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ANY FANTASY CAMPAIGN



# Dungeon Crawl Classics #14

## Dungeon Interludes

by Jason Little

SIX ADVENTURES FOR CHARACTER LEVELS 1-13



Remember the good old days, when adventures were underground, NPCs were there to be killed, and the finale of every dungeon was the dragon on the 20th level? Those days are back. Dungeon Crawl Classics adventures don't waste your time with long-winded speeches, weird campaign settings, or NPCs who aren't meant to be killed. Each adventure is 100% good, solid dungeon crawl, with the monsters you know, the traps you remember, and the secret doors you know are there somewhere.

This module is a collection of six related adventures designed to be played nonconsecutively over the course of a campaign. Each adventure builds on the one before it, but is complete and stand-alone. This allows the DM to weave an ongoing plot line into his larger campaign, which gets revealed bit by bit, one episode at a time. As the heroes progress in level, they slowly uncover a great plot by an ancient summoner to forge the *Oculum Infernae*, a terrifying artifact that will allow him to read the heavens with perfect clarity. Only by stopping his efforts can the heroes ensure that the evil wizard won't summon an army of unspeakable terror!

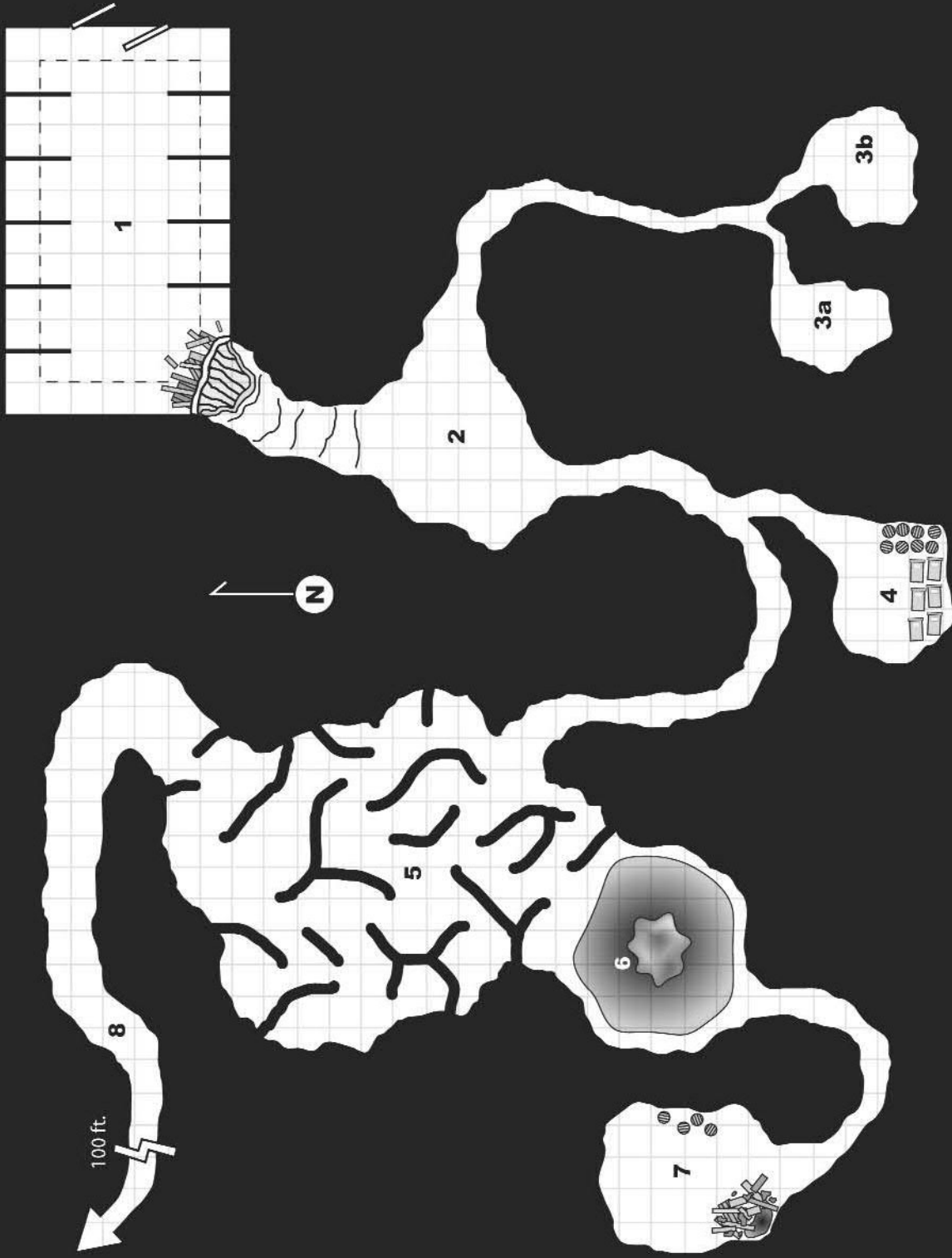
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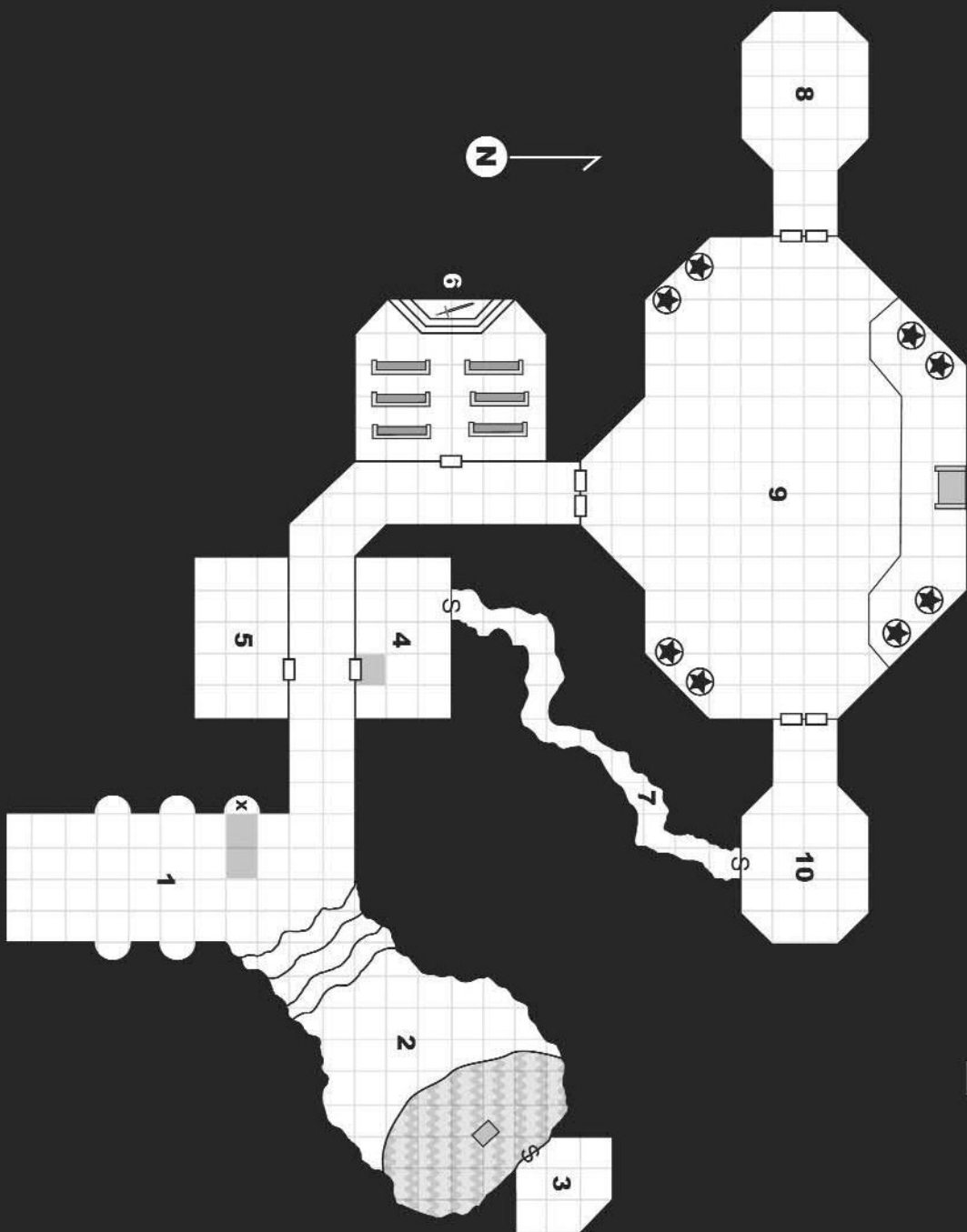
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# Chapter One: Eye of the Night

■ = 5 ft.



# Chapter Two: the Defiled Sanctuary

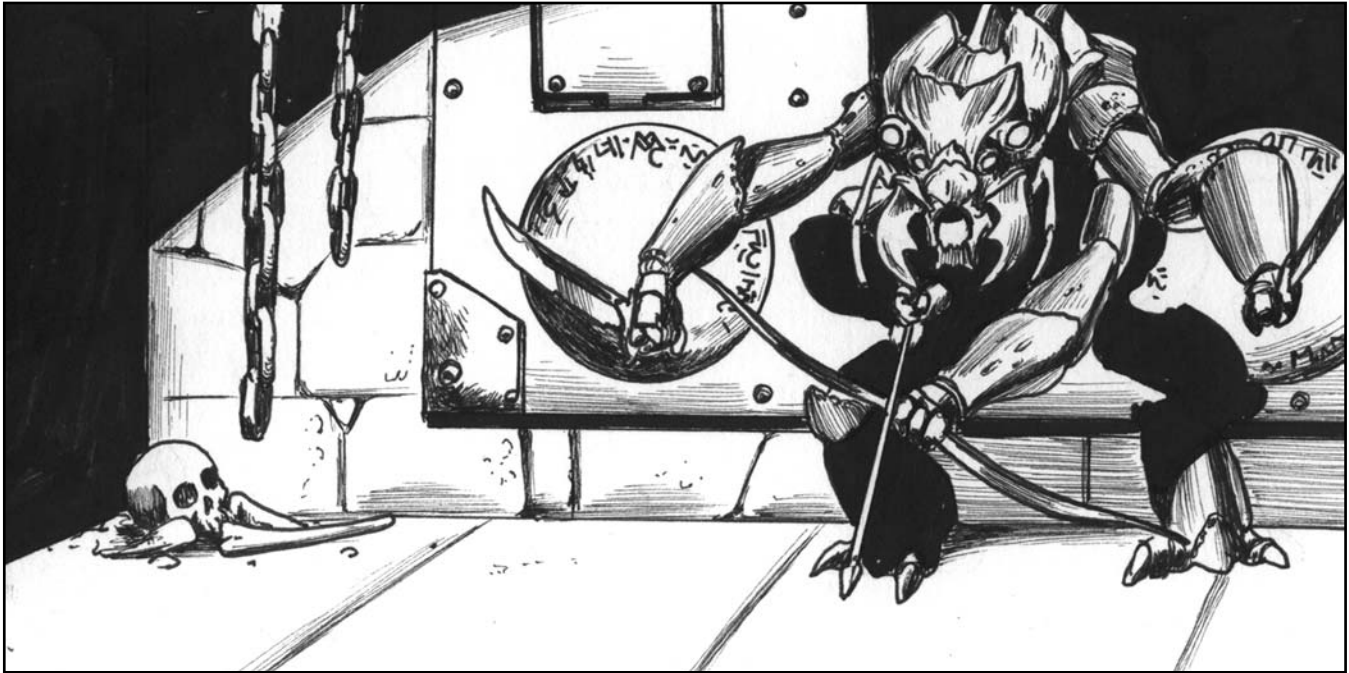


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If you like this adventure, be sure to look for the rest of the Dungeon Crawl Classics series at your local game store.

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# Dungeon Crawl Classics: Dungeon Interludes

## Introduction

Remember the golden days of role playing, when adventures were underground, NPCs were there to be killed, and the finale of every dungeon was the dragon on the 20th level? Well, those days are back. Dungeon Crawl Classics feature bloody combat, intriguing dungeons, and no NPCs who aren't meant to be killed. Each adventure is 100% good, solid dungeon crawl, with the monsters you know, the traps you fear, and the secret doors you know must be there somewhere.

Dungeon Crawl Classics: Dungeon Interludes is a slightly different beast than other adventures in the series. Rather than presenting one epic module to test the mettle of your group, Interludes provides a series of stand-alone adventures that can be linked into an existing campaign or played on their own. These six adventures can easily be tied together using the over-arching storyline or taken as separate, bite-sized nuggets.

The chapters in Interludes range from low-level scenarios perfect for starting adventurers to deadly scenarios that will test even the most seasoned veterans. Each individual chapter is designed around a compelling location and the dangers therein and can be played in one or two sessions. Dungeon Crawl Classics: Dungeon Interludes introduces new monsters, traps and magic items along the way – and plenty of excitement to keep your gaming group engaged for some time.

Note that the adventures in this module are not designed to be played consecutively. Although the level ranges match up (for example, the first adventure, “Eye of the Night,” is for levels 1-3 while the second adventure, “The Defiled Sanctuary,” is for levels 3-5), the scenarios don't always give PCs enough experience to advance directly to the next episode. The idea is that these adventures can be interspersed among other adventures in an ongoing campaign. At first, the players won't even realize they're connected. But as the plot slowly unfolds over the course of several scenarios, they'll see the bigger picture. This adds a thread of continuity to your campaign that can go on for many sessions. You can even use other Dungeon Crawl Classics modules as the “filler” between Interludes episodes.

## Getting the Players Involved

When there is fame and fortune to be had, some groups need little else to dive into the action. Depending on your group's play style and personalities, you may need to give them a bit of an extra push. Luckily, once the group has embarked on one of the adventures in this series, there is a built-in incentive to follow subsequent plot hooks – an evil summoner may conquer the realms if the heroes sit back on their laurels! Since Interludes is split into several different chapters, each chapter will provide some hooks to get your players involved in that particular adventure.

Each episode in Interludes includes lead-ins from previous episodes, as well as a number of stand-alone adventure hooks. This should be enough to get your players moving in the right direction. If they need additional help, consider using Knowledge (local) or Gather Information skill checks, or bardic knowledge checks. Ask the players to make a check when they encounter a potential hook in one episode, then “reveal” information that sends them toward the next adventure.

## Background Story

Albrecht Skullshank, a human summoner of unspeakable evil, lies imprisoned in a sheath of crystal, deep within the bowels of a long-abandoned mine. Skullshank was defeated in battle nearly a century ago by a brave band of heroes and encased in the crystal for what they hoped would be eternity. As the years have worn on, memories of Skullshank's evil have faded in the minds of everyone involved in that epic battle – except the summoner's faithful minions.

Celestial events are taking shape, and the world is on the brink of a grand astral conjunction. The stars and planets will soon be in alignment to empower the most potent dark sorceries the world has seen in millennia. With this in mind, Skullshank's minions are feverishly scouring the land for the items needed to build his grandest invention – the *Oculum Infernae*.

Albrecht Skullshank was working on the *Oculum Infernae* when he was attacked. He saved what he could from his precious device, scattering the core components to various laboratories and holdings under his control. The final plans for completing the *Oculum Infernae* lie encased in the crystal with Skullshank. Once the items are assembled and Skullshank is freed from his prison, it will only be a matter of time before the *Oculum Infernae* is complete and an army of demonic warriors is summoned to lay siege to the realms.

The *Oculum Infernae* is an enormous telescope with magic lenses and cantilevers. When properly aligned and calibrated, the *Oculum Infernae* allows the user to view the heavens with perfect clarity. This allows the user to predict astral conjunctions and celestial events unerringly – knowledge that Skullshank can use to summon an army with greater power than usual. With the precise timing and information gleaned from the *Oculum Infernae*, the summoning will become permanent.

Skullshank's minions are many and their tasks numerous. Scores of followers search for the missing pieces to the *Oculum Infernae* while others toil refining the lenses and complex instruments used by the infernal device. Still more are working to extract Skullshank from his crystal prison and bring forth a new age of dominance and evil to the land. The epic magnitude of the undertaking provides a startling realization – should Albrecht be freed and the *Oculum Infernae* completed, the entire realm will fall under the rule of his demonic armies!

As the scenarios unfold, there are plot hooks, tidbits and clues that can reveal this plot line and help tie one adventure into the next. However, the adventures can also easily be played separately. The summoner and his lieutenants make excellent villains, several of which can resurface in different scenarios.

If you wish to skip past any particular adventures, you can decide whether or not Skullshank's minions were successful in completing their goal. Since the entire series of adventures is linked to a grand finale pitting the party against Skullshank, there is an added element of continuity and impact to this final confrontation.

## Adventure Overview

The six adventures in the Interludes series are as follows:

- “The Eye of the Night” is for levels 1-3. It pits the characters against a fiendish wererat whose escapades have brushed up against those of Skullshank's minions.
- “The Defiled Sanctuary” is for levels 3-5. It sends the characters into the defiled burial sanctuary of a noble paladin, where they defeat one of Skullshank's undead lieutenants.
- “The Hunter of Worlds” is for levels 5-7. The characters become aware that they are making powerful enemies when a drow assassin poisons their rations. The drow escapes into a lair that turns out to be the domain of a xill trophy hunter, which the PCs must defeat in order to escape alive.
- “The Dünerain Mines” is for levels 7-9. After finding a map to the mines on the body of their would-be assassin in the previous episode, the characters become aware of a connection between these seemingly distinct adventures. The characters explore the mines and find plans for the *Oculum Infernae* left in the office of the ogre mage foreman.
- “The Sinking Spire” is for levels 9-11. Armed with a map found in the Dünerain Mines, the PCs set off for Skullshank's former wizard's tower, now falling into ruin amidst a deep jungle. They arrive at the wizard's tower only moments after a pair of tieflings sent to recover magical components for Skullshank himself.
- “The War of the Summoner” is for levels 11-13. Having learned of Skullshank's master plans, the PCs move to confront him. They must battle through alien wizardry in a strange elemental tower before finally confronting him and his *Oculum Infernae*.



# Chapter 1: The Eye of the Night

## Introduction

“The Eye of the Night” is the first adventure in the Interludes series and is best suited for a party of 4-6 characters of levels 1-3. The group should have 6-12 class levels among the characters. Any classes will find this challenging, but characters with developed physical skills, such as rogues, rangers, and monks, will fit particularly well. At least one type of caster, arcane or divine, will also be very useful.

## Adventure Summary

The party stumbles across an abandoned druidic community, where monsters and dangers lurk in a network of burrows below the farmlands. The commune is the resting place of a seemingly simple magic item – a gem Skullshank seeks to fashion into one of the lenses to the *Oculum Infernae*. Skullshank’s minions have already torn through the commune, looking for this “*Eye of the Night*,” but have not been able to find it.

This adventure is a springboard into the rest of the Interludes series, as the party gets its first look at Skullshank’s evil raiders roaming the countryside, learns a little bit about the overall plot, and discovers that there is a larger evil looming in the distance. The “*Eye of the Night*” can also be used as a simple encounter between adventures in an ongoing campaign.

## Game Master’s Section

### Encounter Table

To help the GM prepare, we have included a quick reference table showing all encounters at a glance. **Loc** – the location number keyed to the map for the encounter. **Pg** – the module page number that the encounter can be found on. **Type** – this indicates if the encounter is a trap (T), puzzle (P), or combat (C). **Encounter** – the key monsters, traps, or NPCs that can be found in the encounter. Names in *italics* are classed NPCs. **EL** – the encounter level.



<u>Loc</u>	<u>Page</u>	<u>Type</u>	<u>Encounter</u>	<u>EL</u>
1-1	6	T	Crumbling timbers	1
		T	Breakaway floor pit	2
1-2	6	C	4 rats per character	1-2
1-3A	7	C	3 rats per character	2-3
			2 dire rats	
1-3B	7	C	3 rats per character	2-3
			2 dire rats	
1-4	8	C	1 monstrous centipede	1
		T	Diseased bodies	1
1-5	9	C	4 fiendish dire rats	5
1-6	9	T	Sludge pit trap	2
		C	1 gray ooze	4
1-7	10	C	<i>Blood Whisker</i> , wererat Rog3	6
		C	5 fiendish dire rats	3
		P/T	Pit of endless rats	1
1-8	13	P	Snarl the badger	1/2

## Scaling Information

GMs can quickly adjust the difficulty of the scenario to accommodate slightly more experienced groups. Consider adapting the adventure using any of the following suggestions:

**Weaker Parties (groups with fewer than 6 total character levels):** Decrease the number of normal rats encountered in area 1-2 to three per character. Reduce the number of dire rats in area 1-3A and area 1-3B to one. Reduce the number of fiendish dire rats in area 1-5 and area 1-7 by one in each location. Remove 1-2 rogue levels from Blood Whisker in area 1-7.

**Stronger Parties (characters above 3rd level, or for more than 12 total character levels):** Increase all skill and save DCs each by 2 points. Upgrade rats in area 1-2 to dire rats. Upgrade normal rats in area 1-3A and area 1-3B to dire rats and the dire rats in area 1-3A and area 1-3B to fiendish dire rats (by applying the fiend template). Increase the number of fiendish dire rats in area 1-5 and area 1-7 by two each.

## Getting the Players Involved

There are two very simple and direct ways to involve the characters in this plot. GMs weaving this scenario into an ongoing campaign may come up with other ways to pique the curiosity of their group.

**A Cry For Help:** The party is resting in the small village of Taggart's End when a haggard druid and weary farmer stumble into the town. Exhausted, the pair tells the villagers a terrible tale of how the nearby commune of Fairweather has fallen victim to raiders. They beseech the villagers, and the party, to come to Fairweather's defense to help the farmers and druids who were unable to flee in time. Knowing how important the commune is to Taggart's End, the village elders offer each party member 50 gold pieces to do what they can to aid Fairweather and its druids.

**All Roads Lead To Fairweather:** While traveling across country from their latest adventure, the party comes across a large farming commune in shambles. Fairweather stretches before them, toppled barns and ravaged fields dotting the landscape. A muffled cry leads them to one of the ruined barns, where a dying farmer tells the tragic tale of the raider attacks. He tells the party that the commune leader was last seen being dragged off to a barn on the other side of the commune.

## Adventuring Underground

Only area 1-1, the crumbling barn, is located on the surface. The rest of the adventure is underground, roughly 40 feet below the surface. Unless otherwise noted, there are no light sources underground. The party must provide a light source unless the characters have dark-vision. GMs may wish to review the rules on light sources and visual ranges before running this adventure.

## Background Story

The druid commune of Fairweather has been a valuable member of the region for quite some time. Providing nearby townships and villages with fresh produce and milk, Fairweather is acknowledged as one of the most successful farms in the area. Recently, however, trade caravans have stumbled across a horrible sight – raiders have devastated the peaceful commune of Fairweather.

Crop fields lie in tatters. The remains of razed houses and barns litter the grounds. The commune has been utterly destroyed by the summoner Skullshank's raiders. These minions have been sent to recover a magic gem known as the *Eye of the Night*. Skullshank seeks to corrupt the powers of this jewel and fashion it into one of the lenses of the *Oculum Infernae*.

The commune's leader Thistle, a sentient plant being of a race known as the thornblood, stood up to the raiders to allow his brethren a chance to flee to safety. Many farmers and druids fled into the nearby forests and foothills, making their way to the nearest villages to seek help. Those who remained were captured and enslaved by Skullshank's raiders. Thistle was beaten and tortured but resisted all attempts to reveal the location of the gem the raiders sought.

All the commotion caught the attention of Blood Whisker, a fiendish wererat living in a network of burrows below the commune. Blood Whisker has secretly reviled the commune and Thistle from a distance since his lycanthropic presence is not welcome on the grounds. Surprising the guards who were interrogating Thistle, Blood Whisker easily defeated them and took Thistle as his own hostage.

Blood Whisker took Thistle underground, keeping him trapped in a pit in his personal lair within the mazelike burrows beneath the commune. With Thistle as his prisoner and the commune above in ruins, Blood Whisker's empire of rats has free reign of the territory.

Soon, Skullshank's remaining minions moved on to seek the gem elsewhere, having failed to locate it at the commune.

## Player Beginning

*The once-vibrant farming commune of Fairweather is in shambles. Entire fields of crops lie spoiling and ruined. Razed barns and burned-out silos dot the land. The signs of struggle are everywhere – and it is clear the commune had little chance to defend itself.*

*All this destruction, and for what? A gem? Various rumors have reached your ears that raiders struck the commune looking for a large topaz – some say the size of a man's fist. Other rumors hint that the gem is magical. But could it possibly be worth this grave price?*

*The stench of rotting crops mixes with the decay from the dead bodies of farmers killed during the raid. Countless rats litter the area. Everywhere you look, you see the filthy vermin rifling through the ruined commune. Crows and buzzards fly lazy circles overhead, seeking their next meal.*

*The remains of a large barn catch your attention. It lies on the very edge of the commune, near the tree line of the adjacent forest. The barn is partially collapsed, and the large wooden doors hang awkwardly open. Near the barn entrance lie a half dozen bodies of dead farmers, as well as two bodies of human raiders dressed in black and red leather armor. The bodies of farmers and raiders alike show numerous small cuts and scratches.*



# The Eye of the Night

Unless noted in the text, all corridors are 10 feet high and the walls are hard-packed earth. There is no typical default door – this dungeon consists of sprawling caverns and tunnels. There are no wandering monsters in this scenario.

**Earthen Walls:** 3 ft. thick; hardness 5; hp 90; Break DC 30; Climb DC 18.

## Areas of the Map

**Area 1-1 – The Crumbling Barn (EL 2):** Blood Whisker surprised the raiders and Thistle in this barn. The ensuing struggle as Blood Whisker subdued Thistle left behind some clues. Read or paraphrase the following when the party enters the barn:

*Sunlight filters into the barn from the gaps in the fallen roof. The barn stretches 60 feet long and stands 30 feet wide. Empty stalls line the north and south walls. A loft built halfway up the 20-foot-high ceiling precariously teeters as it covers the western half of the barn. Straw and feed litter the floor of the barn, and several collapsed timbers from the ceiling criss-cross the room. The bodies of three more farmers and two more leather-clad raiders lie near one of the stalls to the south.*

*Far in the southwest corner, more timbers and broken earth surround a large hole in the ground. It appears as though the collapse is centered near this sunken portion. The hole is roughly 10 feet wide, cutting a crude half-circle in the floor in the back corner.*

**Cause of Death:** A DC 14 Heal check can identify the cause of death for the various bodies. The small cuts and scratches are teeth marks – caused by the numerous rats in the area. All of the farmers died from weapon injuries inflicted by the raiders. The two raiders appear to have been killed by wild animals.

**Climbing:** If anyone weighing more than 100 pounds attempts to climb any of the walls or onto the loft, there is a 20% chance per round that portion of the barn will collapse. Climbing the crumbling walls or loft requires a DC 12 Climb check.

**Crumbling Timbers:** CR 1; mechanical; location trigger (per instance along exterior walls or loft); no reset (once broken, it is negated); collapsing timbers (2d4 damage); DC 14 Reflex save for no damage; single target; Search DC 18; Disable Device DC 18.

**Skill Checks:** A successful DC 20 Search check centered on the western half of the barn reveals

drag marks (such as a person being carried with their heels dragging behind) and numerous small animal tracks and spoor on the floor. A successful DC 18 Knowledge (nature) reveals them to be rat tracks, but the tufts of hair scattered about are unusually thick for rats.

**The Hole:** When the party examines the hole more closely, read the following:

*The rickety timbers surrounding the hole creak as you approach. The hole yawns 10 feet across and quickly disappears into a fairly steep tunnel descending into the earth. The smell of the earth is strong here, and deep within the tunnel, you can hear a distant chattering – more rats lie below. A small metallic glint from deep within the tunnel's darkness catches your eye.*

The tunnel descends 40 feet into the ground. The section of floor immediately north of the pit is in terrible shape. Anyone weighing more than 100 pounds who steps on the northern edge marked on the map may fall down the tunnel as the weakened floorboards give way.

**Breakaway Floorboard and Tunnel:** CR 2; mechanical; location trigger; no reset (once broken, it is negated); 40-foot fall (3d6 damage plus 1d6 nonlethal damage); DC 14 Reflex save to avoid falling; single target; Search DC 20; Disable Device DC 18.

The rough surfaces along the tunnel and steep slope require a DC 15 Climb check to successfully handle. Failing the Climb check by 5 or more means a character falls from his current height. There are enough sturdy timbers remaining in the barn that the party can find a safe place to tie down a rope to aid their descent.

**Area 1-2 – Tattered Remains (EL 1-2):** Once the characters have descended into the tunnel and have a light source, read the following.

*As you reach the bottom, the tunnel flares wider and opens into an irregularly shaped room roughly 40 feet wide and 30 feet deep. A tunnel leads off roughly east from the main room, while another winds south from across the chamber.*

*Nearby lie three crumpled corpses. The carcasses of two small barnyard animals lie picked over and nearly devoured. The third appears to be the corpse of another raider, its red and black leather armor torn to shreds. In the corpse's hand, a short sword lies partially pulled from its sheath.*

*You slowly recognize movement among the corpses. Numerous rats feast on the remains. One raises its snout and sniffs the air, then another. Chattering furiously, they move to attack!*

**Tactics:** There are 4 rats per party member. These rats are compelled by Blood Whisker to protect the tunnels, so they are more aggressive than usual. Once half the rats have been defeated, the remaining rats must make a DC 12 Will save or flee toward area 1-3. This roll is made every round until the rats flee or are all defeated.

**Enraged Rats (4 per character):** CR 1/8; Tiny animal; HD 1/4d8; hp 1 each; Init +2; Spd 15 ft., climb 15 ft., swim 15 ft.; AC 14, touch 14, flat-footed 12; Base Atk +0; Grp -12; Atk/Full Atk Bite +4 melee (1d3-4); Space/Reach 2-1/2 ft./0 ft.; SQ Low-light vision, scent; AL N; SV Fort +2, Ref +4, Will +1; Str 2, Dex 15, Con 10, Int 2, Wis 12, Cha 2.

*Skills and Feats:* Balance +10, Climb +12, Hide +14, Move Silently +10, Swim +10, Weapon Finesse

**Aftermath:** The sword in the raider's scabbard is a masterwork cold iron scimitar. A DC 18 Search check of the body will also reveal a small leather pouch near the animal corpses containing 7 gp, 23 sp and a labeled *vial of silversheen*.

**Area 1-3A and area 1-3B – Rat Breeding Grounds (EL 2-3 each):** This hallway constricts considerably, forcing characters to squeeze through the narrow openings to travel further. The narrow hallway splits into two nearly identical rooms. Both area 1-3A and area 1-3B feature the same monster encounters but different treasures, as indicated in the text. As the characters start to head down this hallway, read the following:

*The hallway slowly turns southward, following a sinuous curve. After 30 feet the hallway narrows considerably. Another 10 feet deeper and the hall is only five feet wide, then four, three and finally narrowing to nearly two feet wide.*

*The narrow hall eventually splits off into two equally narrow corridors, one heading slightly southeast, the other slightly southwest. The distant chattering of more rats fills your ears.*

Small size characters can navigate the narrowest stretch with no problems, but Medium or larger characters must squeeze into this location. See the sidebar on squeezing for detailed information on how this impacts characters.

**Skill Checks:** A DC 14 Spot check reveals that there are numerous small burrows or holes along the bottom of the walls. They are large enough for rats to comfortably navigate but too small for even Small size characters to use. A DC 18 Listen check indicates that there is a lot of chattering going on, and that it would take several dozen rats – or more – to make that much noise.

**The Rooms:** Once the party picks a corridor, it will eventually flare out wider again after 20 feet or so. When a character reaches one of the larger rooms, read the following:

*Crude shelves have been gouged out of the earthen walls, and hundreds of small burrows dot the walls and floors. In a grotesque parody of a chicken coop, this room appears to be a breeding pen for rats. And rats there are. Hundreds of the vile creatures scamper about the room, dodging and darting between the tunnels.*

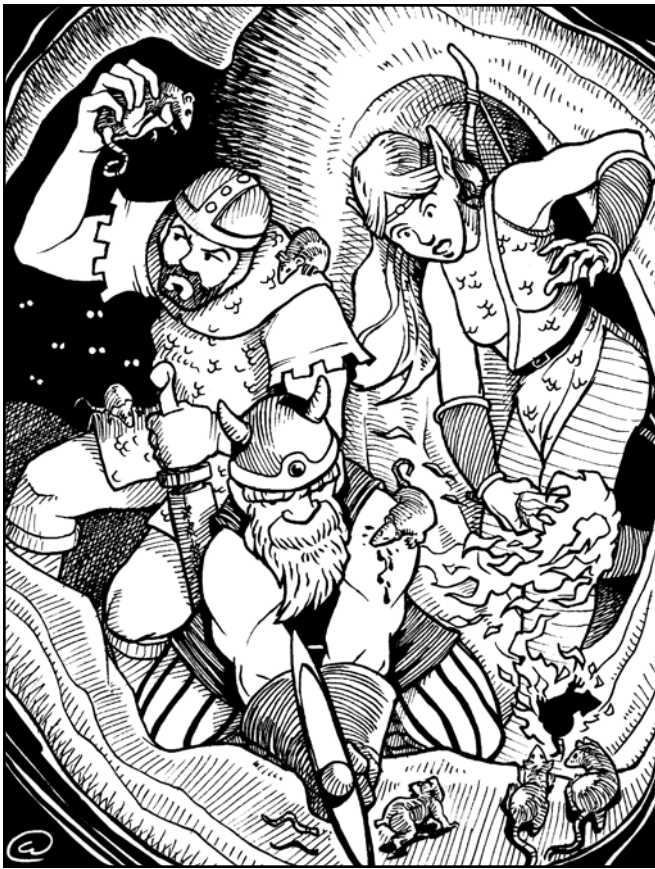
*Breeding rats line the shelves spawning new litters of vermin. But dominating the center of the room are two enormously bloated rats – easily more than three feet in length – suckling countless young on their corpulent bodies. Their beady black eyes watch you warily.*

**Tactics:** The two dire rats will only attack if the other rats in the room are threatened or attacked. There are three normal rats per player character. These also attack, while the rest mill about excitedly or try to flee. All rats forced into combat will fight to the death. The rats will target the physically smallest characters first.

## Squeezing

In some cases, you may have to squeeze into or through an area that isn't as wide as the space you take up. You can squeeze through or into a space that is at least half as wide as your normal space. Each move into or through a narrow space counts as if it were 2 squares, and while squeezed in a narrow space you take a -4 penalty on attack rolls and a -4 penalty to AC. A creature can squeeze past an opponent while moving but it can't end its movement in an occupied square.

To squeeze through or into a space less than half your space's width, you must use the Escape Artist skill. You can't attack while using Escape Artist to squeeze through or into a narrow space, you take a -4 penalty to AC, and you lose any Dexterity bonus to AC.



**Dire Rats (2):** CR 1/3; Small Animal; HD 1d8+1; hp 6, 8; Init +3; 40 ft., climb 20 ft.; AC 15, touch 14, flat-footed 12; Base Atk +0; Grp -4; Atk/Full Atk Bite +4 melee (1d4 plus disease); SA disease; SQ Low-light vision, scent; AL N; SV Fort +3, Ref +5, Will +3; Str 10, Dex 17, Con 12, Int 1, Wis 12, Cha 4.

*Skills and Feats:* Climb +11, Hide +8, Listen +4, Move Silently +4, Spot +4, Swim +11; Alertness, Weapon Finesse

*Disease (Ex):* Filth fever – bite, Fortitude DC 11, incubation period 1d3 days, damage 1d3 Dex and 1d3 Con.

**Enraged Rats (3 per character):** CR 1/8; Tiny Animal; HD 1/4d8; hp 1 each; Init +2; Spd 15 ft., climb 15 ft., swim 15 ft.; AC 14, touch 14, flat-footed 12; Base Atk +0; Grp -12; Atk/Full Atk Bite +4 melee (1d3-4); Space/Reach 2-1/2 ft./0 ft.; SQ Low-light vision, scent; AL N; SV Fort +2, Ref +4, Will +1; Str 2, Dex 15, Con 10, Int 2, Wis 12, Cha 2.

*Skills and Feats:* Balance +10, Climb +12, Hide +14, Move Silently +10, Swim +10; Weapon Finesse

**Aftermath:** Area 1-3A and area 1-3B are identical in all regards except for loot. After dispatching the rats in area 1-3A, a DC 18 Search check reveals a small collection of gems (3 amethysts, 15 gp each) and a vial of silversheen stashed into one of the burrows on the western wall. A DC 18 Search check

in area 1-3B reveals a heavily gnawed bone scroll case inside one of the burrows on the south wall. The scroll case was taken from Thistle, and contains divine magic scrolls, scribed by a 4th level caster: *entangle*, *goodberry*, and *purify food and drink*.

**Area 1-4 – The Kitchen (EL 2):** When the characters enter the hallway leading to the room, read the following:

*A strong, unpleasant odor fills the hallway, before the hall flares open to reveal a room lying 30 feet in the distance. The reek of rotting vegetables mingles with the unmistakable stench of death. The air is thick with humidity, and the ground is much softer beneath your feet.*

This room contains castoffs and stolen goods from the commune. Blood Whisker leaves the foodstuffs here for later use, and much of it lies rotting. Once the party pushes forward into the room itself, read the following:

*The room stands roughly 30 feet by 30 feet. The stink of death and rot is nearly overpowering. A half dozen barrels lie in the southeast corners, their lower halves covered in mold and mildew. Burlap sacks are stacked along the south wall, their chewed and threadbare corners spilling dried feed corn along the floor.*

*A pair of humanoid legs clad in leather stick out from behind the burlap sacks, and a small pool of apparently dried blood stretches along the floor next to the sacks of corn. Above the distant chatter of rats from deeper within the burrows, you hear a low clicking sound coming from behind the barrels.*

A DC 20 Listen check identifies the clicking sound as a monstrous centipede moving across something metallic. In fact, it is moving across a pile of discarded equipment as it feeds on the corpses behind the barrels.

The bodies of 2 more raiders and 1 more farmer lie behind the sacks, neatly stacked. Blood Whisker is keeping these bodies as “snacks” for the large gray ooze that lies in the pool in area 1-6.

**Tactics:** As soon as any character moves within five feet of the centipede’s hiding space, it attacks – unless a character specifically mentioned he was trying to hide and succeeds at an opposed Hide check. Once in combat, the centipede fights to the death.

**Monstrous Centipede:** CR 1; Large Vermin; HD 4d8; hp 23; Init +2; Spd 40 ft., climb 40 ft.; AC 14,

touch 11, flat-footed 12; Base Atk +2; Grp +7; Atk/Full Atk Bite +3 melee (1d8+1 plus poison); 10 ft./5 ft.; SA Poison; SQ Darkvision 60 ft., vermin traits; AL N; SV Fort +3, Ref +3, Will +1; Str 13, Dex 15, Con 10, Int –, Wis 10, Cha 2.

*Skills and Feats:* Climb +10, Hide +6, Spot +4; Weapon Finesse

*Poison (Ex):* Injury, Fortitude DC 11, initial and secondary damage 1d4 Dex.

**Aftermath:** Once the characters have dispatched the centipede, they may wish to search the bodies stacked behind the grain sacks. The bodies have been rotting for some time.

Unless the characters specifically state they will attempt to carefully remove items found on the bodies or take other precautions with the corpses, any character coming into contact with one of the bodies (including moving the bodies or attempting a Search check to locate items) is exposed to disease. A DC 20 Search check, however, will reveal a secret, interior pocket of the jerkin on one of the raider corpses. Inside the pocket are a small ruby (30 gold), 11 gp and a *ring of climbing*.

**Diseased Bodies:** CR 1; mechanical; location trigger; constant function; disease (the shakes, incubation 1 day, 1d8 Dex damage); contact; DC 13 Fortitude save to avoid contamination (DC 11 if adequate precautions were taken); single target; Search DC 20; Disable Device N/A (burn bodies); DC 18 Heal check to identify presence of disease.

The pile of gear and items huddled in the corner contains mostly mundane and insignificant items: 3 daggers, 1 sickle, 17 crossbow bolts, 1 metal buckler, 1 torch, flint and steel, 2 water skins and a 50-foot coil of rope.

**Area 1-5 – Maze of Mud (EL 5):** The main features of the room are the numerous thin, mud walls and soft muddy floor that make quick navigation through the area difficult. As the party enters this area, read the following:

*The long, curving hallway slowly widens until a large room lies before you. The ground grows soft and muddy underfoot, and the air is very humid. It is difficult to determine the actual shape or size of this room, as numerous mud walls criss-cross the area.*

*This chamber appears chaotic and mazelike, with numerous small passages. Some of the mud walls stretch fully from ceiling to floor, while others have several small gaps. A handful of walls run only a few feet before falling under their own weight, while others curve and crawl 15 feet or more.*

Now give the players handout A. The mud walls contain small holes and tunnels that the dire rats can pass through unimpeded. Small size characters can also pass through them with little difficulty, costing 10 feet of movement instead of 5 feet. Medium size characters must succeed at a DC 15 Escape Artist check to squeeze through, at a cost of 10 feet of movement. Failing by more than 5 means the character gets stuck. A stuck character is considered prone until they can free themselves with a successful DC 15 Escape Artist check or by breaking through the mud walls.

**Slick Floor:** The floor here is very muddy and slick, presenting a falling risk. A DC 15 Survival check makes the hazard noticeable. Otherwise, any character moving more than half speed through the maze must make a DC 10 Balance check or fall prone. A critical miss during combat also requires a character to make a DC 10 Balance check or fall prone.

**Tactics:** Four huge fiendish dire rats patrol this area. They know the tunnels well and use their maneuverability to flank the characters. The dire rats are not subject to fall due to the slick conditions and can use their full movement without risk. Each dire rat uses its smite good ability on the first flank attack possible. They fight to the death.

**Improved Fiendish Dire Rats (4):** CR 2; Small Magical Beast; HD 2d8+2; hp 16, 15, 13; Init +3; Spd 40 ft., climb 20 ft.; AC 15, touch 14, flat-footed 12; Base Atk +0; Grp –4; Atk/Full Atk Bite +4 melee (1d4 plus disease); SA Smite Good 1/day (+2 damage), disease; SQ Spell resistance 7, Darkvision, Cold/Fire resistance (5), scent; AL NE; SV Fort +4, Ref +5, Will +3; Str 10, Dex 17, Con 12, Int 3, Wis 12, Cha 4.

*Skills and Feats:* Climb +11, Hide +8, Listen +4, Move Silently +4, Spot +4, Swim +11; Alertness, Weapon Finesse.

*Disease (Ex):* Filth fever – bite, Fortitude DC 11, incubation period 1d3 days, damage 1d3 Dex and 1d3 Con.

**Area 1-6 – The Sludge Pit (EL 5):** As the party makes its way through area 1-5 toward the sludge pit, read the following:

*The muddy maze finally clears out to the southwest. Just a few paces from the maze, the floor sweeps sharply downward, forming a small pool 20 feet across at the bottom of the recessed floor. The surface of the pool, a good 30 feet below the ground level, is thick and murky with algae, with small clouds of flies and mosquitoes buzzing lazily above it.*



*The rest of the chamber is nearly 40 feet across, but only a narrow ledge of flat earth encircles the sunken center to either side. The footing on the ledge appears sturdy, but the steep sides of the pit look slick and muddy.*

*On the opposite end of the pit, far to the southwest, a 10-foot-wide tunnel extends further into the earth.*

Now give the players handout B.

**Skill Checks:** A DC 18 Survival check to scan the area for tracks indicates tracks that lead off along both the northwest and southeast sections of the pool. The tracks along the northeast are larger, and there also appear to be drag marks, similar to those found in area 1-1.

A DC 20 Spot check reveals that the majority of the tracks along the southeast route end about halfway around the circumference of the pool. Further, the mud along the southern and eastern edges of the pit appears to be far more disturbed and churned.

The narrow path along the north and west edges is the easiest path to take and the one Blood Whisker uses. It requires a DC 12 Balance check to navigate. The path along the south and east edges is thinner and slicker, requiring a DC 15 Balance check to navigate. Increase the Balance check on

both sides by +3 for any character moving faster than half speed through the area. Failing either Balance check by more than 5 indicates falling into the pit.

**Narrow Ledge Around Pit:** CR 2; mechanical; location trigger; constant effect. 30-foot fall (2d6 damage, 1d6 non-lethal damage from slope); gray ooze; DC 16 Reflex save to cling to edge; DC 15 Climb check to hang on and pull self up; single target; Search DC 20; Disable Device NA.

Once a character has fallen into the pit, they need to make a DC 15 Climb check to start making their way back up the muddy walls, in addition to dealing with the gray ooze.

**Tactics:** The gray ooze exhibits no tactics; it is a mindless puddle of goo. It is too clumsy and bulky to ooze up the slick, muddy sides so it cannot pursue anyone who climbs out of the pit.

**Gray Ooze:** CR 4; Medium ooze; HD 3d10+15; hp 36; Init -5; Spd 10 ft.; AC 5, touch 5, flat-footed 5; Base Atk +2; Grp +3; Atk/Full Atk Slam +3 melee (1d6+1 plus 1d6 acid); SA Acid, constrict 1d6+1 plus 1d6 acid, improved grab; SQ Blindsight 60 ft., immunity to cold and fire, ooze traits, transparent; AL N; SV Fort +6, Ref -4, Will -4; Str 12, Dex 1, Con 21, Int -, Wis 1, Cha 1

**Acid (Ex):** Dissolves organic material and metal but not stone; affected objects (including weapons attacking the ooze) dissolve unless they make a DC 16 Ref save.

**Transparent (Ex):** A gray ooze is hard to identify, even under ideal conditions, and it takes a DC 15 Spot check to notice one. Since this ooze is hidden below the surface of the pool, increase the Spot check DC to 20. Anyone who falls into the pit is treated as having failed to spot it, and is automatically hit with a slam attack.

**Treasure:** There is no treasure in the pit, as the gray ooze's strong acidic touch has dissolved anything of interest.

**Area 1-7 – Blood Whisker's Lair (EL 7):** Blood Whisker and 5 fiendish dire rats occupy this room, as well as a literal endless pit of normal rats, where Thistle is currently held hostage. Scraps of Thistle's druidic regalia are found here, with other clues leading the group to possibly realize that something is in the pit.

Once the characters have navigated the pit from area 1-6 and reach the tunnel entrance, read the following:

*The wide tunnel feels more solid underfoot, a welcome sign given the muddy hazards in other*



*parts of the burrows. The tunnel curves slightly as it reaches westward, and the dull static of chattering rats is obvious. Above the din of the rats, however, you can hear something larger moving ahead.*

If the characters press forward without extinguishing their light source, Blood Whisker will be able to prepare an ambush – read the following:

*The sounds of shuffling and the clicking of claws on hard earth soon fade, until the only sound is once again the chattering of rats.*

Once the characters enter the room itself with a light source, read the following:

*A large room expands before you, smoothed out with more care than the tunnels and caverns through the rest of the burrows. A simple straw bed lies to the west, and a series of crudely constructed chests and crates lines the western wall. But that's not what draws your attention the most.*

*The sound of rats has been constant throughout the tunnels, and it is nearly deafening here. Finally you see why. Near the northwest corner of the room, a five-foot patch of ground seems to literally bubble and churn with rats. Countless rats tumble forth from the area, scattering across the room and eventually running into the honeycomb of small tunnels perforating the walls of the chamber. Even as you watch, dozens of rats spawn from that part of the room and head into the complex of tunnels.*

*A wooden staff, a tattered green cloak, a length of rope and a leather satchel stick out from beneath the churning pile of rats.*

Now give the players handout C.

**Room Condition:** Any Concentration checks in this room have the DC increased by +3 due to the distracting chatter of the rat swarm. Keep this in mind should any spell casters attempt to Combat Cast.

**Tactics:** If the characters did not extinguish their lights, Blood Whisker and his dire rat minions have already used their darkvision to quickly get into position to ambush the party, hiding behind the

makeshift bed and chests in this room. Once Blood Whisker attacks, characters must pass a DC 20 Spot check or they are surprised for the first round of combat. Otherwise, combat will begin as usual.

As soon as a character gets within 10 feet of the bed, the pit of rats or the wooden chests, Blood Whisker launches his attack. He and the dire rat minions fight to the death. During the battle, Blood Whisker will focus on the largest or most dangerous-looking opponent, attempting to get his sneak attack bonus during a surprise round. Blood Whisker positions his dire rats to assist him to create flanking situations. If a spell caster overcomes Blood Whisker's innate cold or fire resistance, he will switch his focus to the caster.

**Blood Whisker, Fiendish Human Wererat Rog3:** CR 6; Medium human (shapechanger); HD 2d8+3d6+9; hp 40; Init +3; Spd 30 ft.; AC 20, touch 16, flat-footed 14; Base Atk +2; Grp +3; Atk Rapier +9 melee (1d6+2/18–20); Full Atk Rapier +7 melee (1d6+2/18–20) and bite +3 melee (1d6 plus disease); SA Smite good 1/day (+5 damage), curse of lycanthropy, disease, sneak attack (+2d6); SQ Spell resistance 10, darkvision 60', cold/fire resistance 5, rat empathy, damage reduction 10/silver, low-light vision, scent, evasion, trap sense +1; AL LE; SV Fort +7, Ref +13, Will +5; Str 13, Dex 22, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 11, Cha 8.

*Skills and Feats:* Climb +16, Escape Artist +10, Hide +10, Listen +10, Move Silently +10, Spot +10, Swim +12; Alertness, Weapon Finesse, Weapon Focus (rapier), Lightning Reflexes.

*Disease (Ex):* Filth fever – bite, Fortitude DC 11, incubation period 1d3 days, damage 1d3 Dex and 1d3 Con.

*Possessions:* +1 rapier, leather armor, *minor ring of sonic resistance*, keys to chests in room, two *potions of cure light wounds*.

*Hybrid Form:* Blood Whisker is currently stuck in his hybrid form. His anger and rage prevent him from focusing properly to shift forms, and his life underground shields him from encountering the full moon, which might force a form shift.

**Fiendish Dire Rats (5):** CR 1; Small magical beast; HD 1d8+1; hp 8, 8, 7, 7, 7; Init +3; Spd 40 ft., climb 20 ft.; AC 15, touch 14, flat-footed 12; Base Atk +0; Grp –4; Atk/Full Atk Bite +4 melee (1d4 plus dis-

## Defeating Blood Whisker

Please note that this is a very challenging encounter for low-level characters, due to Blood Whisker's high damage reduction. There are several *vials of silversheen* in the dungeon. If no one in the party has at least a minor silver weapon, you may wish to include one on the body of a raider or among the centipede's stash in area 1-4. If the party rescues Thistle, he will aid them, as well. Finally, clever groups may try to draw Blood Whisker back to the pit with the grey ooze and attack from a distance or try to force the wererat into the ooze.

## Acquiring the *Eye of the Night*

The most direct means to acquire the *Eye of the Night* is to reunite Thistle and Snarl. The group can do this regardless of which area they visit first. However, if the group bypasses area 1-8 completely, there is still a chance to gain this treasure.

If Thistle finds the group to be resourceful and helpful, he may still offer the gem freely. If the group has been belligerent, crude or threatening, it will take some convincing. When all else fails, a DC 16 Diplomacy check will convince Thistle that the group deserves the gem, modified as the GM sees fit based on the characters' actions.

The *Eye of the Night* is in fact a *gem of brightness*. However, instead of a long rough prism, the eye is a wide, circular topaz. If the GM determines that Thistle would give the *Eye of the Night* to the group, read the following aloud:

*Looking over the group with his leafy countenance, Thistle addresses the party after apparently weighing something over in his mind.*

*"You have proven yourself worthy," the druid says, his voice the sound of wind rustling through the leaves. "It is painfully obvious to me now that I simply cannot bear this burden any longer. To think that carrying this gem has caused so much pain ... so much destruction."*

*With a deep sigh, Thistle plunges his hand directly into his chest. His leafy ribcage bulges as he slowly pulls something out of his chest – a large, smooth topaz the size of a man's fist. So the rumors were true!*

*"This is the Eye of the Night. I fear this is what the raiders sought, and apparently what the filthy vermin Blood Whisker wanted, as well. I can no longer ensure its safety and must focus my time and energy to rebuilding the commune.*

*"In the wrong hands, this tool of peace and nature could be corrupted. An ill omen rides the wind, and I fear the raiders that destroyed Fairweather are merely servants of a greater threat beating like a twisted heart in the darkness. Please, take the Eye of the Night and keep it safe."*

ease); SA Smite good 1/day (+1 damage), disease; SQ Spell resistance 6, darkvision, cold/fire resistance 5, scent; AL NE; SV Fort +4, Ref +5, Will +3; Str 10, Dex 17, Con 12, Int 3, Wis 12, Cha 4.

*Skills and Feats:* Climb +11, Hide +8, Listen +4, Move Silently +4, Spot +4, Swim +11, Alertness, Weapon Finesse.

*Disease (Ex):* Filth fever – bite, Fortitude DC 11, incubation period 1d3 days, damage 1d3 Dex and 1d3 Con.

The common rat swarm poses no tactical or combat impact, unless a character moves into the area and falls into the rat pit itself.

**Pit of Endless Rats:** CR 1; mechanical; location trigger; constant effect; rat swarm (automatic hit, 1d4 damage per round of exposure); DC 14 Reflex save to avoid falling in; Search automatic; Disable Device DC special. The pit of rats houses a unique magic item called a *bag of endless rats* (see page 73). The bag is currently open, allowing a limitless supply of rats to enter the bottom of the pit. Unless the bag is retrieved, this danger cannot be eliminated.

**Development:** Thistle the druid lies buried beneath the swarm of rats, on the bottom of the pit alongside the *bag of endless rats*. The length of rope seen by the pit is securely tied to Thistle. Blood Whisker uses the rope to raise Thistle from the pit to interrogate and bully the druid, and then lowers him back into the swarm when finished.

Thistle's fast healing ability prevents the rat swarm from killing him outright, but he has lived a tortured existence since his capture and will be grateful if rescued from the pit. If the characters have not noticed the strange nature of the endless number of rats in the room once Thistle has been rescued, he will warn them of a magic bag in the pit that seems to be the source of the infestation. If rescued while Blood Whisker is still alive, Thistle will quickly come to the party's aid.

Stopping the rat swarm could be accomplished by several means. Area effect spells, especially fire, may burn a swathe through the rats to reveal the bag at the bottom of the pit. Characters may also brave the pit to search for the bag within the swarm. Most plans will require a DC 20 Search check of the bottom of the pit to locate the bag. Modify the DC by -2 to -6 based on clever thinking by the characters to reduce the number of rats in the pit.

**Thistle, Thornblood Drd4:** CR 7; Medium plant; HD 4d8; hp 26; Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; AC 12, touch 12, flat-footed 10; Base Atk +3; Grp +3; Atk unarmed +3 melee (1d4+1 nonlethal) or +1 *quarterstaff* +7 melee (1d6+1); Full Atk unarmed +3 melee (1d4+1



nonlethal) or +1 *quarterstaff* +3/+3 melee (1d6+1); SA spells; SQ animal companion, nature sense, wild empathy, woodland stride, trackless step, resist nature's lure, dark vision, fast healing 3, plant traits; AL LE; SV Fort +4, Ref +3, Will +7; Str 13, Dex 15, Con 11, Int 10, Wis 16, Cha 12.

**Skills and Feats:** Handle Animal +8, Heal +10, Knowledge (nature) +9, Survival +12; Two Weapon Fighting, Weapon Finesse, Scribe Scroll.

**SA – Spells:** Despite the druid levels, Thistle's imprisonment and constant torture have made it impossible for him to meditate and prepare spells.

**SA – Animal Companion:** Thistle's badger animal companion Snarl met an ill fate while searching for Thistle in the burrows. The animal companion's remains can be found in area 1-8.

**Aftermath:** Aside from the items on Blood Whisker's body, the items by the pit and inside the wooden chests are of interest. The staff, cloak and leather satchel all belong to Thistle. If rescued, he is willing to give the party one of the items as a reward. The staff is a +1 *quarterstaff* (both ends), the green cloak is a +1 *cloak of resistance*, and the leather satchel contains one jar of *restorative ointment*.

Two crude chests are unlocked and contain patched clothes and a variety of frayed and worn scraps of fabrics, rugs or tapestries, all clawed and weathered to worthlessness. Two of the crude

chests on the western wall are locked but not trapped. A DC 15 Open Lock check will open the simple locks. The first chest holds 110 sp, 35 gp and 5 gems (3 moss agates worth 10 gp each, 2 peridots worth 40 gp each). The second chest holds the more valuable items scavenged from the raiders: +1 *dagger*, +1 *buckler*, masterwork chain-mail, masterwork heavy mace, *vial of silversheen*, *potion of spider climb* and two *potions of cure light wounds*.

**Finding the *Eye of the Night*:** Thistle himself is the holder of the *Eye of the Night* – the magic gem that both the raiders and Blood Whisker sought. He is unwilling to reveal the gem to the party yet, at least, not until he learns more about them. In truth, the *Eye of the Night* is secretly hidden inside Thistle's body. He absorbed the gem into his chest, where his fast healing and fibrous body quickly sealed the gem safely from view.

Should the characters reunite him with his animal companion Snarl in area 1-8, Thistle will retrieve the *Eye of the Night* and bestow it upon the group.

**Area 1-8 – The Escape Tunnels (EL 1/2):** As the party moves north from area 1-5, read the following aloud:

*The muddy, cavernous maze finally clears out, revealing a tunnel leading north. The tunnel is ten feet wide and curves to the left as it cuts into*

*the earth. The ground is thankfully more solid. A light rasping noise carries from deeper within the tunnel. It's difficult to make out exactly what it is.*

This tunnel eventually leads to Blood Whisker's escape route and the original entrance into the burrow. Some 200 feet away, within the forest, the tunnel winds its way upward into the hollowed-out stump of a long dead tree.

Thistle's animal companion Snarl, a courageous badger, lies dying in the tunnel. Snarl came searching for Thistle and suffered mortal wounds when battling several of the dire rats in the caves.

A DC 14 Listen check determines that the rasping noise is heavy, labored breathing by something. A DC 14 Knowledge (nature) check indicates it's definitely a mammal, but not a person. This is Snarl, struggling from his terrible wounds.

Once the characters move further down the hall, read the following:

*As you round a sharp curve in the tunnel, you see a large pool of blood slowly soaking into the earth. The bodies of three large dire rats lay scattered about the tunnel, mauled by ferocious attacks. Next to one of the rat corpses, a fourth body heaves and quivers. Blood mats its thick fur, but you recognize the sharp teeth, claws and steely gaze – a large badger lies bleeding before you.*

If the characters have already freed Thistle, he will immediately break from the group and head down the tunnel, recognizing his friend in need. If the characters have not freed Thistle yet, they have to decide how to handle the wounded badger.

**Tactics:** Snarl is badly wounded, reduced to -5 hit points once his rage wore off after the battle with the dire rats, and is very close to death. His Diehard feat keeps Snarl conscious at negative hit points.

If Thistle is with the group, Snarl calms almost immediately. However, without Thistle nearby, Snarl will live up to his name and growl viciously at anyone who approaches him. A DC 15 Animal Empathy check is required to calm the wounded creature. Lacking that, unless the group specifically forms a plan to calm and soothe the creature, or takes great pains to show they are not dangerous, Snarl will attempt a claw attack versus anyone coming close enough to touch him (such as in order to cast a *cure* spell).

If the characters decide to attack Snarl, he is considered prone due to his exhaustion and the severity of his wounds.

**Snarl the Badger:** CR 1/2; Small magical beast; HD 3d8+6; hp -5; Init +3; Spd 30 ft., burrow 10 ft.; AC 18, touch 15, flat-footed 14; Base Atk +0; Grp -5; Atk Claw +5 melee (1d2-1); Full Atk 2 claws +5 melee (1d2-1) and bite +0 melee (1d3-1); SA Rage; SQ Link, share spells, evasion, low-light vision, scent; AL NE; SV Fort +4, Ref +5, Will +1; Str 9, Dex 18, Con 15, Int 2, Wis 12, Cha 6.

**Skills and Feats:** Escape Artist +7, Listen +3, Spot +3, Track, Weapon Finesse, Diehard.

**Rage (Ex):** A badger that takes damage in combat flies into a berserk rage on its next turn, clawing and biting madly until either it or its opponent is dead. It gains +4 to Strength, +4 to Constitution, and -2 to armor class. The creature cannot end its rage voluntarily.

**Aftermath:** If the characters kill Snarl and Thistle eventually discovers this, he will be shocked and angered. He will rescind any offers to help the group he may have made before and ask the return any items he may have granted already. If Thistle hasn't already revealed the *Eye of the Night*, he will not offer it to the group.

However, if the group has done its best to heal Snarl and reunite the animal with its master, Thistle will be very pleased. He gladly bestows the *Eye of the Night* on the group and thanks them earnestly for their assistance. See the sidebar on page 12 for more details.

## Rewards

Award the following bonuses to the characters for achieving these significant goals.

Discovering at least one of the <i>vials of silversheen</i>	+50 XP
Saving Snarl the badger (on their own or with help)	+50 XP
Rescuing Thistle from the pit of rats	+100 XP
Destroying the <i>bag of endless rats</i>	+100 XP
Obtaining the <i>Eye of the Night</i>	+200 XP

# Chapter 2: The Defiled Sanctuary

## Introduction

“The Defiled Sanctuary” is the second adventure in the Interludes series and is best suited for a party of 4-6 characters of levels 3-5. The group should have approximately 15-20 class levels among the characters. All classes will find this challenging, but characters with divine powers, such as clerics and paladins, will be particularly helpful. A rogue will also help overcome the various traps in the adventure.

## Adventure Summary

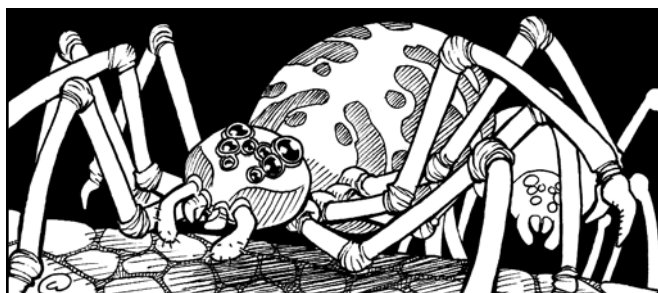
The party explores a paladin’s burial sanctuary, disturbed by an ancient evil that has been awakened by the nearby villagers. The once-holy caverns are an important destination for local pilgrims and must be cleansed of the evil lurking within.

The great evil now in the tomb is one of Skullshank’s lieutenants, killed nearly two decades ago while trying to protect the piece of the *Oculus Infernae* entrusted to him by his master. The lieutenant has been raised from the dead by Skullshank. The undead horror is preying on the local villagers to regain his own strength, so he can take his piece of the *Oculus Infernae* to Skullshank’s tower and be welcomed back into the summoner’s fold.

## Game Master’s Section

### Encounter Table

To help the GM prepare, we have included a quick reference table showing all encounters at a glance. **Loc** – the location number keyed to the map for the encounter. **Pg** – the module page number that the encounter can be found on. **Type** – indicates if the encounter is a trap (T), puzzle (P), or combat (C). **Encounter** – the key monsters, traps, or NPCs that can be found in the encounter. Names in *italics* are classed NPCs. **EL** – the encounter level.



<u>Loc</u>	<u>Page</u>	<u>Type</u>	<u>Encounter</u>	<u>EL</u>
2-1	17	T	Toppling statue	4
		C	3 darkmantles	3
2-2	18	C	2 lacedon ghosts	5
		P	Secret door riddle	
2-3	18	C	<i>Jarson Tender’s</i> ghost	4
2-4	20	C	Owlbear	4
		T	<i>Acid arrow</i> trap	3
2-5	20	P	Compelled townsfolk	1
2-6	21	C	Wraith and townsfolk	6
		T	Poison needle trap	3
2-7	22	C	5 monstrous spiders	3
2-8	22	P	Compelled townsfolk	1
2-9	23	C	<i>Dread Watcher</i> ,	8
		C	Pseudo-lich Clr6 4 animated statues	5
2-10	24	C	5 ghouls, 1 ghost	6

### Scaling Information

GMs can quickly adjust the difficulty of the scenario to accommodate slightly more or less experienced groups. Consider adapting the adventure using any of the following suggestions:

**Weaker Parties (groups with fewer than 15 total character levels):** Decrease skill check and save DCs by -1 or -2. Remove 1 darkmantle from area 2-1. Add one more *bead of blessing* and one more *bead of healing* to the strand of *prayer beads* in area 2-3. Reduce number of monstrous spiders in area 2-7 to 3. Remove 1 cleric level from *Dread Watcher* in area 2-9. Remove two townsfolk from areas 2-4 and 2-6. Remove the ghost from area 2-10.

**Stronger Parties (characters above 5th level, or for more than 20 total character levels):** Increase skill check and save DCs by +1 or +2. Add 2 more darkmantles to area 2-1. Add 1 more lacedon ghost to area 2-2. Remove the string of *prayer beads* from area 2-3. Add 2 more monstrous spiders to area 2-7 and increase the poison save DC to 15. Add 2 more animated statues to area 2-9. Add another ghost to area 2-10.



## Getting the Players Involved

There are a few simple and direct ways to involve the characters in this plot. GMs weaving this scenario into an ongoing campaign may come up with other ways to pique the curiosity of their group.

**Strangers Be in Blessings-Be:** Several outsiders and folk who trade or pass through Blessings-Be remark that the townsfolk seem distant and not like their usual genial, friendly selves. Several mention seeing progressions of townsfolk traveling to the Mourning Cave just outside of town. One merchant's business has been hit hard by the recent change in attitudes by the villagers and asks the party to investigate.

**Dutybound:** A lawful good member of the group may receive orders from his temple or holy order to investigate the Mourning Cave. Superiors within the order are concerned about the growing dissension and unruly behavior by the villagers of Blessings-Be, and feel it may be related to reported disruptions at the holy site.

## Background Story

The town of Blessings-Be is located near of the expansive Ferahn Forest, nestled along White Tip Lake. The town has a thriving fishing trade, but is best known for its proximity to the Mourning Cave, an important holy site for pilgrims of the lawful god Honorus.

The Mourning Cave bears several holy relics, as well as the entombed body of Arden Brightheart, a paladin of Honorus. Arden fell in battle against Dread Watcher, an undead diviner who can see into the future through necromantic rituals. Dread Watcher was an important seer in Albrecht Skullshank's employ.

The *Sword of Conviction*, Arden Brightheart's legendary blade, was used to battle Dread Watcher. Arden drove his holy blade into the creature, pinning him to the wall of the cave. The magic of the sword bound Dread Watcher to a state of torpor, preventing the creature from regenerating or fleeing.

Unfortunately, the *Sword of Conviction* has been removed by a greedy local man, not knowing the sword's role in keeping Dread Watcher bound. With the sword removed, Dread Watcher awoke and quickly summoned undead to assist him in his duties.

First, the Dread Watcher stripped the trappings of Arden Brightheart and hid the Paladin's remains deep in the bowels of the cave. Dread Watcher sits upon a crude throne of pure white marble where he has always sat and pondered – but now wearing Arden's tabard and armor.

The paladin's regalia has tricked the townsfolk into mistaking Dread Watcher for their patron hero Arden Brightheart. The holy symbol of Honorus and the *Sword of Conviction* are suspiciously absent, however.

It won't be long before Dread Watcher returns to full strength, at which time the corruption of Arden Brightheart will be complete. Once this has been accomplished, Dread Watcher will return to Skullshank's side, seeking to win his master's attentions once more.

The group must recover the *Sword of Conviction* and return it to its proper place – sheathed in the body of Dread Watcher to bind the damnable creature once more. Between Dread Watcher and his undead cohorts, the deadly traps found in the crypt, and the disillusioned townsfolk, the party has quite a challenge on its hands.

## Player Beginning

*Your presence in the quaint town of Blessings-Be is met with a mix of hope and anxiety. The townsfolk seem earnest if a bit distant. They offer little advice or information, seeming uncertain whether their assistance would put them in jeopardy. It is clear that fear has them tightly clenched in its fist.*

*After staying briefly in Blessings-Be to resupply, you head out to explore the crypt and sanctuary of Arden Brightheart, a paladin of local legend. Rumors have hinted to an evil stirring in the paladin's tomb recently, suppressing the holy radiance of the sanctuary and making this important pilgrimage destination dangerous. But every rumor you've heard paints a very different picture.*

*Some rumors tell of a veritable army of undead raised from the townsfolk's own graves, while others hint that Arden himself haunts the crypt, corrupted by the very lack of faith of the townsfolk. Another rumor describes a*

## Honorus

The god of Might and Honor, Honorus is lawful good. He is known far and wide as a pillar of all things righteous. In addition to honor, he represents conviction, righteousness, loyalty, and noble sacrifice. His followers are strong in hand and heart, and he counts an unusually high number of paladins among their ranks. The domains he is associated with are Good, Law, Protection, and Strength. His favored weapon is the bastard sword, and paladins and clerics of Honorus automatically receive proficiency in the bastard sword at first level. Honorus' symbol is a four-pointed equilateral cross, symbolizing a moral compass.

vile darkness manifested in the crypt, impenetrable to all but the most holy or devout. Still others surmise that the evil sorcerer Dread Watcher, whom Arden battled decades ago, has risen to exact vengeance on the paladin and the town he protected.

It is up to you to determine what has actually become of Arden Brighthear's sanctuary and put to rest any evil stirring in its halls.

## The Defiled Sanctuary

Unless noted in the text, all ceilings are 15 feet high and the walls are high-quality hewn stone. Doors are sturdy wood reinforced with metal struts. There are no wandering monsters in this scenario.

**Hewn Stone Walls:** 3 ft. thick; hardness 10; hp 540; Break DC 50; Climb DC 25.

**Reinforced Wooden Door:** 4 inches thick; hardness 8; hp 35; Break DC 25.

### Areas of the Map

**Area 2-1 – The Sanctuary Entrance (EL 5):** When the party is ready to enter the sanctuary, read the following aloud:

*The narrow stone path leading to the sanctuary entrance is not terribly steep, but it does curve sinuously up the side of what the townsfolk refer to as Bright Hill. The path eventually flattens and widens out near the mouth of the entrance, spanning 30 feet wide. The ceiling arches slightly overhead, with evenly spaced marble columns set along the walls. The columns are studded with lit candles, making it easy to see inside the yawning entrance.*

Once they're inside, read or paraphrase the following:

*The area immediately inside the entrance is thick with dirt, leaves and branches. The chamber is noticeably cleaner further inside, where the white marble stonework reflects the candlelight brightly. The entrance stretches 50 feet into the side of the hill. The northeastern corner of the chamber is carved away, as the chamber was fashioned to fit a natural cavern extending farther in that direction. A 10-foot-wide corridor heads west from the north end of the chamber.*

*Spaced at regular intervals, several alcoves have been fashioned into the walls to the west and east. Within the alcoves, alabaster statues of Arden Brighthear stand at attention. The western wall features three alcoves, while the eastern wall has only two alcoves – the space*

*where the third alcove would sit is part of the transition to the natural cavern.*

Now give the players handout D.

**Details:** The statues are slightly larger than actual size and show Arden Brighthear in various battle poses, with placards indicating several of Arden's military achievements. (If the players want to know what the placards say, substitute major military events of your campaign world: "Arden Conquering the Northern Orc Clans," "Arden Vanquishing the Devil-Lich's Hordes," etc.)

The statue marked with an X is trapped. The statue is rigged to collapse and crush characters who enter any of the indicated tiles.

A DC 20 Spot Check indicates that the trapped statue is in much poorer repair than the others, and that its placard has been tampered with. The following warning has been scratched deep into the placard by one of Dread Watcher's minions:

*Turn hence, lest Darkness claim you, as it has claimed Arden Darkheart.*

With a DC 15 Knowledge (religion) or Knowledge (local) check, a character notices the deliberate change of Arden Brighthear's name in the cryptic message.

**Collapsing Statue:** CR 4; mechanical; location trigger (marked spaces); no reset; Atk +15 melee (6d6, statue); affects first character to walk through marked space; Search DC 20; Disable Device DC 24.

In addition to the trap, three darkmantles are fixed to the ceiling along the east wall.

**Tactics:** The darkmantles use their darkness ability as soon as a target is within range, then grapple opponents to use their constrict ability. A Spot check, opposed by the darkmantles' +15 Hide skill, is required to spot them before they attack. Failure means the darkmantles have a surprise round before the characters can react. The darkmantles are hungry and fight to the death.

**Darkmantles (3):** CR 1; Small Magical Beast; HD 2d10+2; hp 21, 19, 18; Init +4; Spd 20 ft., fly 30 ft. (poor); AC 17, touch 11, flat-footed 17; Base Atk +1; Grp +5; Atk Slam +5 melee (1d4+4); Full Atk Slam +5 melee (1d4+4); SA Darkness (1/day), improved grab, constrict 1d4+4; SQ Blindsight 90 ft.; AL N; SV Fort +3, Ref +2, Will +0; Str 16, Dex 10, Con 13, Int 2, Wis 10, Cha 10.

*Skills and Feats:* Hide +15, Listen +5, Spot +5; Improved Initiative

**Area 2-2 – The Reflecting Pool (EL 5):** When the characters enter this area, read the following aloud:

*A set of crude stone steps descends into the natural cavern, cutting roughly 20 feet across the northeast end of the entrance. The wide steps lead 20 feet down into the earth, where the rough contour of the cavern stretches approximately 50 feet by 40 feet, with the ceiling reaching nearly 30 feet in some places. A pool of water occupies the northeast corner of this cool, crisp cavern.*

*Set in the middle of the pool is another alabaster statue, similar to the ones found in the entrance. This statue depicts Arden Brightheart down on one knee, head bowed in a contemplative pose. Arden's shield is strapped across his back and his sword in its scabbard. A golden placard is set into the base of the statue.*

*Candlelight from the entranceway dances across the surface of the pool, but otherwise the cavern lacks its own light source. A subtle whiff of mold or mildew rankles your senses.*

Now give the players handout E.

A narrow ledge runs the length of the pool only a foot below the waterline, following along the northeast wall. A DC 25 Spot check is needed to notice the ledge. A DC 12 Balance check is needed to safely walk the ledge around the contour of the pool; failure indicates a fall into the pool.

Two lacedon ghosts lurk below the surface of the 10 foot deep pool. The characters must make a Spot check opposed by the lacedons' +18 Hide check to spot the creatures before they attack.

**Tactics:** As soon as a character is within five feet of the pool of water, the lacedons attack. They target the smallest or weakest-looking characters. The lacedons attempt to grapple and pull their targets into the pool to drown them. The lacedons fight to the death.

**Lacedon Ghosts (2):** CR 3; Medium Aquatic Undead; HD 4d12+3; hp 38, 33; Init +3; Spd 30 ft., swim 30 ft.; AC 17, touch 12, flat-footed 14; Base Atk +2; Grp +5; Atk Bite +5 melee (1d8+3 plus paralysis); Full Atk Bite +5 melee (1d8+3 plus paralysis) and 2 claws +3 melee (1d4+1 plus paralysis); SA Ghoul fever, paralysis (DC 15 Fort), stench; SQ Darkvision 60 ft., undead traits, +2 turn resistance; AL CE; SV Fort +1, Ref +4, Will +6; Str 17, Dex 17, Con –, Int 13, Wis 14, Cha 16.

**Skills and Feats:** Balance +7, Climb +9, Hide +18\*, Jump +9, Move Silently +8, Spot +8;

Multiattack, Toughness. \*The lacedons receive a +10 Hide bonus for beginning the encounter submerged.

**Ghoul Fever (Su):** Disease – bite, Fortitude DC 15, incubation period 1 day, damage 1d3 Con and 1d3 Dex.

**Paralysis (Ex):** Those hit by a ghost's bite or claw attack must succeed on a DC 15 Fortitude save or be paralyzed for 1d4+1 rounds.

**Stench (Ex):** Living creatures within 10 feet must succeed on a DC 15 Fortitude save or be sickened for 1d6+4 minutes. Creatures resistant to poison receive their normal bonus on their saving throws. Since the lacedon ghosts begin the encounter submerged, the Stench ability only applies when they are out of the water.

**Aftermath:** A DC 14 Search check underwater reveals the skeletal remains of two of the lacedon's previous victims. Once located, a DC 18 Search check uncovers the following items on the bodies: ruby ring (100 gp), masterwork flail, +1 *light mace*, and a waterlogged quiver with 11 +1 *bolts*.

**The Statue:** A DC 20 Search check reveals the statue rotates on its base (see below). The placard on the statue is written in Common. Read the following when a character examines the placard:

*When strength of steel in trouble fails, Silent reverence knows the way*

*Arden's arm was strong and true, But 'twas his faith that won the day*

**Secret Door:** There is a secret door leading to area 1-3 hidden along the northeast wall of the pool. A DC 20 Search check is required to locate the door. The door is not trapped but is locked. There is no apparent means to unlock or open the door anywhere along the wall. The only way to open the door is to rotate the statue of Arden Brightheart so that it is facing the door, as suggested by the clue on the placard. The door remains open as long as the statue is facing in that direction.

**Area 2-3 – Tender's Quarters:** Once the characters have opened the secret door, read the following:

*The section of stone wall slides quietly aside, revealing a small, diamond-shaped room lying to the northeast. The walls and floor are smooth white marble, like the entrance hall. Sturdy wooden desks, shelves and crates line the walls to the north, while a simple cot and a small chest of drawers lies along the south wall.*

*Several flies flit lazily about a human corpse lying crumpled in the cot. The corpse is dressed*

in a simple white cotton shift, emblazoned with the holy symbol of Honorus in gold thread across the chest.

As you watch, a wispy apparition lifts from the corpse. An ethereal version of that same elf floats up from the cot, turning to the open doorway with a look of shock and revulsion. In a faint, trembling voice, it says:

*“Leave this place, o evil-doers! I am protected by Honorus and the mighty Arden Brightheart – you shall not enter my quarters!”*

**Room Condition:** This room is under a *hallow* effect, as the spell. *Detect evil* is the secondary spell bound into the *hallow* effect.

**Details:** This is the room of Jarson Tender, the former keeper of the crypt. Jarson kept the grounds clean and provided aid to pilgrims visiting the sanctuary. Once Dread Watcher awoke, Jarson hid in this room. The ghastrs in the pool outside kept him locked in here and he died of starvation. Now his ghost is bound to this room. In his current state, Jarson’s ghost does not have a horrific appearance.

Jarson’s ghost poses no threat to the group if they are civil or can convince him they are not evil. A DC 12 Diplomacy check, modified by the group’s actions (such as a compelling argument or showing Jarson the symbol of other good deities), will convince Jarson the group deserves his help.

A lever by the door controls the statue in the pool outside to open and close the secret door from inside the room.

**Tactics:** Jarson will only attack if the group is evil or if attacked by the party. Even if attacked, the first round Jarson will plead with the group to leave him be and help rid the sanctuary of the true evil – Dread Watcher. If Jarson does enter combat, he fights to the death. Jarson shifts his features to employ his horrific appearance, and will use his drain attack on the strongest party members first.

**Jarson Tender, human ghost Clr2:** CR 4; Medium Undead; HD 2d12+3; hp 21; Init +3; Spd 30 ft., fly 30 ft. (perfect); AC 16, touch 16, flat-footed 14; Base Atk +1; Grp +2; Atk draining touch +3 melee (1d4 Str) or corrupting gaze +3 range (2d10 and 1d4 Cha); Full Atk draining touch +3 melee (1d4 Str) or corrupting gaze +3 range (2d10 and 1d4 Cha); SA Corrupting gaze, draining touch, frightful moan, horrific appearance, malevolence; SQ Manifestation, telekinesis, rejuvenation, undead traits, +4 turn resistance; AL LG; SV Fort +3, Ref +2, Will +7; Str 12, Dex 15, Con –, Int 12, Wis 14, Cha 19.



**Skills and Feats:** Concentration +5, Listen +15, Spot +15; Iron Will.

**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 DC 15 Fortitude save or take 2d10 points of damage and 1d4 points of Charisma damage.

**Draining Touch (Su):** A ghost that hits a living target with its incorporeal touch attack drains 1d4 Str. On each such successful attack, the ghost heals 5 points of damage to itself.

**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 DC 15 Will save or become panicked for 2d4 rounds. This is a sonic necromantic mind-affecting fear effect.

**Horrific Appearance (Su):** Any living creature within 60 feet that views a ghost must succeed on a DC 15 Fortitude save 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.

**Divine Spells (4/3+1; Save DC = 12 + spell level; Domains: Lawful, Good):** 0 – *detect magic, light, mending, purify food and drink*; 1st – *command (x2), obscuring mist, protection from evil\**.

**Aftermath:** The shelves on this room have many items used to keep the sanctuary clean and holy. Either by defeating Jarson, or through negotiation, the characters will have access to the following items: 12 flasks of holy water, a block of *incense of meditation*, a strand of *prayer beads* (3 beads of blessing, 1 bead of healing) and a *wand of consecrate* (6 charges, CL 9th).

**Area 2-4 – Cornered Beast (EL 5):** When the party approaches this room, read the following:

*The door to the room is barred with a heavy iron candle stand placed through the large ring handle and wedged into the floor. A dozen metal spikes are angled into the door to secure it to the frame. The door and patches of the adjacent walls have slashes and rents cutting deep into the wood and stone.*

**Details:** An owlbear wandered into the crypt some time ago and was eventually trapped in this room by villagers. The owlbear completely consumed the unfortunate villagers trapped inside with it and is starving. A DC 18 Listen check at the door reveals something large and heavy moving around, and the sound of snapping bones.

Opening the door requires either a DC 14 Disable Device check or a DC 16 Strength check to remove the spikes and candle stand. The door is otherwise not locked. The tile directly inside the room has been trapped in an attempt to keep the owlbear inside – but may easily be triggered by an unwary character entering the room.

Once the door has been opened, read the following:

*The door opens to reveal a small chapel 15 feet by 25 feet. The small altar and wooden pews have all been crushed. The skeletal bodies of several townsfolk lie crumpled in the corners. At the sound of the door opening, a creature full of claws and feathers looks up from the bones it was chewing – an enormous owlbear lunges forward to attack!*

**Tactics:** The owlbear stays inside the room to avoid the trap. It uses its reach to swipe at characters in the hall. The owlbear fights to the death.

**Owlbear:** CR 4; Large Magical Beast; HD 6d10+20; hp 71; Init +1; Spd 30 ft; AC 15, touch 10, flat-footed 14; Base Atk +5; Grp +14; Atk claw +9 melee (1d6+5); Full Atk 2 claws +9 melee (1d6+5) and bite +4 melee (1d8+2); Space/Reach 10 ft./10 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.

**Acid Arrow Trap:** CR 3; magic device; location trigger (marked space); instant reset; Atk +4 ranged touch; spell effect (*acid arrow*, 3rd-level wizard, 2d4 acid/round for 2 rounds); Search DC 25; Disable Device DC 27.

**Aftermath:** A DC 20 Search check reveals 17 gp, 32 sp and a silver ring (40 gp) on the bodies. There is also a gold holy symbol of Honorus (300 gp) in the altar ruins. Anyone removing the holy symbol from the crypt who is not lawful good or a devotee of Honorus must make a DC 25 Fort save or be stricken both blind and deaf, as if by the spell *blindness/deafness*.

**Secret Door:** There is a secret door on the north wall, leading through area 2-7 into area 2-10. A DC 20 Search check is required to locate the secret door. The door is not trapped or locked.

**Area 2-5 – The Mural Room (EL 1):** When the party opens the door to this room, read the following:

*This brightly lit room is dominated by an elaborate mural depicting the valiant battle between Arden Brightheart and the Dread Watcher, as well as other notable deeds in the paladin's past. The mural stretches the full length of the walls enclosing this 15-foot by 25-foot chamber, and rows of candles flicker along the east and west walls.*

*Six townsfolk appear to be working on the mural in this room. Upon closer inspection, you realize three of them are carefully rubbing out certain parts of the mural while the other three are painting new features.*

*It suddenly dawns on you that these subtle changes are not preserving the mural, but altering it... In one scene, a depiction of a figure clad in black runs Arden Brightheart through with a wickedly curved dagger. In another, that same black shrouded figure leads an army of undead into a small town – which you recognize as Blessings-Be!*

**Details:** The townsfolk have been compelled by Dread Watcher's *suggestion* spells to work on the mural. They will ignore the party to the best of their ability and continue working on the mural to fulfill their compulsion. The response to nearly any question or prodding is "leave us in peace" or "we must do what he says."

A DC 15 Sense Motive check conveys that the townsfolk are conflicted about their task. They are very fearful but cannot help but do what their compulsion dictates.



**Tactics:** The townsfolk will not fight. If attacked, they flee for their lives.

**Townsfolk, human Com1 (6):** CR 1/2; Medium Humanoid (human); HD 1d4+1; hp 3 each; Init +1; Spd 30 ft; AC 11, touch 11, flat-footed 10; Base Atk +0; Grp +0; Atk Unarmed +0 melee (1d3 nonlethal); Full Atk Unarmed +0 melee (1d3 nonlethal); AL NG; SV Fort +1, Ref +1, Will +0; Str 10, Dex 12, Con 12, Int 11, Wis 10, Cha 11.

**Aftermath:** If the characters use *dispel magic*, countersong or some other means to end the *suggestion* effect, the townsfolk will be relieved. A DC 20 Diplomacy check can also break the *suggestion* by convincing the townsfolk that what they are doing is wrong.

The townsfolk have no treasure. If the party saves the townsfolk, they warn the group that more villagers are trapped in Dread Watcher's crypt, area 2-6, held captive by a wraith. One townsfolk will also ask if the group has seen Jarson Tender, the keeper of the sanctuary, whose office is somewhere near the sanctuary entrance.

**Area 2-6 – The Watcher's Crypt (EL 7):** The door to this room is locked but not trapped. A DC 15 Open Lock check is required to unlock the door. Failure by more than 5 on the test means the characters make enough noise in their attempt that they alert the wraith inside, who will be prepared for battle.

When the characters open the door to this room, read the following:

*The door opens to reveal a 25-foot by 25-foot chapel. The far west end of the chamber bevels inward, as steps lead up to an alabaster altar. Two rows of pews lead up to the altar, and a small golden basin sits at the foot of the altar.*

*A twisted corpse is slumped against the far wall, a large bastard sword stuck deep into the corpse's chest, pinning it to the wall. The sword glows with a faint golden light. It appears that this is the chapel dedicated to the epic battle between Dread Watcher and Arden Brightheart, where the noble paladin struck his enemy with the mighty Sword of Conviction.*

*Ten villagers move about the room performing various tasks. Some clean and oil the pews. Several pour water into the golden basin by the altar. Others replace white wax votive candles along the walls with black candles.*

**Room Condition:** There is a *darkskull* hidden in the altar of this room. The room is under the effect of an *unhallow* spell, with *bane* as its secondary

effect. A DC 15 Will save is required every minute spent in the room to resist the *bane* effect. The *unhallow* effect provides the wraith in the room with a *protection from good* aura.

**Details:** Townsfolk are desecrating the chapel by thoroughly washing the area with unholy water. A wraith has control over the townsfolk, who must obey its commands.

**Tactics:** If the characters made enough noise trying to enter the room, the wraith is prepared and has a surprise round to act first. The wraith commands the townsfolk to engage the characters in battle, trying to spread the party out. The wraith tries to kill the weakest looking opponent, in hopes of raising it as spawn to join it in battle. The wraith and the townsfolk fight to the death.

As it attacks, the wraith shouts out the following:

*We must stop them; this room still has the taint of good... We must not fail lest we shall ne'er bring Dread Watcher back to us.*

**Wraith:** CR 5; Medium undead (incorporeal); HD 7d12; hp 68; Init +7; Spd fly 60 ft. (good); AC 15 (17\*), touch 15 (17\*), flat-footed 12 (14\*); Base Atk +2; Grp -; Atk Incorporeal touch +5 melee (1d4 plus 1d6 Con); Full Atk Incorporeal touch +5 melee (1d4 plus 1d6 Con); SA Constitution drain, create spawn; SQ Darkvision 60 ft., daylight powerlessness, incorporeal traits, +2 turn resistance, undead traits, unnatural aura; AL LE; SV Fort +1 (+3\*), Ref +4 (+6\*), Will +6 (+8\*); 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; Alertness, Blind-Fight, Combat Reflexes, Improved Initiative

**Unnatural Aura (Su):** Animals 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.

**Constitution Drain (Su):** Living creatures hit by a wraith's incorporeal touch attack must succeed on a DC 14 Fortitude save or permanently lose 1d6 points of Con. On each such successful attack, the wraith gains 5 temporary hit points.

**Create Spawn (Su):** 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.

**\*Protection from Good (Special):** The *darkskull* in the altar shields the wraith with *protection from good*, as the spell.



**Townfolk, human Com1 (10):** CR 1/2; Medium humanoid (human); HD 1d4+1; hp 3 each; Init +1; Spd 30 ft; AC 11, touch 11, flat-footed 10; Base Atk +0; Grp +0; Atk Unarmed +0 melee (1d3 non-lethal); Full Atk Unarmed +0 melee (1d3 non-lethal); AL NG; SV Fort +1, Ref +1, Will +0; Str 10, Dex 12, Con 12, Int 11, Wis 10, Cha 11

**Aftermath:** Once the wraith is defeated, the remaining villagers are released from their compulsion. If the party killed any villagers, the rest attempt to flee. If the party did not kill any townsfolk, or do their best to tend to any injured, they will tell the party what they were forced to do to desecrate this room. It will take a *consecrate* spell, or the application of 10 vials of holy water, to counter the effects.

The body stuck to the wall is a normal corpse dressed in black robes. It is propped up by the sword to make the characters nervous. The sword is merely a masterwork bastard sword, enchanted with *magic aura* to appear as a +1 *undead bane bastard sword*. The corpse has had *gentle repose* cast on it to delay further decomposition.

**Hidden Details:** The altar has a secret compartment on the west side, facing the back wall. A DC 20 Search check of the altar will reveal the compartment. The compartment is locked and trapped. A DC 25 Open Lock check is required to open it. Dread Watcher also has a key to the compartment which bypasses the trap. Inside the compartment are 2 black pearls (100 gp each), 4 flasks of unholy water, the *darkskull* and a *lens of detection*. This is the gem Dread Watcher is keeping safe for Albrecht Skullshank.

**Poisoned Needle Trap:** CR 3; mechanical; touch trigger; manual reset; lock bypass (Open Lock DC 25 or key); Atk +13 ranged (1 plus poison, needle); poison (Large monstrous scorpion venom, DC 14 Fortitude save resists, 1d4 Con/1d4 Con); Search DC 20; Disable Device DC 16.

**Area 2-7 – Secret hallway (EL 3):** Regardless of which area the party enters from (area 2-5 or area 2-10), read the following description:

*The secret door slides quietly open to reveal a rough-hewn hallway snaking off into the distance. A thin layer of dust puffs up from the walls and floor, and a few wispy spider webs billow slightly as the door opens. The floor has been worked more or less smooth, but the walls and ceiling are still crude and angular. The hallway is musty and dank. The passage looks to have remained unused for quite some time.*

There is no light source in this hallway. A DC 14 Survival check reveals many sets of insect tracks in the dust. A DC 14 Knowledge (nature) check reveals them to be small spiders. The webs are thick enough at the centerpoint of the hallway that they need to be burned or brushed away. The secret doors at the end of each hallway are easier to find from inside than outside and require only a DC 15 Search check to locate.

**Tactics:** A nest of monstrous spiders is located halfway through the hall. The spiders attack as soon as anything disturbs the main webs. The spiders fight to the death.

**Aftermath:** There is no treasure in the hallway.

**Monstrous Spiders (5):** CR 1/2; Small vermin; HD 1d8; hp 6 each; Init +3; Spd 30 ft., climb 20 ft.; AC 14, touch 14, flat-footed 11; Base Atk +0; Grp -6; Atk/Full Atk Bite +4 melee (1d4–2 plus poison); SA Poison (DC 10 Fort, 1d3 Str/1d3 Str), web; SQ Darkvision 60 ft., tremorsense 60 ft., vermin traits; AL N; SV Fort +2, Ref +3, Will +0; Str 7, Dex 17, Con 10, Int –, Wis 10, Cha 2.

*Skills and Feats:* Climb +14, Hide +14, Jump –2, Spot +4; Weapon finesse.

**Area 2-8 – The Veneration Ossuary (EL 1):** The doors leading to this area are not locked or trapped. When the party opens the doors to this area, read the following:

*The stink of decay permeates this room. Wide shelves are hewn into the stone walls of this room. From the broken bits of ceramic, stone and masonry littering the room, it appears to be a ransacked ossuary.*

*Engravings along the walls depict several knights of Arden's order, identifying the room as a crypt for the venerated dead. Each sepulcher, holding urn and veneration chest is smashed. All the desiccated bodies and bones from the destroyed containers are heaped up in the corner.*

*Three villagers are in this chamber. One holds a shovel, trying to dig away at a broken section of marble floor tile. The other two are sifting through the bones scattered about the room, heaping them onto the large pile.*

The presence of the venerated heroes of Honorus protects this room. The room is under a *hallow* effect, as the spell, with *remove fear* as the secondary spell bound into the effect.

Dread Watcher and his undead will not enter this room, for the true body of Arden Brightheart lies at the bottom of the corpse pile.

A DC 15 Spot check reveals that there are more bones and bodies in the pile than burial plots and spaces in the room. This is because Dread Watcher forced several skeleton minions into the room to bury Arden completely, and these skeletons were destroyed soon after entering the room.

The townsfolk are still under the compulsion by Dread Watcher to work in this room. They are trying to bury the body of Arden Brightheart. Burying it under the bone pile suffices until they can clear a larger hole below the floor tiles.

**Tactics:** The townsfolk will not fight. If attacked, they will cower in the corners of the room. If Dread Watcher has been defeated, they flee for their lives instead.

**Townsfolk, human Com1 (3):** CR 1/2; Medium Humanoid (human); HD 1d4+1; hp 3 each; Init +1; Spd 30 ft; AC 11, touch 11, flat-footed 10; Base Atk +0; Grp +0; Atk/Full Atk Unarmed +0 melee (1d3 non-lethal); AL NG; SV Fort +1, Ref +1, Will +0; Str 10, Dex 12, Con 12, Int 11, Wis 10, Cha 11

**Aftermath:** If the characters use *dispel magic*, countersong or some other means to end the *suggestion* effect, the townsfolk will be relieved. A DC 20 Diplomacy check can also break the *suggestion* by convincing the townsfolk that what they are doing is wrong.

The townsfolk will explain their task, but they do not know that the body is actually Arden Brightheart. They do know there was an empty sword scabbard and a symbol of Honorus among the items buried so far.

A DC 17 Search check of the pile will reveal Arden's remains, preserved with *gentle repose*. The body has been stripped of its tabard and the scabbard for the *Sword of Conviction* is empty.

**Hidden Details:** After Arden battled Dread Watcher decades ago, he stole the lich's phylactery and hid it in this chamber, knowing that Honorus' presence would make it difficult for the lich to retrieve. A DC

17 Search check of the shelves on the north wall reveals a small leather bundle. Inside the bundle is a dagger made of crystal that pulses with flashes of red energy – Dread Watcher's phylactery. A DC 20 Knowledge (religion) check reveals the item for what it truly is, reduced to DC 15 if the group has already encountered Dread Watcher.

**Dread Watcher's Phylactery:** Enchanted crystal; hardness 6; hp 25; Break DC 25.

**Area 2-9 – The Glorification of Arden Brightheart (EL 9):** As the party approaches this room, read the following:

*The hall leads to a set of wide double doors. The halls are lined with hundreds of skulls, carefully socketed into the walls in perfect rows and columns. Small placards spaced intermittently among the skulls bear many different families' names. It appears that this sanctuary also serves as an ossuary for the people of Blessings-Be.*

The large double doors are not locked and swing inward. When the party opens the doors, read the following:

*As the doors open, the sickly-sweet stench of decay rolls into the hallway. A massive chamber sprawls before you, the walls lined with thousands more skulls like in the hall. The room is lit by hundreds of candles fixed into some of the skulls, creating shadows that flicker and flit along the ceiling.*

*The chamber is roughly octagonal. It spans 60 feet north to south and stretches 70 feet east to west, where sets of double doors lie at the farthest edges. On both sides of the entrance, two marble statues stand at attention in alcoves. The statues depict other venerated knights of Arden Brightheart's order.*

*Beautiful tile work adorns the floor, leading up to a wide set of steps which support a dais on the north wall. A large white marble throne occupies the dais. Clad in resplendent robes and burnished armor, the preserved body of Arden Brightheart sits upon the throne, as if pondering the room about him. This is the veneration chamber of the great paladin.*

**Details:** The figure on the throne is actually Dread Watcher, currently shrouded by *alter self* and *non-detection* to prevent characters from properly identifying him. The 4 statues near the entrances are animated statues.

A DC 24 Spot check reveals that the figure on the

throne appears to be Arden Brightheart, but there is no holy symbol present on the armor or tabard, nor one around his neck. Characters making this observation gain a +4 circumstance bonus versus Dread Watcher's Disguise check.

**Tactics:** Dread Watcher waits for a character to get close enough to use his touch attack. A Sense Motive check opposed by Dread Watcher's +19 Disguise check is required to see through his ruse. Failure means being caught flat-footed during Dread Watcher's surprise round.

As soon as Dread Watcher begins his attack, he exclaims the following:

*"Woe unto you who dare tamper in my master's work! Skullshank shall not abide those who would disrupt the construction of his most fearsome invention. But you are too late – even should you recover the lens from the chapel, you shall not prevail. The Oculum shall be completed. And once completed, Skullshank shall rule the land without question!"*

Dread Watcher casts *invisibility* if cornered or surrounded, to maneuver into position to attack weakened foes. From a distance, Dread Watcher will use *bestow curse* and *hold person* to try to cripple spell casters.

The animated statues will gang up on melee characters, trying to slow them down from reaching Dread Watcher. The animated statues and Dread Watcher fight to the death.

**Dread Watcher, pseudo-lich human Clr6:** CR 8; Medium undead; HD 6d12; hp 54; Init +2; Spd 20 ft.; AC 22, touch 16, flat-footed 20; Base Atk +4; Grp +5; Atk/Full Atk touch +5 melee (1d8+5 and paralysis, DC 18 Will save halves) or heavy mace +6 (1d8+2); SA Fear aura (Will save DC 18), paralyzing touch (Fort save DC 18), rebuke undead (7/day); SQ Immunity (sleep, poison, polymorph), resistances 10 (acid, cold, electricity, fire), turn resistance +4, DR 10/bludgeoning and magic, undead traits; AL LE; SV Fort +5, Ref +4, Will +9; Str 13, Dex 15, Con –, Int 14, Wis 19, Cha 18.

**Skills and Feats:** Concentration +8, Disguise +9 (+19 with alter self in place), Knowledge (religion) +10, Listen +11, Move Silently +10, Search +10, Sense Motive +11, Spellcraft +10, Spot +11; Combat Casting, Craft Wondrous Item, Dodge, Mobility.

**Fear Aura (Su):** Creatures with less than 5 HD within a 60 foot radius must succeed at a DC 18 Will save or become affected by a fear spell.

**Paralyzing Touch (Su):** Any living creature struck by a touch attack must succeed at a DC 18 Fort save or become permanently paralyzed.

**Tenuous Lich-hood:** Dread Watcher was created

as a lich by Skullshank in a foul experiment, rather than becoming a lich of his own accord. As such, his powers are slightly weaker. His DR is reduced from 15 to 10 and all elemental immunities are reduced to resistances as noted in the description.

**Phylactery:** Dread Watcher's phylactery is among the items found in area 1-9. Dread Watcher has lost track of its phylactery during its torpor.

**Divine Spells** (5/4+1/4+1/3+1, save DC = 14 + spell level, Domains: Trickery and Evil): 0 – *detect magic*, *guidance* (x2), *resistance* (x2); 1st – ~~*alter self*~~ (used already), *command* (x2), *doom*, *protection from good*; 2nd – *death knell*, *desecrate*, *hold person* (x2), *invisibility*; 3rd – *bestow curse* (x2), *dispel magic*, ~~*nondetection*~~ (used already).

**Possessions:** +1 heavy mace, +1 breastplate, minor ring of spell storing (currently holds *invisibility*), wand of suggestion (13 charges, command word), key to secret compartment in area 2-6.

**Animated Statues (4):** CR 2; Medium constructs; HD 2d10+20; hp 33, 30, 27, 26; Init +0; Spd 40 ft; AC 14, touch 10, flat-footed 14; Base Atk +1; Grp +2; Atk/Full Atk Slam +2 melee (1d6+1); SQ Construct traits, darkvision 60 ft., hardness 8, low-light vision; AL N; SV Fort +0, Ref +0, Will -5; Str 12, Dex 10, Con –, Int –, Wis 1, Cha 1.

**Aftermath:** There is no treasure in the room other than what Dread Watcher currently has equipped.

**Area 2-10 – Blessings-Be Ossuary:** The doors leading to this area from area 2-9 are not locked or trapped. When the party opens either door to this area, read the following:

*The reek of death and corruption billows out from this room. Row upon row of shelves are cut deep into the stone walls of this chamber. Skulls still sit perched atop the highest shelves, but hundreds more litter the floor. From the trappings in the room, it appears to be an ossuary to honor the dead of Blessings-Be deemed worthy of burial in this crypt.*

*A group of ghouls pulls the skulls from the shelves, tossing them to the floor where more ghouls smash them beneath their clawed feet. They look up from their destruction and snarl as they leap to attack.*

**Room Condition:** The destruction of this chamber, along with the application of dozens of vials of unholy water, has *desecrated* this chamber, as the spell.

**Tactics:** The ghouls and their ghost leader fight to the death. They gang up to surround foes as often as possible. Due to the *desecration* effect, each Charisma check made to turn undead within this area takes a –3 profane penalty, and the ghouls

gain a +1 profane bonus on attack rolls, damage rolls, and saving throws (already calculated into the creatures' statistics).

**Ghast:** CR 3; Medium Undead; HD 4d12+3; hp 38, 33; Init +3; Spd 30 ft., swim 30 ft.; AC 17, touch 12, flat-footed 14; Base Atk +2; Grp +5; Atk Bite +6 melee (1d8+4 plus paralysis); Full Atk Bite +6 melee (1d8+4 plus paralysis) and 2 claws +4 melee (1d4+2 plus paralysis); SA Ghoul fever, paralysis (DC 15 Fort), 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 +7, Climb +9, Hide +18, Jump +9, Move Silently +8, Spot +8; Multiattack, Toughness.

*Ghoul Fever (Su):* Disease – bite, Fortitude DC 15, incubation period 1 day, damage 1d3 Con and 1d3 Dex.

*Paralysis (Ex):* Those hit by a ghast's bite or claw attack must succeed on a DC 15 Fortitude save or be paralyzed for 1d4+1 rounds.

*Stench (Ex):* Living creatures within 10 feet must succeed on a DC 15 Fortitude save or be sickened for 1d6+4 minutes. Creatures resistant to poison receive their normal bonus on their saving throws.

**Ghouls (5):** CR 1; Medium Undead; HD 2d12; hp 21, 20, 19, 19, 15; Init +2; Spd 30 ft.; AC 14, touch 12, flat-footed 12; Base Atk +1; Grp +2; Atk Bite +3 melee (1d6+2 plus paralysis); Full Atk Bite +3 melee (1d6+2 plus paralysis) and 2 claws +1 melee (1d3+1 plus paralysis); SA Ghoul fever, paralysis (DC 12 Fort); SQ Darkvision 60 ft., undead traits, +2 turn resistance; AL CE; SV Fort +1, Ref +3, Will +6; Str 13, Dex 15, Con –, Int 13, Wis 14, Cha 12.

*Skills and Feats:* Balance +6, Climb +5, Hide +6, Jump +5, Move Silently +6, Spot +7; Multiattack.

*Ghoul Fever (Su):* Disease – bite, Fortitude DC 12, incubation period 1 day, damage 1d3 Con and 1d3 Dex. A humanoid of 4 Hit Dice or more rises as a ghast, not a ghoul.

*Paralysis (Ex):* Those hit by a ghoul's bite or claw attack must succeed on a DC 12 Fortitude save or be paralyzed for 1d4+1 rounds. Elves have immunity to this paralysis.

**Aftermath:** A DC 16 Knowledge (religion) check reveals both the *desecrated* nature of the room and the steps necessary to purify the room. A *consecrate* or *hallow* spell will remove the effect. Cleansing the room with 10 potions of holy water and returning the skulls to their proper places will also remove the effect.

Scattered among the remains of the skulls are numerous heirloom necklaces, torcs and periapts buried with the dead. A DC 15 Search check reveals 10 pieces of jewelry, with an average value of 20 gp. If the characters sell these items for personal gain, they must make a DC 25 Fort save or be stricken both blind and deaf, as if by the spell *blindness/deafness*.

A DC 18 Search check reveals a glint of metal from one of the higher shelves on the eastern wall. Hidden behind a row of skulls is Arden Brightheart's *Sword of Conviction*. It is an intelligent, lawful good item. If it is removed from the crypt by anyone of evil alignment, they must make a DC 25 Fort save or be stricken both blind and deaf by the holy wrath of Honorus, as if by the spell *blindness/deafness*.

## Rewards

Award the following bonuses to the characters for achieving these significant goals.

Gaining Jarson's assistance without resorting to violence	+100 XP
Freeing all the townsfolk trapped in the crypt without killing any of them	+300 XP
Consecrating and blessing the violated rooms (per room)	+50 XP
Locating and destroying the <i>darkskull</i> in area 2-6	+200 XP
Locating and destroying Dread Watcher's phylactery in area 2-8	+200 XP
Returning the family heirlooms from area 2-10 to their rightful owners	+100 XP
Recovering the <i>Sword of Conviction</i>	+100 XP

## Sword of Conviction

+2 *bastard sword*, AL LG; Int 10, Wis 13, Cha 13; empathy, 60 ft. vision and hearing; Ego score 8.

*Lesser Powers:* Bless 3/day, 10 ranks of Knowledge (Religion)

*Personality:* Arden Brightheart's prized blade had been handed down through the decades to the paladins serving Honorus until used by Arden to defeat Dread Watcher. While not especially willful or assertive, the *Sword of Conviction* helps provide a moral compass for its wielder, providing insight and a sense of right and wrong based on intended actions.

Moderate conjuration; CL 11th, Craft Magic Arms and Armor; *keen edge, bless*; Price 16,335 gp.



# Chapter 3: The Hunter of Worlds

## Introduction

“The Hunter of Worlds” is the third adventure in the Interludes series and is best suited for a party of 4-6 characters of levels 5-7. The group should have approximately 25-30 class levels among the characters. While any class can help overcome the dangerous enemies in this module, a rogue will be most useful to locate and disarm the numerous traps in the villain’s lair.

## Adventure Summary

A drow assassin is dispatched at Skullshank’s command to eliminate the party. The assassin poisons the party’s food supply, but his tampering is discovered. The party pursues the fleeing assassin to what they assume is the drow’s lair.

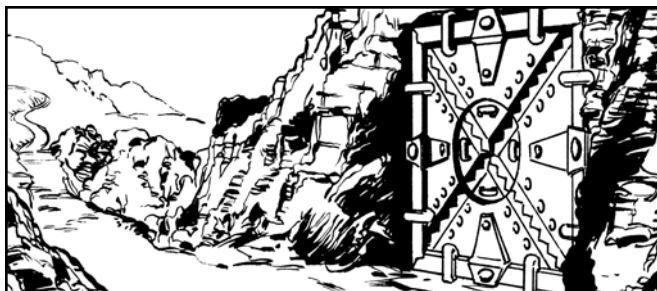
Unknown to the party, the drow is merely trying to escape and ducks into the lair of a dangerous xill hunter. The assassin is no match for the xill, who quickly overpowers the drow and is preparing him as a “trophy” to add to the hunter’s museum of conquests.

The characters explore the lair, slowly realizing it is not the drow’s domain but the home of an otherworldly hunter. The party rushes to confront their would-be assassin, but first they must contend with the powerful xill and the dangerous traps in its lair.

## Game Master’s Section

### Encounter Table

To help the GM prepare, we have included a quick reference table showing all encounters at a glance. **Loc** – the location number keyed to the map for the encounter. **Pg** – the module page number that the encounter can be found on. **Type** – indicates if the encounter is a trap (T), puzzle (P), or combat (C). **Encounter** – the key monsters, traps, or NPCs that can be found in the encounter. Names in *italics* are classed NPCs. **EL** – the encounter level.



<u>Loc</u>	<u>Page</u>	<u>Type</u>	<u>Encounter</u>	<u>EL</u>
3-1	28	C/P	Animated door	3
		T/P	Trapped handle	6
3-2	29	C	3 ethereal marauders	5
		T	Razor wire net trap	3
3-3	29	T/P	Electricity traps	7
3-4	30	T/P	Dart trapped door	5
		C	Invisible stalker	7
3-5	31	T	Floor pit trap	5
		C	Huge mimic	7
3-6	32	T/P	Series of door traps	8
3-7	33	C	2 flesh golems	8
3-8	34	C	<i>Dae Shar</i> , Rog5/Asn3	5
		C	Ochre jelly	5
3-10	36	T	Arena traps	6
		C	<i>T’Klack</i> , xill Rgr5	9

## Scaling Information

GMs can quickly adjust the difficulty of the scenario to accommodate groups of different levels. Consider adapting the adventure using any of the following suggestions:

**Weaker Parties (groups lower than 5th level or with fewer than 25 total character levels):** Lower all trap Search, Disable and effect Save DCs by 2-4 each. Remove 1 ethereal marauder from area 3-2. Reduce mimic in area 3-5 from Huge to Large. Remove 1 flesh golem from area 3-7. Remove 1-2 assassin levels from *Dae Shar* in area 3-8. Remove 1-2 ranger levels from *T’Klack* in area 3-10.

**Stronger Parties (characters above 7th level, or for more than 30 total character levels):** Increase all trap Search, Disable and effect Save DCs by 2 each. Add 1 or 2 ethereal marauders to area 3-2. Add 1 flesh golem to area 3-7. Add 1 assassin level to *Dae Shar*, and have the drow begin the encounter fully healed. Add 2-3 ethereal marauders to area 3-10 to assist *T’Klack*.

## Getting the Players Involved

The most direct route is to have the characters, or a friend of the party, be the target of the assassination attempt by the drow. If this is used as part of the overall storyline, Skullshank has sent the assassin. If a targeted assassination is not feasible, these options will also work.

**A Dangerous Game:** Locals beseech the party for help. A mysterious stranger hunts in the morning mists near the city. Soon after witnesses report seeing the stranger, a powerful member of the town militia goes missing. City officials are growing concerned, fearful that soon no militia will remain to protect the city. The group heads into the nearby hills where the trail of clues leads to the lair.

**Eccentric Collector:** A wealthy merchant hires the characters to retrieve a rare and valuable wyvern head trophy from a rival big game hunter. The merchant is willing to pay handsomely for the wyvern head, and for any information they can provide about the reclusive hunter. The merchant seeks to drive up interest – and thus prices – in similar exotic trophies, and provides clues that lead the party to the lair.

## Background Story

The party's intervention in Fairweather and Blessings-Be (from chapters 1 and 2) has not gone unnoticed. While recovering his strength from decades of torpor, Skullshank has commanded his minions to eliminate the party before they pose a serious threat to his plans.

Dae Shar, a drow assassin, was hired to poison the group. Dae Shar followed the group for several weeks, looking for the right opportunity to introduce the poison. While the group was camping one evening, Dae Shar slipped into the camp to poison their water and rations.

A storm broke unexpectedly, and the thunder woke the group just as Dae Shar was finishing the deed. Caught in the act, Dae Shar panicked and fled. The steady rain from the sudden storm made easy work of following the would-be assassin's tracks in the muddy turf.

The storm broke as suddenly as it came, and dawn was nigh. Scrambling for a place to escape both the party and the dawning sun, Dae Shar stumbled upon the xill's lair. Breaking into the lair was fairly easy, but the xill hunter, T'Klack, was soon aware of the intruder's presence.

T'Klack subdued Dae Shar and took him to the lower level of the lair, where a vile medical lab awaits those unlucky enough to be captured. Dae Shar is being slowly preserved for exhibition in the macabre trophy room of the xill.

T'Klack is only involved via Dae Shar's intrusion. The xill has no real connection to Skullshank. T'Klack has constructed a sizeable trophy room to house his numerous hunting conquests. Worthy opponents that stumble into his lair represent an opportunity too good to pass up.

## Adventure Note

Dae Shar did successfully poison the party's rations and water before getting caught. The GM should determine if the party has any special precautions to protect their goods; otherwise, all food and water has been laced with concentrated arsenic. If the group camps during the adventure, they will be consuming poisoned food and water. The player beginning (below) provides a warning to the party; it's up to them to heed that warning.

**Poisoned Food:** CR 4; location trigger; no reset; poisoned food; individual targets; never miss (if ingested); poison (concentrated arsenic, DC 15 Fortitude save resists, 1d2 Con/1d8 Con plus 1 Con drain); Search DC 20; Disable Device varies (discard).

## Player Beginning

*While surprised by the sudden storm, you're grateful that it woke you when it did, despite being soaked to the bone. The stranger in your camp was a most unwelcome guest. You surprised a drow rifling through your foodstuffs and water skins, pouring something over your rations.*

*As surprised to see you awake as you were to see him, the drow fled into the nearby hills. Thankfully, steady rain made the ground soft enough that you had a decent set of tracks to follow.*

*You must have made serious enemies along the way if someone hired a drow assassin to poison you and your friends. As you follow the drow's trail, you can't help but wonder just who is behind this aborted assassination attempt.*

*Your focus quickly snaps back to the present as you find the end of the tracks. The drow took a circuitous path through the foothills, but the trail ends abruptly at a large metal door fixed into the side of a hill.*

*Shaking the last bit of rain from your gear, you gird yourself for whatever dangers may lie ahead. You want some answers, and you hope to find some beyond this door.*



# The Hunter of Worlds

Unless noted in the text, all ceilings are 10 feet high and the walls are high-quality hewn stone. All doors are smooth, polished metal. There are no wandering monsters in this scenario.

**Dungeon Note:** In the center of every five-foot square there is a small recessed hole six inches across with a sturdy metal handle set inside. These facilitate the multi-limbed xill in traveling through the dungeon along ceilings and walls. This applies to every five-foot square on the floor, walls and ceiling. This description only appears in a few read-aloud passages but applies to every area in the lair unless otherwise noted.

**Hewn Stone Walls:** 3 ft. thick; hardness 10; hp 540; Break DC 50; Climb DC 12 (handholds set into walls and ceiling as noted above)

**Strong Metal Doors:** 3 inches thick; hardness 12; hp 60; Break DC 30.

**Inset Metal Handles:** 1 inch thick; hardness 5; hp 25; Break DC 23.

## Areas of the Map

**Area 3-1 – The Animated Entrance (EL 6):** When the players are ready to begin, read the following aloud:

*The wide metal door is a perfect square nearly ten feet to a side. The door is unlike any you have seen before.*

*The surface is cut along the diagonals – the four separate hinged slats would pull outward, like the petals of a giant metal flower. Each slat has a smooth metal handle set into a small circular recess fashioned into its center. The criss-crossed diagonals where the slats meet are saw-toothed. In its current closed position, the teeth align seamlessly.*

The door is not trapped, per se. It is actually an animated object. It functions much like a trapped door would, but there is technically no trap to locate or disable. *Detect magic* reveals that the door has a moderate aura of transmutation magic. A DC 26 Spellcraft check identifies the aura as *animate objects*.

**Tactics:** The doors open easily and swing fully back until they are flush with the floor or side of the hill. However, unless the characters announce that they are opening all four doors simultaneously, the animated doorway attacks the first character passing through. If it hits, the animated doorway initiates a grapple and crushes the character on subsequent rounds.

The characters' best chances are to either defeat the animated doorway or ready actions to move through the doorway when the opportunity presents itself. This requires a DC 15 Jump check or DC 25 Tumble check.

**Animated Doorway:** CR 3; Large construct; HD 4d10+30; hp 62; Init +0; Spd 0 ft. (fixed location, cannot move); AC 14, touch 9, flat-footed 14; Base Atk +3; Grp +12; Atk/Full Atk Slam +7 melee (1d8+6); Space/Reach Special/5 ft.; SQ Hardness 10, construct traits, darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; AL N; SV Fort +1, Ref +1, Will -4; Str 20, Dex 10, Con –, Int –, Wis 1, Cha 1.

**Aftermath:** If the door is left alone for one full minute and no character is currently trapped, it closes automatically. If enough damage is inflicted to the door to defeat it, the animation is destroyed and it reverts to a normal door (albeit a little worse for wear).

Once the characters have entered the main entrance, read the following:

*A large octagonal room stretches 30 feet by 30 feet, tapering to a 10-foot hallway leading off to the north. Soft yellow light illuminates the room and hallway from a series of crystals mounted into the corners of the ceiling at regular intervals.*

*The stone surfaces have been polished to a bright sheen. Every five feet, there is a circular recess in the stone six inches across and three inches deep. Smooth metal rods mounted inside the recesses lie flush with the stonework. These handles are all in perfect alignment and appear on the walls, ceiling and floor of this room and continue down the hallway in the same fashion.*

*You notice a small scrap of blue-grey fabric lying near the entrance. You recognize it – it's from the cloak the drow assassin was wearing.*

The lower handle set into the wall along the southwest controls the animated door. A DC 25 Spot check reveals that it is slightly out of alignment with the other handles along the wall.

Rotating the handle clockwise automatically opens the door (if it is still animated) and keeps it open for 2 minutes before it closes or the handle is rotated back to the starting position. Rotating the handle counter-clockwise triggers a gas trap.

**Insanity Mist Trap:** CR 6; mechanical; location trigger (handle turned counter-clockwise); manual reset; gas; multiple targets (all targets within five feet of southwest wall); never miss; poison (insani-

ty mist, DC 15 Fortitude save resists, 1d4 Wis/2d6 Wis); Search DC 20; Disable Device DC 16.

The glowing crystals are equivalent to *everburning torches*. There are six total. They can be removed with a DC 15 Disable Device check.

**Area 3-2 – Centerpoint Hub (EL 5):** When the party reaches this hub, read the following:

*The short hallway opens into a small hub. Similar hallways stretch 20 feet to the west, north and east from this chamber. The same recessed handles appear every five feet along the walls, floor and ceiling.*

*An odd, high-pitched whine echoes throughout the room. Three bluish-purple smears of light hover in mid air, one in each of the hallways heading from this room. The whining noises follow the blue ripples of light as they slowly drift about the halls.*

Now give the players handout F.

The colored patches of light are actually ethereal marauders hovering on the edge of the Ethereal Plane, eager to attack. They are trained pets of T'Klack. A DC 25 Knowledge (the planes) check will reveal the nature of the lights and the sound.

**Tactics:** The ethereal marauders wait until the group moves to one of the other hallways or the secret door, then slip out of the Ethereal Plane to flank a single opponent and attack. The ethereal marauders fight to the death.

**Ethereal Marauders (3):** CR 3; Medium magical beast (extraplanar); HD 3d10; hp 27, 24, 22; Init +5; Spd 40 ft.; AC 14, touch 11, flat-footed 13; Base Atk +3; Grp +5; Atk/Full Atk Bite +5 melee (1d6+3);

Space/Reach 10 ft./10 ft.; SQ Darkvision 60 ft., ethereal jaunt; AL N; SV Fort +3, Ref +4, Will +2; Str 14, Dex 12, Con 11, Int 7, Wis 12, Cha 10.

**Skills and Feats:** Listen +5, Move Silently +5, Spot +4; Improved initiative

**Ethereal Jaunt (Su):** An ethereal marauder 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 (CL 15th).

**Hidden Details:** There is a secret door on the northwest wall leading to area 3-3. Uncovering it requires a DC 20 Search check. To open the door, the two handles on that wall must both be turned clockwise at the same time. Remember the handles are set into the wall at the 2-1/2-foot and 7-1/2-foot marks. Any other manipulation of the handles triggers a razor wire trap that swings from the ceiling to attack the marked areas.

**Spring-Loaded Razor Wire Net:** CR 3; mechanical; event trigger (handle manipulation); automatic reset (5 minutes); Atk +15 melee (1d6+6 and special, razor wire net); Special: Struck target is entangled; DC 20 Escape Artist check or DC 25 Strength test to break free (inflicting additional 1d6 damage); Search DC 18; Disable Device DC 25.

The Disable Device rating listed above will ruin the razor wire net used in the trap. However, the razor wire net can be removed intact with a DC 30 Disable Device check.

**Area 3-3 – Control Booth (EL 7):** When the characters open the door, read the following:

*The secret door slides open to reveal a small room lit with a dim blue glow. A series of panels line the walls, sporting a variety of buttons and*

## New Item: Razor Wire Net

A razor wire net is comprised of thin, serrated filaments of Mithral woven into a complex web. Only the outer perimeter of the net is safe to handle without sturdy gloves. The razor wire net functions as a normal net with the following exceptions:

- A razor wire net inflicts 1d6 damage when it strikes an opponent.
- A razor wire net inflicts an additional 1d6 damage if an entangled target attempts any sort of movement, such as freeing himself from the net.
- Using a razor wire net requires Exotic Weapon Proficiency (razor wire net) to use safely.
- Wielding a razor wire net untrained increases the risk of critically failing a combat roll by 1 (1-2 on 1d20 instead of 1).
- A razor wire net has hardness 10 and 10 hit points.

Market price: 1,020 gp.

levers. This is the only area you've seen where there are no circular recesses in the walls or ceiling with those odd handles.

Small metal placards are placed above each panel, with a strange, runic text neatly etched onto the surface. There are a total of five such panels: two each on the longer southwest and northeast walls, with one panel on the northwest wall opposite the secret door.

Now give the players handout G.

These panels allow T'Klack to reset or deactivate traps on the first floor of the lair, as well as determine how often traps have been triggered.

The placards above each panel are written in Infernal. Clockwise from the south-most panel, they are labeled A-E on the map. All the buttons, levers and panels are constructed of well-polished steel. Manipulating any of the panels in the wrong way (as described below) triggers the same effect – electricity arcs throughout the room, zapping the characters. A separate Disable Device check is required to disable the trapped status of each individual panel.

**Electricity Trapped Panels:** CR 4; magic device; mechanical trigger; instant reset; spell effect (*lightning bolt*, 5th-level wizard, 5d6 electricity, DC 14 Reflex save half damage); Special effect (increases to DC 16 Reflex save for targets wearing metal armor); Search DC 28; Disable Device DC 28.

**Placard A:** "Entrance Door"

There are four buttons. If all four buttons are pressed at the same time, the animated door and gas trap in area 3-1 are de-activated. Pressing them all again reactivates and resets both.

**Placard B:** "Martial Trophy Room"

There are four levers in a 2x2 square. The top two levers are up; the bottom two levers are down. If all four levers are switched to their opposite position at the same time, the trap on the door to area 3-4 is deactivated as the trap resets. Returning them all to their original positions reactivates the trap.

**Placard C:** "Control Booth"

There are two buttons stacked vertically with a short switch to the right of each. Both switches are pointing up slightly. If both buttons are pressed and both switches pushed all the way up (flush to the wall) at the same time, the razor wire frame in area 3-2 retracts to the ceiling and deactivates. Pressing the buttons and returning the switches to their original positions reactivates the razor wire trap.

**Placard D:** "Museum"

This panel has four levers in a row. The first and last lever are up, the middle two levers are down. This panel is broken. Any change of position to any of the levers triggers the trap. There is no other effect.

**Placard E:** "Spoils of Conquest"

This panel has four levers in a column. The first and second lever are positioned left, the third and fourth lever are positioned right. They are already set in the deactivation mode – preventing the trap on the door to area 3-5 from going off. Reversing the positions of the levers (1 and 2 to the right, 3 and 4 to the left) will activate the trap to area 3-5.

**Area 3-4 – Martial Trophy Room (EL 8):** When the party reaches the door to this area, read the following:

*The large double door stands nearly the entire width of the 10-foot hallway. Four large metal rings are fixed in a straight line across the door, two per side. The rings are spaced less than one foot apart and stick straight out from the metal doors. A small pearl is set into the top of each ring.*

Now give the players handout H.

The door is trapped but not locked. The party can bypass the trap by rotating the two rings on the left door clockwise and the two rings on the right door counterclockwise so the pearls face the center.

All four rings must be manipulated at the same time or the trap is triggered, releasing a hail of darts from the ceiling throughout the entire 20-foot hallway. Opening the door without properly positioning the rings also triggers the trap.

**Fusillade of Darts:** CR 5; mechanical; event trigger; manual reset (area 3-3); Atk +18 ranged (1d4+1, dart); multiple targets (1d8 darts per target in the 10 ft. by 20 ft. hallway); Search DC 19; Disable Device DC 25.

Once the door has been bypassed and opened, read the following:

*The wide double doors open to reveal a room bright with the gleam of polished metal. Elaborate mountings and displays of luxurious dark woods line the walls of the room. Mounted on these displays is a wide collection of exotic and exquisite weapons.*

*You recognize a dwarven *urgrosh* and a pair of silvery *kukri*, among others. But many of the weapons are foreign to you, featuring unusual lines and angles. The weapons appear to be in*

*peerless condition. It's obvious that someone takes great pride in this collection.*

Long ago, T'Klack defeated an invisible stalker in combat. Since T'Klack could not prepare and display the stalker along with his other quarry, the xill has made the invisible stalker his servant. The invisible stalker defends this room with its life.

**Tactics:** The invisible stalker only attacks if anyone attempts to touch or remove a weapon from the displays. The invisible stalker fights to the death.

The invisible stalker will attack with weapons from the displays to confuse the party. A successful Bluff check by the stalker, opposed by the party's Sense Motive, will lead the party to believe they are up against animated items, like the door in area 3-1, rather than the stalker itself. If the group exceeds the stalker's total by 10 or more, they know the weapons are being manipulated by something and are not animated.

**Invisible Stalker:** CR 7; Large elemental (air, extraplanar); HD 8d8+16; hp 58; Init +8; Spd 30 ft., fly 30 ft. (perfect); AC 17, touch 13, flat-footed 13; Base Atk +6; Grp +14; Atk Slam +10 melee (2d6+4) or weapon +10 melee (as weapon); Full Atk 2 slams +10 melee (2d6+4) or 2 weapons +10 melee (as weapon); Space/Reach 10 ft./10 ft.; SQ Darkvision 60 ft., elemental traits, natural invisibility, improved tracking; AL N; SV Fort +4, Ref +10, Will +4; Str 18, Dex 19, Con 14, Int 14, Wis 15, Cha 11.

**Skills and Feats:** Bluff +8, Listen +13, Move Silently +15, Search +13, Spot +13, Survival +2 (+4 following tracks); Combat Reflexes, Improved Initiative, Weapon Focus (slam).

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

**Aftermath:** Once the invisible stalker has been defeated, only encumbrance prevents the party from taking all of the weapons here. The collection includes the following weapons.

**Masterwork items:** bolas (4), bastard sword, composite longbow, dire flail, dwarven urgrosh, dwarven waraxe, gnome hooked hammer, greatsword, hand crossbow, heavy repeating crossbow, kama, nets (2), nunchaku, orc double axe, sai, shuriken (20), siangham, spiked chain.

**Silver items:** kukri (2), greataxe, longsword, ranseur.

**Cold-wrought iron items:** battle axe, heavy pick, morningstar, warhammer.

**Mithral items:** falchion, flail, scimitar.



**Area 3-5 – Spoils of Conquest (EL 7):** When the party reaches the door to this area, read the following:

*The large double door stands nearly the entire width of the 10-foot hallway. Four large metal rings are fixed in a straight line across the door, two per side. The rings are spaced less than a foot apart and stick straight out from the metal doors. A small pearl is set into the bottom of each ring.*

The door starts out with the trap inactive and unlocked. The trap is only active if the characters manipulated the panel in area 3-3. If active, the party can bypass the trap by rotating the two rings on the left door counterclockwise and the two rings on the right door clockwise so the pearls face toward the center.

If the trap has been re-activated, all four rings must be manipulated at the same time or the trap is triggered. The floor swings open from the center along the hinges between the floor and the walls, as marked on the map.

**Collapsing Floor Pit Trap:** CR 5; mechanical; location trigger; automatic reset (5 minutes); DC 20 Reflex save avoids on edges or special; 40 ft. deep (4d6, fall); multiple targets (10' x 15' section of floor); Search DC 25; Disable Device DC 18.



**Special:** A character in the center squares of the opening pit must make a DC 25 Reflex save to jump toward the walls and cling to the handles on the wall. Maneuvering along the handholds requires a DC 15 Climb check.

Once the door has been bypassed and opened, read the following:

*The wide double doors open to reveal a large room filled with numerous wooden display cases. The scent of oil and polish hangs in the air. Intricate shelving lines the room, covering the circular recesses along most of the wall space.*

*Glass encases the various displays, protecting the items housed on rich velvets and soft padded cushions. Everything appears to be well cared for, and the room is impeccably clean.*

This is another trophy room for T'Klack, where he keeps the interesting and exquisite items scavenged from his various conquests. The entire shelving structure on the north end of the wall – and most of the items on the shelf – is actually a huge mimic. The mimic protects the room for T'Klack in exchange for treasures.

**Tactics:** The mimic waits until a character actually touches an item on its fake shelves, snaring the character with its adhesive. Otherwise, it has a readied action to strike anyone in range that tries to pilfer items from nearby shelves. The mimic will grapple and try to overcome its initial target before moving on to others. The mimic fights to the death.

**Enlarged Mimic:** CR 7; Huge aberration (shapechanger); HD 11d8+55; hp 104; Init 0; Spd 10 ft.; AC 16, touch 9, flat-footed 16; Base Atk +6; Grp +20; Atk Slam +14 melee (2d6+8); Full Atk 2 slams +12 melee (2d6+8); Space/Reach 20 ft. x 5 ft./10 ft.; SA Adhesive, crush (2d6+8); SQ Darkvision 60 ft., immunity to acid, mimic shape; AL N; SV Fort +6, Ref +5, Will +8; Str 26, Dex 10, Con 20, Int 10, Wis 13, Cha 10.

*Skills and Feats:* Climb +9, Disguise +17, Listen +10, Spot +10; Alertness, Lightning Reflexes, Weapon Focus (slam).

*Adhesive (Ex):* A mimic exudes a thick slime that acts as a powerful adhesive, holding fast any creatures or items that touch it. An adhesive-covered mimic automatically grapples any creature it hits with its slam attack. Opponents so grappled cannot get free while the mimic is alive without removing the adhesive first.

A weapon that strikes an adhesive-coated mimic is stuck fast unless the wielder succeeds on

a DC 16 Reflex save. A successful DC 16 Strength check is needed to pry it off. Strong alcohol dissolves the adhesive, but the mimic still can grapple normally. A mimic can dissolve its adhesive at will, and the substance breaks down 5 rounds after the creature dies.

*Mimic Shape (Ex):* Anyone who examines the mimic can detect the ruse with a successful Spot check opposed by the mimic's Disguise check. Of course, by this time it is generally far too late.

**Aftermath:** Once the mimic has been defeated, only encumbrance will prevent the group from plundering the items found in this room. The collection includes the following notable items: 5 sets of artisan's tools (masterwork), blacksmithing tools (masterwork), climbers' kit, 2 disguise kits, 2 healers' kits, 2 hourglasses, 2 magnifying glasses, 2 merchant's scales, military saddle (exotic), 3 musical instruments (masterwork dulcimer, flute and tambourine), thieves' tools (masterwork), water clock, 2 blank wizard's spellbooks.

The collection also includes 4 finely sculpted wooden pieces of art worth 50 gp each and 6 pieces of silver jewelry worth 80 gp each.

**Area 3-6 – Fourplex of Door Traps (EL 8):** Four trapped puzzle doors bar the way to area 3-7. Since these doors are detailed puzzles, they warrant their own entry. Each door has its own handout. When the characters reach the first door, give the players handout I and read the following aloud.

*A set of large double doors extends nearly the entire width of the 10-foot hallway. Aside from a diagonal slash across the front of the door where you assume the seam between the doors to be, there are no visible handles.*

*Set into the wall next to the door is a metal panel featuring a grid of buttons, each marked with an unusual symbol. It appears that these buttons control the door.*

**Door 1:** To open the door, the party must press the four buttons featuring the same symbol at the same time. They are the only symbol to appear four times. A DC 26 Spot or Bardic Knowledge check can help provide a clue. If any other combination of buttons is used, a trap is triggered.

**Burning Hands Trap:** CR 4; magic device; mechanical trigger; automatic reset; spell effect (*burning hands*, 5th-level wizard, 5d4 fire, DC 13 Reflex save half damage); Search DC 23; Disable Device DC 26.

Once door 1 is open, give the players handout J and read the following aloud.

*As the diagonal metal doors slide open, you see a nearly identical door just a few feet further down the hall. The diagonal slash cuts along the door in the opposite direction, and the panel of buttons features a different series of symbols.*

**Door 2:** To open the door, the party must press the two matched pairs of buttons at the same time (four buttons total). Only two sets of buttons have symbols repeated in the pattern. A DC 28 Spot or Bardic Knowledge check can help provide a clue. If any other combination of buttons is used, a trap is triggered.

**Ray of Enfeeblement Trap:** CR 4; magic device; mechanical trigger; automatic reset; Atk +7 ranged touch against closest target (*ray of enfeeblement*, 6th-level wizard, 1d6+3 Str); Search DC 24; Disable Device DC 26.

Once door 2 is open, give the players handout K and read the following aloud.

*The door slides open with a whisper, revealing another set of metal doors. Another panel with a different pattern of buttons is set into the wall.*

**Door 3:** To open the door, the party must press the four buttons that don't follow the pattern. One symbol appears on only one button, while another symbol appears three times. All other symbols appear exactly twice. A DC 30 Spot or Bardic Knowledge check can help provide a clue. If any other combination of buttons is used, a trap is triggered.

**Poison Wall Spikes:** CR 5; mechanical; location trigger; manual reset; Atk +16 melee (1d8+4 plus poison, spike); multiple targets (coming out of walls in 10' x 10' area at panel and previous door area); poison (Medium monstrous spider venom, DC 13 Fortitude save resists, 1d4 Str/1d4 Str); Search DC 17; Disable Device DC 21.

Once door 3 is open, give the players handout L and read the following aloud.

*Gritting your teeth, you wince as you see yet another metal door blocking your way. The now familiar panel sits nearby, but there are no duplicate symbols anywhere on the buttons.*

**Door 4:** To open the door, the party must simply press the four buttons in the farthest corners. A DC 30 Spot or Search check of the panel reveals the corner buttons have slightly more wear than the others. If any other combination of buttons is used, a trap is triggered. When this trap is triggered, Door 1 closes shut, sealing off escape. When the panel is properly activated, both Door 1 and Door 4 open.

**Black Tentacles Trap:** CR 7; magic device; proximity trigger (*alarm*); no reset; spell effect (*black tentacles*, 7th-level wizard, Atk Grapple +15 melee [1d6+4]); multiple targets (attack all in 10' x 15' area affected); Search DC 29; Disable Device DC 29.

**Area 3-7 – Museum of Flesh (EL 9):** Once the party opens the last door from area 3-6, read the following.

*This massive angular room flares open to 70 feet wide, its actual depth obscured by the numerous large displays set up throughout the area. The ceiling stretches far higher than anywhere else in the lair, reaching nearly 40 feet.*

*Mounted and preserved beasts occupy dozens of displays in this macabre museum. Tanned and stretched animal skins and hides line the eastern wall. Suspended from several of the circular handholds in the ceiling is the serpentine skeleton of an enormous remorhaz.*

*As you look over the displays, you recognize a bulette, chimera, wyvern, ettin and other formidable enemies. Far to the northwest corner, you notice a gap in the displays. From here, it appears that there is a large section missing from the floor.*

Now give out players handout M.

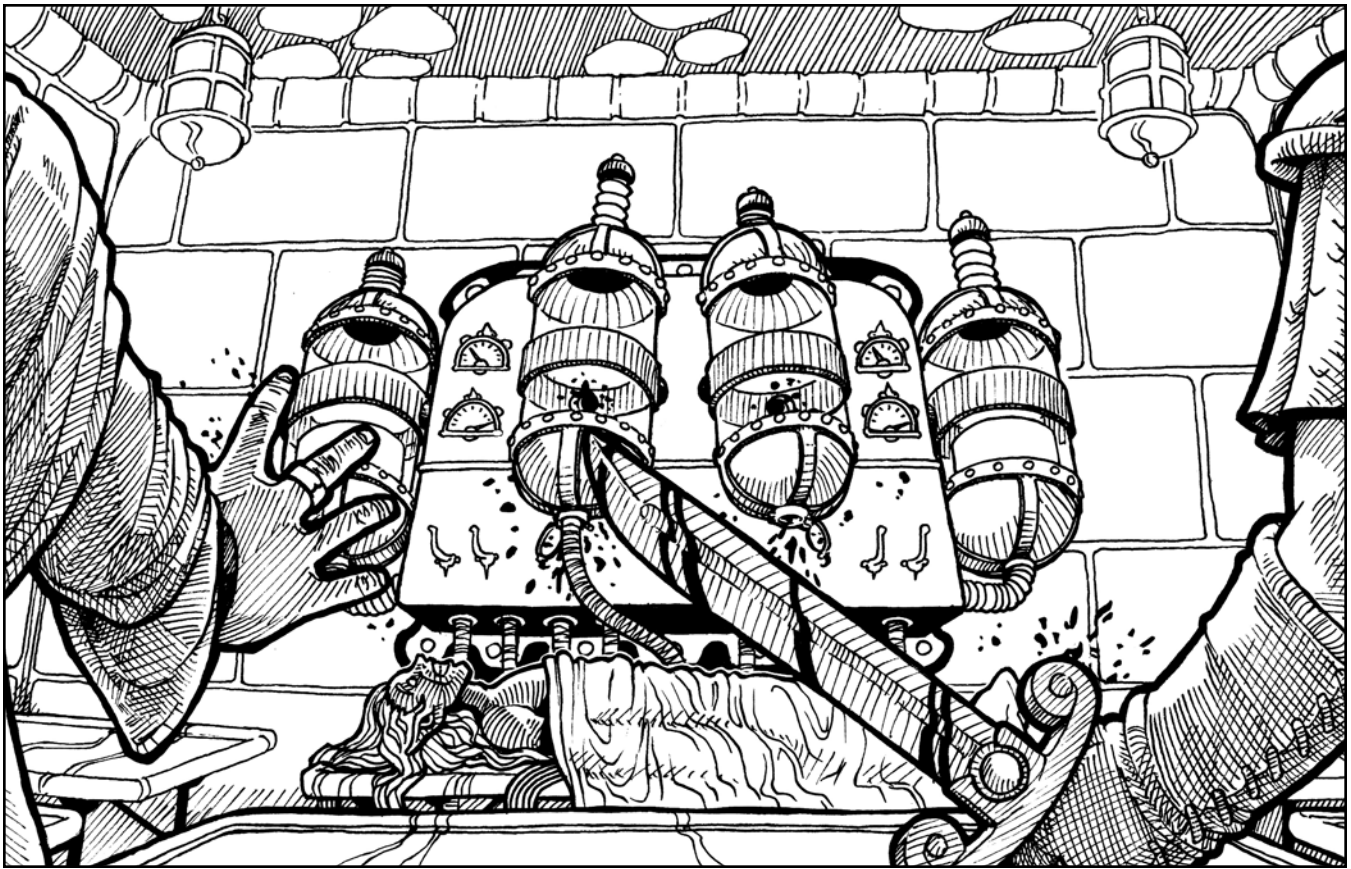
This is T'Klack's personal trophy room, where he proudly displays the creatures he has defeated and then preserved in area 3-8. Two of the displays feature flesh golems, hiding easily among the actual displays. A Spot check opposed by the flesh golem's Hide check is required to notice something is amiss.

**Tactics:** Each flesh golem remains silent and hidden until a character passes within its range or approaches the lift in the back of the room. Once one golem attacks, the other joins in the following round. The flesh golems fight to the death.

**Flesh Golems (2):** CR 7; Large constructs; 9d10+30; hp 91, 72; Init -1; Spd 30 ft.; AC 18, touch 8, flat-footed 18; Base Atk +6; Grp +15; Atk Slam +10 melee (2d8+5); Full Atk 2 slams +10 melee (2d8+5); Space/Reach 10 ft./10 ft.; SA Berserk; SQ Construct traits, damage reduction 5/adamantine, 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:* Hide +15 (due to circumstance of room)

*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.

*Immunity to Magic (Ex):* A flesh golem is immune to any spell or spell-like ability that allows spell resistance. In addition, 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.

**The Lift:** The northwest corner of the museum houses a large mechanical lift that allows T'Klack to travel between levels with larger preserved creatures. A small console is mounted on the north wall immediately next to the lift. A small lever pointing toward the hole is currently in a "down" position. Lifting the lever creates a loud grinding noise and rattles some of the displays slightly as the 10' x 15' section of floor slowly rises from the second floor.

The second floor is 40 feet below the first – 30 feet of solid stone and the 10-foot height of area 3-9. Characters can easily climb down to the second floor with a DC 15 Climb check. A DC 18 Listen check reveals some bubbling noises coming from the second floor. From the vantage near the lift, there are no discernable features of area 3-9.

**Area 3-8 – Exsanguination Laboratory:** Once the party has descended to the second floor, read the following:

*This large room is brightly illuminated by dozens of magic lanterns hanging from the handles in the ceiling. The room stretches out 40 feet wide by 40 feet north-to-south – a carbon copy of the museum above, except for the 10-foot ceiling.*

*Gleaming metal tools, blades and medical instruments line the desks near the walls. A complex metal contraption covered with tubes, needles and pumps is mounted on the east wall, with tubes snaking from the contraption to a dozen nearby metal tables.*

*A large drain cover rests in the center of the room. A series of dark red grooves trickle along deep channels cut into the floor. The flow starts near the metal tables on the east side of the room. It pools around the drain, dripping down into the gurgling darkness below.*

*Only one table seems occupied. A blood-stained white sheet covers most of a human-sized figure. Half a dozen tubes pump something dark red, while a handful of others have yellow and white liquid coursing through them.*

The body on the table is Dae Shar. T'Klack is in the process of preserving the drow so he can be added to the xill's collection.

**Room Status:** The party has 10 minutes to halt the process before Dae Shar is killed. He is in dire straits, without his usual equipment or armor. The preservation process has only just begun, but the drow has been paralyzed by the fluids pumped into him.

**The Exsanguination Machine:** The mechanical contraption is T'Klack's prized Exsanguination Machine. The Exsanguination Machine is a series of pumps and vats of liquid used to remove blood from the victim and replace it with special preservatives. Two of the vats can store the drained blood for later use. Currently, however, the vat filters are open, allowing the blood to pour onto the floor, where it follows the blood channels to the drain. The third vat is filled with a yellow-colored liquid, the equivalent of 20 *potions of gentle repose*. The last vat is filled with a cream-colored liquid, the equivalent of 20 *potions of hold person*.

**Exsanguination Machine:** 12 inches thick; hardness 15; hp 200; Break DC 40.

**Medical Tubes (2/vat):** 2 inches thick; hardness 5; hp 20; Break DC 25

The contraption can be disabled by physically damaging it, or with a DC 30 Disable Device check. The tubes and needles can be carefully removed from the drow's body with either a DC 20 Heal or Sleight of Hand check without damaging the machine. Failing any of the rolls above by more than 5 inflicts 1d6 points of damage to Dae Shar.

**Tactics:** Dae Shar is helpless unless the machine is destroyed or healing is provided. If removed from the machine and healed, he bluffs that he is comatose. If the group destroys the Exsanguination Machine, Dae Shar recovers from the paralysis 3 rounds later. Due to the nature of his condition, Dae Shar gets a +5 circumstance bonus to his Bluff check, opposed by the group's highest Sense Motive check.

Even while paralyzed, Dae Shar is conscious and aware of the group. He studies the most dangerous looking opponent to use his assassin death attack ability as soon as he is able. If his Bluff is successful, he will catch the group unaware and get a surprise round before they can act. Once combat ensues, he will use Improved Feint or cast *invisibility* to use his sneak attack ability to the fullest. Dae Shar fights to the death.

**Dae Shar, drow Rog5/Asn3:** CR 5 (weakened state); Medium humanoid (drow); HD (8d6+8); hp

23; Init +5; 30 ft.; AC 15, touch 15, flat-footed 10; Base Atk +5; Grp +6; Atk/Full Atk Scalpel +10 melee (1d3+1/18-20); SA Death attack (Fort save DC 15 or die), +5d6 sneak attack; SQ Darkvision 120, evasion, improved saves (+1 vs. poisons, +2 vs. spells), light blindness, spell resistance 19, spells, trapfinding, trap sense +1, uncanny dodge; AL LE; SV Fort +3, Ref +12, Will +3; Str 12, Dex 20, Con 13, Int 15, Wis 12, Cha 14.

**Skills and Feats:** Bluff +13, Disable Device +16, Escape Artist +16, Hide +16, Listen +10, Move Silently +16, Open Lock +16, Search +13, Sleight of Hand +16, Spot +10; Combat Expertise, Improved Feint, Weapon Finesse.

**Arcane Spells** (3/1; save DC = 12 + spell level): 1st – *ghost sound, jump, obscuring mist*; 2nd – *invisibility*.

**Hidden Details:** A DC 20 Spot check near the middle of the room reveals a subtle red glow coming from beneath the grate. An ochre jelly resides below the room, feeding off the blood and remains of the victims in this room. Due to the constant diet of blood and remains, the ochre jelly's coloring has been permanently stained dark red. A DC 30 Spot or DC 20 Knowledge (dungeoneering) identifies the ochre jelly.

If a character investigates the grate, a DC 20 Spot check reveals a glint of metal floating in the ichors below. Closer inspection reveals 2 scalpels and one faintly glowing silver ring about 2 feet below the surface of the grate floating on top of the coagulated puddle.

**Tactics:** Moving the grate or reaching into its chamber triggers the ochre jelly to act. A character reaching into the grate to retrieve the items without proper protection takes automatic acid damage, and the ochre jelly gets to initiate a free grapple attempt. The ochre jelly takes a full round action to climb out and ooze through the grating onto the main floor if it does not have an opponent grappled through the grating. The ochre jelly fights to the death.

**Ochre Jelly:** CR 5; Large Ooze; 6d10+36; hp 71; Init -5; Spd 10 ft./climb 10 ft.; AC 4, touch 4, flat-footed 4; Base Atk +4; Grp +10; Atk/Full Atk Slam +6 melee (2d4+4 plus 1d4 acid); Space/Reach 10 ft./5 ft.; SA Acid, constrict (2d4+3 plus 1d4 acid), improved grab; SQ Blindsight 60 ft., split, ooze traits; AL N; SV Fort +8, Ref -3, Will -3; Str 16, Dex 1, Con 22, Int -, Wis 1, Cha 1.

**Skills:** Climb +11.

**Acid (Ex):** An ochre jelly secretes a digestive acid that dissolves only flesh. Any melee hit or constrict attack deals acid damage.

**Split (Ex):** Slashing and piercing weapons and electricity attacks deal no damage to an ochre jelly.

Instead the creature splits into two identical jellies, each with half of the original's current hit points (round down). A jelly with 10 hit points or less cannot be further split and dies if reduced to 0 hit points.

**Aftermath:** The two scalpels and ring are suspended in the ochre jelly's body and can be retrieved from wherever the ochre jelly has been defeated. The scalpels are treated as Small-sized masterwork kukri (1d3/18-20). The ring is a *ring of feather falling*. There are also 5 garnets (150 gp) suspended in the ooze.

**Area 3-9 – Long Hallway (EL 0):** As the group heads down the hall from area 3-8, read the following:

*A long corridor stretches before you, nearly 60 feet long. The handholds on the walls are obscured by more stretched and tanned leather hides and intricate tapestries woven from various animal hairs, punctuated from time to time with singularly impressive teeth, bones, feathers, scales and other oddities.*

*These trophies span the entire length of the hallway, until the very end. It appears that the last 20 feet of the hall on the eastern side is a wide aperture leading into an enormous room beyond.*

There is a locked secret door behind a tapestry on the eastern wall, leading to a small storage room. A DC 30 Search check is needed to locate the door or DC 20 if the characters state they are deliberately looking behind or moving the various displays. The door is locked but not trapped. A DC 20 Open Lock check opens the door; otherwise T'Klack carries a key to this room.

The small room has several simple wooden shelves lining the walls. Dae Shar's gear is stashed here: +2 *studded leather armor of shadows*, +2 *dagger*, +1 *keen shortsword*, *boots of elvenkind* and a disguise kit.

A DC 25 Search check of the shelves will also reveal the following useful items: a *wand of reduce person* (7 charges), *wand of reduce animal* (9 charges), two scrolls of *longstrider* and one *potion of hide from animals*.

**Area 3-10 – The Arena (CR 11):** As the party approaches the archway to this area, read the following aloud:

*The hallway ends abruptly, as the eastern wall stretches open into a 20-foot-wide archway. Beyond the archway, an enormous room lies to the east. The walls flare to 40 feet wide, and the room stretches 60 feet long.*

*The floor and walls are marked with scratches and dark stains. Chains gently clink as they swing from the ceiling 20 feet overhead. The dominant feature, however, is the large metal panel on the wall to the east. Standing 20 feet wide and 10 feet tall, the panel features four large metal buttons each a yard in diameter, bearing some of the same strange symbols you saw on the trapped doors above.*

*Standing next to the panel is a short, insect-like humanoid. It is barely five feet tall, and four segmented arms protrude from the figure's chitinous chest. A pair of silvery shortswords weave menacingly in its right arms, while an arrow is nocked in the bow held in its left arms. Its segmented eyes look at you with a degree of respect as the figure's mandibles click out a staccato tongue.*

This is T'Klack's arena, where he brings worthy victims in order to defeat them in combat and prove his battle prowess.

The room sports four separate traps, each controlled by one of the four buttons on the panel. The areas affected by each trap are highlighted on the map and labeled A-D, as their corresponding buttons.

**Tactics:** T'Klack waits near the far wall until the party acts. He will attempt to split up the party by lowering the portcullis with button A first. Next he will try to disable opponents with the net traps controlled by button B or the pit traps controlled by button C. T'Klack will trigger the wall spikes with button D whenever he can get more than one character into the area of effect.

T'Klack can trigger the traps by pressing the buttons, or by firing his arrows at them from elsewhere in the room. Each button has an AC of 20 when attempting to hit it with a missile attack. T'Klack will focus on characters unaffected by the traps to prevent them from assisting each other. T'Klack fights to the death.

The traps can be disabled individually. The buttons can also be disabled with separate DC 25 Disable Device checks.

**Button A – Portcullis Trap:** CR 2; mechanical; manual trigger; manual reset; Atk +10 melee (4d6); Search DC 20; Disable Device DC 20. Note: Damage applies only to those within 5 ft. of the portcullis. Portcullis blocks 20' passageway; DC 25 Strength test to lift; DC 20 Escape Artist check to pass through. Metal portcullis bars: 1 inch thick; hardness 10; hp 20; Break DC 28. Each bar destroyed reduces Escape Artist check by 5.

**Button B – Large Net Trap:** CR 2; mechanical; manual trigger; manual reset; Atk +6 melee (see note); Search DC 20; Disable Device DC 25. Note: Characters in 10 ft. x 20 ft. area grappled by net (Str 20) if they fail a DC 15 Reflex save. An entangled creature can escape with a DC 20 Escape Artist check (a full-round action). The net has hardness 2 with 5 hit points and can be burst with a DC 25 Strength check (also a full-round action).

**Button C – Camouflaged Pit Traps:** CR 3; mechanical; manual trigger; manual reset; DC 20 Reflex save avoids; 30 ft. deep (3d6, fall); multiple targets (all targets in each marked square); Search DC 24; Disable Device DC 18.

**Button D – Poison Wall Spikes:** CR 5; mechanical; location trigger; manual reset; Atk +16 melee (1d8+4 plus poison, spike); multiple targets (all targets on indicated spaces); poison (Medium monstrous centipede venom, DC 12 Fortitude save resists, 1d4 Dex/1d4 Dex); Search DC 17; Disable Device DC 21.

**T'Klack, the Hunter of Worlds, Xill Rgr5:** CR 9; Medium outsider; 10d8+20; hp 84; Init +7; 40 ft.; AC 23, touch 13, flat-footed 20; Base Atk +10; Grp +13; Atk Short sword +13 melee (1d6+3/19–20) or claw +13 melee (1d4+3) or longbow +13 ranged (1d8+1/19-20/x3); Full Atk 3 short swords +11/+6/+1 melee (1d6+4/19-20, 1d6+2/19–20) and 2 claws +11/+6 melee (1d4+1); or 4 claws +11/+11/+6/+6 melee (1d4+2, 1d4+1); or 6 longbows +11/+11/+6/+6/+1/+1 ranged (1d8+1/19-20/x3); SA Implant, improved grab (+2 to grp check for each claw that hits; automatic bite), paralysis (on bite; DC 14 Fort save; 1d4 hours); SQ Favored enemies (magical beast, aberration), darkvision 60 ft., planewalk, spell resistance 21, wild empathy; AL LE; SV Fort +10, Ref +11, Will +6; Str 16, Dex 16, Con 15, Int 12, Wis 12, Cha 11.

*Skills and Feats:* Balance +20, Climb +17, Diplomacy +2, Escape Artist +18, Hide +11, Intimidate +8, Listen +17, Move Silently +18, Sense Motive +8, Spot +17, Tumble +19, Use Rope +11 (+13 with bindings); Endurance, Improved Critical (longbow), Improved Initiative, Multiattack, Multiweapon Fighting, Rapid Shot, Track.

*Implant (Ex):* As a standard action, a xill can lay eggs inside a paralyzed creature. The young emerge about 90 days later, literally devouring the host from inside. A *remove disease* spell rids a victim of the eggs, as does a DC 25 Heal check. If the check fails, the healer can try again, but each attempt (successful or not) deals 1d4 points of damage to the patient.

*Planewalk (Su):* Xill can cross from the Ethereal Plane with a move action but take 2 rounds to cross

back, during which time they are immobile. As a xill fades away, it becomes harder to hit. Opponents have a 20% miss chance in the first round and a 50% miss chance in the second. A xill can planewalk with a willing or helpless creature.

*Divine Spells* (1; save DC = 11 + spell level): 1st – *longstrider*

*Possessions:* Two +1 mithral shortswords, +1 leather armor, two +1 longbows, 20 +1 arrows, 10 +1 aberration bane arrows, 10 +1 magical beast bane arrows, four *potions of cure serious wounds* and key to secret door in area 3-9.

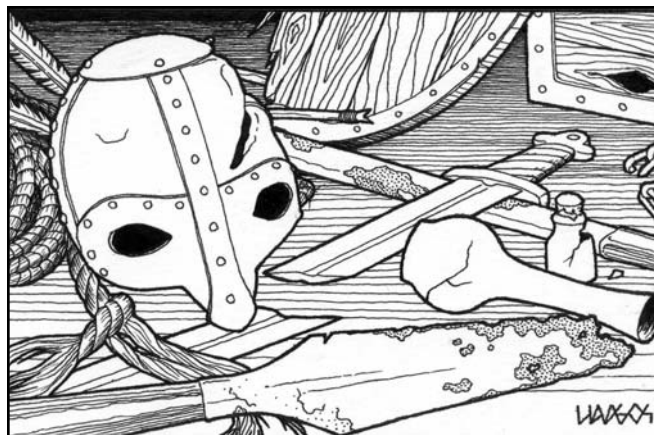
**Aftermath:** A bone scroll case on T'Klack contains a weathered leather map taken from Dae Shar. Notations written in Undercommon indicate that it is a map to the Dünerain Crystal Mine, a once prosperous mining operation thought to be long abandoned. A DC 25 Decipher Script check will provide the gist of the notes if none of the characters read Undercommon.

Apparently, Dae Shar was supposed to meet up with Skullshank's operatives at the Dünerain mine after dispatching the party to collect the remainder of his fee. This will lead the party to Interludes Chapter 4: The Dünerain Mines.

## Rewards

Award the following bonuses to the characters for achieving these significant goals.

Discovering their food had been poisoned before eating it	+100 XP
Navigating area 3-3 (Control Booth) without triggering any traps	+100 XP
Navigating area 3-6 (Fourplex of Door Traps) without triggering any traps	+200 XP
Avoiding a surprise attack from Dae Shar	+100 XP





# Chapter 4: The Dünerain Mines

## Introduction

“The Dünerain Mines” is the fourth adventure in the Interludes series and is best suited for a party of 4-6 characters of levels 7-9. The group should have approximately 35-40 class levels among the characters. This adventure contains a fair amount of combat, but a well balanced party will prove invaluable.

## Adventure Summary

The Dünerain Mines, a quartz mine thought long dormant, have been re-opened by an ogre mage in the employ of Skullshank. The large mine is back in operation, as the ogre mage’s slaves toil to extract the crystals needed to build lenses for the *Oculum Infernae*.

Numerous orcs work the mines, along with their ogre taskmasters. The lower level of the mine is filled with poisonous gas but also holds the greatest treasures and information about Skullshank’s plans.

Should the characters plumb the depths of the mine and discover the offices deep within the lower level, they find copies of the blueprints for the *Oculum Infernae* left in the ogre mage’s charge – a valuable tool in battling Skullshank in their eventual confrontation!

## Game Master’s Section

### Encounter Table

To help the GM prepare, we have included a quick reference table showing all encounters at a glance. **Loc** – the location number keyed to the map for the encounter. **Pg** – the module page number that the encounter can be found on. **Type** – indicates if the encounter is a trap (T), puzzle (P), or combat (C). **Encounter** – the key monsters, traps, or NPCs that can be found in the encounter. Names in *italics* are classed NPCs. **EL** – the encounter level.



<u>Loc</u>	<u>Page</u>	<u>Type</u>	<u>Encounter</u>	<u>EL</u>
4-1	39	C	Ogre guards	7
4-2	40	C	Ogre guards	9
		C	<i>Taskmaster Broggab</i> , Ogre Ftr6	8
4-3	41	C	Goblin slave	2
4-4	42	C	Ogre torturer	5
		C/T	Black pudding	7
4-5	43	C	Poisonous viper	1
		T/P	Winch elevator	2
		C	Fiendish bat swarm	3
4-6	44	C	Vapor demons	9
4-7	45	C	Vapor demon	7
4-8	46	C	<i>Chundag</i> the ogre mage	9
		C	Burm, the rat	2
		T	<i>Burning hands</i> trap	2
4-9	47	C	Destrachan	8

## Scaling Information

GMs can quickly adjust the difficulty of the scenario to accommodate groups of different levels. Consider adapting the adventure using any of the following suggestions:

**Weaker Parties (groups lower than 7th level or with fewer than 35 total character levels):** Remove one ogre from areas 4-1 and 4-2. Remove one vapor demon from area 4-6. Reduce skill check and save DCs by 2 each.

**Stronger Parties (characters above 9th level, or for more than 40 total character levels):** Add one ogre to areas 4-1 and 4-2. Add one vapor demon to areas 4-6 and 4-7 and 4-8. Increase all skill check DCs and Save DCs by +2 each.

## Getting the Players Involved

This adventure can easily follow on the heels of Chapter 3: “Hunter of Worlds.” The party has recovered a map to the Dünerain mines from their would-be assassin. The chance to learn about who is behind the assassination attempt should provide enough incentive for the characters to venture to the mines. Otherwise, these adventure hooks may be used.

**Pressed Into Service:** While traveling through town, the party learns that ogre raiding parties have been cap-

turing men of all ages. Witnesses say the unfortunate captives have been taken to the nearby Dünerain mines to work under the oppressive whip of their ogre masters. Ogre slavers later attack the PCs, leading them to investigate. Alternately, the town magistrate requests they investigate.

**A Cleaning Contract:** The deed to the Dünerain mines has been in a noble's family for some time. Finally, an intrepid member of the family has decided to attempt to re-open the mine to rejuvenate the economy. The party is hired to explore the mines to ensure its safety and clear out any riff-raff that have taken up residence.

## Background Story

Nearly a century ago, Skullshank was chased into the Dünerain Mines, where a dramatic magical combat took place. Skullshank defeated his pursuers, but was encased in a sheath of crystal deep in the bowels of the mine.

As time wore on, the mines were explored by businessmen enamored by the rich yield of crystals. Seven different mining operations had fabulous success extracting the precious gems before catastrophe would inevitably strike. Eventually, laborers refused to work the Dünerain Mines, considering them cursed ground.

Over the decades, Skullshank lay in torpor, slowly recovering his senses and his strength. He began planning his escape and revenge. After many years of searching, Skullshank's loyal ogre mage vassal Chundag found his master's resting place.

With the power of an ogre tribe at his command, Chundag began gathering slaves to work the mines and free his master. Once Skullshank was released from his crystal prison, he revealed his plans to Chundag before returning to his tower.

Skullshank used his magic to summon several vapor demons and bind them to ogre mage. These foul creatures now taint the lower level, providing protection against those delving too deep within the mine. They obey Chundag without question.

Chundag remains at the Dünerain mines, overseeing the mining of the precious quartz which will be used in the *Oculum Infernae*. He has a copy of the designs for the *Oculum Infernae* to ensure he provides the crystals necessary for its completion.

## Player Beginning

*The journey through the rolling foothills along the edge of the forest was thankfully unremarkable. You've had time to consider what may lie ahead in the once-abandoned Dünerain mine.*

*You know it used to once be a prosperous crystal mine, providing exquisite gems for artificers and jewelers across the lands. No one knows for certain why the mine shut down. Most folk believe the crystal deposits were simply mined out. But there are rumors that something stirs deep in the bowels of the earth – something that did not take kindly to intruders.*

*You lose your train of thought as the tree line breaks. The massive peaks of the Dünerain mountains loom overhead.*

*Your destination is clear. A hundred feet up is a large opening hewn from the face of the mountain. A wide dirt path pocked with wagon tracks leads to the mine entrance. Even from this distance, you can see large figures moving around inside the entrance.*

## The Dünerain Mines

Unless noted in the text, all ceilings are 15 feet high and the walls are coarsely worked stone. There are no doors in the Dünerain Mines. There are light sources on the first level of the mines, areas 4-1 through 4-5, but the party must supply its own light sources on the second level, areas 4-6 through 4-9.

**Coarse Stone Walls:** 3 ft. thick; hardness 10; hp 540; Break DC 50; Climb DC 18

### Areas of the Map

#### Dünerain Mines, First Level

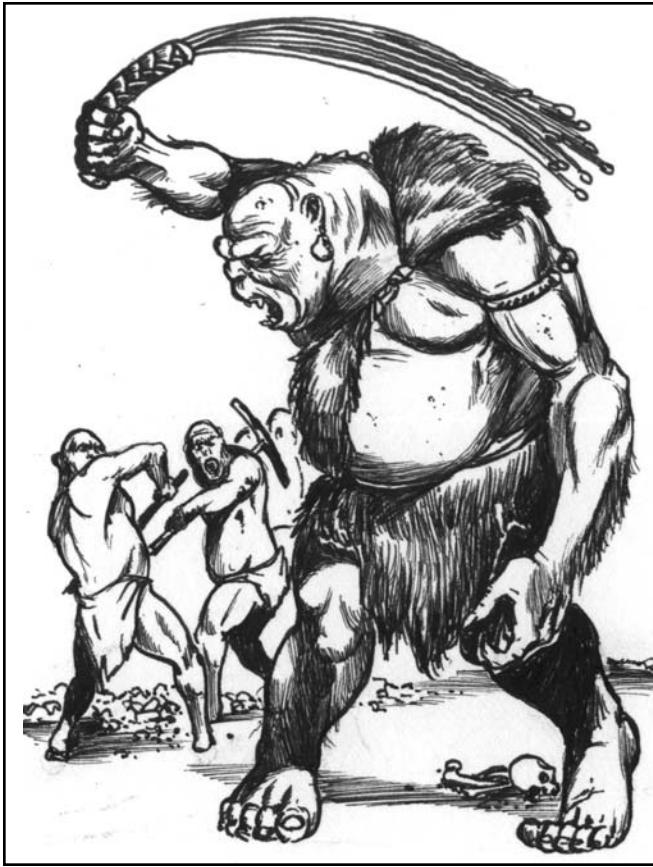
**Area 4-1 – The Dünerain Path (EL 7):** When the players are ready to begin, read the following aloud:

*The wide path leading up to the cave entrance shows heavy wear from wide trawlers and wagons. The hard packed dirt tapers to 20 feet wide as it stretches up toward the entrance nearly 100 feet above the ground. The drop-off is steep and sheer.*

*Near the mouth of the cave, you see two large carts turned on their sides, blocking the cavern entrance. Three ogres stand guard behind their makeshift wall, scanning the path and edge of the forest below.*

*Behind the ogres, you can see movement inside the cavern, but it's too far away to make out any details. The sounds of orcish chants and the ring of metal on stone echo from the mountainside.*

The group begins 100 feet away, at the edge of the tree line. The ogres will not see them unless they get closer.



**Tactics:** The ogres are actively looking for trespassers (+2 circumstance bonus to Spot checks), but only pay attention to the dirt path itself. If they spot the characters, they will hurl spears from behind the carts. The carts provide cover (+4 AC versus ranged and melee combat). In melee combat, the ogres will try to bull rush characters off the edge of the path. The ogres fight to the death.

Characters bull rushed off the path must make a DC 18 Reflex save to cling onto the ledge. On subsequent turns, a DC 15 Climb check is required to climb back onto the path. Characters pushed off the path fall to the dirt talus piles below. The distance of the fall depends on how close the PCs are to the cave mouth, as indicated on the map.

**Ogre Bbn2 (3):** CR 4; Large giant; HD 4d8+2d12+15; hp 62, 59; Init -1; Spd 50 ft.; AC 16, touch 8, flat-footed 16; Base Atk +5; Grp +15; Atk/Full Atk Greatclub +10 melee (2d8+7) or large spear +5 ranged (1d10+5); Space/Reach 10 ft./10 ft.; SQ Darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision, rage 1/day, uncanny dodge; AL CE; SV Fort +9, Ref +0, Will +1; Str 21, Dex 8, Con 15, Int 6, Wis 10, Cha 7.

*Skills and Feats:* Climb +7, Listen +4, Spot +6; Alertness, Toughness, Weapon Focus (spear)

*Possessions:* Large spear, large greatclub, padded armor

**Aftermath:** There are 15 large spears stacked inside each of the carts. The carts can be maneuvered around with either a DC 10 Climb or Escape Artist check, or moved out of the way completely with a DC 18 Strength check.

*Unless the group took precautions to dispatch the guards quietly or without highly visible magic, the ogres in area 4-2 are prepared for them.*

**Area 4-2 – Grand Crystal Cavern (EL 10):** As the party prepares to enter the mines, read the following:

*The chamber immediately inside the mine entrance is enormous. The rough-cut walls stretch 80 feet wide and 50 feet deep. Several grimy lanterns illuminate the area, sending curls of greasy smoke toward the ceiling arching 40 feet overhead.*

*The stench of sweat and refuse is almost unbearable. Several dozen orcs, goblins and humans stripped to their breechcloths work at the walls of the cavern with crude picks. Other slaves load stone into ore carts positioned around the chamber. Their bodies are bruised and dirty, many sporting welts and fresh lash marks. Heavy chains bind their feet to steel rings set into the stone floor, preventing escape.*

*Several ogres shout orders and insults to the slaves, pushing them to work faster. One ogre wields a long leather whip. “Chundag eat your lazy bones,” the taskmaster yells as he mercilessly whips the workers.*

Most of the slaves will completely ignore the characters unless approached, fearful of Taskmaster Broggab’s whip. An orc or goblin slave will point out the characters to the taskmaster in hopes of reprieve.

**Tactics:** If the characters made a ruckus taking out the guards in area 4-1, two of the ogres are positioned directly flanking the cavern opening, with readied actions to strike the first person entering the cave. Otherwise, all the ogres are milling around the center of the chamber. The standard ogres charge into melee, while Taskmaster Broggab uses his whip to trip and disarm characters within range. All the ogres fight to the death.

**Ogre Bbn2 (5):** CR 5; Large giant; HD 4d8+2d12+15; hp 61, 57, 56, 52, 50; Init -1; Spd 50 ft.; AC 16, touch 8, flat-footed 16; Base Atk +5; Grp +15; Atk/Full Atk Greatclub +11 melee (2d8+7) or large spear +4 ranged (1d10+5); Space/Reach 10 ft./10 ft.; SQ Darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision, rage

1/day, uncanny dodge; AL CE; SV Fort +9, Ref +0, Will +1; Str 21, Dex 8, Con 15, Int 6, Wis 10, Cha 7.

*Skills and Feats:* Climb +7, Listen +4, Spot +4; Power Attack, Toughness, Weapon Focus (greatclub).

*Possessions:* Large spear, large greatclub, padded armor.

**Taskmaster Broggab, Ogre Ftr6:** CR 8; Large giant; HD 4d8+6d10+20; hp 89; Init 0; Spd 40 ft.; AC 18, touch 10, flat-footed 17; Base Atk +9; Grp +18; Atk Whip +15 melee (1d4+6) or Greatclub +15 melee (2d8+9); Full Atk Whip +15/+10 melee (1d4+6) or Greatclub +15/+10 melee (2d8+9); Space/Reach 10 ft./10 ft. (20 ft. with whip); SQ Darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; AL CE; SV Fort +10, Ref +1, Will +2; Str 22, Dex 10, Con 15, Int 13, Wis 10, Cha 7.

*Skills and Feats:* Climb +6, Listen +3, Spot +3; Combat Expertise, Exotic Weapon Proficiency (Whip), Improved Disarm, Improved Trip, Toughness.

*Possessions:* Masterwork large whip, large greatclub, leather armor.

**Slaves:** If you need stats for the slaves, treat them as generic commoners: CR 1/2; hp 2 each; Spd 30 ft.; AC 10, touch 10, flat-footed 10; Atk unarmed +0 melee (1d4 nonlethal).

**Aftermath:** Once the ogres are defeated, the slaves surge forward pleading for release. Taskmaster Broggab has the key to the manacles, or the manacles may be destroyed. If freed, the slaves will flee from the mines.

**Shoddy manacles:** 1 inch thick; hardness 8; hp 10; Break DC 24

**Getting Information:** The party can glean information from the slaves with a Diplomacy or Gather Information check. Award a +4 circumstance bonus for freeing the slaves. The party learns all information up to the skill check result, as follows:

- **DC 10:** The ogres are afraid of someone they call Chundag. The slaves have never seen Chundag, but have heard someone bellowing and yelling at the ogres from deeper in the caves. The slaves will indicate area 4-5, but it is actually coming from the second level.
- **DC 15:** A dozen slaves have died in the past week. They were forced to work on the lower level of the mine, where poisonous gases leak out into the tunnels.
- **DC 20:** Several of the goblin slaves were able to slip their manacles and must be hiding somewhere within the mines – there's no way they could have gotten past the ogre guards.

- **DC 25:** Eerie green mists sometimes roll through the caves, choking the slaves. Chilling laughter can be heard late at night. Even the ogres seemed uncomfortable about the noises.

**Areas 4-3A, 4-3B and 4-3C – Workers' Quarters (EL 3):** Read the following aloud when the party approaches any of these three corridors. All three areas are identical except as noted below.

*This narrow, cramped tunnel burrows only 20 feet or so deeper into the mountain. The walls are rough and well-worked, the crystal veins long since mined to completion.*

*Tattered, flea-infested cots and moldy blankets litter the tunnel. The reek of urine and the unwashed masses is nearly nauseating. A few rotting barrels and crude crates hold bits of moldy bread and cheese. A buzz of flies circles around a rusty bucket filled with oily looking water.*

These are where the slaves take their brief rest breaks. At any time, 1d8 workers will be in each area. For each slave, there is a 50% chance he's sleeping, a 25% chance he's awake, and a 25% chance he's dead.

Any character searching the rags, food or dead bodies in any of the chambers risks exposure to an especially potent version of filth fever.

**Diseased Remnants:** CR 1; mechanical; location trigger; constant function; disease (Filth fever, incubation 1d3 day, 1d3 Dex/1d3 Con); DC 14 Fortitude save to avoid contamination (DC 12 if adequate precautions were taken); multiple targets; Search N/A; Disable Device N/A (avoid contact). DC 18 Heal check to identify presence of disease.

**Area 4-3A:** The goblin slaves sleep in this tunnel. A DC 25 Search of the tunnel reveals 4 crude metal shivs hidden under some rags. They are treated as poor quality daggers and break if a natural 1 is rolled during combat. There is always at least 1 goblin hidden at the farthest back corner, pretending to be asleep.

**Tactics:** The goblin takes 20 on its Bluff check to fool the characters. If the goblin's Bluff check exceeds the party's Sense Motive check, he catches them flat-footed and strikes the nearest character. He will attempt to snag anything shiny from them, hoping it is a key to free himself from his manacles. The goblin slave fights to the death. Any other slaves in the tunnel cower in fear or attempt to flee.

**Slave, Goblin Rog3:** CR 2; Small humanoid (goblinoid); HD 3d6; hp 12; Init +8; Spd 30 ft.; AC 15,

touch 15, flat-footed 11; Base Atk +2; Grp -2; Atk/Full Atk Shiv +6 melee (1d3 and disease/19-20); SA Disease (from shiv, Filth fever, incubation 1d3 day, 1d3 Dex/1d3 Con), Sneak attack (+2d6); SQ Darkvision 60 ft., evasion; AL CE; SV Fort +1, Ref +7, Will +0; Str 10, Dex 19, Con 11, Int 12, Wis 9, Cha 9.

*Skills and Feats:* Bluff +5, Hide +14, Climb +6, Listen +5, Move Silently +14, Spot +5; Dodge, Weapon finesse

**Area 4-3B:** The orc slaves sleep in this tunnel. A DC 25 Search of the tunnel reveals an assortment of teeth and 27 cp under one of the mats. The orcs have been “collecting” teeth from the goblin and human slaves. Despite being slaves themselves, the orcs are still quick to bully the others in hopes of winning a reprieve from the ogres.

**Area 4-3C:** The human slaves sleep in this tunnel. When the PCs enter, there is at least one awake human slave here, a former merchant named Tomar. He eyes characters with suspicion but makes no overt moves.

A DC 15 Diplomacy check gets Tomar to reveal that a human slave named Justin has been taken to “the pit” for questioning. Justin is trying to lead a rebellion to free the slaves – at least the human slaves. With a Diplomacy result of 20 or more, Tomar shows the party a key Justin filched from one of the guards that they’ve been hiding in a crack in the wall (DC 35 Search check to find without Tomar’s assistance).

They were hoping it would open their manacles, but it does not. Tomar will give the key to the party if they promise to free Justin. The key actually opens the desk in area 4-8 Chundag’s offices.

**Area 4-4 – Solitary Confinement (EL 8):** Read the following aloud when the characters approach this room:

*Around a sharp curve in the rough stone wall, you can hear the guttural voice of an ogre barking out insults in Common.*

*“Tell us where you hide it! Chundag know you have it! More you make us look, more pain you get!”*

*The brutish ogre is standing over a wide pit in the floor. A length of metal chain is wrapped around his forearm, leading into the pit. As he talks, the ogre slowly raises and lowers the chain. A pained groan echoes from the depths of the pit.*

*A large stone slab leans up against the far wall.*

The ogre is torturing the slave Justin, who hid one of Chundag’s keys in area 4-3C. The pit is filled with a black pudding. The stone slab (800 lbs.) is rolled over the pit to prevent the black pudding from escaping.

**Tactics:** Since the ogre is preoccupied, it must make a successful Spot or Listen check based on the party’s actions or be caught flat-footed. However, unless the party takes precautions to secure the chain, the ogre drops Justin into the pit as a free action. The ogre tries to grapple or bull rush opponents into the pit. The ogre fights to the death.

Anyone falling into the pit is automatically grappled by the black pudding. If a body falls into the pit, the black pudding digests the body for 2d4 rounds before climbing out of the pit at 20 feet per round. Due to the constraints of the pit, the black pudding occupies the bottom 20 feet of the pit.

**Ogre Bbn2:** CR 5; Large giant; HD 4d8+2d12+15; hp 62; Init -1; Spd 50 ft.; AC 16, touch 8, flat-footed 16; Base Atk +5; Grp +15; Atk/Full Atk Greatclub +11 melee (2d8+7); Space/Reach 10 ft./10 ft.; SQ Darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision, rage 1/day, uncanny dodge; AL CE; SV Fort +9, Ref +0, Will +1; Str 21, Dex 8, Con 15, Int 6, Wis 10, Cha 7.

*Skills and Feats:* Climb +7, Listen +4, Spot +4; Power Attack, Toughness, Weapon Focus (greatclub)

**Black Pudding:** CR 7; Huge Ooze; HD 10d10+60; hp 121; Init -5; Spd 20 ft., climb 20 ft.; AC 3, touch 3, flat-footed 3; Base Atk +7; Grp +18; Atk/Full Atk Slam +8 melee (2d6+4 plus 2d6 acid); Space/Reach 15 ft./10 ft.; SA Acid, constrict 2d6+4 plus 2d6 acid, improved grab; SQ Blindsight 60 ft., split, ooze traits; AL N; SV Fort +9, Ref -2, Will -2; Str 17, Dex 1, Con 22, Int -, Wis 1, Cha 1.

*Skills:* Climb +11.

*Acid (Ex):* Dissolves organic material and metal; does not affect stone; damaged armor and clothing dissolve (DC 21 Reflex save to avoid).

*Split (Ex):* Slashing and piercing weapons deal no damage; pudding splits into two identical puddings, each with half of original’s current hit points; cannot split once reduced to 10 hp or less.

**Dangling in the Pit:** The pit is 50 feet deep and just over five feet wide. The chain is 50 feet long. Justin begins dangling 30 feet inside the pit (just above the pudding) with 20 feet of slack above ground. Once the ogre lets go, the chain will disappear into the pit after one round. A DC 15 Reflex save allows a character nearby to grab the chain.

A character weighing 100 pounds or less must

make a DC 14 Strength test or be pulled into the pit along with Justin. A DC 14 Strength test is required to pull the chain up before Justin is submerged in the black pudding.

If Justin is freed, the group is horrified to notice that his feet have been completely melted off as if from a strong acid. He is delirious and losing blood at a rate of 1 hp/turn from his wounds. A DC 15 Heal check will recognize his condition, and a DC 15 Heal check will provide the necessary first aid to stabilize Justin.

**Justin the Slave, human Ftr1:** CR 1/2; Medium humanoid (human); HD 1d10+1; hp 3; Init +0; Spd crawl 10 ft.; AC 10, touch 10, flat-footed 10; Base Atk +1; Grp +2; Atk/Full Atk Unarmed +2 melee (1d3+1 nonlethal); AL NG; SV Fort +5, Ref +0, Will +2; Str 13, Dex 11, Con 12, Int 9, Wis 11, Cha 12.

*Skills and Feats:* Climb +5, Handle Animal +5, Jump +5, Ride +4; Endurance, Greater Fortitude, Iron Will.

**Aftermath:** If the black pudding is defeated, a character climbing into the pit and making a DC 15 Search check will find the following items that the ooze couldn't digest: an *earth elemental gem*, a *dusty rose prism ioun stone* and six perfect star rose quartz crystals (100 gp each).

**Area 4-5 – The Winch Room (EL 5):** As the characters head down the tunnel to this area, read the following:

*Two large ore carts have been turned upside-down in the center of the tunnel, blocking easy access to the tunnel ahead. You can see the tunnel curve slightly to the west before opening into a much wider chamber.*

The carts were positioned by the ogres to prevent slaves from working their way to area 4-5. A medium viper snake has been trapped beneath one of the carts. A DC 15 Strength test is needed to flip the carts over and wheel them out of the way, or they can be climbed over with a DC 15 Climb check.

**Tactics:** The snake has a readied action to strike at the first available target. The snake fights to the death.

**Poisonous Viper:** CR 1; Medium animal; HD 3d8+3; hp 19; Init +8; Spd 20 ft., climb 20 ft., swim 20 ft.; AC 17, touch 14, flat-footed 13; Base Atk +1; Grp +0; Atk/Full Atk +4 melee (1d4 plus poison); SA Poison (DC 12 Fort, 1d6 Con/1d6 Con); SQ Scent; AL N; SV Fort +3, Ref +7, Will +1; Str 10, Dex 18, Con 13, Int 1, Wis 12, Cha 2.

*Skills and Feats:* Balance +12, Climb +12, Hide +12, Listen +5, Spot +5, Swim +8; Improved Initiative, Weapon Finesse

Once the characters enter the main chamber, read the following aloud:

*The tunnel opens into a chamber cut roughly into a circle 30 feet in diameter. An acrid, bitter smell stings your nostrils. There's a slight buzz and crackle from the torches as they flicker in the sconces forced into the walls.*

*A wide, circular wooden platform 15 feet across covers a slightly wider hole in the center of the room. Wooden support frames brace a rope-and-winch mechanism secured to the platform by four large metal rings sunk into the perimeter.*

*It appears that about 100 feet of rope is coiled around the winch's axle. A toothed gear on the winch is currently locked in place with a wooden block, preventing the platform from descending on its own.*

Now give the players handout N.

The winch can be used to lower the platform to the second floor. The rope is knotted at the halfway point as a reminder to the ogres of a series of bat caves in that section of the shaft – and to descend slowly and quietly past that section.

**Operating The Winch:** A DC 14 Strength test is needed each round to lower up to 1,000 pounds safely via the platform at a rate of 20 feet per turn. Modify the DC by +/-1 for every 100 pounds in excess of or below this limit. Failure means the platform does not descend for a round. Failure by more than 5 indicates losing control of the winch mechanism, causing the platform to fall from its current height.

A person assisting the main winch operator can attempt a DC 15 Reflex save to put the wooden block in the winch to brake the descent. Braking the descent in this manner jars the platform, requiring the passengers to make a DC 18 Balance check as indicated below.

There is a large knot 50 feet through the coil of rope. Someone attending the winch needs a DC 20 Spot check to notice the large knot. If it is not spotted, or characters proceed to lower the platform through the knotted section, everyone on the platform must make a DC 18 Balance check as the platform buckles and shudders.

Failing a Balance check on the platform moves a character five feet in a random direction. Failure by more than 5 means the character falls prone, as well. If more than 2/3 of the total weight on the platform shifts to one side of the center line (based on





the winch axle), the platform tips. Prone characters automatically fall the remaining 50' down the shaft. Standing characters can attempt a DC 18 Reflex save to catch onto support ropes or a portion of the platform.

**The Bat Cave:** 50 feet down the shaft, the same point where the knot in the rope appears, there are numerous small channels in the wall. Characters making any noise at this section of the descent will rouse a swarm of fiendish bats. The 10-foot vertical section of the elevator shaft from 40'-50' above ground level (area 4-6) contains the bats.

**Tactics:** The fiendish bats burst from the cavern section and swarm the platform. The swarm fights to the death. Keep in mind that character positioning on the platform may tip the platform over.

**Fiendish Bat Swarm:** CR 4; Diminutive magical beast (swarm, extraplanar); HD 4d8+8; hp 29; Init +2; 5 ft., fly 40 ft. (good); AC 16, touch 14, flat-footed 12; Base Atk +2; Grp -; Atk/Full Atk Swarm (1d6); SA *Distraction*, *smite good* (1/day +4 damage), wounding (1 hp/round until healed); SQ *Blindsense* 20 ft., damage reduction (5/magic), half damage from slashing and piercing, low-light vision, spell resistance 9, resistance 5 (cold, fire), swarm traits; AL N; SV Fort +3, Ref +7, Will +3; Str 3, Dex 15, Con 14, Int 2, Wis 14, Cha 4; Skills and Feats:

Listen +11, Spot +11; Alertness, Lightning Reflexes

*Distraction (Ex):* Any living creature that begins its turn with a swarm in its space must succeed on a DC 13 Fortitude save or be nauseated for 1 round. The save DC is Constitution-based.

*Blindsense (Ex):* A bat swarm notices and locates creatures within 20 feet. Opponents still have total concealment against the bat swarm (but swarm attacks ignore concealment).

## Dünerain Mines, Second Level

The second level of the mine consists of areas 4-6 through 4-9. There are no light sources on the second level of the mine.

**Poisonous Vapors:** The second level is filled with flammable, poisonous vapors. Any spark or flame will set off a small explosion. This deals 4d6 fire damage to all targets in a 10-foot radius from the source of the explosion, unless they succeed at a DC 20 Reflex save. There is enough ambient vapor throughout the level that it cannot be burned off completely.

Further, every 10 minutes that the characters are exposed to the vapors, they need to make a DC 15 Fort save versus poison. The first time a character fails, he becomes fatigued. Each subsequent failure causes 1 point of temporary Con damage. Taking special precautions provides a +2 circumstance bonus to these Fort saves. A DC 20 Knowledge (dungeoneering) or DC 25 Survival check will provide insight into precautions that gain this bonus.

Finally, the vapors partially obscure vision. Targets 10-20 feet away have concealment (attacks have a 20% miss chance). Targets farther away than 20 feet have total concealment (50% miss chance, and the attacker cannot use sight to locate the target).

**Area 4-6 – Vapor Demon Patrol (EL 9):** When the party reaches the area with a light source, read the following:

*A thick mist of green vapor fills the chamber as far as you can see. The vapors burn at your eyes and nose with a bitter taint. They swirl and dance as you survey the large circular room, nearly 40 feet in diameter.*

*Through the haze of the vapors, you barely make out a 10-foot-wide tunnel leading east from this main chamber. The mist is thick and heavy enough that you have difficulty seeing clearly for more than just a few feet.*

*On the edge of your hearing, you could swear you hear whispering coming from the mist-shrouded corridor to the east.*

The whispering is actually from the vapor demons themselves. Two vapor demons patrol this room to ensure no one comes to disturb Chundag. See page 74 for more information on vapor demons.

A DC 20 Listen check determines the whispering is coming from this room and not the east corridor. Characters who made the Listen check and understand Abyssal hear the vapor demons discussing tactics as they prepare to attack. Understanding this provides a +2 circumstance bonus to the initiative check for combat.

**Tactics:** The vapor demons attempt to engulf the nearest characters to overwhelm them with their poison and then pick off weakened targets with their claws. They target prone characters who fell down the shaft first, if possible. The vapor demons fight to the death.

**Vapor Demons (2):** CR 7; Medium elemental (air, extraplanar); HD 8d8+8; hp 53, 49; Init +9; Spd 30 ft., fly 40 ft. (perfect); AC 23, touch 15, flat-footed 18; Base Atk +8; Grp +10; Atk Claw +10 melee (1d6+2 and poison); Full Atk 2 claws +10 melee (1d6+2 and poison) and 2 claws +5 melee (1d6+2 and poison); SA Poison (DC 13 Fort, 1d4 Con/1d4 Con), inhalation; SQ Area vulnerability, darkvision 60 ft., elemental traits, vapor form; AL CE; SV Fort +6, Ref +11, Will +7; Str 15, Dex 20, Con 13, Int 12, Wis 12, Cha 11.

*Skills and Feats:* Hide +15, Listen +8, Move Silently +20, Spot +8; Improved Initiative, Multiattack, Weapon Finesse

*Area vulnerability (Ex):* Due to its semi-solid form, a vapor demon takes 150% damage from any area-based damage effect.

*Inhalation (Ex):* A vapor demon in vapor form (see below) can engulf opponents by moving on top of them. It simply fills the air around one Medium or smaller opponent without provoking an attack of opportunity. The target must succeed on a DC 13 Fortitude save or inhale part of the creature. The vapors inside the victim intensify the effects of the demon's usual poison, automatically inflicting poison damage each round. An affected creature can attempt another Fortitude save each subsequent round to cough out the vapors.

*Vapor Form (Su):* The vapor demon exists only in its semi-solid misty form. Its misty form provides the vapor demon with concealment (20% miss chance). In addition, slashing and piercing weapons inflict only half damage.

**Area 4-7 – The Last Mining Outpost (EL 7):** When the party reaches the area with a light source, read the following:

*The tunnel narrows briefly before flaring out again into a wide, oval room 40 feet wide and 25 feet deep. Two mining carts and several picks lie abandoned near the north wall.*

*The walls are pitted with rough grooves and cracks. Thick layers of quartz fill the crevices, and crystal fragments crunch underfoot. It appears this section of the mine has not been worked in quite some time.*

*On the far eastern wall, there is a big heap of large sacks or bedding.*

Chundag ordered the mining be stopped in this section after realizing the quartz was not high enough quality for Skullshank's purposes. A DC 20 Craft (jeweler) or Appraise check reveals the quartz shows subtle imperfections. There are enough quartz pieces here to collect 2d6 x 10 crystals worth 2d4 x 5 gp each.

The heap on the far side is actually composed of a dozen dead slaves, those unfortunate enough to draw the assignment of working in the lower level earlier in the day. A vapor demon has currently engulfed the pile, making sure the slaves are truly dead before disposing of them.

**Tactics:** The vapor demon has effectively taken 20 on its Hide check among the bodies. Due to the misty vapors, add +5 to its Hide check if a character is trying to Spot more than 10 feet from the vapor demon's location. The vapor demon will strike the first person wandering too close and fights to the death.

**Vapor Demon:** CR 7; Medium elemental (air, extraplanar); HD 8d8+8; hp 50; Init +9; Spd 30 ft., fly 40 ft. (perfect); AC 23, touch 15, flat-footed 18; Base Atk +8; Grp +10; Atk Claw +10 melee (1d6+2 and poison); Full Atk 2 claws +10 melee (1d6+2 and poison) and 2 claws +5 melee (1d6+2 and poison); SA Poison (DC 13 Fort, 1d4 Con/1d4 Con), inhalation; SQ Area vulnerability, darkvision 60 ft., elemental traits, vapor form; AL CE; SV Fort +6, Ref +11, Will +7; Str 15, Dex 20, Con 13, Int 12, Wis 12, Cha 11.

*Skills and Feats:* Hide +15, Listen +8, Move Silently +20, Spot +8; Improved Initiative, Multiattack, Weapon Finesse

*Area vulnerability (Ex):* Due to its semi-solid form, a vapor demon takes 150% damage from any area-based damage effect.

*Inhalation (Ex):* A vapor demon in vapor form (see below) can engulf opponents by moving on top

of them. It simply fills the air around one Medium or smaller opponent without provoking an attack of opportunity. The target must succeed on a DC 13 Fortitude save or inhale part of the creature. The vapors inside the victim intensify the effects of the demon's usual poison, automatically inflicting poison damage each round. An affected creature can attempt another Fortitude save each subsequent round to cough out the vapors.

**Vapor Form (Su):** The vapor demon exists only in its semi-solid misty form. Its misty form provides the vapor demon with concealment (20% miss chance). In addition, slashing and piercing weapons inflict only half damage.

**Aftermath:** Searching the heap of bodies risks exposure to filth fever, as with the slave pens on the first floor. A DC 20 Search check will uncover 5 quartz crystals worth 20 gp each.

One of the abandoned mine carts is still partially filled with quartz. The majority of crystals are of poor quality (2d6 x 10 crystals worth 2d4 x 5 gp each), but a DC 20 Search check reveals two larger quartz crystals of exceptional quality worth 250 gp each.

**Diseased Bodies:** CR 1; mechanical; location trigger; constant function; disease (Filth fever, incubation 1d3 day, 1d3 Dex/1d3 Con); DC 14 Fortitude save to avoid contamination (DC 12 if adequate precautions were taken); multiple targets; Search N/A; Disable Device N/A (avoid contact); DC 18 Heal check to identify presence of disease.

**Area 4-8 – Chundag's Offices (EL 13):** When the party reaches the area with a light source, read the following:

*Through the swirling mists pervading this level, you see a tunnel branching off to the northeast. A sturdy wooden frame has been installed in the hallway, housing a wide wooden door reinforced with metal struts. The walls and the ceiling have been carefully worked to snugly hold the doorframe.*

This is the door to Chundag's offices. The door is locked and trapped. If triggered, Chundag has time to prepare for interlopers. The wood has an aura of abjuration, as it has been treated with specially brewed *potions of protection with fire*. Opening the door requires a DC 25 Open Lock check.

**Burning Hands Trap:** CR 3; magic device; mechanical trigger; automatic reset; spell effect (*burning hands*, 5th-level wizard, 5d4 fire, DC 11 Reflex save half damage) and environment effect (flammable vapors, 4d6 fire, all targets within 30

feet of door, DC 20 Reflex save for half damage); Search DC 26; Disable Device DC 26.

Once the door has been opened, read the following aloud:

*The faintest green shimmer illuminates the room. Mist slowly swirls into the chamber from the hallway, but otherwise the room is free of the poisonous vapor. The walls have been worked to a high sheen, with shelves carved into the rock itself.*

*Numerous scrolls are unfurled atop the enormous desk occupying the far wall. A huge barbed spear leans next to the desk. Several crates and chests are lined along the northwestern wall. A large cloth map hangs on the southeast wall, depicting a birds-eye view of some distant locale.*

Chundag is invisible, reviewing the mining logs at his desk to make sure the mine is on track to meet Skullshank's quota. Unless the door remains open for more than 10 rounds, the vapors seeping into this room will not cause combustion as they do in other areas on this level.

**Tactics:** If the group triggered the trap on the door, Chundag has already cast *protection from good* on himself and *ghoul touch* on his familiar, Burm, the fiendish dire rat. Chundag uses *cone of cold* to hit as many enemies as possible, then alternates using his touch spells or *true strike* to ensure he hits with his spear. Chundag will have Burm deliver touch attack spells, targeting spellcasters with *touch of idiocy* and *ghoul touch*. Both Chundag and Burm fight to the death.

**Chundag, Ogre Mage Sor4:** CR 11; Large giant; HD 5d8+15 plus 4d4+12; hp 72; Init +4; Spd 40 ft., fly 40 ft. (good); AC 19, touch 11, flat-footed 19; Base Atk +5; Grp +14; Atk/Full Atk Longspear +11 melee (2d6+7/x3) or longspear +6 ranged (2d6+5/x3); Space/Reach 10 ft./10 ft.; SA Spell-like abilities; SQ Darkvision 90 ft., low-light vision, regeneration 5, spell resistance 19; AL LE; SV Fort +8, Ref +2, Will +7; Str 21, Dex 10, Con 17, Int 14, Wis 14, Cha 18.

**Skills and Feats:** Concentration +15, Knowledge (arcana) +6, Listen +11, Spellcraft +14, Spot +11; Combat Casting, Combat Expertise, Improved Familiar, Improved Initiative.

**Spell-Like Abilities:** At will – *darkness*, *invisibility*; 1/day – *charm person* (DC 15), *cone of cold* (DC 19), *gaseous form*, *polymorph*, *sleep* (DC 15). CL 9th.

**Flight (Su):** An ogre mage can cease or resume flight as a free action. While using gaseous form it



can fly at its normal speed and has perfect maneuverability.

*Regeneration (Ex):* Fire and acid deal normal damage to an ogre mage.

*Arcane spells (6/6/3; save DC = 14 + spell level):* 0 – *acid splash, daze, detect magic, flare, mage hand, read magic, touch of fatigue*; 1st – *chill touch, protection from good, shocking grasp, true strike*; 2nd – *ghoul touch, touch of idiocy*

*Possessions:* +1 large longspear, large-sized chain shirt, *ring of protection +1*, three *potions of cure serious wounds*.

**Burm, Fiendish Dire Rat:** CR 2; Small magic beast; HD 2d8+2; hp 36 (half Chundag's total); Init +3; Spd 40 ft., climb 20 ft.; AC 17, touch 14, flat-footed 14; Base Atk +5; Grp –1; Atk/Full Atk Bite +8 melee (1d4 plus disease); SA *Smite good* 1/day (+2 damage), disease; SQ Deliver touch spells, empathic link, share spells, spell resistance 7, dark-vision, cold/fire resistance 5, scent; AL NE; SV Fort +6, Ref +5, Will +6; Str 10, Dex 17, Con 12, Int 7, Wis 12, Cha 4.

*Skills and Feats:* Climb +11, Hide +14, Listen +4, Move Silently +6, Spot +4, Swim +12; Alertness, Improved Evasion, Weapon Finesse.

*Disease (Ex):* Filth fever – bite, Fortitude DC 11, incubation period 1d3 days, damage 1d3 Dex and 1d3 Con.

**Aftermath:** The desk drawer is locked and requires a DC 30 Open Lock check or the key from Tomar in area 4-3C. The desk holds a copy of the blueprints to the *Oculum Infernae*, as well as orders from Skullshank to mine the gems necessary to build its lenses. A black velvet pouch holds 59 pp, a magnifying glass, and a *gem of seeing* in the form of a perfectly circular, flat quartz crystal the size of a dinner plate. The desk also contains a masterwork jeweler's kit.

The map on the wall leads to Skullshank's former tower, the focus of Chapter 5: "The Sinking Spire." The crates and shelves contain the best crystals mined from the Dünerain so far. There are enough quartz pieces here to collect 2d6 x 10 crystals worth 2d4 x 50 gp each.

**Area 4-9 – Skullshank's Crystal Tomb (EL 8):** When the party reaches the area with a light source, read the following:

*This oddly shaped room has a vaguely circular contour snaking nearly 50 feet wide and roughly 30 feet deep. Several mining carts flank the walls. The walls appear to be nearly solid layers of quartz, with dark, smoky imperfections clouding the crystals.*

*You feel, more than hear, a low bass rumbling coming from somewhere in this chamber.*

This was the cavern where Skullshank was imprisoned. A destrachan lies tethered to the far wall of this cave, used by Chundag to help break down the crystal to reach his master. Characters get the feeling that despite the presence of the thick quartz layers, this room has been heavily mined.

The destrachan's mithral collar and chain prevent escape, as it's too tough for the creature's sonic attack, but does afford the beast movement in a 15-foot radius from the point it's tethered to.

**Mithral chain:** 1 inch thick; hardness 15; hp 30; Break DC 30

**Tactics:** The destrachan's blindsense allows it to notice the characters despite the heavy mists. It emits a cone of destructive harmonics toward the characters as soon as more than one target can be affected. A character adjacent to any wall is subject to additional 2d6 slashing damage from crystal shards exploding from the walls when the destrachan uses its harmonics.

After its initial volley to hit as many people as possible, the destrachan switches to destroy metal in the hopes of shattering the party's weapons and armor. The destrachan fights to the death.

**Destrachan:** CR 8; Large aberration; 8d8+24; hp 72; Init +5; Spd 30 ft.; AC 18, touch 10, flat-footed 17; Base Atk +6; Grp +14; Atk Claw +9 melee (1d6+4); Full Atk 2 claws +9 melee (1d6+4); SA Destructive harmonics; SQ Blindsight 100 ft., immunities, protection from sonics; AL CE; SV Fort +5, Ref +5, Will +10; Str 18, Dex 12, Con 16, Int 12, Wis 18, Cha 12.

**Skills and Feats:** Hide +8, Listen +25, Move Silently +7, Survival +9; Dodge, Improved Initiative, Lightning Reflexes.

**Destructive Harmonics (Su):** A destrachan can blast sonic energy in a cone up to 80 feet long. It can also use this attack to affect any creatures or objects within a 30-foot radius. It can tune the harmonics of this destructive power to affect different types of targets as follows:

**Flesh:** Disrupting tissue and rending bone, this attack deals 4d6 points of damage to all within the area (Reflex DC 15 half).

**Nerves:** A destrachan can focus its harmonics to knock out foes rather than slay them. This attack deals 6d6 points of nonlethal damage to all within the area (Reflex DC 15 half).

**Material:** When using this form of harmonics, a destrachan chooses wood, stone, metal, or glass. All objects made of that material within the area must succeed on a DC 15 Fortitude save or shatter. Objects (or portions of objects) that have up to 30 hit points are potentially affected by this attack.

**Immunities:** Destrachans have immunity to gaze attacks, visual effects, illusions, and other attack forms that rely on sight.

**Protection from Sonics (Ex):** While they can be affected by loud noises and sonic spells (such as *ghost sound* or *silence*), destrachans are less vulnerable to sonic attacks (+4 circumstance bonus on all saves) because they can protect their ears. A destrachan whose sense of hearing is impaired is effectively blinded, and all targets are treated as having total concealment.

**Aftermath:** The collar around the destrachan's neck is of superb quality, fashioned from mithral. It can only be worn by an aberration, animal or magical beast but otherwise functions exactly as a *necklace of adaptation*. Removing the 15-foot mithral chain from the wall requires a DC 15 Disable Device check.

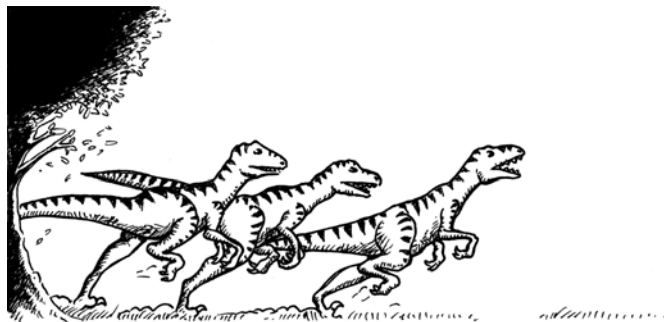
A DC 20 Appraise check of the crystals in this cavern indicates the crystals are of good quality. A DC 15 Search check allows the characters to recover 2d6 x 10 crystals worth 2d4 x 20 gp each.

If Chundag has not been encountered or alerted to the party's presence by this point, he is automatically alerted by the destrachan's harmonics and will be prepared.

## Rewards

Award the following bonuses to the characters for achieving these significant goals.

Making it into the mines without alerting the guards in area 4-2	+100 XP
Gaining Tomar's trust – and the key – from area 4-3C	+200 XP
Rescuing Justin from the black pudding in area 4-4	+500 XP
Descending to the second floor without falling	+200 XP
Taking precautions against the poisonous vapors	+100 XP



# Chapter 5: The Sinking Spire

## Introduction

“The Sinking Spire” is the fifth adventure in the Interludes series and is best suited for a party of 4-6 characters of levels 9-11. The group should have approximately 40-45 class levels among the characters. All classes will be tested, but having a character or two with a variety of physical skills will be particularly helpful.

## Adventure Summary

Armed with the map and several rumors found in the Dünerain mines from Chapter 4, the party locates Skullshank’s former wizard’s tower. Several important artifacts must be recovered from the tower to fully revive Skullshank, including his powerful *blackened pearl of ages*.

The Summoner’s ancient tower now lies slowly sinking into the bubbling tar pits deep in a feral jungle. The fearsome architecture used to dominate the landscape, but after lying abandoned for decades, the surrounding terrain has reverted to its primordial state and grown wild once more.

The group must battle wild beasts and Skullshank’s own minions to keep powerful magic items from falling back into the Summoner’s clutches. Can the party find what they’re looking for and get out of the tower before it sinks forever into the murk?

## Game Master’s Section

### Encounter Table

To help the GM prepare, we have included a quick reference table showing all encounters at a glance. **Loc** – the location number keyed to the map for the encounter. **Pg** – the module page number that the encounter can be found on. **Type** – indicates if the encounter is a trap (T), puzzle (P), or combat (C). **Encounter** – the key monsters, traps, or NPCs that can be found in the encounter. Names in *italics* are classed NPCs. **EL** – the encounter level.

<u>Loc</u>	<u>Page</u>	<u>Type</u>	<u>Encounter</u>	<u>EL</u>
5-1	51	C	Shambling mound	7
		C	4 deinonychus	7
5-2	52	C	<i>Tarfoot</i> , black dragon	9
5-3	53	C	Assassin vine	6
5-4	54	C	Chaos beast	8
5-5	55	T	Rust monster antennae	3
5-6	56	T	Greased floor trap	5
		C	<i>Deadeye</i> the imp	3
5-7	56	C	Stone golem	11
		C	Gargoyle	5
		T	Collapsing statue	4
5-8	57	C	Fiendish violet fungus	8
5-9	58	C	<i>Odolan</i> , tiefling Rog8	9
		C	<i>Virkus</i> , tiefling Rog8	9
5-10	59	C	Tar roper	12

## Scaling Information

GMs can quickly adjust the difficulty of the scenario to accommodate groups of different levels. Consider adapting the adventure using any of the following suggestions:

**Weaker Parties (groups lower than 9th level or with fewer than 40 total character levels):** Reduce skill check DCs and save DCs by 2 each. Remove 1 deinonychus from area 5-1. Have *Tarfoot* begin the encounter in area 5-2 asleep under the archway. Remove the poison from the thieves’ weapons in area 5-9, and have them begin the encounter by hiding instead of starting invisible.

**Stronger Parties (characters above 11th level, or for more than 45 total character levels):** Increase all skill check DCs and save DCs by 2 each. Add 1-2 deinonychus to area 5-1. Add a second chaos beast to area 5-4. Add a second gargoyle to area 5-7. Increase the potency of the poison on the thieves’ weapons in area 5-9 to concentrated giant wasp venom (DC 20 Fort, 2d4 Dex/2d4 Dex).

## Getting the Players Involved

This adventure can easily follow on the heels of Chapter 4: “The Dünerain Mines.” The party has information about Skullshank’s plans and the blueprints to the *Oculum Infernae*. The chance to thwart Skullshank’s



minions should be strong incentive for the party. Otherwise, these adventure hooks may be used.

**Abandoned Tower:** Rumors have reached the party of a long-abandoned wizard's tower deep in the wild. No one who has set out to explore the recently discovered tower has ever returned. There is a limited window of opportunity to explore the tower and plunder it for treasure, as the tower is sinking into the tar pit that once served as its moat.

**Bounty Hunters Needed:** A dangerous criminal has escaped custody, and the local authorities are growing anxious. The criminal is said to be hiding out in an abandoned wizard's tower. The party is hired to track down the criminal and bring him back to stand trial – before he can claim any of the tower's magic for himself and cause more trouble.

## Background Story

Before Skullshank's imprisonment within the lower levels of the Dünerein mines, he had spent a decade constructing his wizard's tower. The twisted black spires stretched into the night sky, dominating the nearby landscape.

Skullshank's powerful magic tainted the nearby forests, perverting the flora and fauna. Skullshank rent the earth, forcing bubbling tar to fill the trenches surrounding his tower to serve as a moat.

A large observatory was built on the topmost floor of the tower, where Skullshank plotted out his fiendish plans to summon an army of demons to conquer the world. Laboratories, libraries and research facilities fill the tower, each detailing terrible aspects of the Summoner's plans. The *blackened pearl of ages*, a magic item which enhances a caster's effectiveness, is also hidden within the tower, along with several of Skullshank's journals.

Once Skullshank was defeated and forced into torpor, the tower fell into disrepair. The fearsome architecture used to dominate the landscape, but after lying abandoned for decades, the surrounding terrain has reverted to its primordial state and grown wild once more. The massive supports have crumbled, leaving the tower slowly sinking into the pool of tar below. Soon, the entire tower will be lost forever.

Skullshank has dispatched two tiefling thieves to retrieve the *blackened pearl of ages* from his tower. They arrived shortly before the characters and are searching the lower levels of the tower for the pearl.

## Player Beginning

*Over the last several days, the temperate comfort of the woods has slowly started to change. The air is now thick and humid. The massive trees grow more wild and feral, with dense undergrowth choking your path toward the tower. The canopy of trees is alive with noise – clicking insects, singing birds, and the rustling of leaves.*

*Finally, the trees start to thin slightly. You approach a large clearing cut from the very center of the forest itself. The clearing stretches several hundred yards across, dominated by the black, twisted spire you seek. Aside from a few large patches of thick grass and weeds, the clearing is fairly unobstructed.*

*The tower lists to one side, leaning slightly to the east at nearly a 15-degree slant. Rumors led you to believe the tower to be at least five or six stories tall, but only three sections can be seen. As you soak in the details, the wrinkle of sulfur and tar wafts toward you. Now you can clearly see that the tower is situated in the middle of a large tar pit 100 yards across.*

## The Sinking Spire

Unless noted in the text, all ceilings are 15 feet high and the walls are expertly worked stone. All doors are reinforced metal. Mounted flush into the ceiling at regular intervals are smooth, polished stones with *continual flame* set to a subtle blue hue. There are no random encounters in this adventure.

**Hewn Stone Walls:** 3 ft. thick; hardness 10; hp 540; Break DC 50; Climb DC 25.

**Strong Metal Doors:** 3 inches thick; hardness 12; hp 60; Break DC 30.

**Barred Narrow Windows:** 1 inch thick; hardness 8; hp 18; Break DC 25

**Tower Condition:** The tower leans at a significant enough degree to pose the following risks to the party:

- All Balance, Climb, Concentration, Jump and Tumble DCs are more difficult by 2. This is already factored into checks for listed encounters.
- All Reflex save DCs are more difficult by 2. This is already factored into checks for listed encounters.
- Failing any Reflex save by more than 5 results in falling prone, in addition to other effects.
- Any character moving more than half speed in the tower must succeed at a DC 10 Balance check or fall prone. The DC increases by +1 for each additional 5 feet moved.
- Critical failures during combat could result in the attacker's falling prone.



**The Tar Pit:** The tar pit is a dangerous environmental factor. Characters may fall into the tar pit during combat outside the tower, when attempting to scale the tower, or from a particularly nasty trap inside the tower (area 5-6).

Contact with the hot tar inflicts 1d6 fire damage each round of exposure, or 6d6 each round for complete submersion. Damage from the tar continues for 1d3 rounds after exposure ceases, but this additional damage is only half of that dealt during actual contact. Armor coated in tar has its check penalty increased by -1 until the tar is sufficiently cleaned off with alcohol or *universal solvent*.

A character coming into contact with the tar must make a DC 18 Reflex save or become entangled. Failing the save by 5 or more indicates the character is immobilized and loses his Dexterity bonus to AC. Even on a successful save, he can move only at half speed. A character stuck in the tar can break free by making a DC 18 Strength check. A character capable of spell-casting who is stuck in the tar must make a Concentration check to cast a spell DC (15 + spell level). A character sinks into the tar 1 foot/round for every 100 pounds of total weight. Each foot he sinks increases the DC for subsequent saves or skill checks by +1.

## Areas of the Map

**Area 5-1 – The Tower Clearing (EL 9):** When the party enters the clearing for a better look at the tower, read the following:

*The black surface of the tower is smooth and polished. Each floor tapers slightly to a small crenellated ridge where the next floor begins. Narrow barred windows and numerous arrow slits circle the levels, the apertures now filled with dross, debris and nesting materials. They appear too small and cluttered to use.*

*The topmost section, roughly 50 feet above the surface of the tar, has a slightly more elaborate crenellated ridge than the other floors. A darkened archway cuts into a covered walkout corridor, likely housing stairs leading into the tower.*

*A mass of rusted metal is crumpled at the easternmost lip of the ridge, with numerous branches and vines dangling over the edge. A few smaller pieces of rusted metal poke through a large patch of rotten vegetation molding near the eastern edge of the tar pit.*

Now give the players handout O.

The first challenge facing the characters is gaining entrance to the tower itself. The large clearing

allows the characters to study the tower from several angles.

A pack of deinonychus, nimble dinosaurs with a voracious appetite, waits at the fringes of the forest, watching for prey. The large patch of vegetation is a shambling mound.

**Tactics:** The shambling mound waits until a character searches the pile. Unless the characters' Spot check beats the shambling mound's Hide check, the shambling mound gains a surprise round and grapples the nearest character. The shambling mound fights to the death.

If the characters spend a lot of time studying the clearing, the deinonychus attack as soon as one character is separated from the rest. Otherwise, they enter the battle with the shambling mound 1d6 rounds after combat has begun. The deinonychus charge to take advantage of their pounce ability. They focus on characters standing apart from the rest of the party, such as those using spells or ranged weapons. The deinonychus fight to the death.

**Shambling Mound:** CR 7; Large plant; HD 9d8+29; hp 87; Init +0; Spd 20 ft., swim 20 ft.; AC 20, touch 9, flat-footed 20; Base Atk +6; Grp +16; Atk Slam +12 melee (2d6+6); Full Atk 2 slams +12 melee (2d6+6); Space/Reach 10 ft./10 ft.; SA Improved grab, constrict 2d6+9; SQ Darkvision 60 ft., immunity to electricity, low-light vision, plant traits, resistance to fire 10; AL N; SV Fort +9, Ref +2, Will +4; Str 22, Dex 10, Con 17, Int 7, Wis 10, Cha 9.

**Skills and Feats:** Hide +15, Listen +8, Move Silently +8; Iron Will, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (slam)

**Immunity to Electricity (Ex):** Shamblers take no damage from electricity. Instead, any electricity attack used against a shambler temporarily grants it 1d4 points of Constitution.

**Deinonychus (4):** CR 3; Large animal; HD 5d8+20; hp 55, 54, 50, 47; Init +2; 60 ft.; AC 16, touch 11, flat-footed 14; Base Atk +3; Grp +11; Atk Talons +6 melee (2d6+4); Full Atk Talons +6 melee (2d6+4) and 2 foreclaws +1 melee (1d3+2) and bite +1 melee (2d4+2); Space/Reach 10 ft./5 ft.; SA Pounce; SQ Low-light vision, scent; AL N; SV Fort +8, Ref +6, Will +2; Str 19, Dex 15, Con 19, Int 2, Wis 12, Cha 10.

**Skills and Feats:** Hide +12, Jump +26, Listen +10, Spot +10, Survival +10; Run, Track

**Pounce (Ex):** If a deinonychus charges, it can make a full attack.

**Aftermath:** The rusted metal pieces in the sham-

bling mound heap are tubes, gears and round hoops. A DC 15 Knowledge (engineering) check reveals they are parts to a very large spyglass or telescope. The pieces are ruined and currently worthless.

The only effective way into the tower is to get to the top and descend from there. The only windows are barred (Str DC 30 to open; DC 35 Escape Artist to squeeze through).

The tar pit is 20 to 40 feet wide on all sides of the tower, as indicated on the map. Climbing the tower itself is possible once characters navigate past the tar. The difficulty depends on the side the group wishes to climb, with a DC 15 Climb check being the default. Climbing the western side (up the slope) reduces the DC by 5, while climbing the eastern side (under the slope) increases the DC by 5.

**Area 5-2 – The Observatory (EL 9):** When a character reaches the top of the tower, read the following:

*Despite the debris and ivy clinging to the tower, it is in remarkably good shape. The covered walkway curves slightly as it tapers to the floor, disappearing into the darkness beyond. You can only assume it is a spiral staircase used to access the observatory from within the tower.*

*A large series of metal tubes, gears and scrap lie rusted along the eastern edge of the crenelated lip. Mixed in with the rusted gears are various branches, patches of fur, and the gleam of bone. Some sort of creature has made a nest up here!*

Tarfoot, a young adult black dragon, was just a wyrmling when Skullshank last lived here. Tarfoot is Skullshank's pet and has looked after the tower waiting for his master's return. He is currently resting squeezed inside the cool walkway to keep out of the sun.

**Tactics:** Have Tarfoot make a Listen check opposed by a character's Move Silently skill check, modified based on how carefully they decided to cover their ascent. If Tarfoot beats the character's Move Silently check, he rushes out to initiate combat, gaining a surprise round. Otherwise, he attacks from the safety of the walkway once disturbed. Tarfoot casts *darkness* to befuddle the characters and then attempts to knock characters near the edge of the tower into the tar below. Tarfoot reserves his breath weapon for when he can affect more than one target.

The walkway provides cover (+4 AC, +2 Reflex saves) to Tarfoot against all attacks except those made from directly in front of the entrance.

Once Tarfoot is reduced to 20 hp or less, he cowers and grovels, begging for the characters to spare his life. Tarfoot will ingratiate himself with the party, tempting them with information about the tower. If the characters wish to parlay, Tarfoot reveals the following information based on a successful Diplomacy check. All information up to the highest check result is gained, as follows:

- DC 15: Two of Tarfoot's master's men are inside the tower, looking for something. They arrived yesterday and are still within the tower. (He is alluding to the tiefling thieves in area 5-8.)
- DC 20: Tarfoot's master sent two men here to retrieve a magic pearl. They asked Tarfoot about it, but Tarfoot did not know where it was. (He is alluding to the blackened pearl of ages in area 5-10.)
- DC 25: The tar has clogged the lower levels of the tower and seeped into the master's grand laboratory. Tarfoot saw something from the tar pit ooze into the chamber several days ago. (He is alluding to the modified roper in area 5-9.)

**Tarfoot, Young Adult Black Dragon:** CR 9; Large dragon; HD 16d12+48; hp 142; Init +0; Spd 60 ft., fly 150 ft. (poor), swim 60 ft.; AC 24, touch 9, flat-footed 24; Base Atk +16; Grp +24; Atk Bite +19 melee (2d6+4); Full Atk Bite +19 melee (2d6+4) and 2 claws +14 melee (1d8+2) and 2 wings +14 melee (1d6+2) and 1 tail +14 melee (1d8+6); Space/Reach 10 ft./5 ft. (10 ft. with bite); SA Breath weapon (acid, 80' line, DC 21, 10d4), spells, spell-like abilities; SQ Damage reduction 5/magic, dragon qualities, darkvision 120', frightful presence (DC 19), immunities (acid, sleep, paralysis), spell resistance 17, water breathing; AL CE; SV Fort +13, Ref +10, Will +11; Str 19, Dex 10, Con 17, Int 12, Wis 13, Cha 12.

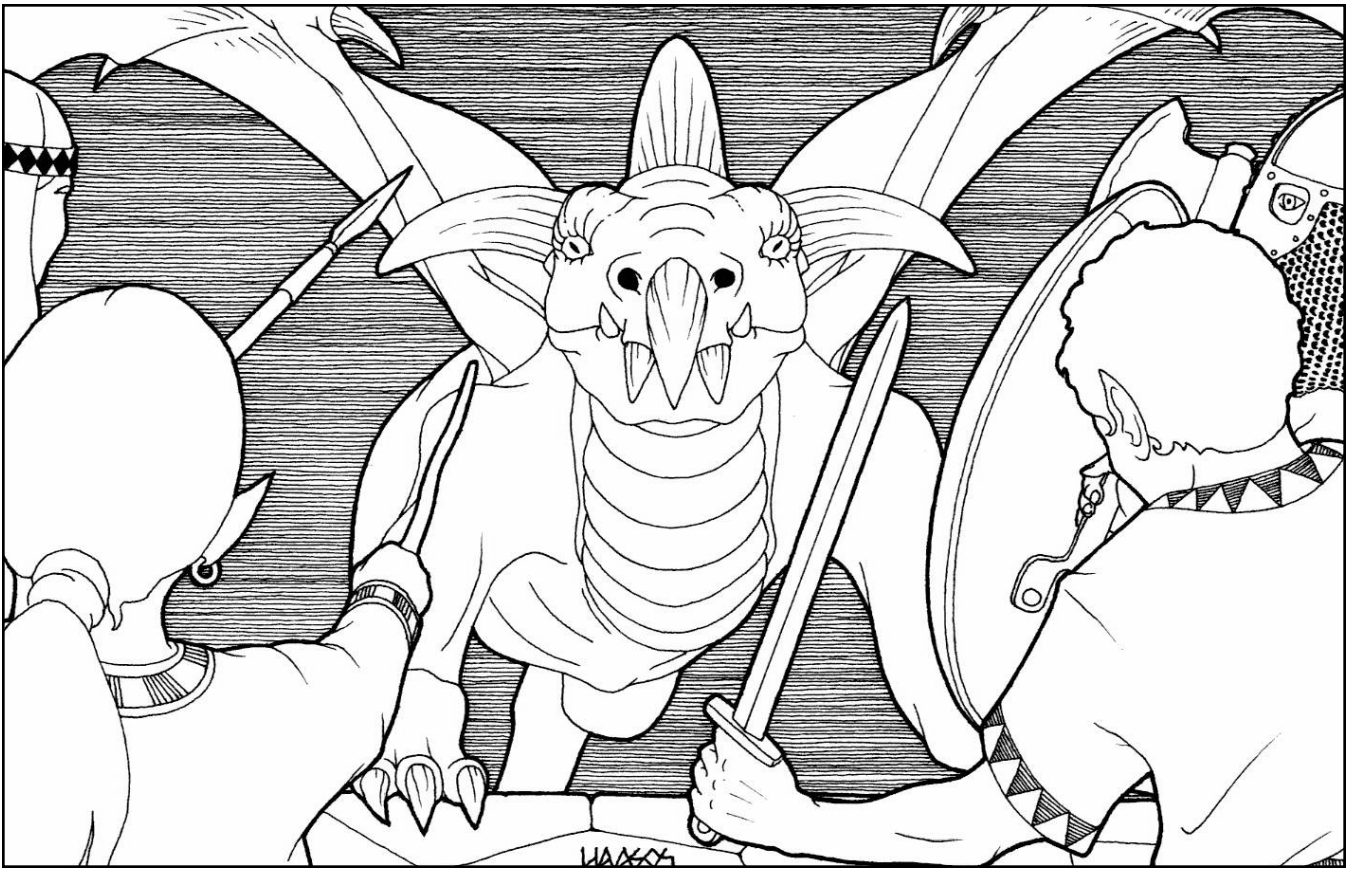
*Skills and Feats:* Hide +10, Intimidate +12, Knowledge (local) +11, Listen +20, Move Silently +10, Spot +20, Survival +20, Swim +24;

*Spell-Like Abilities:* 3/day – *darkness* (50-foot radius)

*Arcane spells* (as 1st level sorcerer, 5/3; save DC 11 + spell level): 0 – *acid splash, flare, resistance, touch of fatigue*; 1st – *obscuring mist, protection from good, ray of enfeeblement*.

*Possessions:* *minor ring of spell storing* (currently holding *ray of enfeeblement* x2).

**Aftermath:** A search of the rusted debris and nest uncovers enough twisted metal parts to have built a grand telescope that occupied the majority of the top of the tower. A DC 25 Search check of the debris also uncovers Tarfoot's modest horde: 170 gp, 27 pp, 3 garnets (50 gp each), 2 amethyst (150



gp each), a jade amulet on silver chain (300 gp), 2 vials of antitoxin, small steel mirror, +1 *slick studded leather armor*, +2 *light metal shield of bashing*, +2 *merciful heavy mace*, arcane scroll (CL 7th – *fog cloud*, *hypnotic pattern*, *keen edge*), and a *bottle of air*.

**Area 5-3 – Ivy Choked Room (EL 6):** Once the party is prepared to descend into the tower, read the following:

*The walkway from the observatory is cluttered with animal remains and thick ivy. A narrow path has been cut through the debris, making the stairwell a bit easier to navigate. A soft blue glow beckons from the lower level. As the spiral stairwell slowly curves downward, a large stone archway opens into the next floor. More ivy and vegetation chokes the ceiling and floors. A few small animal skeletons lie near the door entrance.*

*The room is wedge-shaped, nearly 40 feet wide and 20 feet deep. Identical metal doors stand closed at opposite ends of the room. Through the dense ivy, you can barely make out large maps hanging along the walls. Wooden shelves and a desk lie splintered on the floor, with fragments of broken glass, wood and metal littering the far wall.*

The thick ivy along the south wall is a patch of assassin vines. This room is in shambles. It once held all the astrological charts and maps of the heavens Skullshank used to calibrate his telescope and observe the astral conjunctions.

A character with the Track feat can make a DC 20 Survival check to follow the trail of the tiefling thieves. Two human-sized figures entered this room and made their way to the door on the west, leading to area 5-4. They traveled through 5-4 to 5-5 and 5-6. Tracks also lead in from area 5-6 and back to the stairwell.

**Tactics:** The assassin vines wait until characters approach to view the maps. It entangles as many opponents as possible and then attacks. The assassin vine fights to the death.

**Improved Assassin Vine:** CR 6; Huge plant; HD 12d8+60; hp 135; Init +0; Spd 5 ft.; AC 16, touch 7, flat-footed 16; Base Atk +9; Grp +25; Atk/Full Atk Slam +17 melee (1d8+12); Space/Reach 10 ft./10 ft. (20 ft. with vine); SA Constrict (1d8+12), entangle, improved grab; SQ Blindsight 30 ft., camouflage, immunity to electricity, low-light vision, plant traits, resistances (10 cold and fire); AL N; SV Fort +13, Ref +3, Will +5; Str 26, Dex 8, Con 20, Int –, Wis 13, Cha 9.

*Skills and Feats:* Hide +12, Jump +26, Listen

+10, Spot +10, Survival +10; Run, Track

**Entangle (Su):** An assassin vine can animate plants within 30 feet of itself as a free action (Ref DC 13 partial). The effect lasts until the vine dies or decides to end it (also a free action). The ability is otherwise similar to *entangle* (CL 4th).

**Camouflage (Ex):** Since an assassin vine looks like a normal plant when at rest, it takes a check to notice it before it attacks (DC 25 Spot, Survival, or Knowledge (nature)).

**Aftermath:** Unless the characters were especially careful during the battle, there is a cumulative 5% chance per round the battle lasted that the maps on the wall have been destroyed. If the maps survive the battle, a DC 20 Knowledge (arcana or the planes) check reveals that these astral maps, used with the right equipment (such as a large telescope, or the *Oculus Infernae*) would aid in summoning devils. Notes scribbled on the map also reveal that a grand astral conjunction will occur in the near future, further empowering any devils summoned.

A DC 30 Search of the room uncovers one of Skullshank's journals amidst the debris, "The Gate of Flames." It is considered a masterwork tool and provides a +2 competence bonus to Knowledge (the planes) checks when a character has time to use it as a reference. It also contains a copy of the spell *summon monster V* (bearded devil only).

**Area 5-4 – Chaos Laboratory (EL 8):** When a character enters this room, read the following:

*This room is wedge-shaped and symmetrical like the previous one, with two metal doors standing at opposite ends. Large glass tubes, jars and cylinders occupy the eastern portion of the room, with a toppled desk, several chairs and a small bookstand pinning them against the wall. Broken glass litters the entire room.*

*This appears to have been a lab of some sort, but as the tower shifted over the years, so did the delicate equipment. Only a few of the items remain intact. Among them is the largest glass cylinder, nearly two feet in diameter and ten feet tall. Behind the thick and smudged glass, you see a dark liquid slowly churning and bubbling. A glowing, silvery prism swirls amidst the liquid.*

**Room Condition:** Anyone falling prone in this room suffers 1d4+1 damage from the glass shards.

The large glass cylinder holds a chaos beast. Tampering with the debris surrounding the cylinder, or using certain spell effects, could open the cylinder and release the beast. A DC 30 Spot or Search check of the cylinder reveals a delicate spider-web

of cracks along the surface. A DC 30 Knowledge (the planes) check identifies the contents of the cylinder as a chaos beast.

**Reinforced Glass Cylinder:** 1 inch thick; hardness 2; hp 8; Break DC 10

**Tactics:** The chaos beast cannot act while still in the cylinder. If the cylinder is tampered with, the chaos beast is released and fights to the death.

**Enhanced Chaos Beast:** CR 8; Medium outsider (chaotic, extraplanar); HD 10d8+8; hp 75; Init +5; Spd 20 ft.; AC 16, touch 11, flat-footed 15; Base Atk +10; Grp +12; Atk Claw +12 melee (1d3+2 plus corporeal instability); Full Atk 2 claws +12 melee (1d3+2 plus corporeal instability); SA Corporeal instability; SQ Darkvision 60 ft., immunities (critical hits, transformation), spell resistance 15; AL CN; SV Fort +8, Ref +8, Will +7; Str 14, Dex 13, Con 13, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 10.

**Skills and Feats:** Climb +13, Escape Artist +12, Hide +12, Jump +9, Listen +11, Search +11, Spot +11, Survival +0 (+2 following tracks), Tumble +14, Use Rope +1 (+3 with bindings); Dodge, Improved Initiative, Mobility

**Corporeal Instability (Su):** A blow from a chaos beast against a living creature can cause a terrible transformation. The creature must succeed on a DC 15 Fortitude save or become a spongy, amorphous mass. Unless the victim manages to control the effect (see below), its shape melts, flows, writhes, and boils.

An affected creature is unable to hold or use any item. Clothing, armor, rings, and helmets become useless. Large items worn or carried – armor, backpacks, even shirts – hamper more than help, reducing the victim's Dexterity score by 4. Soft or misshapen feet and legs reduce speed to 10 feet or one-quarter normal, whichever is less. Searing pain courses along the nerves, so strong that the victim cannot act coherently. The victim cannot cast spells or use magic items, and it attacks blindly, unable to distinguish friend from foe (–4 penalty on attack rolls and a 50% miss chance, regardless of the attack roll).

Each round the victim spends in an amorphous state causes 1 point of Wisdom drain from mental shock. If the victim's Wisdom score falls to 0, it becomes a chaos beast. A victim can regain its own shape by taking a standard action to attempt a DC 15 Charisma check. A success reestablishes the creature's normal form for 1 minute. On a failure, the victim can still repeat this check each round until successful.

Corporeal instability is not a disease or a curse and so is hard to remove. A *shapechange* or *stone-skin* spell does not cure an afflicted creature but

fixes its form for the duration of the spell. A *restoration*, *heal*, or *greater restoration* spell removes the affliction (a separate *restoration* is necessary to restore any drained points of Wisdom).

**Aftermath:** A thorough search of the debris reveals the following, including everything up to the highest check result.

DC	Items Found
15	The glowing jewel swirling in the chaos beast – a <i>pearly white spindle ioun stone</i> (regenerate 1 hp/hour)
20	1d3 <i>potions of cure moderate wounds</i> , 1d3 <i>potions of eagle's splendor</i>
25	One of Skullshank's journals, <i>The Darkened Sky</i> . It is considered a masterwork tool and provides a +2 competence bonus to Knowledge (the planes) checks when a character has time to use it as a reference. It also contains a copy of the spell <i>summon monster V</i> (chaos beast only).

**Area 5-5 – The Reading Lounge (EL 3):** When the party enters this room, read the following aloud:

*This room sports the now-familiar wedge-shaped design but seems much more cramped. A heavy, plush carpet has remained in place on the floor, and heavy wooden bookshelves are secured to the northwest and northeast walls. The northern wall is covered with a variety of tapestries, paintings and works of art – all with a macabre taint.*

*A pair of darkwood reading chairs lies tipped over in the center of the room, along with a pair of small darkwood reading tables. The room bears the heavy scent of earthy pipe smoke, barely subdued by the passage of time.*

**Hidden Details:** A secret door leading to a small storage vault is hidden behind a tapestry of preserved rust monster antennae. A DC 20 Spot check reveals that display is hanging off center. A DC 25 Search check locates the secret door, reduced to DC 20 if the tapestry is removed. A DC 25 Knowledge (dungeoneering) check identifies the antennae.

The display must be moved aside to access the door, but characters risk their equipment if they are not careful. The door is locked but not trapped. A DC 20 Open Lock check opens the door. A book on the bottom shelf of the bookshelf to the west is connected to a mechanism that draws the antennae aside like a window shade. A DC 35 Search check is required to locate the book.

**Rust Monster Antennae Trap:** CR 3; mechanical device; location trigger; no reset; extraordinary power effect (rust, as rust monster); variable targets (inert, but may touch victims in process of moving the antennae); Search DC 25; Disable Device DC 15.

*Rust (Ex):* Any mundane metal object coming into contact with the antennae is immediately destroyed. The touch can destroy up to a 10-foot cube of metal instantly. Magic armor and weapons, and other magic items made of metal, must succeed on a DC 17 Reflex save or be destroyed.

**Aftermath:** A DC 20 Knowledge (arcana) check identifies the library as a fairly expansive and valuable collection. Characters can spend the time to collect the more valuable books. Each half hour spent searching the books reveals 1d4 books worth 2d6 x 50 gp each.

Inside the storage area are several hewn-stone shelves holding all manner of magical and mundane items: four scrolls of *read magic*, four scrolls of *lesser restoration*, one scroll of *restoration*, *incense of meditation* (1 block), two silver pipes (150 gp each), six leather packs of expensive tobacco (10 gp each), two ivory scroll cases (50 gp each), three bottles of ink, writing utensils, sheaves of paper, a spyglass, magnifying glass, sealing wax (black), an hourglass and a blank spellbook.

**Area 5-6 – Room of Broken Glass (EL 6):** When the characters enter this room, read the following:

*Another wedge-shaped room stands before you. A mounted shelving unit occupies the entire western wall, eerily empty of contents. Similar shelves line the northeast and southeast walls, still housing dozens of glass bottles, jars and flasks of every possible description.*

*The floor is littered with broken glass, and a large pile of debris has cluttered the eastern edge between the wall and floor, nearly reaching up to the narrow window on the wall. The room smells odd – a mix of sweet fragrances, thick earthy elements and other alchemical odors.*

This is the tower's reagent supply. However, the tiefling thieves set up a trap after searching this room. Deadeye the imp, Skullshank's former familiar, also resides in this room – taking up guard here to make it difficult to avoid the trap.

**Room Condition:** Anyone falling prone or tripped in this room suffers 1d4+1 damage from the glass shards.

**Tactics:** Deadeye lurks invisible above the window.

When a character starts to search the room, he strikes, trying to lure characters to enter the greased sections of the room. If there is enough room, Deadeye will use alternate form to polymorph into a hyena and trip characters in the greased section. Deadeye fights to the death.

**Deadeye the Imp:** CR 3; Tiny outsider (evil, extraplanar, lawful); HD 6d8+6; hp 42; Init +3; Spd 20 ft., fly 50 ft. (perfect); AC 21, touch 16, flat-footed 18; Base Atk +6; Grp -2; Atk Sting +11 melee (1d4 plus poison); Full Atk Sting +11/+6 melee (1d4 plus poison); Space/Reach 2-1/2 ft./0 ft.; SA Poison (DC 14, 1d4 Dex/2d4 Dex), spell-like abilities; SQ Alternate form (hyena), damage reduction 5/good or silver, darkvision 60 ft., fast healing 2, immunity to poison, resistance to fire 5; AL LE; SV Fort +5, Ref +7, Will +5; Str 10, Dex 17, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 14.

*Skills and Feats:* Diplomacy +8, Hide +17, Knowledge (any one) +6, Listen +7, Move Silently +9, Search +6, Spellcraft +6, Spot +7, Survival +1 (+3 following tracks); Dodge, Weapon Finesse

*Spell-Like Abilities:* At will – *detect good*, *detect magic*, *invisibility* (self only); 1/day – *suggestion* (DC 15). CL 6th.

*Alternate Form (Su):* An imp can assume another form at will as a standard action. This ability functions as a *polymorph* spell cast on itself (CL 12th), except that an imp does not regain hit points for changing form. Deadeye can only polymorph into a hyena.

*Possessions:* ring of protection +1, potion of cure moderate wounds.

**The Trap:** The thieves found four *salves of slipperiness* still intact and poured them on the floor in this room after weakening the framework around the window. Any character entering any of the marked spaces must immediately make a DC 20 Reflex save or fall. A character being especially cautious or making the Reflex save can move at half speed through the area by making a DC 18 Balance check.

Failing either the Reflex save or Balance check results in the character's falling prone and sliding down the slope of the room into the loosened window grate. If the character's total weight is 50 lbs. or more, the grate breaks, sending the character falling into the tar pit outside the tower.

**Salve of Slipperiness treated floor:** CR 5; magic device; mechanical trigger; constant effect; spell effect (*grease*, 6th-level wizard, DC 20 Reflex or fall) and environment effect (30' fall and tar, 3d6 fall + 6d6 fire damage); Search DC 25; Disable Device DC 30 or automatic (apply alcohol).

**Aftermath:** Most of the items are broken and worth-

less, but there are still hundreds of intact bottles amidst the debris. For every ten minutes spent searching, allow a Search check. On a result of 20 or more, roll on the following table to see what the characters find. Once a specific item is found it is no longer available; a duplicate result means nothing is found.

1d8	Items Found
1	1d4 flasks of alchemist's fire
2	1d4 flasks of antitoxin
3	1 vial of <i>universal solvent</i>
4	1 vial of <i>unguent of timelessness</i>
5	1 jar of <i>restorative ointment</i>
6	1d2 <i>potions of blur</i>
7	1d2 <i>potions of fox's cunning</i>
8	1 <i>flask of curses</i>

**Area 5-7 – Hall of Heroes (EL 12):** When the characters head down the stairs to the second floor, read the following:

*The stairs curl downward gradually until you reach another doorway facing to the south. The doorway opens into a very large wedge-shaped room, standing nearly 60 feet at its widest point and 35 feet from the doorway to the outer wall.*

*The room is filled with dozens of sculptures and statues. Several of the statues have toppled over or lean precariously against the eastern wall, partially obscuring the door there, but most of them remain upright despite the angle of the floor. All manner of devilish and evil countenances are sculpted here, giving the room a chilling look.*

This is Skullshank's hall commemorating the great lieutenants – devilish and mortal – that have served him before. One of the statues is set to collapse on anyone wandering too close, and another is actually an exquisitely crafted stone golem standing guard with a gargoyle.

**Tactics:** The stone golem is positioned by the west door. As soon as anyone enters its area of reach, the stone golem uses slow on the nearest character, then launches into combat. The gargoyle waits until characters have engaged the stone golem, then attacks any individuals standing back from the fight. Both creatures fight to the death.

Due to the nature of the room, a DC 30 Spot or Knowledge (arcana) check is required to notice anything unusual about the stone golem or gargoyle statues.

**Stone Golem:** CR 11; Large construct; HD 14d10+30; hp 112; Init +3; Spd 20 ft.; AC 26, touch 8, flat-footed 26; Base Atk +10; Grp +23; Atk Slam

+18 melee (2d10+9); Full Atk 2 slams +18 melee (2d10+9); Space/Reach 10 ft./10 ft.; SA Slow; SQ Construct traits, damage reduction 10/adamantine, 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.

*Slow (Su):* As the spell, as a free action, once every 2 rounds; range 10 feet; duration 7 rounds; DC 17 Will save to negate.

*Immunity to Magic (Ex):* A stone golem is immune to any spell or spell-like ability that allows spell resistance. 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.

**Gargoyle:** CR 5; Medium monstrous humanoid (earth); HD 6d8+27; hp 66; Init +2; Spd 40 ft., fly 60 ft. (average); AC 16, touch 12, flat-footed 14; Base Atk +6; Grp +8; Atk Claw +9 melee (1d4+3); Full Atk 2 claws +9 melee (1d4+3) and bite +7 melee (1d6+1) and gore +7 melee (1d6+1); SQ Damage reduction 10/magic, darkvision 60 ft., freeze; AL LE; SV Fort +5, Ref +6, Will +4; Str 16, Dex 14, Con 18, Int 6, Wis 11, Cha 7.

*Skills and Feats:* Hide +18, Listen +4, Spot +4; Multiattack, Toughness.

*Freeze (Ex):* A gargoyle can hold itself so still it appears to be a statue. An observer must succeed on a DC 30 Spot check to notice the gargoyle is really alive.

**The Eastern Door:** The door to the east is partially blocked by a few statues that toppled over. Attempting to move any of the statues causes one of them to collapse. Once that has been resolved, a DC 25 Strength test, modified by clever problem solving, is required to move statues out of the way enough to gain access to the door.

**Collapsing Statue:** CR 4; mechanical; touch trigger (attached); no reset; Atk +15 melee (6d6, stone statue); Search DC 20; Disable Device DC 24.

**Aftermath:** Careful examination of the statues in the room reveals the identities of many of the individuals. Dread Watcher (from Chapter 2) and Chundag (from Chapter 4) are both depicted as statues, as well as dozens of others.

A DC 25 Search check also reveals one statue depicting a gnome that has actually been made larger in scale so it wouldn't be dwarfed by the other statues. The gnome has a shriveled arm holding a wand, and a skull mask covering the majority of its face. This is a statue of Skullshank. The statue radi-

ates very strong evil.

A DC 30 Disable Device or Sleight of Hand check allows a character to carefully remove the wand. It is a *wand of monster summoning V* (15 charges) but only summons bearded devils, which will immediately attack anyone using the wand who is not Skullshank.

**Area 5-8 – Apprentice's Chamber (EL 8):** When the characters enter this room, read the following aloud:

*As the door opens, a small puff of purple dust swirls from the room, riding on a humid breeze. Nearly the entire room is covered with thick fungus and mold. The fungal blooms cling to the walls, ceiling and fill the cracks of the wedge-shaped room, leaving only a narrow pathway from one door to the next.*

This was once a study for Skullshank's apprentices. The entire patch on the eastern edge of this room is a large fiendish violet fungus. Hidden beneath the bulk of the fungal bloom are the apprentices' journals and spellbooks.

**Tactics:** The fungus uses its smite good ability on the first eligible target, then whips wildly and fights to the death.

**Fiendish Violet Fungus:** CR 8; Large plant; HD 10d8+60; hp 122; Init -1; Spd 10 ft.; AC 14, touch 10, flat-footed 14; Base Atk +7; Grp +16; Atk Tentacle +12 melee (1d8+6 plus poison); Full Atk 4 tentacles +12 melee (1d8+6 plus poison); Space/Reach 10 ft./15 ft.; SA Poison (DC 17 Fort, 1d6 Str and 1d6 Con/1d6 Str and 1d6 Con), *smite good* (1/day, +10 damage); SQ Darkvision, DR 5/magic, low-light vision, plant traits, resistance 10 (cold, fire), spell resistance 15; AL NE; SV Fort +12, Ref +1, Will +3; Str 22, Dex 6, Con 22, Int 3, Wis 11, Cha 9.

**Aftermath:** After defeating the fungal bloom, if the group breaks it down to clear the eastern section (hacking it apart, burning it, etc.), they can attempt a Search of the area. A DC 20 Search check turns up three blank spell books and one spell book with 3d4 random first level arcane spells, 2d4 random second level arcane spells and 1d4 random third level arcane spells. There is also a masterwork writing kit and a *minor rod of metamagic (enlarge spell)* inside a wooden desk mired within the fungal bloom batch.





**Area 5-9 – The Master Plan (EL 11):** When the characters enter this room, read the following:

*The entire northern section of this level is one large semi-circular room, stretching fully 90 feet across. Along the far curve along the northern wall is mounted an enormous sheet of pearly stone 10 feet tall and 30 feet wide. A flickering image dances across the surface of the stone.*

*Aside from the arcane components, it appears to be a military war room. There are numerous tables sporting enormous regional maps, with pewter miniatures representing various armies and troops dotting the territories. Large slate boards reveal sketches of maps and strategies for what appears to be a massive assault of the kingdom lying to the north of the tower.*

The stone on the northern wall functions like a crystal ball, revealing a viewpoint as if one were standing on the observatory deck (area 5-2). The tieflings were searching this room when the characters entered the tower, so they saw them as clear as day, unless the PCs were invisible. The tiefling thieves hide in this room, waiting for the group.

**Room Condition:** The cluttered furniture, debris and uneven flooring results in hampered movement through the area – each space counts as two

spaces for movement, unless a character succeeds at a DC 15 Balance check. Failure on the Balance check consumes an entire move action. Tumbling and similar checks in this room have their DCs increased by +4.

Also, review the hazards presented by the tar on page 51 to prepare for characters falling into the tar on the eastern edge of this room.

**Tactics:** The tieflings wait until the groups start to split up and search the room. They begin the encounter invisible, stalking the characters. The pair will flank a spell caster first, to disable him with their sneak attack. If the battle goes poorly, they will try to lure or force characters toward the roper in area 5-10.

They have not yet discovered a way to get past the roper in area 5-10 to retrieve the pearl. If the characters reach area 5-10 before this room, the thieves may ambush them during the battle with the roper, to take advantage of the group's divided attention.

**Odolan and Virkus, the Tiefling Thieves, tiefling Rog8:** CR 9; Medium outsider; HD 8d6+8; hp 53, 49; Init +5; 30 ft.; AC 21, touch 16, flat-footed 16; Base Atk +6; Grp +8; Atk shortsword +13 melee (1d6+4 plus poison); Full Atk 2 shortswords +13/+8 melee (1d6+4 plus poison); SA *Darkness* (1/day, CL 8th), poison (DC 18 Fort, 1d6 Dex/1d6 Dex), sneak attack +4d6; SQ *Darkvision*, evasion, improved uncanny dodge, resistance 5 (cold, electricity, fire), trapfinding, trap sense +2, uncanny dodge; AL NE; SV Fort +3, Ref +11, Will +3; Str 15, Dex 21, Con 12, Int 14, Wis 12, Cha 10.

**Skills and Feats:** Balance +15, Bluff +10, Climb +10, Craft (poisonmaking) +10, Disarm Device +13, Hide +15, Jump +15, Move Silently +15, Open Lock +15, Search +13, Tumble +18; Weapon Finesse, Dodge, Mobility

**Poison:** The rogues' shortswords start the encounter coated with giant wasp poison. Once a successful hit has been made, they must either re-coat their blades with poison or no longer gain the benefits from the poison damage listed above.

**Possessions (per rogue):** +2 studded leather armor, +2 shortsword, +1 dagger, +1 shortbow, 20 +1 arrows, three *potions of cure moderate wounds*, *potions of delay poison*, three vials of giant wasp poison, *potions of cat's grace*, *ring of protection +1*.

**Aftermath:** Aside from their gear, a DC 20 Search check of the bodies reveals a tattered note depicting a large black pearl with a small silvery tear drop on its surface. This is a sketch of the *blackened pearl of ages* from area 5-10. A DC 25 Decipher Script check allows a character to read the tieflings' shorthand notes. They've narrowed the location of

the pearl down to area 5-9 or 5-10. There's also a note that a secret compartment somewhere in area 5-9 bears a magic rod.

A DC 25 Search check of the westernmost war table reveals a hidden compartment under the lip of the table. The compartment is locked (DC 25 Open Lock) but not trapped. Inside the compartment is a *minor rod of metamagic (empower spell)*.

**Area 5-10 – A Sticky Situation (EL 13):** When the party enters this room, read the following:

*The strong stench of tar overpowers your senses briefly. The thick tar oozes into the eastern edge of this wedge-shaped room through the remains of a cracked window, nearly submerged beneath the sticky black tar.*

*Several glass displays and wooden shelves lie sinking into the murk, tilted at odd angles, most of their contents lost to the bubbling muck. It appears that this may have once been a trophy room. Who knows what treasures have been lost to the tar.*

Review the hazards presented by the tar on page 51 to prepare for characters falling into the tar on the eastern edge of this room.

A modified roper, acclimated to the sticky tar, lurks in the tar bubbling up from the eastern wall of this room. A trapped display case lies sinking in the tar on the eastern edge of the room. Inside the display case are an empty velvet pillow and a small golden stand. The glass is still intact.

The *pearl* simply fell off the pillow and has rolled to the back of the display case, which characters can't see unless they get closer. Abjuration magic on the display case placed to prevent scrying also prevents *detect magic* from picking up the aura of the *pearl*.

**Tactics:** The roper lies still until the group starts to navigate the room and attempts to retrieve the pearl. The roper tries to keep the group split up and will pull grappled targets into the tar for additional damage. The roper fights to the death.

**Modified Tar Roper:** CR 12; Large magical beast; HD 10d10+30; hp 103; Init +5; Spd 10 ft.; AC 24, touch 10, flat-footed 23; Base Atk +10; Grp +18; Atk Strand +11 ranged touch (drag) or bite +13 melee (2d6+6); Full Atk 6 strands +11 ranged touch (drag) and bite +13 melee (2d6+6); Space/Reach: 10 ft./10 ft. (50 ft. with strand); SA Drag, strands, weakness; SQ Darkvision 60 ft., immunity to fire, low-light vision, resistance to electricity 10, spell resistance 30, vulnerability to cold; AL CE; SV Fort +10,

Ref +8, Will +8; Str 19, Dex 13, Con 17, Int 12, Wis 16, Cha 12.

**Skills and Feats:** Climb +12, Hide +18, Listen +13, Spot +13; Alertness, Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Weapon Focus (strand)

**Modifications:** The tar roper's resistances and vulnerabilities have been altered to reflect its affinity for the hot tar, but it is otherwise identical to a standard roper.

**Drag (Ex):** If a roper hits with a strand attack, the strand latches onto the opponent's body. This deals no damage but drags the stuck opponent 10 feet closer each subsequent round unless that creature breaks free, which requires a DC 25 Escape Artist check or a DC 20 Strength check. A roper can draw in a creature within 10 feet of itself and bite with a +4 attack bonus in the same round. A strand has 10 hit points and can be attacked by making a successful sunder attempt. If the strand is currently attached to a target, the roper takes a -4 penalty on its opposed attack roll to resist the sunder attempt. Severing a strand deals no damage to a roper.

**Strands (Ex):** The creature can have up to six strands at once, and they can strike up to 50 feet away (no range increment). If a strand is severed, the roper can extrude a new one on its next turn as a free action.

**Weakness (Ex):** Anyone grabbed by a strand must succeed on a DC 18 Fortitude save or take 2d8 points of Strength damage.

**Aftermath:** A DC 25 Spot check allows a character to spot the *pearl* at the back of the display. Even without the roper impeding their progress, the group must contend with the dangerous tar. Aside from the *pearl* itself, the velvet pillow is worth 50 gp and the small golden stand is worth 30 gp.

## Rewards

Award the following bonuses to the characters for achieving these significant goals.

Entering tower without falling into the tar	+200 XP
Recovering Skullshank's journals (per journal)	+100 XP
Accessing the secret room in area 5-5 without falling victim to the rust monster antennae trap	+200 XP
Recovering the <i>blackened pearl of ages</i>	+500 XP

# Chapter 6: The War of the Summoner

## Introduction

“The War of the Summoner” is the sixth and final adventure in the Interludes series and is best suited for a party of 4-6 characters of levels 11-13. The group should have approximately 45-55 class levels among the characters. At least one arcane and one divine caster are strongly recommended. All classes will be tested, so having a wide range of abilities will prove most useful.

## Adventure Summary

The party has finally uncovered Skullshank’s master plan to summon an army of devils to conquer the region. A grand astral conjunction is imminent, which will empower the devils Skullshank summons during a special ritual.

The construction of the *Oculus Infernae* is complete. The preparations for the ritual have begun. To defeat Skullshank and foil his plans once and for all, the group must brave the dangers of his new fortress. Once they make their way to Skullshank’s summoning chancel, they will face the dire summoner himself and decide the fate of the region!

## Game Master’s Section

### Encounter Table

To help the GM prepare, we have included a quick reference table showing all encounters at a glance. **Loc** – the location number keyed to the map for the encounter. **Pg** – the module page number that the encounter can be found on. **Type** – indicates if the encounter is a trap (T), puzzle (P), or combat (C). **Encounter** – the key monsters, traps, or NPCs that can be found in the encounter. Names in *italics* are classed NPCs. **EL** – the encounter level.



<u>Loc</u>	<u>Page</u>	<u>Type</u>	<u>Encounter</u>	<u>EL</u>
6-1	61	C	Erinyes guardian	8
		C	Bearded devils	5-7
		P/T	Elemental portal	9
6-2	63	T	<i>Phantasmal killer</i> traps	6
6-3	64	C	Aboleth	7
		C	3 chuul	10
6-4	65	C	4 fiendish xorn	11
6-5	66	C	8 air mephits	7
6-6	68	C	1 noble salamander	10
		C	3 flamebrothers	5
6-7	69	C	6 bearded devils	9
		T	<i>Energy drain</i> door trap	10
6-8	70	C	<i>Skullshank</i> , Wiz15	15
		T	4 elemental floor traps	10 per

## Scaling Information

GMs can quickly adjust the difficulty of the scenario to accommodate groups of different levels. Consider adapting the adventure using any of the following suggestions:

**Weaker Parties (groups lower than 11th level or with fewer than 45 total character levels):** Reduce skill check DCs and save DCs by 2 each. Reduce the number of bearded devils summoned by the erinyes in area 6-1. Remove a chuul from area 6-3. Remove a xorn from area 6-4. Remove 2-4 mephits from area 6-5. Do not have the noble salamander summon aid in area 6-6. Remove 1-2 bearded devils from area 6-7. Remove the special abilities from the *Oculus Infernae* in area 6-8.

**Stronger Parties (characters above 13th level, or for more than 55 total character levels):** Increase all skill check DCs and save DCs by 2 each. Add 2 bearded devils to area 6-1. Remove the hidden treasures at the entrance and by the Elemental Key in each of the elemental rooms (areas 6-3, 6-4, 6-5 and 6-6). Replace the bearded devils in area 6-7 with erinyes.

## Getting the Players Involved

This adventure will ideally be the exciting conclusion of the Interludes scenario, following Chapter 5: “The Sinking Spire.” If left unchallenged, Skullshank will summon an army of devils and devastate the countryside. This knowledge alone should provide strong incentive to most seasoned adventurers. However, these addi-

tional plot hooks might prove useful in spurring on stubborn groups.

**A Sacrifice to Save:** A mad wizard seeks to summon an army to wreak havoc, as above, but now the daughters of several important local politicians or guildsmen are missing. Clues indicate that they are being held hostage to serve as sacrifices for the wizard's diabolic summoning ritual – and the group must rescue them before he succeeds!

**A Country in Need:** Knowing what a dangerous adversary the summoner may become, the king himself has sought out the aid of intrepid adventurers to venture forth into the summoner's fortress and dispatch this fiend before his plans come to fruition. Wealth and land await those brave enough to challenge the summoner – and survive!

## Background Story

Over the course of the Interludes adventures, Skullshank has recovered fully from his torpor. As his minions scoured the countryside looking for the pieces to the *Oculum Infernae*, Skullshank outlined the complete ritual which would allow him to summon an army of devils.

The *Oculum Infernae* has been constructed to Skullshank's specifications and the fortress sealed off to interlopers as the summoner and his minions begin the ritual. Unless the ritual is stopped, a large number of devils will be permanently bound to Skullshank, and the surrounding region will surely suffer great peril.

Unknown to the party, their actions in previous chapters may affect the potency of the *Oculum Infernae* and thus the results of the final ritual. Regardless, Skullshank will do everything in his power to destroy those who would interfere with his plans.

Skullshank's fortress is actually a gigantic locked door of sorts. The adventurers must enter the four sides of the fortress to retrieve the elemental keys necessary to unlock the gate on top of the fortress. The gate is a teleportation portal that links to an arcane observatory suspended a thousand feet in the air above the crater, where Skullshank and the *Oculum Infernae* prepare for the astral conjunction.

The previous chapters and the introductory Interludes background provide all the additional information needed. It has now come down to this final confrontation – the party must defeat Skullshank at all costs!

## Player Beginning

*Your spirits lift as you realize your grueling journey may finally be reaching an end. The arduous trek to the bot-*

*tom of a massive crater was exhausting. But as you descended into the crater, you had an unobstructed view of the very top of the wide, flat fortress built into its base.*

*Perhaps fortress is not the right word, as the wide crenellated surface is barely 50 paces across. But you know that dangers lurk below the surface, for Skullshank and his minions surely lie in wait.*

*Girding yourself for the struggles ahead, you make your way down the last lip of the crater and stand before the fortress. Magic runes carved along the walls shimmer like a mirage across the fortress' surface. You can almost feel the primal magic crackling in the air.*

## The War of the Summoner

Unless noted in the text, all ceilings are 15 feet high and the walls are expertly worked stone. All doors are reinforced metal. All rooms are lit well enough that characters with lowlight vision have no difficulty seeing. There are no random encounters in this adventure.

**Hewn Stone Walls:** 3 ft. thick; hardness 10; hp 540; Break DC 50; Climb DC 25.

**Strong Metal Doors:** 3 inches thick; hardness 15; hp 70; Break DC 35.

## Areas of the Map

**Area 6-1 – The Fortress Grounds (EL 11):** When the party is ready to begin, read the following aloud:

*The short, wide crenellated walls span 50 feet to a side, and lean ever so slightly to the center, just 20 feet above the surface of the crater. Runes carved deep into the stone shimmer and fade as light passes by. You have a strong sense that the structure is far, far greater than the small portion currently exposed.*

*Spaced evenly about the squat square fortress are four large, stout doors. Each door is attached to the fortress by a small stone extension, ten feet from the surface of the wall. The doorframes each sport intricately carved archways featuring more of the strange, glowing runes.*

Skullshank has stationed an erinyes devil atop the fortress to guard the lock. The lock mechanism is set into the center of the top of the fortress, but can only be opened with the elemental keys found in areas 6-3, 6-4, 6-5 and 6-6 (see page 63).

The runes in the walls have a strong abjuration aura. They envelop the fortress in a permanent magic circle against good (CL 15th), extending 10



feet in all directions. Aside from normal means, this effect can also be suppressed by defacing 1d4 runes on each side of the fortress.

The walls of the fortress are easy to scale, as the runes provide excellent handholds. Climbing the walls requires a DC 10 Climb check. The crenellated wall provides cover (+4 AC, +2 Reflex saves) to anyone firing down from the tower wall.

**Tactics:** The erinyes summons 1d4 bearded devils to flank and hassle characters attempting to scale the walls. It will use *unholy blight* to thwart characters attempting to reach the top of the tower. The erinyes focuses bow attacks on spell casters first, then those that have the best chance of scaling the top of the tower. The erinyes fights to the death.

**Erinyes Guardian:** CR 8; Medium outsider (evil, extraplanar, lawful); HD 9d8+45; hp 88; Init +5; 30 ft., fly 50 ft.; AC 23, touch 15, flat-footed 18; Base Atk +9; Grp +14; Atk Longsword +14 melee (1d8+5/19–20) or +1 *flaming composite longbow* (+5 Str bonus) +15 ranged (1d8+6/x3 plus 1d6 fire) or rope +14 ranged (entangle); Full Atk Longsword +14/+9 melee (1d8+5/19–20) or +1 *flaming composite longbow* (+5 Str bonus) +15/+10 ranged (1d8+6/x3 plus 1d6 fire) or rope +14 ranged (entangle); SA *Entangle*, spell-like abilities, *summon devil*; SQ Damage reduction 5/good, darkvision 60 ft.,

immunity to fire and poison, resistance 10 (acid, cold), see in darkness, spell resistance 20, telepathy 100 ft., true seeing; AL LE; SV Fort +11, Ref +11, Will +10; Str 21, Dex 21, Con 21, Int 14, Wis 18, Cha 20.

**Skills and Feats:** Concentration +17, Diplomacy +7, Escape Artist +17, Hide +17, Knowledge (Arcane, the Planes) +14, Listen +16, Move Silently +17, Search +14, Sense Motive +16, Spot +16, Survival +4 (+6 following tracks), Use Rope +5 (+7 with bindings); Dodge, Mobility, Point Blank Shot, Precise Shot, Rapid Shot, Shot on the Run

**Damage Reduction (Ex):** An erinyes' natural weapons, as well as any weapons it wields, are treated as evil-aligned and lawful-aligned for the purpose of overcoming damage reduction.

**Entangle (Ex):** Each erinyes carries a stout rope some 50 feet long that entangles opponents of any size as an *animate rope* spell (CL 16th). An erinyes can hurl its rope 30 feet with no range penalty. Typically, an erinyes entangles a foe, lifts it into the air, and drops it from a great height.

**Spell-Like Abilities:** At will – *greater teleport* (self plus 50 pounds of objects only), *charm monster* (DC 19), *minor image* (DC 17), *unholy blight* (DC 19). CL 12th.

**Summon Devil (Sp):** Once per day this erinyes can automatically summon 1d4 bearded devils (without the usual 50% failure chance) due to the powers of the fortress. This ability functions as a 3rd-level spell.

**Bearded Devils (1d4):** CR 5; Medium outsider (evil, extraplanar, lawful); HD 6d8+18; hp 44 each; Init +6; 40 ft.; AC 19, touch 12, flat-footed 17; Base Atk +6; Grp +8; Atk Glaive +9 melee (1d10+3 plus infernal wound) or claw +8 melee (1d6+2); Full Atk Glaive +9/+4 melee (1d10+3 plus infernal wound) or 2 claws +8 melee (1d6+2); SA Infernal wound, beard, battle frenzy; SQ Damage reduction 5/silver or good, darkvision 60 ft., immunity to fire and poison, resistance to acid 10 and cold 10, see in darkness, spell resistance 17, telepathy 100 ft.; AL LE; SV Fort +8, Ref +7, Will +5; Str 15, Dex 15, Con 17, Int 6, Wis 10, Cha 10.

**Skills and Feats:** Climb +11, Diplomacy +2, Hide +11, Listen +9, Move Silently +9, Sense Motive +9, Spot +9; Improved Initiative, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (glaive).

**Spell-Like Abilities:** At will – *greater teleport* (self plus 50 pounds of objects only). CL 12th.

**Infernal Wound (Su):** The damage a bearded devil deals with its glaive causes a persistent wound. An injured creature loses 2 additional hit points each round. The wound does not heal naturally and resists healing spells. The continuing hit point loss can be stopped by a DC 16 Heal check,

a *cure* spell, or a *heal* spell. However, a character attempting to cast a *cure* spell or a *heal* spell on a creature damaged by a bearded devil's glaive must succeed on a DC 16 caster level check, or the spell has no effect on the injured character. A successful Heal check automatically stops the continuing hit point loss.

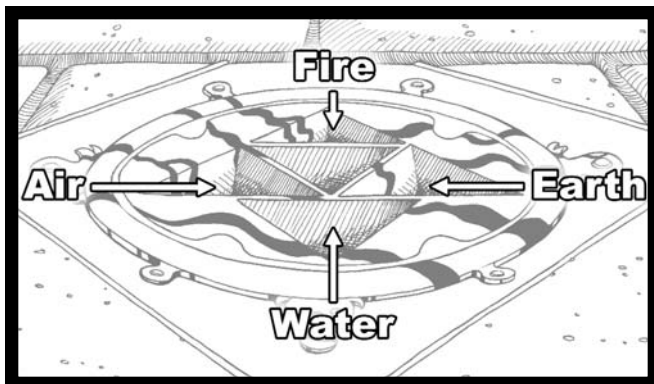
**Beard (Ex):** If a bearded devil hits a single opponent with both claw attacks, it automatically hits with its beard. The affected creature takes 1d8+2 points of damage and must succeed on a DC 16 Fortitude save or be infected with a vile disease known as devil chills (incubation period 1d4 days, damage 1d4 Str). Damage is dealt each day until the afflicted creature succeeds on three consecutive Fortitude saves, the disease is cured magically, or the creature dies.

**Battle Frenzy (Ex):** Twice per day, a bearded devil can work itself into a frenzy similar to the barbarian's rage (+4 Strength, +4 Constitution, +2 morale bonus on Will saves, -2 AC penalty). The frenzy lasts for 6 rounds, and the bearded devil suffers no ill effects afterward.

**Aftermath:** Once the erinyes is defeated, the body will begin to wilt and waste away, finally disintegrating completely with all its gear in 15 minutes. On the erinyes' belt is a silver key that opens the doors to the elemental corridors in area 6-2 and to the observatory in area 6-8. This disintegrates along with the rest of the gear after 15 minutes elapse, unless the PCs take it.

**The Locked Gate:** Once the characters have retrieved all four elemental keys from within the fortress, they need to use them to open the lock. Set on top of the fortress is a large platinum seal with five triangular recesses. Give the players hand-out P to represent this.

The elemental keys must be set into the proper places in the seal, as indicated below. The runes on the doors down the elemental corridors offer clues as to how to place the symbols. The order in which the keys are entered is not important. The center



socket remains empty (reference to the void). Each time a key is put into the wrong slot, a magic trap triggers, affecting everyone within 20 feet of the fortress. Once all four keys have been entered properly, go immediately to area 6-7.

**Elemental Seal Trap:** CR 10; magic device; event trigger (wrong key); automatic reset; spell effect (*symbol of weakness*, 15th-level wizard), Search DC 32; Disable Device DC 38 (attempted on each recess).

**Area 6-2 – The Elemental Corridors (EL 6):** The corridors to each of the Elemental Paths in areas 6-3, 6-4, 6-5 and 6-6 are identical except for the runes inscribed along the archways. For this reason, they are all handled in this single listing.

Read the following aloud when a character studies one of the doors to the fortress.

*The wide, sturdy door is bound with metal slats and seems virtually indestructible. A large lock is mounted into the center of the door itself, with a small opening for a key. There is no obvious handle or visible hinges. The lock mechanism itself is the only discernable feature on the face of the door.*

*The archway above the door is composed of several large, hewn-stone blocks. Magic runes glow along the surface of the stone, pulsing like a heartbeat.*

The runes are carved in Infernal, although a DC 25 Decipher Script check or *read magic* can also interpret the writing. The archway above each door holds a different clue as to the placement of the elemental keys for the sealed gate in area 6-1.

**Door to the Path of Water:**

*And send the seas back down below  
To rage and boil, ebb and flow*

**Door to the Path of Earth:**

*And thus the world is born anew  
The Devil Lords again to rule*

**Door to the Path of Air:**

*Sky and earth both split asunder  
Set aside for void to plunder*

**Door to the Path of Fire:**

*Fire raining from the sky  
To cleanse the world as fate draws nigh*

**The Locked Doors:** Each door bears a similar lock. They can be opened with the silver key found on the erinyes or picked open with a DC 30 Open Lock check. Note that the silver key on the erinyes does not bypass the trap found on each door.

**Phantasmal Killer Traps:** CR 6; magic device; event (key/pick turning in lock); automatic reset; spell effect (*phantasmal killer*, 15th-level wizard, DC 20 Will save for disbelief and DC 20 Fort save for partial effect); Search DC 29; Disable Device DC 32.

Upon opening one of the doors, read the following aloud:

*An impossibly long corridor lies before you. Runes along the floor glow softly, illuminating the 100-foot length of the corridor. That would place it outside the fortress itself — or at the least, overlapping the entrance on the opposite side!*

When the PCs approach the end of the hall, read the following:

*The corridor terminates in a mirror-like wall of energy. Silvery sparks dance across the rippling surface. Runes along the wall light up, circling the portal. Written in several languages, it is easy to understand their meaning — even in those languages you cannot comprehend.*

*“Brace yourself.”*

The portals are not trapped and inflict no damage. Each portal merely sends people passing through it directly to the matching portal in the respective elemental chamber.

**Area 6-3 – The Path of Water (EL 12):** When the characters step through the Water Portal from the north side of the fortress, read the following:

*A wave of energy courses through your body as you pass through the portal. Your vision blurs momentarily, and you have the sensation of falling rapidly. Suddenly, your senses snap back to normal. You find yourself resting on an enormous shell, bobbing on a limitless pool of water. Runes along the edge of the shell match those of the portal you passed through.*

*The sky is bleak and featureless. There are no structures or land masses to be seen above the waterline — but thick, colorful coral reefs grow mazelike in the depths. The water is boundless and clear, illuminated with blue and green light filtering from the depths. It’s difficult to determine the actual depth, but you think the water is less than 100 feet deep — the light seems to be*

*coming from something lying on the bottom of this magic lake.*

An aboleth and several chuul occupy the watery domain, swimming among the large reefs. The water extends infinitely in each direction, with no land structures or features.

The other half of the shell the party finds itself on is resting 80 feet below on the sandy floor of the chamber. Inside the shell is the Elemental Key of Water, which is providing the light. The shell the characters arrive on is sturdy and buoyant. It can support up to 2,000 lbs. without sinking, and can only be tipped over with a DC 25 Strength test.

**Hidden Aid:** Should the characters be enterprising enough to search the shell, a DC 30 Search check reveals that under the lip of the shell is a small hollowed-out shelf containing three *pearls of the sirines*.

**Tactics:** The aboleth and chuul wait for characters to close within 20 feet of the shell on the floor of the chamber. The aboleth will attempt to enslave a strong character to help battle the others, then befuddle the party with its psionic abilities. It wades in to use tentacle attacks only if the chuul need assistance. The chuul focus on weaker-looking characters, hoping to grapple and paralyze them. Once a victim is paralyzed, the chuul will move to a fresh target. The aboleth and chuul all fight to the death.

**Aboleth:** CR 7; Huge aberration (aquatic); HD 8d8+40; hp 73; Init +1; Spd 10 ft., swim 60 ft.; AC 16, touch 9, flat-footed 15; Base Atk +6; Grp +22; Atk Tentacle +12 melee (1d6+8 plus slime); Full Atk 4 tentacles +12 melee (1d6+8 plus slime); Space/Reach 15 ft./10 ft.; 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 (the planes) +13, Listen +16, Spot +16, Swim +8; Alertness, Combat Casting, Iron Will.

**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 (CL 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.

**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.

**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. 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.

**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.

**Chuul (3):** CR 7; Large aberration (aquatic); HD 11d8+44; hp 91, 88, 80; Init +7; Spd 30 ft., swim 20 ft.; AC 22, touch 12, flat-footed 19; Base Atk +8; Grp +17; Atk Claw +12 melee (2d6+5); Full Atk 2 claws +12 melee (2d6+5); 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.

**Paralytic Tentacles (Ex):** 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. While held in the tentacles, paralyzed or not, a victim automatically takes 1d8+2 points of damage each round from the creature's mandibles.

**Aftermath:** The shell half-resting on the bottom holds several treasures, including the Elemental Key of Water. Lying within the shell are 15 pearls (200 gp each), a *horn of tritons*, a +2 *large metal shield of blinding* and a +2 *icy burst trident*. A DC 25 search of the sandy floor near the shell also reveals a *ring of protection* +2, a *ring of improved swimming* and a *rod of withering*.

The shell bobbing on the surface activates into the



gate to return to the fortress once the Elemental Key of Water comes within 10 feet. The runes along the edges of the shell light up, and the interior crackles to life as a gate, similar to the one the characters arrived in. Characters already in the shell when this happens are automatically teleported. Once the person bearing the Elemental Key of Water passes through the portal, the gate remains active for 5 minutes.

Characters passing through the gate are teleported back into the corridor leading to the water gate. Runes light up along the walls within 10 feet of the Elemental Key of Water, repeating the cryptic verse:

*And send the seas back down below  
To rage and boil, ebb and flow*

**Area 6-4 – The Path of Earth (EL 12):** When the characters step through the Earth Portal from the east side of the fortress, read the following:

*A wave of energy courses through your body as you pass through the portal. Your vision blurs momentarily, and you have the sensation of falling rapidly. Suddenly, your senses snap back to normal. You find yourself standing at the bottom of a rough, rocky cavern in the middle of a small crater filled with razor-sharp crystals. Runes along the edge of the crater match those of the door you passed through.*

*The sheer cliff walls are riddled with deep niches and studded with crystals that cast a soft white light over the chamber. A wide stone bridge spans 100 feet overhead, appearing to be roughly 20 feet wide. A soft, pulsing white glow is coming from something on top of the bridge.*

The Elemental Key of Earth lies on the top of the bridge, which is covered with sharp crystals. Four fiendish xorn patrol the room, always on the lookout for precious metals to consume.

Climbing the cliff walls requires a DC 15 Climb check, as there are ample handholds. The bridge is covered with rough crystals and is treated as hindering terrain. Anyone moving faster than half speed on the bridge must make a DC 10 Balance check or fall prone. If they are near the edge of the bridge, this increases to DC 15. Anyone falling prone on the bridge suffers 2d6 slashing damage from the crystals.

**Hidden Aid:** A DC 30 search check of the area immediately outside of the recessed crater reveals a small geode in two pieces, carefully set back together to appear whole. Inside the geode are two *rings of improved climbing*.

**Tactics:** The fiendish xorn lurk just inside the stone, two on each side of the bridge. They wait for characters to reach the bridge, then rush forward to attack. They focus on whichever character is carrying the most metallic items. The xorn try to surround and bull rush opponents off the bridge. The xorn fight to the death.

**Fiendish Xorn (4):** CR 8; Medium outsider (extraplanar, earth); HD 7d8+17; hp 61, 58, 53, 49; Init +0; Spd 20 ft., burrow 20 ft.; AC 24, touch 10, flat-footed 24; Base Atk +7; Grp +10; Atk Bite +10 melee (4d6+3); Full Atk Bite +10 melee (4d6+3) and 3 claws +8 melee (1d4+1); SA *Smite good* (1/day, +7 damage); SQ All-around vision, earth glide, damage reduction 5/bludgeoning and magic, dark-vision 60 ft., immunity to cold and fire, resistance to electricity 10, spell resistance 12, tremorsense 60 ft.; AL NE; SV Fort +7, Ref +5, Will +5; Str 17, Dex 10, Con 15, Int 10, Wis 14, Cha 5.

**Skills and Feats:** Hide +10, Intimidate +10, Knowledge (dungeoneering) +10, Listen +10, Move Silently +10, Search +10, Spot +10, Survival +10 (+12 following tracks or underground); Cleave, Multiattack, Power Attack, Toughness.

**All-Around Vision (Ex):** A xorn's symmetrically placed eyes allow it to look in any direction, providing a +4 racial bonus on Spot and Search checks. A xorn can't be flanked.

**Earth Glide (Ex):** A xorn 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 xorn flings the xorn back 30 feet, stunning the creature for 1 round unless it succeeds on a DC 15 Fortitude save.

**Aftermath:** There is a small recess in the center of the bridge which holds several treasures, including the Elemental Key of Earth. Lying within the recess are 15 diamonds (200 gp each), a +3 *keen dagger*, +2 *buckler of electricity resistance* and a *ring of feather fall*. A DC 25 search of the sharp crystals near the shell also reveals an *amulet of natural armor +2* and *circlet of persuasion*.

The recessed crater back on the floor of the cavern activates into the gate to return to the fortress once the Elemental Key of Earth comes within 10 feet. The runes along the edges of the crater light up, and the interior crackles to life as a gate, similar to the one the characters arrived in. Characters already in the crater when this happens are automatically teleported. Once the person bearing the Elemental Key of Earth passes through the portal, the gate remains active for 5 minutes.

Characters passing through the gate are teleported back into the corridor leading to the earth gate. Runes light up along the walls within 10 feet of the Elemental Key of Earth, repeating the cryptic verse:

*And thus the world is born anew  
The Devil Lords again to rule*

**Area 6-5 – The Path of Air (EL 11):** When the characters step through the Air Portal from the south side of the fortress, read the following:

*A wave of energy courses through your body as you pass through the portal. Your vision blurs momentarily, and you have the sensation of falling rapidly. Suddenly, your senses snap back to normal. You find yourself slowly sinking into a large, circular cloud drifting in the sky. Silvery runes puff and shift along the contour of the cloud.*

*Clear blue sky extends in every direction, with no sight of a land mass below. A soft breeze billows about the cloud. Similar clouds dot the sky in random places, while larger, thicker clouds lie overhead. One cloud in particular catches your eye – the largest cloud you see easily spans 80 feet and glows with a silver lining. The silver-lined cloud lies 100 feet above you.*

The clouds are sturdy but soft and can support infinite weight without collapsing. They are all considered hindering terrain. The Elemental Key of Air rests in the center of the cloud with the silver lining. A mob of air mephits patrols this area, wreaking havoc on any who tamper with their domain.

**Hidden Aid:** A DC 30 search of the area immediately outside of the character's point of arrival reveals a pair of *boots of levitation*.

**Special Conditions:** The clouds are substantial enough to attach a ladder or grappling hook, but all resulting Climb checks have their DCs increased by +4 due to the breeze and the sinking nature of the clouds. All Balance checks have their DCs increased by +4, as well.

A character falling off a cloud into the sky will fall indefinitely. There is a 10% chance per round of falling they will hit a cloud somewhere below them. Assume an average falling speed of 30 feet per round to determine how far a character falls. Despite the buoyancy and softness of the clouds, falls inflict lethal damage.

**Tactics:** The mephits start near the silver-lined cloud. They use their *blur* ability and then attack using their breath weapons from a distance. When a target is near the edge of a cloud or particularly vulnerable, the mephits use their *gust of wind* ability to try to force characters to fall. Mephits not under direct threat will summon additional mephits to aid them. All mephits fight to the death.

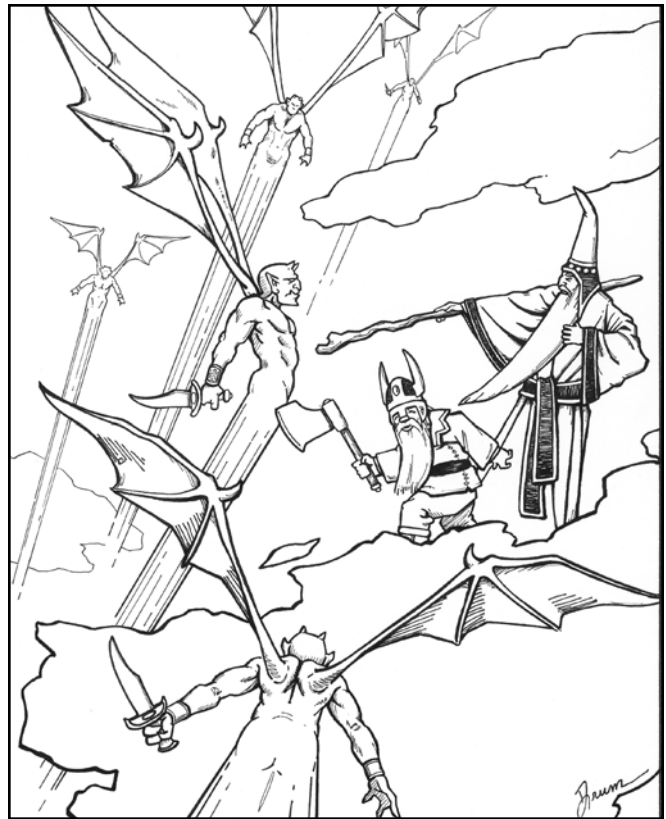
**Air Mephits (8):** CR 3; Small outsider (air, extraplanar); HD 3d8+3; hp 22, 21, 20, 20, 19, 18, 18, 17; Init +8; 30 ft., fly 60 ft.; AC 18, touch 15, flat-footed 14; Base Atk +3; Grp -1; Atk Claw +5 melee (1d3+1); Full Atk 2 claws +5 melee (1d3+1); SA Breath weapon, spell-like abilities, summon mephit; SQ Damage reduction 5/magic, darkvision 60 ft., fast healing 2; AL NE; SV Fort +4, Ref +7, Will +3; Str 13, Dex 18, Con 12, Int 6, Wis 11, Cha 15.

**Skills and Feats:** Bluff +8, Escape Artist +9, Hide +13, Diplomacy +4, Disguise +2 (+4 acting), Intimidate +4, Listen +6, Move Silently +9, Spot +6, Use Rope +3 (+5 with bindings); Dodge, Improved Initiative.

**Breath Weapon (Su):** 15-foot cone of dust and grit, damage 1d8, Reflex DC 13 half.

**Spell-Like Abilities:** Once per hour an air mephit can surround itself with vapor, duplicating the effect of a *blur* spell (CL 3rd). Once per day it can use *gust of wind* (DC 15, CL 6th).

**Fast Healing (Ex):** An air mephit heals only if exposed to moving air, be it a breeze, a draft, a spell effect, or even the mephit fanning itself. This is always the case in this domain, unless the party can



somehow prevent it.

**Summon Mephit (Sp):** Once per day, a mephit can attempt to summon another mephit of the same variety, much as though casting a *summon monster* spell but with only a 25% chance of success. On a failure, no creature answers the summons that day. A mephit that has just been summoned cannot use its own summon ability for 1 hour. This ability is the equivalent of a 2nd-level spell.

**Aftermath:** There is a small circle of glowing silver runes in the center of the silver-lined cloud which holds several treasures, including the Elemental Key of Air. Lying within the runic circle are 15 sapphires (200 gp each), a +2 *longbow of seeking*, +2 *mithral chain shirt* and a *wand of call lightning* (30 charges). A DC 25 search of the fluffy cloud near the runic writing also reveals a *periapt of wisdom* +2 and an *efficient quiver*.

The runic circle on the top of the cloud where the party originally arrived activates into the gate to return to the fortress once the Elemental Key of Air comes within 10 feet. The runes along the edges of the cloud light up, and the interior crackles to life as a gate, similar to the one the characters arrived in. Characters already in the cloud when this happens are automatically teleported. Once the person bearing the Elemental Key of Air passes through the portal, the gate remains active for 5 minutes.

Characters passing through the gate are teleported

back into the corridor leading to the air gate. Runes light up along the walls within 10 feet of the Elemental Key of Air, repeating the cryptic verse:

*Sky and earth both split asunder  
Set aside for void to plunder*

**Area 6-6 – The Path of Fire (EL 12):** When the characters step through the Fire Portal from the west side of the fortress, read the following:

*A wave of energy courses through your body as you pass through the portal. Your vision blurs momentarily, and you have the sensation of falling rapidly. Suddenly, your senses snap back to normal. You find yourself standing in the middle of a large piece of obsidian floating on a sea of molten lava. Silvery runes glow along the edges of the obsidian.*

*It is oppressively hot. Lava bubbles and spews around you. Dozens of other floating sheets of obsidian dot the surface of the lava floe, each bobbing 10 to 15 feet from the nearest piece. Against the haze of the heat, you can see a bright red glow coming from a sheet of obsidian some 100 feet away.*

The Elemental Key of Fire rests on a similar obsidian shelf 100 feet from the character's starting point. A noble salamander and several flamebrother salamanders protect the key.

**Hidden Aid:** A DC 30 Search check of the obsidian shelf the characters start on reveals a *major ring of fire resistance* fashioned from obsidian.

**Special Conditions:** The domain is intensely hot and will create problems for parties who are not adequately protected. The domain is considered extreme heat. Extreme heat deals lethal damage. Breathing air in these temperatures deals 1d6 points of damage per minute (no save). In addition, a character must make a Fortitude save every 5 minutes (DC 15, +1 per previous check) or take 1d4 points of nonlethal damage. Those wearing heavy clothing or any sort of armor take a –4 penalty on their saves. In addition, those wearing metal armor or coming into contact with very hot metal are affected as if by a *heat metal* spell.

Coming into contact with the lava carries its own risks. The lava deals 2d6 points of damage per round of exposure. Total immersion (such as falling into the lava) deals 20d6 points of damage per round. Damage from the lava continues for 1d3 rounds after exposure ceases, but this additional damage is only half of that dealt during actual contact.

**Tactics:** The noble salamander will use *wall of fire* to hem in characters or make traversing the obsidian shelves more difficult. The noble salamander will summon additional flamebrothers when the party is split among several shelves to surround characters. The flamebrothers team up against spell casters and attempt to flank. The salamanders fight to the death.

**Flamebrother Salamander (3):** CR 3; Small outsider (extraplanar, fire); HD 4d8+8; hp 35, 31, 30; Init +1; Spd 20 ft.; AC 19, touch 12, flat-footed 18; Base Atk +1; Grp +1; Atk Spear +6 melee (1d6+1/x3 plus 1d6 fire); Full Atk Spear +6 melee (1d6+1/x3 plus 1d6 fire) and tail slap +4 melee (1d4 plus 1d6 fire); SA Constrict (1d4 plus 1d6 fire), heat, improved grab; SQ Darkvision 60 ft., immunity to fire, vulnerability to cold; AL LE; SV Fort +6, Ref +5, Will +6; Str 12, Dex 13, Con 14, Int 14, Wis 15, Cha 13.

**Skills and Feats:** Craft (blacksmithing) +8, Hide +12, Listen +11, Move Silently +6, Spot +11; Alertness, Multiattack.

**Noble Salamander:** CR 10; Large outsider (extraplanar, fire); HD 15d8+45; hp 131; Init +1; 20 ft.; AC 198, touch 10, flat-footed 17; Base Atk +15; Grp +25; Atk +3 longspear +23 melee (1d8+9/x3 plus 1d8 fire); Full Atk +3 longspear +23/+18/+13 melee (1d8+9/x3 plus 1d8 fire) and tail slap +18 melee (2d8+3 plus 1d8 fire); Space/Reach 10 ft./10 ft. (20 ft. with tail or longspear); SA Constrict (2d8+3 plus 1d8 fire), heat, improved grab, spell-like abilities; SQ Damage reduction 15/magic, darkvision 60 ft., immunity to fire, vulnerability to cold; AL LE; SV Fort +12, Ref +10, Will +11; Str 22, Dex 13, Con 16, Int 16, Wis 15, Cha 15.

**Skills and Feats:** Bluff +19, Craft (blacksmithing) +25, Diplomacy +4, Hide +15, Intimidate +4, Listen +13, Move Silently +17, Spot +13; Alertness, Cleave, Great Cleave, Multiattack, Power Attack, Skill Focus (Craft [blacksmithing]).

**Heat (Ex):** A salamander generates so much heat that its mere touch deals additional fire damage. Salamanders' metallic weapons also conduct this heat.

**Spell-Like Abilities** (noble salamander only): 3/day – *burning hands* (DC 13), *fireball* (DC 15), *flaming sphere* (DC 14), *wall of fire* (DC 16); 1/day – *dispel magic*, *summon monster VII* (1d4+1 flamebrother salamanders). CL 15th.

**Aftermath:** There is a small circle of glowing red runes in the center of the obsidian shelf housing the Elemental Key of Fire. Lying within the runic circle are 15 rubies (200 gp each), a +2 *keen falchion*, +1 *banded mail* and a *wand of burning hands* (30 charges, CL 10th). A DC 25 search of the sulfurous vents near the runic circle also reveals *gauntlets of ogre power* and a *ring of sustenance*.

The runic circle on the obsidian shelf where the party originally arrived activates into the gate to return to the fortress once the Elemental Key of Fire comes within 10 feet. The runes along the edges of the shelf light up, and the interior crackles to life as a gate, similar to the one the characters arrived in. Characters already in the obsidian shelf when this happens are automatically teleported. Once the person bearing the Elemental Key of Fire passes through the portal, the gate remains active for 5 minutes.

Characters passing through the gate are teleported back into the corridor leading to the fire gate. Runes light up along the walls within 10 feet of the Elemental Key of Fire, repeating the cryptic verse:

*Fire raining from the sky  
To cleanse the world as fate draws nigh*

**Area 6-7 – The Observatory Entrance (EL 10):** Once the characters have successfully activated the lock on the top of the fortress in area 6-1, read the following aloud:

*As the last Elemental Key clicks into place, you hear a grinding sound of stone on stone, and the entire fortress begins to shake. The grinding noise grows louder and louder, and the runes surrounding the surface of the fortress start to glow brighter and brighter.*

*Suddenly, there is an enormous flash of light and a dizzying sensation of falling. The fortress is nowhere to be seen, only the shimmering runes suspended in inky blackness. The heavens still lie above you, but nothing except darkness lies below. You slowly realize that instead of falling, you're actually moving up – racing incredibly fast toward the darkened sky.*

*Constellations shift and rotate before your eyes, like the tumblers of a celestial combination lock. The stars part to either side as you approach, and then your ascent ends. Below you, the circle of runes still glows ominously, as the curtain of stars draws closed once more. The grinding noise has stopped.*

*You find yourself in a small room with smooth walls, floor and ceiling. Each surface shimmers like the night sky itself. The room is 40 feet wide and 60 feet long. On the narrower wall opposite your point of entrance are two enormous black doors. A silver crossbar is set across the doors, bound in a heavy lock.*

*As you finally gather your bearings, you notice demonic forms slinking toward you from the shadowy corners of the room. One of the fig-*



*ures barks out orders to the others in a voice that sounds like rusted metal.*

*“Stop them! They must not disturb the ritual! They must not reach Skullshank!”*

This room is a small antechamber leading to the actual observatory. Bearded devils guard the antechamber.

**Tactics:** The bearded devils position themselves to prevent characters from reaching the doors. They flank and frenzy to gang up on weak or injured opponents to take them down as quickly as possible. They fight to the death.

**Bearded Devils (6):** CR 5; Medium outsider (evil, extraplanar, lawful); HD 6d8+18; hp 52, 50, 49, 49, 47, 42 each; Init +6; Spd 40 ft.; AC 19, touch 12, flat-footed 17; Base Atk +6; Grp +8; Atk Glaive +9 melee (1d10+3 plus infernal wound) or claw +8 melee (1d6+2); Full Atk Glaive +9/+4 melee (1d10+3 plus infernal wound) or 2 claws +8 melee (1d6+2); SA Infernal wound, beard, battle frenzy; SQ Damage reduction 5/silver or good, darkvision 60 ft., immunity to fire and poison, resistance to acid 10 and cold 10, see in darkness, spell resistance 17, telepathy 100 ft.; AL LE; SV Fort +8, Ref +7, Will +5; Str 15, Dex 15, Con 17, Int 6, Wis 10, Cha 10.

**Skills and Feats:** Climb +11, Diplomacy +2, Hide +11, Listen +9, Move Silently +9, Sense

Motive +9, Spot +9; Improved Initiative, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (glaive).

*Spell-Like Abilities:* At will – *greater teleport* (self plus 50 pounds of objects only). CL 12th.

*Infernal Wound (Su):* The damage a bearded devil deals with its glaive causes a persistent wound. An injured creature loses 2 additional hit points each round. The wound does not heal naturally and resists healing spells. The continuing hit point loss can be stopped by a DC 16 Heal check, a *cure* spell, or a *heal* spell. However, a character attempting to cast a *cure* spell or a *heal* spell on a creature damaged by a bearded devil's glaive must succeed on a DC 16 caster level check, or the spell has no effect on the injured character. A successful Heal check automatically stops the continuing hit point loss as well as restoring hit points.

*Beard (Ex):* If a bearded devil hits a single opponent with both claw attacks, it automatically hits with its beard. The affected creature takes 1d8+2 points of damage and must succeed on a DC 16 Fortitude save or be infected with a vile disease known as devil chills (incubation period 1d4 days, damage 1d4 Str). Damage is dealt each day until the afflicted creature succeeds on three consecutive Fortitude saves, the disease is cured magically, or the creature dies.

*Battle Frenzy (Ex):* Twice per day, a bearded devil can work itself into a frenzy similar to the barbarian's rage (+4 Strength, +4 Constitution, +2 morale bonus on Will saves, –2 AC penalty). The frenzy lasts for 6 rounds, and the bearded devil suffers no ill effects afterward.

**The Black Doors:** The door leading to area 6-8 is trapped and locked. The silver key from the erinyes in area 6-1 will open the lock but does not bypass the trap on the door. If the characters do not have the silver key, a DC 30 Open Lock check will unlock the door. The trap is set into the doorway itself, not the lock. The trap triggers each time a good-aligned being passes through the doorway. The trap has no effect on evil or neutral beings.

**Energy Drain Trap:** CR 10; magic device; spell trigger (*detect good*); automatic reset; Atk +8 ranged touch; spell effect (*energy drain*, 17th-level wizard, 2d4 negative levels for 24 hours, DC 23 Fortitude save negates); Search DC 34; Disable Device DC 34.

**Area 6-8 – The Ritual Observatory (EL 16):** Once the characters open the doors to the ritual observatory, read the following:

*The black doors glide noiselessly open, parting to reveal an immense room set among the stars themselves! The oily blackness of the night sky stretches endlessly overhead. The room itself is 100 feet across and 100 feet wide.*

*Dominating the room is a monstrous contraption of metal tubes, lenses and gears. The Oculum Infernae stands nearly ten feet tall and occupies an immense dais in the center of the room. On the floor, four colored wedges surround the dais, bearing the same colors as the Elemental Keys – light blue as the air, red for fire, green-blue for water and dark brown for earth. Narrow tile pathways lead between the wedges to the base of the dais.*

*The telescope swings around slowly, training on another section of the sky. As the platform swivels, you see a small, hunched figure atop the dais. The weathered face and withered arm of Skullshank, the foul summoner, gazes down at you from his perch.*

*“You are too late,” the gnomish summoner cackles. “Despite your best efforts, you have failed. My army comes to me as we speak.” Skullshank sweeps his hand skyward, constellations lighting up as his hand passes by them. Runes begin to glow along the floor of the room.*

The characters must defeat Skullshank before he summons his army of devils. Reaching the dais may prove difficult, as the elemental sections of the floor house terrible surprises. The *Oculum Infernae* augments Skullshank's spells, making them even more powerful.

**The Oculum Infernae:** Any conjuration spell cast by Skullshank while he is on the dais with the *Oculum Infernae* is cast at +1 caster level and functions as if cast using the following metamagic feats: Enlarge Spell, Extend Spell, Silent Spell, Still Spell. These effects only benefit Skullshank, since he has calibrated the *Oculum Infernae* to match his talents. The telescope must be destroyed or disabled with a DC 30 Disable Device check to counter these benefits.

**Oculum Infernae:** 2 ft. thick; hardness 8; hp 100; Break DC 35; Disable Device DC 30. Bludgeoning weapons deal double damage to the *Oculum Infernae*.

**The Elemental Wards:** The four sections of the

floor corresponding to the four elements each have a different effect on any living creature that comes into contact with that section. If a character makes his initial saving throw versus a particular section, he is immune to that effect for the next 24 hours.

**Water-Bound Floor:** CR 10; magic device; manual trigger; constant effect; automatic hit; special effect (DC 22 Fortitude save, or victim's lungs fill with water; considered nauseated; may attempt new DC 22 Fort save each round as full-round action to cough up water; if not successful within 2d4 rounds, falls unconscious, then in following round drops to -1 hit points and is dying, then in third round is dead); Search DC 10; Disable Device DC 35.

**Earth-Bound Floor:** CR 10; magic device; manual trigger; constant effect; spell effect (*flesh to stone*, CL 15th, DC 19 Fortitude negates); Search DC 10; Disable Device DC 35.

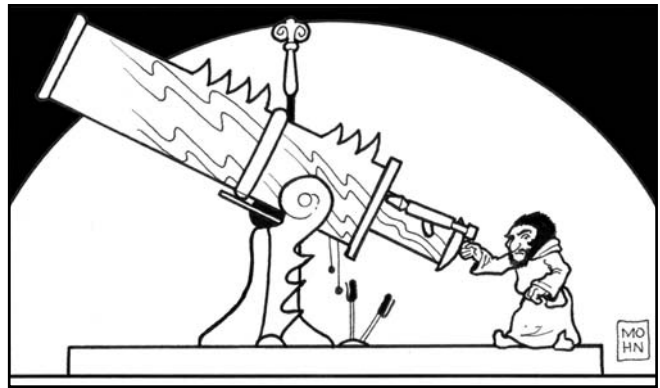
**Air-Bound Floor:** CR 10; magic device; manual trigger; constant effect; spell effect (*etherealness*, CL 17th, DC 22 Fortitude save negates); Search DC 10; Disable Device DC 35.

**Fire-Bound Floor:** CR 10; magic device; manual trigger; constant effect; spell effect (*flame strike*, CL 15th, 15d6 damage, DC 19 Reflex save for half damage); Search DC 10; Disable Device DC 35.

**Tactics:** Skullshank will remain within the protection of the dais and continue to summon as long as possible. The first round he casts *summon monster VIII* to summon 1d4+1 bone devils to protect himself and the *Oculus Infernae*. He will use *forcecage* to trap anyone flying or getting close to the dais, and then summon a bone devil or chain devil into the forcecage to fight the unfortunate character. When possible, he will counter spells from spell casters using his Improved Counterspell feat. Skullshank will cast *grease* on the paths between the elemental traps or on the stairs of the dais to impede character progress.

If forced off the dais, Skullshank will attempt to incapacitate spell casters with his spells. The summoned devils will occupy melee characters. Skullshank and his summoned servants fight to the death. Keep in mind that creatures summoned while Skullshank is on the dais last for 32 rounds (+1 caster level, duration doubled by Extend Spell effect).

**Skullshank the Summoner, gnome Wiz15:** CR 15; Small humanoid (gnome); HD 15d4+15; hp 68; Init +5; Spd 20 ft.; AC 23, touch 18, flat-footed 20; Base Atk +8; Grp +4; Atk +11 *shocking burst dagger of brilliant energy* (1d3+3 and 1d6 electricity); Full Atk +11/+6 *shocking burst dagger of brilliant energy* (1d3+3 and 1d6 electricity); SA Spells; SQ Low-light vision, gnome



traits, spells; AL LE; SV Fort +8, Ref +12, Will +15; Str 11, Dex 17, Con 13, Int 22, Wis 14, Cha 12.

**Skills and Feats:** Concentration +19, Decipher Script +24, Knowledge (arcana) +24, Knowledge (history) +24, Knowledge (the planes) +24, Listen +12, Search +15, Spellcraft +24, Spot +12; Augment Summoning, Greater Spell Focus (conjunction), Improved Counterspell, Iron Will, Lightning Reflexes, Scribe Scroll, Spell Focus (conjunction).

**Arcane spells** (4/6/6/5/5/5/4/2/1; save DC = 16 + spell level +1 for Illusion or +2 for Conjunction): 0 – *acid splash*‡, *detect magic* (x2), *light*; 1st – *grease*‡ (x2), *obscuring mist*‡, *ray of enfeeblement* (x2), *unseen servant*‡; 2nd – *acid arrow*‡ (x2), *blur*\*, *invisibility*\*, *mirror image*\*, *web*; 3rd – *displacement*\*, *sleet storm*‡, *stinking cloud*‡ (x2); 4th – *black tentacles*‡ (x2), *greater invisibility*\*, *rainbow pattern*\*, *solid fog*‡; 5th – *cloudkill*‡, *summon monster V*‡ (x3), *waves of fatigue*; 6th – *acid fog*‡, *mass bull's strength*, *summon monster VI*‡ (x2); 7th – *forcecage*, *summon monster VII*‡; 8th – *summon monster VIII*‡. \*Indicates illusion spell. ‡Indicates conjunction spell.

**Possessions:** *amulet of natural armor* +2, *boots of teleportation*, *bracers of armor* +5, *cloak of resistance* +2, *ring of protection* +2, *ring of greater fire resistance*, +3 *shocking burst dagger of brilliant energy*, *wand of enervation* (15 charges).

**Note:** The bone devil and chain devil statistics include the bonus from Skullshank's Augment Summoning feat.

**Bone Devil:** CR 9; Large outsider (evil, extraplanar, lawful); HD 10d8+70; hp 112; Init +9; Spd 40 ft.; AC 25, touch 14, flat-footed 20; Base Atk +10; Grp +21; Atk Bite +16 melee (1d8+7); Full Atk Bite +16 melee (1d8+7) and 2 claws +14 melee (1d4+4) and sting +14 melee (3d4+3 plus poison); Space/Reach 10 ft./10 ft.; SA Spell-like abilities, fear aura, poison (DC 22 Fort resists, 1d6 Str/2d6 Str); SQ Damage reduction 10/good, darkvision 60 ft., immunity to fire and poison, resistance to acid 10 and cold 10, see in darkness, spell resistance 21, telepathy 100 ft.; AL LE; SV Fort +14, Ref +12, Will +11; Str 25, Dex



21, Con 25, Int 14, Wis 14, Cha 14.

*Skills and Feats:* Bluff +15, Concentration +18, Diplomacy +6, Disguise +2 (+4 acting), Hide +14, Intimidate +17, Knowledge (any one) +15, Listen +17, Move Silently +18, Search +15, Sense Motive +15, Spot +17, Survival +2 (+4 following tracks); Alertness, Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Multiattack.

*Fear Aura (Su):* Bone devils can radiate a 5-foot-radius fear aura as a free action. Affected creatures must succeed on a DC 17 Will save or be affected as though by a fear spell (CL 7th). A creature that successfully saves cannot be affected again by the same bone devil's aura for 24 hours. Other devils are immune to the aura.

*Spell-Like Abilities:* At will – *greater teleport* (self plus 50 pounds of objects only), *dimensional anchor*, *fly*, *invisibility* (self only), *major image* (DC 15), wall of ice. CL 12th.

**Chain Devil:** CR 6; Medium outsider (evil, extraplanar, lawful); HD 8d8+32; hp 68; Init +6; Spd 30 ft.; AC 20, touch 12, flat-footed 18; Base Atk +8; Grp +12; Atk Chain +12 melee (2d4+4/19–20); Full Atk 2 chains +12 melee (2d4+4/19–20); Space/Reach 5 ft./5 ft. (10 ft. with chains); SA Dancing chains, unnerving gaze; SQ Damage reduction 5/silver or good, darkvision 60 ft., immunity to cold, regeneration 2, spell resistance 18; AL LE; SV Fort +10, Ref +8, Will +6; Str 19, Dex 15, Con 19, Int 6, Wis 10, Cha 12.

*Skills and Feats:* Climb +13, Craft (blacksmithing) +17, Escape Artist +13, Intimidate +12, Listen +13, Spot +13, Use Rope +2 (+4 with bindings); Alertness, Improved Critical (chain), Improved Initiative.

*Dancing Chains (Su):* A chain devil's most awesome attack is its ability to control up to four chains within 20 feet as a standard action, making the chains dance or move as it wishes. In addition, a chain devil can increase these chains' length by up to 15 feet and cause them to sprout razor-edged barbs. These chains attack as effectively as the devil itself. If a chain is in another creature's possession, the creature can attempt a DC 15 Will save to break the chain devil's power over that chain. If the save is successful, the chain devil cannot attempt to control that particular chain again for 24 hours or until the chain leaves the creature's possession. A chain devil can climb chains it controls at its normal speed without making Climb checks.

*Unnerving Gaze (Su):* Range 30 ft., Will DC 15 negates. A chain devil can make its face resemble one of an opponent's departed loved ones or bitter enemies. Those who fail their saves take a -2 penalty on attack rolls for 1d3 rounds.

*Regeneration (Ex):* Chain devils take normal damage from silvered weapons, good-aligned weapons, and spells or effects with the good

descriptor. A chain devil that loses a piece of its body regrows it in 2d6x10 minutes. Holding the severed member against the stump enables it to reattach instantly.

**Aftermath:** With the destruction of Skullshank, the characters have accomplished a great deed. The observatory holds countless ledgers and books on conjuration magic. These books count as masterwork items and provide a +2 competence bonus to Knowledge (arcana) or Knowledge (the planes) checks when a character has sufficient time to use them as a reference.

If the *Oculum Infernae* is still intact, a DC 25 Use Magic Device check allows a character to operate the telescope and determine where they are in the cosmos, and plot a course back to their home. If the *Oculum Infernae* has been destroyed, a DC 35 Use Magic Device or Decipher Script check allows characters to cobble information together from the numerous charts, maps and notes in the observatory to return home. Regardless of the means used, the net result is similar to *plane shift* cast by a 15th level caster.

## Rewards

Award the following bonuses to the characters for achieving these significant goals.

Recovering the Elemental Keys without a character death (per key)	+250 XP
Locating the hidden items at the portal entry of the elemental zones (per zone)	+100 XP
Solving the Elemental Key riddle in area 6-1 without setting off the trap	+500 XP
Destroying the <i>Oculum Infernae</i>	+1000 XP
Defeating Skullshank the Summoner	+1000 XP

# Appendix 1: New Items and Monsters

## New Magic Items

**Bag of Endless Rats:** This simple, well-worn cloth sack houses a portal directly into a plane of vermin. When the drawstrings are closed, the sack is inert. When the drawstrings are opened, however, the sack produces an unlimited supply of rats. Each round, 1d4+1 normal rats are generated. There is a 10% chance per rat generated that it will be a dire rat. Nothing can be placed in the sack, since once the sack is opened the stream of rats is constant. If the sack is turned inside out, a massive explosion will be heard, inflicting 6d6 sonic damage to anyone within 20 feet and summoning 10d4 rats. Afterward, the sack is rendered useless.

Moderate conjuration; CL 5th; Craft Wondrous Item, *summon nature's ally III*; Price 30,000 gp; Weight 1 lb.

**Blackened Pearl of Ages:** This strange magic item functions somewhat like a *pearl of power*, but from a different standpoint. Once per day, an arcane spell caster can call upon the power of the pearl as a free action to increase his effective caster level by +1d4 to determine the effects of a spell. For example, a 3rd level wizard invoking the pearl can cast a *magic missile* spell and add 1-4 levels, making it effectively cast as if by a 4th through 7th level wizard. After each use, there is a 5% noncumulative chance the pearl will crack and become useless.

Strong transmutation, CL 12th; Craft Wondrous Item, creator must be 12th level, *mnemonic enhancer*; price: 21,000 gp.



## New Monsters

### THORNBLOOD

#### Thornblood, 1st-Level Warrior Medium Plant

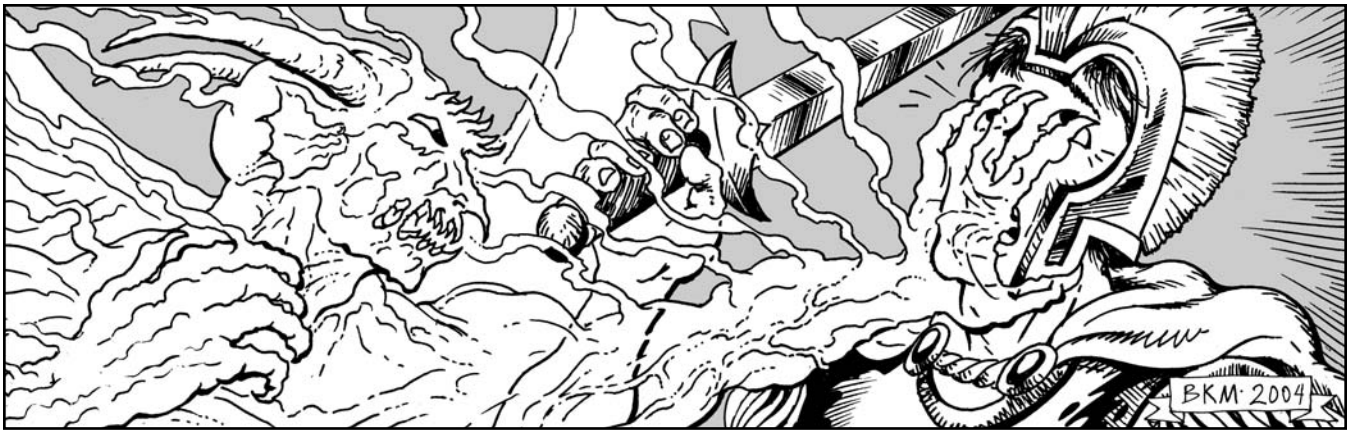
<b>Hit Dice:</b>	1d8 (5 hp)
<b>Initiative:</b>	+0
<b>Speed:</b>	30 ft. (6 squares)
<b>Armor Class:</b>	10, touch 10, flat-footed 10
<b>Base Attack/Grp:</b>	+1/+0
<b>Attack:</b>	Quarterstaff +0 melee (1d4-1)
<b>Full Attack:</b>	Quarterstaff +0 melee (1d4-1)
<b>Space/Reach:</b>	5 ft./5 ft.
<b>Special Attacks:</b>	–
<b>Special Qualities:</b>	Fast healing 3, darkvision 60 ft., plant traits
<b>Saves:</b>	Fort +2, Ref +2, Will +1
<b>Abilities:</b>	Str 8, Dex 10, Con 11, Int 11, Wis 13, Cha 8
<b>Skills:</b>	Climb +1, Handle Animal +1, Jump +1, Swim +1
<b>Feats:</b>	Lightning Reflexes
<b>Environment:</b>	Any wilderness
<b>Organization:</b>	Solitary, pair, band (3–10), village (11–30), or town (31–100)
<b>Challenge Rating:</b>	1/2
<b>Treasure:</b>	Standard
<b>Alignment:</b>	Usually neutral
<b>Advancement:</b>	By character class
<b>Level Adjustment:</b>	–

Thornbloods are sentient plant creatures, having thin, delicate features composed entirely of thick leaves and ivy. From a distance, a thornblood might be mistaken for an elf, but their green skin and obvious leafy appearance reveal their true nature. Thornbloods rarely reach six feet in height and tend to be very thin and frail-looking, despite their plant nature. They generally choose professions which keep them close to the earth and other plants, and they enjoy all manner of hobbies and crafts related to nature.

### THORNBLOOD CHARACTERS

Thornblood characters possess the following racial traits.

- -2 Strength, -2 Charisma, +2 Wisdom
- A thornblood's base land speed is 30 feet.
- Fast healing 3
- Darkvision out to 60 feet



- Considered a plant subtype and possesses the following plant 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
- Automatic Language: Common. Bonus Languages: Sylvan, Elf, Terran
- Favored class: Druid
- Level Adjustment +3

## VAPOR DEMON

**Medium Elemental (Air, Extraplanar)**

<b>Hit Dice:</b>	8d8+8 (48 hp)
<b>Initiative:</b>	+9
<b>Speed:</b>	30 ft. (6 squares), fly 40 ft. (perfect)
<b>Armor Class:</b>	21 (+5 Dex, +6 natural), touch 15, flat-footed 16
<b>Base Attack/Grp:</b>	+8/+10
<b>Attack:</b>	Claw +10 melee (1d6+2 and poison)
<b>Full Attack:</b>	2 claws +10 melee (1d6+2) and 2 claws +5 melee (1d6+2)
<b>Space/Reach:</b>	5 ft./5 ft.
<b>Special Attacks:</b>	Poison, inhalation
<b>Special Qualities:</b>	Area vulnerability, darkvision 60 ft., elemental traits, vapor form
<b>Saves:</b>	Fort +6, Ref +11, Will +7
<b>Abilities:</b>	Str 15, Dex 20, Con 13, Int 12, Wis 12, Cha 11
<b>Skills:</b>	Hide +15, Listen +8, Move Silently +20, Spot +8
<b>Feats:</b>	Improved Initiative, Multiattack, Weapon Finesse
<b>Environment:</b>	Elemental Plane of Air
<b>Organization:</b>	Solitary, pair, or fog (3–6)
<b>Challenge Rating:</b>	7
<b>Treasure:</b>	None

**Alignment:** Always chaotic evil  
**Advancement:** 9–12 HD (Large); 13–18 HD (Huge)  
**Level Adjustment:** –

Vapor demons are incredibly quick and nimble creatures from the Plane of Air composed of semi-solid poisonous mist. They have winged and horned features that trail off into wisps of vapor. They stand about 6 feet tall and weigh 10 pounds. Vapor demons speak Abyssal and Auran.

### COMBAT

A vapor demon fights with its poisonous claws or tries to force targets to inhale its poisonous form.

*Area vulnerability (Ex):* Due to its semi-solid form, a vapor demon takes 150% damage from any area-based damage effect.

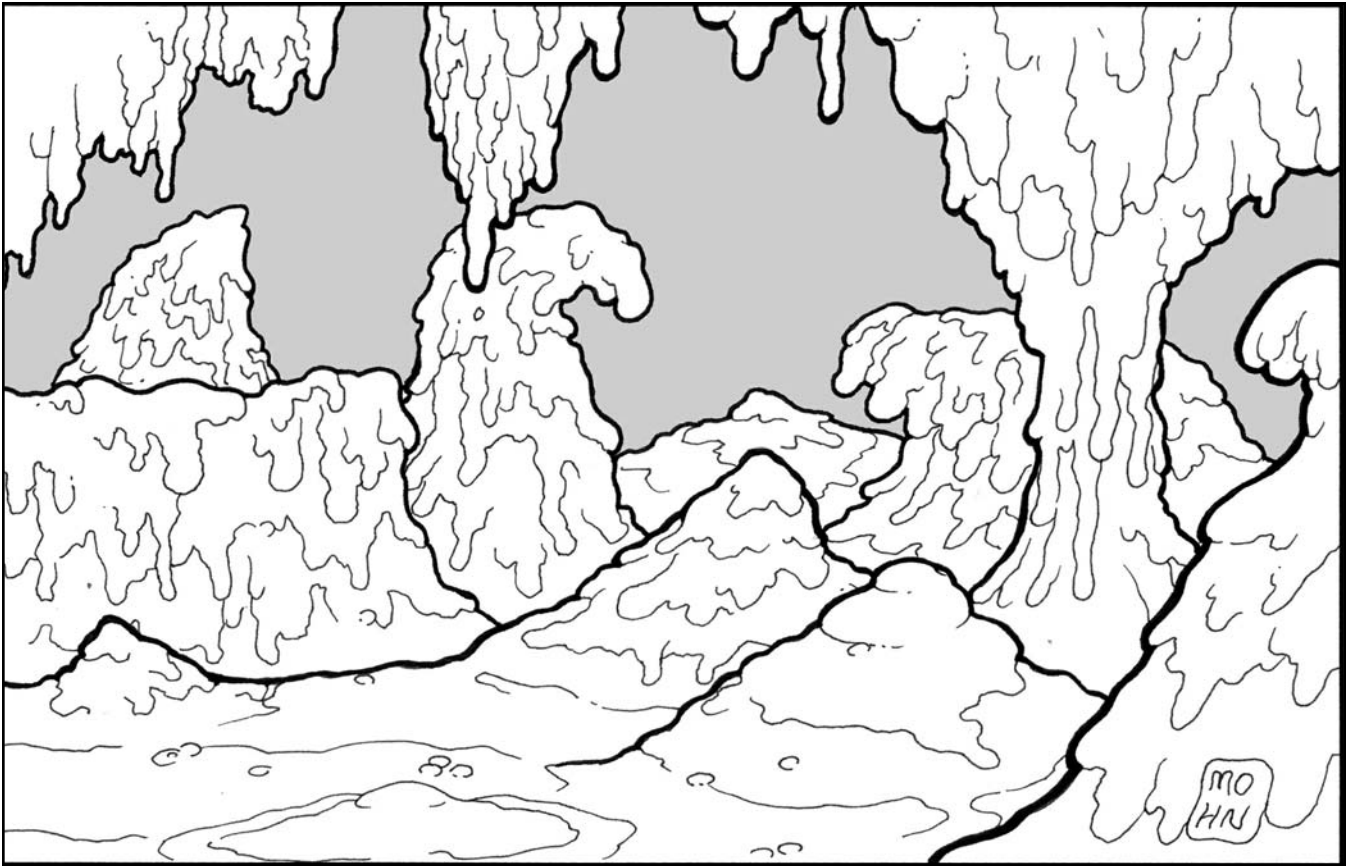
*Inhalation (Ex):* A vapor demon in vapor form (see below) can engulf opponents by moving on top of them. It simply fills the air around one Medium or smaller opponent without provoking an attack of opportunity. The target must succeed on a DC 13 Fortitude save or inhale part of the creature. The save DC is Constitution-based. The vapors inside the victim intensify the effects of the demon's usual poison, automatically inflicting poison damage each round. An affected creature can attempt another Fortitude save each subsequent round to cough out the vapors.

*Poison (Ex):* Injury, Fortitude DC 13, initial and secondary damage 1d4 Con. The save DC is Constitution-based.

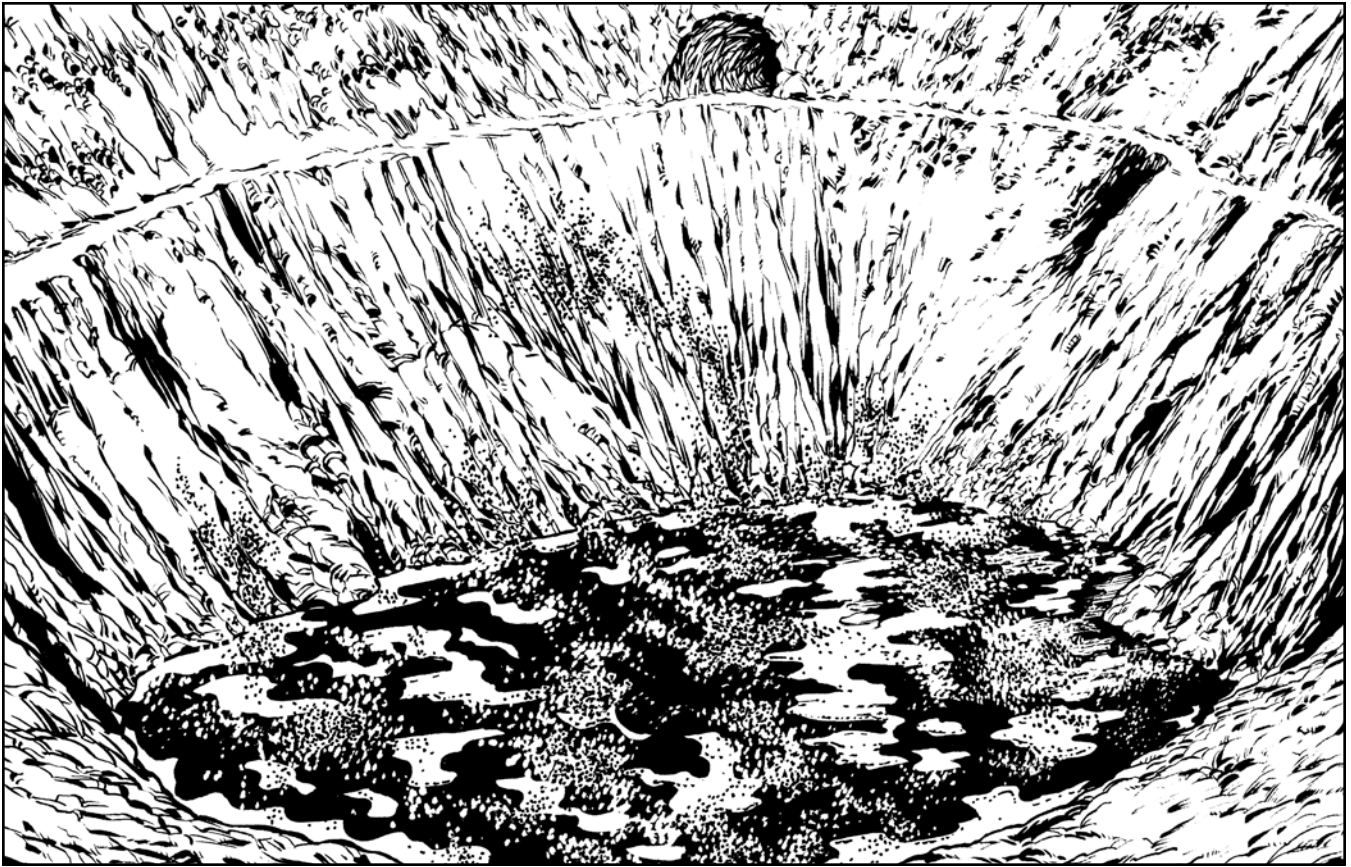
*Vapor Form (Su):* The vapor demon exists only in its semi-solid misty form. Its misty form provides the vapor demon with concealment (20% miss chance). In addition, slashing and piercing weapons inflict only half damage.

*Skills:* Vapor demons have a +4 racial bonus on Hide and Move Silently checks.

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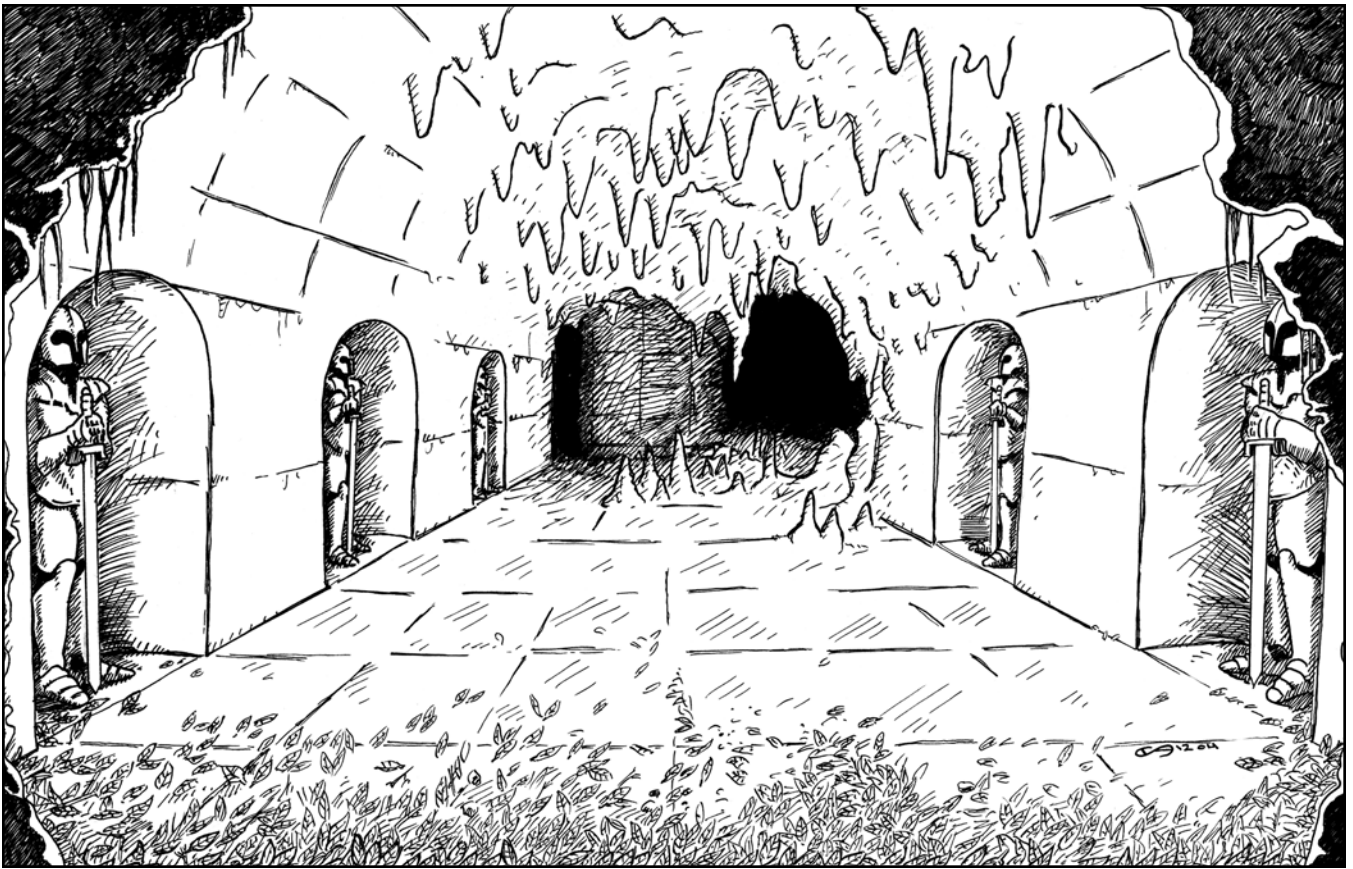
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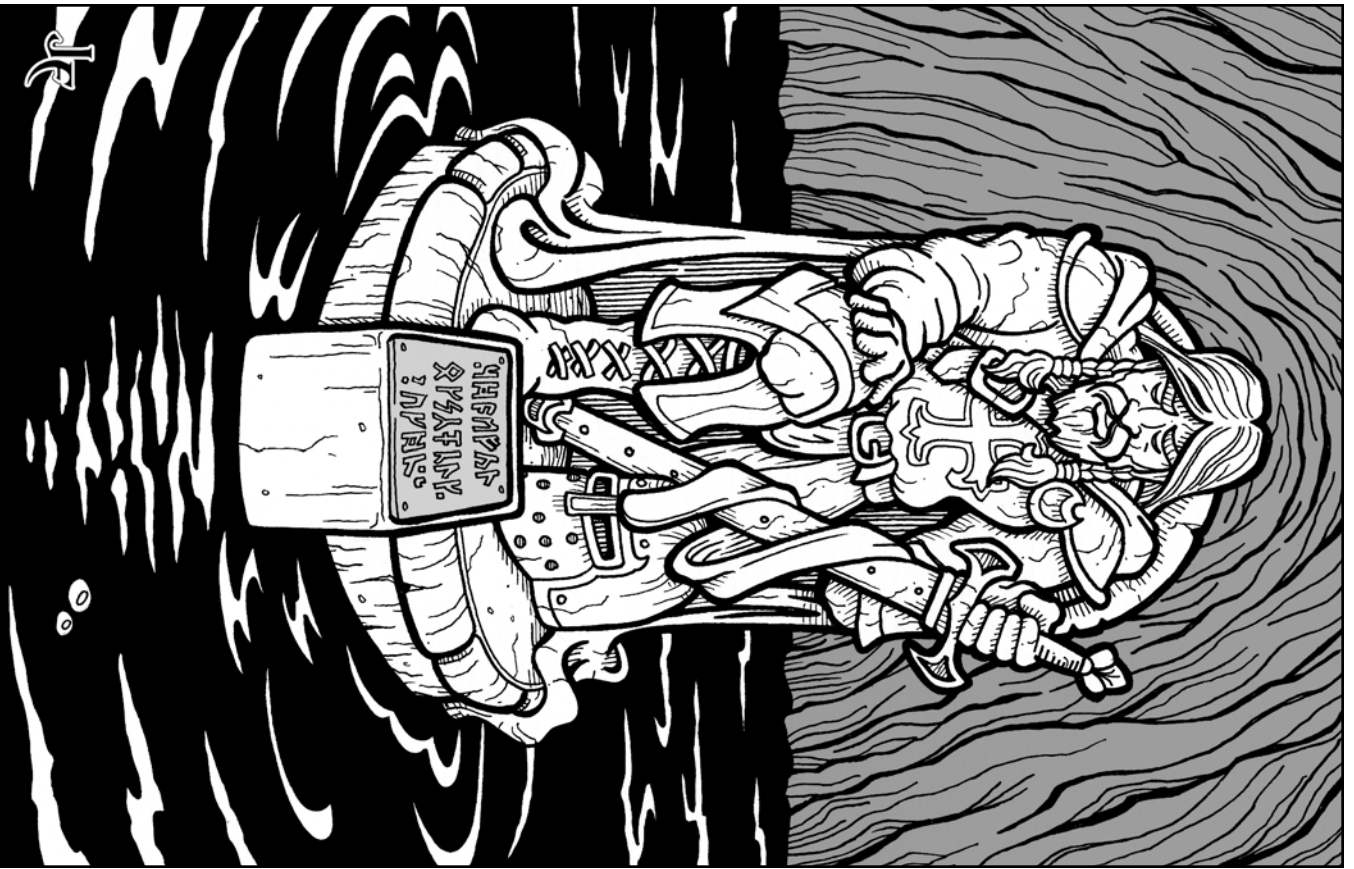


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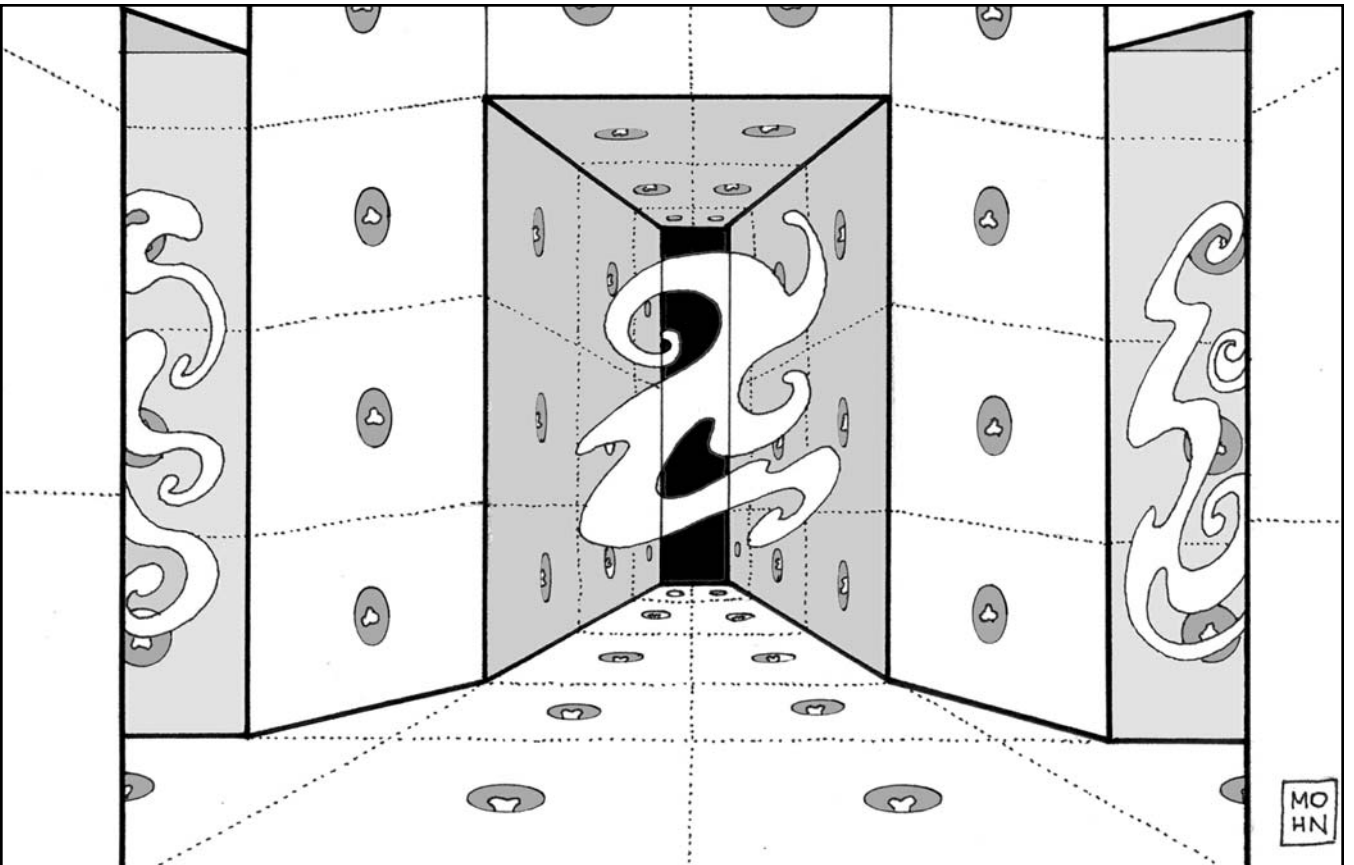




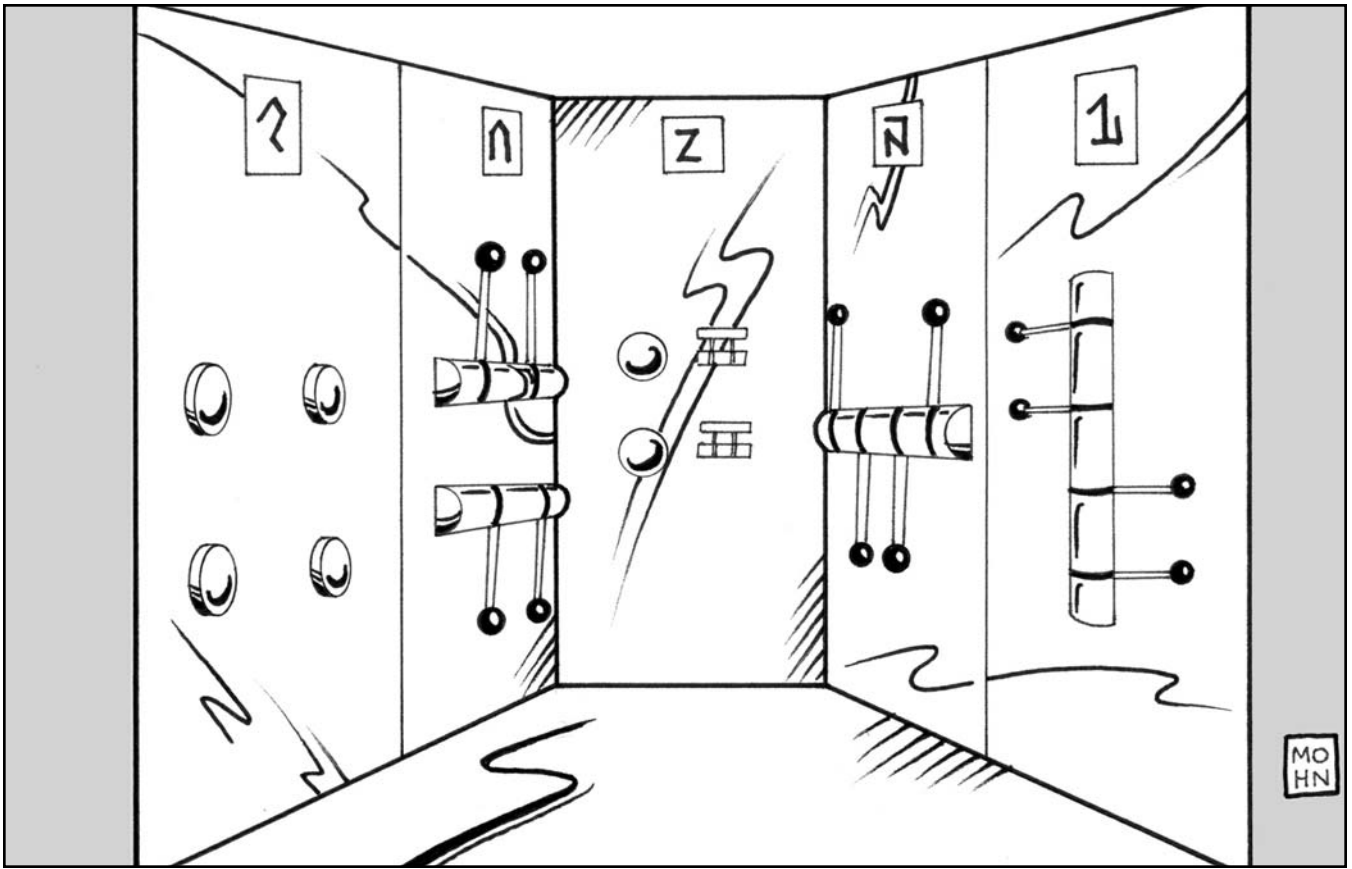
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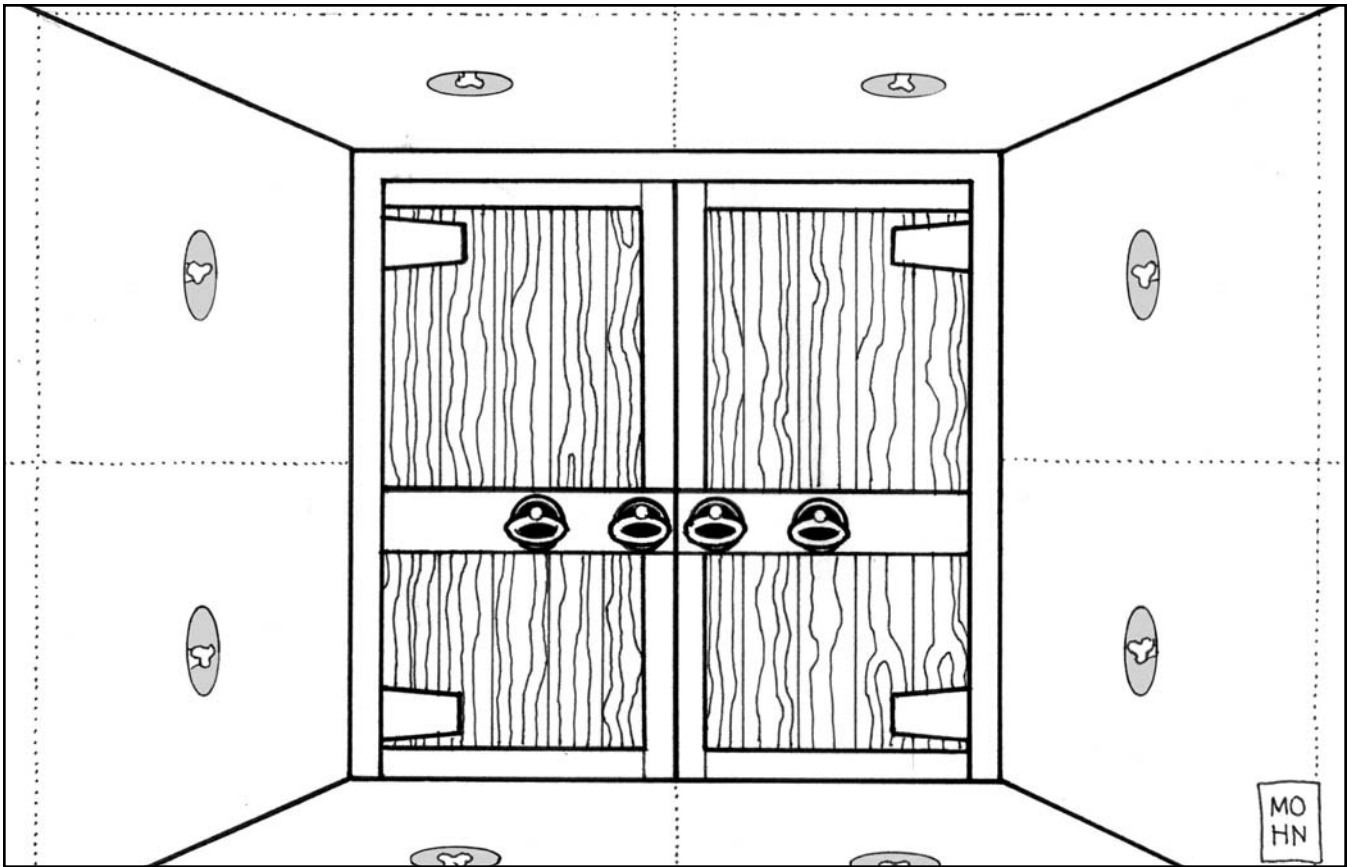
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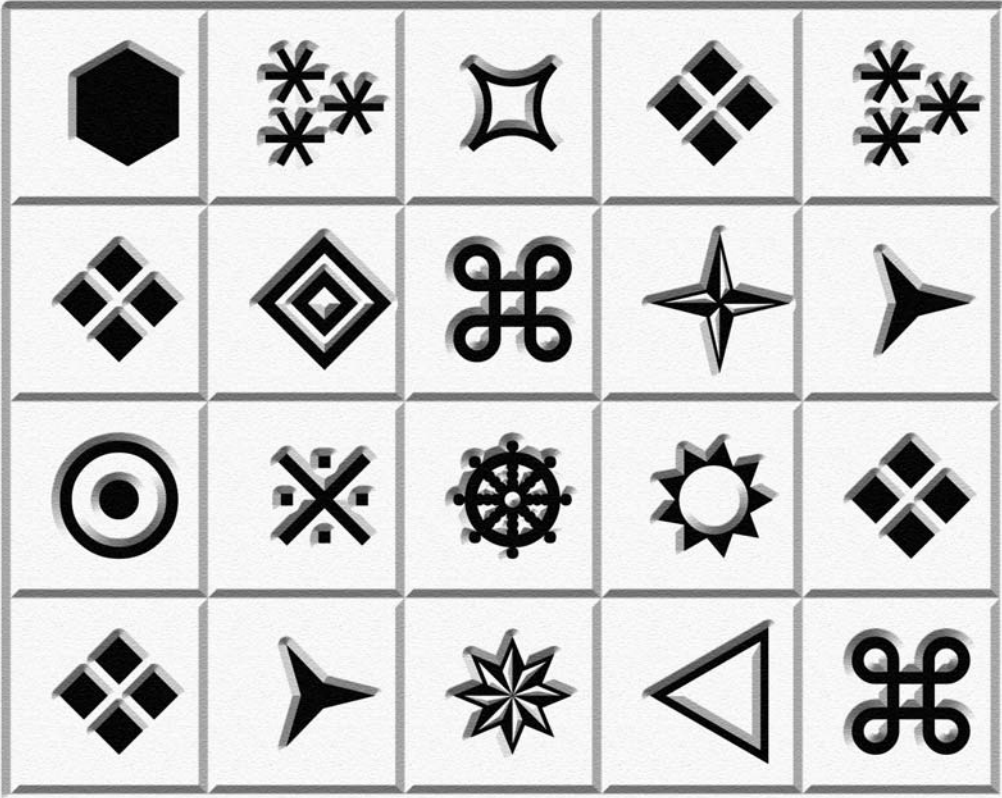


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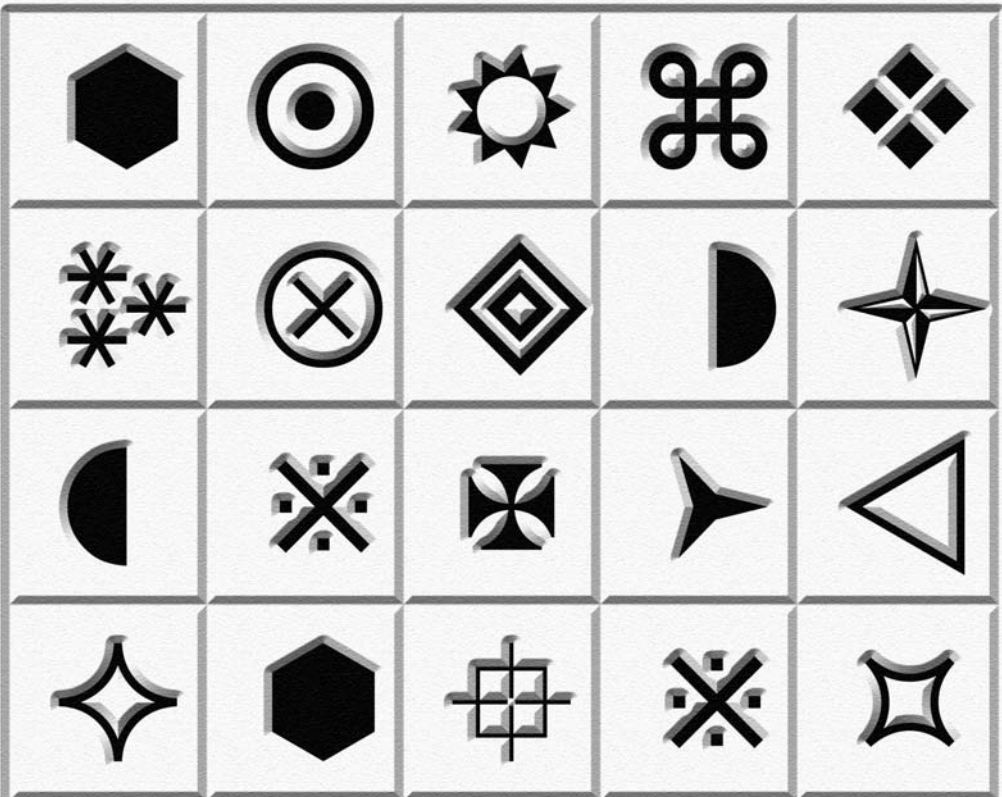




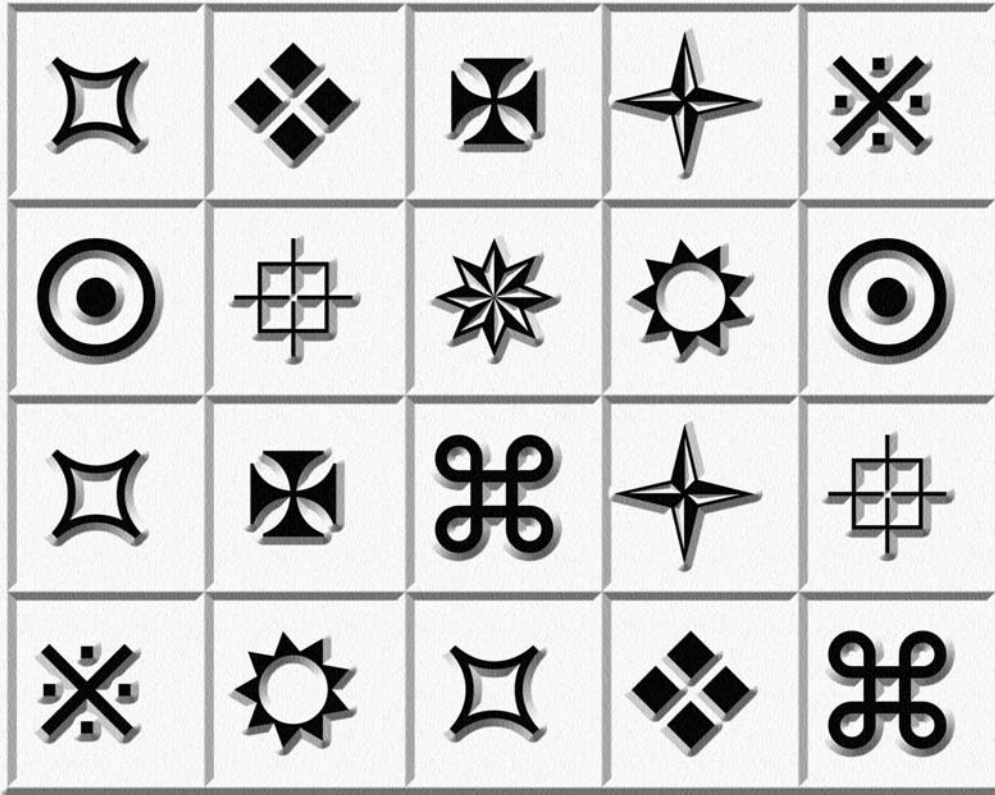
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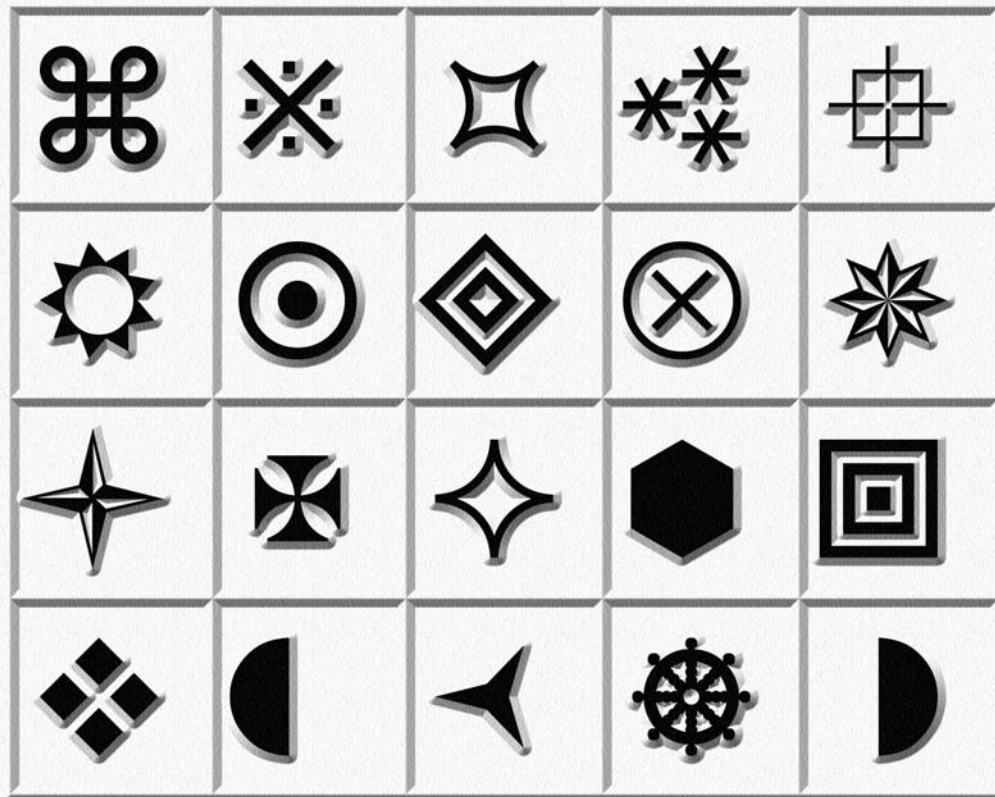
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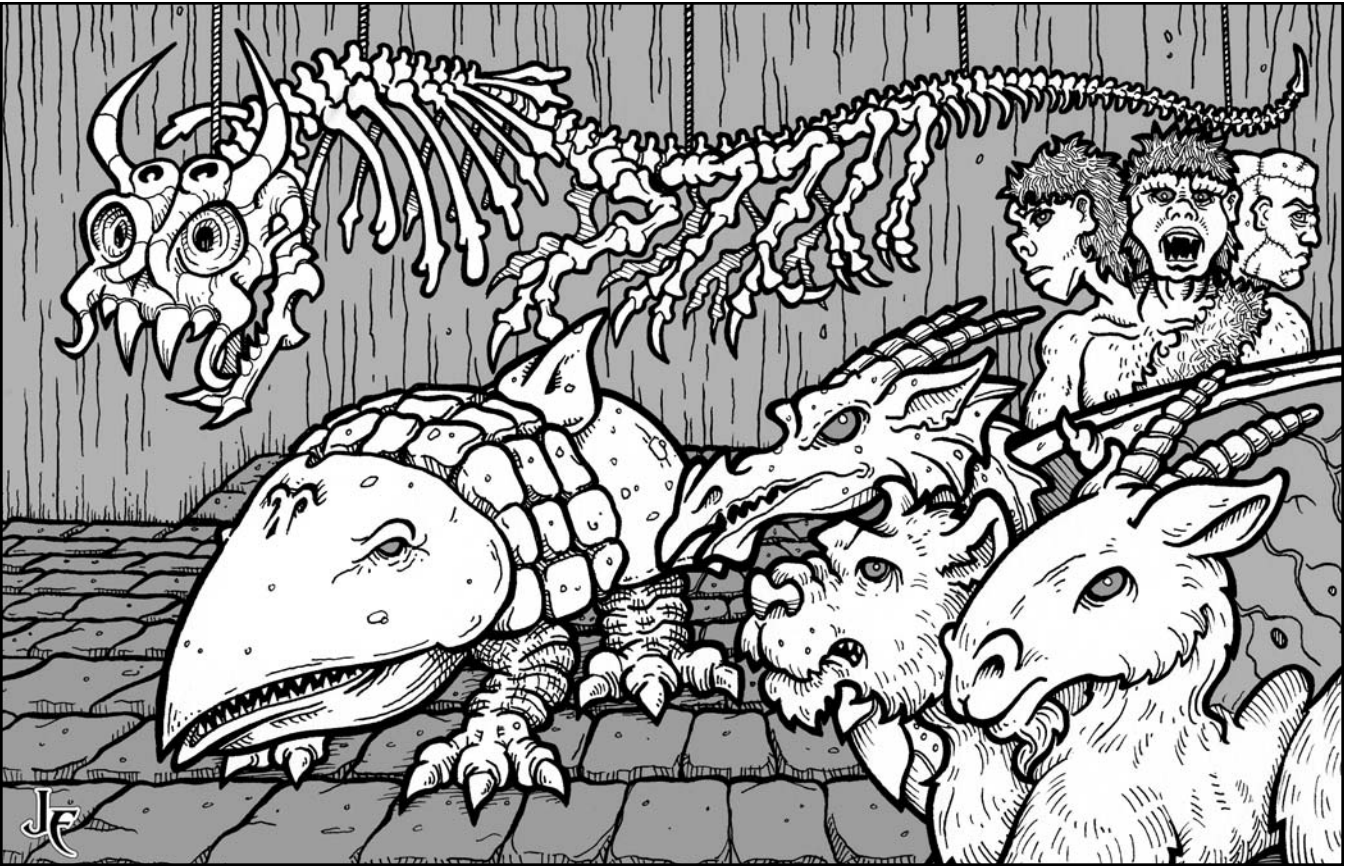
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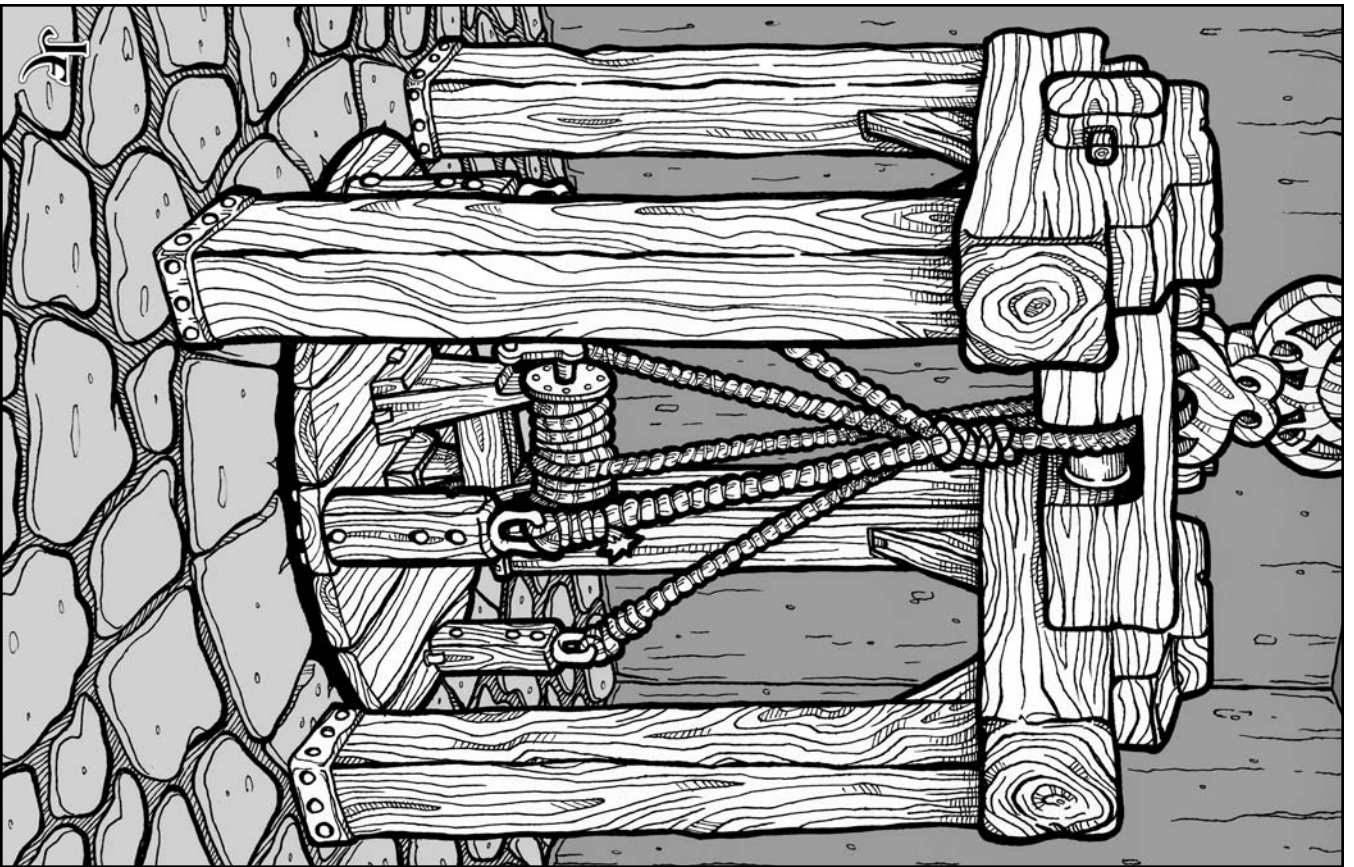
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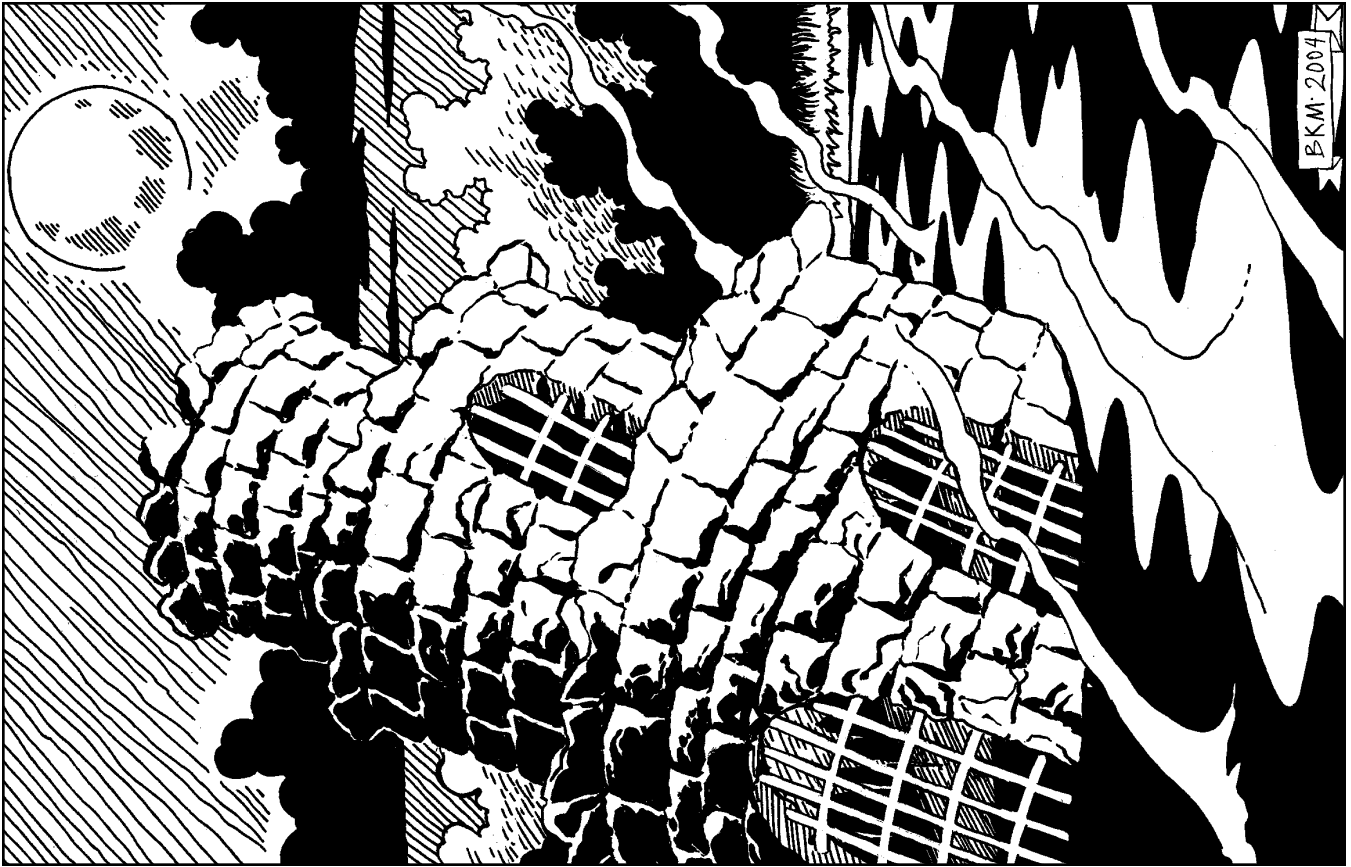
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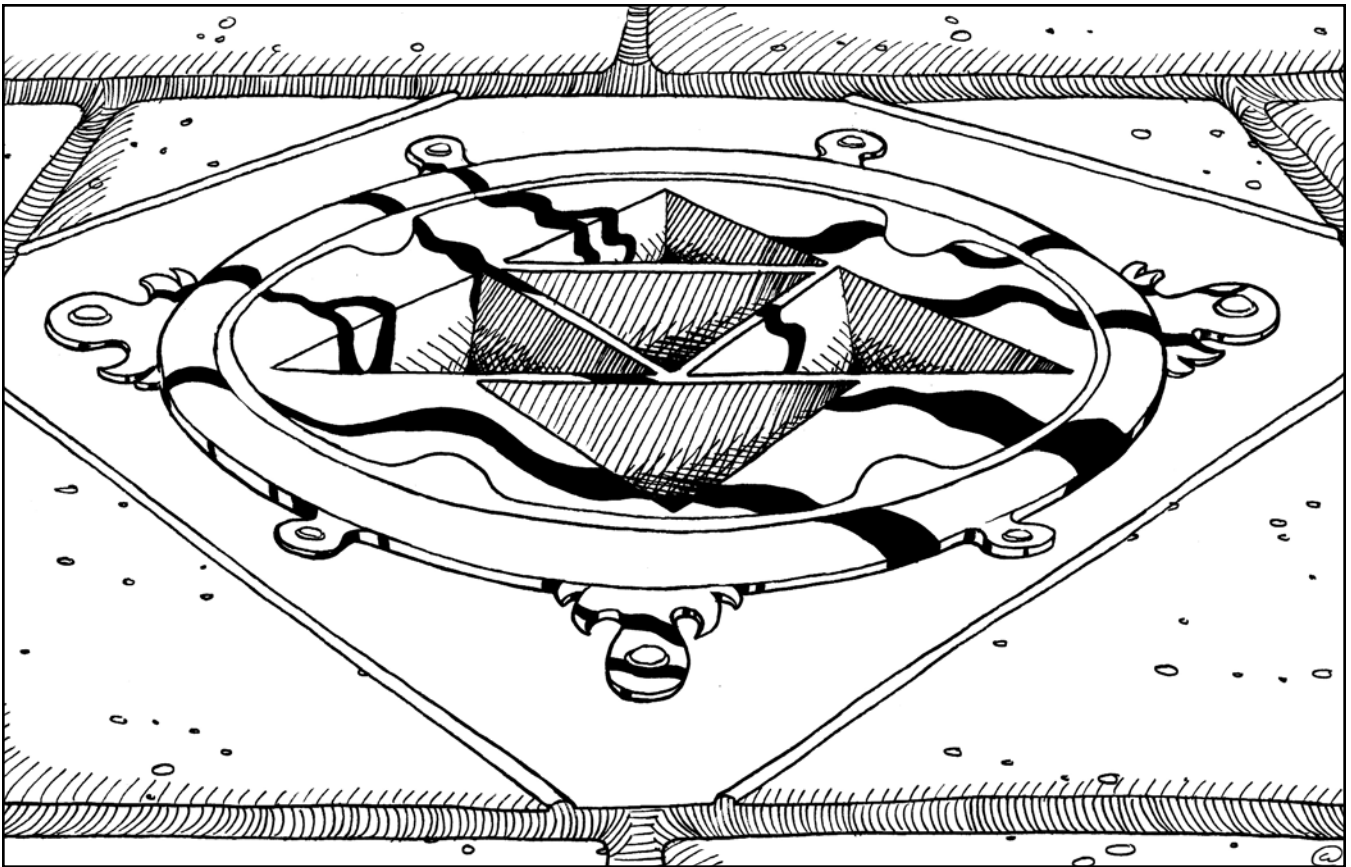
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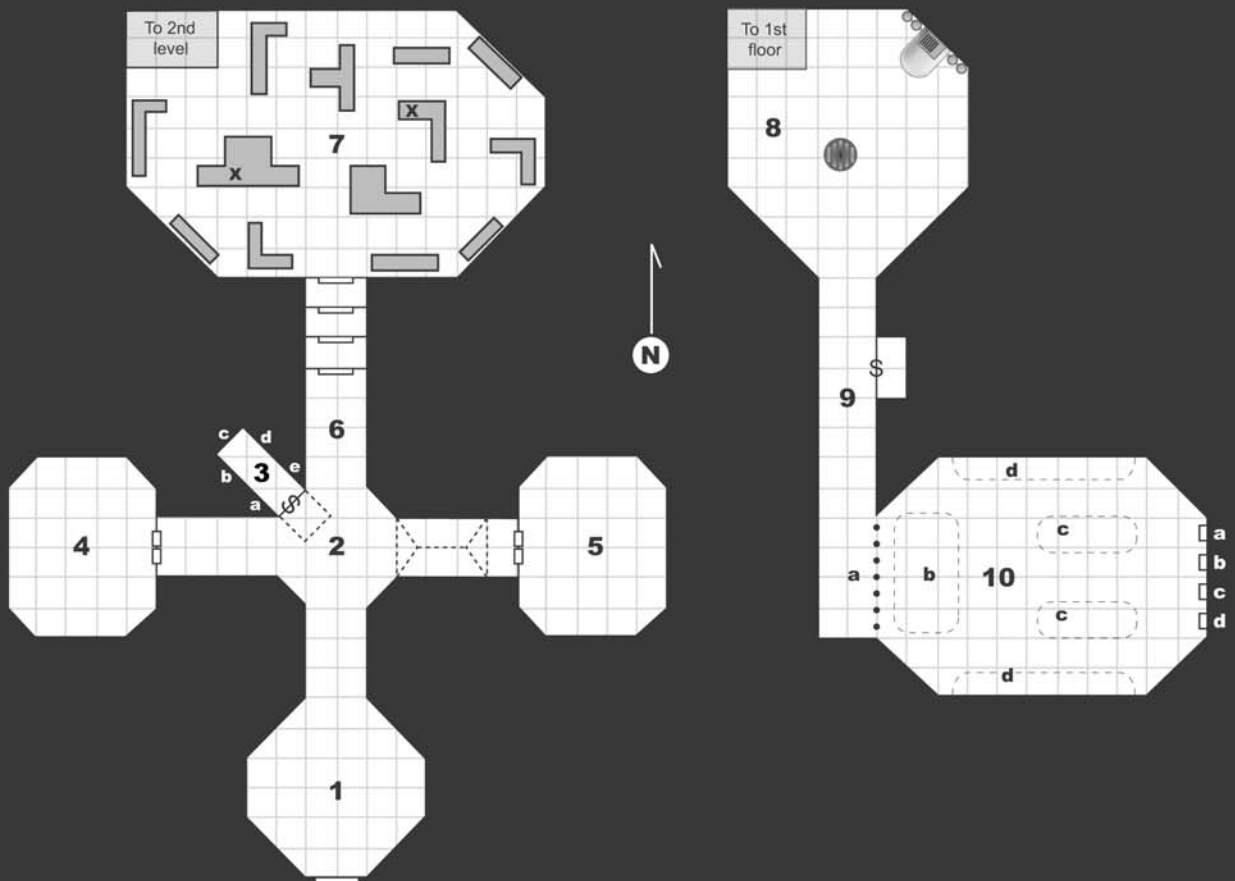
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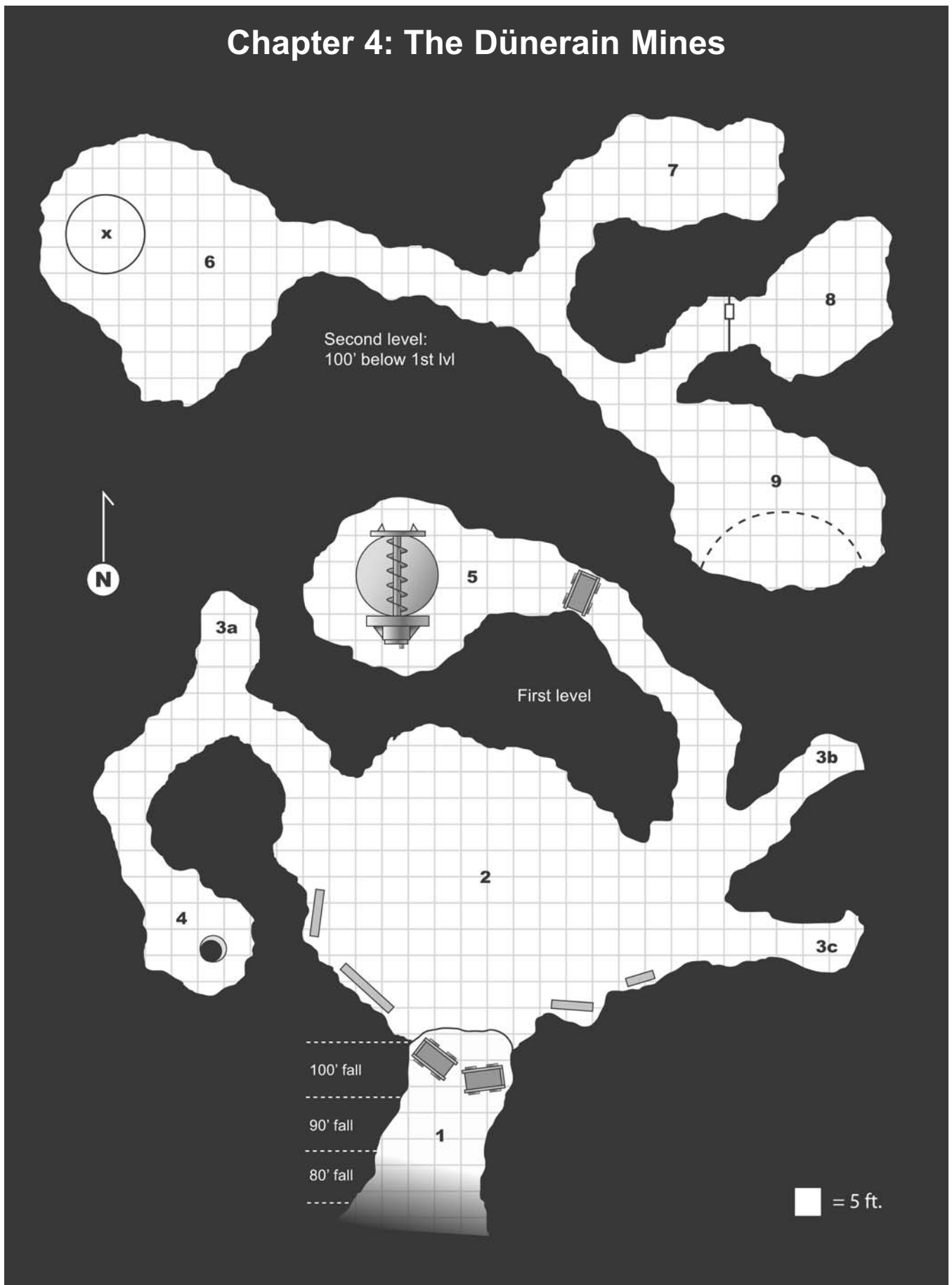


# Chapter 3: Hunter of Worlds

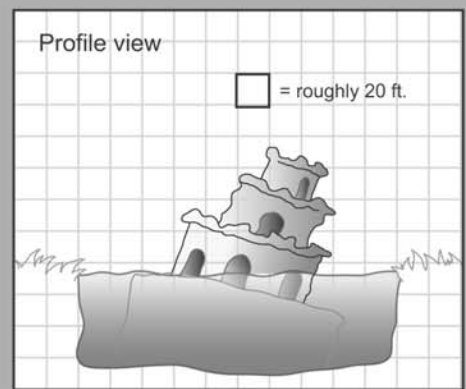
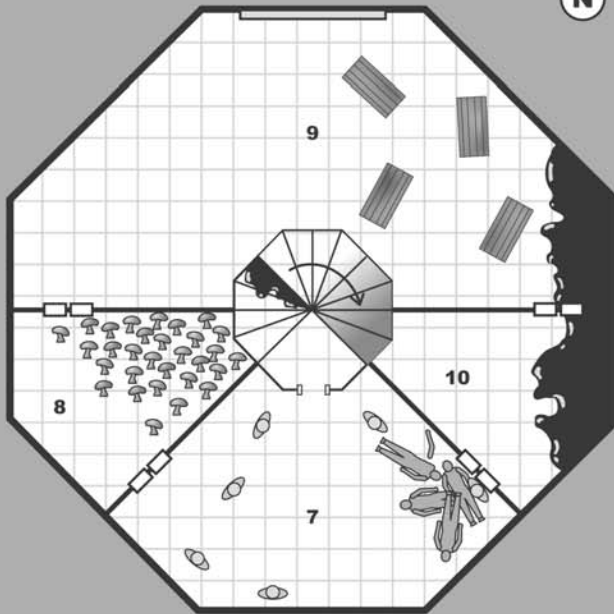
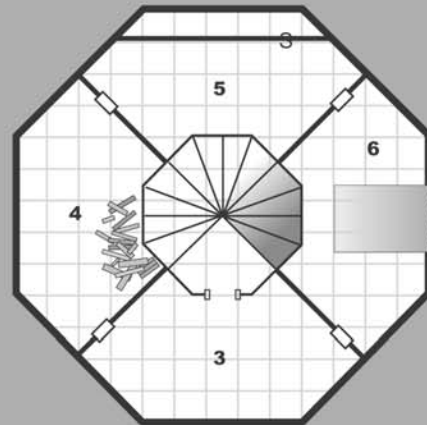
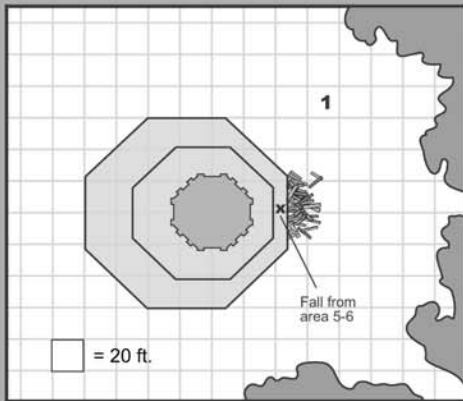
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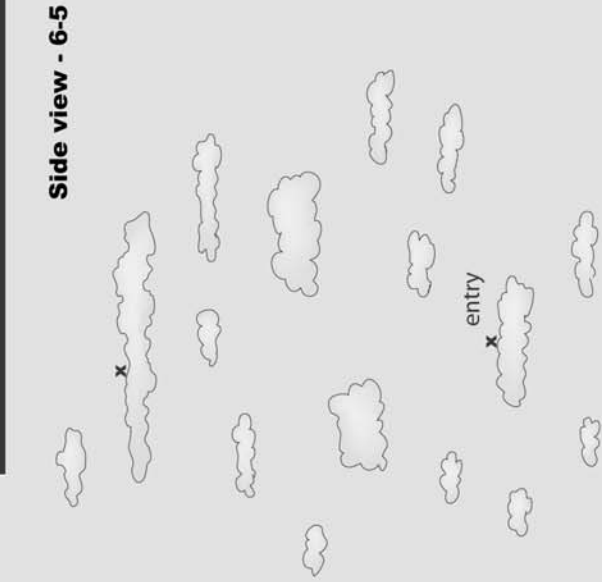
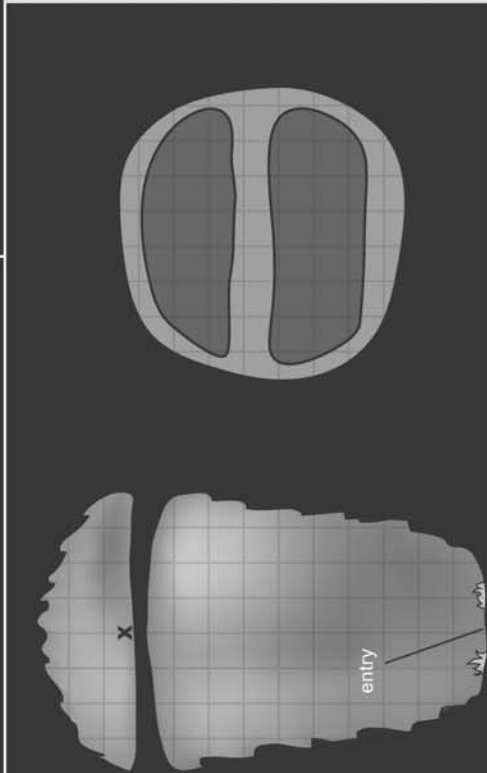
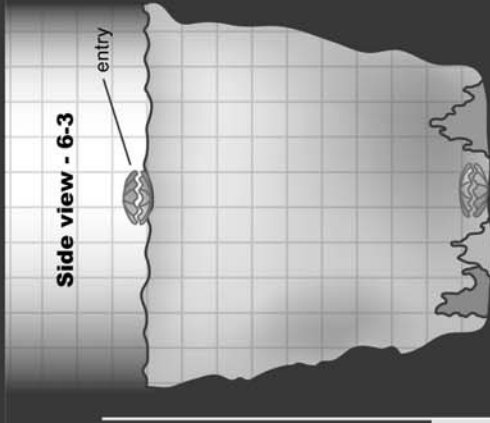
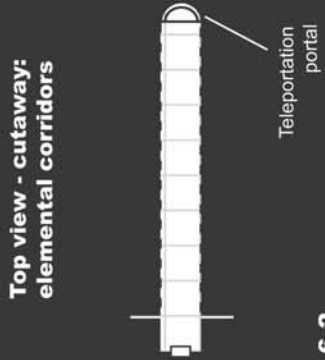
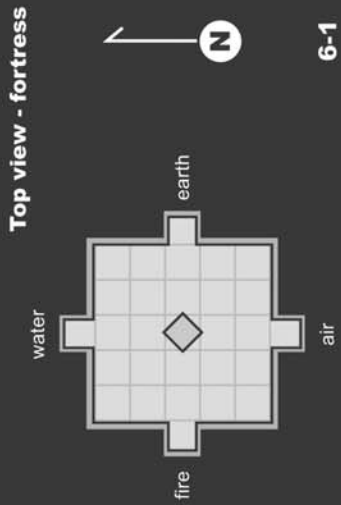


# Chapter 5: The Sinking Spire



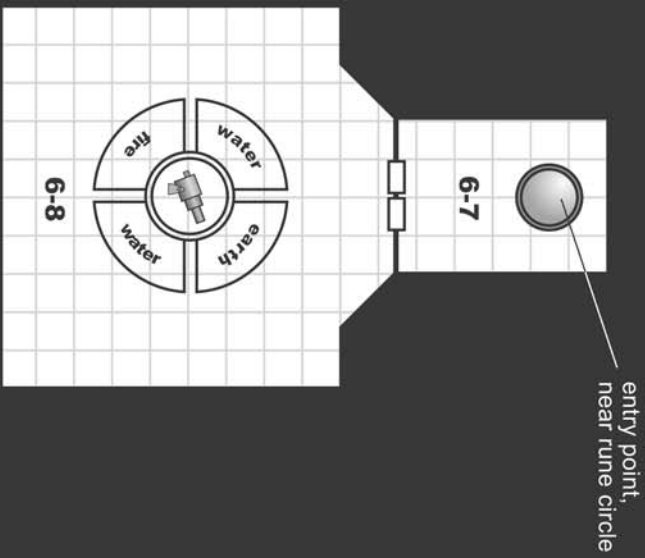
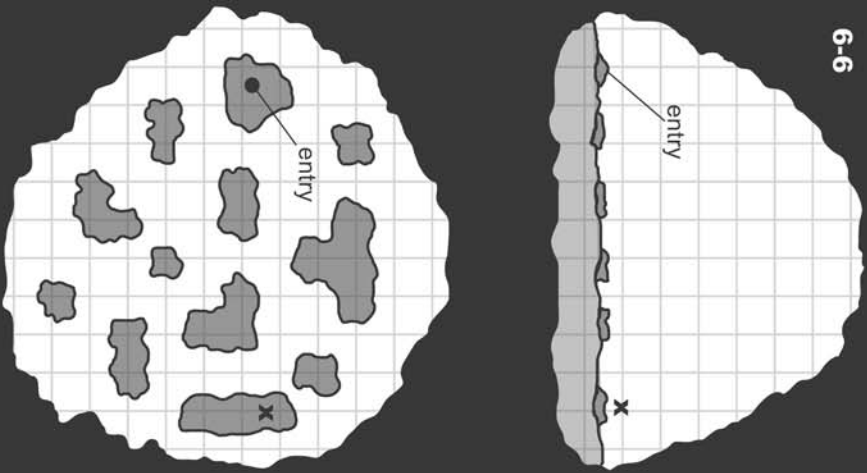


# Chapter 6: The War of the Summoner



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# Chapter 6: The War of the Summoner



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