundreds of hidden cracks, as if the stone is shattered internally and is held together only by the polished surface. This stone is set in a golden necklace.

The *shattered eye's* wearer is immune to the effects of divination spells. It masks the wearer from every sort of *detect* spell, even *detect magic.* When the *eye* is not worn or carried, it radiates a faint magical aura (*see the spell detect magic*).

The *shattered eye* confers a +2 armor bonus to AC on its wearer.

*Caster Level:* 20th; *Weight:* —.



# The Ghoul Lord

## Introduction

*The Ghoul Lord*, one of the dangerous Medusan lords, lurks in the swamps of Markappal.

This is one of four adventures in Tier 9. It is meant for characters of levels 18–20.

## Adventure Synopsis

In the inhospitable swamps of Markappal lies the lair of the dangerous Medusan Lord Majeral, Lord of Ghouls. After he joined forces with Malrog, Majeral sought a location where he could work in secret, with as many natural defenses as could be found. Markappal was perfect, surrounding his chosen site on all sides with the dangers of the vast swamplands.

Soon after the PCs arrive in the region, they discover a large group of corpses, mostly warriors. They are Jalpans slain by Majeral's minions. As the PCs examine them, the bodies rise as ghouls. The PCs quickly find themselves beset by a large number of ghouls, and must fight their way out.

They may discover that all of the villages in the area are deserted. In fact, the entire area seems strangely empty. As they look into matters, they encounter one of Majeral's March Lords, the vile and dangerous Shivril, leading his men on a Llyr-bound slaving raid. Some of the March Lord's followers are ghouls magically disguised as men. Majeral sends these ghouls as spies to make sure the March Lords stay loyal and to give them an edge over other slavers. The PCs may capture Shivril, who knows much about Majeral's plans.

If they fail to gain any information from Shivril, they can pick up rumors if they can actually find anyone to talk to. Majeral's slavers come and go openly, and the few survivors know that something terrible is happening in the swamps of Markappal.

The Ghoul Lord learns of the PCs' presence when they fight his ghouls, and their fame may precede them. He lays a trap for them at the border of the Markappal delta, which is likely to ensnare the PCs. He takes them to his lair, where he plans to turn them into his undead minions. The PCs must escape from Majeral's laboratory and its teeming ghoul hordes. They may even face Majeral himself.

This adventure is loosely structured until the PCs begin to close in on Majeral's lair, when they suddenly become the prey rather than the hunters. They may come into the region specifically searching for Majeral, or they may just have an idea that an unknown evil is afoot. They may wish to explore the swamps, visit the town of Semiline, or seek out the March Lords for investigation or retribution. The Markappal delta is so vast that weeks of searching would be required for the PCs to find Majeral's lair on their own. For this reason, the exact location of Majeral's lair is left vague. They should not find it until Majeral chooses to find *them*. At this point, they are ambushed by Majeral's minions and captured. After they are captured, they have an opportunity to escape, perhaps even defeating Majeral for good!

## Area 1: Markappal

The Markappal region is part of the sprawling salt-water marsh of the southern delta. It stretches for hundreds of miles, interspersed with patches of soggy land overgrown with moss, mangroves, and other salt-tolerant foliage. This land is populated by the hardy few who can withstand its rigors. The inhabitants are mainly people running from something, or the children of those people who know no other life. Finding someone who does not wish to be found in such a place is a near impossible task. They are tough, independent people, accustomed to surviving by agile wit and ruthless strength.

The men known as the March Lords have formed communities here, but most settlements are no larger than a collection of ramshackle huts. The largest settlement, Semiline, lies on a large island on the inland reaches of the marsh. Ostensibly the March Lords pay tribute to Queen Chandra Semiline, a title passed to each queen's first-born daughter ever since the first Chandra founded Semiline. She oversees Semiline with a small force of personal guardsmen, but the real power in Markappal lies in the hands of the March Lords. Their alliances have always shifted in their attempts to eke sustenance from the unforgiving swamp. Amid their struggles for dominance, there was always balance. Until recently, that is.

The two most powerful March Lords, Shivril Willowroot and Gavin Lochenvar, were recently subjugated by Majeral, the Ghoul Lord, and are now his unwilling servants. Majeral bolstered their forces with his ghouls and sent them against the other March Lords, enslaving or routing entire settlements. The other important March Lords are Simon Halfstep, Gaspare Leisson, and Rolf Caersil: none has been heard from in some time, and none of their surviving followers know where they are or whether they yet live. Most of their followers that were not captured are now hiding. Simon Halfstep is dead, slain in a raid and eaten by ghouls. Gaspare Leisson was also killed in a raid, and is now a ghoul in Majeral's lair. Rolf Caersil is imprisoned in Majeral's lair, waiting to give up his life-force to sustain Majeral's existence.

The chief means of transportation in Markappal is by boat. The entire region is a collection of sedimentary islands surrounded by muddy water. The closer one travels to the sea, the saltier the water becomes. The largest patches of dry land are less than half a square mile in area, and most are only a few score yards across. These patches of land are surrounded by free-flowing fresh water streams, treacherous bogs, and stagnant lagoons filled with not only unpleasant biting insects and venomous snakes, but also extremely dangerous larger creatures. Anyone brave enough to travel the Markappal swamps does so with great care. Some of the landmasses are accessible by shallow river fords, but the treacherous, muddy river bottom makes even these a hazard.

For this reason, every settlement has individuals who will guide strangers if paid. Most are willing to sell their boats for an above-average price. They simply take any money they make from the sale of their boats to buy materials for a new one. Most boats found in this area are small, hand-built rowboats, with a narrow waists and shallow drafts, perfect for navigating the labyrinthine backwaters of the Markappal swamp. Such boats can seat four Medium people and up to 150 lb. of cargo. Any more than that may cause the boat to capsize. There is a 25% chance that a given local person has or knows where to find one of the larger boats that can seat up to six people. The difficulty of traveling in and around Markappal is one of the reasons it is so sparsely populated.

For every six hours PCs spend in the unsettled areas of Markappal, roll d% to determine if they encounter any swamp denizens. The chance of an encounter is 20%. If an encounter occurs, roll on the table below (**Table 24–1**), and use the party's level to determine the encounter level, adjusting the number of creatures accordingly. For every day the characters spend in the Markappal region, the Ghoul result on the table should expand by 2% in both directions, thus becoming more likely as time passes. This is meant to reflect the growing number of people who have given up their lives to feed Majeral's vitality and been turned into ghouls.

## Table 24-1: Markappal Region Random Encounters

| d% | Encounter |
|---|---|
| 01–10 | Brine fiend (2d6, CR 2, see p. 35 *Monsters and Lairs*) |
| 11–15 | Crocodile, normal (2d6, CR 2, see p. 271 *Monster Manual*™) |
| 16–20 | Crocodile, giant (2d6, CR 4, see p. 271 *Monster Manual*™) |
| 21–40 | Ghoul (3d6, CR 1, see p. 118 *Monster Manual*™) |
| 41–46 | Hydra, Thunic (1) (CR 14, see p. 183 *Monsters and Lairs*) |
| 47–54 | Maidenhair serpent (1d10, CR 2, see p. 123 *Monsters and Lairs*) |
| 55–60 | Markappal basilysk (3d6, CR 1, see p. 128 *Monsters and Lairs*) |
| 61–65 | Marsh hag (1d4+1, CR 4, see p. 100 *Monsters and Lairs*) |
| 66–70 | Praying mantis, giant (2d6, CR 1, see p. 285 *Monster Manual*™) |
| 71–75 | Refugees from slave raids (Human) (4d10, see stats below) |
| 76–80 | Shade harpy (1d6+6, CR 5, see p. 108 *Monsters and Lairs*) |
| 81–85 | Shambling mound (CR 6, see p. 222 *Monster Manual*™) |
| 86–90 | Sutek (1 warband, see p. 174 *Monsters and Lairs*) |
| 91–95 | Swamp Gaunt (1d4+1, CR 3, see p. 84 *Monsters and Lairs*) |
| 96–00 | Forest Troll (1d4+1, CR 5, see p. 193 *Monsters and Lairs*) |

**Refugee, Male and Female Human Rgr 1:** CR 1; Medium humanoid (Human); HD 1d8+1+3; hp 9; Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; AC 11, touch 11, flat-footed 10; Base Atk +1; Grp +3; Atk +3 melee (1d6+2(19–20/x2), short sword); Full Atk +3 melee (1d6+2(19–20/x2), short sword); SA —; SQ Favored terrain (marsh), Human traits, race/class abilities; AL CN; SV Fort +3, Ref +1, Will +0; Str 14, Dex 13, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 11, Cha 10.

*Skills and Feats*: Climb +2, Hide +4, Jump +2, Knowledge (nature) +4, Listen +3, Move Silently +4, Survival +4; Use Rope +1; Alertness, Toughness, Track.

*Race/Class Abilities: Ranger*: none.

*Favored terrain (marsh)*: A refugee gains a +3 circumstance bonus to Climb, Hide, Listen, Knowledge (nature), Move Silently, Ride, Search, Spot, Swim, Use Rope, and Survival checks as well as a +2 circumstance bonus to all attack rolls in marsh terrain.

*Possessions*: Shortsword.

### Jinny — Markappal Swamp Guide

**Jinny is a generic NPC provided for the GM if the PCs wish to hire a guide for their travels in Markappal. She has lived in Markappal all her life, and knows it well. She is still young, and will not to throw herself into danger for anyone without the promise of a substantial reward.**

**Jinny, Markappal Swamp Guide, Female Human Rgr 4:** CR 4; Medium humanoid (Human); HD 4d8+4+3; hp 26; Init +3; Spd 30 ft.; AC 13, touch 13, flat-footed 10; Base Atk +4; Grp +6; Atk +6 melee (1d8+2(19–20/x2), longsword) or +7 ranged (1d8/x3, longbow); Full Atk +6 melee (1d8+2(19–20/x2), longsword) or +7 ranged (1d8/x3, longbow); SA —; SQ Favored terrain (marsh), Human traits, race/class abilities; AL CN; SV Fort +5, Ref +4, Will +2; Str 14, Dex 17, Con 13, Int 12, Wis 12, Cha 8.

*Skills and Feats*: Climb +6, Craft (boatwright) +5, Handle Animal +0, Hide +12, Jump +4, Knowledge (nature) +5, Listen +5, Move Silently +8, Profession (boater) +4, Search +2, Spot +4, Swim +8, Survival +8; Alertness, Dodge, Favored Terrain (Marsh), Toughness, Track, Sixth Sense.

*Race/Class Abilities*: *Ranger*: Cover Bonus.

*Favored terrain (marsh)*: Jinny gains a +3 circumstance bonus to Climb, Hide, Listen, Knowledge (nature), Move Silently, Ride, Search, Spot, Swim, Use Rope, and Survival checks as well as a +2 circumstance bonus to all attack rolls in marsh terrain.

*Possessions:* Longsword, longbow, 20 arrows.

*Ranger Spells Prepared* (0/1; save DC 12 + spell level): 1st — *expeditious journey*.

## Area 2: The Town of Semiline

Semiline is a town on stilts, built to withstand the periodic floods that sweep through the region. The air is wet, and everything here seems to be in a state of perpetual decay as the swamp tries to reclaim its land. The roughly fashioned buildings stand on wooden stilts 6 to 10 feet off the ground. One can walk between buildings on the often-soggy ground, but the inhabitants generally use the catwalks strung between the buildings. Some of the catwalks are made of rope and planks, but others are semi-permanent wooden structures on poles between important buildings, such as the queen's house and the older shops.

Semiline trades with the Free Kingdoms, particularly Llyr, so the town was hard hit when Llyr was destroyed by the Elves. The town has tried to increase contact with the city-states of the Free Kingdoms, but the process is slow. It has been made even more difficult lately because everyone fears travel through Markappal, even merchants with well-armed retinues.

Queen Chandra's 25 personal guards maintain order, all loyal to her alone. They are mostly experienced fighters and rogues. The people of Semiline trust her. The guards are necessary mainly to keep outsiders in line.

Queen Chandra has two trusted advisors and friends: Rufus Copperpot, a cleric, and Baramil the Broken, a wizard. Both men fled here from Llyr after the elven attacks, and both have fallen deeply in love with her. She needs a husband to sire an heir; both would make suitable husbands, but she thinks so highly of both of them that she cannot bear to hurt either by choosing. The rivalry for her affection has thus far remained civilized.

**Semiline (small town):** Conventional; AL N; 800 gp limit; Assets 38,000 gp; Population 950; Mixed (Human 98%, elf 1%, Nothrog 1%). *Authority Figures:* Queen Chandra Semiline, female Human Rog10, LN; Baramil the Broken, male Human Wiz9, LN; Rufus Copperpot, Human Clr8, CG.

Chandra Semiline is a woman of lithe grace and deep convictions. In spite of having little political power outside of the town of Semiline, she considers herself the Queen of Markappal, as did her mother and grandmother before her. She maintains contact with the neighboring Free Kingdoms to keep the trade pacts intact. She takes every opportunity to keep the peace among the fractious March Lords, but to little avail. She knows of Shivril's and Gavin's sudden rise to prominence, but can do little to about it. She has only twenty-five soldiers, and cannot spare them to go haring off into the swamps. On the other hand, she desperately wants the slaving raids to cease, and is willing to help anyone who can see to it. The only aid she can provide is a place to rest, supplies, and information. She knows the ways to the areas where Shivril and Gavin keep themselves.

**Creatures:** Queen Chandra Semiline, a 10th-level rogue; Baramil the Broken, a 9th-level wizard; Rufus Copperpot, an 8th-level cleric.

**Chandra Semiline, Queen of Markappal, Female Human Rog 10:** CR 10; Medium humanoid (Human); HD 10d6; hp 42; Spd 30 ft.; Init +4; AC 14, touch 14, flat-footed 10; Base Atk +7; Grp +7; Atk +9 melee (1d6+2/18–20, *+2 scimitar*); Full Atk +9/+4 melee (1d6+2/18–20, *+2 scimitar*); SA Sneak attack +4d6; SQ Catfall, evasion, hide in plain sight, improved evasion, improved nightsight, whisperstep, Human traits, race/class abilities; AL LN; SV Fort +3, Ref +11, Will +6; Str 10, Dex 18, Con 11, Int 14, Wis 17, Cha 16.

*Skills and Feats*: Appraise +7, Balance +9, Bluff +13, Climb +5, Decipher Script +7, Diplomacy +13, Disable Device +7, Disguise +8, Escape Artist +9, Gather Information +10, Hide +9, Jump +5, Listen +8, Knowledge (local) +5, Move Silently +9, Search +7, Sense Motive +13, Spot +8, Swim +7, Survival +7, Tumble +9, Use Magic Device +8, Use Rope +9; Alertness, Combat Reflexes, Hand of Fate, Martial Weapon Proficiency (scimitar), Leadership.

*Race/Class Abilities*: *Rogue*: Street Smarts.

*Catfall:* On a successful Reflex save (DC 10 + 1 for every 10 feet fallen), Chandra takes only half normal damage from a fall.

*Evasion*: If Chandra makes a successful Reflex saving throw against an attack that normally deals half damage on a successful save, she instead takes no damage. Evasion can be used only if Chandra is wearing light armor or no armor. If helpless, Chandra does not gain the benefit of evasion.

*Hide In Plain Sight*: Each time Chandra makes a Hide check, she may reduce the total penalty (if any) to his skill check by her rogue class level (10), to a minimum of 0.

*Improved Nightsight:* Chandra can see half again as far as normal in conditions of low light.

*Slippery Mind*: If Chandra is affected by an enchantment and fails her saving throw she can attempt the saving throw again one round later. She only gets this one extra chance to succeed.

*Sneak Attack*: Anytime Chandra's target is denied a Dexterity bonus to AC, or when she flanks a target, Chandra deals an additional 4d6 points of damage on a successful melee attack.

*Whisperstep*: Chandra may move her full speed while attempting to Move Silently with no penalty. If Chandra is running, she suffers only half the normal penalty (–10) to his Move Silently check.

*Possessions*: *+2 scimitar.*

Baramil the Broken has seen more horrors of war than he can withstand. He is gaunt, and his eyes are haunted by the ghosts of dead countrymen, but he is handsome and charming. His cognomen comes from his serious injuries during the fall of Llyr, when a wall collapsed on him. He now walks with a pronounced limp and hunches slightly. He is loyal to the queen, and thus to the welfare of Semiline and Markappal. The tales of slave raids alarm him, but he can do nothing because of Semiline's shortage of fighting men. Short of adventuring himself, he is willing to help in any way he can to see that the raids cease. He fears it is only a matter of time before the raiders turn their attention to Semiline. Seeing the utter destruction of his home has left him with a deep-seated hatred of Elves. If the party includes any Elves, his first reaction will be to attack them. He can overcome this urge with a successful Will save (DC 15) if they appear to be working for the good of Semiline or Queen Chandra.

**Baramil the Broken, Advisor and Suitor to the Queen, Male Human Wiz 9:** CR 9; Medium humanoid (Human); HD 9d4+9; hp 31; Spd 30 ft.; Init –1; AC 9, touch 9, flat-footed 9; Base Atk +4; Grp +5; Atk +5 melee (1d4(19–20/x2), dagger); Full Atk +5 melee (1d4(19–20/x2), dagger); SA Spells; SQ Eidetic Memory (*dimension door, haste, shocking grasp, slow*), summon familiar (rat), Human traits, race/class abilities; AL LN; SV Fort +6, Ref +2, Will +8; Str 11, Dex 9, Con 12, Int 17, Wis 15, Cha 14.

*Skills and Feats:* Alchemy +10, Concentration +13, Diplomacy +6, Knowledge (history) +13, Knowledge (arcana) +11, Scry +12, Spellcraft +8, Swim +5; Enlarge Spell, Extend Spell, Great Fortitude, Heighten Spell, Magical Bloodline (1/day — *detect magic, disrupt undead, ray of frost*), Maximize Spell, Scribe Scroll, Alertness, Spell Mastery (*shocking grasp, charm person, magic missile*).

*Eidetic Memory*: Baramil may spontaneously cast *dimension door, haste, shocking grasp,* and *slow* in place of a prepared spell of equal or higher level. This loses the prepared spell to fuel the memorized spell.

*Race/Class Abilities*: *Wizard*: Spell Mastery, Spontaneous Casting (Evocation).

*Wizard Spells Prepared* (4/5/5/4/2/1; save DC 13 + spell level): 0 — *resistance, detect magic, read magic, light*; 1st — *power spike, shocking grasp, magic missile, charm person, cause fear*; 2nd — *begone, fireeyes, flame arrow, weakness, glitterdust*; 3rd — *slow, imperviousness, haste, fireball*; 4th — *dimension door, soul knife*; 5th — *cloudkill.*

*Possessions*: Dagger.

**Familiar (rat):** Baramil's rat familiar has the following statistics:

**Rat (Familiar):** CR —; Tiny magical beast; HD 9; hp 20; Init +2; Spd 15 ft, climb 15 ft, swim 15 ft; AC 19, touch 14, flat-footed 16; Base Atk +4; Grp –8; Atk +6 melee (1d3–4/x2, bite); Full Atk +6 melee (1d3–4/x2, bite); Space/Reach 2–1/2 ft./0 ft.; SA —; SQ low-light vision, scent, empathic link, share spells, improved evasion, deliver touch spells, speak with master, speak with animals of its kind; AL N; SV Fort +3, Ref +5, Will +7; Str 2, Dex 15, Con 10, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 2.

*Skill and Feats*: Balance +10, Climb +12, Hide +14, Move Silently +10, Swim +10; Weapon Finesse (bite).

*Low-Light Vision (Ex)*: A rat can see twice as far as a Human in starlight, moonlight, torchlight, and similar conditions of shadowy illumination. It retains the ability to distinguish color and detail under these conditions.

*Scent (Ex)*: A rat can detect opponents within 30 feet by sense of smell. If the opponent is upwind, the range increases to 60 feet; if downwind, it drops to 15 feet. Strong scents, such as smoke or rotting garbage, can be detected at twice the ranges noted above. Overpowering scents, such as skunk musk or troglodyte stench, can be detected at triple normal range. When a rat detects a scent, the exact location of the source is not revealed—only its presence somewhere within range. The rat can take a move action to note the direction of the scent.

Whenever the rat comes within 5 feet of the source, the rat pinpoints the source's location.

*Familiar Ability Descriptions:* All familiars have special abilities (or impart abilities to their masters) depending on Baramil's combined level in classes that grant familiars. The abilities are cumulative.

*Alertness (Ex)*: While his familiar is within arm's reach, Baramil gains the Alertness feat.

*Improved Evasion (Ex)*: When subjected to an attack that normally allows a Reflex saving throw for half damage, a familiar takes no damage if it makes a successful saving throw and half damage even if the saving throw fails.

*Share Spells*: At Baramil's option, he may have any spell (but not any spell-like ability) he casts on himself also affect his familiar. The familiar must be within 5 feet at the time of casting to receive the benefit. If the spell or effect has a duration other than instantaneous, it stops affecting the familiar if it moves farther than 5 feet away and will not affect the familiar again even if it returns to Baramil before the duration expires. Additionally, Baramil may cast a spell with a target of "You" on his familiar (as a touch range spell) instead of on himself. Baramil and his familiar can share spells even if the spells normally do not affect creatures of the familiar's type (magical beast).

*Empathic Link (Su)*: Baramil has an empathic link with his familiar out to a distance of up to 1 mile. Baramil cannot see through the familiar's eyes, but they can communicate empathically. Because of the limited nature of the link, only general emotional content can be communicated. Because of this empathic link, Baramil has the same connection to an item or place that his familiar does.

*Deliver Touch Spells (Su)*: Baramil's familiar can deliver touch spells for him. If Baramil and the familiar are in contact at the time Baramil casts a touch spell, he can designate his familiar as the "toucher." The familiar can then deliver the touch spell just as Baramil could. As usual, if Baramil casts another spell before the touch is delivered, the touch spell dissipates.

*Speak with Master (Ex)*: Baramil and his familiar can communicate verbally as if they were using a common language. Other creatures do not understand the communication without magical help.

*Speak with Animals of Its Kind (Ex)*: Baramil's familiar can communicate with rodents (including dire varieties). Such communication is limited by the intelligence of the conversing creatures.

Rufus Copperpot is a portly man with an easy smile and a bald pate encircled by flaming red hair. His pale green eyes sparkle with a mischievous light, in spite of the shadows of past horrors that lurk in their depths. He coughs often, a deep hacking cough that is the result of breathing too much smoke when Llyr burned. He distrusts Elves, having barely escaped Llyr with his life, but he believes there is good to be found in them, so he lets the actions of any elven PCs speak for them, not his own prejudices.

**Rufus Copperpot, Advisor and Suitor to the Queen, Male Human Clr 8:** CR 8; Medium humanoid (Human); HD 8d8–8; 28; Spd 30 ft.; Init +1; AC 16, touch 11, flat-footed 15; Base Atk +6; Grp +9; Atk +9 melee (1d4+3(19-20/x2), dagger); Full Atk +9/+4 melee (1d4+3(19-20/x2), dagger); SA Spells, turn undead 5/day; SQ Cleric domains (Knowledge, Good), spontaneous casting, Human traits, race/class abilities; AL CG; SV Fort +4, Ref +3, Will +11; Str 16, Dex 13, Con 8, Int 13, Wis 17, Cha 14.

*Skills and Feats:* Concentration +6, Craft (bookbinding) +5, Diplomacy +6, Heal +7, Knowledge (arcana) +5, Knowledge (religion) +5, Knowledge (history) +5, Spellcraft +5; Endurance, Iron Will, Maximize Spell, Spell Penetration.

*Race/Class Abilities*: *Cleric (Neus)*: Godly Knowledge (Knowledge (nature), Knowledge (local), Knowledge (architecture and engineering), Knowledge (history)).

*Spontaneous Casting*: Rufus can "lose" a prepared spell (except for a domain spell) in order to cast any *cure* spell of the same level or lower.

*Turn Undead*: Rufus can attempt to turn undead 5 times per day.

*Cleric Spells Prepared* (6/5+1/4+1/4+1/2+1; Save DC: 13 + spell level): 0 — *mending, light, cure minor wounds, purify food and drink, create water, strangled steel*; 1st — *protection from evil*, cure light wounds, remove fear, begone, cause fear, soothe pain*; 2nd — *detect thoughts*, silence, hold person, water weird, weakness*; 3rd — *mass blessing, spirit singing, divine protection, banish the wound, magic circle against evil**; 4th — *minister the wounds, inferno, divination**. *Domain spell

*Possessions*: Dagger.

### Rumors in Semiline

Gather Information checks (DC 15) in the town of Semiline yield the following bits of information. Note that not all of them are true.

- Former followers of three of the March Lords have come through town and left again. They speak of being attacked by slavers without provocation. (True.)
- Of the five March Lords, only Shivril Willowroot and Gavin Lochenvar and believed to be alive. The other three have disappeared. (True.)
- Shivril and Gavin are behind the slaving raids. They are working with Elves who eat the flesh of the dead. (The first part is true.)
- A black dragon has its lair somewhere in the swamp. Shivril and Gavin may be working for the dragon to provide it with food. (Whether a dragon truly resides in Markappal is up to the GM. Shivril and Gavin are working for Majeral, so this is probably an overblown rumor about a Brine Fiend lair, or a particularly old and dangerous Giant Crocodile, should the GM wish to expand on this point.)
- The slavers are working for Jalpa, a place known for its thriving slave trade. (False.)

# Part 1: Events and Encounters

The encounters listed below do not correspond to any map. Introduce them as they seem dramatically appropriate. The encounters should occur in this order to present the PCs with an unfolding picture of the situation.

### Encounter 1: Unsettling Events (EL 17)

**Read aloud:** *Far to the south and west, the endless expanse of soggy marsh stretches toward the sea. The ground has been growing ever softer underfoot, in places giving way with a startling squelch. The wet air stinks with decay; gnarled mangrove trees drip moss. The muddy brown river meanders past, unconcerned with the affairs of the Accordlands. The patches of land in the midst of the ancient river are covered in thick, succulent foliage. Then the scent of something else comes through the swamp stench, something dead and rotting. It does not take long to find source of the stench: a broad swath of wounded earth, covered with corpses. The buzzing of flies almost drowns the sounds of the river.*

**Development:** The corpses are the remains of a Jalpan slaving party. Two days ago, they encountered Shivril Willowroot and his followers and ghouls. The ten surviving Jalpan slavers were taken prisoner. Characters with the Track feat may make a Survival check (DC 20) to discover this. Many of the corpses appear to have been partially eaten.

As the PCs examine the corpses, they begin to rise as ghouls. The ghouls immediately attack the party, ravenous in their first moments of unlife, and fight until destroyed. The four most putrefied of the newly risen undead creatures are ghasts, but this is not apparent until combat begins. Since these ghouls are the remains of warriors, they are still wearing their armor. They throw their weapons aside and attack with bare claws.

**Creatures:** Twenty ghouls; four ghasts.

**Ghouls (20):** CR 1; Medium undead; HD 3d12; hp 20; Init +2; Spd 30 ft.; AC 14, touch 12, flat-footed 12; Base Atk +1, Grp +2; Atk +2 melee (1d6+1 plus paralysis, bite); Full Atk +2 melee (1d6+1 plus paralysis/x2, bite), +0 melee (1d3 plus paralysis/x2, 2 claws); Space/Reach 5 ft./5 ft.; SA Ghoul fever, paralysis; SQ Darkvision 60 ft., undead traits, +2 turn resistance; AL CE; SV Fort +1, Ref +3, Will +5; Str 13, Dex 15, Con —, Int 13, Wis 14, Cha 12.

*Skills and Feats:* Balance +7, Climb +6, Hide +7, Jump +5, Move Silently +7, Spot +8; Ability Focus (paralysis), Multiattack.

*Darkvision, 60 ft.:* A ghoul can see in the dark with no light source at all, out to a range of 60 feet. Darkvision is black and white only (colors cannot be discerned). It does not allow the ghoul to see anything that it could not see otherwise — invisible objects are still invisible, and illusions are still visible as what they seem to be. Likewise, darkvision subjects the ghoul to gaze attacks normally. The presence of light does not spoil darkvision.

*Ghoul Fever:* Disease — bite, Fortitude DC 12, incubation period 1 day, damage 1d3 Con and 1d3 Dex. The save DC is Charisma-based.

An afflicted humanoid who dies of ghoul fever rises as a ghoul at the next midnight. A humanoid who becomes a ghoul in this way retains none of the abilities it possessed in life. It is not under the control of any other ghouls, but it hungers for the flesh of the living and behaves like a normal ghoul in all respects. A humanoid of 4 Hit Dice or more rises as a ghast, not a ghoul.

*Paralysis:* Those hit by a ghoul's bite or claw attack must succeed on a DC 14 Fortitude save or be paralyzed for 1d4+1 rounds. Elves have immunity to this paralysis. The save DC is Charisma-based.

*Turn Resistance:* When resolving a turn, rebuke, command, or bolster attempt, add +2 to the ghoul's Hit Dice total.

*Undead Traits:* The ghoul has the following traits:

- No Constitution score.
- Darkvision out to 60 feet.
- Immunity to all mind-affecting effects (charms, compulsions, phantasms, patterns, and morale effects).
- Immunity to poison, sleep effects, paralysis, stunning, disease, death effects, and necromancy effects.
- Negative energy (such as an *inflict* spell) can heal undead creatures. The fast healing quality works regardless of the creature's Intelligence score.
- Not subject to critical hits, non-lethal damage, ability damage, ability drain, fatigue, exhaustion, or energy drain. Immune to damage to its physical ability scores (Strength, Dexterity, Constitution), as well as to fatigue and exhaustion effects.
- Immunity to any effect that requires a Fortitude save (unless the effect also works on objects, or is harmless).

- Uses its Charisma modifier for Concentration checks.
- Not at risk of death from massive damage. Immediately destroyed when reduced to 0 hit points or less.
- Not affected by *raise dead* and *reincarnate* spells or abilities. *Resurrection* and *true resurrection* can affect undead creatures. These spells turn undead creatures back into the living creatures they were before becoming undead.
- Proficient with its natural weapons, all simple weapons, and any weapon mentioned in its entry.
- Proficient with whatever type of armor (light, medium, and heavy) it is described as wearing, as well as all lighter types.
- Undead do not eat, sleep, or breathe.

**Ghasts (4):** CR 3; Medium undead; HD 6d12+3; hp 42; Init +3; Spd 30 ft.; AC 17, touch 13, flat-footed 14; Base Atk +3, Grp +6; Atk +6 melee (1d8+3 plus paralysis/x2, bite); Full Atk +6 melee (1d8+3 plus paralysis/x2, bite), +4 melee (1d4+1 plus paralysis, 2 claws); Space/Reach 5 ft./5 ft.; SA Ghoul fever, paralysis, stench; SQ Darkvision 60 ft., undead traits, +2 turn resistance; AL CE; SV Fort +2, Ref +5, Will +7; Str 17, Dex 17, Con —, Int 13, Wis 14, Cha 16.

*Skills and Feats:* Balance +9, Climb +10, Hide +10, Jump +10, Move Silently +10, Spot +10; Ability Focus (paralysis), Multiattack, Toughness.

*Darkvision, 60 ft.:* A ghast can see in the dark with no light source at all, out to a range of 60 feet. Darkvision is black and white only (colors cannot be discerned). It does not allow the ghast to see anything that it could not see otherwise — invisible objects are still invisible, and illusions are still visible as what they seem to be. Likewise, darkvision subjects the ghast to gaze attacks normally. The presence of light does not spoil darkvision.

*Ghoul Fever:* Disease — bite, Fortitude DC 15, incubation period 1 day, damage 1d3 Con and 1d3 Dex. The save DC is Charisma-based.

An afflicted humanoid who dies of ghoul fever rises as a ghoul at the next midnight. A humanoid who becomes a ghoul in this way retains none of the abilities it possessed in life. It is not under the control of any other ghouls, but it hungers for the flesh of the living and behaves like a normal ghoul in all respects. A humanoid of 4 Hit Dice or more rises as a ghast, not a ghoul.

*Paralysis:* Those hit by a ghast's bite or claw attack must succeed on a DC 17 Fortitude save or be paralyzed for 1d4+1 rounds. Even Elves can be affected by this paralysis. The save DC is Charisma-based.

*Stench:* The stink of death and corruption surrounding these creatures is overwhelming. Living creatures within 10 feet must succeed on a DC 15 Fortitude save or be sickened for 1d6+4 minutes. A creature that successfully saves cannot be affected again by the same ghast's stench for 24 hours. A *delay poison* or *neutralize poison* spell removes the effect from a sickened creature. Creatures with immunity to poison are unaffected, and creatures resistant to poison receive their normal bonus on their saving throws. The save DC is Charisma-based.

*Turn Resistance:* When resolving a turn, rebuke, command, or bolster attempt, add +2 to the ghast's Hit Dice total.

*Undead Traits:* The ghast has the following traits:

- No Constitution score.
- Darkvision out to 60 feet.
- Immunity to all mind-affecting effects (charms, compulsions, phantasms, patterns, and morale effects).
- Immunity to poison, sleep effects, paralysis, stunning, disease, death effects, and necromancy effects.
- Negative energy (such as an *inflict* spell) can heal undead creatures. The fast healing quality works regardless of the creature's Intelligence score.
- Not subject to critical hits, non-lethal damage, ability damage, ability drain, fatigue, exhaustion, or energy drain. Immune to damage to its physical ability scores (Strength, Dexterity, Constitution), as well as to fatigue and exhaustion effects.
- Immunity to any effect that requires a Fortitude save (unless the effect also works on objects, or is harmless).
- Uses its Charisma modifier for Concentration checks.
- Not at risk of death from massive damage. Immediately destroyed when reduced to 0 hit points or less.
- Not affected by *raise dead* and *reincarnate* spells or abilities. *Resurrection* and *true resurrection* can affect undead creatures. These spells turn undead creatures back into the living creatures they were before becoming undead.
- Proficient with its natural weapons, all simple weapons, and any weapon mentioned in its entry.
- Proficient with whatever type of armor (light, medium, and heavy) it is described as wearing, as well as all lighter types.
- Undead do not eat, sleep, or breathe.

### Encounter 2: An Empty Settlement

**Read aloud:** *As you travel deeper into Markappal, the air becomes increasingly dense and humid. Swarms of tiny insects hover over the rippling brown water. Occasionally a sudden splash disrupts the smooth surface of the water, or a swirling froth erupts from the depths of nearby lagoon, only to subside again just as quickly. You round a bend in the river, and there on a nearby island is a small Human settlement of a few half-decaying huts and lean-tos. The weeping branches of moss-festooned willow trees hang like long fingers over the bark roofs. Rough-hewn doors hang ajar.*

**Development:** If the PCs have a guide with them, the guide tells them that this settlement was populated three days ago. Now it is completely deserted. The houses have been looted. Successful Spot checks (DC 17) reveal the copious bloodstains spattering the grass and the dirt footpaths. Inside one of the houses is what remains of a Human corpse, all but completely devoured. All valuables have vanished with the inhabitants.

A successful Survival check by a character with the Track feat (DC 18) reveals that there was a bloody struggle around the village. At least ten captives were dragged to the water's edge and loaded into boats. The attackers appear to have been both Humans with sturdy boots and creatures with gnarled, clawed feet.

The party may find several settlements such as this one as they make their way deeper into the swamp. With each settlement found deserted in this manner, their guide grows increasingly alarmed. Something is not right in these parts. Encounters such as this one can build a sense of dread, making the PCs fear that the bad guys could leap out at them at any moment.

ENCOUNTER 3: AMBUSH (EL 17)

By this time, Majeral knows the PCs are in the region, and has dispatched ghouls into the swamps to watch for the party. These ghouls hide in shadows and bushes, watching the PCs. They do not attack; Majeral specifically ordered them not to. If they are attacked, they flee. (These ghouls may or may not be present as a result of a random encounter.)

Present the following encounter when the party is deep in the swamp, near dusk.

**Read aloud:** *The air is raucous with the mournful cries of birds and... other things, welcoming the coming night, when all the evils of the world can do their work unseen by the light of day. The boat slides silently through the water among mysterious ripples rising from murky depths. Invisible night creatures begin their chittering chorus, echoing among the stagnant lagoons.*

Vigilant PCs who make Spot checks (DC 22) notice the red eyes of hidden ghouls along their course, visible now in the fading light. They lurk in deep shadows, crouching in bushes, dense tree branches, or soggy rushes, watching every move the PCs make. Listen checks (DC 22) can perceive their furtive movements, the faint rustle of grass and foliage, the ripple of movement in the water. The party cannot determine the nature of the creatures, only that they are under surveillance.

After darkness falls and the PCs camp, Shivril Willowroot sets up the ambush. He is in telepathic communication with Majeral, who has been relaying information from his ghouls about the party's position and apparent strengths. He waits until after midnight to make his attack.

His prowess at arms and experience in swamp skirmishes make him a formidable opponent. When he springs the ambush, he sends in the ghouls to tie up the party in hand-to-hand combat. From the darkness, he and his men volley arrows. They concentrate their fire on spellcasters until they are down.

The aim of this raid is not kill the party outright, but to capture them alive. If Shivril and his men put down the entire party, they immediately stabilize their captives. When he is sure he has the upper hand, he demands that the party surrender. If the PCs comply, they are stripped of all equipment, armor, and weapons, tightly bound and gagged, and dragged on Shivril's boats. Dead characters are returned to Majeral's lair to be turned into undead minions. Shivril is not foolhardy. If the PCs gain the upper hand, he flees with his men, leaving any ghouls to be killed.

**Creatures:** Shivril Willowroot, an 8th-level ranger/8th-level rogue; six Shivril's followers, 4th-level fighters/3rd-level rangers/3rd-level rogues; twenty ghouls *(see Encounter 1 for stats)*.

**Shivril Willowroot, March Lord, Male Human Rgr 8/Rog 8:** CR 16; Medium humanoid (Human); HD 8d8+8 plus 8d6+8+3; hp 82; Spd 30 ft.; Init +7; AC 21, touch 14, flat-footed 17; Base Atk +14; Grp +17; Atk +21 melee (1d8+6 plus 1d10 electricity on critical hit(17–20/x2), *+3 keen shocking burst longsword*) or +21 ranged (1d8+2/x3, *+2 distance composite longbow*); Full Atk +21 melee (1d8+6 plus 1d10 electricity on critical hit(17–20/x2), *+3 keen shocking burst longsword*) or +21 ranged (1d8+2/x3, *+2 distance composite longbow*); SA Sneak attack +3d6; SQ Catfall, evasion, favored terrain (marsh, woodlands), hide in plain sight, improved nightsight, whisperstep, Human traits, race/class abilities; AL LE; SV Fort +9, Ref +12, Will +3; Str 12, Dex 16, Con 13, Int 14, Wis 11, Cha 13.

*Skills and Feats:* Appraise +8, Balance +7, Bluff +10, Climb +7, Diplomacy +6, Escape Artist +26*, Gather Information +8, Heal +6, Hide +15, Intimidate +9, Jump +10, Knowledge (local) +4, Knowledge (nature) +8, Listen +6, Move Silently +29*, Search +6, Sense Motive +6, Spot +6, Swim +10, Survival +9, Use Rope +7; Alertness, Combat Reflexes, Improved Initiative, Improved Track, Quick Draw, Point Blank Shot, Power Attack, Power Shot, Toughness, Track, Weapon Focus (longbow), Weapon Focus (longsword). *includes +5 bonus from *+2 slick silent moves mithral shirt*

*Race/Class Abilities*: *Ranger*: Cover Bonus; *Rogue*: Street Smarts.

*Catfall:* On a successful Reflex save (DC 10 + 1 for every 10 feet fallen), Shivril takes only half normal damage from a fall.

*Evasion*: If Shivril makes a successful Reflex saving throw against an attack that normally deals half damage on a successful save, he instead takes no damage. Evasion can be used only if Shivril is wearing light armor or no armor. If helpless, Shivril does not gain the benefit of evasion.

*Favored terrain (marsh, woodland)*: Shivril gains a +3 circumstance bonus to Climb, Hide, Listen, Knowledge (nature), Move Silently, Ride, Search, Spot, Swim, Use Rope, and Survival checks as well as a +2 circumstance bonus to all attack rolls in marsh and woodland terrain.

*Hide In Plain Sight*: Each time Shivril makes a Hide check, he may reduce the total penalty (if any) to his skill check by his rogue class level (8), to a minimum of 0.

*Improved Nightsight*: Shivril can see half again as far as normal in conditions of low light.

*Sneak Attack*: Anytime Shivril's target is denied a Dexterity bonus to AC, or when he flanks a target, he deals an additional 3d6 points of damage on a successful melee attack.

*Whisperstep*: Shivril may move his full speed while attempting to Move Silently with no penalty. If Shivril is running, he suffers only half the normal penalty (–10) to his Move Silently check.

*Possessions*: *+2 slick silent moves mithral shirt, +3 keen shocking burst longsword, +2 distance composite longbow, pearl of sirines*

**Shivril's Followers (6), Male Human Ftr 4/Rgr 3/Rog 3:** CR 10; Medium humanoid (Human); HD 4d10+8 plus 3d8+6 plus 3d6+6+3; hp 68; Spd 30 ft.; Init +6; AC 17, touch 12, flat-footed 15; Base Atk +9; Grp +11; Atk +14 melee (1d6+5 (18–20/x2), *+2 scimitar*) or +12 ranged (1d8+1/x3, *+1 composite longbow*); Full Atk +14 melee (1d6+5(18–20/x2), *+2 scimitar*) or +12 ranged (1d8+1/x3, *+1 composite longbow*); SA Sneak attack +1d6; SQ Evasion, favored terrain (marsh), hide in plain sight, Human traits, race/class abilities; AL LE; SV Fort +12, Ref +7, Will +5; Str 14, Dex 14, Con 14, Int 12, Wis 12, Cha 12.

*Skills and Feats:* Balance +6*, Climb +7*, Gather Information +3, Intimidate +6, Knowledge (nature) +8, Knowledge (local) +3, Listen +8, Move Silently +11*, Search +7, Spot +7, Survival +10, Swim +8*; Cleave, Great Fortitude, Improved Initiative, Mighty Blow, Never Turn Your Back, Patience, Power Attack, Quick Draw, Toughness, Track. *includes –1 armor check penalty

*Race/Class Abilities: Fighter*: Courage (+1 Will/+4 vs. fear); *Ranger*: none; *Rogue*: Street Smarts.

*Evasion*: If a follower makes a successful Reflex saving throw against an attack that normally deals half damage on a successful save, he instead takes no damage. Evasion can be used only if the follower is wearing light armor or no armor. A helpless follower does not gain the benefit of evasion.

*Favored terrain (marsh)*: A follower gains a +3 circumstance bonus to Climb, Hide, Listen, Knowledge (nature), Move Silently, Ride, Search, Spot, Swim, Use Rope, and Survival checks as well as a +2 circumstance bonus to all attack rolls in marsh terrain.

*Favored Weapon (scimitar)*: A follower gains a +1 competence bonus to attack and damage rolls with the scimitar.

*Hide In Plain Sight*: Each time a follower makes a Hide check, he may reduce the total penalty (if any) to his skill check by his rogue class level (3), to a minimum of 0.

*Sneak Attack*: Anytime a follower's target is denied a Dexterity bonus to AC, or when he flanks a target, he deals an additional 1d6 points of damage on a successful melee attack.

*Possessions: +1 chain shirt, +2 scimitar, +1 longbow.*

**Ghouls (20):** hp 20 (all twenty).

**Development:** If Shivril is captured, he resists interrogation, but may crack under sufficient pressure. He is terrified of Majeral, and does not wish to serve the Ghoul Lord forever. Majeral gained his cooperation with coercion, not *domination* or other mind control. If the PCs are obviously powerful, he may try to throw in with them if they promise him safe passage. Of course, he will stab them in the back or flee at the first opportunity. He is not to be trusted.

If the PCs overcome his resistance to interrogation, he divulges the following information.

- The creature behind the slaving in Markappal calls himself Majeral, the Ghoul Lord.
- Majeral coerced Shivril into helping him about a year ago, promising great power and a king's ransom if Shivril joined him, endless death if he refused. Shivril complied, but so far, he has seen none of the promised rewards.
- He does not know why Majeral needs so many slaves, but he always has several of them chained to his body.
- In the last few months, the entire Markappal region has become infested with ghouls.
- Besides Gavin Lochenvar, he thinks all the other March Lords are dead. He killed Simon Halfstep himself. The other two disappeared into Majeral's lair.
- He knows where to find Majeral's lair, and can draw a map to it.
- Gavin Lochenvar is working for Majeral too, but Shivril and Gavin do not work together.
- Shivril and his men have personally captured several hundred people. Their slave raids have been so successful that they have been forced to expand their searches to Andover.

If the PCs are subdued or captured, proceed to **Part 2**. If not, continue with **Encounter 4**.

### Encounter 4: Capture (EL 19)

**Read aloud:** *The night is clear and calm, and God's Eye hangs aloof among the stars. Suddenly a jagged red shape heaves over the twisted black treetops, casting a trail of light on the river water like a swath of bloody coins. Bascaron's wounded face peers over the treetops, painting a sanguine glow on the night-shrouded marshes. The mournful cries of the swamp creatures grow louder, as if they are greeting their lord and master.*

**Development:** If Majeral failed to capture the PCs in **Encounter 3** he tries again with Gavin Lochenvar, bolstered by a powerful artifact borrowed from Cassica Moonseed. This fight should be fierce, and the PCs should feel as if they have a chance of escaping, but the result is predetermined — the trick is making the players feel as if this was not the case. The ideal time to spring this attack is before they have had a chance to recover from **Encounter 3**, perhaps even the same night.

The only warning for this encounter occurs if one of the PCs is able to detect *scrying*. Gavin *scries* the PCs area first shortly before he launches his attack so that he can get the location correct for his *teleportation circle*. He does not know the spell, but Majeral provided him with two scrolls, one for departure, one for return. He has the second one on his person when he appears. When he and his followers *teleport* into the area, they immediately attack. When Gavin appears, he is protected by several magical wards, having cast them before entering the *teleportation circle: protection from arrows, protection from cold, protection from fire, protection from good, protection from spells, stoneskin,* and *shield*. He is wearing a *ring of spell turning*. The *protection* spells last far beyond the end of the encounter, because of Gavin's high level. He sends his undead and Human followers to tie up the PCs in melee combat, then from a safe distance he uses the *staff of Bascaron's slumber* (see **Part 5**) to subdue the PCs one by one. If the group includes a cleric, Gavin targets him in the first round of combat, having previously *scried* the party to locate the cleric.

He has brought 20 ghasts, 10 swamp gaunts, and his two followers. His followers are powerful spellcasters, and they move to Gavin's flanks to protect him, casting swarms of empowered, maximized *magic missiles*.

After this encounter the PCs are all rendered unconscious, taken captive, and *teleported* to Majeral's lair (see **Part 2**), to be plagued by the *staff's* nightmares until they awaken.

Gavin is a powerful spellcaster who was born and raised in Markappal, the son of a March Lord. It is all he knows, and he is content to rule the only domain he has ever known. He considers Queen Chandra an incompetent but convenient figurehead.

The people of Markappal know where the real power lies. As with Shivril, Majeral coerced Gavin with promises of gold and power if he agreed, versus eternal death if he refused. Gavin and Shivril were the most powerful March Lords before Majeral ordered them to remove the other three. He does not yet know Majeral's true designs, nor the true reach of the Ghoul Lord's power.

**Gavin Lochenvar, March Lord, Male Human Wiz 17:** CR 17; Medium humanoid (Human); HD 17d4+34; hp 80; Spd 30 ft.; Init +7; AC 21, touch 13, flat-footed 18; Base Atk +8; Grp +9; Atk +14 melee (1d6+6 plus 2d6 vs. good/x2, *Staff of Bascaron's Slumber*); Full Atk +14 melee (1d6+6 plus 2d6 vs. good/x2, *Staff of Bascaron's Slumber*); SA Spells; SQ Eidetic memory (*black tentacles, charm person, dispel magic, dominate person, greater teleport, mass suggestion, protection from arrows, scrying*), summon familiar (owl), Human traits, race/class abilities; AL LE; SV Fort +12*, Ref +13*, Will +19*; Str 12, Dex 16, Con 14, Int 18, Wis 18, Cha 11. *includes *cloak of resistance +5*

*Skills and Feats:* Alchemy +10, Concentration +20, Craft (alchemy) +9, Diplomacy +3, Knowledge (history) +7, Knowledge (arcana) +13, Knowledge (nature) +15, Listen +9, Search +10, Sense Motive +8, Spellcraft +20, Spot +10*, Swim +7, Survival +14; Craft Wondrous Item, Combat Casting, Empower Spell, Enlarge Spell, Extend Spell, Forge Ring, Improved Initiative, Maximize Spell, Spell Penetration, Scribe Scroll, Alertness Spell Mastery *(web, magic missile, mage armor, shield)*. *Gavin gains +3 to his Spot checks in shadows.

*Race/Class Abilities: Wizard:* Spell Mastery, Spontaneous Casting (Evocation), True Sight.

*Eidetic Memory:* Gavin may spontaneously cast *black tentacles, charm person, dispel magic, dominate person, greater teleport, mass suggestion, protection from arrows,* and *scrying* in place of a prepared spell of equal or higher level. This loses the prepared spell to fuel the memorized spell.

*Wizard Spells Prepared* (4/5/5/5/5/4/4/3/2/1; save DC 14 + spell level): 0 — *detect magic (2), read magic, ghost sound*; 1st — *mage armor, shield, charm person, true strike, magic missile*; 2nd — *acid arrow, web, mirror image, protection from arrows, bull's grace*; 3rd — *acid spittle, dispel magic, vampiric touch, hold person, haste*; 4th — *greater invisibility, scrying, ball lightning, ice storm, black tentacles*; 5th — *feeblemind, dominate person, teleport, talons of the wind*; 6th — *quickened invisibility, globe of invulnerability, disintegrate, flesh to stone*; 7th — *greater teleport, mass suggestion, finger of death*; 8th — *iron body, blight person*; 9th — *power word kill.*

*Possessions:* Spellbook, *Staff of Bascaron's slumber, bracers of armor +8, cloak of resistance +5, ring of spell turning, scroll of teleportation circle.*

**Familiar (owl):** Gavin's owl familiar has the following statistics:

**Owl (Familiar):** CR —; Tiny magical beast; HD 17; hp 40; Init +3; Spd 10 ft, fly 40 ft. (average); AC 26, touch 15, flat-footed 23; Base Atk +8; Grp –3; Atk +11 melee (1d4–3/x2, talons); Full Atk +11 melee (1d4–3/x2, talons); Space/Reach 2-1/2 ft./0 ft.; SA —; SQ low-light vision, empathic link, share spells, improved evasion, deliver touch spells, speak with master, speak with animals of its kind, scry on familiar, spell resistance 22; AL N; SV Fort +6, Ref +8, Will +13; Str 4, Dex 17, Con 10, Int 14, Wis 14, Cha 4.

*Skill and Feats:* Listen +14, Move Silently +17, Spot +6*; Weapon Finesse (talons). *Owls have a +8 racial bonus on Listen checks and a +14 racial bonus on Move Silently checks. *They have a +8 racial bonus on Spot checks in areas of shadowy illumination.

*Low-Light Vision (Ex)*: An owl can see twice as far as a Human in starlight, moonlight, torchlight, and similar conditions of shadowy illumination. It retains the ability to distinguish color and detail under these conditions.

*Familiar Ability Descriptions:* All familiars have special abilities (or impart abilities to their masters) depending on Gavin's combined level in classes that grant familiars. The abilities are cumulative.

*Alertness (Ex):* While his familiar is within arm's reach, Gavin gains the Alertness feat.

*Improved Evasion (Ex)*: When subjected to an attack that normally allows a Reflex saving throw for half damage, a familiar takes no damage if it makes a successful saving throw and half damage even if the saving throw fails.

*Share Spells:* At Gavin's option, he may have any spell (but not any spell-like ability) he casts on himself also affect his familiar. The familiar must be within 5 feet at the time of casting to receive the benefit. If the spell or effect has a duration other than instantaneous, it stops affecting the familiar if it moves farther than 5 feet away and will not affect the familiar again even if it returns to Gavin before the duration expires. Additionally, Gavin may cast a spell with a target of "You" on his familiar (as a touch range spell) instead of on himself. Gavin and his familiar can share spells even if the spells normally do not affect creatures of the familiar's type (magical beast).

*Empathic Link (Su)*: Gavin has an empathic link with his familiar out to a distance of up to 1 mile. Gavin cannot see through the familiar's eyes, but they can communicate empathically. Because of the limited nature of the link, only general emotional content can be communicated. Because of this empathic link, Gavin has the same connection to an item or place that his familiar does.

*Deliver Touch Spells (Su)*: Gavin's familiar can deliver touch spells for him. If Gavin and the familiar are in contact at the time Gavin casts a touch spell, he can designate his familiar as the "toucher." The familiar can then deliver the touch spell just as Gavin could. As usual, if Gavin casts another spell before the touch is delivered, the touch spell dissipates.

*Speak with Master (Ex)*: Gavin and his familiar can communicate verbally as if they were using a common language. Other creatures do not understand the communication without magical help.

*Speak with Animals of Its Kind (Ex)*: Gavin's familiar can communicate with birds (including dire varieties). Such communication is limited by the intelligence of the conversing creatures.

*Spell Resistance (Ex)*: Gavin's familiar gains spell resistance equal to its master's level + 5 (22). To affect the familiar with a spell, another spellcaster must get a result on a caster level check (1d20 + caster level) that equals or exceeds the familiar's spell resistance.

*Scry on Familiar (Sp)*: Gavin may scry on his familiar (as if casting the *scrying* spell) once per day.

**Gavin's Followers (2), Male Human Wiz 10:** CR 10; Medium humanoid (Human); HD 10d4+10; hp 35; Spd 30 ft.; Init +2; AC 17, touch 12, flat-footed 15; Base Atk +5; Grp +6; Atk +8 melee (1d6+3/x2, *+2 quarterstaff*); Full Atk +8 melee (1d6+3/x2, *+2 quarterstaff*); SA Spells; SQ Eidetic memory (*black tentacles, charm person, dispel magic, dominate person, protection from arrows*); summon familiar (bat), Human traits, race/class abilities; AL LE; SV Fort +4, Ref +5, Will +8; Str 12, Dex 14, Con 13, Int 16, Wis 13, Cha 11.

*Skills and Feats:* Alchemy +10, Concentration +14, Craft (alchemy) +11, Knowledge (history) +6, Knowledge (arcana) +6, Knowledge (nature) +5, Spellcraft +9, Survival +6; Craft Wondrous Item, Combat Casting, Empower Spell, Enlarge Spell, Extend Spell, Maximize Spell, Spell Penetration, Scribe Scroll, Alertness, Spell Mastery *(web, charm person, protection from arrows)*.

*Race/Class Abilities: Wizard*: Spell Mastery, Spontaneous Casting (Evocation).

*Eidetic Memory:* Gavin's followers may spontaneously cast *black tentacles, charm person, dispel magic, dominate person,* and *protection from arrows* in place of a prepared spell of equal or higher level. This loses the prepared spell to fuel the memorized spell.

*Wizard Spells Prepared* (4/5/5/4/3/2; save DC 13 + spell level): 0 — *detect magic (2), read magic, ghost sound*; 1st — *mage armor, shield, charm person, true strike, magic missile*; 2nd — *acid arrow, web, mirror image, protection from arrows, bull's grace*; 3rd — *acid spittle, dispel magic, vampiric touch, hold person*; 4th — *greater invisibility, ball lightning, black tentacles*; 5th — *feeblemind, dominate person*.

*Possessions*: *+2 quarterstaff*, spellbook.

**Familiar (bat):** Gavin's followers' bat familiars have the following statistics:

**Bat (Familiar):** CR —; Diminutive magical beast; HD 10; hp 17; Init +2; Spd 5 ft., fly 40 ft. (good); AC 21, touch 16, flat-footed 19; Base Atk +5, Grp –12; Atk —; Full Atk —; Space/Reach 1 ft./ 0 ft.; SA —; SQ Blindsense 20 ft., low-light vision, improved evasion, share spells, empathic link, deliver touch spells, speak with master, speak with animals of its kind; AL N; SV Fort +3, Ref +5, Will +9; Str 1, Dex 15, Con 10, Int 10, Wis 14, Cha 4.

*Skills and Feats:* Hide +14, Listen +8*, Move Silently +6, Spot +8*; Alertness. * A bat has a +4 racial bonus on Spot and Listen checks. These bonuses are lost if its blindsense is negated.

*Familiar Ability Descriptions:* All familiars have special abilities (or impart abilities to their masters) depending on Gavin's follower's combined level in classes that grant familiars. The abilities are cumulative.

*Alertness (Ex):* While his familiar is within arm's reach, Gavin's follower gains the Alertness feat.

*Improved Evasion (Ex)*: When subjected to an attack that normally allows a Reflex saving throw for half damage, a familiar takes no damage if it makes a successful saving throw and half damage even if the saving throw fails.

*Low-Light Vision:* A bat can see twice as far as a Human in starlight, moonlight, torchlight, and similar conditions of shadowy illumination. A bat retains the ability to distinguish color and detail under these conditions.

*Blindsense:* A bat notices and locates creatures within 20 feet. Opponents still have 100% concealment against a creature with blindsense.

*Share Spells*: At Gavin's follower's option, he may have any spell (but not any spell-like ability) he casts on himself also affect his familiar. The familiar must be within 5 feet at the time of casting to receive the benefit. If the spell or effect has a duration other than instantaneous, it stops affecting the familiar if it moves farther than 5 feet away and will not affect the familiar again even if it returns to Gavin's follower before the duration expires. Additionally, Gavin's follower may cast a spell with a target of "You" on his familiar (as a touch range spell) instead of on himself. Gavin's follower and his familiar can share spells even if the spells normally do not affect creatures of the familiar's type (magical beast).

*Empathic Link (Su)*: Gavin's follower has an empathic link with his familiar out to a distance of up to 1 mile. Gavin's followers cannot see through the familiar's eyes, but they can communicate empathically. Because of the limited nature of the link, only general emotional content can be communicated. Because of this empathic link, Gavin's follower has the same connection to an item or place that his familiar does.

*Deliver Touch Spells (Su)*: Gavin's follower's familiar can deliver touch spells for him. If Gavin's follower and the familiar are in contact at the time Gavin's follower casts a touch spell, he can designate his familiar as the "toucher." The familiar can then deliver the touch spell just as Gavin's follower could. As usual, if Gavin's follower casts another spell before the touch is delivered, the touch spell dissipates.

*Speak with Master (Ex)*: Gavin's follower and Gavin's follower's familiar can communicate verbally as if they were using a common language. Other creatures do not understand the communication without magical help.

*Speak with Animals of Its Kind (Ex)*: Gavin's follower's familiar can communicate with bats (including dire varieties). Such communication is limited by the intelligence of the conversing creatures.

**Swamp Gaunts (10):** CR 7; Large undead; HD 12d12+3; hp 81; Init +0; Spd 30 ft.; AC 21, touch 9, flat-footed 21; Base Atk +3, Grp +6; Atk +8 melee (1d6+4/x2, slam); Full Atk +8 melee (1d6+4/x2, 2 slams); Space/Reach 10 ft./5 ft.; SA Despair, swamp rot; SQ damage reduction 5/magic, undead traits; AL LE; SV Fort +4, Ref +3, Will +10; Str 18, Dex 10, Con —, Int 6, Wis 14, Cha 15.

*Skills and Feats:* Hide +14, Listen +17, Move Silently +14, Spot +17; Alertness, Power Attack, Cleave, Toughness, Weapon Focus (slam).

*Despair (Su)*: At the mere sight of a swamp gaunt, the viewer must make a Will save (DC 15 for swamp gaunts) or be paralyzed with fear for 1d4 rounds. Regardless of whether the save is successful, that opponent cannot be affected by the gaunt's despair ability for one day. The save DC is Charisma-based.

*Swamp Rot (Su):* Supernatural disease — slam, Fortitude save (DC 14), incubation period 1 day, damage 1d6 temporary Constitution. Opponents killed by the effects of swamp rot become swamp gaunts themselves. After death, the opponent rises 1d4+1 days later, and immediately walks toward the swamp in which it was infected, regardless of distance. Once it arrives, it joins the creature that infected it. The save DC is Charisma-based.

*Resistant to Blows (Ex)*: Physical attacks of all types deal only half damage to gaunts. Apply this effect before damage reduction.

*Undead Traits:* A swamp gaunt has the following traits:

- No Constitution score.
- Darkvision out to 60 feet.
- Immunity to all mind-affecting effects (charms, compulsions, phantasms, patterns, and morale effects).
- Immunity to poison, sleep effects, paralysis, stunning, disease, death effects, and necromancy effects.
- Negative energy (such as an *inflict* spell) can heal undead creatures. The fast healing quality works regardless of the creature's Intelligence score.
- Not subject to critical hits, non-lethal damage, ability damage, ability drain, fatigue, exhaustion, or energy drain. Immune to damage to its physical ability scores (Strength, Dexterity, Constitution), as well as to fatigue and exhaustion effects.
- Immunity to any effect that requires a Fortitude save (unless the effect also works on objects, or is harmless).
- Uses its Charisma modifier for Concentration checks.
- Not at risk of death from massive damage. Immediately destroyed when reduced to 0 hit points or less.
- Not affected by *raise dead* and *reincarnate* spells or abilities. *Resurrection* and *true resurrection* can affect undead creatures. These spells turn undead creatures back into the living creatures they were before becoming undead.
- Proficient with its natural weapons, all simple weapons, and any weapon mentioned in its entry.
- Proficient with whatever type of armor (light, medium, and heavy) it is described as wearing, as well as all lighter types.
- Undead do not eat, sleep, or breathe.

*Possessions*: *+5 breastplate*.

**Ghasts (20):** CR 3; Medium undead; HD 6d12+3; hp 42; Init +3; Spd 30 ft.; AC 17, touch 13, flat-footed 14; Base Atk +3, Grp +6; Atk +6 melee (1d8+3 plus paralysis/x2, bite); Full Atk +6 melee (1d8+3 plus paralysis/x2, bite), +4 melee (1d4+1 plus paralysis/x2 claws); Space/Reach 5 ft./5 ft.; SA Ghoul fever, paralysis, stench; SQ Darkvision 60 ft., undead traits, +2 turn resistance; AL CE; SV Fort +2, Ref +5, Will +7; Str 17, Dex 17, Con —, Int 13, Wis 14, Cha 16.

*Skills and Feats*: Balance +9, Climb +10, Hide +10, Jump +10, Move Silently +10, Spot +10; Ability Focus (paralysis), Multiattack, Toughness.

*Darkvision, 60 ft.*: A ghast can see in the dark with no light source at all, out to a range of 60 feet. Darkvision is black and white only (colors cannot be discerned). It does not allow the ghast to see anything that it could not see otherwise — invisible objects are still invisible, and illusions are still visible as what they seem to be. Likewise, darkvision subjects the ghast to gaze attacks normally. The presence of light does not spoil darkvision.

*Ghoul Fever*: Disease — bite, Fortitude DC 15, incubation period 1 day, damage 1d3 Con and 1d3 Dex. The save DC is Charisma-based.

An afflicted humanoid who dies of ghoul fever rises as a ghoul at the next midnight. A humanoid who becomes a ghoul in this way retains none of the abilities it possessed in life. It is not under the control of any other ghouls, but it hungers for the flesh of the living and behaves like a normal ghoul in all respects. A humanoid of 4 Hit Dice or more rises as a ghast, not a ghoul.

*Paralysis*: Those hit by a ghast's bite or claw attack must succeed on a DC 17 Fortitude save or be paralyzed for 1d4+1 rounds. Even Elves can be affected by this paralysis. The save DC is Charisma-based.

*Stench*: The stink of death and corruption surrounding these creatures is overwhelming. Living creatures within 10 feet must succeed on a DC 15 Fortitude save or be sickened for 1d6+4 minutes. A creature that successfully saves cannot be affected again by the same ghast's stench for 24 hours. A *delay poison* or *neutralize poison* spell removes the effect from a sickened creature. Creatures with immunity to poison are unaffected, and creatures resistant to poison receive their normal bonus on their saving throws. The save DC is Charisma-based.

*Turn Resistance*: When resolving a turn, rebuke, command, or bolster attempt, add +2 to the ghast's Hit Dice total.

*Undead Traits:* The ghast has the following traits:

- No Constitution score.
- Darkvision out to 60 feet.
- Immunity to all mind-affecting effects (charms, compulsions, phantasms, patterns, and morale effects).
- Immunity to poison, sleep effects, paralysis, stunning, disease, death effects, and necromancy effects.
- Negative energy (such as an *inflict* spell) can heal undead creatures. The fast healing quality works regardless of the creature's Intelligence score.
- Not subject to critical hits, non-lethal damage, ability damage, ability drain, fatigue, exhaustion, or energy drain. Immune to damage to its physical ability scores (Strength, Dexterity, Constitution), as well as to fatigue and exhaustion effects.
- Immunity to any effect that requires a Fortitude save (unless the effect also works on objects, or is harmless).
- Uses its Charisma modifier for Concentration checks.
- Not at risk of death from massive damage. Immediately destroyed when reduced to 0 hit points or less.
- Not affected by *raise dead* and *reincarnate* spells or abilities. *Resurrection* and *true resurrection* can affect undead creatures.

These spells turn undead creatures back into the living creatures they were before becoming undead.

- Proficient with its natural weapons, all simple weapons, and any weapon mentioned in its entry.
- Proficient with whatever type of armor (light, medium, and heavy) it is described as wearing, as well as all lighter types.
- Undead do not eat, sleep, or breathe.

## Location 1: Majeral's Lair (map page 461)

After their capture, the PCs are *teleported* back to Majeral's lair, deep within the Markappal swamps. They are stripped of all equipment, armor, weapons, and even clothing, down to undergarments, and strapped to the metal tables in Area 1. When Majeral returns, he will perform the latest test of his procedure to create powerful undead minions.

### From the Outside In

It is possible, if unlikely, that the PCs can defeat or outwit the worst that Majeral and his minions can throw at them. If they come through with brilliant tactics or unbelievable die rolls, so be it. Let them try to tackle Majeral's lair from the outside in, rather than having to escape. This is in many ways less dramatic, but the PCs already have the satisfaction and excitement of great success, so let them enjoy it. The tables will turn soon enough. Allow them to discover the location of Majeral's lair and attempt to enter it. This does create more work for the GM, who then must go through Part 2 backwards.

Majeral's lair is located on an island deep in the swamp, far from any habitation, but near the ocean (see the above-ground map of Majeral's Lair). Around the site of Majeral's lair was once a thriving port town. The town was wiped out in a flood centuries ago, and its name has been forgotten for centuries. No one alive remembers its existence. All that remains is the ancient cemetery, with a dull, weathered tomb at the island's highest point. The tomb is obscured by vines and trees, and it is invisible beyond forty feet away. The earth of the island is soft and shifting, forever being eaten away by the scudding river, causing the graves and vaults to shift into haphazard patterns. The aboveground tomb leads down into the moist earth, to ancient catacombs that Majeral has enlarged for his stronghold.

Within Majeral's lair, the PCs' starting location is **Location**

## Location 1.1: Laboratory

**Read aloud:** *The universe of blood and fire and pain and the banshee wail of Bascaron begin to fade like a dream. The horrifying images of the previous eternity shift to the vision of a smooth-cut stone ceiling. Was it all part of the dream, the flashes of rending flesh and spurting gore? Whose flesh was it? One thing about the dream does not change, however. The stench of death and decay, is still overpowering, although now it is overlaid with a sharp alchemical smell. You are lying upon something hard and cold, a metal table, with forehead, wrists and ankles lashed painfully tight. There are no sounds other than your own movements, your own breathing.*

### Daanso Batoq

Fifteen years ago, Daanso Batoq was a talented, ambitious Azima-lahn, a student of magic in Narawat. He was a good man, but he had an unhealthy interest in the mysteries of death. He wanted to know the means by which a dead thing could become reanimated and act as if it were alive. What part of the transformation destroyed the dead person's intellect and personality? He did not wish to create more such creatures, but rather to fight them, because they were growing alarmingly common in Narawat.

He discovered evidence of a conspiracy of undead lords at work in the southern kingdoms, including Narawat. As he uncovered more information, his alarm grew. Their influence was everywhere, their undead minions lurking in every corner. He approached the leaders of Narawat, the Priests' Circle, but to no avail. He began seeing undead everywhere, fearing that the conspiracy reached into every hall of power in the southern kingdoms. His family tried to temper his strident outcries, but he would not listen. They began to think him mad; all except for his cousin, a young man named Baqbou Umbala, who had always looked up to him. Baqbou listened to his theories and believed his evidence, but even he began to think that Daanso was going mad.

Unable to find the support or answers he sought in Narawat, he sought another method of learning what he wished. His eyes turned to the Isadran, those mysterious and knowledgeable people to the south. They have never been precisely friendly, but they had made it clear that lore was theirs, and it was available for a price. So Daanso left Narawat for Isadran, to study.

Daanso's persistent investigations drew the attention of those he sought, the Lords of the Undead. Majeral preferred to subvert the wizard rather than simply destroying him, and approached Daanso in disguise with the promise of information. Daanso's mind had become so clouded that he failed to see the danger. Majeral did not subvert him immediately. He enjoyed watching Daanso squirm as he fed him tantalizing morsels of information. This new information electrified Daanso, and he threw himself into his investigations with new fervor. Daanso's behavior frightened Baqbou, who tried to warn him of the danger, but Daanso was too far gone. Eventually Majeral gave Daanso an ancient scroll that would, he said, unlock all the knowledge that Daanso desired.

The instant Daanso began to read the ancient glyphs, the scroll seized control of his mind. He was compelled to continue, even though he knew that completing it would mean his doom. When he finished reading the scroll, he was transformed into an incorporeal undead creature, doomed to eternal unlife as Majeral's servant.

Daanso now has only brief snatches of lucidity in an endless night of death and horror. He knows that Majeral is dying, and he lusts for the day when the Ghoul Lord is gone. Only then will he be free. In these moments, he attempts to subvert Majeral's will, unknown to the Ghoul Lord. Daanso can make a Will save (DC 25) to disobey Majeral's orders.

**When the PCs are brought into Majeral's lair, Daanso sees them as an opportunity for vengeance against Majeral, and a chance for his own freedom.**

**Daanso Batoq, Dark Wraith:** CR 14; Medium undead (incorporeal); HD 14d12; hp 91; Init +7; Spd fly 60 ft. (good); AC 15, touch 15, flat-footed 12; Base Atk +6; Grp —; Atk +9 melee (1d6 plus 1d4 negative levels plus 1d4 permanent Constitution drain/x2, incorporeal touch); Full Atk +9/+4 melee (1d6 plus 1d4 negative levels plus 1d4 permanent Constitution drain/x2, incorporeal touch); Space/Reach 5ft./5 ft.; SA Blood drain, energy drain, create spawn; SQ Incorporeal subtype, +4 turn resistance, daylight powerlessness, fast healing 5, immunities, telekinesis, undead traits, unnatural aura; AL CE; SV Fort +4, Ref +7, Will +10; Str —, Dex 16, Con —, Int 15, Wis 14, Cha 15.

*Skills and Feats*: Hide +10, Intimidate +10, Listen +12, Search +10, Sense Motive +7, Spot +8; Alertness, Blind Fight, Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Improved Initiative, Weapon Finesse (incorporeal touch).

*Blood Drain (Su)*: Living creatures hit by a dark wraith's incorporeal touch must succeed at a Fortitude save (DC 18) or suffer 1d6 points of permanent Constitution drain as it sucks the victim's blood into its own ghostly form.

*Energy Drain (Su)*: Living creatures hit by a dark wraith's incorporeal touch must succeed at a Fortitude save (DC 18) or suffer 1d4 negative levels.

*Create Spawn (Su)*: Any humanoid slain by a dark wraith becomes a normal wraith in 1d4 rounds. A spawned wraith is under the command of the dark wraith that created it and remains enslaved until it is destroyed. Spawned wraiths do not possess any of the abilities they had in life.

*Daylight Powerlessness (Ex)*: Dark wraiths are utterly powerless in natural sunlight (not merely a *daylight* spell) and flee from it.

*Fast Healing (Ex)*: A dark wraith heals 5 points of damage every round as long as it has at least 1 hit point. If reduced to 0 hp or lower, the dark wraith immediately dissipates in a wisp of smoke.

*Immunities (Ex)*: Dark wraiths are immune to *cold*, *electricity*, and *polymorph* attacks.

*Telekinesis (Sp)*: Once per day, a dark wraith can exert its will on the physical world, and produce effects identical to the spell *telekinesis* as if cast by a 14th level wizard.

*Turn Resistance (Ex)*: Dark wraiths have +4 turn resistance.

*Unnatural Aura (Su)*: Both wild and domesticated animals can sense the unnatural presence of a dark wraith at a distance of 30 feet. They will not willingly approach nearer than that and panic if forced to do so.

*Incorporeal Subtype*: Due to its incorporeal nature, a dark wraith has the following traits:

- An incorporeal creature has no physical body. It can be harmed only by other incorporeal creatures, magic weapons or creatures that strike as magic weapons, and spells, spell-like abilities, or supernatural abilities.
- It is immune to all nonmagical attack forms. Even when hit by spells or magic weapons, it has a 50% chance to ignore any damage from a corporeal source (except for positive energy, negative energy, force effects such as *magic missile*, or attacks made with *ghost touch* weapons). Although it is not a magical attack, holy water can affect incorporeal undead, but a hit with holy water has a 50% chance of not affecting an incorporeal creature.
- An incorporeal creature has no natural armor bonus but has a deflection bonus equal to its Charisma bonus (always at least +1, even if the creature's Charisma score does not normally provide a bonus).
- An incorporeal creature can enter or pass through solid objects, but must remain adjacent to the object's exterior, and so cannot pass entirely through an object whose space is larger than its own. It can sense the presence of creatures or objects within a square adjacent to its current location, but enemies have total concealment (50% miss chance) from an incorporeal creature that is inside an object. In order to see farther from the object it is in and attack normally, the incorporeal creature must emerge. An incorporeal creature inside an object has total cover, but when it attacks a creature outside the object it only has cover, so a creature outside with a readied action could strike at it as it attacks. An incorporeal creature cannot pass through a force effect.
- An incorporeal creature's attacks pass through (ignore) natural armor, armor, and shields, although deflection bonuses and force effects (such as *mage armor*) work normally against it.
- Incorporeal creatures pass through and operate in water as easily as they do in air.
- Incorporeal creatures cannot fall or take falling damage.
- Incorporeal creatures cannot make trip or grapple attacks, nor can they be tripped or grappled. In fact, they cannot take any physical action that would move or manipulate an opponent or its equipment, nor are they subject to such actions.
- Incorporeal creatures have no weight and do not set off traps that are triggered by weight.
- An incorporeal creature moves silently and cannot be heard with Listen checks if it doesn't wish to be. It has no Strength score, so its Dexterity modifier applies to both its melee attacks and its ranged attacks. Nonvisual senses, such as scent and blindsight, are either ineffective or only partly effective with regard to incorporeal creatures.
- Incorporeal creatures have an innate sense of direction and can move at full speed even when they cannot see.

**Undead Traits:** A dark wraith has the following traits:

- No Constitution score.
- Darkvision out to 60 feet.
- Immunity to all mind-affecting effects (charms, compulsions, phantasms, patterns, and morale effects).
- Immunity to poison, sleep effects, paralysis, stunning, disease, death effects, and necromancy effects.

- Negative energy (such as an *inflict* spell) can heal undead creatures. The fast healing quality works regardless of the creature's Intelligence score.
- Not subject to critical hits, non-lethal damage, ability damage, ability drain, fatigue, exhaustion, or energy drain. Immune to damage to its physical ability scores (Strength, Dexterity, Constitution), as well as to fatigue and exhaustion effects.
- Immunity to any effect that requires a Fortitude save (unless the effect also works on objects, or is harmless).
- Uses its Charisma modifier for Concentration checks.
- Not at risk of death from massive damage. Immediately destroyed when reduced to 0 hit points or less.
- Not affected by *raise dead* and *reincarnate* spells or abilities. *Resurrection* and *true resurrection* can affect undead creatures. These spells turn undead creatures back into the living creatures they were before becoming undead.
- Proficient with its natural weapons, all simple weapons, and any weapon mentioned in its entry.
- Proficient with whatever type of armor (light, medium, and heavy) it is described as wearing, as well as all lighter types.
- Undead do not eat, sleep, or breathe.

The PCs awaken, securely bound and all but naked. Soon Majeral will return from a meeting with Malrog and the other Medusan Lords; he is also returning the *staff of Bascaron's slumber* to Cassica Moonseed. If the PCs have already killed her, Majeral gives the *staff* to Gavin. When Majeral returns, he plans to use his new method to convert the PCs into undead slaves.

Until the PCs get free, they cannot turn their heads to look around the room. Several cages hang from the ceiling on two sides of the room. One contains a decomposing Human corpse, a man who apparently clawed out his own eyes and tried to eat his own flesh. Another cage holds a gaunt young Human woman. She is still alive, but not for long. She has one hit point and will be dead in a few hours from the hideous puncture wound on the side of her throat. She cannot be cured by anything short of a *wish* or *miracle*. After she dies, she will become a new kind of undead creature, retaining all her intelligence and abilities, without most of the weaknesses of other undead creatures, and under Majeral's total control. This fate awaits the PCs unless they escape.

A large tank of viscous green liquid along one wall has tubes running to each of the metal tables. At the end of each tube is a large hollow needle, slightly curved like a giant serpent's fang. Majeral's method involves injecting a large quantity of this substance directly into the jugular vein of his victim, transferred through the tubes. What he has not yet perfected is how much blood must be drained first, but he believes now that he has the correct ratio.

PCs can attempt to free themselves by making Escape Artist checks (DC 30) or Strength rolls (DC 35).

**While the PCs are trying to free themselves, read aloud:** *A Human shape emerges from the wall, incorporeal, hazy, as if seen through a thick fog, and trailing wisps of black mist. "Listen to me," it says, its voice a faint death rattle. "We do not have much time." It looks like a dark-skinned Narawati man, his ghostly hair twisted into long dreadlocks, but with eyes burning blood red. "He is coming back soon, and when he does, your lives will end, and your unlives will begin. I can help you escape from your bonds — but if I help you, you must destroy him."*

**If they refuse, he says,** *"So be it. I had thought you made of sterner stuff. Soon we will be... brothers in bondage." Then he disappears through the wall.*

**If they agree,** *he uses his telekinetic powers to release their hands and tells them where their weapons can be found* (**Location 1.2**).

**If they ask who he is, he says,** *"I was once a man of Narawat, and I was called Daanso Batoq. But no more. Now I am just 'slave.' A slave to the Putrid One, and it seems I have never been anything else."*

**If they ask why he is helping them, he says,** *"Unimportant. Just kill him. Once and for all."*

**If they ask how to kill Majeral, he says,** *"The Lord of the Undead is dying. Starve him."*

The PCs cannot question him for long. His lucid moments are brief. **Soon after the PCs are free, he says,** *"I must go now. Soon I will no longer be... myself. If you see me again, do not trust me. Farewell."* Then he disappears through the wall.

Daanso Batoq watches the PCs to see if they intend to follow through with their promise. If they attempt to flee Majeral's lair without killing Majeral as promised, Daanso attacks them, enraged at their betrayal. If the PCs encounter Daanso later, he will have slipped back into madness.

## Location 1.2: Store Room

**Read aloud:** *The air in this room is dank and stagnant. Cobwebs choke the corners, and deep shadows lurk under the tables.*

The PCs' equipment and weapons are thrown haphazardly across the half-rotten tables. Also in this room are several bottles of magical and alchemical ingredients for the green fluid in the tank in **Location 1.1**. The material components for 2d6 castings of any necromancy spell can be found here.

All the PCs' equipment is here except for any divine focus items and holy symbols, which have been destroyed. Majeral and his undead minions could not touch the holy items themselves; they ordered their Human slaves to do it. However, if the PCs had more than one holy symbol or divine focus item (and *only* if they had more than one), one of them still exists (see **Location 1.11**).

## Location 1.3: Study

The doors to this room have a special kind of *arcane lock*. *Knock* does not work. They can only be opened by Majeral himself or with *dispel magic*.

**Study Doors:** 2 in. thick, hardness 5, hp 20, Break DC 25.

### Where is he?

**The timing of Majeral's arrival is up to the GM. At a dramatically appropriate moment Majeral could return to his lair, or the PCs could encounter him when opening a door, or they could even find him sitting placidly upon his throne. See Majeral's stats in *Part 4*.**

**Read aloud:** *The large table in the middle of the room is strewn with crumbling scrolls and texts. The ancient tomes are bound in unthinkable skins and encrusted with dark, lustrous metals, sealed with heavy locks, their spotted and curled pages covered in a crabbed scrawl. The air stinks of mold and decay.*

These scrolls and texts include a wealth of information for daring or foolhardy PCs. They do not have time to read the information here before Majeral returns, unless he is already dead.

Among the scrolls and tomes are the following. All of them are written in an ancient dialect of Isadran, and each requires a Decipher Script check (DC 30) and 10 minutes to read, unless otherwise specified. All of the scrolls have enchantments against the perpetual damp moldy atmosphere of the marshlands.

- A scroll discussing the nature of the Storm and the Dragon.
- Several scrolls of notes discussing the possibility of harnessing the power of the Storm and placing it back in the Dragon's body. The scrolls leave the impression that such a thing is possible.
- A scroll with some details about the ritual required to resurrect the Dragon. It is a long, complex ritual, and the scroll implies that it can take years. The ritual requires the blood of hundreds of living sacrifices, all slain with ritual weapons on the same night.
- Majeral's hand-written journals, scribed on thin steel plates, spanning centuries. These journals describe the accelerating process of his death. He requires the souls of ever more slaves to sustain his life. He despises this existence and writes of a day very soon when he will not be chained to his own victims. These journals take many hours to read thoroughly.
- A scroll, not yet bound into a journal, vaguely describing Majeral's dealings with the Medusan Lords. They offered him an alliance where he might be able to gain true immortality, not this hideous half-existence.
- A scroll that is simply a list of names, with an unfamilar rune beside each name. These are the names of the other Medusan Lords. The unfamilar rune is the command word for each destination for the *teleportation circle* in **Location 1.7**. One rune does not appear to correspond to any of the names: it is the command word to open or close the *circle*.
- An account of Majeral's final corruption of Daanso Batoq (*see the sidebar Daanso Batoq*) He received the scroll that corrupted Daanso from someone named Aswadmeya.
- Three ancient tomes, the *Books of Bone & Blood* (*see New Magic Items*).

## Location 1.4: Resting Chamber

The doors to this room have a special *arcane lock*, as **Location 1.3**. *Knock* does not work. They can only be opened by Majeral himself or with *dispel magic*.

**Resting Chamber Doors:** 2 in. thick, hardness 5, hp 20, Break DC 25.

**Read aloud:** *A large stone slab in the center of the room is intricately carved with skulls, bones, and images of violent sacrificial rituals. Hundreds of bones and skulls are strewn haphazardly in the corners. The floor is crusted with old blood and other fluids.*

Majeral sometimes rests and dines here. A Spot check (DC 17) on the slab reveals a vaguely humanoid outline on the upper surface of the stone, bits of Majeral's body that have sloughed off him as he rests.

One of the carvings is a switch that operates the secret door in **Location 1.5**. It can be found with a successful Search check (DC 25). This switch is trapped.

**Burnt Othur Fumes Trap:** CR 10; mechanical; location trigger; repair reset; gas; multiple targets (all targets within 5 ft. of open door); never miss; onset delay (1 rounds); poison (burnt othur fumes, DC 18 Fortitude save resists, 1 Con drain/3d6 Con); Search DC 21; Disable Device DC 25.

## Location 1.5: Treasure Chamber

The door to this room has a special *arcane lock*, as **Location 1.3**. *Knock* does not work. It can only be opened by Majeral himself or with *dispel magic*.

*Treasure Chamber Door:* 2 in. thick, hardness 5, hp 20, Break DC 25.

There is a secret door leading to **location 1.6**, carefully camouflaged to appear as part of the stone wall. This door cannot be broken, nor opened except by the switches on the stone slab in **Location 1.4**.

Majeral's centuries of accumulated wealth are stored in large chests in the corner opposite the secret door.

Anyone other than Majeral who touches the treasure sets off a hidden magical warding glyph and the *fire storm* trap.

**Fire Storm Trap:** CR 10; magic device; touch trigger (*glyph of warding*); automatic reset; spell effect (*fire storm*, 20th-level cleric, DC 22 Reflex save half); multiple targets (everyone in room and within 5 ft. of open door); Search DC 33; Disable Device DC 33.

*Treasure*: The chests contain the following treasure:

- 24,000 gp.
- 12,000 pp.
- A small coffer containing 8 gems worth 5,000 gp each, and 13 gems worth 1,000 gp each.
- A golden crown worked into a representation of the Dragon, inlaid with dozens of small precious stones, worth 5,000 gp.
- An ancient Isadran scepter made of gold, platinum, and lapis lazuli, worth 4,000 gp.
- *Tome of clear thought +3*
- *Manual of quickness of action +3*
- *Circlet of blasting, major*

- *Robe of eyes*
- *Wand of unholy blight*
- *Mask of the skull*
- *Gauntlets of fumbling*

## Location 1.6: Escape Tunnel

This tunnel, Majeral's final escape route, is crudely hacked from the stone. Besides Majeral, only Daanso knows of its existence. It leads under the swamp for two miles before emerging from a rock outcropping on a small island.

The opposite end of the tunnel is trapped with a pressure plate in the floor to prevent anything from venturing inside. An old skeleton rests near the pressure plate.

**Burnt Othur Fumes Trap:** CR 10; mechanical; location trigger; repair reset; gas; multiple targets (all targets within 15 ft. of location); never miss; onset delay (1 rounds); poison (burnt othur fumes, DC 18 Fortitude save resists, 1 Con drain/3d6 Con); Search DC 21; Disable Device DC 25.

## Location 1.7: Meeting Hall

**Read aloud:** *In the center of the room is a massive wooden table, surrounded by seven richly appointed chairs. The chairs are carved from rich black wood, thickly padded, inlaid with delicate golden filigree. In one corner of the room, the air ripples above a glowing circle scribed into the stone floor.*

**Development:** This is where Majeral meets with other Medusan Lords who visit him. The chairs are worth 1,500 gp each, but each of them weighs 125 lb.

The circle in the floor is a permanent *teleportation circle* keyed to the strongholds of all the other Medusan Lords. This special *teleportation circle* has several functions. By stepping into the *circle* and speaking the command word corresponding to his destination, the user is *teleported* to the location of his choice. For example, speaking the command word corresponding to Malrog transports the user to Malrog's stronghold.

Most of the other Medusan Lords have circles like this one in their lairs. This circle can be opened or closed by speaking the proper command word. When it is closed, no one can *teleport* to or from the circle.

## Location 1.8: Stairway

The stairway between Level 3 and Level 2 is long and steep.

## Location 1.9: Throne Room *(map page 511)*

**Read aloud:** *Moans echo like lost souls among the stone pillars. The ceiling of the cavernous chamber is lost in shadow. Ensconced torches on the central rows of pillar provide the only light. The floor is blank, smooth stone, spattered in places with rusty brown stains.*

The moans come from the large slave chambers, **Locations 1.10 and 1.11**. Majeral conducts audience with his minions from this chamber. Sometimes he chooses to pass the time here, seated on his throne, with only his chained slaves for company, savoring his power.

## Location 1.9.1: Majeral's Throne

**Read aloud:** *The massive throne here is carved from a single block of black stone, polished to a dull sheen. Gigantic rubies are set on the armrests and behind the head. Looking closely, one can see thin, ghostly white filaments, almost like veins, weaving through the stone, forming strange patterns that seem to worm into the brain, but leaving no memory of what those patterns were.*

Anyone besides Majeral who sits on the throne is immediately affected by the spell *disintegrate* as if cast by a 20th level wizard.

Characters who spend one round or more examining the throne must make a Fortitude save (DC 22) or be affected by the patterns. Those who fail are filled with an unwholesome feeling of impending doom, suffering a –2 penalty to all saves, rolls, and checks for a period of 1d6 hours.

## Location 1.10: Slave Chamber

The moans heard in the throne become much louder when the double doors to this chamber are opened. The stench of hundreds of unwashed bodies roils out on a wave of hot, stuffy, moist air. In this huge chamber are 450 captive slaves. The slaves are 98% Human, 1% Elf, and 1% Nothrog. All are nearly starved, and many are deathly ill. None are capable of doing anything more strenuous than walking.

Each end of the chamber is closed off by a set of iron bars. Each set of bars has its own locked door (DC 25).

## Location 1.11: Slave Chamber

This chamber is identical to **Location 1.10** with one exception. Rolf Caersil, the March Lord, is still alive, and held captive in this chamber. He is not well, but he can offer the PCs information or limited assistance, and may possess one of the PCs' holy symbols. Majeral ordered Rolf to carry the PCs' holy symbols and other divine focus items to the smithy (**Location 1.17**) where they were thrown into the forge and destroyed. Rolf is an accomplished rogue, and if there was more than one of these items, he palmed one (from a good deity, if possible).

He offers his assistance to the PCs, hoping to gain their trust by offering the missing holy symbol. He is weak because he refuses to eat the food he is given (see **Location 1.12**), but he is still capable. Many of the captives here are his people, and will obey him. With proper food and some healing, he can assemble some of his men. They are desperate to escape and willing to try anything, even unarmed. Rolf and his men suffer from 70 hit points of subdual damage and are considered fatigued from starvation.

The other people here are desperate to leave as well, but are paralyzed with fear. They do not wish to be killed by any of the undead creatures, a fate worse than simple death. Dozens are too ill to move without assistance. To rescue the rest of the slaves, the way must be cleared.

All the slaves, including Rolf and his men, are shackled by their hands and feet in groups of ten individuals.

**Creatures:** Rolf Caersil, a 7th-level fighter/7th-level ranger; 36 of Rolf's followers, 10th-level fighters.

**Rolf Caersil, March Lord, Male Human Ftr 7/Rgr 7:** CR 14;

Medium humanoid (Human); HD 7d10+7 plus 7d8+7; hp 102 (currently 32); Init +7; Spd 30 ft.; AC 14, touch 14, flat-footed 10; Base Atk +14; Grp +16; Atk +16 melee (1d3+2/x2, unarmed strike); Full Atk +16/+11/+6 melee (1d3+2/x2, unarmed strike); SA Favored weapon (scimitar, longbow), improved damage (scimitar); SQ Favored terrain (marsh, woodlands), Human traits, race/class abilities; AL LN; SV Fort +11, Ref +5, Will +8; Str 15, Dex 14, Con 13, Int 14, Wis 13, Cha 12.

*Skills and Feats:* Climb +9, Hide +16, Jump +9, Knowledge (nature) +9, Listen +8, Move Silently +13, Search +7, Sense Motive +9, Spot +6, Swim +7, Survival +9; Alertness, Cleave, Improved Bull Rush, Improved Initiative, Improved Track, Iron Will, "Just a Flesh Wound," Leadership, Loyalty's Reward, Mighty Blow, Mobility, Power Attack, Track.

*Race/Class Abilities*: *Fighter*: Courage (+1 Will/+4 vs. fear), Evade (+2); *Ranger*: Cover Bonus.

*Favored terrain (marsh, woodland)*: Rolf gains a +3 circumstance bonus to Climb, Hide, Listen, Knowledge (nature), Move Silently, Ride, Search, Spot, Swim, Use Rope, and Survival checks as well as a +2 circumstance bonus to all attack rolls in marsh and woodland terrain.

*Favored Weapon (scimitar, longbow)*: Rolf gains a +1 competence bonus to attack and damage rolls with the scimitar and longbow.

*Improved Damage (scimitar)*: Rolf does an additional +2 (+3 total) damage with the scimitar.

*Possessions*: Possibly one of the PCs' confiscated holy symbols *(see above)*; otherwise none.

**Rolf's Followers (36), Male Human Ftr 10:** CR 10; Medium humanoid (Human); HD 10d10+20; hp 84 (currently 14); Init +6; Spd 30 ft.; AC 14, touch 14, flat-footed 10; Base Atk +10; Grp +13; Atk +13 melee (1d3+3/x2, unarmed strike); Full Atk +13/+8 melee (1d3+3/x2, unarmed strike); SA Favored weapon (scimitar, longbow, halberd), improved critical threat (scimitar), improved damage (scimitar, longbow); SQ Human traits, race/class abilities; AL LN; SV Fort +9, Ref +5, Will +7; Str 17, Dex 15, Con 15, Int 11, Wis 14, Cha 7.

*Skills and Feats:* Climb +8, Craft (bowmaking) +5, Jump+8, Swim +8, Survival +5; Alertness, Cleave, Great Cleave, Improved Bull Rush, Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Mighty Blow, Mobility, Power Attack.

*Race/Class Abilities*: *Fighter*: Courage (+2 Will/+6 vs. fear), Evade (+2).

*Favored Weapon (scimitar, longbow, halberd)*: A follower gains a +1 competence bonus to attack and damage rolls with the scimitar, longbow, and halberd.

*Improved Critical Threat (scimitar)*: A follower's critical threat range is increased by +2 (to 16–20) with the scimitar.

*Improved Damage (scimitar, longbow)*: A follower does an additional +2 (+3 total) damage with the scimitar and longbow

*Possessions*: None.

## Location 1.12: Kitchen (EL 16)

In the center of this room a monstrous black cauldron hangs over a fire pit. The cauldron is filled with a bubbling brown liquid that smells like soup.

Surrounding the fire pit are several large tables covered with spilled blood, both old and fresh. Large meat cleavers hang from hooks on the walls. Once per day, some of the slaves are taken from the large chambers and dragged in here, where they are butchered, boiled, and fed to the other slaves. One of the tables still bears pieces of this grisly work. The cooks are four massive ogres, who occasionally sample their work. If attacked, they use their huge meat cleavers as weapons.

Some of the slaves do not know what they are fed. Some have guessed. Some are too starving to care.

**Creatures:** Four Ogre cooks, 10th-level fighters.

**Ogre Cooks (4), Male Ogre Ftr 10:** CR 13; Large Giant; HD 4d8+11 plus 10d10+40+3; hp 132; Init +5; Spd 30 ft.; AC 18, touch 10, flat-footed 18; Base Atk +13, Grp +25; Atk +21 melee (2d8+15(18–20/x3), great meat cleaver); Full Atk +21/+16/+11 melee (2d8+15(18–20/x3), great meat cleaver); Space/Reach 10 ft./10 ft.; SA Favored weapon (meat cleaver, greatclub, greataxe), improved critical threat (meat cleaver), improved damage (meat cleaver, greatclub); SQ Darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; AL CE; SV Fort +15, Ref +5, Will +6; Str 27, Dex 13, Con 19, Int 7, Wis 14, Cha 3.

*Skills and Feats*: Climb +15*, Listen +5, Swim +15*; Cleave, Exotic Weapon Proficiency (meat cleaver), Great Cleave, Improved Bull Rush, Improved Initiative, "Just a Flesh Wound," Power Attack, Sunder, Toughness. *includes –3 armor check penalty.

*Darkvision, 60 ft.*: An ogre can see in the dark with no light source at all, out to a range of 60 feet. Darkvision is black and white only (colors cannot be discerned). It does not allow the ogre to see anything that it could not see otherwise—invisible objects are still invisible, and illusions are still visible as what they seem to be. Likewise, darkvision subjects the ogre to gaze attacks normally. The presence of light does not spoil darkvision.

*Low-Light Vision:* An ogre can see twice as far as a Human in starlight, moonlight, torchlight, and similar conditions of shadowy illumination. He retains the ability to distinguish color and detail under these conditions.

*Favored Weapon (meat cleaver, greatclub, greataxe)*: An ogre gains a +1 competence bonus to attack and damage rolls with the meat cleaver, greatclub, and greataxe.

*Improved Critical Threat (meat cleaver)*: An ogre's critical threat range is increased by +2 (to 18–20) with the meat cleaver.

*Improved Damage (meat cleaver, greatclub)*: An ogre does an additional +2 (+3 total) damage with the meat cleaver and greatclub.

*Possessions*: Hide armor, great (two-handed) meat cleaver.

## Location 1.13 Grand Stairway *(map page 511)*

A huge stairway leads down over 200 ft. from Level 1 to Level 2. The ceiling of the stairway is 30 ft. above. Anywhere on the upper half of the stairway, the steps are slick with moisture and slime. Any sudden moves or combat on the upper half requires a Reflex save (DC 17) or else the character falls down.

## Location 1.14: Ghoul Town

**Read aloud:** *The walls and floor are slimy and the sound of dripping water mingles with grunts, punctuated by sudden shrieks of rage. Scores of red eyes burn in the darkness.*

This large room contains some of the ghouls who were formerly Majeral's chained slaves. There are 10d10 dire ghouls here squatting over piles of bones, squabbling over scraps of flesh, or just sitting silently waiting for orders from the Master.

**Creatures:** 10d10 ghouls *(see Encounter 1 for stats).*

## Location 1.15: Failure Storage

Majeral keeps his many failed necromantic experiments in these large rooms. Spaced around the floor of each room are small cells sunk into the earth, and covered with thick iron grates. The cells are 10 feet deep and 4 feet in diameter. The grates are rusty but strong. Each grate has a lever that locks it in place. Each cell has a 75% chance of containing one of Majeral's dire ghouls. If a dire ghoul's cell is opened, the dire ghoul launches itself out of the black depths and attacks.

The dire ghouls in the room rest silently until they perceive someone to be inside the room, at which time all of them explode into a deafening cacophony of frenzied, ravenous screams. They have not fed in months or years.

**Creatures:** (Variable — 75% chance per cell) dire ghouls *(see Part 4 for stats).*

**Dire Ghouls (variable — 75% chance per cell):** hp 97.

## Location 1.16: Bones

**Read aloud:** *Floor to ceiling, wall to wall, are stacks of bones. Thousands upon thousands of bones, gnawed, broken, splintered bones.*

The discarded remnants of the ghouls' diet are thrown here. There is nothing of value.

## Location 1.17: Smithy

**Read aloud:** *A blast of heat roils from the open door, carrying the smells of molten iron, smoke, and coals. A brilliant orange glow shines from the brightly burning forge in the center of the room.*

New slaves have manacles hammered onto their hands and feet here. There are plenty of smith's tools here, alone with one large ogre blacksmith.

**Creatures:** One Ogre blacksmith, a 10th-level fighter *(see stats for the ogre cooks in Location 1.12).*

**Ogre Blacksmith (1):** hp 132.

## Location 1.18: Coal Storage

Heaps of coal are piled along the walls, waiting to be used in the forge.

## Location 1.19: Entrance/Exit

**Read aloud:** *The floor of the room is under two inches of cloudy water, and stinks of decay. Water drips incessantly from the large hole in the ceiling. The walls are covered with glossy brown slime. Water seeps through the cracks in the stone walls, trickling into the pool on the floor before disappearing into unseen crevices.*

**Development:** Aside from Majeral's own travel methods, this room is the only means of exit or entrance to his lair. All captured slaves are brought into the dungeon through the hole in this room's ceiling, the bottom of a long, steeply sloped tunnel. It is pitch black, and the sides are moist and slippery. The tunnel slopes at roughly a 45-degree angle, making it a difficult climb. Climbing up the tunnel without any ropes or assistance requires a Climb check (DC 20). Failure means the character slides all the way back down, taking 1d6 points of damage from the fall. Sliding into a climber below requires the lower climber to make a Reflex save (DC 17) followed by a Strength check (DC 17) or fall along with the first. Only the person on the bottom takes damage from the fall.

## Location 1.20: Hollow Crypt *(map page 461)*

From the outside, this crypt looks much like the other two, a large stone crypt with a heavy stone lid. A successful Spot check (DC 17) reveals that the edges of the stone lid are greatly worn, with fresh scratches and gouges from frequent movement.

The crypt has no bottom; it opens into the long black tunnel described in **Location 1.19.** This close to the surface, the sides of the tunnel are moist earth, filled with crawling creatures and gnarled wet tree roots.

## Location 1.21: Ancient Crypt

**Read aloud:** *This crypt exudes an aura of incredible antiquity, like the tomb in which it rests. It is a square stone block, with a thick stone lid resting on top. The lid is engraved with writings and pictographs so ancient they cannot be deciphered.*

This crypt is empty.

## Location 1.22: Dock

This is a simple wooden dock, half-rotted away. Four boats are moored here, each large enough to carry 600 lbs. of characters or equipment.

Two of Shivril Willowroot's men guard these boats at all times.

**Creatures:** Shivril's followers, 4th-level fighters/3rd-level rangers/3rd-level rogues *(see Encounter 3 for stats).*

**Shivril's Followers (2):** hp 68, 65.

## Location 1.23: Forgotten Tombs

Scattered across the hillock that makes up the island are dozens of ancient crypts, sinking into the moist earth and covered with vines and rotting vegetation. They can be found with successful Search checks (DC 20).

There is a 50% chance that a dark wraith occupies a disturbed tomb.

**Creatures:** (Variable — 50% chance per tomb) dark wraiths *(see Part 4 for stats)*.

**Dark Wraiths (variable — 50% chance per tomb):** hp 91.

# Part 3: Concluding the Adventure

The PCs may end this adventure knowing a great deal more about the Medusan Lords and their plans, or they may have barely escaped with their lives.

Even if they get away, if they fail to destroy Majeral, there are almost a thousand helpless slaves awaiting certain death. Here is where the PCs have the opportunity, perhaps even the obligation, to be true heroes. They may wish to return after regrouping and resting, but Majeral will be gone. He takes his treasures with him to the Pit, to await the final ritual the Medusan Lords have been planning. He has abandoned his Markappal Lair forever. Nevertheless, there are numerous unwholesome dead things still roaming about that may require destruction.

If Majeral is not destroyed, Daanso Batoq becomes the PCs' eternal enemy. He attacks and thwarts them at every opportunity, but he is not stupid. If he is seriously threatened, he flees to attack another day.

If the PCs destroy Majeral, Daanso Batoq appears to them and offers his sincere thanks for being set free, then disappears. He is not destroyed, but he is no longer under Majeral's control.

If Rolf Caersil survives, the PCs have gained a powerful ally. Rolf sets about regrouping his scattered followers and contacting Queen Chandra to begin the unwholesome task of ridding the Markappal swamp of Majeral's undead minions.

# Part 4: New Monsters

### Majeral, the Ghoul Lord

*Medium Undead*

*Hit Dice*: 30d12+6 (201 hp)
*Initiative*: +6
*Speed*: 30 ft.
*Armor Class*: 32* (+2 Dex, +20 natural), touch 12, flat-footed 30
*Base Attack/Grapple*: +14/+21
*Attack*: Claw +22 melee (1d4+7/x2)
*Full Attack*: 2 claws +22/+22/+17/+17/+12/+12 melee (1d4+7/x2), bite +20 melee (1d6+7/x2)
*Space/Reach*: 5 ft./5 ft.
*Special Attacks*: Majeral's touch +23 melee touch
*Special Qualities:* Aura of corruption, chained slaves, command undead, damage reduction 20/—, darkvision 60 ft., dying, spell resistance 30*, ghoul spawn, stench, undead traits, turn immunity, unholy aura.
*Saves*: Fort +12*, Ref +12*, Will +22*
*Abilities*: Str 25, Dex 15, Con —, Int 18, Wis 17, Cha 16
*Skills:* Appraise +5, Bluff +5, Climb +5, Concentration +10, Decipher Script +13, Diplomacy +12, Heal +8, Intimidate +12, Jump +6, Knowledge (history) +8, Knowledge (undead lore) +10, Listen +10, Move Silently +8, Search +7, Sense Motive +8, Spot +12
*Feats*: Feats: Alertness, Blind-fight, Dodge, Expertise, Great Fortitude, Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Multiattack, Toughness, Weapon Focus (Majeral's touch).
*Environment*: Special
*Organization*: Solitary
*Challenge Rating*: 20
*Treasure*: Special
*Alignment*: Neutral evil
*Advancement*: None
*Level Adjustment:* —

Majeral, the Ghoul Lord, is a tall creature with sickly pale, rubbery skin half-covering black, wiry muscles. He wears ancient rags and a thick belt (*Majeral's Belt*; see **Part 5**) with a series of rusty chains attached to it. Each chain is 15 ft. long and ends in a collar around the neck of a half-dead humanoid slave. The pale-skinned slaves appear to be deathly ill, and are doomed to relinquish their life-force to maintain Majeral's failing health. Majeral has a large stable of slaves, all of whom are fated to die in this manner. When Majeral sucks the last of his slaves' life-force, they usually become ghouls under his command. Majeral releases ghouls that are chained to him and replaces them with fresh slaves whenever possible.

#### Combat

Majeral is a fearsome opponent. Whenever he has lost a significant number of hit points, he uses his life-stealing touch to restore himself to full health. Furthermore, he is always surrounded by chained slaves, whom he can change to ghouls quickly. These chained ghouls surround him in combat and can move up to 15 ft. away from him.

*Undead Traits:* Majeral has the following traits:

- No Constitution score.
- Darkvision out to 60 feet.
- Immunity to all mind-affecting effects (charms, compulsions, phantasms, patterns, and morale effects).
- Immunity to poison, sleep effects, paralysis, stunning, disease, death effects, and necromancy effects.

- Negative energy (such as an *inflict* spell) can heal undead creatures. The fast healing quality works regardless of the creature's Intelligence score.
- Not subject to critical hits, non-lethal damage, ability damage, ability drain, fatigue, exhaustion, or energy drain. Immune to damage to its physical ability scores (Strength, Dexterity, Constitution), as well as to fatigue and exhaustion effects.
- Immunity to any effect that requires a Fortitude save (unless the effect also works on objects, or is harmless).
- Uses its Charisma modifier for Concentration checks.
- Not at risk of death from massive damage. Immediately destroyed when reduced to 0 hit points or less.
- Not affected by *raise dead* and *reincarnate* spells or abilities. *Resurrection* and *true resurrection* can affect undead creatures. These spells turn undead creatures back into the living creatures they were before becoming undead.
- Proficient with its natural weapons, all simple weapons, and any weapon mentioned in its entry.
- Proficient with whatever type of armor (light, medium, and heavy) it is described as wearing, as well as all lighter types.
- Undead do not eat, sleep, or breathe.

*Chained Slaves:* At all times, Majeral has twelve humanoid slaves chained to him. He can suck the life force out of any of these slaves as a free action, stealing all their hit points for himself. These slaves become ghouls in 1d4 rounds (see Create Spawn below). Living slaves are incapable of fighting, being so ill that Majeral must drag them along, reducing his movement to 20 ft.

*Command Undead (Su)*: Majeral is such a powerful undead lord that he can command undead creatures, even liches and vampires. As a standard action, Majeral can give mental orders to any undead creature within 100 ft. The creature can resist these effects with a successful Will save (DC 22, DC 30 for ghouls). He can command any number of undead creatures whose total Hit Dice do not exceed his Hit Dice. He may voluntarily relinquish command of any creatures in order to command new ones.

Furthermore, Majeral has such power that he may command any single undead creature with fewer Hit Dice, with no save allowed. The target can be anywhere, but he must concentrate continuously to do so (as if concentrating to maintain a spell), and he can command no other undead at the same time. If the target creature is not in line of sight, this requires 1d6 minutes of prior concentration while Majeral searches the world with his mind for the target.

This ability has no effect on Elven Severed characters.

*Dying (Su)*: Majeral has used unholy means to extend his life, but these methods were imperfect. As a result, whenever he is active, he loses 1d4+1 hit points per hour.

*Ghoul Spawn (Su)*: Anyone killed by Majeral rises as a ghoul in 1d4 rounds. Casting *protection from evil* on a body before the end of that time averts the transformation. Majeral has complete control over every ghoul he has spawned.

*Majeral's Touch (Su):* If Majeral makes a successful melee touch attack against a living creature, the target must make a Fortitude save (DC 22) or lose all but 1d4 hit points. These hit points are transferred to Majeral. This ability may not increase his hit points above his maximum. A drained victim must make a second Fortitude save (DC 22) or be paralyzed for 1d6+2 minutes.

*Stasis (Ex)*: Majeral has learned how to slow the process of his perpetual dying. He can choose to enter a period of stasis, during which his hit point loss from Dying (see above) is reduced to 1 hit point per day. While in stasis, he is fully aware of his surroundings, but he cannot move or perform any actions. He is as motionless as a statue. He can enter or leave stasis in 1d4 full round actions.

*Stench (Ex)*: Majeral reeks of centuries of death. Living creatures within 60 ft. must make a Fortitude save (DC 22) or be wracked with nausea for 1d6+4 minutes. Characters who make this save need not make another for one full day.

*Turn Immunity (Su)*: Majeral cannot be turned or rebuked. He confers this ability on all ghouls chained to him. Such is his evil power that he grants all undead creatures within 100 ft. a +12 profane bonus to turn resistance.

*Unholy Aura (Sp)*: Majeral radiates evil, and is permanently affected as by the spell *unholy aura.* Statistics receiving a bonus from this effect are noted above with an asterisk (*). This bonus has not been added to any scores in the statistics printed above.

*Aura of Corruption (Su)*: Majeral radiates negative energy. Any character reduced to less than 25% of his maximum hit points while within 30 ft. of Majeral must make a Fortitude save (DC 16) each round or suffer from the effects of a *weakness* spell, and lose 2d8 hit points. Hit points lost in this manner are transferred to Majeral, although they may not bring him above his maximum hit points.

### Dire Ghoul

*Medium Undead*

*Hit Dice*: 15d12 (97 hp)
*Initiative*: +3
*Speed*: 50 ft.
*Armor Class*: 19 (+3 Dex, +6 natural), touch 13, flat-footed 16
*Base Attack/Grapple*: +2/+7
*Attack*: Claw +7 melee (1d4+5/x2)
*Full Attack*: 2 claws +7 melee (1d4+5/x2), bite +5 melee (1d6+5/x2)
*Space/Reach*: 5 ft./5 ft.
*Special Attacks*: Ghoul fever, paralysis
*Special Qualities*: Undead traits, +4 turn resistance, damage reduction 10/—, darkvision 60 ft., spell resistance 25, stench
*Saves*: Fort +5, Ref +8, Will +9
*Abilities*: Str 20, Dex 17, Con —, Int 6, Wis 10, Cha 16

*Skills:* Climb +8, Escape Artist +10, Hide +7, Jump +11, Listen +4, Move Silently +8, Search +3, Spot +7
*Feats:* Multiattack
*Environment:* Any land or underground
*Organization:* Solitary, gang (2–4), or pack (7–12)
*Challenge Rating:* 11
*Treasure:* None
*Alignment:* Always chaotic evil
*Advancement:* None
*Level Adjustment:* —

Dire ghouls are a special type of undead creature created by the Lords of the Undead, particularly Majeral, the Ghoul Lord. Their physical shapes vary wildly, but they resemble a tight bundle of wiry, squirming muscle sheathed in rubbery black skin, with red eyes that blaze with feral fury. The face of a dire ghoul is a grotesque approximation of a humanoid face, but with the lower half extended into an almost canine snout, filled with cracked yellow fangs and a lolling black tongue. Most have horrendously distorted limbs, but they still move with surprising speed and agility. A dire ghoul's deformed body is extremely tough and resilient, resistant to most types of damage.

### Combat

A dire ghoul throws itself at its prey with shrieking abandon, its only thought to tear into hot flesh with its teeth.

*Undead Traits:* A dire ghoul has the following traits:

- No Constitution score.
- Darkvision out to 60 feet.
- Immunity to all mind-affecting effects (charms, compulsions, phantasms, patterns, and morale effects).
- Immunity to poison, sleep effects, paralysis, stunning, disease, death effects, and necromancy effects.
- Negative energy (such as an *inflict* spell) can heal undead creatures. The fast healing quality works regardless of the creature's Intelligence score.
- Not subject to critical hits, non-lethal damage, ability damage, ability drain, fatigue, exhaustion, or energy drain. Immune to damage to its physical ability scores (Strength, Dexterity, Constitution), as well as to fatigue and exhaustion effects.
- Immunity to any effect that requires a Fortitude save (unless the effect also works on objects, or is harmless).
- Uses its Charisma modifier for Concentration checks.
- Not at risk of death from massive damage. Immediately destroyed when reduced to 0 hit points or less.
- Not affected by *raise dead* and *reincarnate* spells or abilities. *Resurrection* and *true resurrection* can affect undead creatures. These spells turn undead creatures back into the living creatures they were before becoming undead.
- Proficient with its natural weapons, all simple weapons, and any weapon mentioned in its entry.
- Proficient with whatever type of armor (light, medium, and heavy) it is described as wearing, as well as all lighter types.
- Undead do not eat, sleep, or breathe.

*Ghoul Fever (Su):* Disease—bite, Fortitude DC 15, incubation period 1 day, damage 1d3 Con and 1d3 Dex. The save DC is Charisma-based.

*Paralysis (Su):* If a dire ghoul hits with a melee attack, the victim must make a Fortitude save (DC 18) or be paralyzed for 1d6+2 minutes.

*Stench (Ex):* Dire ghouls reek of corruption. Living creatures within 10 ft. must make a Fortitude save (DC 18) or be wracked with nausea, suffering a –2 circumstance penalty to all attacks, saves, and checks for 1d6+4 minutes. Characters who make this save need not make another for one full day.

*Turn Resistance (Ex):* Dire ghouls have +4 turn resistance.

## Dark Wraith

*Medium Undead (Incorporeal)*

*Hit Dice:* 14d12 (91 hp)
*Initiative:* +7
*Speed:* Fly 60 ft. (good) (12 squares)
*Armor Class:* 15 (+3 Dex, +2 deflection), touch 15, flat-footed 12
*Base Attack/Grapple:* +6/-
*Attack:* Incorporeal touch +9 melee (1d6 plus 1d4 negative levels plus 1d4 permanent Constitution drain/x2)
*Full Attack:* Incorporeal touch +9/+4 melee (1d6 plus 1d4 negative levels plus 1d4 permanent Constitution drain/x2)
*Space/Reach:* 5 ft./5 ft.
*Special Attacks:* Blood drain, energy drain, create spawn
*Special Qualities:* Incorporeal subtype, +4 turn resistance, daylight powerlessness, fast healing 5, immunities, telekinesis, undead traits, unnatural aura
*Saves:* Fort +4, Ref +7, Will +10
*Abilities:* Str —, Dex 16, Con —, Int 15, Wis 14, Cha 15
*Skills:* Hide +10, Intimidate +10, Listen +12, Search +10, Sense Motive +7, Spot +8
*Feats:* Alertness, Blind Fight, Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Improved Initiative, Weapon Finesse (incorporeal touch)
*Environment:* Any land or underground
*Organization:* Solitary
*Challenge Rating:* 14
*Treasure:* None
*Alignment:* Always evil
*Advancement:* 14–18 HD (Medium)
*Level Adjustment:* —

The dark wraith is a special type of undead creature that can be created only by rituals jealously guarded by the Lords of the Undead. These rituals usually involve the victim becoming their slave. The dark wraith shares some qualities with wraiths, liches, and vampires, sustaining its existence by feeding on the blood and the life force of its victims.

A dark wraith appears as a humanoid incorporeal shape with burning red eyes. Its face and features are still recognizable by any who knew the dark wraith in life. When it succeeds with its incorporeal touch attack and the victim fails his Fortitude save, rivulets of blood are drawn out of its victim into its ghostly shape.

COMBAT

Close combat with a dark wraith is exceedingly dangerous because of its energy and blood drains, and its immunities to most types of damage.

*Blood Drain (Su)*: Living creatures hit by a dark wraith's incorporeal touch must succeed at a Fortitude save (DC 18) or suffer 1d6 points of permanent Constitution drain as it sucks the victim's blood into its own ghostly form.

*Energy Drain (Su)*: Living creatures hit by a dark wraith's incorporeal touch must succeed at a Fortitude save (DC 18) or suffer 1d4 negative levels.

*Create Spawn (Su)*: Any humanoid slain by a dark wraith becomes a normal wraith in 1d4 rounds. A spawned wraith is under the command of the dark wraith that created it and remains enslaved until it is destroyed. Spawned wraiths do not possess any of the abilities they had in life.

*Daylight Powerlessness (Ex)*: Dark wraiths are utterly powerless in natural sunlight (not merely a *daylight* spell) and flee from it.

*Fast Healing (Ex)*: A dark wraith heals 5 points of damage every round as long as it has at least 1 hit point. If reduced to 0 hp or lower, the dark wraith immediately dissipates in a wisp of smoke.

*Immunities (Ex)*: Dark wraiths are immune to *cold*, *electricity*, and *polymorph* attacks.

*Incorporeal*: Can be harmed only by other incorporeal creatures, +1 or better magic items, 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.

*Telekinesis (Sp)*: Once per day, a dark wraith can exert its will on the physical world, and produce effects identical to the spell *telekinesis* as if cast by a 14th level wizard.

*Turn Resistance (Ex)*: Dark wraiths have +4 turn resistance.

*Unnatural Aura (Su)*: Both wild and domesticated animals can sense the unnatural presence of a dark wraith at a distance of 30 feet. They will not willingly approach nearer than that and panic if forced to do so.

*Incorporeal Subtype:* Due to its incorporeal nature, a dark wraith has the following traits:

- An incorporeal creature has no physical body. It can be harmed only by other incorporeal creatures, magic weapons or creatures that strike as magic weapons, and spells, spell-like abilities, or supernatural abilities.
- It is immune to all nonmagical attack forms. Even when hit by spells or magic weapons, it has a 50% chance to ignore any damage from a corporeal source (except for positive energy, negative energy, force effects such as *magic missile*, or attacks made with *ghost touch* weapons). Although it is not a magical attack, holy water can affect incorporeal undead, but a hit with holy water has a 50% chance of not affecting an incorporeal creature.
- An incorporeal creature has no natural armor bonus but has a deflection bonus equal to its Charisma bonus (always at least +1, even if the creature's Charisma score does not normally provide a bonus).
- An incorporeal creature can enter or pass through solid objects, but must remain adjacent to the object's exterior, and so cannot pass entirely through an object whose space is larger than its own. It can sense the presence of creatures or objects within a square adjacent to its current location, but enemies have total concealment (50% miss chance) from an incorporeal creature that is inside an object. In order to see farther from the object it is in and attack normally, the incorporeal creature must emerge. An incorporeal creature inside an object has total cover, but when it attacks a creature outside the object it only has cover, so a creature outside with a readied action could strike at it as it attacks. An incorporeal creature cannot pass through a force effect.
- An incorporeal creature's attacks pass through (ignore) natural armor, armor, and shields, although deflection bonuses and force effects (such as *mage armor*) work normally against it.
- Incorporeal creatures pass through and operate in water as easily as they do in air.
- Incorporeal creatures cannot fall or take falling damage.
- Incorporeal creatures cannot make trip or grapple attacks, nor can they be tripped or grappled. In fact, they cannot take any physical action that would move or manipulate an opponent or its equipment, nor are they subject to such actions.
- Incorporeal creatures have no weight and do not set off traps that are triggered by weight.
- An incorporeal creature moves silently and cannot be heard with Listen checks if it doesn't wish to be. It has no Strength score, so its Dexterity modifier applies to both its melee attacks and its ranged attacks. Nonvisual senses, such as scent and blindsight, are either ineffective or only partly effective with regard to incorporeal creatures.
- Incorporeal creatures have an innate sense of direction and can move at full speed even when they cannot see.

*Undead Traits:* The dark wraith has the following traits:

- No Constitution score.
- Darkvision out to 60 feet.
- Immunity to all mind-affecting effects (charms, compulsions, phantasms, patterns, and morale effects).
- Immunity to poison, sleep effects, paralysis, stunning, disease, death effects, and necromancy effects.
- Negative energy (such as an *inflict* spell) can heal undead creatures. The fast healing quality works regardless of the creature's Intelligence score.

- Not subject to critical hits, non-lethal damage, ability damage, ability drain, fatigue, exhaustion, or energy drain. Immune to damage to its physical ability scores (Strength, Dexterity, Constitution), as well as to fatigue and exhaustion effects.
- Immunity to any effect that requires a Fortitude save (unless the effect also works on objects, or is harmless).
- Uses its Charisma modifier for Concentration checks.
- Not at risk of death from massive damage. Immediately destroyed when reduced to 0 hit points or less.
- Not affected by *raise dead* and *reincarnate* spells or abilities. *Resurrection* and *true resurrection* can be affect undead creatures. These spells turn undead creatures back into the living creatures they were before becoming undead.
- Proficient with its natural weapons, all simple weapons, and any weapon mentioned in its entry.
- Proficient with whatever type of armor (light, medium, and heavy) it is described as wearing, as well as all lighter types.
- Undead do not eat, sleep, or breathe.

# Part 5: New Magic Items

### The Books of Bone & Blood

*Major Artifact*

*The Books of Bone & Blood* are a collection of treatises written by the Lords of the Undead in three massive volumes on the relationship between life and undeath. All three volumes are required to gain any benefit.

They are written in an encrypted form of ancient Isadran. Reading them requires a successful Decipher Script check (DC 32) and a full 72 hours of dedicated reading. When the reader is finished, he gains 5 ranks of Knowledge (arcana). If he is a spellcaster, he can cast Necromancy spells as if he prepared or cast them as maximized and empowered spells, without using higher-level spell slots.

This dreadful knowledge comes with a price. The character must make a Will save (DC 30) or his alignment changes by one step toward evil: good characters become neutral, and neutral characters become evil.

*Strong unholy; CL:* 20; *Weight:* 20 lb.

### Majeral's Belt

*Artifact*

This unique item is in the possession of Majeral the Ghoul Lord. It was created specifically for him, but its great powers could be used by anyone foolish or evil enough to wear it.

*Majeral's Belt* is a wide, dark brown belt of thick leather fastened by a massive bronze buckle. Spaced evenly around the belt's circumference are twelve stout iron rings. Attached to each ring is a strong iron chain, 15 feet long, with an iron collar at the other end. The collars are a size appropriate for Medium humanoids.

Any humanoid creature locked in one of the collars is at the mercy of the *Belt's* wearer. At will, as a free action, the wearer can subject a collared humanoid to the spell *vampiric touch*. The hit points the wearer gains in this manner are not temporary, but permanent. These hit points cannot raise a character's hit points to above his maximum.

The wearer can read the thoughts of any humanoid or undead creature wearing a collar.

Humanoids killed by the collars' effects become ghouls in 1d4 rounds. These ghouls are under the complete control of the belt's wearer.

If at any time, one or more of the collars is empty (the victim in it was either slain and rose as a ghoul, or freed), the wearer may make one free action per round to attempt to grapple a target within 15 feet. On a successful grapple, the target is now locked in the collar. (Regardless of how many collars are empty, only one free action is granted.)

*Strong unholy; CL:* 20th; *Weight:* 70 lb.

### Staff of Bascaron's Slumber

*Major Artifact*

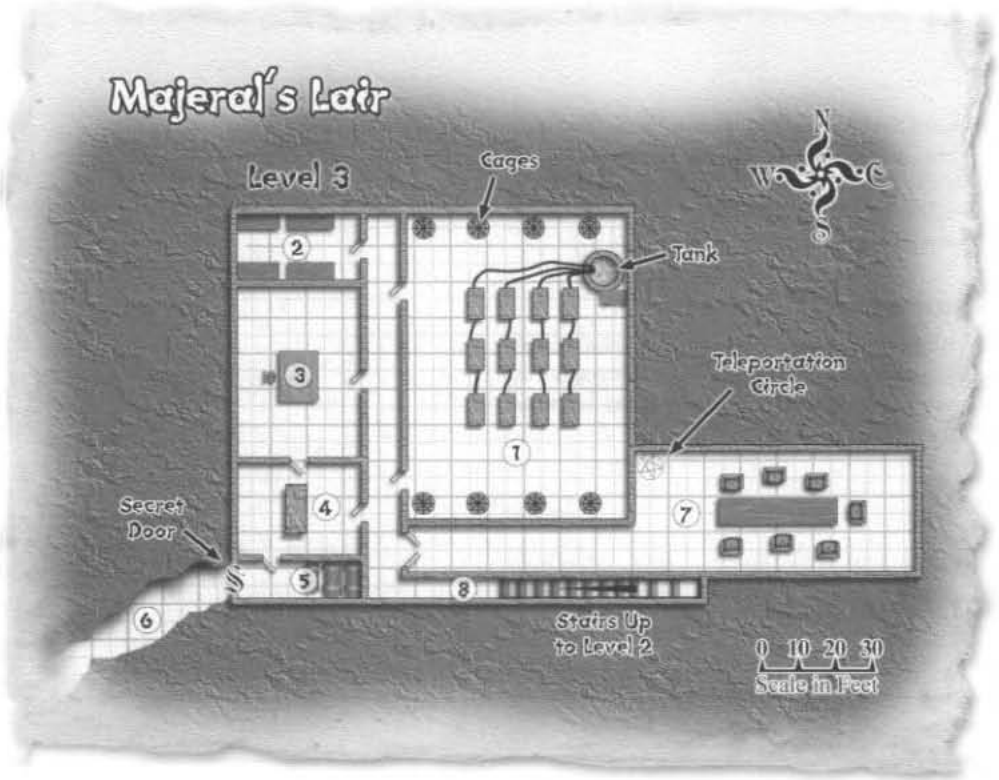
The origins of this staff are unknown, but some believe that it was created by the Cult of Bascaron. It is a rough wooden staff with a large red stone embedded in it, as if the wood had grown around the stone before it was cut. The red stone glints with a sinister inner light. In melee, it is a *+5 unholy defending quarterstaff*.

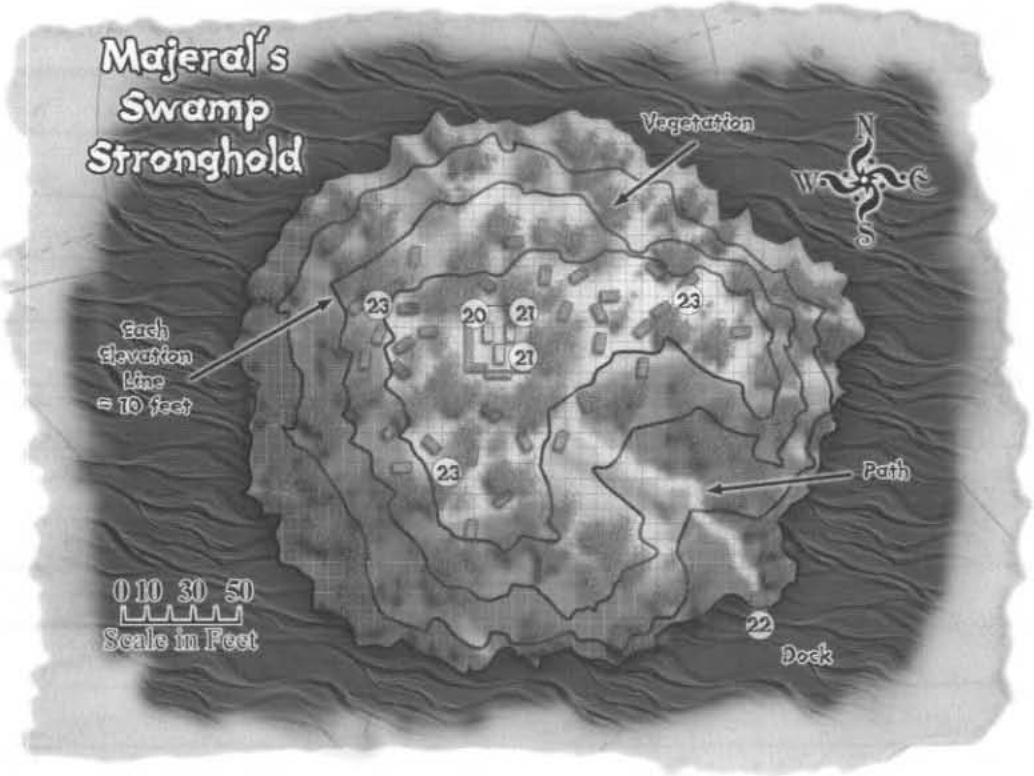
The user of the staff may choose any target within line of sight and speak the command word. The target must immediately make a Will save (DC 30) or fall into a deep slumber for 2d6 hours.

While asleep, the victim is plagued by nightmares caused by the Banshee Moon. Visions of twisted flesh, screaming frenzy, mind-numbing terror, and ravening violence tear through the victim's psyche, leaving him weakened, shaky, terrified, and disoriented when he finally awakes. For 1d6 hours after the victim awakes, he suffers a temporary 1d6 loss to *each* ability score, rolled separately.

The wielder of the *Staff* is also plagued by nightmares whenever he goes to sleep. Every day he must make a Fortitude save (DC 22) or suffer the loss of one temporary point from one ability score. Roll 1d6 to determine which ability score is affected. These losses continue until he gives up the *staff* to someone else. To relinquish possession of the *staff*, he must make a Will save (DC 22); if he fails, he cannot release the artifact. If the *staff* is stolen, not relinquished, the user directs every effort to reclaiming it, requiring a Will save (DC 22) to perform any action not related to regaining possession of the *staff*. Once he makes this save, the *staff* loses its hold on him, and this effect ends.

*Strong unholy; CL:* 20th; *Weight:* 4 lb.


Majeral's Lair
Level 3
Cages
Tank
Teleportation Circle
Secret Door
Stairs Up to Level 2
0 10 20 30
Scale in Feet
N
W
E
S
1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8


Majeral's Swamp Stronghold
Vegetation
Each Elevation Line = 10 feet
Path
Dock
0 10 30 50
Scale in Feet
N
W
E
S
20
21
22
23

# Tier 10

This tier consists of the final confrontation with the Medusan Lords. Everything has built to this, as Malrog stands poised to become a god. Only the party has even a slim chance of opposing him, and their odds dwindle still further if any of the other Medusan Lords have survived.

## The Final Showdown

The series of events that began with the Assassins' Strike must now be ended by the party. They must prove themselves to be the heroes the Accordlands cry out for, or a new age of darkness will claim all that they hold dear.

## Campaign Notes:



# The Final Showdown

## Introduction

*The Final Showdown* is the end of a long, difficult road for the PCs, and is the final confrontation with Medusan Lords. This adventure is meant for characters of levels 19–20.

## Adventure Background

Malrog's great plan will soon be complete. Two of the moons, Gods' Eye and La Hashan, will pass in front of the sun in a dual eclipse. Even more important, this eclipse casts into total shadow the area where the corpse of the Great Dragon fell to earth. When the eclipse begins, the Medusan Lords will enact the final phase of their ritual.

This scheme began early in the Medusan Lords' careers, when Malrog and Cear Adinerach first compared their adventures. Both men quickly realized the personal power they had amassed they owed almost solely to slaying dragons, a fact corroborated by the talents that the Ten almost casually demonstrated, and the myths of Athanae's apotheosis after slaying the Dragon. The two villains sought out others who could help them turn this vague plan into a reality — Duke Blackthorn, unparalleled scholar of the Storm; the Ghoul Lord Majeral, whose eternal unlife afforded the Medusan Lords unique insight into necromancy and resurrection; and Cassica Moonseed, whose treacherous magic unveiled the location of the artifacts they would need. Other Medusan Lords were little more than pawns or potential rivals brought into the fold to monitor; these five alone remained the true heart of their cabal.

At length, they discovered a means to an unholy end — resurrecting the Dragon, only to kill It once more. Such a dangerous task would require not only bravery, but magical energies not harnessed since before the Dragon's death in the First War. The ritual would require the deaths of the purest, strongest souls to entice the Storm, and the clever trap of one of the Dragon Orbs. To slay the Dragon would be an even greater task, requiring a perfect blade. The Medusan Lords would have to journey into the heart of the Abyss, into the Dragon's own atrophied corpse, fighting hordes of abyssals, Stormborn, and Dwarves all the while. Finally, the Dragon's rise could only come during a time when the gods themselves would be blind, lest the divine powers cut down the Medusan Lords.

The Assassins' Strike provided the necessary souls to bind the Storm, with thousands of other deaths serving no purpose but to obscure the actual motive in the killings and to eliminate potential threats to the Lords' schemes. The Medusan Lords uncovered the location of all three Dragon Orbs. The unwitting cooperation of Nassiral Hate has given the Medusan Lords the fabled Blade of Syneri. Careful manipulations have left the Dwarves and abyssals both unprepared for the Storm's manifestation in the Abyss. As La Hashan passes before Gods' Eye and the sun, the heavens are blinded.

The time has come for the Medusan Lords to raise and destroy the Dragon, and become gods themselves.

# Adventure Synopsis

By this time in the campaign, the PCs should know who the Medusan Lords are, and that they are up to something very, very bad. Their information varies greatly with the things they have accomplished and the paths they have taken through the campaign. In this adventure, they must thwart the Medusan Lords' plan or face apocalyptic consequences.

The PCs travel to the Pit, Malrog's stronghold, to try to stop the Medusan Lords, but they arrive too late. The Medusan Lords have already left for the Dragon's resting place far below the earth to complete the ritual. In the meantime, Malrog left behind some of his deadliest servants to guard his stronghold, and the PCs must defeat them before they can follow the Medusan Lords to the Abyss.

Upon their arrival in the Abyss, the party discovers that the Medusan Lords' dark rite is already well underway, and a bloody melee has broken out between the abyssals, the Dwarves, and the displaced spawn of the Storm. The party must maneuver through this chaos to the Dragon's partially buried remains, and from there into Its very body, facing surviving Medusan Lords along the way before at last facing the greatest enemy of all, Malrog himself.

## Running this Adventure

This adventure is the long-awaited climax to a deadly, difficult campaign. By this time, the PCs have built an entire epic around their exploits, working toward a final confrontation with the worst villains in the Accordlands. Up until this point, most of the adventures have allowed the PCs to move at their own pace, giving them time to accumulate the experience and powers necessary to have a chance against the Medusan Lords.

In this adventure, however, the GM should try to build a mood of accelerating desperation in the PCs. There is a Darkness, an Evil, an impending Doom, gathering in the depths, and the PCs must act quickly or face the catastrophic consequences. The best tool to spur the PCs along is the impending eclipse. If it appears that the PCs are content with a leisurely pace, the GM should point out that the two moons are nearing conjunction.

At the same time, there is no explicit timeline for the resurrection ritual, because the PCs must have a chance to thwart it directly. When they discover the whereabouts of the Pit and decide to go there, they could be anywhere. They may have to travel hundreds of miles, and they should be given the opportunity to do so.

When the PCs arrive at the Pit and begin to explore, give them the indication that the Medusan Lords have been gone only a short while, a few hours at most. The Medusan Lords are a step ahead of them. They must find out where Malrog and his cohorts have gone, and quickly.

The GM must create a delicate balance between giving the PCs a sense of urgency, without making the urgency seem contrived. Of course, if they persistently dawdle, the GM may be inclined to let the Medusan Lords' ritual succeed!

# Part 1: Encounters

The first portion of this adventure takes place at Malrog's stronghold, the Pit, located deep in the Shattered Lands. If the PCs use a *teleportation circle* from another Medusan Lord's lair, begin at **Location 1.8**.

### Encounter 1: The Old Battlefield (EL 18)

**Read aloud:** *The miles of flat earth around you are bare and parched, packed as hard as stone, devoid of even plant life. In the midst of this vast desolation is a single black hole. Even in the distance it was visible, a yawning black wound on the face of the world. The strangely circular hole is almost a half-mile in diameter. Its sides fall away into unseen depths, sheer, treacherous cliffs. If not for the nakedness of the landscape, the wreckage near the hole would have been invisible. Scattered over several hundred yards are the weathered remains of wooden beams and rusty iron fittings. Here and there bleached white bits protrude from the cracked earth.*

This is all that remains of the Malrog Legion's catastrophic battle with the dragon named Deathbile (**see Location 2.13 for more information on the battle**). Dozens of charred, shattered siege engines, their beams and wheels weathered and splintered, iron fittings almost rusted away, decompose among thousands of sun-bleached bones half-buried in the earth, skulls and ribs and pelvic bones. The dead have lain here for two hundred years, a silent monument to Malrog's early days as a Nothrog warlord.

If the PCs thoroughly explore the battlefield, they are confronted by a platoon of hostile ghosts, angry at having their resting place disturbed.

**Creatures:** Nine Nothrog ghosts, 9th-level fighters.

**Nothrog Ghosts (9), Ftr 9:** CR 11; Medium undead (augmented humanoid) (incorporeal); HD 9d12; hp 68; Init +6; Spd 40 ft. fly 80 ft. (perfect); AC 15, touch 13, flat-footed 13; Base Atk +9; Grp +13; Atk +15 melee (1d8+9(17–20/x2), longsword); Full Atk +15 melee (1d8+9(17–20/x2), longsword); Space/Reach 5 ft./5 ft.; SA Favored weapon (longsword, battleaxe), improved damage (longsword), corrupting gaze, frightful moan, manifestation, horrific appearance; SQ Undead traits, incorporeal subtype, rejuvenation, +4 turn resistance; AL LE; SV Fort +6, Ref +5, Will +3; Str 18, Dex 14, Con —, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 16.

Skills and Feats: Hide +16*, Listen +16*, Search +10*, Spot +16*; Cleave, Combat Reflexes, Improved Critical, Improved Initiative, Power Attack, Sunder, Weapon Focus (longsword), Weapon Specialization (longsword). *+8 racial bonus on Hide, Listen, Search, and Spot checks.

*Favored Weapon (longsword, battleaxe):* A guardian ghost gains a +1 competence bonus to attack and damage rolls with the longsword and the battleaxe.

*Improved Damage (longsword):* A guardian ghost does an additional +2 (+3 total) damage with the longsword.

*Corrupting Gaze (Su):* A ghost can blast living beings with a glance, at a range of up to 30 feet. Creatures that meet the ghost's gaze must succeed on a Fortitude save (DC 15) or take 2d10 points of damage and 1d4 points of Charisma damage.

*Frightful Moan (Su):* A ghost can emit a frightful moan as a standard action. All living creatures within a 30-foot spread must succeed on a Will save (DC 15) or become panicked for 2d4 rounds. This is a sonic necromantic mind-affecting fear effect. A creature that successfully saves against the moan cannot be affected by the same ghost's moan for 24 hours.

*Horrific Appearance (Su):* Any living creature within 60 feet that views a ghost must succeed on a Fortitude save (DC 15) or immediately take 1d4 points of Strength damage, 1d4 points of Dexterity damage, and 1d4 points of Constitution damage. A creature that successfully saves against this effect cannot be affected by the same ghost's horrific appearance for 24 hours.

*Manifestation (Su):* Every ghost has this ability. A ghost dwells on the Ethereal Plane and, as an ethereal creature, it cannot affect or be affected by anything in the material world. When a ghost manifests, it partly enters the Material Plane and becomes visible but incorporeal on the Material Plane. A manifested ghost can be harmed only by other incorporeal creatures, magic weapons, or spells, with a 50% chance to ignore any damage from a corporeal source. A manifested ghost can pass through solid objects at will, and its own attacks pass through armor. A manifested ghost always moves silently. A manifested ghost can strike with its touch attack or with a ghost touch weapon. A manifested ghost remains partially on the Ethereal Plane, where is it not incorporeal. A manifested ghost can be attacked by opponents on either the Material Plane or the Ethereal Plane. The ghost's incorporeality helps protect it from foes on the Material Plane, but not from foes on the Ethereal Plane.

When a spellcasting ghost is not manifested and is on the Ethereal Plane, its spells cannot affect targets on the Material Plane, but they work normally against ethereal targets. When a spellcasting ghost manifests, its spells continue to affect ethereal targets and can affect targets on the Material Plane normally unless the spells rely on touch. A manifested ghost's touch spells don't work on nonethereal targets.

A ghost has two home planes, the Material Plane and the Ethereal Plane. It is not considered extraplanar when on either of these planes.

*Telekinesis (Su):* A ghost can use *telekinesis* as a standard action (caster level 12th). When a ghost uses this power, it must wait 1d4 rounds before using it again.

*Rejuvenation (Su):* In most cases, it's difficult to destroy a ghost through simple combat: The "destroyed" spirit will often restore itself in 2d4 days. Even the most powerful spells are usually only temporary solutions. A ghost that would otherwise be destroyed returns to its old haunts with a successful level check (1d20 + 6) against DC 16. As a rule, 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. The exact means varies with each spirit and may require a good deal of research.

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

*Incorporeal Subtype:* Due to its incorporeal nature, a guardian ghost has the following traits:

- An incorporeal creature has no physical body. It can be harmed only by other incorporeal creatures, magic weapons or creatures that strike as magic weapons, and spells, spell-like abilities, or supernatural abilities.
- It is immune to all nonmagical attack forms. Even when hit by spells or magic weapons, it has a 50% chance to ignore any damage from a corporeal source (except for positive energy, negative energy, force effects such as *magic missile*, or attacks made with *ghost touch* weapons). Although it is not a magical attack, holy water can affect incorporeal undead, but a hit with holy water has a 50% chance of not affecting an incorporeal creature.
- An incorporeal creature has no natural armor bonus but has a deflection bonus equal to its Charisma bonus (always at least +1, even if the creature's Charisma score does not normally provide a bonus).
- An incorporeal creature can enter or pass through solid objects, but must remain adjacent to the object's exterior, and so cannot pass entirely through an object whose space is larger than its own. It can sense the presence of creatures or objects within a square adjacent to its current location, but enemies have total concealment (50% miss chance) from an incorporeal creature that is inside an object. In order to see farther from the object it is in and attack normally, the incorporeal creature must emerge. An incorporeal creature inside an object has total cover, but when it attacks a creature outside the object it only has cover, so a creature outside with a readied action could strike at it as it attacks. An incorporeal creature cannot pass through a force effect.

- An incorporeal creature's attacks pass through (ignore) natural armor, armor, and shields, although deflection bonuses and force effects (such as *mage armor*) work normally against it.
- Incorporeal creatures pass through and operate in water as easily as they do in air.
- Incorporeal creatures cannot fall or take falling damage.
- Incorporeal creatures cannot make trip or grapple attacks, nor can they be tripped or grappled. In fact, they cannot take any physical action that would move or manipulate an opponent or its equipment, nor are they subject to such actions.
- Incorporeal creatures have no weight and do not set off traps that are triggered by weight.
- An incorporeal creature moves silently and cannot be heard with Listen checks if it doesn't wish to be. It has no Strength score, so its Dexterity modifier applies to both its melee attacks and its ranged attacks. Nonvisual senses, such as scent and blindsight, are either ineffective or only partly effective with regard to incorporeal creatures.
- Incorporeal creatures have an innate sense of direction and can move at full speed even when they cannot see.

*Undead Traits:* A guardian ghost has the following traits:

- No Constitution score.
- Darkvision out to 60 feet.
- Immunity to all mind-affecting effects (charms, compulsions, phantasms, patterns, and morale effects).
- Immunity to poison, sleep effects, paralysis, stunning, disease, death effects, and necromancy effects.
- Negative energy (such as an *inflict* spell) can heal undead creatures. The fast healing quality works regardless of the creature's Intelligence score.
- Not subject to critical hits, non-lethal damage, ability damage, ability drain, fatigue, exhaustion, or energy drain. Immune to damage to its physical ability scores (Strength, Dexterity, Constitution), as well as to fatigue and exhaustion effects.
- Immunity to any effect that requires a Fortitude save (unless the effect also works on objects, or is harmless).
- Uses its Charisma modifier for Concentration checks.
- Not at risk of death from massive damage. Immediately destroyed when reduced to 0 hit points or less.
- Not affected by raise dead and reincarnate spells or abilities. Resurrection and true resurrection can affect undead creatures. These spells turn undead creatures back into the living creatures they were before becoming undead.
- Proficient with its natural weapons, all simple weapons, and any weapon mentioned in its entry.
- Proficient with whatever type of armor (light, medium, and heavy) it is described as wearing, as well as all lighter types.
- Undead do not eat, sleep, or breathe.

## Location 1: The Pit (EL 20)

**Read aloud:** *Standing at the lip of the abyss induces a moment of vertigo. The sides of the hole drop sheer to the floor — a depth difficult to gauge, but it may be even deeper than it is wide. The far edge is almost half a mile distant. The floor is swathed in shadow, but the rippling glimmer of a bright circle is reflected from a large pool in the center of the floor. The bright circle is sky above. The rumbling hiss of falling water echoes from the depths, drawing your attention to the waterfall shooting from the wall of the pit, roughly halfway down, spilling into a broad stream that forms the pool in the center of the chamber. Where the water goes from there, you cannot tell.*

**Development:** Climbing down the sides of the Pit requires a Climb check (DC 15). It is 2000 feet from the lip of the Pit to the floor. There is a narrow stairway down, beginning on the southernmost point on the edge of the Pit. The stairway is 5 feet wide and spirals along the wall all the way to the floor.

PCs who make a Spot check (DC 20) see the cave openings scattered around the cylindrical walls of the Pit. One of these cave openings (**Location 1.1**) is the entrance to Malrog's stronghold, once the lair of Deathbile. Malrog has had two hundred years to remodel the dragon's lair. The other openings, labeled 2b, are the lairs of Nothrog warriors, who leap from their cave entrances to attack the party as the party nears.

These Nothrog are the descendants of Malrog's original legion, those few who had remained behind in Nothrog lands while Malrog himself warred with Deathbile. As penance, they and their children moved to the Shattered Lands. They are monstrous creatures, inbred and corrupted by Bascaron's influence, but absolutely loyal to Malrog. It is Malrog, after all, who feeds them and provides them shelter from creatures far more vile than they. Even should the party guess this, however, it is of no use. These Nothrog cannot even conceive of a life outside the Shattered Lands, and believe none of the party's 'lies.'

While other Nothrog live here in the Pit, these are both the physically strongest and the most expendable — Malrog cares little for their safety. The remnants of his old legion are but fodder to ensure the safety of his truly worthy allies. As such, any protracted fight with these Nothrog (more than 10 rounds, or immediately, if one or more combatants fall off the edge) raises a general alarm among Malrog's worthier servants deeper in the Pit. Malrog does not even consider them pawns, as pawns can eventually prove worthy enough to earn a promotion.

**Creatures:** Landrok, a 20th-level barbarian; (1 legionnaire per PC) Malrog Legionnaires, 15th-level barbarians; Numfar, a 14th-level bard.

**Landok, Malrog Legion Barbarian, Male Nothrog Brb 20:** CR 20; Medium humanoid (Nothrog); HD 20d12+100; hp 230; Spd 40 ft.; Init +0; AC 20, touch 16, flat-footed 20; Base Atk +20; Grp +25; Atk +33 melee (1d12+13(19–20/x3), greataxe); Full Atk +33/+28/+23/+18 melee (1d12+13(19–20/x3), greataxe); SA

Furious charge, greater rage 6/day, mighty blow; SQ Fast movement, illiteracy, non-magical bonus +6, Nothrog traits, resist magic +4, totem animal (elephant), uncanny dodge (+1 vs. traps), undying fury (1d8 hp/round), war cry, wild shape, damage reduction 3/—, race/class abilities; AL CE; SV Fort +17, Ref +6, Will +6; Str 21, Dex 10, Con 21, Int 10, Wis 11, Cha 10.

*Skills and Feats:* Climb +11*, Intimidate +12, Jump +11*, Survival +12; Cleave, Great Cleave, Greater Weapon Focus (greataxe), Improved Critical (greataxe), Improved Sunder, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (greataxe), Improved Trip. *includes –3 armor check penalty

*Race/Class Abilities: Barbarian:* Improved Trip, Damage Reduction (damage reduction 3/—), Induce Fear (Will save DC 25 or panicked).

*Fast Movement:* Landok has a speed faster than the norm for his race by +10 feet when wearing no armor, light armor, or medium armor (and not carrying a heavy load).

*Furious Charge:* While raging Landok may make three attacks during a charge action.

*Greater Rage (6/day):* While Landok rages, his statistics change as follows: HD 20d12+160; hp 290; AC 18, touch 14, flat-footed 18; Grp +28; Atk +36 melee (1d12+18(19–20/x3), greataxe); Full Atk +36/+31/+26/+21 melee (1d12+18(19–20/x3), greataxe); SV Fort +20, Will +9; Str 27, Con 27. His fit of rage lasts for 11 rounds.

*Illiteracy:* Landok cannot read nor write.

*Mighty Blow:* Any time Landok scores a critical hit while raging he has an opportunity to knock his opponent senseless. The victim must make a Fortitude save (DC 10 + damage inflicted) or be stunned for the next round.

*Non-Magical Bonus:* Landok receives a +6 bonus to his attack and damage rolls when not using a magical weapon and Armor Class when not wearing magical armor or carrying an enchanted shield. Attacks made by Landok ignore damage reduction as if his weapon were enchanted with an enhancement bonus of the same amount.

*Resist Magic:* Landok gains a +4 morale bonus to saves against effects generated by spells, spell-like abilities and magic items. A +2 morale bonus also extends to any of Landok's allies within 10 feet of the barbarian that suffers the same spell or effect as the barbarian. Landok also reduces additional damage inflicted against him by enhancement bonuses by the same amount.

*Totem Animal (elephant):* Bonus Ability: Tough hide — Landok gains a +1 natural armor bonus to AC.

*Uncanny Dodge:* Landok retains his Dexterity bonus to AC (if any) even if he is caught flat-footed or struck by an invisible attacker. However, he still loses his Dexterity bonus to AC if immobilized. Landok also gains a +1 bonus on Reflex saves made to avoid traps and a +1 dodge bonus to AC against attacks made by traps.

*Undying Fury:* Landok may prolong his rages. For every 1d8 hit points he chooses to lose he may rage an additional round.

*War Cry:* Once per day, while raging and as a standard action, Landok may issue a blood-curdling battle cry that freezes his opponents. Although it only affects opponents within 100 feet of the barbarian, the yell can be heard for 8 miles. All opponents within 100 feet of the barbarian must succeed at a Will save (DC 25) or be stunned for 4 rounds.

*Wild Shape:* Once per day Landok may polymorph as a spell-like ability into a Small, Medium, or Large elephant (but not a dire elephant) and back again. When changing, Landok regains hit points as if he had rested for a day. The barbarian also does not risk the standard penalty for being disoriented while in the wild shape.

*Possessions:* Hide armor, greataxe.

**Malrog's Legionnaires, Male Nothrog Bar 15:** CR 15; Medium humanoid (Nothrog); HD 15d12+30; hp 120; Spd 40 ft.; Init +0; AC 18, touch 14, flat-footed 18; Base Atk +15; Grp +18; Atk +23 melee (1d12+8(19–20/x3), greataxe); Full Atk +23/+18/+15 melee (1d12+8(19–20/x3), greataxe); SA Furious charge, greater rage 4/day, mighty blow; SQ Fast movement, illiteracy, non-magical bonus +4, Nothrog traits, resist magic +4, totem animal (elephant), uncanny dodge (+1 vs. traps), undying fury (1d12 hp/round), damage reduction 2/—, race/class abilities; AL CE; SV Fort +12, Ref +5, Will +2; Str 17, Dex 10, Con 15, Int 6, Wis 6, Cha 6.

*Skills and Feats:* Climb +4*, Jump +4*, Survival +4; Cleave, Great Cleave, Improved Critical (greataxe), Improved Sunder, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (greataxe), Improved Trip. *includes –3 armor check penalty

*Race/Class Abilities: Barbarian:* Improved Trip, Damage Reduction (damage reduction 2/—), Induce Fear (Will save DC 20 or panicked).

*Fast Movement:* A legionnaire has a speed faster than the norm for his race by +10 feet when wearing no armor, light armor, or medium armor (and not carrying a heavy load).

*Furious Charge:* While raging a legionnaire may make two attacks during a charge action.

*Greater Rage (6/day):* While a legionnaire rages, his statistics change as follows: HD 15d12+90; hp 180; AC 16, touch 12, flat-footed 16; Grp +21; Atk +27 melee (1d12+14(19–20/x3), greataxe); Full Atk +27/+22/+17 melee (1d12+14(19–20/x3), greataxe); SV Fort +16, Will +6; Str 23, Con 21. His fit of rage lasts for 11 rounds. At the end of the rage a legionnaire is fatigued (–2 to Strength, –2 to Dexterity, can't charge or run).

*Illiteracy:* A legionnaire cannot read nor write.

*Mighty Blow:* Any time a legionnaire scores a critical hit while raging he has an opportunity to knock his opponent senseless. The victim must make a Fortitude save (DC 10 + damage inflicted) or be stunned for the next round.

*Non-Magical Bonus:* A legionnaire receives a +4 bonus to his attack and damage rolls when not using a magical weapon and Armor Class when not wearing magical armor or carrying an enchanted shield. Attacks made by a legionnaire ignore damage reduction as if his weapon were enchanted with an enhancement bonus of the same amount.

*Resist Magic:* A legionnaire gains a +4 morale bonus to saves against effects generated by spells, spell-like abilities and magic items. A +2 morale bonus also extends to any of a legionnaire 's allies within 10 feet of the barbarian that suffers the same spell or effect as the barbarian. A legionnaire also reduces additional damage inflicted against him by enhancement bonuses by the same amount.

**Totem Animal (elephant):** Tough hide — a legionnaire gains a +1 natural armor bonus to AC.

*Uncanny Dodge:* A legionnaire retains his Dexterity bonus to AC (if any) even if he is caught flat-footed or struck by an invisible attacker. However, he still loses his Dexterity bonus to AC if immobilized. A legionnaire also gains a +1 bonus on Reflex saves made to avoid traps and a +1 dodge bonus to AC against attacks made by traps.

*Undying Fury:* A legionnaire may prolong his rages. For every 1d12 hit points he chooses to lose he may rage an additional round.

*Possessions:* Hide armor, greataxe.

**Numfar, Malrog Legion Bard, Male Nothrog Brd 14:** CR 14; Medium humanoid (Nothrog); HD 14d6; hp 45; Spd 30 ft.; Init +3; AC 13, touch 13, flat-footed 10; Base Atk +14; Grp +14; Atk +17 melee (1d8(19–20/x2), light crossbow); Full Atk +17 melee (1d8(19–20/x2), light crossbow); SA Spells; SQ Bardic knowledge 14, bardic music 14 (inspire greatness, song of bravado, suggestion, countersong, fascinate, inspire competence, rhythm of defense, cacophony, lingering melody), Nothrog traits, race/class abilities; AL CN; SV Fort +4, Ref +12, Will +7; Str 10, Dex 16, Con 10, Int 6, Wis 6, Cha 16.

*Skills and Feats:* Climb +6, Concentration +6, Jump +6, Knowledge (Shattered Lands geography) –1, Listen +5, Perform (song) +20, Tumble +9; Point Blank Shot, Inspire Courage, Rhythm of Defense, Song of Bravado, Suggestion.

*Race/Class Abilities: Bard:* Warrior's Heart, Inspire Rage.

*Inspire Rage (Su):* Numfar can *inspire rage* in two allies. Numfar must be within 60 feet of the allies to be inspired, and they must be able to hear him sing for a full round. The rage has the same effect and lasts as long as a typical barbarian's rage. Inspire rage is a supernatural mind-affecting ability.

*Inspire Greatness (Su):* Numfar can *inspire greatness* in two creatures. Numfar must be within 30 feet of the creatures to be inspired, and they must be able to hear him sing for a full round. As long as Numfar continues to sing, and for 5 rounds thereafter, the creatures gain the following bonuses:

- +2 Hit Dice (d10s that grant temporary hit points)
- +2 competence bonus on attacks
- +1 competence bonus on Fortitude saves

The target applies his Constitution modifier to each bonus Hit Die and the extra Hit Dice count as regular Hit Dice for determining effects such as *sleep spells.*

*Song of Bravado (Su):* Beginning at the first round of singing, Numfar's friends and allies that can hear the song gain a +3 morale bonus on all saves and skill checks for as long as he continues the song. Those affected will engage in daring actions they would normally never perform unless they succeed at a Will save (DC 16).

*Suggestion (Su):* As per the spell, to a creature he has already *fascinated.* A Will save (DC 16) negates the suggestion. The suggestion does not count against Numfar's daily limit on bardic music performances.

*Countersong (Su):* Each round Numfar may make a Perform check which allows any creature within 30 feet of him (including himself) who is affected by a sonic or language-dependent magical attack to use Numfar's Perform check result in place of his save if, after rolling the save, the Perform check result proves better. Numfar may keep up the countersong for 10 rounds.

*Fascinate (Su):* Numfar can *fascinate* a single creature within 90 feet of him that he can see. The creature must be able to pay attention; significant distractions prevent the ability from working. The creature can negate Numfar's attempt if its Will save is equal to or greater than his Perform check. If the save succeeds, Numfar cannot attempt to fascinate that particular creature again for 24 hours. A *fascinated* creature remains so for up to 14 rounds and suffers a –4 penalty to Spot and Listen checks (a potential threat allows a second saving throw, while an obvious threat immediately breaks the *fascination*).

*Inspire Competence (Su):* The ally must be within 30 feet of Numfar and must be able to see and hear him; Numfar must also be able to see the ally. The ally gets a +2 competence bonus on skill checks with that particular skill as long as he continues to hear Numfar's music. The effect can be maintained for 2 minutes (long enough to take 20).

*Inspire Courage (Su):* Allies that can hear Numfar for one full round receive a +2 morale bonus to saves against charm and fear effects and a +1 morale bonus to attack and weapon damage rolls. The effect lasts as long as he sings and for 5 rounds after he stops singing (or can no longer be heard). While singing, Numfar cannot cast spells nor activate magic items by spell completion or magic word.

*Rhythm of Defense (Su):* The target must be able to see, hear, and understand Numfar and must be within 30 feet. At the end of the first full round of the song, if the target fails its Will save (DC 16), it is compelled to attack Numfar to the best of its ability.

*Cacophony (Su):* After a full round of song, all creatures within 30 feet who can hear the song must make a Will save (DC 18) or have their Intelligence and Wisdom scores temporarily reduced by 2d4 for the duration of the song. Those who succeed at their Will save must still succeed at a Spellcraft check (DC 18) any time they wish to cast a spell.

*Lingering Melody (Su):* Numfar can have any of his bardic songs linger in the air, extending their effect for up to 7 rounds. This counts as a use of bardic music for the day.

*Bard Spells Prepared* (4/4/4/4/3/1; save DC 13 + spell level): 0 — *dancing lights, daze, ghost sound, lullaby, mending, summon instrument;* 1st — *cause fear, charm person, hideous laughter, lesser confusion;* 2nd — *cat's grace, eagle's splendor, heroism, rage;* 3rd — *confusion, crushing despair, deep slumber, fear;* 4th — *dominate person, hold monster, rainbow pattern, shout;* 5th — *greater heroism, mass suggestion, summon monster V.*

*Possessions:* Light crossbow, Nothrog stringed instrument.

**Development:** In addition to their listed abilities, the above Nothrog are immune to the *wounding* weapon enchantment, and do not immediately die if beheaded. Once decapitated, these Nothrog lose all class features and feats, and are considered blind, deaf, and mute (their heads well and truly die). If left alone, their decapitated bodies eventually die from dehydration.

Landok leads the fight, while Numfar remains behind the Malrog lines to bolster his family with songs and spells. There is one legionnaire for each member of the party. These Nothrog fight without any regard for tactics, and judicious use of trips or bull rushes near the edge of the Pit could easily decimate the Nothrog' ranks. Such thoughts do not occur to the Nothrog themselves, as this is the first time they have ever fought in their home. Instead, the Nothrog attack their closest enemy. Unless the party does not use to their advantage the terrain and their foes' own foolishness, only Landok presents a true threat. Numfar is especially vulnerable, and given to ridiculous dancing during his songs and spells. If he suffers hits during either, he must not only make his Concentration check, but also a Reflex save (DC of the number of hits received) or fall off the side of the Pit. Numfar's fellows barely tolerate him, as his witless antics are still preferable to those of the legion's previous bard, Numfar's exiled cousin.

## Location 1.1: Entrance to Malrog's Lair

On the floor of the Pit is a cave mouth over 100 feet across and 50 feet high.

## Location 1.2: Nothrog Caves

Four caves are scattered around the circumference of the Pit at varying heights. The Nothrog live in these caves, descending along knotted ropes as the party approaches. Each cave is 1d4x5 ft. above the stairway of the Pit.

## Location 1.3: Main Cavern (EL 19)

**Read aloud:** *The mouth of this large cave is strewn with bleached, splintered bones. Near the sides of the cave mouth, the bones are piled 5 feet high against the cold gray stone. The interior of the cave is so large that it still seems dark, in spite of the many sconces lit with continual flame.*

*The ceiling in the cavern arches 50 to 70 ft. above.*

Far in the rear of this cavern is a semi-permanent encampment set up by Malrog's Nothrog guards. Unlike the Nothrog in the caves above, these are well-trained and well-equipped. When they become aware of any intruders, they snap to readiness and cover the intruders with their crossbows. They do not attack unless it is obvious that the PCs are hostile, or Both'chakh or Malrog orders them to do so. These Nothrog are tactically sound, and despite their lower levels, they should be a harder fight than their predecessors.

**Creatures:** Ten Nothrog guards, 12th-level fighters.

**Nothrog Guards (10), Male Nothrog Ftr 12:** CR 12; Medium humanoid (Nothrog); HD 12d10+36; hp 101; Init +5; Spd 20 ft.; AC 24, touch 11, flat-footed 23; Base Atk +12; Grp +17; Atk +20 melee (1d8+10(17–20/x3), *+2 keen battle axe*) or +15 ranged (1d10+5(19–20/x2), *+2 heavy crossbow*); Full Atk +20/+15/+10 melee (1d8+10(17–20/x3), *+2 keen battle axe*) or +15 ranged (1d10+5(19–20/x2), *+2 heavy crossbow*); SA Favored weapon (battleaxe, heavy crossbow, greatclub), improved critical threat (battleaxe), improved damage (battleaxe, heavy crossbow); SQ Nothrog traits, race/class abilities; AL LE; SV Fort +11, Ref +5, Will +6; Str 20, Dex 13, Con 16, Int 12, Wis 14, Cha 10.

*Skills and Feats*: Climb +9*, Jump +10*, Listen +6, Spot +6, Swim +6*; Cleave, Great Cleave, Improved Bull Rush, Improved Initiative, Power Attack, Improved Sunder. *includes –6 armor check penalty

*Race/Class Abilities: Fighter*: Aptitude, Rage (1/day), Magical immunity.

*Favored Weapon (battleaxe, heavy crossbow, great club)*: A guard gains a +1 competence bonus to attack and damage rolls with the battleaxe, heavy crossbow, and great club.

*Improved Critical Threat (battleaxe)*: A guard's critical threat range is increased by +2 (to 18–20) with the battleaxe.

*Improved Damage (battleaxe, heavy crossbow)*: A guard does an additional +2 (+3 total) damage with the battleaxe and heavy crossbow.

*Rage (1/day)*: While Nothrog guard rages, his statistics change as follows: HD 12d10+60; hp 109; AC 22, touch 9, flat-footed 21; Grp +20; Atk +22 melee (1d8+13(17–20/x3), *+2 keen battle axe*) or +15 ranged (1d10+5(19–20/x2), *+2 heavy crossbow*); Full Atk +23/+18/+13 melee (1d8+13(17–20/x3), *+2 keen battle axe*) or +15 ranged (1d10+5(19–20/x2), *+2 heavy crossbow*); SV Fort +10, Will +5; Str 24, Con 20. His fit of rage lasts for 8 rounds. At the end of the rage Nothrog guard is fatigued (–2 to Strength, –2 to Dexterity, can't charge or run).

*Possessions: +2 full plate, +1 large steel shield, +2 keen battle axe, +2 heavy crossbow.*

## Location 1.4: Guard Post (EL 18)

Standing guard in this area is an exceptionally large and well-trained ogre: Bothíchakh. His orders are to guard this cavern, and he spends most of his time here, because beyond this door is Malrog's private chambers.

Malrog took Bothíchakh from his tribe of ogres when he was young and trained him to be a fighter. Malrog chose Bothíchakh for the rare combination (at least among native ogres) of ferocity and intelligence. Bothíchakh is strongly loyal to Malrog, and vain about his prowess. In combat he would be a match for most warlords, but he is content to serve Malrog. He trains Malrog's personal contingent of fighters, some of whom have been loaned out as guards to other Medusan Lords. Bothíchakh finds Malrog worthy of respect, and generous to his loyal underlings.

**Creature:** Bothíchakh, a 16th-level fighter.

**Bothíchakh, Malrog's Ogre Lieutenant, Male Ogre Ftr 16:** CR 19; Large giant (ogre); HD 4d8+20 plus 16d10+80; hp 206; Init +4; Spd 30 ft.; AC 26, touch 9, flat-footed 26; Base Atk +19; Grp +31; Atk +33 melee (3d6+17 plus possible decapitation(18–20/x4), *+5 vorpal* (large) *greataxe*) or +21 ranged (2d8+3(17–20/x2), heavy (large) crossbow); Full Atk +33/+28/+23/+18 melee (3d6+17 plus possible decapitation(18–20/x4), *+5 vorpal* (large) *greataxe*) or +21 ranged (2d8+3(17–20/x2), heavy (large) crossbow); SA Favored weapon (greataxe, heavy crossbow, greatclub, long-

spear), improved critical multiplier (greataxe), improved critical threat (greataxe, heavy crossbow), improved damage (greataxe, heavy crossbow, greatclub); SQ Darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; AL LE; SV Fort +21, Ref +6, Will +8; Str 26, Dex 12, Con 20, Int 11, Wis 14, Cha 11.

*Skills and Feats*: Climb +13*, Jump +13*, Listen +7, Spot +7; Blind-Fight, Cleave, Combat Reflexes, Great Cleave, Improved Bull Rush, Improved Initiative, Power Attack, Quick Draw, Improved Sunder. *includes –5 armor check penalty

*Darkvision, 60 ft.:* Bothíchakh can see in the dark with no light source at all, out to a range of 60 feet. Darkvision is black and white only (colors cannot be discerned). It does not allow Bothíchakh to see anything that he could not see otherwise—invisible objects are still invisible, and illusions are still visible as what they seem to be. Likewise, darkvision subjects Bothíchakh to gaze attacks normally. The presence of light does not spoil darkvision.

*Favored Weapon (greataxe, heavy crossbow, greatclub, longspear)*: Bothíchakh gains a +1 competence bonus to attack and damage rolls with the greataxe, heavy crossbow, greatclub, and longspear.

*Improved Critical Multiplier (greataxe)*: Bothíchakh 's critical multiplier is increased by 1 (to x4) with the greataxe.

*Improved Critical Threat (greataxe, heavy crossbow)*: Bothíchakh 's critical threat range is increased by +2 (to 18–20) with the greataxe and (to 17–20) heavy crossbow.

*Improved Damage (greataxe, heavy crossbow, greatclub):* Bothíchakh does an additional +2 (+3 total) damage with the greataxe, heavy crossbow, and greatclub.

*Low-Light Vision:* Bothíchakh can see twice as far as a human in starlight, moonlight, torchlight, and similar conditions of shadowy illumination. Bothíchakh retains the ability to distinguish color and detail under these conditions.

*Possessions: +4 full plate, +5 vorpal* (large) *greataxe*, heavy (large) crossbow.

## Location 1.5: Training Hall

**Read aloud**: *This large chamber looks much like the training grounds of a Nothrog legion. The walls are lined with oversized weapon racks filled with huge weapons. Through the middle of the chamber are thick wooden beams that have been hacked at for weapons practice. Several posts in rough humanoid shapes also appear to be used for practice.*

This is where Malrog keeps himself in shape, and also where he trained his protégé Bothíchakh. Bothíchakh also trains Malrog's personal guards here, as well as the other ogre guards he loaned to some of the other Medusan Lords. There are many simple and martial melee weapons here, both Medium and Large, enough to equip the party and more.

## Location 1.6: Malrog's Command Chamber

**Read aloud**: *This chamber looks like the interior of a general's command tent. The walls are covered with large maps on stretched, tanned humanoid hides. The maps depict all of the Accordlands in several different scales. The thick wooden table is piled neatly with stacks of smaller maps, parchments, and ancient tomes. Also on the wall is a large recently-drawn picture of a dragon, sleeping or dead. There are several notations on the drawing.*

**Development:** The drawing of the dragon is a representation of the Great Dragon's resting place and how Its corpse is positioned. The drawing is 6 feet long and 4 feet high. Malrog has meticulously planned the resurrection ritual, including comments on where to enact each portion of the rite. The coded notations on the drawing are in the Nothrog tongue (Decipher Script DC 25), and near a claw, an eye, the mouth, and the heart. These notes further suggest that the only way to enter the heart is through a long and harrowing journey down the Dragon's trachea, into its lungs, and following the immense veins into its heart.

The scrolls and texts include a wealth of information about the plans of the Medusan Lords. Among the scrolls and tomes are the following items. All of them are written in the Nothrog tongue, and each requires a Decipher Script check (DC 30) and 10 minutes to read, unless otherwise specified.

- Treatises on the nature of the Storm and the Dragon.
- An ancient account (written in Deverenian) of how the Dragon was slain. Athanae threatened the lives of the Dragon's unhatched eggs, forcing the Dragon to allow Athanae to kill it in return for the lives of the three offspring. Athanae slew the Dragon from within by piercing its heart with her sword, then ascended as a goddess. These Dragon eggs eventually became the Dragon Orbs, each tied to a moon: La Hashan, God's Eye, and Bascaron. The orbs have tremendous magical power, including the power to control dragons.
- Notes by Malrog, who hopes to use a Dragon Orb to summon the Storm by making a sufficient sacrifice of power to the orb itself. He also notes that most dragons revere the Great Dragon as their ancestor.
- Several scrolls describing theoretical rituals to harness the power of the Storm and force it back into the Dragon's corpse. These scrolls describe vaguely how such a thing is to be done, not how to perform the rituals themselves.
- Notes in Malrog's handwriting about the final stages of the resurrection ritual for the Dragon. They involve reciting certain Words of Power over key locations (illustrated on the map, above) on the Dragon's corpse. Other annotations, in a different shade of ink, suggest that most of these incantations are not strictly necessary, as the heart itself is the key to the rites. All others merely speed the process along by more evenly distributing the sacrificed power to the Dragon.
- A list of names, with strange words beside each name. These are the names of the other Medusan Lords. The strange word is the command word for each destination for the *teleportation circle* in **Location 1.8**. One word does not appear to correspond to any of the names. This is the command word to open or close the *circle*.
- A scroll resembling the list of names, except that the destination is given as 'Eternity.' This is the command word for the *teleportation circle* in **Location 1.8** that takes the user directly to the Dragon's corpse (*see Part 2*).
- Several incredibly ancient tomes, some dating from the First War. They are written in several different languages, from Athanaean to Deverenian to Kabal.
- A handwritten note to Malrog (*see sidebar Dragon Rising*).

**Dragon Rising**

Honored colleague,

I wish to bring to your attention the possibility that once the Dragon's body has begun to regenerate, conditions within the ritual chamber will rapidly deteriorate. Can even we hope to survive within the body of the living Eternal Dragon? I think not, but do not fear; I plan to have several spells prepared to convey us to safety if we cannot slay it again. Our task should be possible to complete, since the beast's heart is vulnerable from within.

— Cassica

## Location 1.7: Malrog's Private Chamber

**Read aloud:** *This room is stark and empty, except for a simple stone slab along one wall. The slab is roughly ten feet long and five feet wide, and the top is worn smooth.*

A Search check (DC 22) reveals that the lid of the slab opens. Anyone other than Malrog who touches the slab instantly sets off a hidden magical warding glyph trap.

*Power Word Kill Trap:* CR 10; magic device; spell trigger *(alarm)*; no reset; spell effect *(power word kill,* 20th-level wizard, instantly slays one living creature with 100 hp or less), Search DC 34; Disable Device DC 34.

*Treasure:* Under the slab is Malrog's material wealth, much of which derived from the treasure horde of Deathbile, the black dragon:

- *20,000 gp.*
- *5,000 pp.*
- *Twenty necklaces and bracelets worth 3,000 gp each, 15 gems worth 1,000 gp each, and 25 gems worth 100 gp.*
- *Large suit of full plate +1*
- *Huge battle-axe +1*
- *Potion of healing*
- *Chaos diamond*
- *Helm of opposite alignment*
- *Eyes of petrification*
- *Staff of power*
- *Rod of absorption*

## Location 1.8: Council Chamber

**Read aloud:** *The ceiling arches to 30 feet, with ancient bronze chandeliers hanging from chains gone green with age. The table is a single massive slab of black marble, polished to a high sheen and shot through with white veins. In the center of the table a magical glyph glitters with a soft yellow light. Ten chairs surround the table. In one corner of the room is a circle scribed into the stone floor, set with glimmering stones.*

The circle in the corner is a special *teleportation circle* created by Cassica Moonseed so that the Medusan Lords could travel between their respective strongholds. Command words allow the user to travel to and from the other Medusan Lords' strongholds. This *teleportation circle,* unlike the others, has a special command word keyed to the Dragon's corpse, *planeshifting* the party to the Abyss when activated. This command word is 'Eternity' in the Nothrog language.

The magical glyph in the center of the table wards against any type of *scrying* or divination magic. Divination spells cannot be used anywhere within 100 feet of this glyph, nor can divination spells cast from outside this area be used on any target within this 100-foot radius.

## Location 1.9: Secure Chamber

The door of this chamber is solid iron, with a huge padlock. The door is 2 in. thick, with Hardness 10, 60 hp, and Break DC 28. The padlock is DC 25 to open; Malrog carries the only key on his person. The door latch is trapped.

*Burnt Othur Vapor Trap:* CR 7; mechanical; location trigger; repair reset; gas; multiple targets (all targets in a 10-ft.-by–10-ft. room); never miss; onset delay (3 rounds); poison (burnt othur fumes, DC 18 Fortitude save resists, 1 Con drain/3d6 Con); Search DC 21; Disable Device DC 21.

This room is where Malrog keeps prisoners. Particularly dangerous ones are dropped into the pit in the center of the room. The pit is 40 feet deep and 10 feet square. The pit is usually covered with a heavy wooden trapdoor.

*Trapdoor:* 1 1/2 in. thick, hardness 5, hp 15, Break DC 18.

## Location 1.10: Pile of Bones

**Read aloud:** *A huge pile of bones is crammed into this large niche, piled to the ceiling.*

*The bones here are splintered and ancient, the remnants of centuries' worth of Deathbile's meals.*

# Part 2: The Dragon's Corpse

The only ways for the PCs to reach the Dragon's corpse in time to stop the ritual is to use the *teleportation circle* in **Location 1.8**, or to transport themselves there by similar means. The *teleportation circle* brings characters into **Location 2**, the Great Cavern.

## Location 2: The Great Cavern

**Read aloud:** *The magical circle is a tiny island in a vast alien landscape, as if you are floating on a black sea in some dream world. You are standing in a subterranean cavern of such incredible vastness that it staggers the mind. The floor of the cavern is black and shiny, uneven, like obsidian. High above, so high that gauging the distance is difficult, the domed ceiling of the cavern emits a strange green light. Shimmering waves ripple across the ceiling like wind across a pond. This glow illuminates the immense chamber as if it were dusk. Throughout*

### Travel Around the Cavern

Although the party may only travel to the Great Cavern by means of a *planeshift* or similar spell, the area immediately around the Dragon's corpse is unusually volatile, even for the Abyss. The energies swirling through the fabric of reality in the Dragon's vicinity disrupt any sort of *teleport* or *dimension door* spells. When rolling the results of a *teleport* spell, add +25% to the roll. If the PCs use the spell *teleport without error*, treat the casting as if it were a standard *teleport* spell, with no modification to the results roll. Treat *dimension door* spells as if the caster's intended destination always conflicts with a solid body. If the PCs possess and somehow transport the *Dimensional Confluence* magic item here (see the adventure *Shadow of the Black Tower*), they may use *teleport* or *dimension door* spells as normal.

In the likely case that the party has no such opportunity, then they must be very careful of both time and the attention they draw to themselves. While few abyssals initially notice their presence, the Dragon's corpse is over a dozen miles across. The party must quickly decide how much of the ritual they can risk disrupting.

Fortunately for the party, the Storm is confused, and the party does not suffer the normal effects of entering the Storm for the duration of this adventure.

*the cavern, immense and natural stone pillars reach up to grasp the distant ceiling. The cavern stretches for miles in every direction. As your eyes adjust to the light, you spy huge shapes, like buried leviathans, protruding from the shiny black floor, silent and unmoving.*

*At first, you think it your imagination, but the nearest such structure is writhing... swarming with blasphemous life.*

*Suddenly, a darkness seeps out over the ceiling, and pours down like the judgment of the gods. You recognize it instantly — it is the Storm. Great hordes of stormwraiths descend, their phantom banners held high, as the screeching abyssal hordes rise to meet the challenge.*

Unseen in the distance above is Rockhome, the first bastion of the Dwarven kingdom against the abyssal threat. Fortunately for the party, while they may not see Rockhome, Rockhome certainly notices the activity here.

## Location 2.1: The Shoulder

**Read aloud:** *A massive black hillock rears out of the bubbled black floor hundreds of feet toward the ceiling high above. From a distance, the surface appeared to be smooth, but as you draw nearer, you can see that it is covered in a regular pattern like shields or plates lying in perfect rows. Or scales. They are roughly 30 feet across and 3 feet thick. In places, scales have fallen away, sliding into piles at the foot of the hill. The missing scales expose gaping wounds in the surface like open caves. In the distance, across the top and sides of the hillock, creatures move about the desiccated remains, looking like mites at this distance.*

This is the exposed shoulder of the Dragon. The shallow caves (less than 50 ft. deep) are areas where the Dragon's scales have sloughed away.

### Encounters in the Great Cavern

Throughout the climax of this adventure, the PCs are wandering around the area with the most concentrated population of abyssals in the world, a situation made worse by the Storm's presence. Whenever they are in the Great Cavern, roll 1d20 every 5 minutes on this table. Once the PCs enter the Dragon's corpse, roll 1d10 instead, treating results of 8–10 as "A brief calm."

| d20 | Result |
|---|---|
| 1 | Roll again. If this result is another 1 and the party has not faced this encounter before, the party finds 1 brullahka leaing a group o abyssals (roll 1d6+1, checking the result agains this table, CR 10, see *Monsters and Lairs*, page 8) |
| 2 | Fiendlings and their demon of kvar parents (10d6 fiendlings, CR 1, and 1d6 demons of Kvar, CR 3, see *Monsters and Lairs*, page 13 and 10) |
| 3 | Golgoth (2d10, CR 5, see *Monsters and Lairs*, page 14) 4 Nightclaw (5d6, CR 1/2, see *Monsters and Lairs*, page 15) |
| 5 | Shadowreaver (2d4, CR 6, see *Monsters and Lairs*, page 16) |
| 6 | Skincrawler (5d6, CR 1/2, see *Monsters and Lairs*, page 17) |
| 7 | Zhul (1d4, CR 9, see *Monsters and Lairs*, page 19) |
| 8–9 | Victorious abyssals. Roll 1d6+1, checking the results against this table. These abyssals have just vanquished a number of Stormborn opponents, and have a +1 morale bonus to all attack and damage rolls against the party, but are at 50% their normal hit points. |
| 10–11 | A brief calm. While abyssals and Stormborn may be nearby, they are too busy fighting each other to care about the party. |
| 12–13 | Victorious Stormborn. These stormwraiths have just vanquished a number of abyssal opponents, and have a +1 morale bonus to all attack and damage rolls against the party, but are at 50% their normal hit points. |
| 14–15 | Storm Crows (6d6, CR 3, see *Monsters and Lairs*, page 172) |
| 16–17 | Signon's Disciples (4d8, CR 12, see *Monsters and Lairs*, page 165) |
| 18 | Signon's Disciples and Storm Verdatha mount (1d4, same number of each, CR 12 and 6, see *Monsters and Lairs*, page 165 and 200) |
| 19 | Storm Shadows (1d4, CR X, *Monsters and Lairs*, page 173) |
| 20 | Roll again. If this result is another 20 and the party has not faced this encounter before, the party finds Modred of Carcius leading a group of Stormborn (roll 1d6+13, checking the result against this table, CR 16, see the adventure *Believers*, page 315) |

### Believers

**If the party is mostly Deverenians and/or reached an agreement with Modred of Carcius at the conclusion of the adventure, any Stormborn encountered is not automatically hostile, though highly curious about the party's presence. If this is the case, or the party parleys with the intelligent Stormborn during a combat, the PCs may reveal what they know of the Medusan Lords' plans to the Stormborn. At the GM's discretion, this may move future Stormborn encounters to neutral. If, however, Blackthorn is alive and the party reveals his duplicity, the Stormborn immediately depart to besiege location 13, the Claw, where they quickly overrun Blackthorn. If the party has slain Modred, the Stormborn grant them no quarter.**

The whole expanse is crawling with abyssals, and few stormwraiths have yet approached. If the PCs are anywhere on the shoulder or within 100 ft., they risk facing more abyssals than normal. When an encounter here (*see sidebar*) reveals abyssal opponents, double the normal amount of non-brullakha, but treat results of 14–20 as "A brief calm."

## Location 2.2: The Claw

**Read aloud:** *Three massive objects emerge from the crust of the floor like tremendous fingers hundreds of feet thick, with claws the size of Kaballite towers, covered in hundreds of black, interlocking plates. One of the tremendous fingers is missing its claw, perhaps broken off centuries ago. Stormwraiths swarm here, quickly putting down any abyssal that approaches.*

**Development:** If the PCs are anywhere or within 100 ft. of the Claw, they risk facing more Stormborn than normal. When an encounter here reveals Stormborn opponents (*see Table 25–1*), double the normal amount other than Modred, but results of 1–7 turn up "A brief calm."

If the party has not already killed him, Modred is here, directing the battle. Any Stormborn present with him are suspicious of the party, but not immediately hostile, demanding parlay upon sighting the party. If the party accepts, the Stormborn escort the PCs to Modred.

If Blackthorn is alive, then he, too, is here. Though he cannot lie outright to Modred without breaking the Black Sun code, Blackthorn has deliberately misled the Hierophant, who mistakenly believes Blackthorn is still his ally.

**Read aloud:** *Here, between the Dragon's talons, is the Stormwraiths' makeshift basecamp. Your gaunt guide leads you past checkpoints to the heart of the new war effort: a powerfully-built, immensely tall Stormwraith that can only be Modred of Carcius. As his gaze weighs you, a man clad in mail steps from behind him. Duke Blackthorn attacks.*

Blackthorn's only hope is to slay the party before they can persuade Modred of his true intent. His gambit initially works, and Modred and the Stormborn fight alongside him. If, however, the party suggests Blackthorn's duplicity, Blackthorn

**The party has as much as 12 hours and as little as 4 hours to save the world. Around the 3-hour marker, if the party is still outside, they should notice the Storm seeping into the Dragon's wounds. An army of Blackstone Raiders arrives as well, offering to hold the line while the party halts the ritual. If the party still does not act, what comes next is their fault...**

immediately attempts to flee rather than face the angry Storm. To his mind, he is simply fulfilling Signon's prophecy. Blackthorn thoroughly believes that Malrog's ritual is the event that brings about the Black Sun, the final reign of a god-emperor — Emperor Blackthorn I.

**Creatures:** Duke Tiberius Blackthorn, a 20th-level paladin *(see adventure Castle Blackthorn for stats)*; Modred of Carcius *(see adventure Believers for stats)*;

**Duke Tiberius Blackthorn:** hp 170.

**Modred of Carcius:** hp 141.

**Stormborn (various):** hp as rolled (by type).

## Location 2.3: The Eye

**Read aloud:** *This massive shape rises hundreds of feet from the floor of the cavern, like an impossibly large building lying askew. A reptilian head the size of a small mountain looks up at the cavern ceiling, as if half-submerged in a pool of water. The entire surface is covered with rows of huge, interlocked scales. On one side of the huge head yawns an empty eye socket almost a mile across. The other eye socket lies buried under the skull.*

The Dragon's head is crawling with both abyssals and Stormborn. If the PCs are anywhere on the head or within 100 feet, they find both sides fighting (roll 1d6+1 and 1d6+12 to determine who is present).

Inside the eye socket is a tunnel leading down into the Dragon's skull that eventually opens into the Dragon's throat (**Location 2.6**), a trip that takes 4 hours to complete.

If Majeral is alive, he is awaiting the party here. **As they approach the eye, read aloud:** *"As you reach the peak of the rotting carcass' skull, you see a handful of nightclaws surrounding a single figure. A series of chains whip out, encircling and binding the nightclaws, and their new master turns his rotting face toward you..."*

Majeral is, at long last, on the brink of overcoming his curse. He does not waste time bantering with the party, and in truth does not recognize them even if they have previously met. He is too excited, and his memory too long, to remember them.

If Majeral is encountered here, he has 2d4 nightclaws bound to him as his slaves.

**Creatures:** Majeral *(see adventure Ghoul Lord for stats)*; (2d4) nightclaws *(see Monsters and Lairs, page 15)*.

**Majeral:** hp 201.

**Nightclaws (2d4):** hp 10 (all).

### Surviving Medusan Lords

In all likelihood, the party does not face the lot of Blackthorn, Cassica, Cear, Majeral, and Malrog, nor do they face only Malrog. Throughout the Dragon's corpse, the surviving Medusan Lords do their part in the ritual.

Assuming they lived through previous adventures, Blackthorn and Majeral are the only two still outside the Dragon's body when the party arrives in the Great Cavern, at Location 2.2 and 2.3, respectively. If the party enters the Dragon's corpse without slaying them or otherwise forcing them to abandon their part in the rite, both complete their tasks and join the others in Location 2.13 at the adventure's conclusion.

Similarly, if the party did not kill Cassica in a previous adventure, she, too, does her part in raising the Dragon. For his part, Cear's primary duty is to kill as many of the party as he can before fleeing to the ritual chamber.

What the party does not immediately know is how long they have left before Malrog's ritual is complete. The default time is 12 hours after the party's arrival in the chambers, but deduct 2 hours each if either Blackthorn or Majeral or both complete their rites. If Cassica lives, then halve the remaining hours.

## Location 2.4: The Nose

**Read aloud**: *Two symmetrically spaced caverns on the huge nose appear to be nostrils.*

**Development:** These nostrils lead separately down through the Dragon's sinuses, ultimately opening in the Dragon's throat (**Location 2.6**). This journey takes 3 hours.

The Dragon's head is crawling with both abyssals and Stormborn. If the PCs are anywhere on the head or within 100 feet, they find both sides fighting (roll 1d6+1 and 1d6+12 to determine who is present).

**Creatures:** Various Stormborn and abyssals *(see rolls on Table 25–1)*.

**Stormborn (various):** hp as rolled (by type).

**Abyssals (various):** hp as rolled (by type).

## Location 2.5: The Mouth

**Read aloud**: *The gigantic mouth of this ancient beast could swallow cities. It gapes open, still filled with fangs longer and thicker than a full-grown giant's entire body. An army could march between its gaping jaws. The back of the mouth is an enormous cavern leading into unknown depths.*

**Development:** This is the most direct passage to the Dragon's innards. If the party enters this way, they take 2 hours to reach the Dragon's throat (**Location 2.6**).

The Dragon's head is crawling with both abyssals and Stormborn. If the PCs are anywhere on the head or within 100 feet, they find both sides fighting (roll 1d6+1 and 1d6+12 to determine who is present).

### Inside the Dragon

When the PCs enter the Dragon's body, they are stepping inside an impossibly large creature, an impossibly bizarre environment. All the Dragon legends of the Accordlands say that the Dragon is dead, but the legends are misleading. It could not be slain by a simple wound, especially a wound it permitted. Its soul, the Storm, left the body to ravage the Accordlands, but a tiny spark of life still remains in the Dragon's ancient flesh.

The PCs may be expecting to enter a rotting corpse. The Dragon's corpse is decaying, but incredibly slowly. It is rather in stasis, like a neglected house that can yet be aired when the occupant returns.

If the PCs attempt to harm the Dragon internally, hacking at its throat or lungs, they can cut its flesh. It does not bleed, and regenerates slowly. Any wound caused inside the Dragon before the ritual is finished heals completely within 2d10 minutes. Even the walls of the Dragon's blood vessels and throat are 5 feet thick.

Malrog (and, if they are alive, Cear, and Cassica) has performed his (or their) part of the ritual here already, and entered the Dragon's corpse.

**Creatures:** Various Stormborn and abyssals *(see rolls on Table 25–1)*.

**Stormborn (various):** hp as rolled (by type).

**Azbyssals (various):** hp as rolled (by type).

## Location 2.6: The Throat

**Read aloud:** *As you walk into the immense tunnel, you feel the floor underneath your feet give slightly, as if you were walking on mummified leather. The Dragon's throat slopes sharply down, deep into the corpse.*

The ancient flesh of the Dragon's throat forms sloped terraces, making movement relatively easy in spite of the steep descent.

**After the PCs have moved down into the tunnel, read aloud:** *Suddenly you hear an explosion echoing down the tunnel. You can see the circular opening behind you flickering with blue-white flashes, like lightning. Another rumbling explosion follows the first. The tunnel begins to heave, as if from a sudden earthquake. You hear sharp, thundering concussions from above, as if huge rocks are falling. The faint shriek of an abyssal reaches down the tunnel, followed by a chorus of similar shrieks, as if an army of abyssals had suddenly thrown themselves into battle. Perhaps it is merely the howling wind. The push of air from below suddenly gusts, like an expelled breath, then subsides.*

Malrog's ritual nears completion, and he now draws the Storm back into the Dragon's body.

**Read aloud:** *The tunnel shudders again, but this vibration comes from within. The tunnel floor just moved, shifting of its own volition. Another shudder rises up, like the slow, methodical movement of the earth. The air current suddenly changes direction, sucking down into the depths before diminishing.*

## Location 2.6: The Lung

**Read aloud:** *This far down into the throat, the battle raging in the distant cavern is muffled by distance, and the huge entrance, which had already diminished in size to a mere pinprick, is lost behind a bend in the tunnel.*

**Development:** This chamber is one of the Dragon's partially-collapsed lungs. The two passages leading to the other lung are collapsed and impassable. The two passages leading into the lung enter at different levels. One passage opens into the ceiling, 1000 feet above the floor. The other opens halfway up the wall, leading to the blood vessel (**Location 2.7**) and then the heart (**Location 2.8**).

**After the PCs enter the lung, read aloud:** *The floor is soft and spongy, like soaked and ruined leather. Hundreds of gaping holes pocket the walls and floor of this chamber.*

**Development:** The holes, the blood vessels that carry the blood from the lungs to the heart, are 20 feet in diameter. Most of them lead to the huge vein (**Location 2.7**) that in turn leads to the Dragon's heart, but many are collapsed and impassable after a few dozen yards. The sponginess of the floor and walls reduces movement and falling damage by half.

If the PCs spend more than a few minutes inside the lung, a Spot check (DC 15) reveals that the chamber has changed size, contracting by 10% in every direction. The change happens so slowly that it goes unnoticed. After another 2d6 minutes, the lung expands again.

## Location 2.7: The Blood Vessel

**Read aloud:** *Another cavernous tunnel, much like the Dragon's throat, slopes farther down into the Dragon's depths. The walls of this place are a deep maroon. The tunnel is squashed down to a height of 20 feet, and a width of 100 feet. The floor and walls of the passage are soft, but less spongy than the previous chamber.*

**Development:** This tunnel is the major vein leading toward the heart.

If Cear Adinerach is still alive, he is lying in ambush here, and attacks the party just after the blood vessel shifts. After his initial surprise attack, he taunts them. **Read aloud:** *"Amazing. Had I known you'd cause us this much trouble, I'd have gutted you lot the moment I laid eyes on you at Ghostwood. Did you know that you're the first real challenge we've faced? Be proud — we've wasted more effort on you than we did on the Assassins' Strike. You can tell your weak-willed gods that you died against their betters. Of course, soon enough, I'll be able to do that for you." With that, Cear plunges one of his Black Knives into the ground at his feet.*

Another tremor rumbles through the tunnel, this one so violent the floor heaves.

The PCs must make a Reflex save (DC 20) or be thrown off their feet and tumble down the passage for 10d10 feet. Cear uses his *Black Knives* and fights until the party is seriously hurt (at least half their members dead or down) before attempting to flee to the ritual chamber (**Location 2.13**).

**Creature:** Cear Adinerach, a 15th-level assassin/5th-level Tansiq flesher *(see adventure The Ghostwood Treaty for stats).*

**Caer Adinerach:** hp 193.

### The Dragon's Heart

**The Great Dragon's atrophied heart is 250 feet long, 200 feet wide, and 180 feet tall. Each chamber of the heart is roughly 100 feet wide and tall, and could accommodate a ten-story building.**

**Huge valves divide the heart chambers: walls of leathery muscle 5 to 15 feet thick, now hanging slack and open. Each valve has damage reduction 10/magic, 500 hp, and egenerates 2d10 hp per round. If a valve ced to 0 hp, it is destroyed and ceases to regenerate.**

## Location 2.8: The Heart

**Read aloud:** *The tremors have become a constant, rhythmic rumble, so deep and strong that you feel them in your bones, rather than hearing them with your ears. Then you hear another noise, a succession of staccato crashes, like thunderclaps, growing ever louder. Suddenly the walls ripple, as if struck a sudden blow.*

This blood vessel empties into the first chamber of the Dragon's massive heart. The crashes are the energies of the Storm making its way through the Dragon's flesh, exploring, testing, considering, remembering.

## Location 2.9: The Collapsed Veins

These are more major veins connected to the heart. They lead nowhere, being completely collapsed.

## Location 2.10: Heart Chamber

**Read aloud:** *This massive chamber is empty save for the pool of thick, tarry liquid in the center of the floor. The constant trembling hardly disturbs the black fluid. A dry path about 10 feet wide leads around this pool.*

**Development:** This pool, 20 feet deep in the center, is the remnants of the Dragon's blood, reduced to a thick, black liquid, much like pitch. The magical properties of the Dragon's blood are practically limitless, and it can be used as a substitute for any arcane spell component, regardless of gold or experience cost. It is an extremely dangerous contact poison. Any living creature who touches the blood must make a Fortitude save (DC 25), or suffer the loss of 1d6 initial Constitution, Dexterity, and Strength, and secondary damage of a loss of 3d6 Constitution, Dexterity, and Strength. For creatures immersed in the substance, the Fortitude save is DC 35.

Any living creature killed by touching the Dragon's blood is resurrected in 1d4 rounds and permanently transformed into a zhul.

## Location 2.11: Heart Chamber

This chamber is functionally identical to **Location 2.10**. A Listen check (DC 18) reveals loud chanting coming from **Location 2.13**.

## Location 2.12: The Wound

**Read aloud:** *This chamber looks much like the others, except that a horrific gash about ten feet across and thirty feet long has cut through the floor. The huge fleshy wall leading into the next chamber is bathed from the other side by flickering yellow and blue light. The air roars with continuous thunder.*

**Development:** The wound is 20 feet long and about 3 feet wide in the center, a neat slice in the flesh of the Dragon's heart. The wall of the heart is 5 feet thick. The sounds of things moving in the darkness beyond the wound send chills through anyone who makes a Listen check (DC 18). All that is visible in the echoing vastness are flashes of blue-white light, like bursts of electricity, that illuminate slithering things too unspeakable to comprehend. Any creature that falls into the depths of the Dragon's internal cavity is permanently dead, without saving throw, and beyond the hope of raising. The Dragon has absorbed them, body and soul.

Another Listen check (DC 8) reveals the sounds of loud chanting coming from **Location 2.13**.

## Location 2.13: The Ritual Chamber

**Read aloud:** *The chamber is filled with the flickering yellow light of continual flames floating in the air like will o' wisps, punctuated by flashes of blue-white in the roiling black clouds of the Storm that mask the chamber ceiling. In the center of the circle of continual flames hangs a crystalline orb, dripping blood into an enormous bowl below it. The bowl is six feet across, and every square inch of it is covered with magical glyphs that glow as the blood trickles down. The roar of the Storm is almost deafening, but the large figure near the bowl is chanting so loudly that his voice penetrates the din.*

**Creatures:** Any surviving Medusan Lords (possibly Majeral, Caer, Blackthorn, Cassica — *see stats listed in earlier adventures);* Malrog the Destroyer, a 20th level fighter.

**Malrog the Destroyer, Medusan Lord, Male Nothrog Ftr 20:** CR 23; Large humanoid (Nothrog); HD 20d10+140; hp 250; Init +6; Spd 30 ft; AC 40, touch 11, flat-footed 38; Base Atk +20; Grp +34; Atk +36 melee (2d10+25 plus 2d6 vs. good(17–20/x4), *Malrog's Axe*); Full Atk +36/+31/+26/+21 melee (2d10+25 plus 2d6 vs. good(17–20/x3), *Malrog's Axe*); SA Favored weapon (huge greataxe, huge greatsword, huge crossbow, huge longspear, huge longsword), improved damage (huge greataxe, huge greatsword, huge crossbow, huge longspear), improved critical threat (huge greataxe, huge greatsword, huge crossbow), improved critical multiplier (huge greataxe, huge greatsword), improved critical roll, bile spit, frightful presence; SQ Nothrog traits, damage reduction 20/magic, spell resistance 33 (*Deathbile's Hide*), race/class abilities; AL LE; SV Fort +22, Ref +16, Will +19; Str 30, Dex 15, Con 24, Int 14, Wis 15, Cha 19.

*Skills and Feats:* Bluff +10, Climb +15, Diplomacy +10, Intimidation +13, Jump +15, Listen +7, Ride +10, Sense Motive +7, Spot +4, Swim +14; Weapon Focus (greataxe), Weapon Specialization (greataxe), Greater Weapon Focus (greataxe), Greater Weapon Specialization (greataxe), Improved Critical (greataxe), Power Attack, Cleave, Great Cleave, Combat Reflexes, Overpowering Force, Leadership, Blind-Fight, Improved Initiative.

*Race/Class Abilities: Fighter:* Aptitude, Rage (1/day), Magical Immunity.

*Rage (1/day)*: While Malrog rages, his statistics change as follows: HD 20d10+180; hp 290; AC 38, touch 9, flat-footed 36; Grp +36; Atk +38 melee (2d10+27 plus 2d6 vs. good(17–20/x4), *Malrog's Axe*); Full Atk +38/+33/+28/+23 melee (2d10+27 plus 2d6 vs. good(17–20/x3), *Malrog's Axe*); SV Fort +17, Will +21; Str 34, Con 28. His fit of rage lasts for 13 rounds. At the end of the rage Malrog is fatigued (–2 to Strength, –2 to Dexterity, can't charge or run).

*Favored Weapon (huge greataxe, huge greatsword, huge crossbow, huge longspear, huge longsword):* Malrog gains a +1 competence bonus to attack and damage rolls with the huge greataxe, huge greatsword, huge crossbow, huge longspear, and huge longsword.

*Improved Damage (huge greataxe, huge greatsword, huge crossbow, huge longspear)*: Malrog does an additional +2 (+3 total) damage with the huge greataxe, huge greatsword, huge crossbow, and huge longspear.

*Improved Critical Threat (huge greataxe, huge greatsword, huge crossbow)*: Malrog's critical threat range is increased by +2 (to 18–20) with the huge greataxe, (17–20) with the huge greatsword, and (17–20) with the huge crossbow.

*Improved Critical Multiplier (huge greataxe, huge greatsword)*: Malrog's critical multiplier is increased by 1 (to x4) when wielding his huge greataxe and by 1 (to x3) when wielding a huge greatsword.

*Improved Critical Roll*: When Malrog scores a critical threat, he adds +10 to his subsequent critical roll. If Malrog rolls a natural 20 on an attack roll, the attack is automatically a critical hit.

*Bile Spit (Ex)*: 40 ft. line, 10d4 acid damage, Ref save (DC 23) for half damage, Ref save (DC 18) or be permanently blinded.

*Frightful Presence (Ex)*: Malrog can unsettle foes with his mere presence. The ability takes effect automatically whenever Malrog attacks or charges. Creatures within a radius of 30 feet are subject to the effect if they have fewer HD than Malrog. A potentially affected creature that succeeds on a Will save (DC 23) remains immune to that Malrog's frightful presence for 24 hours. On a failure, creatures with 4 or less HD become panicked for 4d6 rounds and those with 5–19 HD become shaken for 4d6 rounds. Malrog ignores the frightful presence of dragons.

*Immunities*: Malrog is immune to *sleep* and paralysis effects, as well as to acid.

*Spell-Like Abilities (Ex)*: 3/day — *darkness* 100 ft. radius, *insect plague;* 1/day — *plant growth.*

*Possessions*: *Malrog's Axe, Deathbile's Hide, The Blade of Syneri, Living Gauntlet, Protean Gem.*

**Development:** The sphere above the bowl is a Dragon Orb. Which Orb it is depends on the results of the preceding adventures (see sidebar *The Dragon Orbs*). All Medusan Lords that yet live are present in the chamber. Malrog chants the final incantations of the ritual (as does Cassica, if she is alive). He can perform the ritual alone, though the party's interference risks that.

If the party has made it this far, the surviving Medusan Lords attack — although Malrog fights only if Cassica is alive, or if he is the last Medusan Lord standing. Otherwise, he continues the ritual. So long as either Cassica or Malrog maintains the chanting, the ritual's countdown continues. If the party forces either or both to defend themselves, the Medusan Lords temporarily suspend the rite, picking up where they left off if the party dies.

## Part 3: Concluding the Adventure

The fate of the world rests upon the edge of a knife, and depends on the actions of the PCs at this crucial hour. The ritual fails if Malrog dies, or if the Dragon's body completely fills with blood (a safety mechanism set by the Medusan Lords; though they risk much in their attempt to become gods, they do not risk more than necessary).

**If the Dragon resurrection ritual fails, read aloud:** *The roar of the Storm swallows the last horrid syllables of the thunderous chant. A tremendous explosion tears through the chamber, quickly receding back into the orb. The Storm recedes through the ceiling of the ritual chamber, and the Dragon's corpse remains motionless, as it has for an age.*

**Development:** The orb absorbs the Storm's wrath (as the Medusan Lords planned), the Storm returns to its place in the heavens, and the Dragon's corpse remains in its grave. Evil remains in every corner of the world, but a cataclysmic threat to the Accordlands has been averted. Any surviving Medusan Lords flee immediately. While they may seek vengeance upon the party, that can wait. A contingent of the Blackstone Raiders is waiting for the party outside, to escort them to safety.

**If the Dragon resurrection ritual succeeds, read aloud:** *The roar of the Storm swallows the last horrid syllables of the thunderous chant. In an instant, the swirling tumult in the upper reaches of the chamber vanishes into the walls like rainwater sucked into thirsty earth. The pervasive roar of the Storm ceases in a single, exquisite instant. The utter silence is deafening. The unholy screams of the stormwraiths outside echo through the caverns, their very existence thrown into confusion. Suddenly the Dragon's heart convulses, throwing everyone into the air.*

**Development:** The heart has begun to beat, but the pulse is irregular and tentative. Every 2d6 rounds the heart beats, throwing everyone inside it 10 feet into the air. This causes no damage, but each character must make a Reflex save (DC 30) to land on his feet.

Malrog is unconcerned. He takes up the *Blade of Syneri (see Part 4)* and prepares to administer another deathblow to the Great Dragon. The Dragon has been in a deathlike sleep for a thousand years, and does not instantly spring awake.

The Storm, which had gathered in the cavern above and the earth of the entire area, pours itself back into the immense husk of the Dragon. Fresh blood begins to trickle, then flow, then gush through long-shriveled blood vessels. The muscles fill out and begin to twitch and flex. The heart begins to beat more regularly, until it is filled with blood. The Dragon's circulatory system completely fills with blood within 10d6 minutes. The blood causes 2d6 damage each round it contacts exposed skin.

This process of regeneration gives the Medusan Lords plenty of time to enact the final phase of their master plan: to kill the momentarily helpless Dragon and steal its life-force. Malrog begins another chant, and cuts into the heart with the *Blade of Syneri,* slashing huge wounds into the chamber floor, walls, and valves. Any other Medusan Lords present also attack the interior of the ritual chamber.

After the Medusan Lords do 120 points of damage to the interior of the heart chamber, the Dragon begins to die again, and the Storm separates itself from the Dragon's body. By the power of the Dragon Orb above the copper bowl, the magic ritual draws upon the Dragon's power, unleashing it on each of the surviving Medusan Lords present. They ascend to the heavens as a new pantheon of gods. Though opposed by the extant gods, the Medusan Lords' ascension nonetheless is likely to have dire consequences.

The PCs may yet interrupt this final phase of the Medusan Lords' plan if they can defeat the Medusan Lords before Malrog slays the reborn Dragon. The Dragon has been dead for too long to recover, and if it is not slain by the *Blade of Syneri,* it "dies" once again in 1d4 hours after its circulatory system has completely refilled with blood.

If the PCs use the *Blade* to slay the Dragon, they do not reap the benefits that the Medusan Lords expected, for the PCs do not know the proper rituals for channeling the Dragon's spirit (unless they made some truly heroic leaps of logic, and spent many hours deciphering the notes in the various Lords' lairs). Instead, the Storm once more bursts forth from the Dragon's corpse, and the body once more becomes lifeless.

## Part 4: New Magic Items

THE BLADE OF SYNERI

*Major Artifact*

According to legend, the Archmage Syneri himself crafted this weapon from a piece of Bascaron's shadow in an effort to slay his rival, the lich Dythanus. In truth, Syneri's ambitions were far, far higher. Over the course of his studies, he theorized that slaying a dragon in a certain rite would produce effects vaguely similar to those Athanae enjoyed upon slaying the Dragon. Though successful and immortal, Syneri's expanding abilities also led him to the realization that the Dragon Itself was not truly dead, and would eventually return. He struck a bargain with Ablung the Mad in a bid to prevent this, trading the secrets of his immortality for a weapon capable of slaying the Dragon. Though briefly separated from his blade in the aftermath of the Geas, Syneri and the Ten quickly recovered it, placing it in the care of an allied dragon. Cear delivered this information to his comrades in the Medusan Lords, and the Ten never suspected his duplicity.

This is literally a perfect blade, a +7 guisarme with the following enchantments: *bane (dragons), disruption, ghost touch, keen, mighty cleaving, speed, spell storing, vicious, vorpal,* and *wounding.* It also bestows a +2 AC deflection bonus and proficiency to its wielder, and is not detectable as magic nor by *scrying,* nor is it subject to effects that normally suppress magical enchantments.

*Caster Level:* 20th, *Weight:* 12 lbs.

DEATHBILE'S HIDE

*Major Artifact*

After Malrog the Destroyer slew the ancient black dragon Deathbile, he cut large portions of its impenetrable hide to use as armor. The armor still looks like glossy black plates of dragon's hide. Only a creature of Large size can wear it. Since the dragon hide is inherently magical, it allows the wearer to cast spells, and at the same time offers a dragon's natural defenses.

*Deathbile's Hide* grants a +15 armor bonus to AC, causing no loss of movement, no additional chance of arcane spell failure, and imposing no maximum Dex bonus. Furthermore, it grants the wearer Spell Resistance of 33, a +2 enhancement bonus to Charisma, and immunity to *sleep, paralysis,* and acid.

*Caster Level:* 20th; *Weight:* 150 lb.

LIVING GAUNTLET

*Major Artifact*

This is a spiked metal gauntlet made for the right arm of a Large humanoid, monstrous humanoid, or giant creature. Cassica Moonseed created it for Malrog the Destroyer to replace his severed right hand. Such was Cassica's power and Malrog's strength that the *Gauntlet* became stronger than either of them had planned. It bound itself so completely to Malrog's living arm that it functioned as smoothly as his original hand.

In order to function, the *Gauntlet* must be placed on the end of a right arm that has been severed just below the elbow. Iron tendrils snake out from the gauntlet and burrow into the bearer's flesh, merging with muscle, bone, and sinew to become one with the bearer. Removal of the *Gauntlet* thereafter kills the host.

The *Gauntlet* is made for a Large creature.

The *Gauntlet* grants the host +2 Strength and a +4 deflection bonus to AC, but he suffers –1 Dexterity. The *Gauntlet* also grants the host the following abilities:

- 3/day each, the bearer can cast *shocking grasp, prismatic spray,* and *burning hands.*
- 1/day, the bearer can cast *finger of death.*

All powers are at Caster Level 20th, and all DCs to resist their effects are 20.

*Caster Level:* 20th; *Weight:* 30 lb.

MALROG'S AXE

*Malrog's Axe* is a huge double-bitted greataxe made specifically for Malrog the Destroyer. The steel gleams with a dark luster, and vague, shifting shapes are visible in its perfectly smooth surface. Some think these shapes resemble a dragon, while others see tortured victims. The steel haft of the axe is 6 ft. long, wrapped in strips of hide taken from the dragon Deathbile.

*Malrog's Axe* is a huge *unholy vorpal greataxe +3.* It causes 2d10+3 slashing damage, plus 2d6 unholy (evil) damage vs. good creatures. *Malrog's Axe* decapitates its target with a successful critical hit.

*Caster Level:* 20th; *Prerequisites:* Craft Magic Arms and Armor, *keen edge, death spell, unholy blight,* creator must be evil; *Market Price:* 200,340 g; *Weight:* 80 lb.

## Three Orbs

**If the Medusan Lords still have the Orb of La Hashan (whether Al'drich survived the previous adventure, or the Medusan Lords simply recovered it), they use that orb as a focus for the ritual. Otherwise, they use the Orb of Bascaron, due to the familiarity that both Cassica and Malrog have with Bascaron. If both these orbs are unavailable, then the Medusan Lords use Gods' Eye. If that, too, is missing, the Medusan Lords use a crude forgery instead (GMs may need to remind their players that their characters would not be able to automatically spot the forgery). This forgery has the general powers common to all three orbs, but none specific to itself.**

PROTEAN GEM

*Artifact*

The *Protean Gem* is a large, smooth ruby in the size and shape of an eyeball. In order for it to function, it must be placed in a character's empty eye socket. The bearer of the gem loses 2 Charisma that can never be restored. As soon as it is placed in the empty eye socket, it bonds itself permanently to the bearer, and cannot be removed without killing the host. The *Gem* glints with a red light whenever its abilities are not in use.

The Protean Gem grants the host of a variety of abilities.

- 3/day, the character can cast true seeing as a 20th level wizard. The gem glows white when this ability is used.
- 2/day each, the character can cast chain lightning, disintegrate, and 7from his eye. The gem changes color to blue, green, and yellow, respectively, when these abilities are used.

All powers are at Caster Level 20th, and all DCs to resist their effects are 20.

*Caster Level:* 20th; *Weight:* —.

# Part 5: The Medusan Lord Pantheon

If the Medusan Lords win, they transcend flesh and become gods, as outlined below.

## Blackthorn

In the aftermath of his ascension, Blackthorn realizes that he is not, as he supposed, the prophesied harbinger of the Black Sun, and that this belief actually led him further from the Storm. Unfortunately for the Deverenians, he is still mistakenly canonized. His cult drives a wedge in the Paladins of the Black Sun, leading many paladins to serve the Storm as they see fit, free of Church influence. Blackthorn's domains are Evil, Law, and Strength, and his favored weapon is the bastard sword. His symbol is a single bolt of lightning breaking earth.

## Cassica Moonseed

Cassica, the Moonseed, is a revelation for the Bascarites. While they squabbled amongst each other for secular power, she defied all precedent and became a goddess herself. Her worship becomes part and parcel of the Bascarite cult, and a newfound idealism unifies the disparate cells. Soon after, the cult easily breaks the remnants of Yscarite heretics, and Mourn emerges as a political and military power in its own right. Cassica's clergy preach that, while power belongs only to those who deserve it, some power is greater when shared. Her domains are Chaos, Magic, and Trickery, and her holy symbol is a flawless red sphere, symbolizing that Bascaron is Bascaron, no matter the viewpoint. Her favored weapon is the whip.

## Cear Adinerach

Cear is perhaps the only Medusan Lord who does not readily find followers after his apotheosis, but that is because he had already garnered them. In the wake of Cear's actions, House Tansiq returns, spreading the word that those who fear and serve in the Dragon-Killer's name live on in the shadows between the stars. Though few believe House Tansiq's claims, enough join the fold that House Tansiq allies with House Netheryn to unseat High Queen Tepheroth, breaking Calix' reign forever. Cear's domains are Death, Evil, and Trickery, and his favored weapon is also his holy symbol — the black knives he and his followers wielded during the Assassins' Strike.

## Majeral, Lord of Undeath

The eldest of the Medusan Lords finds his newfound power intoxicating, and while it does not truly solve his curse, he now has new methods to contain it. Intelligent undead flock to Majeral's secret shrines, and victims sacrificed to his hunger return as undead in their own right. Even the Elven undead find Majeral tempting, and enough of House Dythanus join Majeral's cults that House Calix can no longer count Dythanus as an ally. Majeral's domains are Death, Earth, and Water, and his favored weapon is the spiked chain. His symbol is a skull wrapped in chains.

## Malrog Iron-Face

The head of the new pantheon, Malrog Iron-Face becomes the new focal point for Nothrog religion. He regularly returns to the Accordlands to slaughter totem avatars, and his clergy quickly unify the Nothrog legions in his service. They constantly claim that they have no desire to conquer the other lands, but in such trying times, the Nothrog' neighbors find themselves desperate for protection from the other Medusan Lords' cults. Malrog is the Destroyer, and his domains are Death, Destruction, Strength, and War. His favored weapon is the greataxe, and his holy symbol is a steel half-mask.

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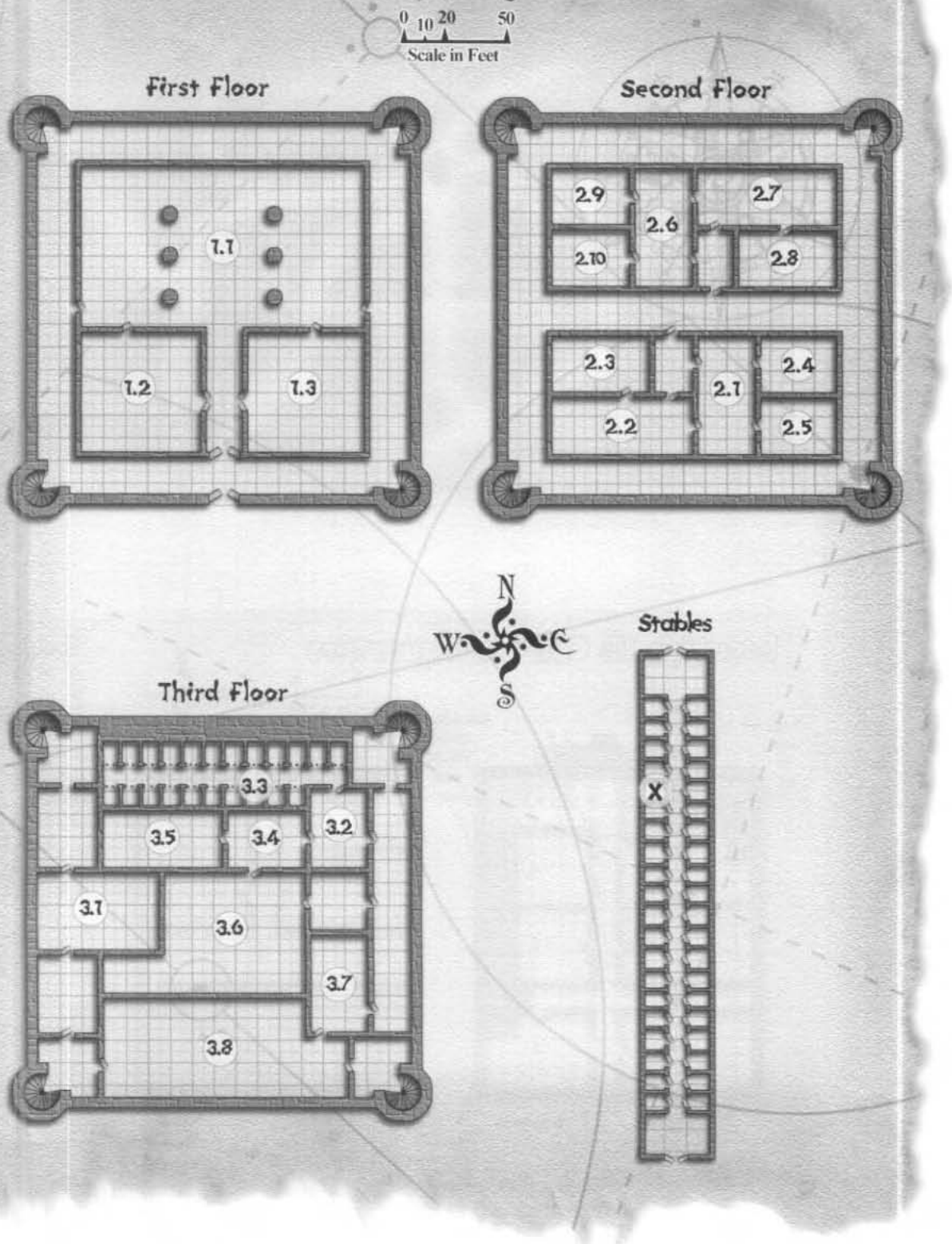
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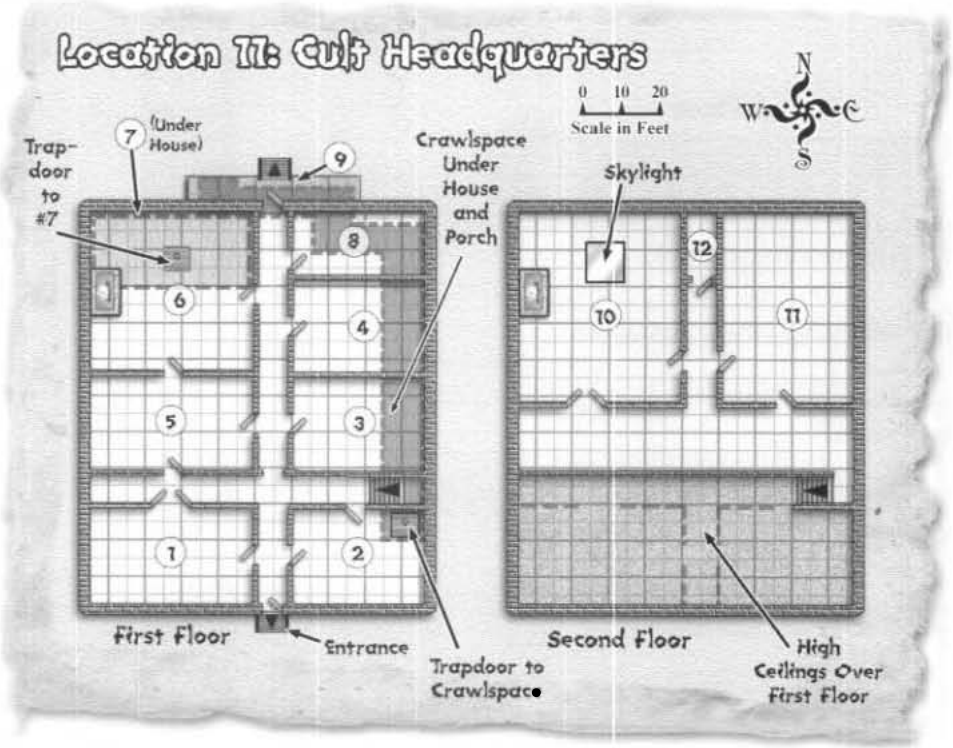
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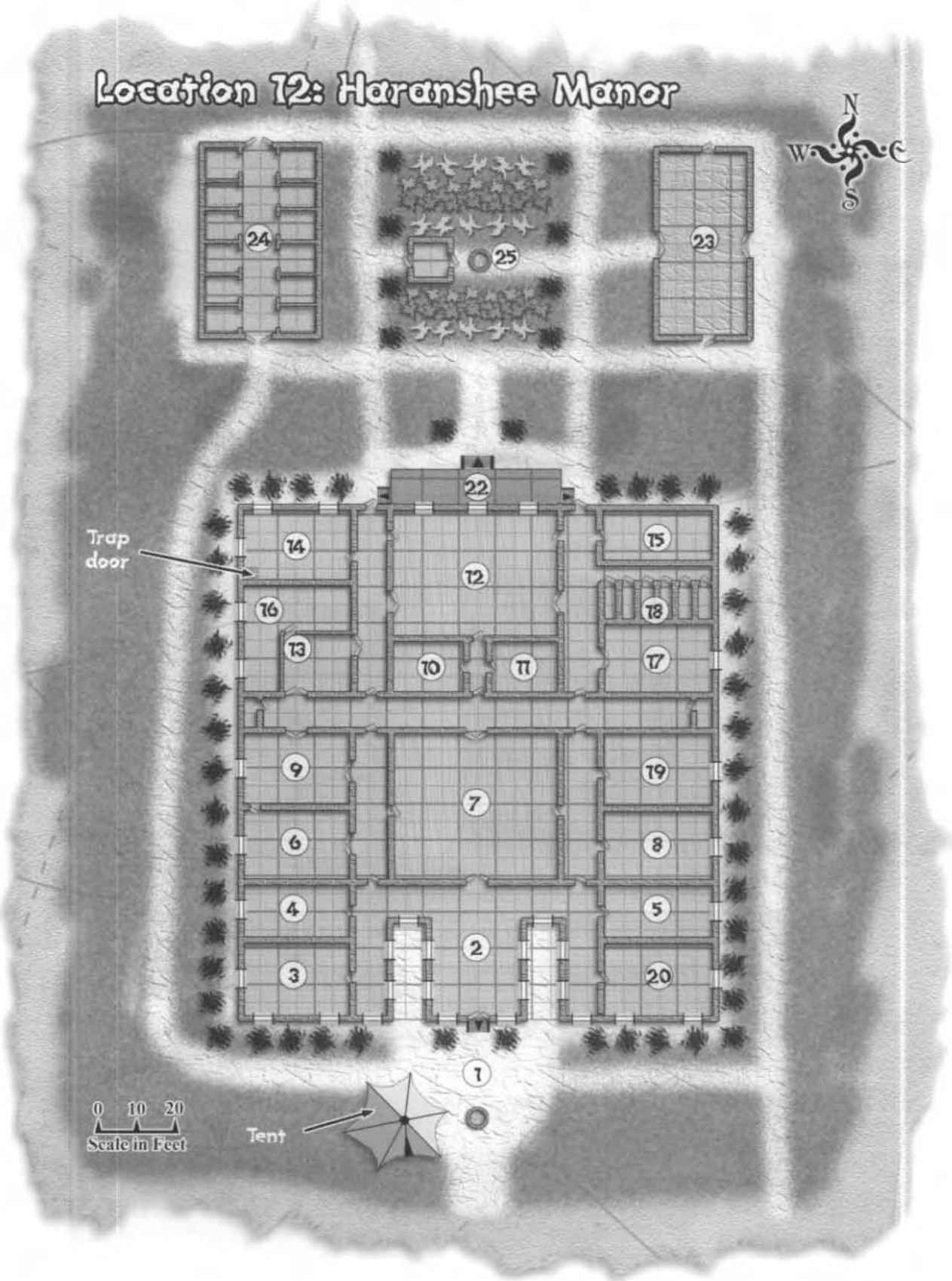
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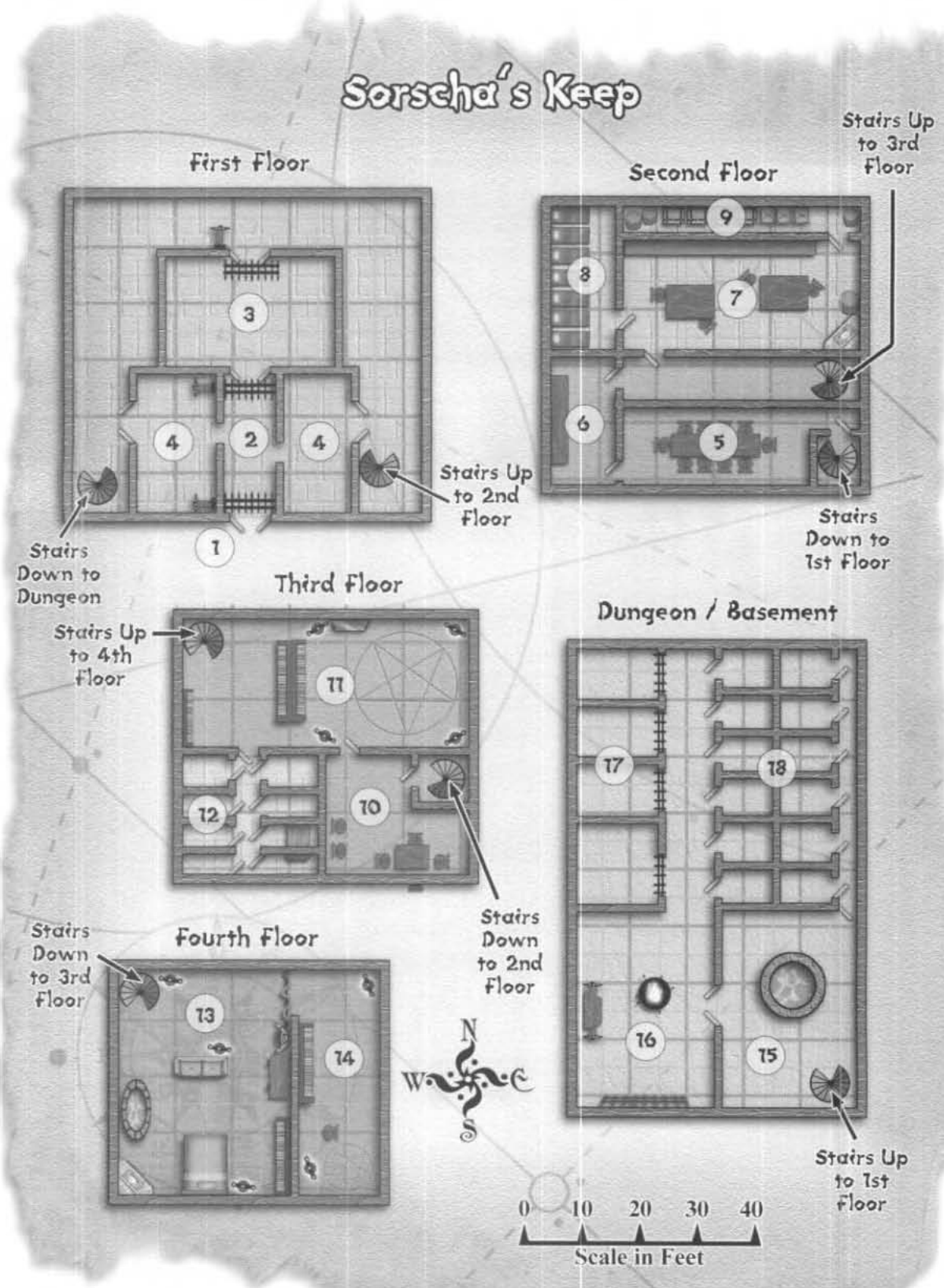
# Location 4: Central Keep

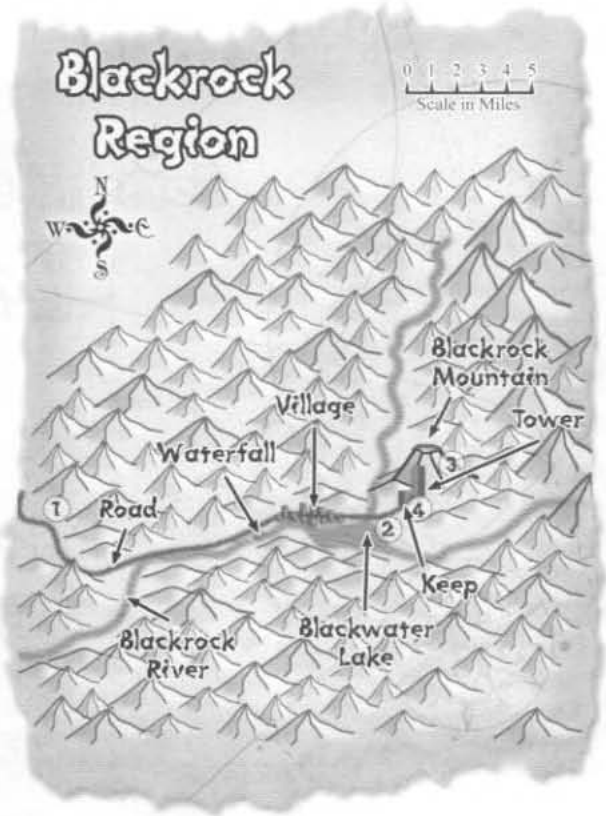


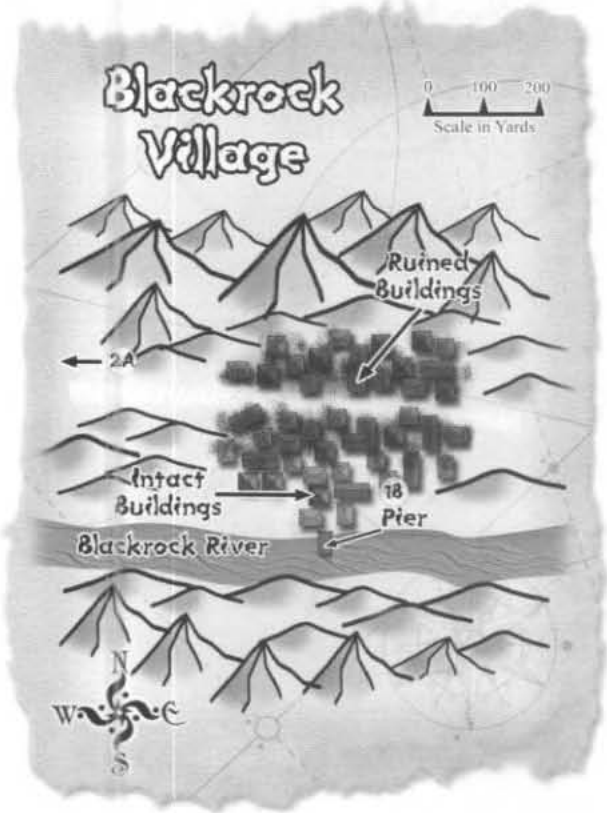

Harranshee
Temple
River-side
Captain's Tower
Harranshee Manor
River
Southgate
Oldtown
Five Points Market
Baron's Park
Docks
Rickard's Smithy
Ostrander's Inn
Forbe's Emporium
N
W
E
S


Location 11: Cult Headquarters
0 10 20
Scale in Feet
N
W
E
S
Trap-door to #7
7 (Under House)
9
Crawlspace Under House and Porch
Skylight
8
12
6
10
11
4
5
3
1
2
First Floor
Entrance
Trapdoor to Crawlspace
Second Floor
High Ceilings Over First Floor

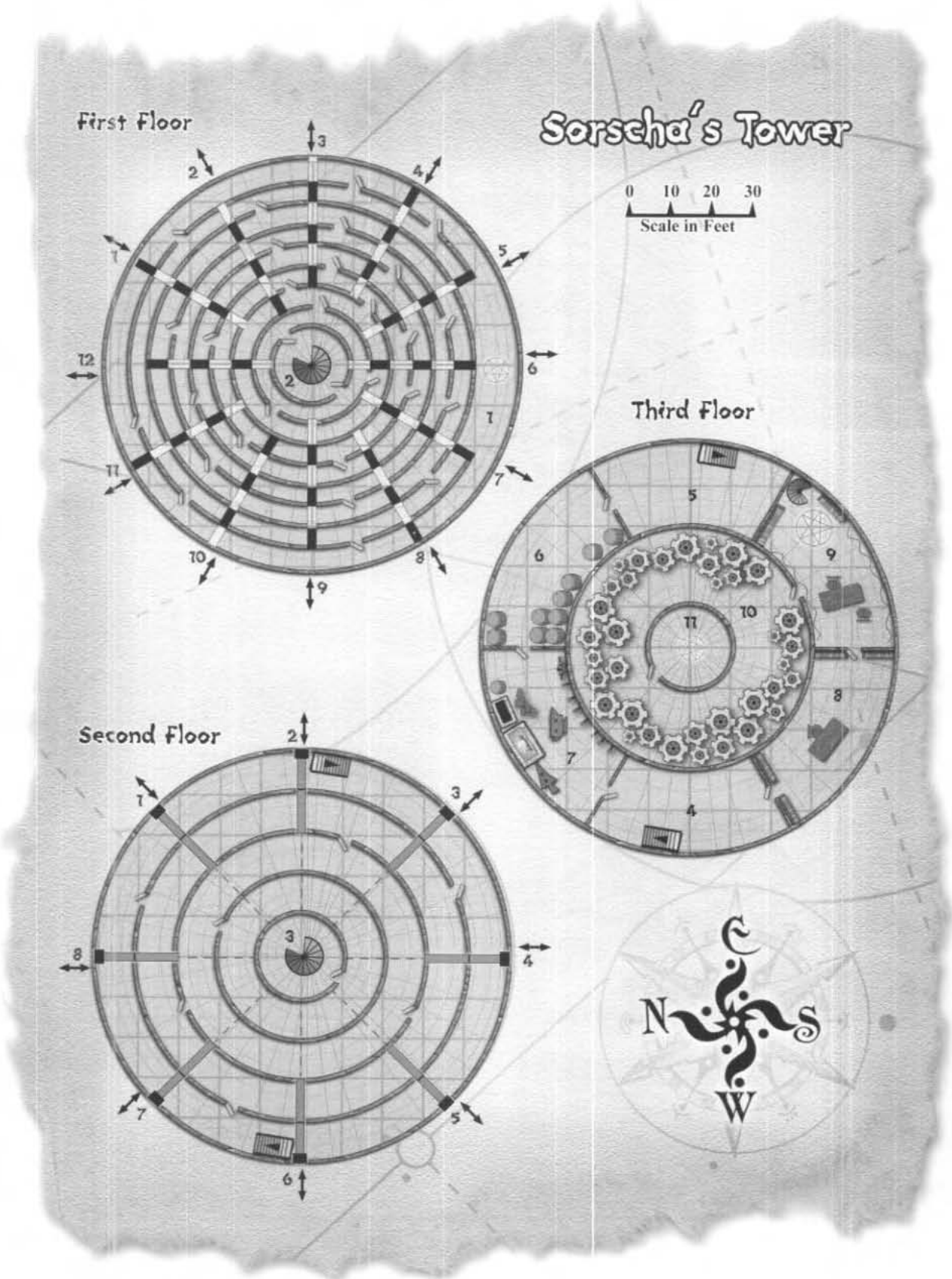

Location 12: Haranshee Manor
N
W
E
S
24
25
23
22
Trap door
14
15
12
16
18
13
10
11
17
9
19
7
6
8
4
5
2
3
20
1
0 10 20
Scale in Feet
Tent

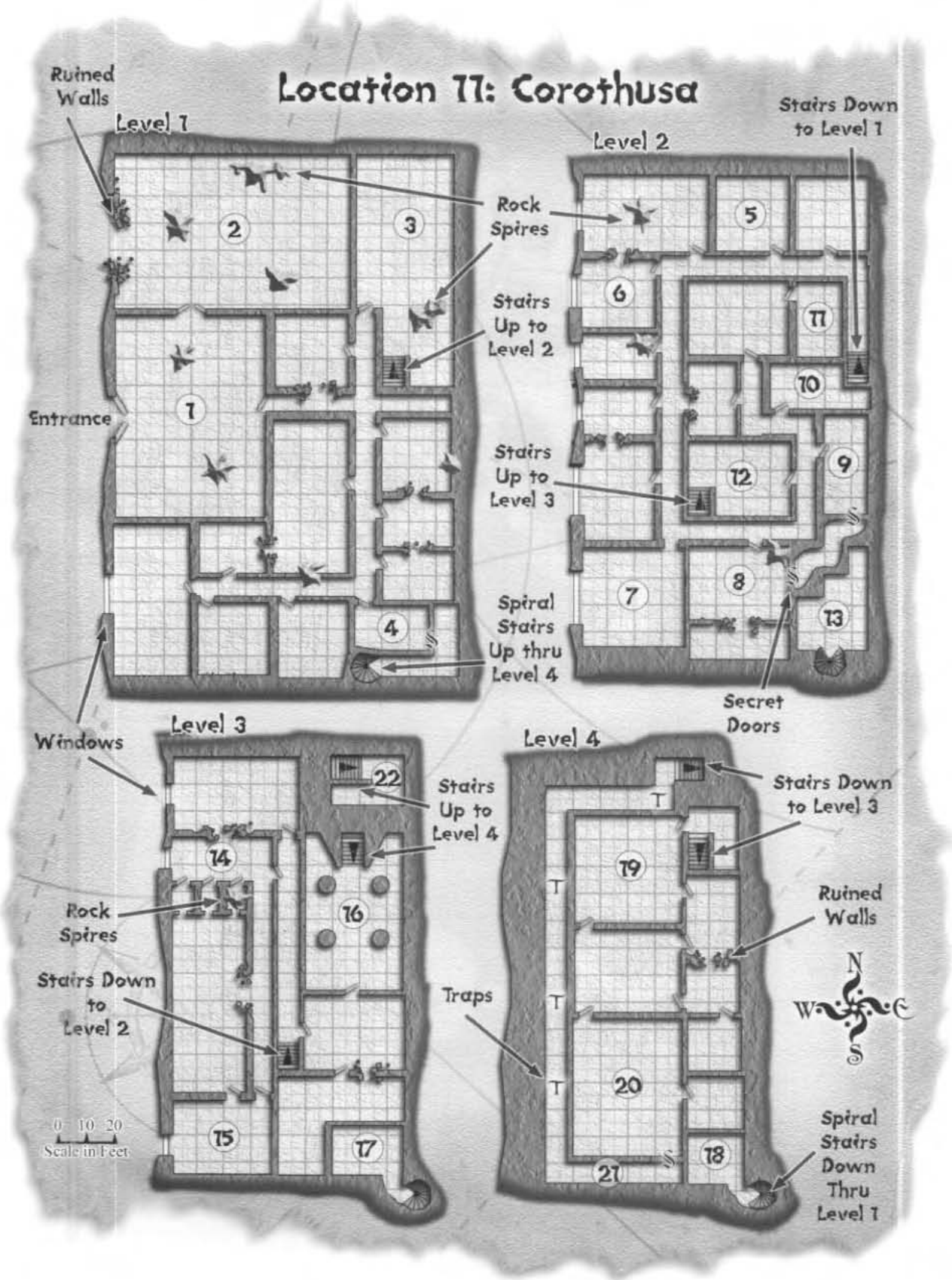

Sorscha's Keep
First Floor
Second Floor
Stairs Up to 3rd Floor
Stairs Up to 2nd Floor
Stairs Down to Dungeon
Stairs Down to 1st Floor
Third Floor
Dungeon / Basement
Stairs Up to 4th Floor
Stairs Down to 2nd Floor
Fourth Floor
Stairs Down to 3rd Floor
Stairs Up to 1st Floor
N
W
E
S
0 10 20 30 40
Scale in Feet

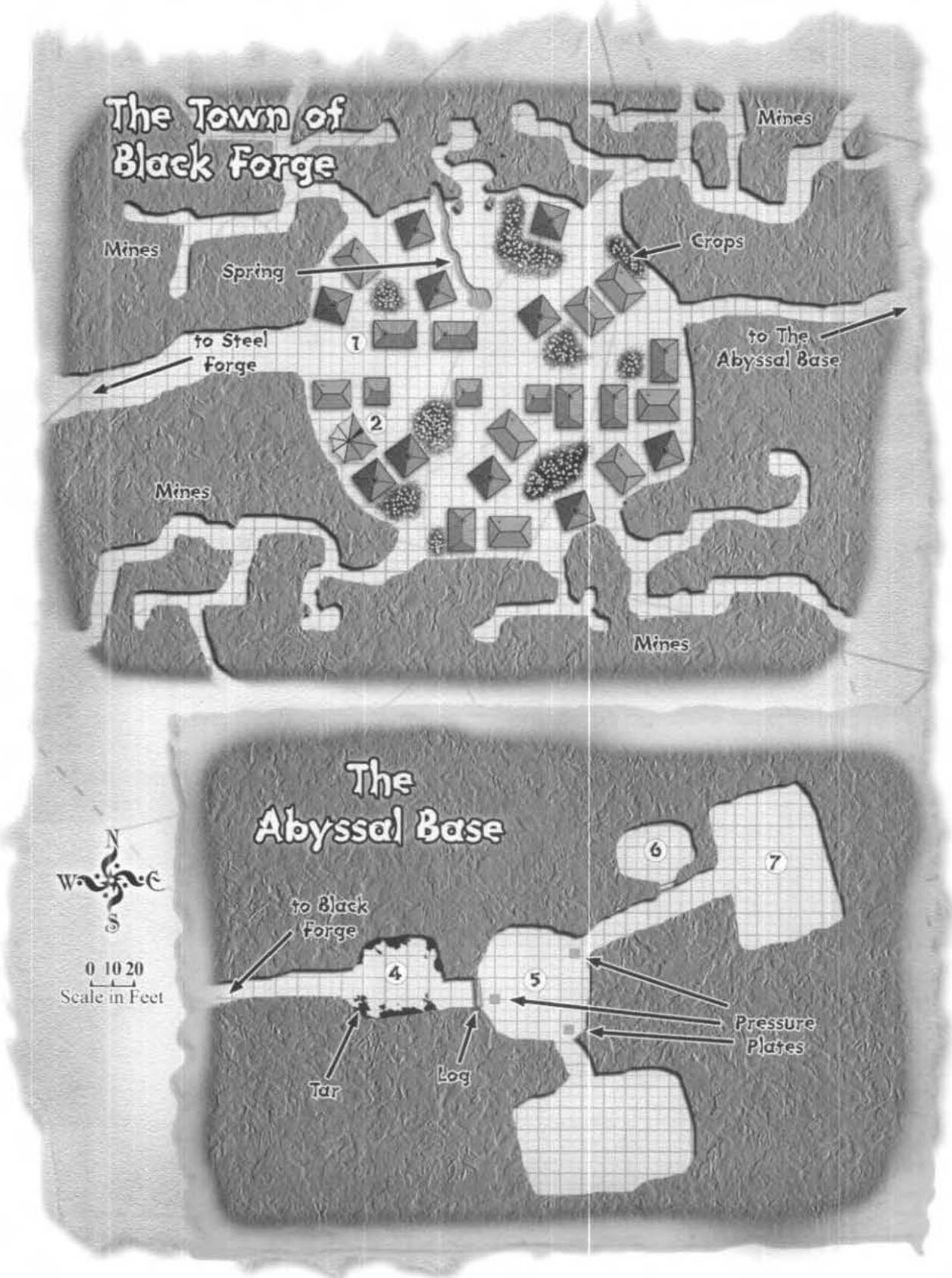

Blackrock Region
0 1 2 3 4 5
Scale in Miles
N
W
E
S
Blackrock Mountain
Village
Tower
Waterfall
3
1
Road
4
2
Keep
Blackrock River
Blackwater Lake


Blackrock Village
0 100 200
Scale in Yards
Ruined Buildings
2A
Intact Buildings
1B
Pier
Blackrock River
N
W
E
S

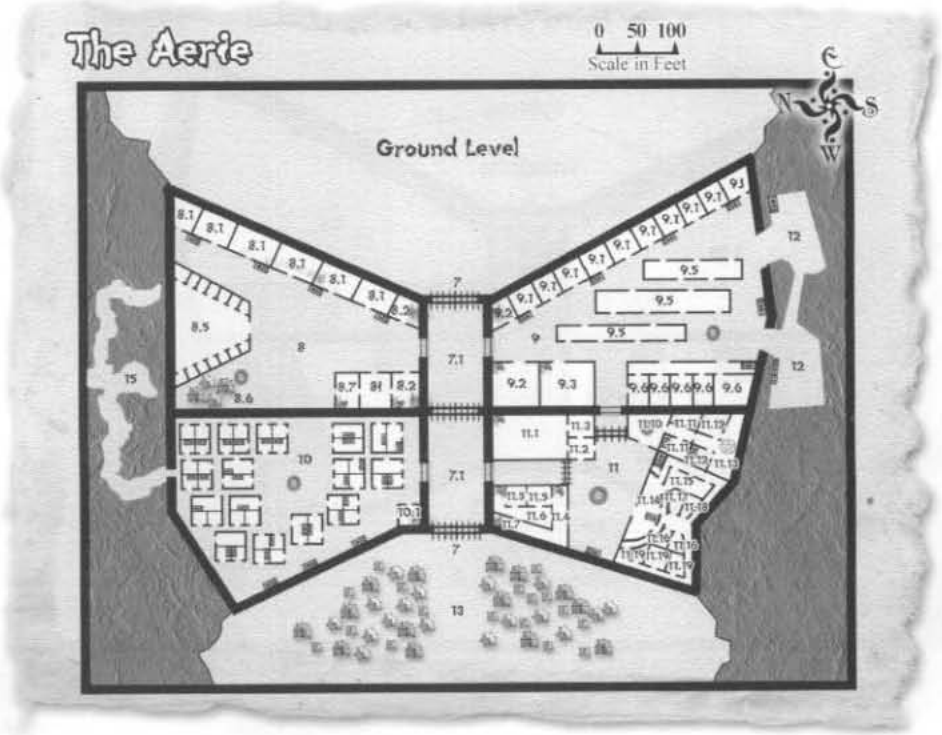

Sorscha's Keep Area Map
N
W
E
S
Black Tower
Sorscha's Keep
4F
4D
4E
4C
4B
4A
Divisions mark 20-foot increases in Elevation
Road
0 50 100
Scale in Feet


Sorscha's Tower
First Floor
Second Floor
Third Floor
0 10 20 30
Scale in Feet
N
S
W

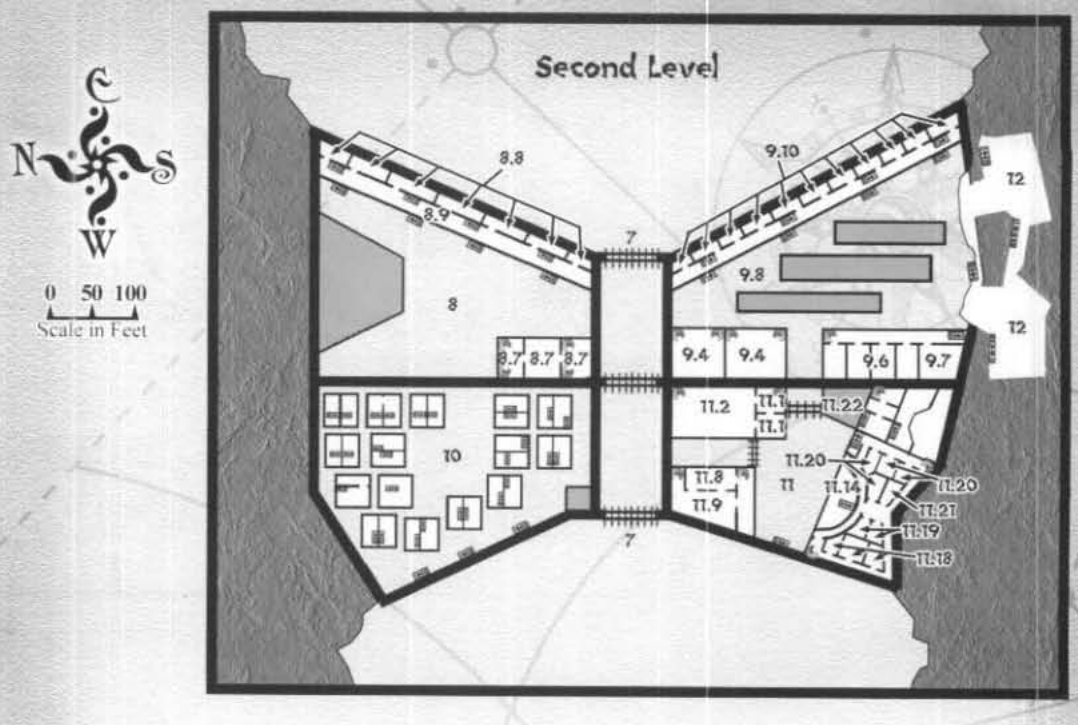

Location 11: Corothusa
Ruined Walls
Level 1
Level 2
Stairs Down to Level 1
Rock Spires
Stairs Up to Level 2
Entrance
Stairs Up to Level 3
Spiral Stairs Up thru Level 4
Secret Doors
Windows
Level 3
Level 4
Stairs Up to Level 4
Stairs Down to Level 3
Rock Spires
Ruined Walls
Stairs Down to Level 2
Traps
Spiral Stairs Down Thru Level 1
0 10 20
Scale in Feet
N
W
E
S

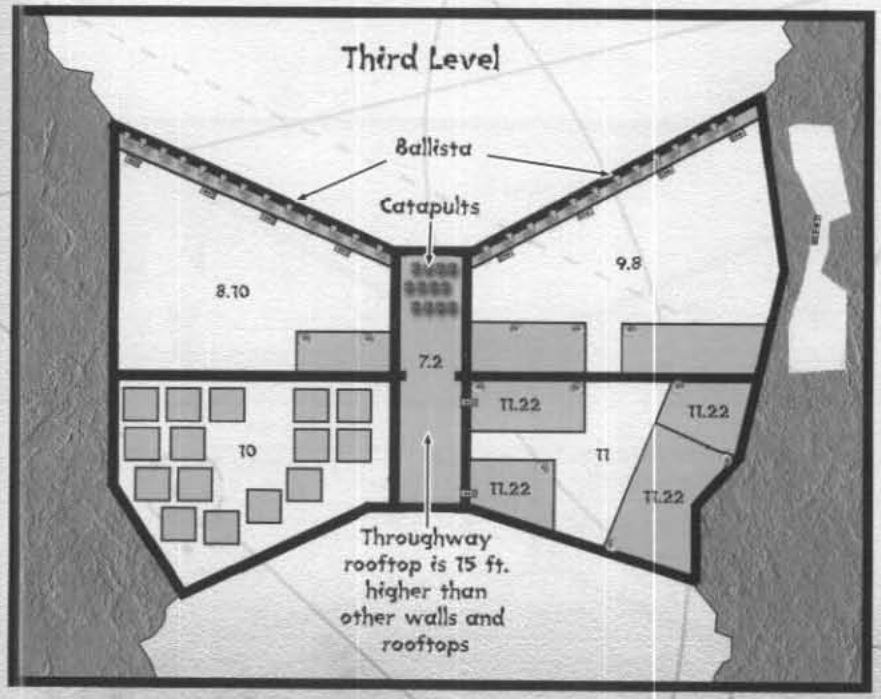

The Town of Black Forge
Mines
Mines
Spring
Crops
to Steel Forge
1
to The Abyssal Base
2
Mines
Mines
The Abyssal Base
N
W
E
S
0 10 20
Scale in Feet
6
7
to Black Forge
4
5
Pressure Plates
Tar
Log

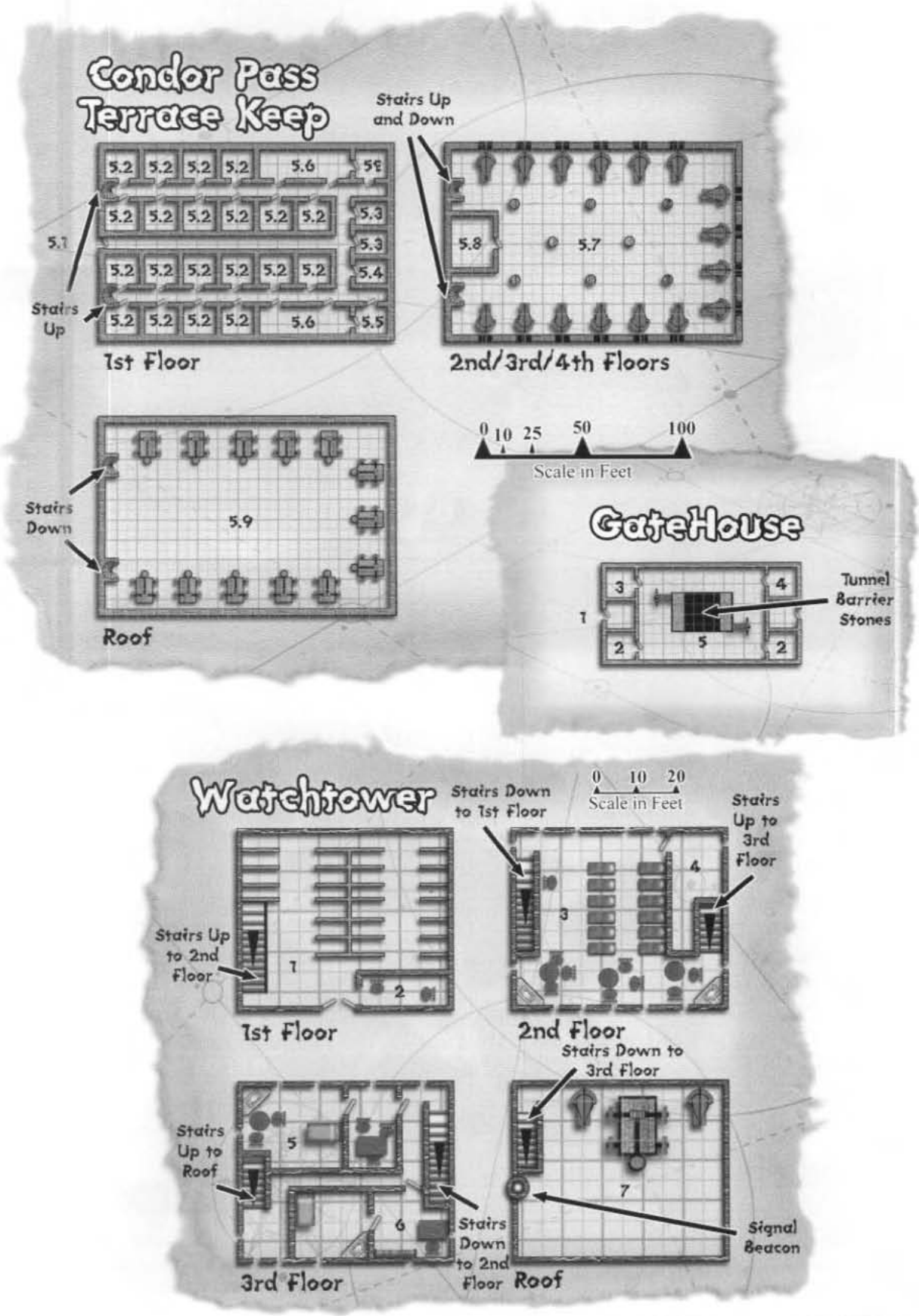

Condor Pass Region
Terror's Lair
Bandit Trails
Watchtowers
Denska
Deverenia
The Aerie
Terraces
N
W
E
S
0
10
20
Scale in Miles

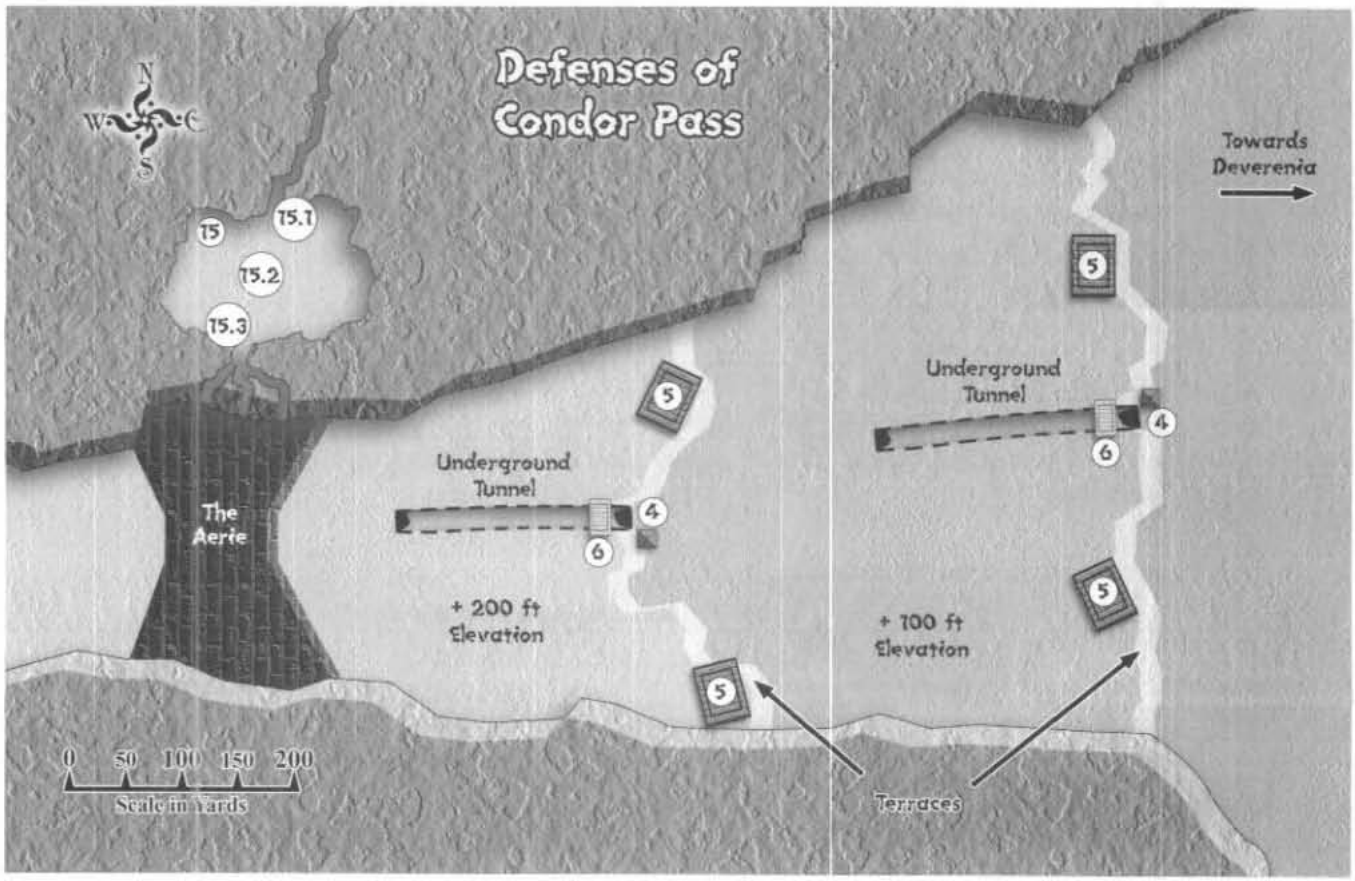

The Aerie
0 50 100
Scale in Feet
Ground Level
N
W
E
S

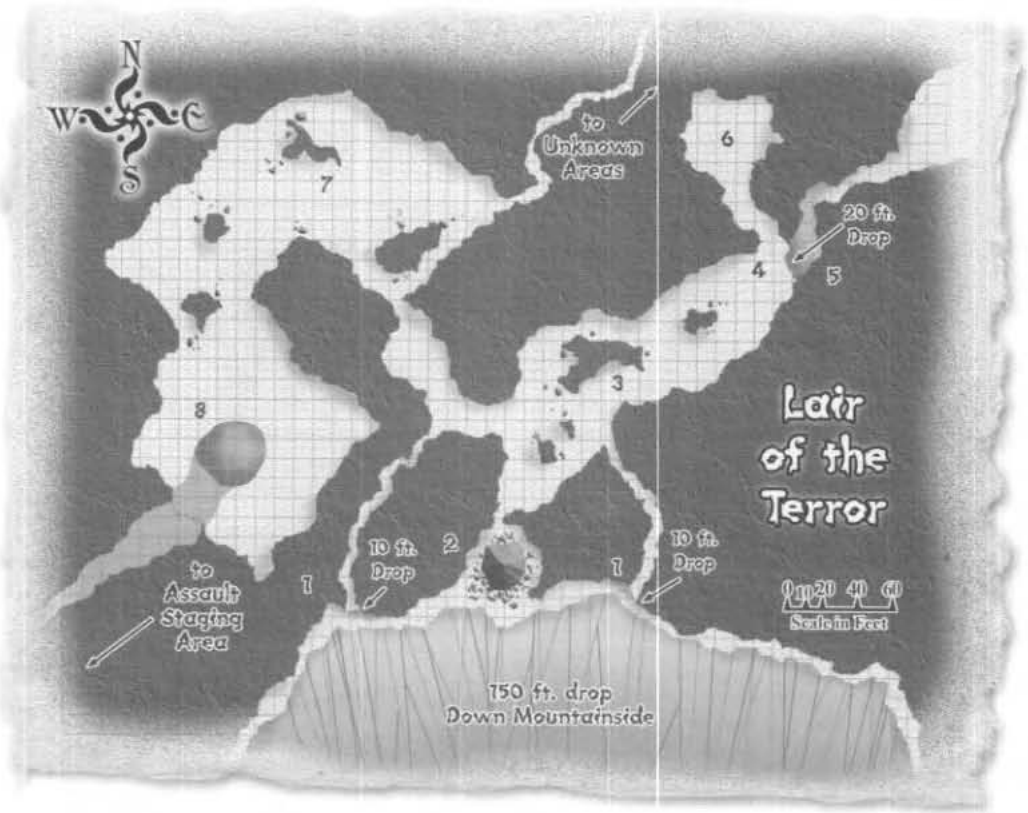
# The Aerie

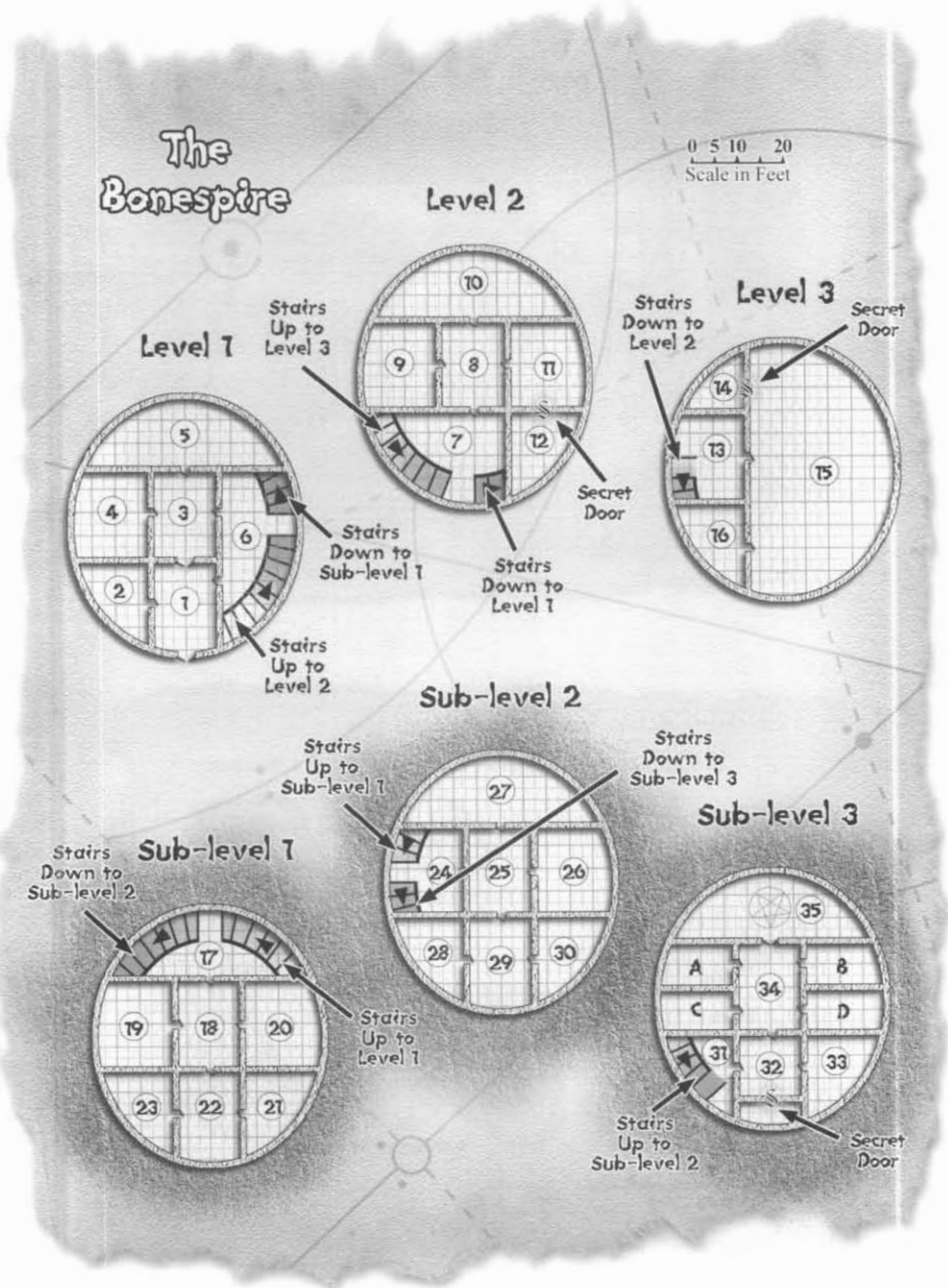

Second Level
N
E
S
W
0 50 100
Scale in Feet
8.8
8.9
9.10
T2
7
9.8
8
8.7 8.7 8.7
9.4 9.4
9.6 9.7
T2
11.2
11.1
11.22
10
11.20
11.8
11
11.14
11.20
11.9
11.21
11.19
11.18
7

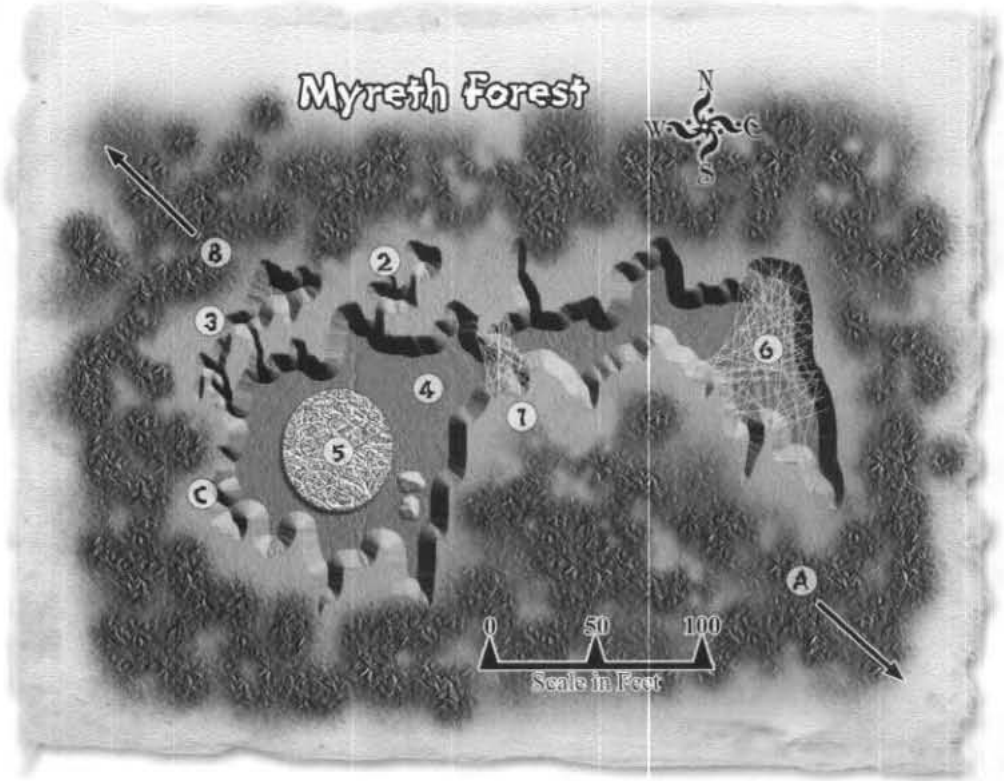

Third Level
Ballista
Catapults
8.10
9.8
7.2
11.22
11.22
10
11
11.22
11.22
Throughway rooftop is 15 ft. higher than other walls and rooftops

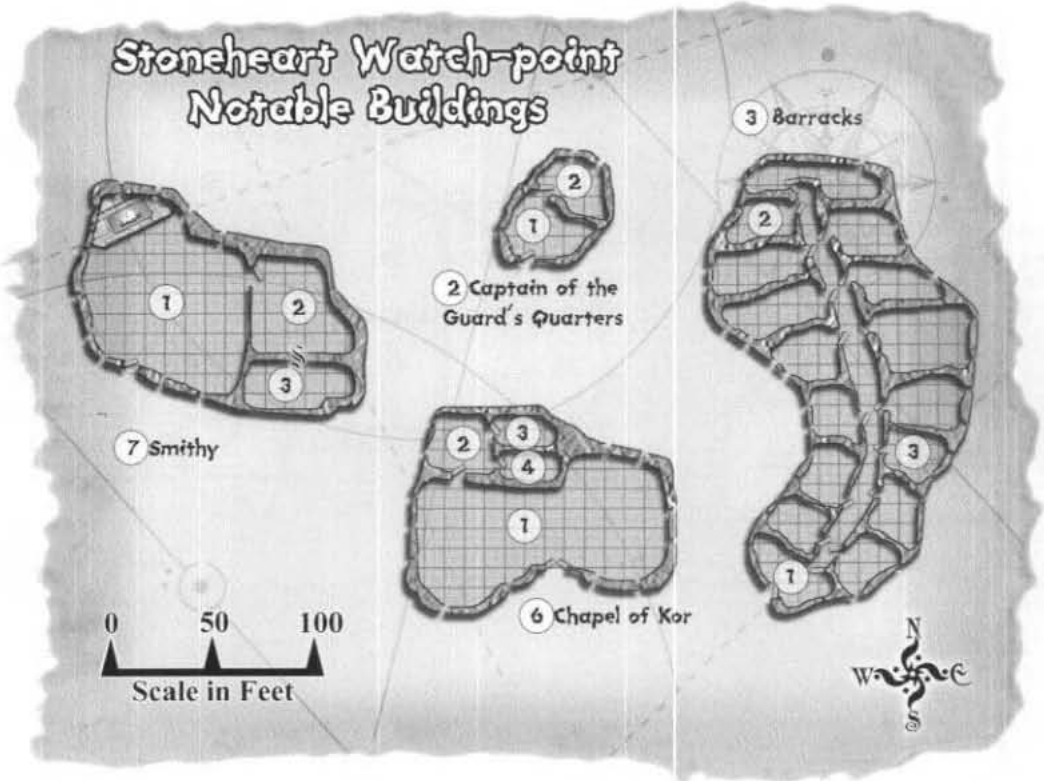

Condor Pass Terrace Keep
Stairs Up and Down
5.1
Stairs Up
5.2
5.3
5.4
5.5
5.6
5.7
5.8
5.9
1st Floor
2nd/3rd/4th Floors
Stairs Down
Roof
0 10 25 50 100
Scale in Feet
GateHouse
Tunnel Barrier Stones
1
2
3
4
5
Watchtower
Stairs Down to 1st Floor
0 10 20
Scale in Feet
Stairs Up to 3rd Floor
Stairs Up to 2nd Floor
1st Floor
2nd Floor
Stairs Down to 3rd Floor
Stairs Up to Roof
6
7
Stairs Down to 2nd Floor
Signal Beacon
3rd Floor
Roof


Defenses of Condor Pass
N
W
E
S
15
15.1
15.2
15.3
The Aerie
5
Underground Tunnel
4
6
+ 200 ft Elevation
+ 100 ft Elevation
Towards Deverenia
0 50 100 150 200
Scale in Yards
Terraces

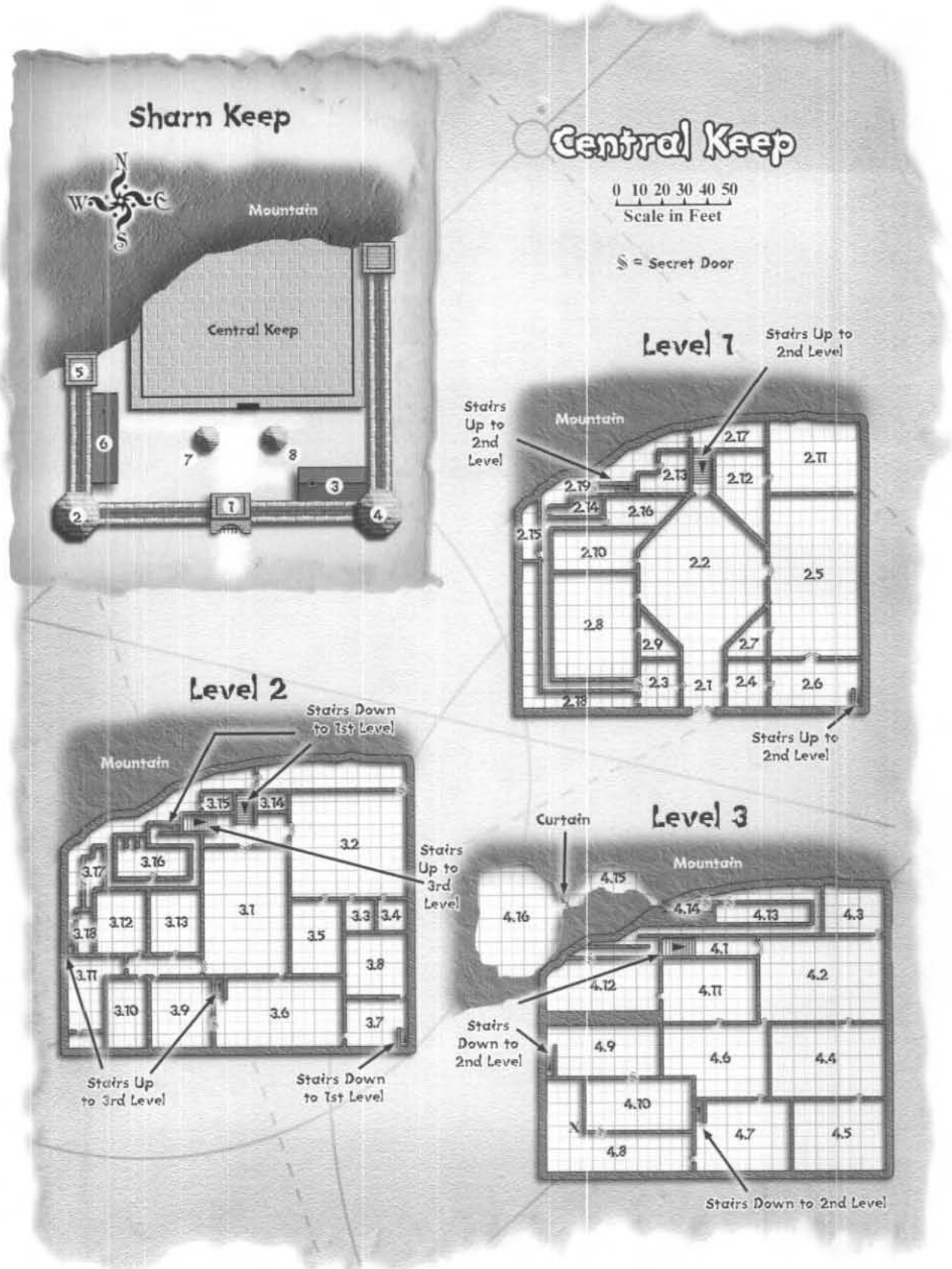

N
W
E
S
to Unknown Areas
6
7
20 ft. Drop
4
5
3
8
Lair of the Terror
10 ft. Drop
2
1
10 ft. Drop
to Assault Staging Area
0 10 20 40 60
Scale in Feet
150 ft. drop Down Mountainside

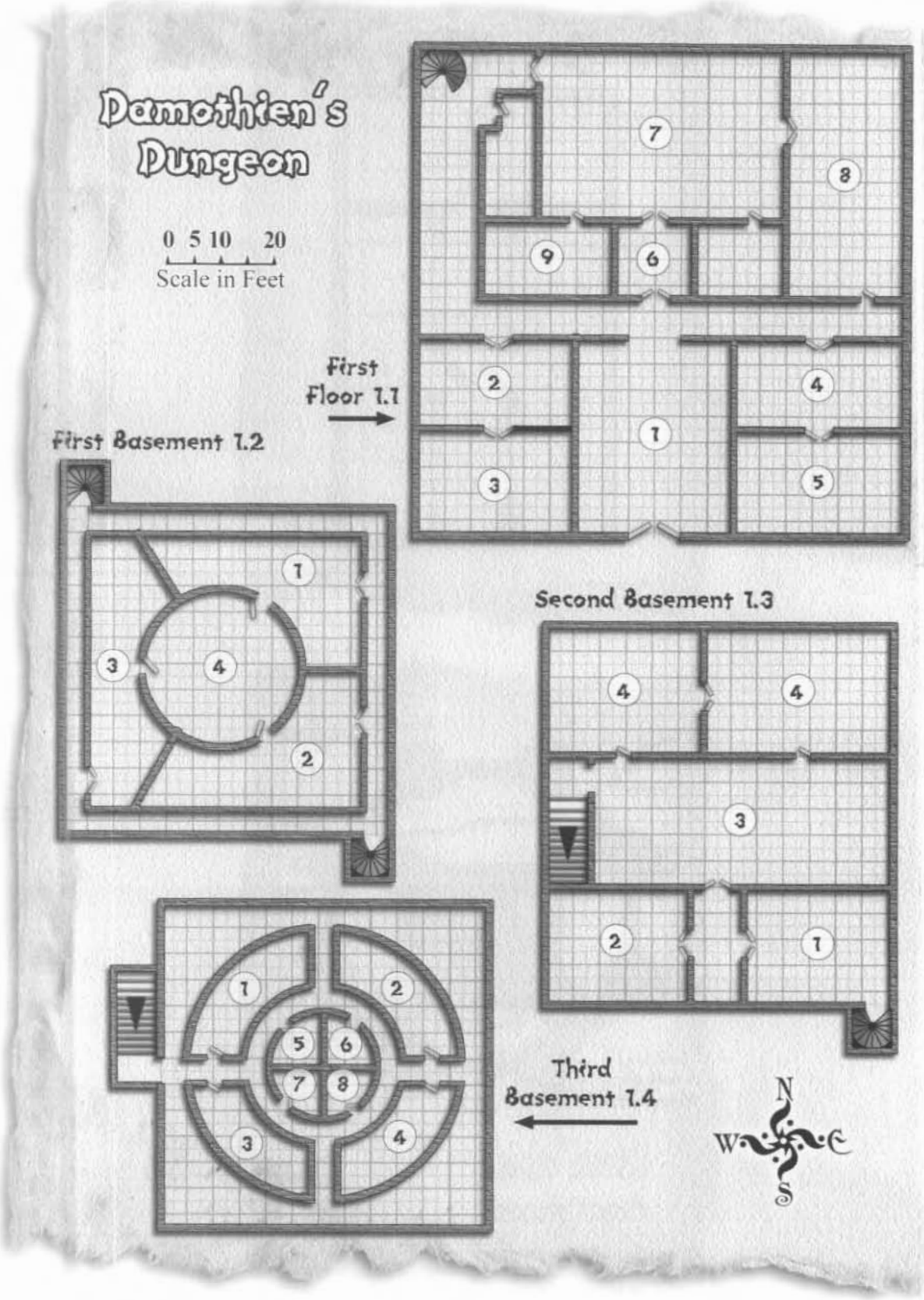

The Bonespire
0 5 10 20
Scale in Feet
Level 2
Level 1
Level 3
Stairs Up to Level 3
Stairs Down to Level 2
Secret Door
Stairs Down to Sub-level 1
Secret Door
Stairs Down to Level 1
Stairs Up to Level 2
Sub-level 2
Stairs Up to Sub-level 1
Stairs Down to Sub-level 3
Sub-level 3
Sub-level 1
Stairs Down to Sub-level 2
Stairs Up to Level 1
Stairs Up to Sub-level 2
Secret Door

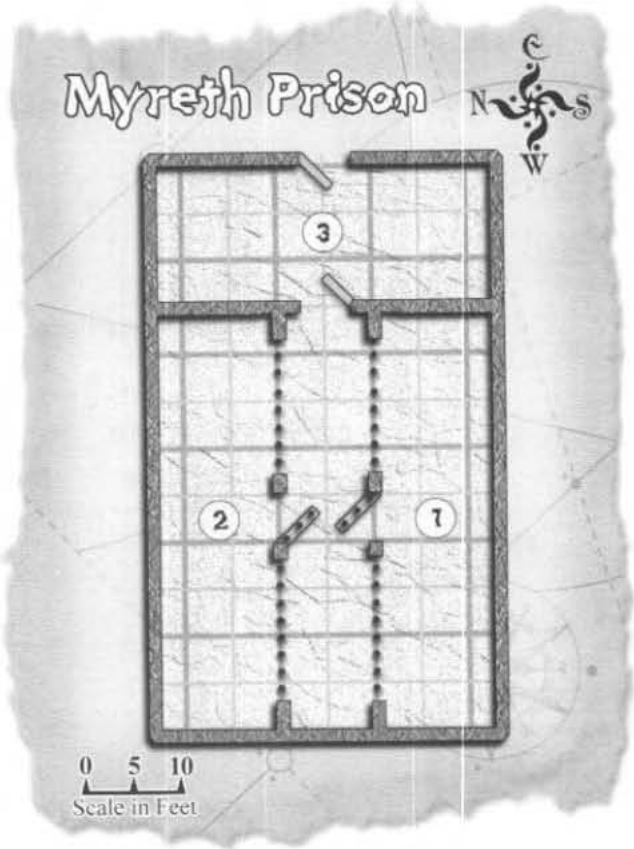

Myreth Forest
N
W
E
S
8
2
3
4
1
5
6
C
A
0
50
100
Scale in Feet

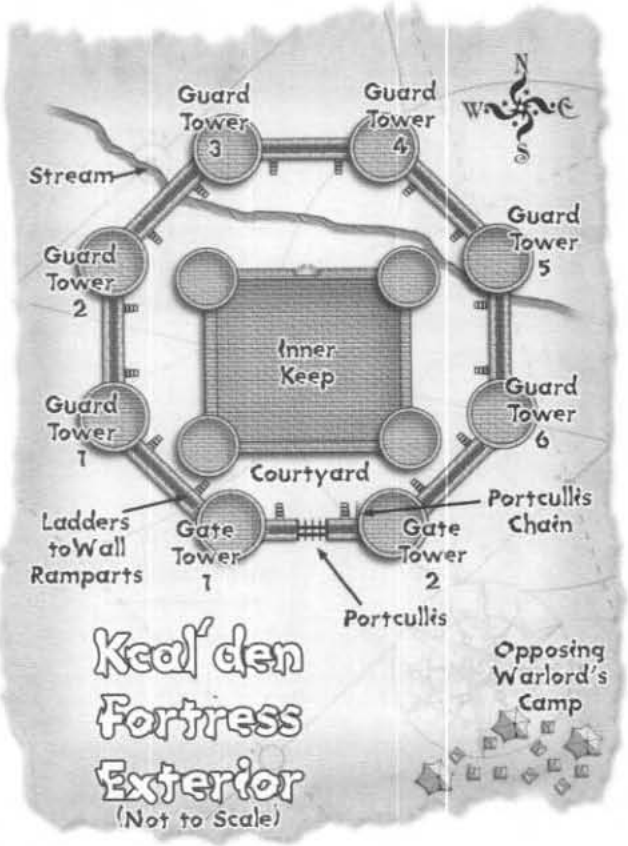

Stoneheart Watch-point
Notable Buildings
3 Barracks
2
1
2 Captain of the
Guard's Quarters
1
2
3
7 Smithy
2
3
4
1
6 Chapel of Kor
2
1
3
0
50
100
Scale in Feet
N
W
E
S

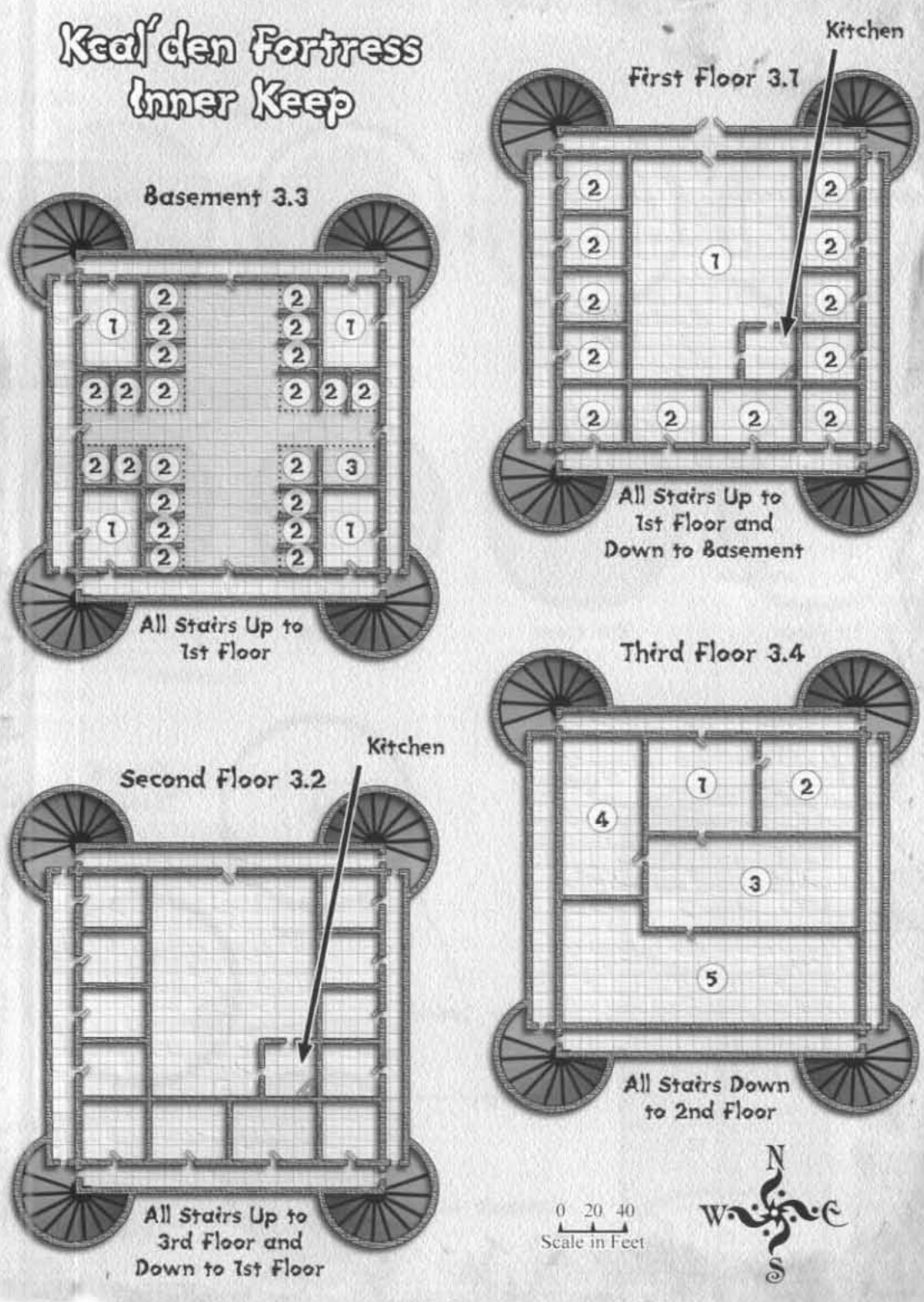

Stoneheart Watch-point
0 100 200
Scale in Feet
To Hillside Entrance
Stalactites, Stalagmites, Columns
1. Abyssal Entry Point
2. Captain of the Guard's Quarters
3. Barracks
4. General Residences
5. Mushroom Farm
6. Chapel of Kor
7. Smithy
8. Quartermaster's
9. Exit
10. Passage to Rockhome
N
W
E
S

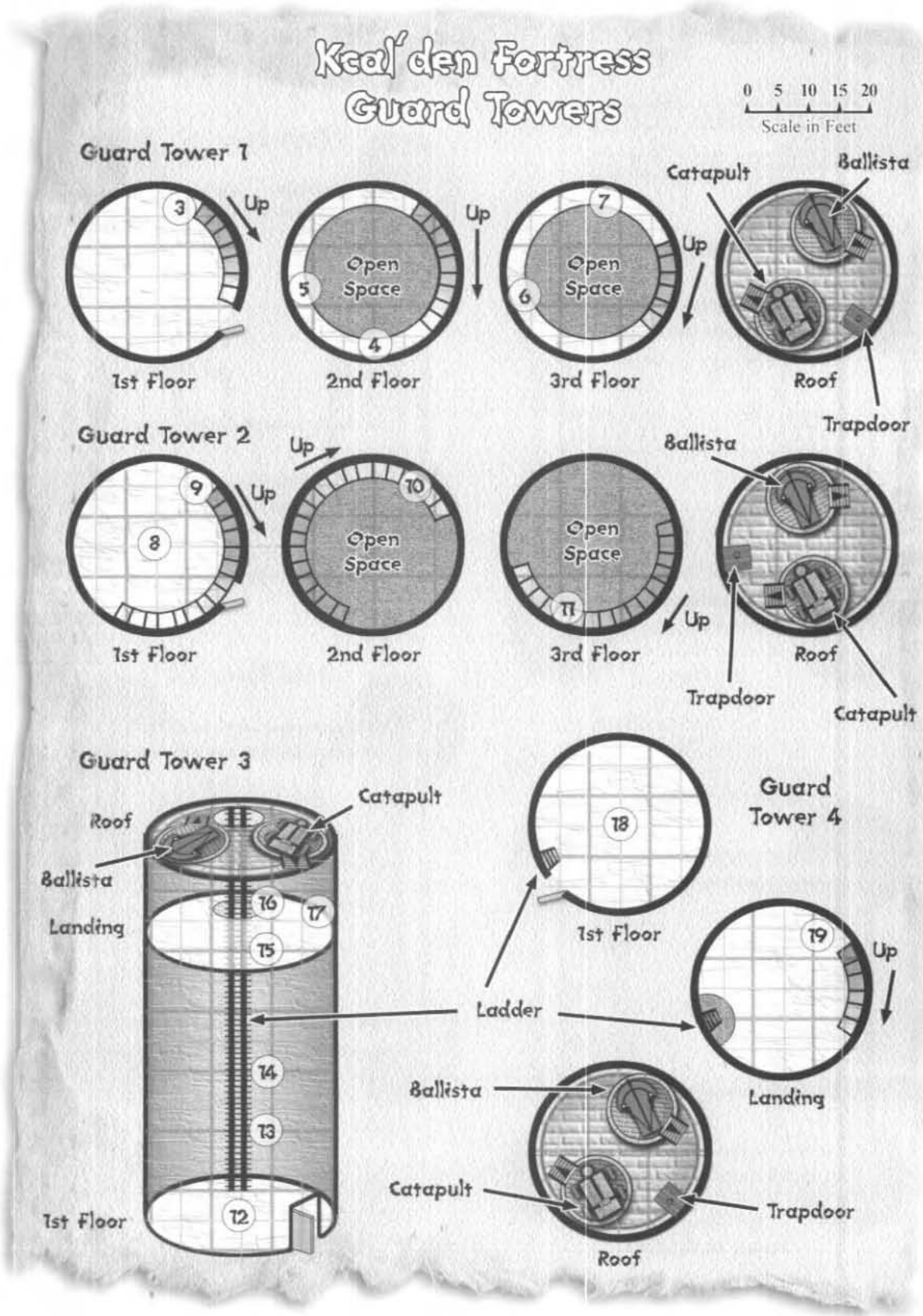

Sharn Keep
N
W
E
S
Mountain
Central Keep
5
6
7
8
3
1
2
4
Central Keep
0 10 20 30 40 50
Scale in Feet
S = Secret Door
Level 1
Stairs Up to 2nd Level
Stairs Up to 2nd Level
Mountain
2.17
2.11
2.13
2.12
2.19
2.14
2.16
2.15
2.10
2.2
2.5
2.8
2.9
2.7
2.3
2.1
2.4
2.6
2.18
Stairs Up to 2nd Level
Level 2
Stairs Down to 1st Level
Mountain
3.15
3.14
3.2
Stairs Up to 3rd Level
3.16
3.17
3.12
3.13
3.1
3.3
3.4
3.18
3.5
3.8
3.11
3.10
3.9
3.6
3.7
Stairs Up to 3rd Level
Stairs Down to 1st Level
Curtain
Level 3
Mountain
4.15
4.16
4.14
4.13
4.3
4.1
4.2
4.12
4.11
Stairs Down to 2nd Level
4.9
4.6
4.4
4.10
4.7
4.5
4.8
Stairs Down to 2nd Level

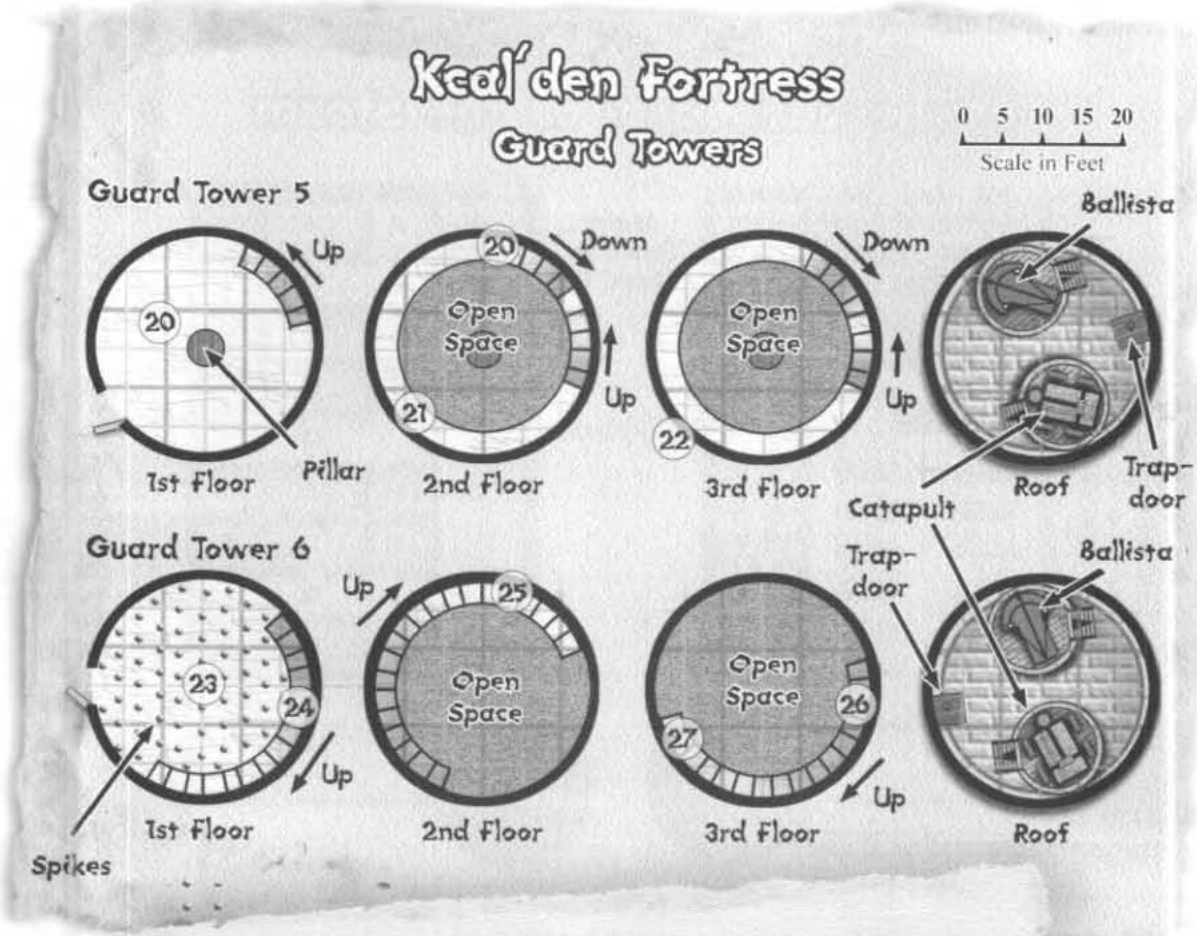

Damothien's Dungeon
0 5 10 20
Scale in Feet
First Floor 1.1
First Basement 1.2
Second Basement 1.3
Third Basement 1.4
N
W
E
S

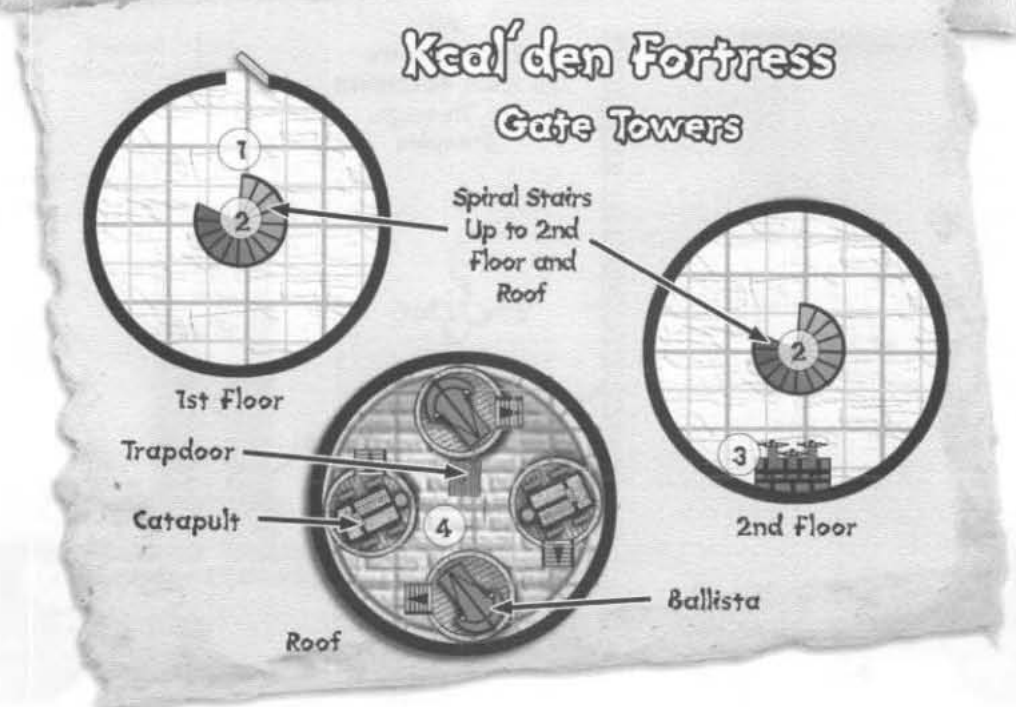

Myreth Prison
N
S
W
3
2
1
0 5 10
Scale in Feet

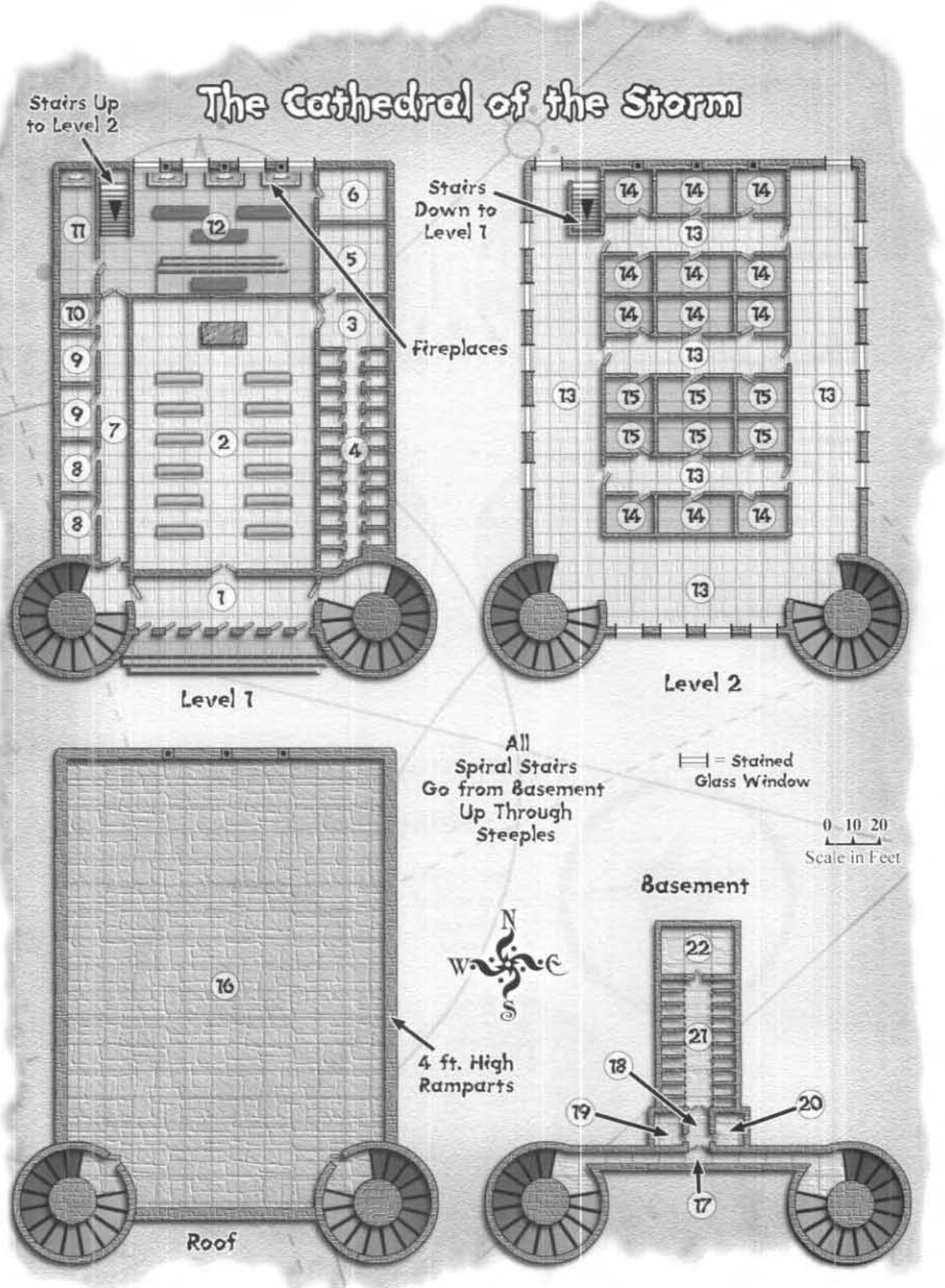

N
W
S
Guard Tower 3
Guard Tower 4
Stream
Guard Tower 5
Guard Tower 2
Inner Keep
Guard Tower 6
Guard Tower 1
Courtyard
Portcullis Chain
Ladders to Wall Ramparts
Gate Tower 1
Gate Tower 2
Portcullis
Opposing Warlord's Camp
Kealden Fortress Exterior
(Not to Scale)

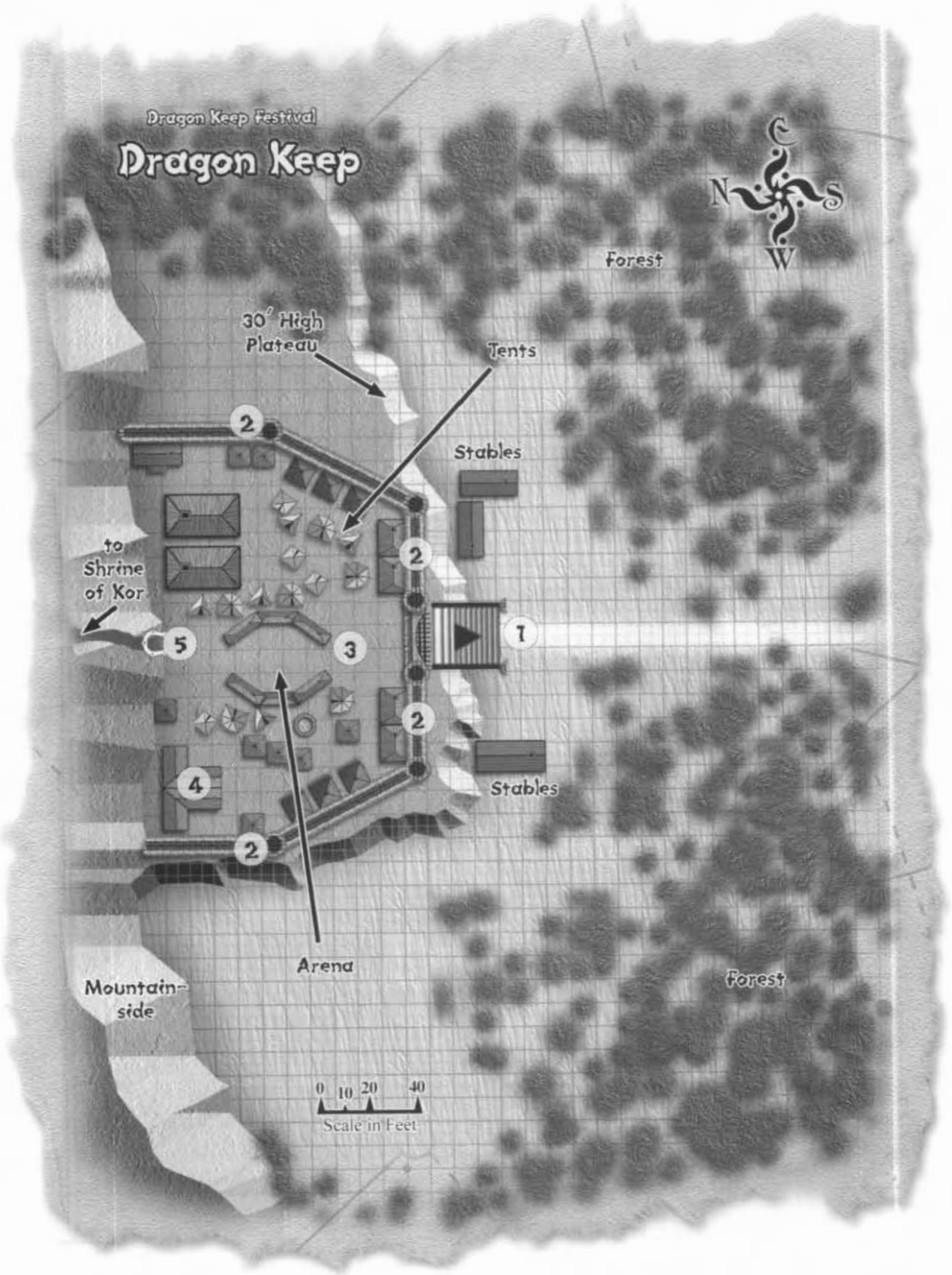

Kealʼden Fortress
Inner Keep
Basement 3.3
All Stairs Up to
1st Floor
First Floor 3.1
Kitchen
All Stairs Up to
1st Floor and
Down to Basement
Second Floor 3.2
Kitchen
All Stairs Up to
3rd Floor and
Down to 1st Floor
Third Floor 3.4
All Stairs Down
to 2nd Floor
0 20 40
Scale in Feet
N
W
E
S

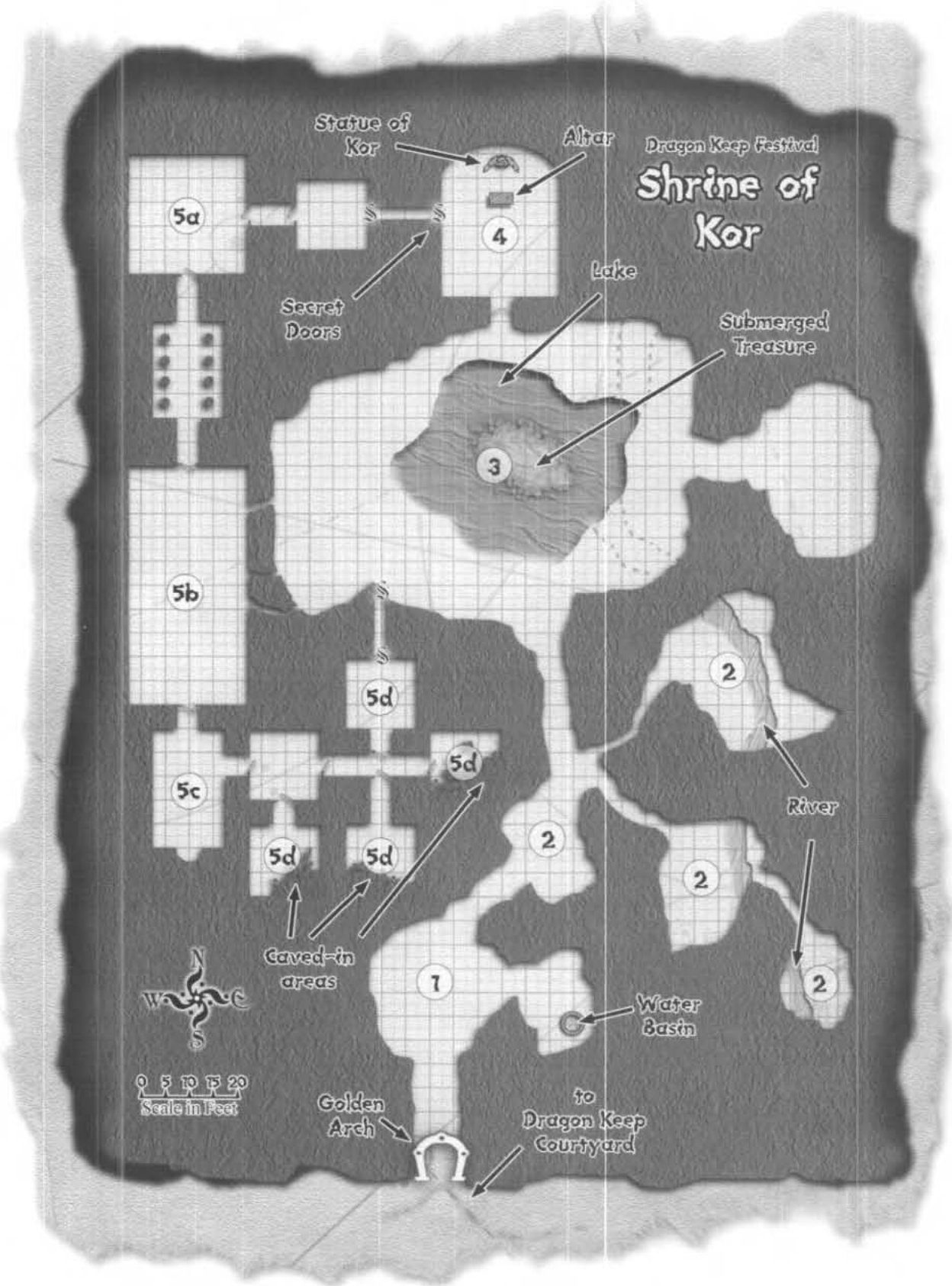

Kcal'den Fortress
Guard Towers
0 5 10 15 20
Scale in Feet
Guard Tower 1
3
Up
Open Space
5
4
Up
7
Open Space
6
Up
Catapult
Ballista
Trapdoor
1st Floor
2nd Floor
3rd Floor
Roof
Guard Tower 2
9
8
Up
Up
10
Open Space
Open Space
11
Up
Ballista
Trapdoor
Catapult
1st Floor
2nd Floor
3rd Floor
Roof
Guard Tower 3
Roof
Catapult
Ballista
Landing
16
17
15
14
13
12
1st Floor
Ladder
Guard Tower 4
18
1st Floor
19
Up
Landing
Ballista
Catapult
Trapdoor
Roof

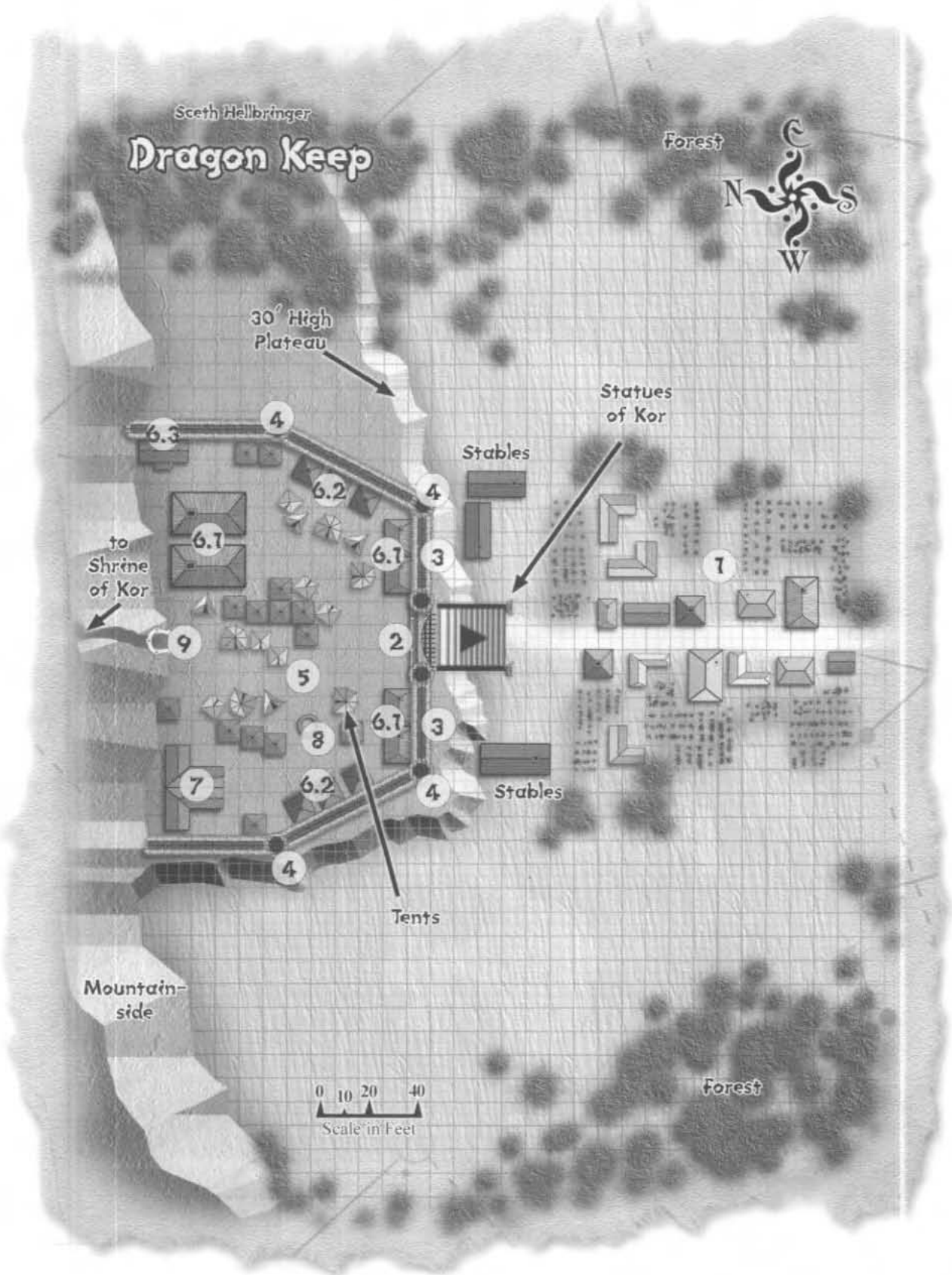

Kcal'den Fortress
Guard Towers
0 5 10 15 20
Scale in Feet
Guard Tower 5
Up
20
Down
Open Space
21
Up
Down
Open Space
22
Up
Ballista
Roof
Trap-door
Catapult
1st Floor
Pillar
2nd Floor
3rd Floor
Guard Tower 6
Up
25
Open Space
Up
23
24
Spikes
1st Floor
2nd Floor
Open Space
27
26
Up
3rd Floor
Trap-door
Ballista
Roof

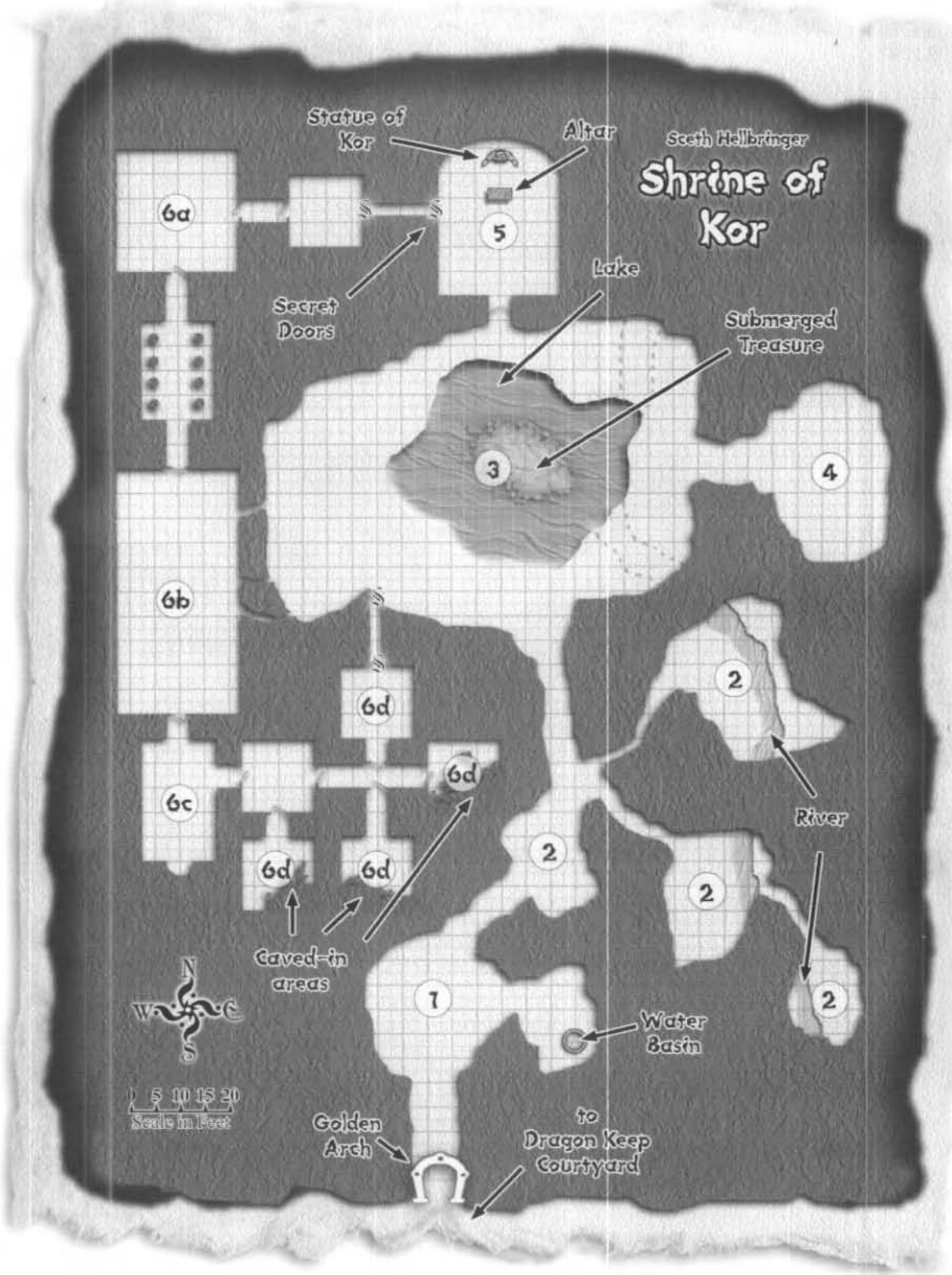

Kcal'den Fortress
Gate Towers
1
2
1st Floor
Spiral Stairs Up to 2nd Floor and Roof
2
3
2nd Floor
Trapdoor
Catapult
4
Roof
Ballista

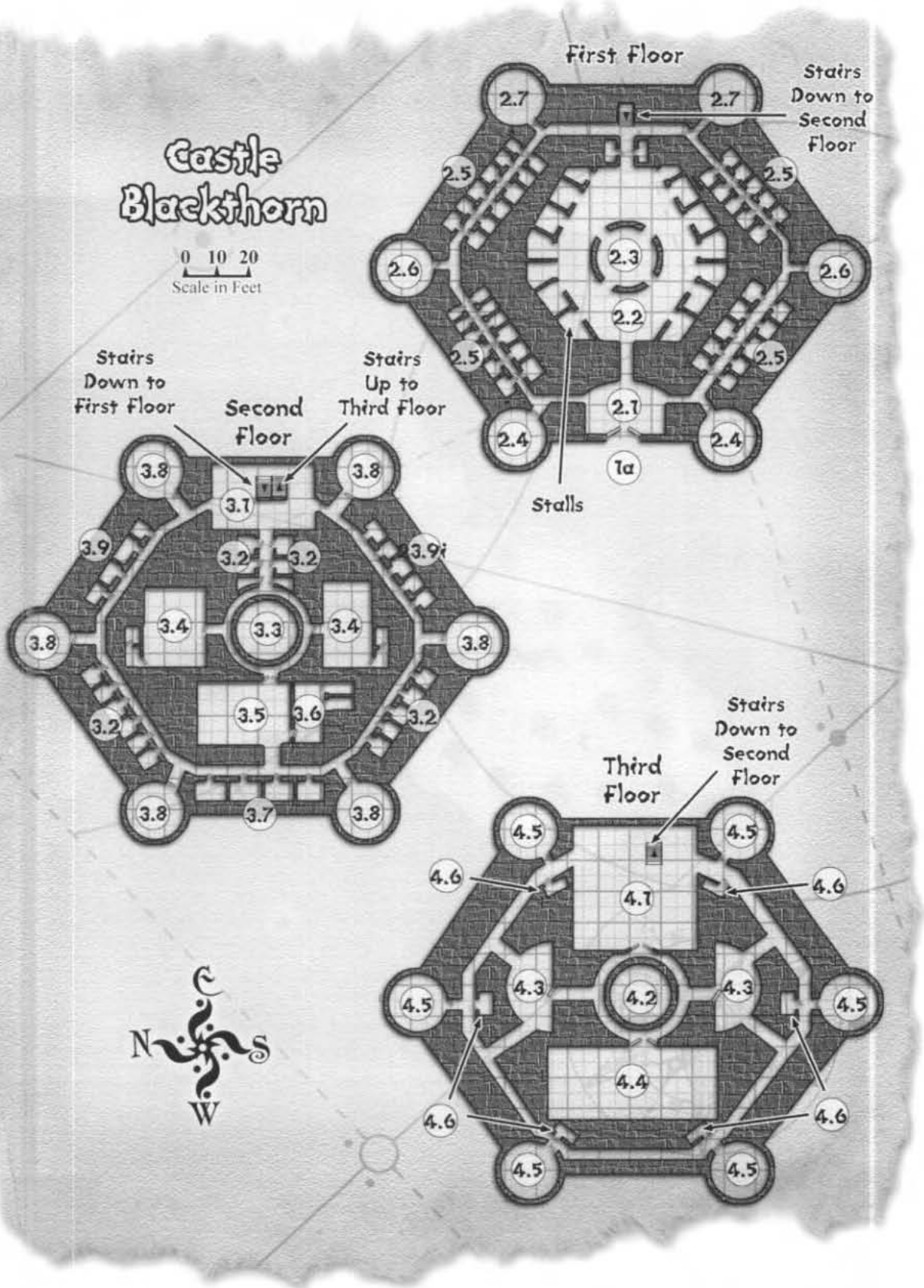

The Cathedral of the Storm
Stairs Up to Level 2
Stairs Down to Level 1
Fireplaces
Level 1
Level 2
All Spiral Stairs Go from Basement Up Through Steeples
= Stained Glass Window
0 10 20
Scale in Feet
Basement
N
W
E
S
4 ft. High Ramparts
Roof


Dragon Keep Festival
Dragon Keep
N
S
W
Forest
30′ High Plateau
Tents
Stables
to Shrine of Kor
1
2
3
4
5
Stables
Arena
Mountain-side
Forest
0 10 20 40
Scale in Feet

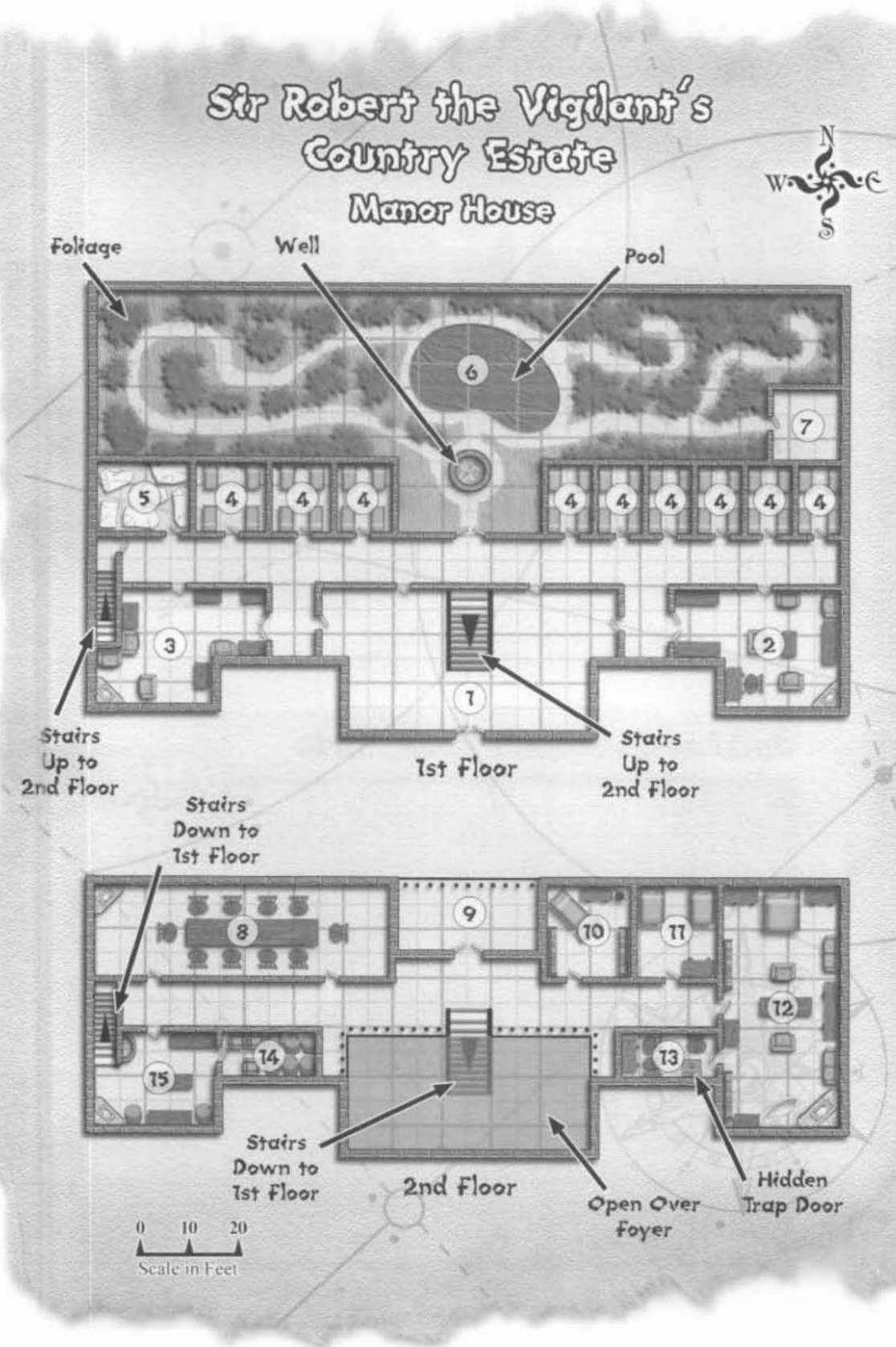

Statue of Kor
Altar
Dragon Keep Festival
Shrine of Kor
5a
4
Secret Doors
Lake
Submerged Treasure
3
5b
5d
5d
5c
5d
5d
2
River
2
2
2
Caved-in areas
1
Water Basin
0 5 10 15 20
Scale in Feet
Golden Arch
to Dragon Keep Courtyard

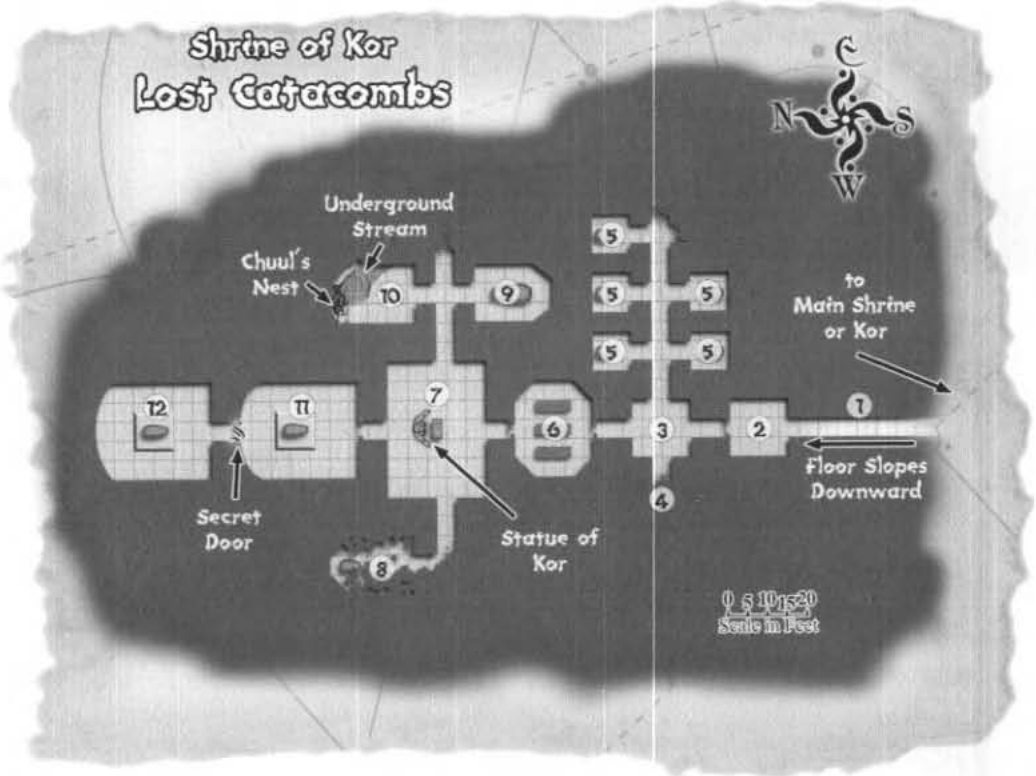

Sceth Hellbringer
Dragon Keep
Forest
N
S
W
30' High Plateau
Statues of Kor
Stables
to Shrine of Kor
Stables
Tents
Mountain-side
Forest
0 10 20 40
Scale in Feet

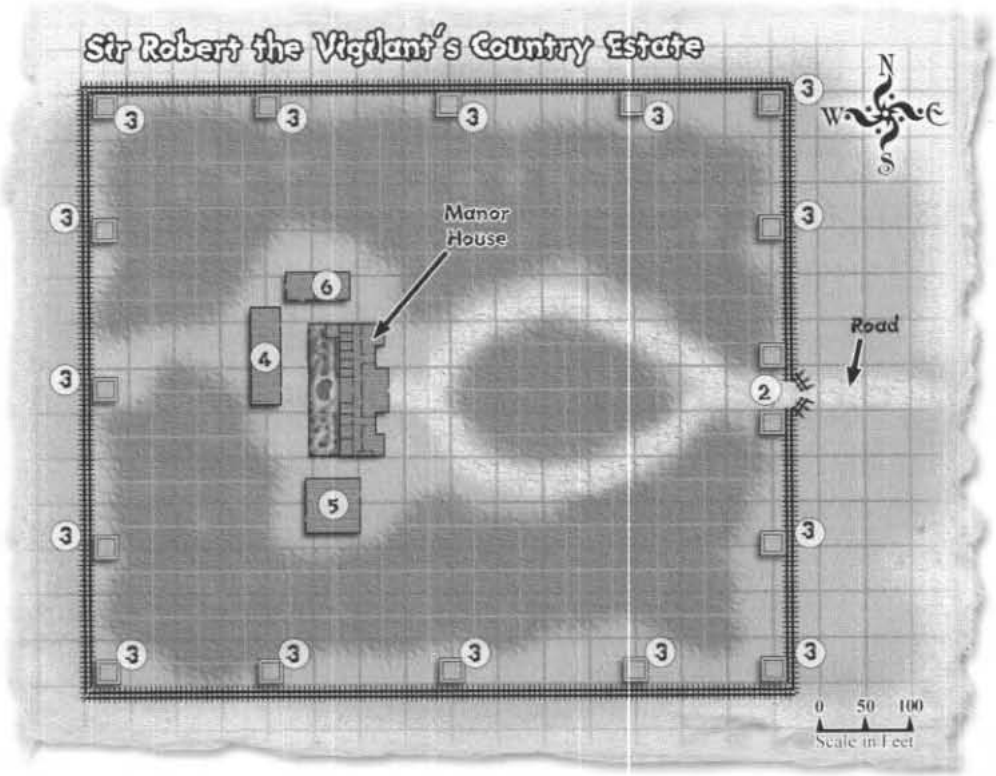

Statue of Kor
Altar
Sceth Hellbringer
Shrine of Kor
6a
5
Secret Doors
Lake
Submerged Treasure
3
4
6b
6d
6c
6d
6d
6d
2
River
2
2
2
Caved-in areas
N
W
E
S
1
Water Basin
5 10 15 20
Scale in Feet
Golden Arch
to Dragon Keep Courtyard

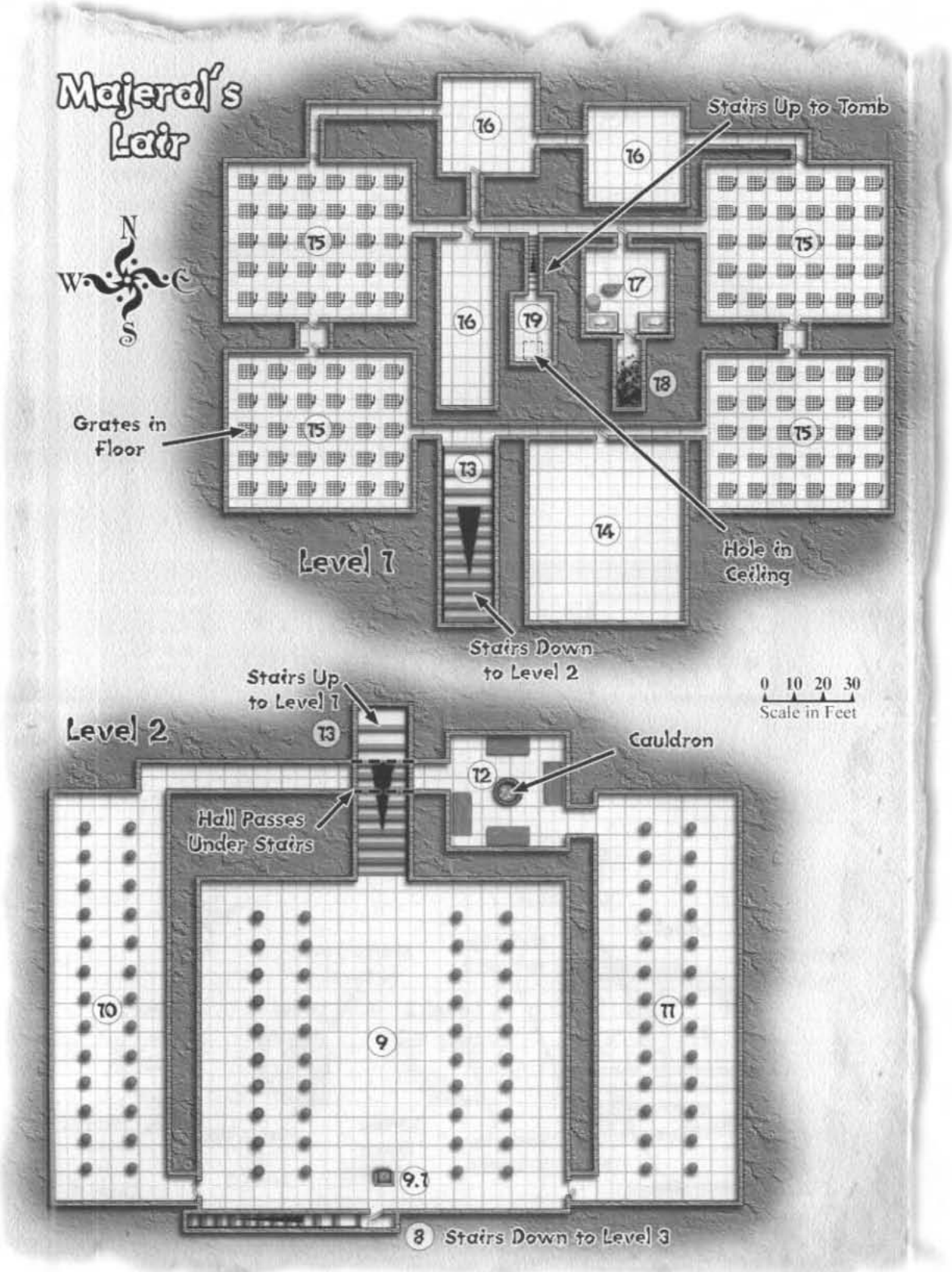

Castle Blackthorn
0 10 20
Scale in Feet
First Floor
Stairs Down to Second Floor
Stalls
Second Floor
Stairs Down to First Floor
Stairs Up to Third Floor
Third Floor
Stairs Down to Second Floor
N
S
W

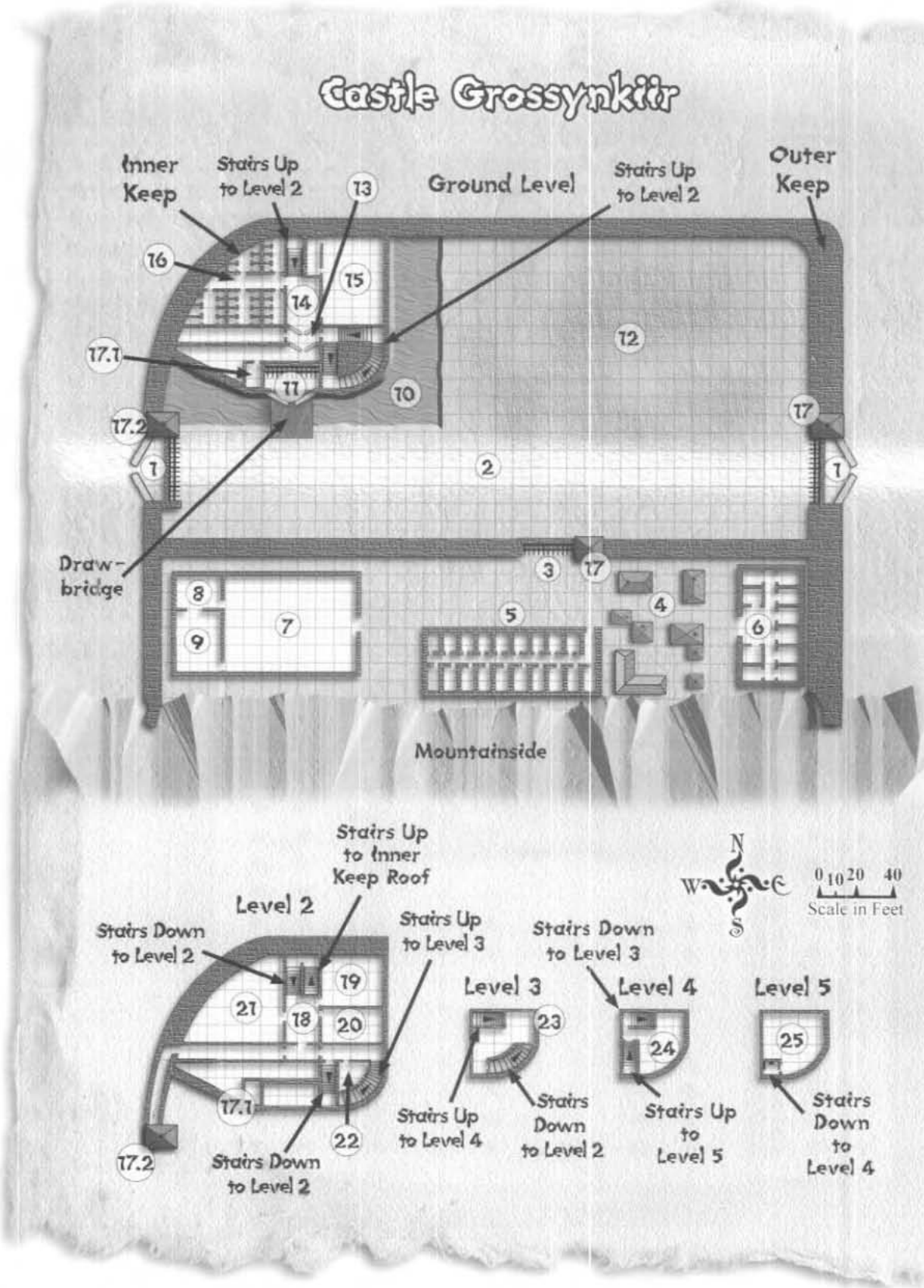

Cassica
Moonseed's Lair
Curved Elevation Lines = 2 feet
6
7
Winches
Cages
3
Fissure
N
S
W
5
7
120 yrds
Treasure Pile
10 ft. Drop
4
5
0 10 20
Scale in Feet


Sir Robert the Vigilant's
Country Estate
Manor House
N
W
E
S
Foliage
Well
Pool
6
7
5
4
4
4
4
4
4
4
4
4
4
3
2
1
Stairs
Up to
2nd Floor
1st Floor
Stairs
Up to
2nd Floor
Stairs
Down to
1st Floor
9
8
10
11
12
14
15
13
Stairs
Down to
1st Floor
2nd Floor
Open Over
Foyer
Hidden
Trap Door
0 10 20
Scale in Feet


Shrine of Kor
Lost Catacombs
N
S
W
Underground Stream
Chuul's Nest
10
9
5
to Main Shrine or Kor
12
11
7
6
3
2
1
4
Floor Slopes Downward
Secret Door
Statue of Kor
8
0 5 10 15 20
Scale in Feet

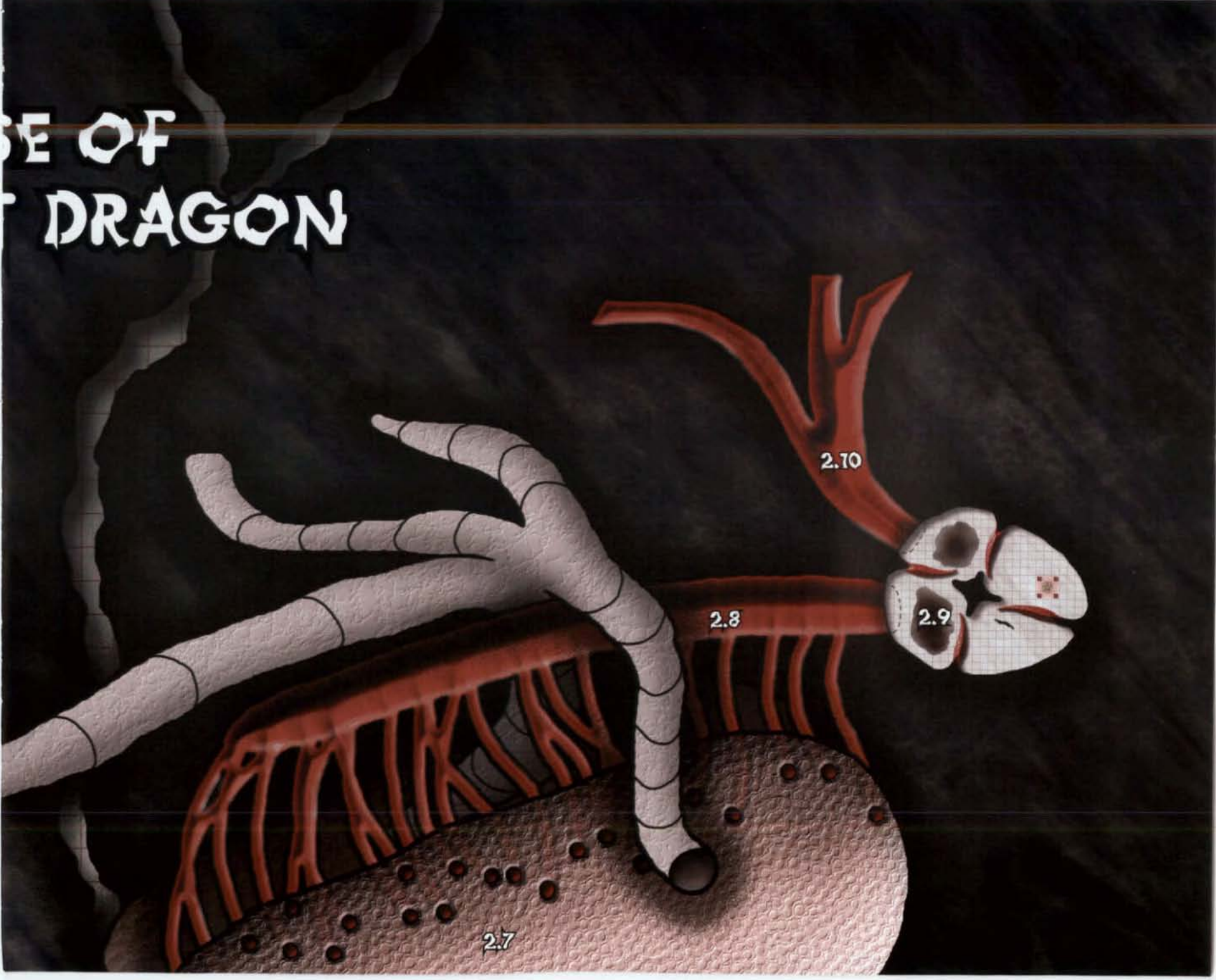

Sir Robert the Vigilant's Country Estate
N
W
S
3
Manor House
6
4
5
2
Road
0 50 100
Scale in Feet

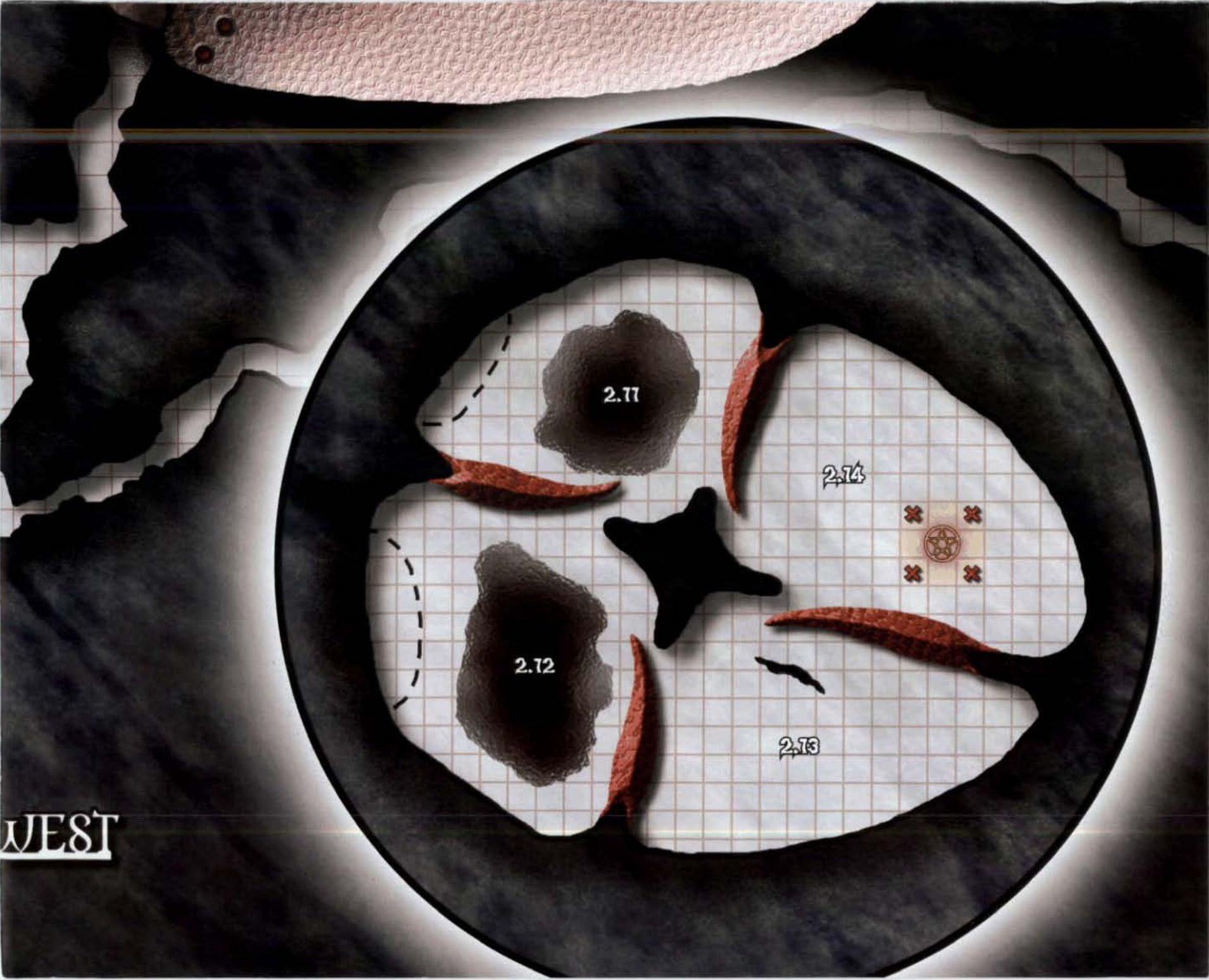

Majeral's Lair
N
W
E
S
16
16
Stairs Up to Tomb
15
15
17
16
19
18
Grates in Floor
15
15
13
14
Hole in Ceiling
Level 1
Stairs Down to Level 2
0 10 20 30
Scale in Feet
Stairs Up to Level 1
Level 2
13
Cauldron
12
Hall Passes Under Stairs
10
11
9
9.1
8 Stairs Down to Level 3


Castle Grossynkiir
Inner Keep
Stairs Up to Level 2
13
Ground Level
Stairs Up to Level 2
Outer Keep
16
15
14
12
17.1
11
10
17
17.2
1
2
1
Draw-bridge
3
17
8
9
7
5
4
6
Mountainside
Stairs Up to Inner Keep Roof
Level 2
Stairs Down to Level 2
Stairs Up to Level 3
19
21
18
20
17.1
22
17.2
Stairs Down to Level 2
Level 3
23
Stairs Up to Level 4
Stairs Down to Level 2
Stairs Down to Level 3
Level 4
24
Stairs Up to Level 5
Level 5
25
Stairs Down to Level 4
N
W
E
S
0 10 20 40
Scale in Feet

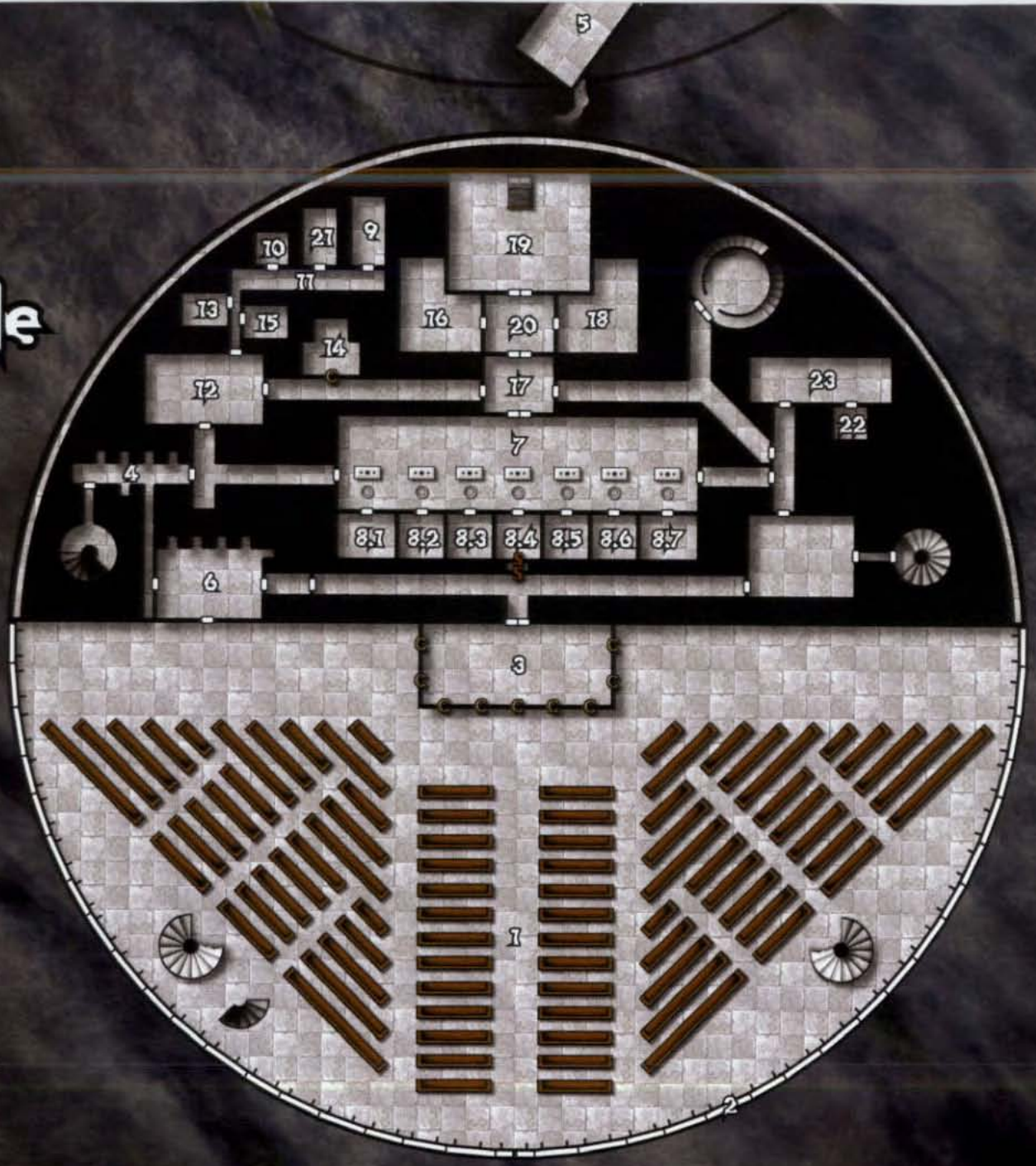

2.4
2.3
2.5
2.1
2.2


CORPS
THE GREAT
2.3
2.4
2.5
2.6


SE OF
T DRAGON
2.10
2.8
2.9
2.7


2.11
2.14
2.12
2.13
WEST

# Main Temple


5
19
10
21
9
11
13
15
16
20
18
14
12
17
23
22
7
4
8.1
8.2
8.3
8.4
8.5
8.6
8.7
6
3
1
2

# HATE'S

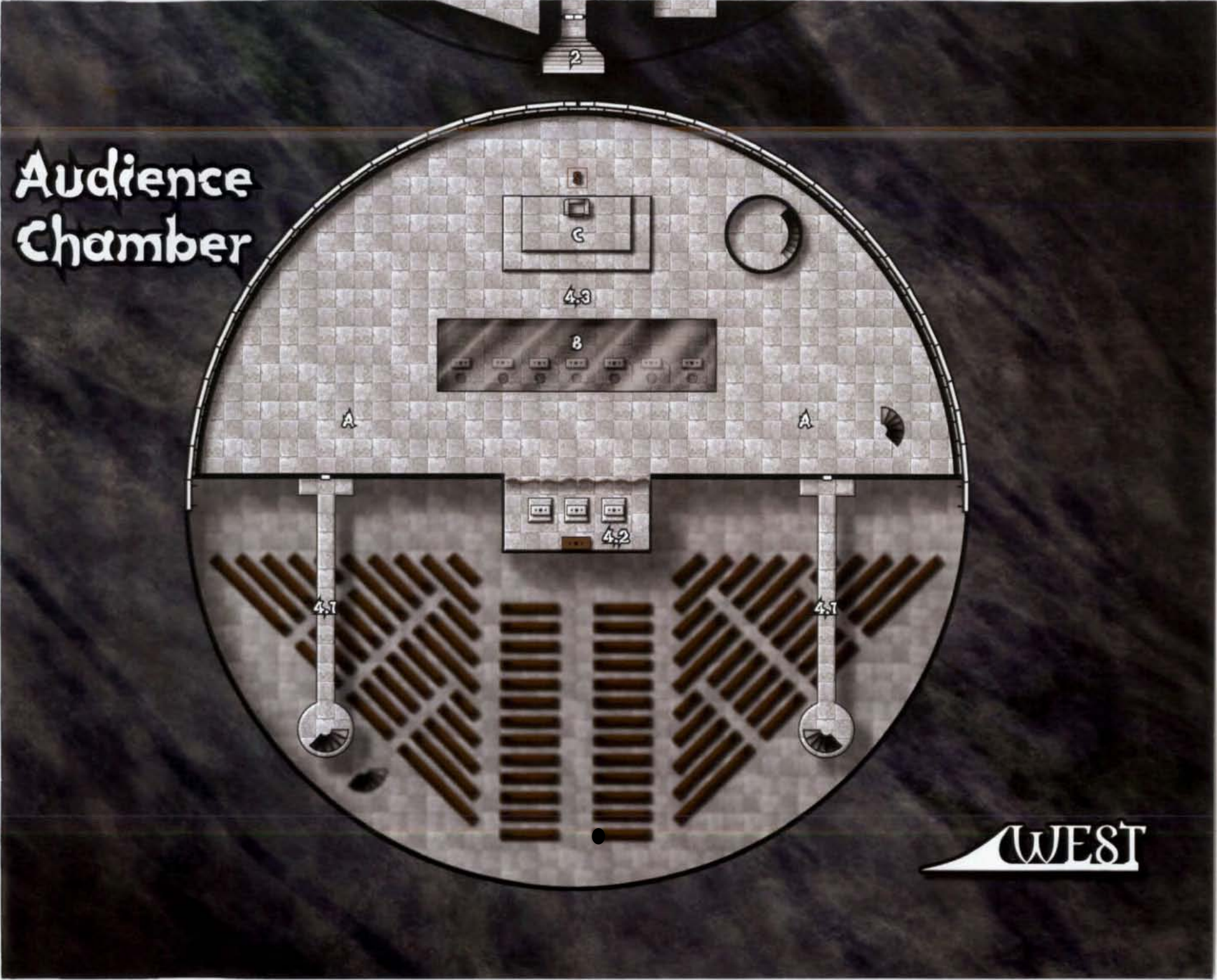
## Lower Level

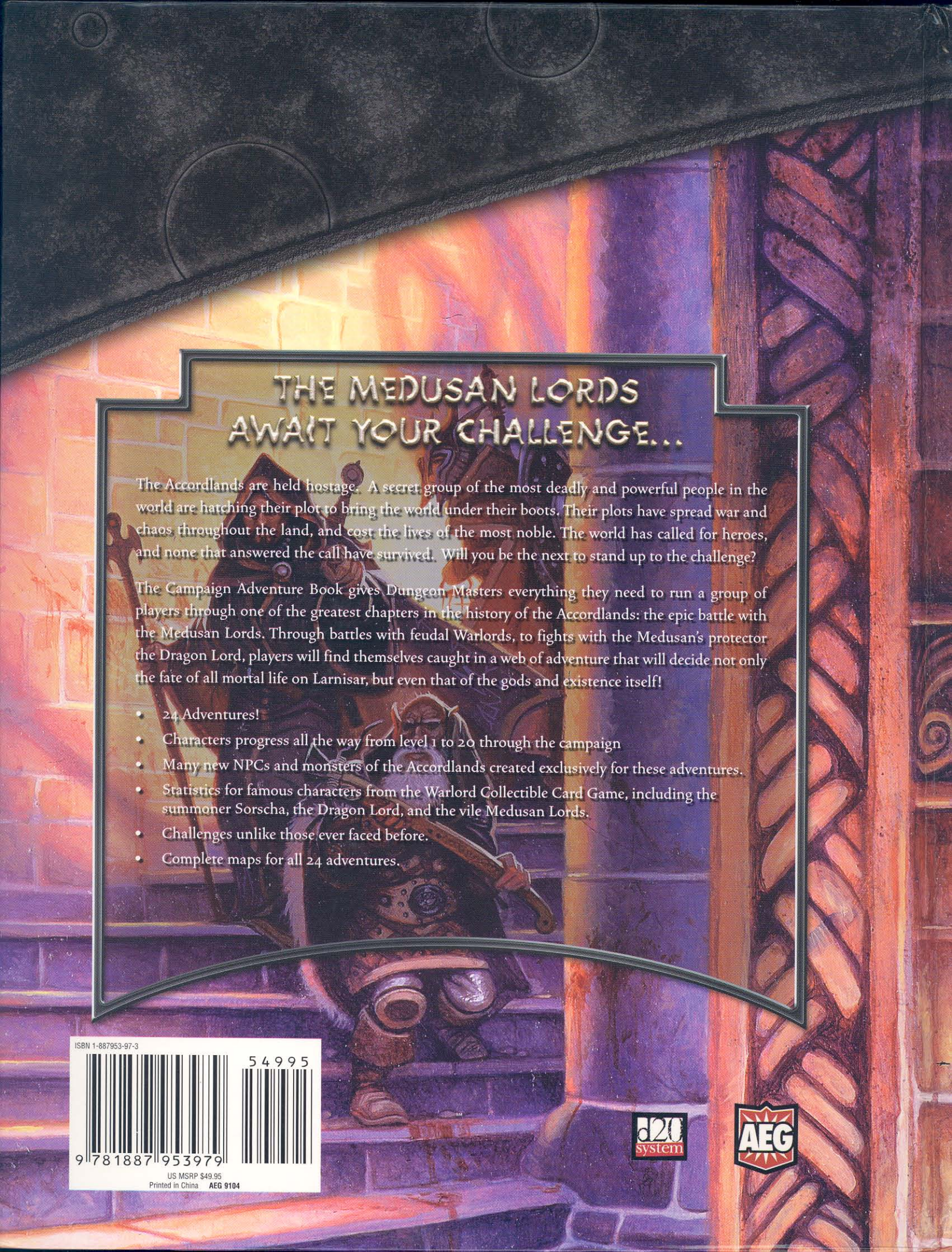


# TEMPLE

## Main Level




Audience Chamber
2
C
4.3
B
A
A
4.2
4.1
4.1
WEST



# THE MEDUSAN LORDS AWAIT YOUR CHALLENGE...

The Accordlands are held hostage. A secret group of the most deadly and powerful people in the world are hatching their plot to bring the world under their boots. Their plots have spread war and chaos throughout the land, and cost the lives of the most noble. The world has called for heroes, and none that answered the call have survived. Will you be the next to stand up to the challenge?

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