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# THE JAWS THAT BITE, THE CLAWS THAT CATCH

A DUNGEONS & DRAGONS® ADVENTURE

BY DAVID M. LAMACCHIA

DEVELOPMENT BY GREG MARKS

REVIEWED BY CHRIS TULACH, RPGA CONTENT DESIGNER

PLAYTESTED BY CEDRIC ATIZADO, NEIL HARKINS, JENNIFER HICKS,  
DONOVAN HICKS, FINN KISCH, NICHOLAS K. TULACH, DAVID BLACKWELL,  
AND ALLEN DREES JR.

Aerithmas, the City of Waves. The Band of the Broken Tower has received a letter from a trusted friend: their help is needed at Clifftop Shrine, overlooking the sea near the Imperial Palace. Nearby, evil stirs within the Empire of the Crimson Light and as the sun sets your friend is nowhere to be found...but now come the sound of footfalls. Something approaches. An adventure for 9th level adventurers.

Based on the original DUNGEONS & DRAGONS® rules created by E. Gary Gygax and Dave Arneson and the new DUNGEONS & DRAGONS game designed by Andy Collins, Rob Heinsoo, and James Wyatt.

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## PREPARING FOR PLAY

In order to play this adventure, you'll need copies of the following D&D 4th Edition rulebooks: Player's Handbook, Dungeon Master's Guide, and the Monster Manual. Any other rules referenced in this adventure will be noted in the **New Rules Items** section at the end of the adventure.

Throughout this adventure, text in bold italics provides player information for you to paraphrase or read aloud when appropriate. Information on nonplayer characters (Nadventurers) and monsters appear in abbreviated form in the adventure text.

Along with this adventure, you'll find a RPGA Session Tracking sheet. If you're playing this adventure as part of an RPGA-sanctioned event, complete and turn in this sheet to your Senior GM directly after play.

## READING MONSTER STAT BLOCKS

Most of the information should be easy to understand, as it mirrors the information presented in the Monster Manual. Attacks have a letter next to them designating the type: M for melee, R for ranged, C for close, and A for area. A lower-case letter (used only in some melee and ranged attacks) denotes that the attack can be used as a basic attack.

## IMPORTANT DM INFORMATION

Keep in mind the following and note that some of these rules only apply to the D&D Championship Series:

- **Unlike normal RPGA adventures, you are not empowered to make adjustments to the adventure. You may, however, make decisions about how the group interacts with the world of this adventure.** This is especially important and applicable outside of combat encounters. However, since this is a tournament, **DO NOT** adjust combat encounters for groups that are having too easy or too hard of a time in an adventure. It is important that you follow the tactics as written to provide a consistent experience between tables during the tournament.
- **While following the combats as outlined, try to give everyone a fun experience.** Try to feel out what the players like in a game, and attempt to give each of them the experience they're after when they play D&D. Give everyone a "chance to shine."
- **Be mindful of pacing, and keep the game session moving along appropriately.** Do not allow the round to stall due to your pacing. RPGA adventures are normally designed to be played within 3.5 - 4 hours; try to be very aware of running long or short but **DO NOT** adjust the pacing accordingly if the slowness or quickness or play is due to the actions of the players. The tournament scoring varies with how much of the adventure a team completes and as such you should **NOT** prompt a team to keep moving or give them hints the adventure does not tell you to give. Unlike a normal adventure where you might prompt the players to remain focused if they were to get off track, let the players dictate the speed of play. Because this is a tournament, it is possible that all of the characters may be dead before the end of the adventure. In this event, you may be forced to

end prematurely or if you desire, you may score the event and then continue play as if the PCs were all still alive. This is particularly appropriate if all of the characters die in the first hour of play.

- **Give the players appropriate hints so they can make informed choices about how to interact with their environment.** Players should always know when enemies are affected by conditions and are bloodied. When directed to by the adventure, you should be given clues about how to interact with the PCs surroundings so the players can tackle skill challenges, combats, and puzzles without getting too frustrated over lack of information. This helps to encourage immersion in the adventure and gives players “little victories” for figuring out a good choice from a clue. Since this is a tournament, however, you are not allowed to give any clues to the party unless specifically instructed to do so by the adventure.
- **The adventure happens all in one day.** Unless specifically told otherwise in the adventure, the adventure happens all in one day and teams MAY NOT take an extended rest without ending the portion of the event that is scored. If your team discusses the possibility of resting, you MUST inform them that doing so will automatically end their round. If they agree, stop and score the event. If time remains and your team desires, you may to continue play for fun.
- **Unexpected difficulties and damage.** If the PCs do something that requires you to invent a DC or assign some damage that is not covered by the adventure, use the chart on page 42 of the DMG.

The following mechanical rules are important to ensure an equal play experience between tables during the tournament:

- **Enemies always roll an 11 for initiative.** Assume that each enemy rolls an 11 for their initiative and acts on 11 + their initiative modifier.
- **Do not roll for recharge.** Instead of rolling for the recharge of an opponent’s power, they occur as follows: 6 - recharges every six rounds, 5-6 - recharges every three rounds; 4-6 - recharges every two rounds; 3-6 - recharges every two rounds; and 2-6 recharges every round.

- **Unexpected difficulties and damage.** If the PCs do something that requires you to invent a DC or assign some damage that is not covered by the adventure, use the chart on page 42 of the DMG.
- **Enemies who use four or more dice when doing damage do average damage.** If an enemy has an attack that does four or more dice of damage, they do average damage. This value is listed in brackets after the damage expression, such as “4d6+2 [16].”

A great deal of good information on being a DM for a D&D game can be found in Chapters 1-2 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide*.

## MILESTONES

No matter if the characters succeed or fail in an encounter, they reach a milestone if it is the second combat or trap encounter they’ve had since the start of the adventure or their last extended rest. Make certain to mention this information to the players when applicable, as it gives each adventurer another action point and affects how some magic item powers are used.

## ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

Several weeks ago, Adray, a soldier stationed in the Imperial Palace of Aerithmas, discovered something troubling: a great evil lay beneath the Clifftop Temple in Aerithmas that is somehow linked to the Emperor of the Empire of the Crimson Light himself. Adray drafted a letter to one of his oldest friends, an adventurer, hoping to get assistance from outside the Imperial Guard. The letter asked Adray's friend to meet him outside the Clifftop Temple with any trusted allies; together they would discover the secret of the Temple.

Unknown to Adray, the Emperor has been quietly disposing of certain enemies of the state in the catacombs underneath Clifftop Temple, where the Imperial Master of Beasts keeps his trained monstrous pets in holding pens.

Adray's letter was unfortunately intercepted by spies working for the Empire of the Crimson Light. The Emperor has notified his Master of Beasts of the adventurers coming to Clifftop Temple and a trap now waits for the Band of the Broken Tower....

## PLAYER’S INTRODUCTION

Once you are seated but before handing out characters, read the following to the players:

*The Band of the Broken Tower, as you call yourselves since joining the adventuring company of the same name founded in the village of Copper Hill, has been called to action by a friend of Acaleem's named Adray. In the letter, Adray asked for help exploring "something vexing" beneath the Clifftop Temple just outside the city walls of Aerithmas. Glad to be away from the confines of your old tower, you've anxiously loaded down a donkey with all the necessary adventuring gear and are on your way.*

the Master of Beasts, an oni mage in disguise, has several tricks up his sleeves.

You may now hand out the characters to the players. Once the start time is announced, begin play with Encounter 1.

## DM'S INTRODUCTION

The adventure tests the party's creativity and combat skills. As Round 1a of the D&D Championship (2008), the goal is to see how much of the adventure the party can accomplish within the time allotted. The challenges are difficult and the party can often give themselves an advantage with some thinking and preparation.

In Encounter One, undead stalking Clifftop Temple attack the party while they wait for their friend Adray. Driving off the undead, a mysterious ghostly figure shows the party where a pit has been covered and disguised. It motions for them to descend into catacombs below the shrine.

Encounter Two is a non-combat encounter. The adventurers discover the bodies of enemies of the Emperor at the bottom of the pit below the shrine. Among these bodies are two ghosts, members of a Rebellion against the evil ruler of the Empire of the Crimson Light, who are bound to stay with their corpses. The adventurers may question the ghosts, who are friendly, about the Rebellion and the catacombs that lie below Clifftop Temple. The ghosts implore the adventurers for help against the Emperor and to find a way to set them free.

In Encounter Three, the party discovers a number of animals held in cages. The adventurers must defeat these beasts as well as two guards to make their way through.

Encounter Four is another combat challenge. The party discovers a natural cave within the catacombs. Waste water from the capital city above drains through this cave and out to the sea beyond. The party must overcome more of the animals trained by the Emperor's Master of Beasts.

In Encounter Five, the party confronts the Master of Beasts directly. They discover the arena he uses to train his animals. Here they are challenged to combat, but

# ENCOUNTER 1: WAITING FOR ADRAY

## ENCOUNTER LEVEL 9

### SETUP

This encounter includes the following creatures.

- 1 Skull Lord (Level 10 Artillery (Leader)) (L)
- 2 Battle Wights (Level 9 Soldier) (W)
- 4 Vampire Spawn Bloodhunters (Level 10 Minion) (H)

The adventurers are waiting for their friend, Adray, to arrive at Clifftop Temple, a coastal temple in Aerithmas, the City of Waves; the old capital city of the kingdom of Aeris which has been subjugated by the invading empire. They are attacked by undead hunting the temple grounds. Allow the party to place themselves on the map and then place the undead. The adventurers are assumed to be on watch for Adray; therefore they are not surprised. Roll initiative normally, remembering that NPCs always roll an 11.

### READ ALOUD TEXT

After the adventurers have placed their miniatures, read aloud:

*Crimson and gold clouds streak across the sky as a weary sun dips below the horizon; cracked flagstones are still damp from rain earlier today. You have come to Clifftop Temple to meet your friend, Adray, who informed you that enemies of the state are being quietly disposed of in nearby underground catacombs. Something has happened: Adray is nowhere to be seen and he is not one to keep you waiting. However, it appears you are not alone....*

If the adventurers ask about or examine the shrine in general (more specifics are provided under the Features of the Area section):

**Perception (DC 25):** You notice that the incense burner (see features of the area below) is on top of a trap door.

**Religion (DC 15):** Your studies of faith remind you that while the architecture is consistent with the native religion of Aerithmas, other elements (the purification fountain, the incense burner) are newer additions

brought to the region by the Empire of the Crimson Light.

**Thievery (DC 20):** Opens the locked trap door near the incense burner.

## FEATURES OF THE AREA

**Illumination:** Eight lanterns (four on each of the north and south walls) provide bright light in the shrine after sunset.

**Incense burner:** In the center of the shrine is a large incense burner. The burner occupies a 10'x10' area and provides cover. Sticks of blessed incense lay in the burner. If lit and placed in the incense burner, the scent harms undead and the area 2 squares around the burner are considered difficult terrain to undead (costing 2 squares of movement).

The incense burner weighs 800lbs; it can be moved by a single adventurer with Strength 16 (the maximum weight an adventurer can push or drag is Strength x 50, PH pg. 222).

**Platforms:** There are raised platforms on the north and south sides of the shrine. Climbing the wall up to the platform requires a DC 15 Athletics check. There are steps up in the northwest and southwest corners. The platforms are 5' high.

**Plaque:** There is a plaque on the incense burner that says in Common: "Clifftop Temple was built on the ruins of Old Clifftop Temple." The date given was over 1000 years ago.

**Purification fountain:** This fountain has six ladles lying in it. Filling a ladle with water and washing one's hands restores a healing surge. Only a single healing surge per day can be restored in this manner. If someone specifically looks at the fountain or asks about it, a DC 15 Religion check provides the knowledge that according to the elemental religion of the Empire, using the ladle at a purification shrine in the manner described above can heal the body and spirit.

## TACTICS

The skull lord directs the other undead at range and uses its skull powers. It enters melee only if it has no other choice. Two vampire minions accompany each battle wight and attack in two groups, approaching the shrine from the east and west. The vampire spawn bloodhunters attack with their claws while the battle wights try to drain healing surges with their swords. The skull lord stays behind the eastern group, using his Skull of Death's Command to revive any vampire spawn bloodhunter minion that falls in battle with its *skull of death's command* power. Remember that since the skull

lord's powers are minor actions, it can sacrifice standard and move actions to use more than one power per round, though it may use each power once per round.

When the skull lord's skulls are destroyed, they are destroyed in the following order: *skull of withering flame*, *skull of death's command*, and then *skull of bonechilling fear*.

## WHAT'S NEXT

If the adventurers have not yet opened the trap door under the incense burner, one of the Trap Haunts from Encounter 2, having become aware of the adventurers, phases through the floor and manifests before them. Eager to have the PCs journey below, it points at the base of the incense burner (at the trap door) and then disappears through the floor.

# ENCOUNTER 1: WAITING FOR ADRAY STATISTICS

Skull Lord	Level 10 Artillery (Leader)
Medium natural humanoid (undead) XP 500	
<b>Initiative</b> +8	
<b>Senses</b> Perception +7; darkvision	
<b>Master of the Grave (Healing)</b> aura 2; undead allies in the aura gain regeneration 5 and a +2 bonus to saving throws. This aura ends when the skull of death's command is destroyed.	
HP 40; <b>Bloodied</b> 20; see also triple skulls	
AC 24; <b>Fortitude</b> 21, <b>Reflex</b> 22, <b>Will</b> 23	
<b>Immune</b> disease, poison; <b>Resist</b> 10 necrotic; <b>Vulnerable</b> 5 radiant	
<b>Speed</b> 6	
m <b>Bone Staff</b> (standard; at-will) ♦ <b>Necrotic, Weapon</b>	
+13 vs. AC; 1d8 + 2 damage plus 1d6 necrotic damage.	
R <b>Skull of Bonechilling Fear</b> (minor 1/round; at-will) ♦ <b>Cold, Fear</b>	
Ranged 10; +15 vs. Will; 1d6 + 3 cold damage, and the target is pushed 5 squares.	
R <b>Skull of Death's Command</b> (minor 1/round; at-will) ♦ <b>Necrotic</b>	
Ranged 10; the skull lord restores a destroyed undead minion within range. The restored undead minion's level must be no higher than the skull lord's level + 2. The restored minion stands in the space where it fell (or in any adjacent space, if that space is occupied) as a free action, has full normal hit points, and can take actions (as normal) on its next turn.	
R <b>Skull of Withering Flame</b> (minor 1/round; at-will) ♦ <b>Fire, Necrotic</b>	
Ranged 10; +15 vs. Fortitude; 2d6 + 3 fire and necrotic damage.	
<b>Triple Skulls</b> ♦ <b>Healing</b>	
When a skull lord is reduced to 0 hit points, one of its skulls (determined randomly from the three listed above) is destroyed, and it loses the ability to use that power. If the creature has any skulls remaining, it instantly heals to full hit points (40 hit points). When all three skulls are destroyed, the skull lord is destroyed as well.	
<b>Alignment</b> Evil	
<b>Languages</b> Common	
<b>Skills</b> Bluff +15, Insight +12, Intimidate +15	
<b>Str</b> 14 (+7)	<b>Dex</b> 16 (+8)
<b>Con</b> 17 (+8)	<b>Int</b> 16 (+8)
	<b>Wis</b> 15 (+7)
	<b>Cha</b> 21 (+10)
<b>Equipment</b> staff, 3 iron crowns	

Battle Wight	Level 9 Soldier
Medium natural humanoid (undead) XP 400	
<b>Initiative</b> +7	
<b>Senses</b> Perception +3; darkvision	
HP 98; <b>Bloodied</b> 49	
AC 25; <b>Fortitude</b> 22, <b>Reflex</b> 18, <b>Will</b> 22	
<b>Immune</b> disease, poison; <b>Resist</b> 10 necrotic; <b>Vulnerable</b> 5 radiant	
<b>Speed</b> 5	
m <b>Soul-draining Longsword</b> (standard; at-will) ♦ <b>Necrotic, Weapon</b>	
+15 vs. AC; 1d8 + 5 damage, and the target loses 1 healing surge and is immobilized (save ends).	
<b>Soul Reaping</b> (standard; recharge 4 5 6) ♦ <b>Healing, Necrotic</b>	
Ranged 5; affects an immobilized target only; +12 vs. Fortitude; 2d8 + 5 necrotic damage, and the battle wight regains 10 hit points.	
<b>Alignment</b> Evil	
<b>Languages</b> Common	
<b>Skills</b> Intimidate +14	
<b>Str</b> 20 (+9)	<b>Dex</b> 13 (+5)
<b>Con</b> 18 (+8)	<b>Int</b> 12 (+5)
	<b>Wis</b> 9 (+3)
	<b>Cha</b> 20 (+9)
<b>Equipment</b> plate armor, heavy shield, longsword	

Vampire Spawn Bloodhunter	Level 10 Minion
Medium natural humanoid (undead) XP 125	
<b>Initiative</b> +8	
<b>Senses</b> Perception +6; darkvision	
HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion.	
AC 25; <b>Fortitude</b> 22, <b>Reflex</b> 23, <b>Will</b> 22	
<b>Immune</b> disease, poison; <b>Resist</b> 10 necrotic	
<b>Speed</b> 7, climb 4 (spider climb)	
m <b>Claws</b> (standard, at-will) ♦ <b>Necrotic</b>	
+16 vs. AC; 6 necrotic damage (8 necrotic damage against a bloodied target).	
<b>Destroyed by Sunlight</b>	
A vampire spawn that begins its turn in direct sunlight can take only a single move action on its turn. If it ends the turn in direct sunlight, it burns to ash and is destroyed.	
<b>Alignment</b> Evil	
<b>Languages</b> Common	
<b>Str</b> 14 (+7)	<b>Dex</b> 16 (+8)
<b>Con</b> 14 (+7)	<b>Int</b> 10 (+5)
	<b>Wis</b> 12 (+6)
	<b>Cha</b> 14 (+7)

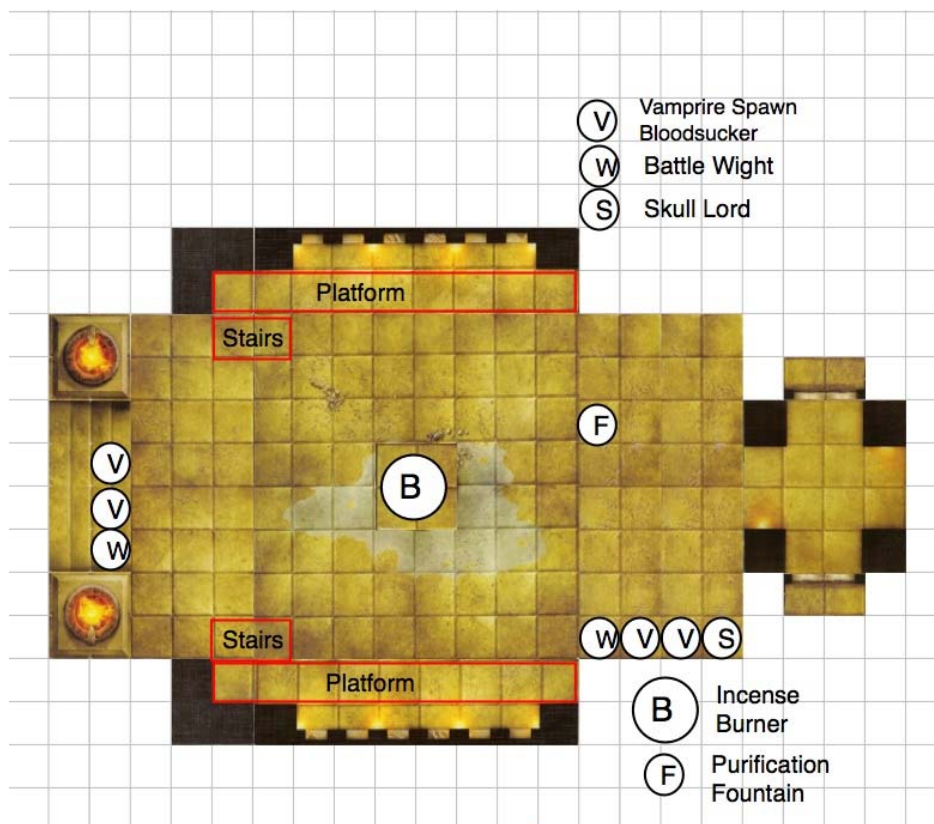
# ENCOUNTER 1: WAITING FOR ADRAY MAP

Two 1x2 square sets of stairs lead up to the platforms, which are 1 square above the main floor. Creatures can squeeze into the half squares near the lanterns. The incense burner (B), represented by a single 2x2 tile, covers a pit. When the adventurers push the incense burner aside, remove the tile, revealing the pit.

The Shrine is open on all sides to the surrounding area. The only walls are those marked on the tiles. The doors near the four columns slide open and are not locked.

## Dire Tombs

Floor w/Well	8x8	x1
Floor	8x3	x1
Floor	4x4	x2
Alcoves w/ torches	8x2	x2
Corner wall	2x2	x2
Floor	2x2	x1
Stairs w/ braziers	8x2	x1
Four columns w/ torches	4x4	x1
Door	1x2	x2
Portcullis	1x2	x1





# INTERLUDE 1: GHOSTS OF THE REBELLION

## SETUP

This non-combat encounter allows the adventurers to get information from the Trap Haunts, Sen and Lareth, about the Emperor, his Master of Beasts, and the catacombs. The Trap Haunts were twin brothers, young soldiers who double-crossed the cruel Emperor and joined the Rebellion against the Empire of the Crimson Light. The Rebellion discovered information that led to these soldiers searching the Old Shrine's catacombs.

## READ ALOUD TEXT

Once the party has descended the pit into the Old Shrine's ruins, read the following:

*The stench at the bottom of the pit is far worse than above and the sight of what greets you is equally gruesome. A pile of mutilated and half-consumed corpses lies here amid mounds of filth. The remains of several humanoids -- humans, eladrin, a dwarf -- are chained to the walls.*

While no map is provided for the pit, the DM is encouraged to put out a 4x4 square with some rubble to give the players the illusion that this may be a combat encounter, even though it is not. The floor here is stone and the walls are white-washed. The bodies of the enemies of the emperor are thrown down the pit and left for the Master of Beasts to feed to his pets. A single closed wooden door, reinforced with iron bars, exits to the southeast.

When the entire party has descended into the pit, the ghosts appear and ask the adventurers why they have come.

**Insight (DC 10; all of the PCs make this):** The trap haunts do not seem aggressive.

Upon seeing the ghosts, each PC should make a Religion check that might also reveal the following.

### Religion (DC 15):

- The ghosts cannot leave this place, though they have tried. Something is keeping them from moving on from this world to the next. If the adventurers discover a way to help them, they would appreciate it greatly.

### DC 20:

- Ghosts often recall the events of their life, but death corrupts and potentially jumbles those memories.

### DC 25:

*The Jaws That Bite...*

- Some ghosts are linked to the world because of an unfulfilled task. Ghosts are often more helpful and friendly to those they perceive can help them.

Having witnessed the adventurers combat with the skull lord, they have determined that they are allies to be helped. If the adventurers are hostile towards the trap haunts, they phase through a wall and into a long forgotten area of the catacombs and the adventurers are on their own. Otherwise, the ghosts are helpful.

If the adventurers interact with the trap haunts, use the following information to answer any questions. All of the information provided below should be given through role-playing without any skill checks required.

- The trap haunts were twins in life, Sen and Lareth.
- The ghosts do not know anyone named Adray.
- Both Sen and Lareth were sons of a lesser landed noble lineage that was bequeathed a fiefdom under the first of the Three Benevolent Kings of Aeris. *DM Note: This is an important clue for a later adventure.*
- When they were recently killed, the brothers were looking for information on an important rebel officer named Welridch, believed captured by the Emperor. Finding and freeing the prisoner is a top priority for the Rebellion.
- Any information the adventurers can find should be brought to the Rebellion itself in the nearby town of Copper Hill.

If the adventurers are not rude to the ghosts or try to befriend the ghosts, ask for a Diplomacy check. If the adventurers offer to help the ghosts end their suffering by trying to complete their mission, give them a +5 on their check. The adventurers are rude to the ghost they instead use Intimidate (use the same DCs as for Diplomacy). While success with Intimidate gives the adventurers information the ghosts become Hostile and leave after giving the information.

The only way a table should not make either a Diplomacy or Intimidate check is if they avoid speaking with the ghosts.

### Diplomacy (DC 15):

- The ghosts don't know how long they've been here.
- The ghosts have seen no others except for three shifters who come to this room to claim bodies. One of the shifters was called "Master" by the other two. On one occasion, two shifters mentioned "gathering food" for "the Master's Beasts."
- The catacombs are vast, but generally lead east. There are numerous small chambers but generally there is one long main corridor.

**DC 20:**

- The ghosts were soldiers who betrayed the Emperor, a cruel and evil ruler, by joining the Rebellion against the Empire of the Crimson Light

**DC 25:**

- Sen and Lareth came to this place searching for a missing comrade, a member of the Rebellion they suspect is being held prisoner. A beast with many tentacles that warped reality (that they have not seen since that time) killed the brothers. If the party asks, allow a Dungeoneering skill check (with a -2 penalty) to identify the balhannoth in Encounter 3.

If the adventurers thoroughly search the area by digging through the corpses and bones, after a few minutes they recover a corpse that is likely the body of their friend Adray.

**Heal (DC 15):** Adray likely died of wounds from slashing weapons.

**WHAT'S NEXT**

The exit from this room leads east deeper into the catacombs. Continue to Encounter 2.

## ENCOUNTER 2: THE CELLS

### ENCOUNTER LEVEL II

#### SETUP

This encounter includes the following creatures.

- 2 **Razorclaw Stalkers (Level 13 Minion) (S)**
- 2 **Hellstinger Scorpions (Level 12 Soldier) (H)**
- 2 **Worgs (Level 9 Brute) (W)**
- 1 **Carrion Crawler (Level 7 Controller) (C)**

Continuing through the catacombs, the adventurers come across a large room at the end of which is an unlocked door. Behind the door are cells in which the Emperor's Master of Beasts keeps some of his more potent creatures. The adventurers have an opportunity to sneak into the room unseen; if they do they get a tactical advantage.

#### READ ALOUD TEXT

*At the end of a large room in the catacombs, you spy a long hallway at the end of which is an open iron-reinforced door. Light from the room beyond spills into the corridor.*

The door is somewhat ajar: enough so that the adventurers can see into the room without opening it fully. The guards do not notice the adventurers as they approach the door, even if the adventurers are not particularly stealthy. The party's passive Stealth is more than the guards' passive Perception, given the door, the distraction of the card game, and the ambient noise coming from the beasts in the cells.

If the adventurers peek around the door, they can see:

- An open door is at the other end of a wide room.
- A table with three chairs on the west side of the door. At two of the chairs sit armed shifters playing cards. A pile of silver pieces is on the table between the guards.
- A rope dangles from a hole in the ceiling, next to the guards.
- The room contains only dim illumination, making it difficult for some PCs to see.

If the adventurers open the door and enter the room, the door squeals horribly as it opens, alerting the guards to the party's presence. Combat starts normally. See Tactics, below, for more information.

If the adventurers decide to be stealthy, initiate a skill challenge. See Encounter 3: The Cells (Skill Challenge) below. Success in the challenge allows the adventurers to place themselves under cover in the room and gives them a surprise round of combat. Failure gives the guards enough time to pull the rope near them, opening the cages before combat starts.

Once combat starts, if the rope has not yet been pulled, the Master of Beasts (an invisible oni mage), yanks the rope, which opens the cages. Note the PCs have no way of detecting the invisible creature.

#### FEATURES OF THE AREA

**Illumination:** The room is dimly lit by wall sconces, imparting a -2 penalty to attacks unless the adventurers have another light source. All of the monsters in this room use either low-light, tremorsense, or darkvision to see and do not suffer this penalty.

**Columns:** Four columns in each of the rooms provide cover.

**Cots:** In one of the alcoves are two cots. The guards occasionally sleep or nap in these when they are relieved by other guards from the Emperor's palace.

**Rope:** The rope hanging near the card table opens the cages keeping the worgs and carrion crawler in cells. It is a move action to pull the rope.

#### DM NOTE

Because of the optional skill challenge, combat can start in one of three ways: the adventurers get the jump on the guards, the guards have time to pull the rope, or they start on an even footing. If the rope has not yet been pulled, the invisible oni mage triggers the cages to open at the end of Round 1 of combat and exits immediately. Pulling the rope does not make the oni visible.

#### TACTICS

The hellstinger scorpions quickly close, provoking opportunity attacks if necessary to surround the party and prevent escape. If not possible, they use their Hellish Sting attack to grab the closest opponents.

The razorclaw stalkers will probably go down quickly. They try to use their Skirmish ability to move into combat and flank enemies for additional to-hit and damage bonuses.

The carrion crawler has little tactical sense and simply uses its tentacles on the closest enemies.

The worgs close with enemies and do not cooperate with each other, hungry for slaughter after being caged for some time.

## SNEAKING INTO THE ROOM SKILL CHALLENGE

**Level:** 9

**Complexity:** 2 (requires 6 successes before 3 failures).

**Number of Successes:** 6

**Number of Failures:** 3

**Primary Skills:** Acrobatics, Insight, Perception, Stealth, Thievery

The party has decided to sneak into the room containing animal pens in order to gain a tactical advantage.

*The guards have yet to notice you. You think you might be able to sneak into the room unnoticed and catch them by surprise!*

Ask each PC to describe how they are trying to sneak into the room and use the appropriate skill. The PCs may not aid each other by using a group skill check. If a player asks, you may tell them the primary skills that they may use to complete the skill challenge.

**Acrobatics (DC 20):** As you move across the room, you slip on something, but nimbly catch yourself without making a sound.

**Insight (DC 24):** There's two guards, but three chairs. You keep your wits about you as you move into the room.

**Perception (DC 24):** You are about to move out from cover as one of the guards glances towards the door. You catch yourself just in time.

**Stealth (DC 24):** You try to make your way unseen and unheard to a position of cover.

**Thievery (DC 20):** You oil the hinges of the doors allowing them to open silently.

## ENDING THE SKILL CHALLENGE

**Success:** Allow the adventurers to place themselves anywhere in the room that provides cover from the guards (behind columns or a wall). Initiate combat; the party gets a surprise round.

**Failure:** With each successive failure, the guards become more alert until the guards spot or hear the party as they sneak into the room. Allow the adventurers to place themselves anywhere between the door and the first row of columns in the room with the cages. The guards stand and pull the rope, opening the cages. Initiate combat.

## WHAT'S NEXT

The adventurers have defeated several of the Emperor's best trained beasts. The door at the end of the room leads further into the catacombs.

The Master of Beasts, an oni mage, is now aware of the adventurers and retreats to prepare for them.

Note that after completing this encounter, the PCs have most likely hit their first milestone.

## ENCOUNTER 2: THE CELLS' STATISTICS

Razorclaw Stalker		Level 13 Minion
Medium natural humanoid, shifter		XP 200
<b>Initiative</b> +6	<b>Senses</b> Perception +12; low-light vision	
<b>HP</b> 1; a missed attack never damages a minion.		
<b>AC</b> 26; <b>Fortitude</b> 26, <b>Reflex</b> 23, <b>Will</b> 22		
<b>Speed</b> 6		
m <b>Short Sword</b> (standard; at-will) ♦ <b>Weapon</b>		
+17 vs. AC; 7 damage; see also skirmish.		
M <b>Short Sword Riposte</b> (free, when an enemy makes an opportunity attack against the razorclaw stalker; at-will) ♦ <b>Weapon</b>		
The razorclaw stalker makes a short sword attack against the enemy.		
<b>Skirmish</b> +1d6		
If, on its turn, the razorclaw stalker ends its move at least 4 squares away from its starting point, it deals an extra 1d6 damage on its attacks until the start of its next turn.		
<b>Alignment</b> Any	<b>Languages</b> Common	
<b>Skills</b> Acrobatics +11, Stealth +11, Streetwise +9		
<b>Str</b> 18 (+9)	<b>Dex</b> 12 (+6)	<b>Wis</b> 11 (+5)
<b>Con</b> 16 (+8)	<b>Int</b> 12 (+6)	<b>Cha</b> 8 (+4)
<b>Equipment</b> leather armor, short sword		

Hellstinger Scorpion		Level 12 Soldier
Large immortal beast		XP 700
<b>Initiative</b> +12	<b>Senses</b> Perception +9; tremorsense 5	
<b>HP</b> 122; <b>Bloodied</b> 61		
<b>AC</b> 27; <b>Fortitude</b> 25, <b>Reflex</b> 25, <b>Will</b> 24		
<b>Resist</b> 20 fire		
<b>Speed</b> 8		
m <b>Claws</b> (standard; at-will) ♦ <b>Fire</b>		
+19 vs. AC; 2d6 + 4 damage, and a Large or smaller target is grabbed (until escape). A grabbed target takes 10 fire damage at the start of the hellstinger scorpion's turn.		
M <b>Hellish Sting</b> (standard; at-will) ♦ <b>Fire, Poison</b>		
+17 vs. Fortitude; 1d8 + 4 damage, and the target takes ongoing 5 fire and poison damage and is weakened (save ends both). The hellstinger scorpion can use this attack against a target it has grabbed.		
<b>Reactive Sting</b> (immediate reaction, when an enemy grabbed by the scorpion escapes; at-will)		
The hellstinger scorpion makes a hellish sting attack against the enemy.		
<b>Alignment</b> Unaligned	<b>Languages</b> –	
<b>Str</b> 19 (+10)	<b>Dex</b> 19 (+10)	<b>Wis</b> 16 (+9)
<b>Con</b> 18 (+10)	<b>Int</b> 1 (+1)	<b>Cha</b> 13 (+7)

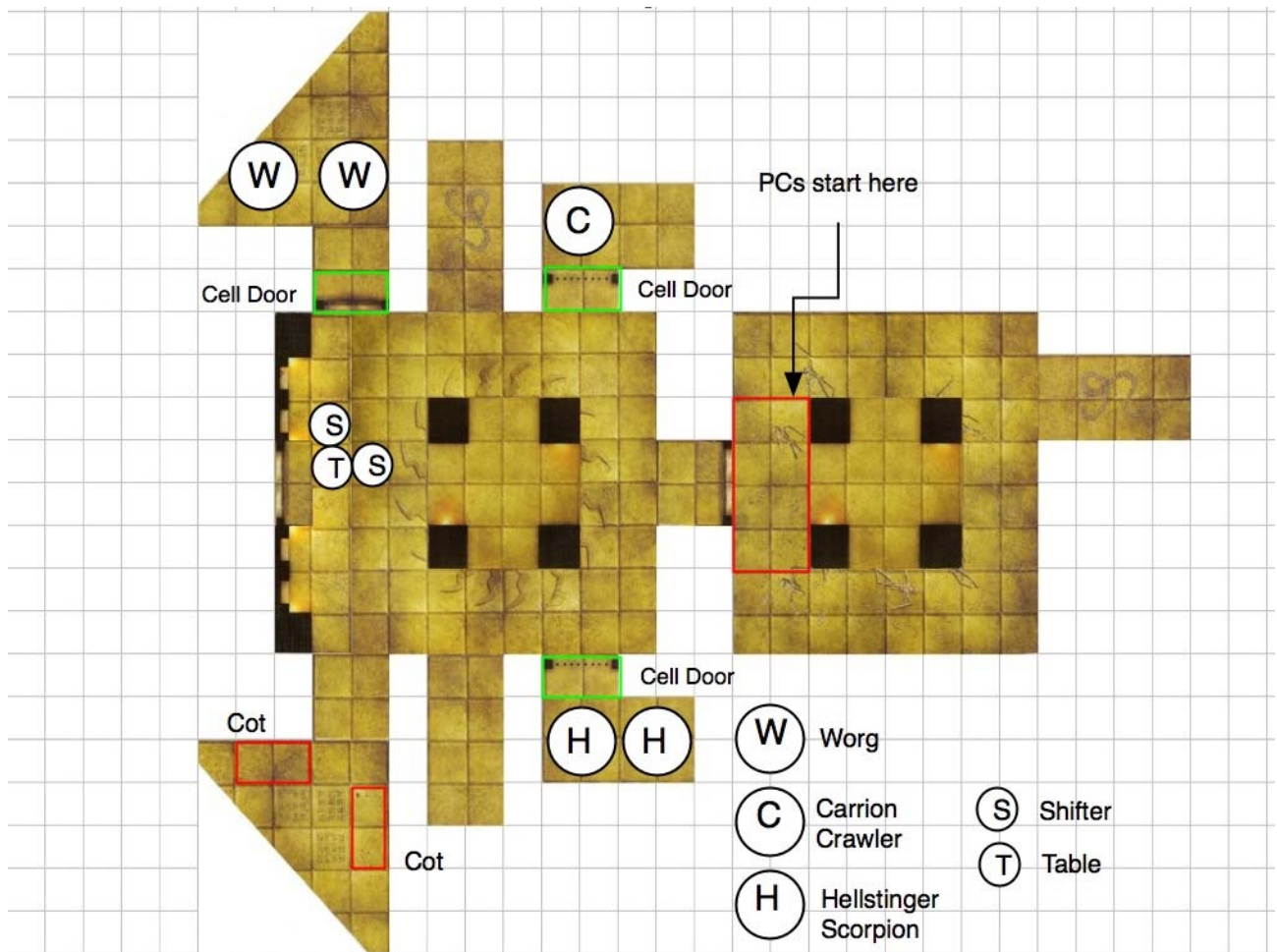
Worg		Level 9 Brute
Large natural magical beast		XP 400
<b>Initiative</b> +7	<b>Senses</b> Perception +9; darkvision	
<b>Frightful Growl</b> ( <b>Fear</b> ) aura 3; enemies in the aura take a -1 penalty to attack rolls, and allies in the aura gain a +1 power bonus to attack rolls.		
<b>HP</b> 120; <b>Bloodied</b> 60		
<b>AC</b> 20; <b>Fortitude</b> 20, <b>Reflex</b> 18, <b>Will</b> 18		
<b>Speed</b> 8		
m <b>Bite</b> (standard; at-will)		
+12 vs. AC; 2d6 + 5 damage, and ongoing 5 damage (save ends).		
<b>Alignment</b> Chaotic evil	<b>Languages</b> Abyssal	
<b>Skills</b> Stealth +12		
<b>Str</b> 21 (+9)	<b>Dex</b> 17 (+7)	<b>Wis</b> 10 (+4)
<b>Con</b> 20 (+9)	<b>Int</b> 7 (+2)	<b>Cha</b> 16 (+7)

Carrion Crawler		Level 7 Controller
Large aberrant beast		XP 300
<b>Initiative</b> +6	<b>Senses</b> Perception +5; darkvision	
<b>HP</b> 81; <b>Bloodied</b> 40		
<b>AC</b> 20; <b>Fortitude</b> 19, <b>Reflex</b> 18, <b>Will</b> 17		
<b>Speed</b> 6, climb 6 (spider climb)		
m <b>Tentacles</b> (standard; at-will) ♦ <b>Poison</b>		
Reach 2; +10 vs. Fortitude; 1d4 + 5 damage, and the target takes ongoing 5 poison and is slowed (save ends both). First Failed Save: The target is immobilized instead of slowed (save ends). Second Failed Save: The target is stunned instead of immobilized (save ends). Saving throws made against the carrion crawler's paralytic tentacles take a -2 penalty.		
M <b>Bite</b> (standard; at-will)		
+12 vs. AC; 1d10 + 5 damage.		
<b>Alignment</b> Unaligned	<b>Languages</b> –	
<b>Str</b> 20 (+8)	<b>Dex</b> 16 (+6)	<b>Wis</b> 14 (+5)
<b>Con</b> 17 (+6)	<b>Int</b> 2 (-1)	<b>Cha</b> 16 (+6)

# ENCOUNTER 2: THE CELLS MAP

## Hidden Crypts

Floor w/skeletons	8x8	x1
Floor w/sun design	8x8	x1
Floor w/bone pile	2x4	x1
Four columns w/ torches	4x4	x2
Floor w/ skulls	2x4	x1
Floor	2x4	x2
Floor	2x2	x4
Triangular floor	5x5	x2
Alcoves w/ torches	8x2	x1
Portcullis	1x2	x2
Door	1x2	x2



## ENCOUNTER 3: THE SEWERS

### ENCOUNTER LEVEL II

#### SETUP

This encounter includes the following creatures.

**2 Chuuls (Level 10 Soldier) (C)**

**1 Balhannoth (Level 12 Elite Lurker) (B)**

**1 Destrachan (Level 9 Artillery) (D)**

The catacombs continue to wind underneath the Imperial Palace until it opens into an unfinished cave (adventurers enter from the west). On the north side of the cave is a large pipe. Drainage from the city above flows from the pipe and has collected in a large pool filling the center of the room. Water flows out of the cave through a pipe to the south. There is a natural bridge leading across the pool to an exit to the east. The water is one square deep.

Chained to one corner of the cave on the eastern side of the pool is a lone destrachan. Its chain is long enough that it can move freely about the room, but it has learned to avoid the pool and will not cross the bridge unless it absolutely has to. The destrachan can mimic sounds it hears and it happily stands two squares from the pool producing sounds such as: chirping, dripping water, a whip crack, and an explosion of stone (from the bulette in Encounter 5). During combat, the destrachan will randomly mimic unusual sounds.

Within the pool are two chuuls who are squeezing and are submerged, trained to wait for prey by the Master of Beasts. Additionally, a terrible creature, a balhannoth, sleeps on the ceiling of the cave 6 squares above the floor, invisible and clinging to the cave using its spider climb ability.

Note that both the balhannoth and destrachan are blind and will not see (with blindsight) creatures that are more than ten squares away, though they can still hear them.

#### READ ALOUD TEXT

*You happen upon a large natural cave, able to hear the sound of rushing water well before you come to the entrance.*

If the adventurers' light extends into the cave, additionally describe the pool:

*In the middle of the cave can be seen a pool. Water rushes out of a pipe in the north wall, fills the pool, and then drains through another pipe to the south. A natural stone bridge extends across the middle of the pool. Some parts of the cave floor look slick with some kind of slime. Beyond the pool a strange biped, chained to one wall, makes cooing noises.*

#### FEATURES OF THE AREA

**Illumination:** There is no light in this area.

**Cave Slime:** Several areas of the cave are covered in slick cave slime. A creature that enters a square filled with the slime must make an **Acrobatics check (DC 15)** or fall prone.

**Cliff:** A cliff in the northeastern corner of the chamber drops down 1 square to the floor below. An **Athletics check (DC 15)** allows a PC to climb the cliff at half speed.

**Natural stone bridge:** The bridge allows the water to flow underneath it (1 square deep). It is three squares wide.

**Pool:** The pool is one square deep and murky. The chuuls hiding in the pool gain a +5 to Stealth checks (+13 total) to avoid being spotted. For creatures without a swim speed, the pool is considered difficult terrain, costing 2 squares of movement. The murky pool provides concealment.

#### TACTICS

The two chuuls wait in the water until an adventurer either crosses the bridge or enters the water. Roll their Stealth vs. the party's passive Perception (or active Perception if an adventurer approaches the water and asks for a check). If the chuuls are not noticed, they receive a surprise round when combat is initiated. They use their action to stand up and stop squeezing.

The destrachan does not act until the chuuls have attacked. At that point it attacks at range with its Sound Pulse. If it can use its Bellowing Blast and not hit its allies, it will do so.

The chuuls use their Double Attack against creatures hoping to immobilize enemies with their tentacles. They wait until one or more creatures are on the bridge or in the water to attack. The chuuls can swim under the bridge by squeezing and will stay in the water if possible. They initially hide in the murky water (**Stealth +13**) and attack if spotted or if creatures walk upon the bridge.

The balhannoth causes chaos by teleporting next to enemies, attacking with its tentacles and sliding enemies into the pool. It will typically use Reality Shift (move

action) to daze opponents, Whipping Tentacles (standard action) to do damage and slide enemies, and Invisibility (minor action). The balhannoth uses its action point after its first action to use *Reality Shift* again. See the DM Note for more about the balhannoth.

## DM NOTE

This encounter can be difficult unless the party uses clever tactics. The balhannoth makes for a tough opponent since it can easily daze the adventurers. Also, it has a high AC, which combined with its Invisibility (-5 to attacks for total concealment) can make it nearly impossible to hit. Smart parties will realize that the best way to attack the beast is to ready attacks for when the balhannoth becomes visible.

The balhannoth is not very intelligent (Int 3). Play the creature this way. If the party tries to provoke Opportunity Attacks the balhannoth will take them. If the creature is invisible, the attack will end that state.

## WHAT'S NEXT

An exit leads east further into the tunnels. Continue to Encounter 4.

## Treasure

Having defeated the cave beasts, the adventurers can search the area and find a sealed iron box.

**Thievery (DC 20):** A locked and sealed iron box lies in the murky pool underneath the northern drainage pipe. It is automatically noticed if the square it's in is entered, or it can be spotted within two squares with a Perception (DC 20) check.

If the adventurers unlock the iron chest they find five rubies worth 250gp and four potions of healing.



## ENCOUNTER 3: THE SEWERS STATISTICS

Chuul	Level 10 Soldier
Large aberrant magical beast (aquatic) XP 500	
Initiative +10 Senses Perception +9; darkvision HP 109; Bloodied 54 AC 27; Fortitude 26, Reflex 20, Will 21 Speed 6, swim 6	
m <b>Claw</b> (standard; at-will) Reach 2; +17 vs. AC; 1d6 + 6 damage, or 3d6 + 6 damage against an immobilized creature.	
M <b>Double Attack</b> (standard; at-will) ◆ <b>Poison</b> The chuul makes two claw attacks. If both claw attacks hit a single target, the chuul makes a secondary attack against the same target with its tentacles. Secondary Attack: +14 vs. Fortitude; the target is immobilized (save ends).	
<b>Tentacle Net</b> ◆ <b>Poison</b> A creature hit by a chuul's opportunity attack is immobilized until the end of the chuul's next turn.	
Alignment Unaligned Languages Deep Speech Str 22 (+11) Dex 16 (+8) Wis 18 (+9) Con 21 (+10) Int 4 (+2) Cha 14 (+7)	

Balhannoth	Level 12 Elite Lurker
Large aberrant magical beast (blind) XP 1,400	
Initiative +18 Senses Perception +16; blindsight 10 HP 202; Bloodied 101 AC 27; Fortitude 26, Reflex 25, Will 23 Immune gaze, illusion Saving Throws +2 Speed 4, climb 4 (spider climb); see also reality shift Action Points 1	
m <b>Tentacle</b> (standard; at-will) Reach 3; +16 vs. AC; 1d8 + 9 damage.	
C <b>Whipping Tentacles</b> (standard; at-will) Close burst 3; targets enemies; +16 vs. AC; 1d8 + 9 damage, and the target slides to any other square of the balhannoth's choosing within the burst area.	
<b>Combat Advantage</b> The balhannoth deals an extra 2d8 damage against any target it has combat advantage against.	
<b>Invisibility</b> (minor; at-will) ◆ <b>Illusion</b> The balhannoth can turn invisible until the end of its next turn. It turns visible if it takes a standard action.	
<b>Reality Shift</b> (move; at-will) ◆ <b>Teleportation</b> The balhannoth can teleport 10 squares. Enemies adjacent to the balhannoth before it teleports are dazed until the end of its next turn. The balhannoth automatically gains combat advantage against creatures it teleports adjacent to.	
Alignment Chaotic evil Languages Deep Speech Skills Stealth +19 Str 29 (+15) Dex 27 (+14) Wis 20 (+11) Con 24 (+13) Int 3 (+2) Cha 8 (+5)	

Destrachan	Level 9 Artillery
Large aberrant magical beast (blind) XP 400	
Initiative +8 Senses Perception +11; blindsight 10 HP 80; Bloodied 40 AC 22; Fortitude 24, Reflex 21, Will 20 Immune gaze Resist 10 thunder Speed 6, climb 3	
m <b>Claw</b> (standard; at-will) +14 vs. AC; 1d8 + 4 damage.	
R <b>Sound Pulse</b> (standard; at-will) ◆ <b>Thunder</b> Ranged 10; +13 vs. Reflex; 2d6 + 5 thunder damage.	
C <b>Bellowing Blast</b> (standard; recharge 3 4 5 6) ◆ <b>Thunder</b> Close blast 5; +13 vs. Fortitude; 2d6 + 5 thunder damage, and the target is dazed (save ends).	
Alignment Evil Languages Deep Speech Skills Bluff +9, Stealth +13 Str 18 (+8) Dex 18 (+8) Wis 14 (+6) Con 20 (+9) Int 7 (+2) Cha 10 (+4)	

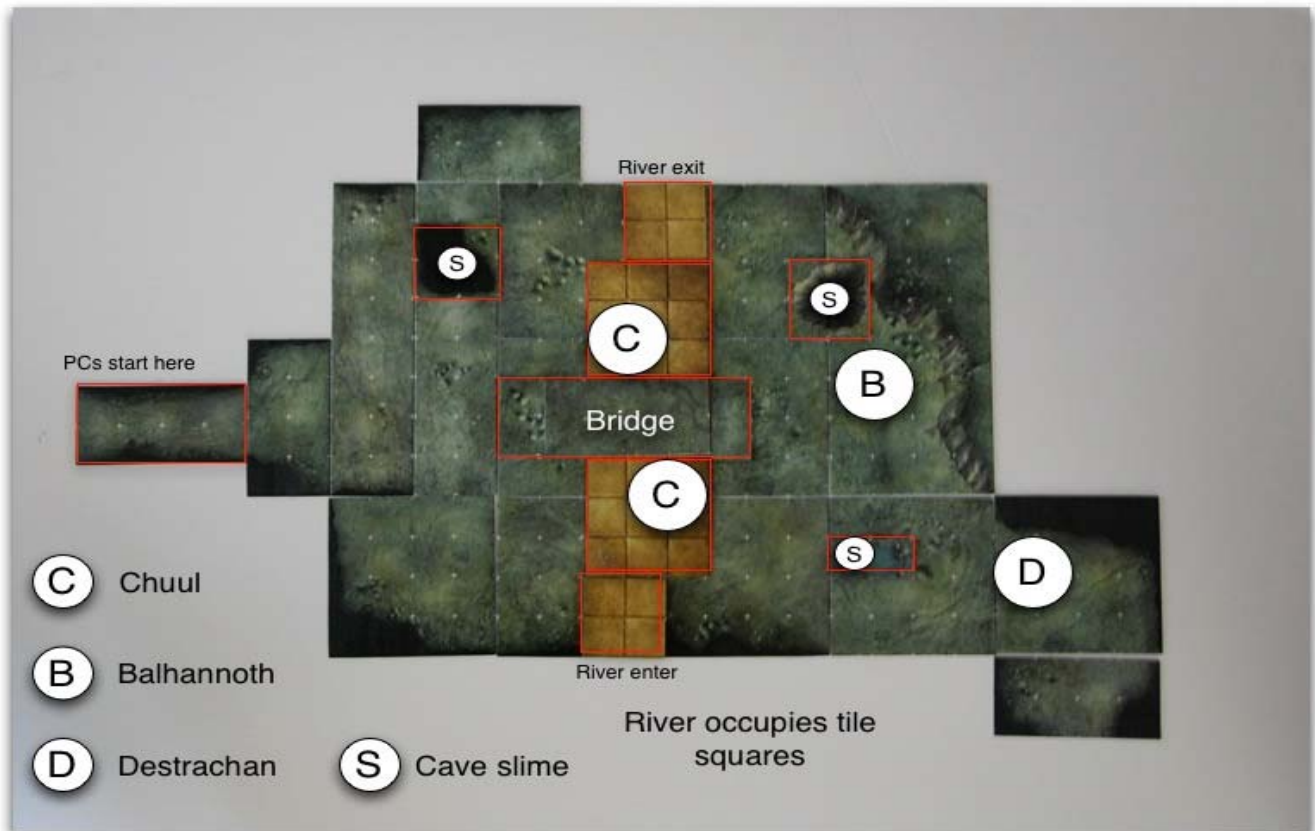
# ENCOUNTER 3: THE SEWERS MAP

## Caverns of the Underdark

Floor	4x2	x5
Floor	1x2	x1
Slime pool/Floor	1x2	x1
Pit	2x2	x1
Cave slime	2x2	x1
Floor/wall	4x4	x1
Floor	4x4	x2
Floor	4x8	x3
Floor/cliff	4x8	x1
Floor	2x8	x2
Floor	2x2	x1

## Dire Tombs

Floor	3x8	x1
Floor	2x2	x2



# ENCOUNTER 4: MASTER OF THE BEASTS

## ENCOUNTER LEVEL 12

### SETUP

This encounter includes the following creatures and traps.

- 1 Master of Beasts (Level 10 Elite Lurker)
- 2 Displacer Beasts (Level 9 Skirmisher)
- 4 Shadow Hounds (Level 11 Minion)
- 1 Bulette (Level 9 Elite Skirmisher)
- 2 Buzzcut Scythes (Level 8 Lurker)

After crossing the drainage pool from the Imperial Palace above, the catacombs continue. The long hallway twists and turns past several small antechambers of little note until light can be seen from ahead. The flicker of torch light casts dancing shadows across the entrance to the room beyond. Within this room is a large pit used by the Master of Beasts to train his pets. On the other side of the room is an exit to the outside. The sound of the sea, waves crashing against the cliffs below the Imperial Palace at Aerithmas, can be heard in the distance.

### READ ALOUD TEXT

*You round a corner and at last you think you spot the end of the catacombs. Torchlight illuminates twin doors, open inward towards the hallway, ahead. The smell of the sea is carried to your party by a cool breeze of fresh air.*

The Master of Beasts (Perception +7) is alert and has been waiting for the adventurers. He likely notices them when they round the corner towards the exit using his darkvision. He is disguised in the form of a thin, but muscular, older man, sporting a well-groomed goatee and loose-fitting colorful clothing.

When any of the party enters the room, continue:

*"Welcome, most honorable guests. You have come to my home, slain my pets, and now would raise your sword against me. How little you understand; but no matter. I challenge you to a duel: your crude weapons versus my most exquisitely trained creatures. I am the Emperor's Master of Beasts. Do you accept my challenge?"*

The "arena" is a large pit that the Master of Beasts trains his animals in. Two ramps lead down into the pit, the floor of which is one square below the main floor. Within the pit can be seen the hounds belonging to the Master of Beasts. The Master stands on one of the ramps where he addresses the adventurers. Additionally, two hallways that double back to the main room provide room to maneuver (though these have been rigged with Buzzcut Scythe traps, as detailed below).

At the far end of the room is a short hallway that ends at an exit to the outside. If it is daytime, light can be seen at the exit. Outside the exit is a small ledge next to a steep drop off that ends far below in the crashing surf. A tiny staircase, carved into the cliff, leads up to the Imperial Palace itself.

### FEATURES OF THE AREA

The Master of Beasts is prepared and has set traps for those who choose to engage him outside the arena.

**Illumination:** Four torches mounted on 5' poles, standing at each corner of the arena, provide bright light to the area. There is no light in the trapped corridors. Note that the torches will only emit dim light if they are within a shadow hounds Shroud of Night aura (5 squares).

**Arena:** The arena pit is one square below the main floor of the room; its surface is packed earth. There are two ramps leading down into the pit. Exiting the pit without using one of the ramps requires an Athletics check (Climb (DC 15) or Jump (DC 25) with a running start).

**Buzzcut Scythe traps:** There are two corridors that lead away from the pit. Both are trapped with scythe blades that trigger once against the first creature to enter the marked squares. See the end of the encounter for information on the traps.

### TACTICS

The Master of Beasts is prepared for the adventurers. He has gathered his best hounds (displacer beasts and shadow hounds) and prepared them to assault the adventurers. In addition, a trained bulette bursts from the ground during the fight and causes chaos by creating hindering terrain.

The Master tries to get the adventurers into the pit for a "fair fight." His plan is to corral the party into a pit area where the bulette can cause damage to several of them at once. He becomes invisible and attacks at range where possible in order to gain the upper hand.

When the adventurers first enter the room, place the Master of Beasts on the map using the miniature of a

Medium human: this is his disguise. The first time the Master of Beasts cancels his invisibility to attack the party, use a Large figure to show that he has dropped his disguise.

If the Master of Beasts can't get the adventurers to fight him in the arena, or if the party denies his challenge, he becomes invisible and initiates combat.

The displacer beasts work together to gain combat advantage and use their Beast's Fury ability. They have threatening reach and use that to try to limit movement of enemies as well.

The shadow hounds use teleport so that they can use their Baying power to affect as many PCs as possible without targeting allies (the hounds have Int 6 and use fairly intelligent tactics). They prefer to teleport next to lightly armored PCs which they can use their Bite and Shadow Ambush powers on.

The bulette, trained for years by the Master of Beasts, defends him and his allies, if possible. It burrows underneath enemies, attempting to knock them prone using its Earth Furrow power (move action). It surfaces using Rising Burst (standard action), creating difficult terrain in the process. It uses its action point the first time it knocks an enemy prone and can use its Bite power to make a standing long jump and attack a prone target.

The oni mage typically uses his powerful Freezing Blast and Lightning Storm abilities before becoming invisible, at which point he might use his Greatsword attack combined with his Combat Advantage ability. The Master of Beasts fights to the death, enraged that the party has slain his pets.

## CONCLUSION

Outside the exit, stairs lead up the cliff face to a back entrance to the Imperial Palace itself. However, the entrance is well guarded by dozens of men and beasts. The next step would seem to be to find the Rebellion and deliver the keys and writ to them. The adventurers will yet have vengeance for the death of their friend, Adray!

## TREASURE

If the adventurers search his body, they find a large brass ring with many keys on it and a piece of paper. The paper says, "By order of his Imperial Majesty, the Undying Ruler of the Empire of the Crimson Light, he who holds this writ may pass freely through the Gate of Sorrow and enter the Imperial Prison."

**Arcana (DC 15):** Reveals a magical aura on both the keys and the paper.

## READ ALOUD TEXT

When the PCs exit, they encounter the trap haunts from Encounter 2. Read the following:

*The ghosts, Sen and Lareth, thank you for completing their task. 'We are sure that these keys you have found will help the Rebellion in Copper Hill find the rebel who is being kept captive. Our time on this world has come to a close. We would like to help you before we go. Buried within the walls of this place, we found a chest.' One of the ghosts flies over to a corner of the room, phases into the ground, and then reappears. It points at the floor. 'Dig here and you shall find it. Farewell, friends.'*

If the adventurers dig at the appropriate area, they find a small wooden chest. The chest is unlocked. Inside they find a bag of holding which contains a set of *elven boots* and an *elven cloak*.

## ENCOUNTER 4: THE MASTER OF BEASTS STATISTICS

Oni Mage	Level 10 Elite Lurker
Large natural humanoid	XP 1,000
<b>Initiative</b> +10 <b>Senses</b> Perception +7; darkvision <b>HP</b> 172; <b>Bloodied</b> 86 <b>Regeneration</b> 5 <b>AC</b> 26; <b>Fortitude</b> 25, <b>Reflex</b> 24, <b>Will</b> 24 <b>Saving Throws</b> +2 <b>Speed</b> 7, fly 8 (clumsy) <b>Action Points</b> 1	
<b>m Greatsword</b> (standard; at-will) ♦ <b>Weapon</b> Reach 2; +15 vs. AC; 2d6 + 6 damage.	
<b>C Freezing Blast</b> (standard; recharge 6) ♦ <b>Cold</b> Close blast 5; +15 vs. Fortitude; 1d8 + 6 cold damage, and the target is slowed (save ends).	
<b>A Lightning Storm</b> (standard; recharge 5 6) ♦ <b>Lightning</b> Area burst 2 within 10; +15 vs. Reflex; 2d6 + 4 lightning damage.	
<b>Combat Advantage</b> The oni mage deals an extra 1d6 damage on melee attacks against any target it has combat advantage against.	
<b>Deceptive Veil</b> (minor; at-will) ♦ <b>Illusion</b> The oni mage can disguise itself to appear as any Medium or Large humanoid. A successful Insight check (opposed by the oni's Bluff check) pierces the disguise.	
<b>Invisibility</b> (standard; at-will) ♦ <b>Illusion</b> The oni turns invisible until it attacks.	
<b>Alignment</b> Evil	<b>Languages</b> Common, Giant
<b>Skills</b> Arcana +14, Bluff +15, Insight +12	
<b>Str</b> 22 (+11)	<b>Dex</b> 13 (+6) <b>Wis</b> 14 (+7)
<b>Con</b> 20 (+10)	<b>Int</b> 18 (+9) <b>Cha</b> 21 (+10)
<b>Equipment</b> chainmail, greatsword	

Shadow Hound	Level 11 Minion
Medium shadow magical beast	XP 150
<b>Initiative</b> +10 <b>Senses</b> Perception +9; darkvision <b>Shroud of Night</b> aura 5; bright light in the aura is reduced to dim light, and dim light becomes darkness. <b>HP</b> 1; a missed attack never damages a minion. <b>AC</b> 24; <b>Fortitude</b> 22, <b>Reflex</b> 20, <b>Will</b> 21 <b>Speed</b> 7, teleport 7 <b>m Bite</b> (standard; at-will) +15 vs. AC; 7 damage; see also shadow ambush.	
<b>Shadow Ambush</b> When the shadow hound teleports adjacent to an enemy, it gains combat advantage and deals an extra 1d6 damage on the next attack it makes against that enemy this turn.	
<b>Alignment</b> Unaligned	<b>Languages</b> –
<b>Skills</b> Endurance +11, Stealth +13	
<b>Str</b> 18 (+9)	<b>Dex</b> 14 (+7) <b>Wis</b> 8 (+4)
<b>Con</b> 11 (+5)	<b>Int</b> 6 (+3) <b>Cha</b> 16 (+8)

Displacer Beast	Level 9 Skirmisher
Large fey magical beast	XP 400
<b>Initiative</b> +11 <b>Senses</b> Perception +12; low-light vision <b>HP</b> 97; <b>Bloodied</b> 48 <b>AC</b> 23; <b>Fortitude</b> 21, <b>Reflex</b> 22, <b>Will</b> 20; see also displacement <b>Speed</b> 12 <b>m Tentacle</b> (standard; at-will) Reach 2; +13 vs. AC; 1d6 + 4 damage. <b>M Bite</b> (standard; at-will) +13 vs. AC; 1d10 + 4 damage. <b>M Beast's Fury</b> (standard; at-will) Requires combat advantage; the displacer beast makes two tentacle attacks and a bite attack against a single target.	
<b>Displacement</b> ♦ <b>Illusion</b> All melee and ranged attacks have a 50% chance to miss the displacer beast. The effect ends when the displacer beast is hit by an attack, but it recharges as soon as the displacer beast moves 2 or more squares on its turn. Critical hits ignore displacement. (See also shifting tactics.) <b>Shifting Tactics</b> (free, when an attack misses the displacer beast because of its displacement; at-will) The displacer beast shifts 1 square.	
<b>Threatening Reach</b> The displacer beast can make opportunity attacks against all enemies within its reach (2 squares).	
<b>Alignment</b> Unaligned	<b>Languages</b> –
<b>Skills</b> Stealth +14	
<b>Str</b> 18 (+8)	<b>Dex</b> 20 (+9) <b>Wis</b> 17 (+7)
<b>Con</b> 17 (+7)	<b>Int</b> 4 (+1) <b>Cha</b> 10 (+4)

Bulette	Level 9 Elite Skirmisher
Large natural beast	XP 800
<b>Initiative</b> +7 <b>Senses</b> Perception +5; darkvision, tremorsense 20 <b>HP</b> 204; <b>Bloodied</b> 102; see also second wind <b>AC</b> 27; <b>Fortitude</b> 26, <b>Reflex</b> 21, <b>Will</b> 21 <b>Saving Throws</b> +2 <b>Speed</b> 6, burrow 6; see also earth furrow <b>Action Points</b> 1 <b>m Bite</b> (standard; at-will) Before it bites, the bulette can make a standing long jump (as a free action) without provoking opportunity attacks; +14 vs. AC; 2d6 + 7 damage, or 4d6 + 7 [21] damage against a prone target. <b>C Rising Burst</b> (standard; at-will) Close burst 2; the bulette sprays rock and dirt into the air when it rises out of the ground; +13 vs. AC; 1d6 + 7 damage. <b>M Earth Furrow</b> (move; at-will) The bulette moves up to its burrow speed just below the surface of the ground, avoiding opportunity attacks as it passes underneath other creatures' squares. As it burrows beneath the space of a Medium or smaller creature on the ground, the bulette makes an attack against the creature: +8 vs. Fortitude; on a hit, the target is knocked prone.	
<b>Ground Eruption</b> The squares into which a bulette surfaces and the squares it leaves when it burrows underground become difficult terrain.	
<b>Second Wind</b> (standard; encounter) ♦ <b>Healing</b> The bulette spends a healing surge and regains 51 hit points. It gains a +2 bonus to all defenses until the start of its next turn.	
<b>Alignment</b> Unaligned	<b>Languages</b> –
<b>Skills</b> Athletics +16, Endurance +15	
<b>Str</b> 24 (+11)	<b>Dex</b> 13 (+5) <b>Wis</b> 12 (+5)
<b>Con</b> 22 (+10)	<b>Int</b> 2 (+0) <b>Cha</b> 8 (+3)

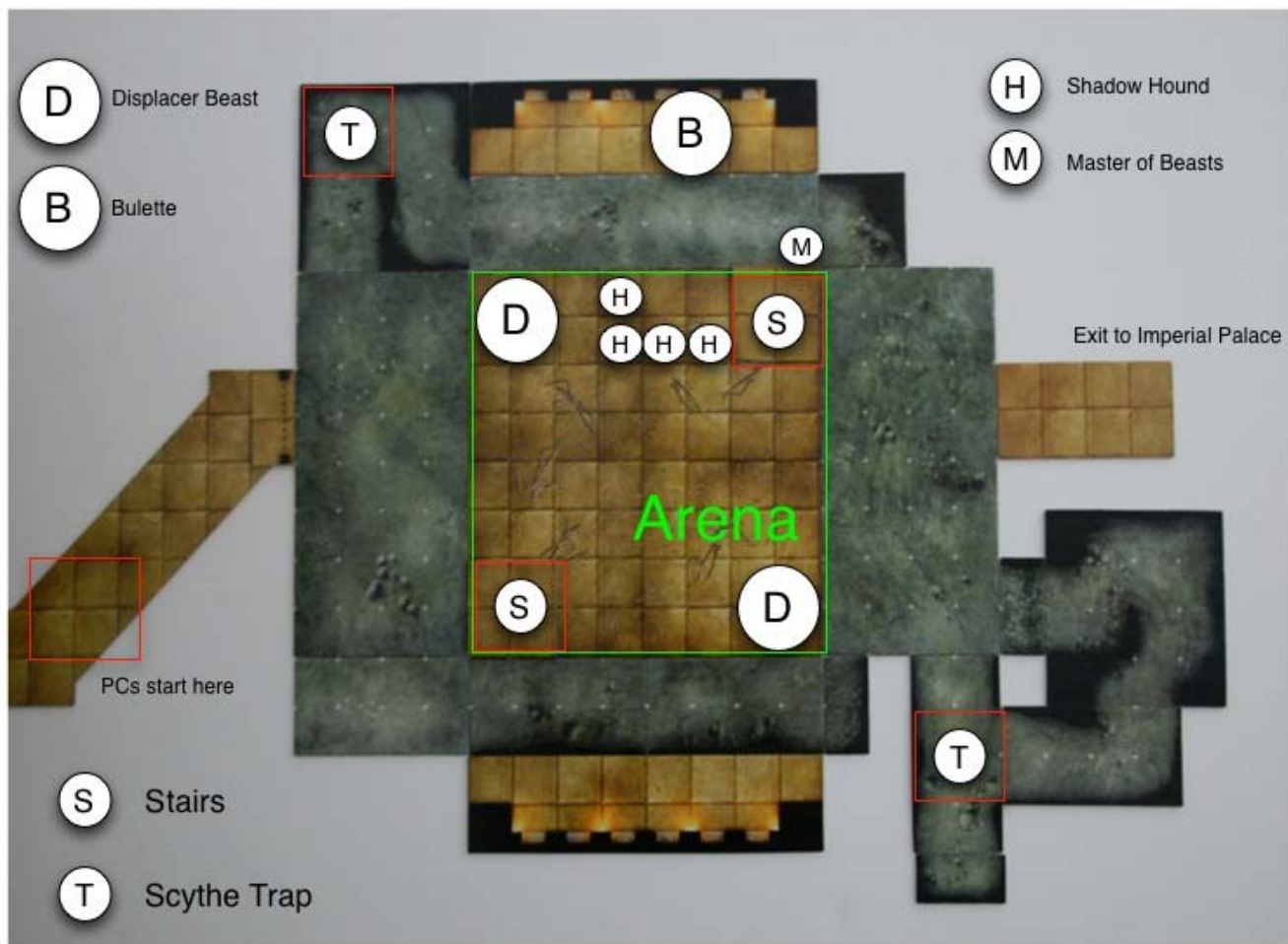
Buzzcut Scythe Trap	Level 8 Lurker XP 350												
<p>A large scythe swings out from the wall with a loud whirring noise and then disappears from view.</p> <p><b>Trap:</b> Each square protected by the scythe contains a pressure plate. Stepping on the plate triggers the scythe, which makes an attack on the triggering character's turn. The scythes reset each turn and continue to attack anyone in that square or who enter the trapped square. They attack only once per round.</p>													
<p><b>Perception</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆DC 19: The character notices a thin, shallow cut running across the dungeon ceiling.</li> <li>◆DC 24: The character spots a pressure plate on the floor. A character who makes a DC 15 Dungeoneering check recognizes the signs of a Buzzcut Scythe trap.</li> <li>◆DC 29: The character notices the hidden control panel for the pressure plate.</li> </ul> <p><b>Initiative:</b> +7</p>													
<p><b>Trigger</b></p> <p>The trap attacks when a creature enters one of the trigger squares or starts its turn on a trigger square. The trap uses a single pressure plate as its trigger. If a character is standing on the trigger pressure plate, a second character entering the trigger zone will not trigger the trap.</p>													
<p><b>Attack</b></p> <table border="0"> <tr> <td><b>Opportunity Action</b></td> <td><b>Melee</b></td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="2"><b>Target:</b> creature that triggered the trap.</td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="2"><b>Attack:</b> +13 vs AC</td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="2"><b>Hit:</b> 2d8 + 5 damage and secondary attack.</td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="2"><b>Secondary Attack:</b> +11 vs. Fortitude</td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="2"><b>Hit:</b> Push 1, knock target prone, and ongoing 5 damage.</td> </tr> </table>		<b>Opportunity Action</b>	<b>Melee</b>	<b>Target:</b> creature that triggered the trap.		<b>Attack:</b> +13 vs AC		<b>Hit:</b> 2d8 + 5 damage and secondary attack.		<b>Secondary Attack:</b> +11 vs. Fortitude		<b>Hit:</b> Push 1, knock target prone, and ongoing 5 damage.	
<b>Opportunity Action</b>	<b>Melee</b>												
<b>Target:</b> creature that triggered the trap.													
<b>Attack:</b> +13 vs AC													
<b>Hit:</b> 2d8 + 5 damage and secondary attack.													
<b>Secondary Attack:</b> +11 vs. Fortitude													
<b>Hit:</b> Push 1, knock target prone, and ongoing 5 damage.													
<p><b>Countermeasure</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆A character who makes a successful Athletics check (DC 10 or DC 15 without a running start) can jump over a single pressure plate square. To jump over two squares, the difficulty is DC 15 (or DC 25 without a running start).</li> <li>◆An adjacent character can disable the trigger plate with a DC 23 Thievery check.</li> <li>◆A character adjacent to the control panel can disable the entire trap with a DC 23 Thievery check.</li> <li>◆A DC 22 Dungeoneering check grants the party a +2 bonus to Thievery checks to delay or disable the trap.</li> <li>◆A character can attack a trigger plate or the control panel (AC 12, other defenses 10; hp 30; resist 5 all). Destroying the trigger plate renders it useless. Destroying the control panel destroys the trap.</li> </ul>													

# ENCOUNTER 5: THE MASTER OF BEASTS MAP

Two sets of stairs (S) lead down to the arena. The stairs both run east-west descending from the cave floor into the pit one square below.

## Ruins of the Wild

Floor	4x8	x2
Floor	2x4	x1
Floor/ Wall	2x8	x1
Floor	2x8	x1
Floor / T	2x4	x1
Dead end	1x2	x1
Floor / Wall (corner)	2x2	x1
Rubble	1x2	x1
Corridor / L shape	2x4	x1
Corridor / L shape	4x4	x2



# APPENDIX

The author suggests the following D&D Miniatures for this adventure's encounters:

## ENCOUNTER 1: WAITING FOR ADRAY

### Dungeons of Dread

Warrior Wight	x2
Vampire Spawn	x4
Death Knight	x1

## ENCOUNTER 3: THE CELLS

### Dungeons of Dread

Dire Wolf	x2
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### Desert of Desolation

Rage Drake (substitute for Carrion Crawler)	x1
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### Deathkneel

Fiendish Monstrous Scorpion	x2
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## ENCOUNTER 4: THE SEWERS

### Dungeons of Dread

Balhannoth	x1
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### Aberrations

Destrachan	x1
Chuul	x2

### Desert of Desolation

Visejaw Crocodile (substitute for Carrion Crawler)	x1
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## ENCOUNTER 5: THE MASTER OF BEASTS

### Desert of Desolation

Shadow Mastiff	x4
Mercenary General (oni disguise)	x1

### War of the Dragon Queen

Displacer Beast Pack Lord	x2
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### Dungeons of Dread

Bulette	x1
Oni (true form)	x1