

The Wizard's Amulet

5th Edition Rules,
1st Edition Feel



FIFTH EDITION
COMPATIBLE

By Clark Peterson & Bill Webb



NECROMANCER
GAMES

The Wizard's Amulet

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The Wizard's Amulet

Introduction

The Wizard's Amulet is a short, introductory adventure for six newly created good-aligned 1st-level characters. The adventure revolves around Corian, a fledgling Sorcerer. While an apprentice, Corian discovered a letter written by a wizard named Eralion, who it is said some years ago attempted to become a lich—and failed. Accompanying the letter was a mysterious amulet with strange markings. Joined by newfound companions, Corian set off in search of Eralion's keep and his supposedly unguarded treasure. But Corian is not alone in desiring to unlock the mystery of Eralion's fate. Darker, more evil forces have designs on the secrets reputedly hidden with Eralion—forces willing to stop at nothing to obtain... *The Wizard's Amulet*.

This adventure is designed to be used “out of the box,” meaning you can run it right away with little preparation time. *The Wizard's Amulet* is the perfect adventure for new GMs who want to try their hand at running their first adventure. Just follow the steps outlined in the section entitled **Using this Adventure** and you should be playing your first game within fifteen minutes!

The adventure itself covers several programmed encounters that Corian and his comrades face on the road from Reme to Fairhill, the purported location of Eralion's keep. The adventure culminates in an ambush by Corian's nemesis Vortigern who tries to capture Eralion's amulet by force. The adventure uses an **Act and Scene** format to facilitate ease of use with little preparation. Veteran GMs should feel free to flesh out the adventure and include events on the road not covered in this module.

Using this Adventure

This adventure requires some of the 5th Edition Rules. We presume you as the GM have spent some time familiarizing yourself with the rules. We presume you have called over a bunch of your friends and ordered some pizza. We also presume you have secured a good table as well as paper, pencils and all those funny dice we gamers love so much. You should also have a dry erase board or some other way to draw up the “battle map” for any encounters your character will face. A big pad of paper will do in a pinch. If you have lead figures or some other way to represent the characters we suggest you use them. We recommend that you print a hard copy of this adventure for your reference and copies of the pre-generated characters for your players' use. Now sit back, relax, break out the chips and dip (since the pizza is probably gone) and follow these steps. You should be playing within 15 minutes!

First, read the sections entitled **Notes for the GM** and **Adventure Background** to yourself, spending a few minutes becoming familiar with the plot line and the main nonplayer characters. Also, read **Corian's Supplemental Information** found at the very end of this module.

Second, pass out the pre-generated characters. (See the section entitled **Pre-generated Characters** at the end of this book.) You can do this one of two ways: you can either pick which six characters you want your players to play and let the players divide those six as they wish. Or you can

show them all of the pre-generated characters and let them choose which six to play.

You **must** include **Corian**, the sorcerer, in the party. You also should include Galdar, the cleric, in the party, though he is not essential.

If you decide to choose the six characters yourself, we recommend that in addition to Corian and Galdar you include at least two of the primary **fighters** as well as either Helman, Phelps, or Flarian the bard because of the importance of having a character with stealth skills. Playtesting demonstrates that this party composition gives the best chance of success. You should use no more than seven or eight total characters, with six being the optimal number. If you add more characters, you may have to increase the number of monsters encountered to keep the combat challenging. If you have fewer than six characters or if your players choose primarily noncombat characters, then you will need to reduce the difficulty of the encounters. Notes are provided to cover these situations.

Once the players have selected which characters they will play, you should give the player who is playing Corian a copy of **Corian's Supplemental Information**, found at the very end of this module. Make sure to keep the information private, since the contents are to be revealed at Corian's discretion.

Third, have the players familiarize themselves with their characters. The person playing Corian should pay particular attention to his or her backstory and to the letter from Eralion.

Fourth, read the section entitled **Player's Introduction** to yourself so you understand it and then read it aloud to your players.

Fifth, once you have read the **Player's Introduction** aloud, turn to the section titled **Running the Adventure** and play out the acts and scenes of the adventure in the order provided. You are officially under way.

Sixth, at the end of the night, use the section entitled **Concluding the Adventure** to wrap things up.

There you have it—fifteen minutes and you should already be adventuring!

Character Selection

Make sure someone plays Corian; encourage someone to play Galdar; don't hand out Corian's Supplemental Information until after the players have selected their characters.

Make sure at least two of your players select combat oriented characters. There is going to be plenty of fighting in this adventure, and the party will need to be able to handle it.

Generally you should stay out of the character selection process, but if two players want to play the same character, resolve it the old fashioned way: roll for it! The one rolling higher on a d20 gets to play the character.

If you want more information about continuing the story started by this adventure, about the system, or about **Necromancer Games** and our products, sections addressing these topics can be found at the very end of this module.

As a final matter, remember the **Necromancer Games** “golden rule”: *use what you want, discard or change the rest*. We have presented this

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adventure in a strict step-by-step format to make it easy to get that first game going without any hassle. But if you want to change some things around, go right ahead. In fact, we hope ambitious GMs will use this adventure as a campaign seed. Feel free to flesh out the city of Reme and to roleplay Corian's discharge from his apprenticeship and his investigation into Eralion and the amulet. Go ahead and play out the meeting between the various characters. Draw up an overland map and handle all the travel rather than just the programmed encounters provided by this adventure. Maybe even throw in a few nonplayer characters of your own. It's your world. Your players are just playing in it.

Notes for the GM

This section is primarily aimed at newer GMs, though reading the tips in this section may remind veteran GMs of how they learned these same lessons through much experience. Your players' characters will be mighty wizards, devout clerics, stout fighters and cunning rogues. But you are in a sense above even the greatest of these, for you are the shaper of the world in which your players adventure. It is your job to breathe life into these written words and make for your players a fictional reality into which they can immerse themselves.

Though players cannot function without a GM, it is also true that a GM cannot function without players. Thus, the best advice for a new GM is this: always remember that your adventures should be like cooperative stories written by both you and your players. You must work together for everyone to have fun. That doesn't mean you should break rules to make your players happy. What it does mean is that, like an enlightened ruler, you should adjudicate your games with fairness and graciousness. Your power should be unquestioned not because it is frequently exercised but rather because it is not. You should never be "out to get" your players. If your adventures are challenging and you run them fairly, you will be heralded as a great GM.

You have many hats to wear as the GM. First and foremost, as already mentioned, you are the fair arbiter of the rules. But you are also the person who plays all the monsters and nonplayer characters (NPCs) that the players encounter. Where the players play one (or at most two) characters, you will play many: the person met at the inn or on the road, the vile orc, the mischievous leprechaun, the evil cleric, the friendly wizard, the power-mad king and all the gods. You are, in short, everything except the player characters. When you are the thief, be cunning and dishonest, when the orc, cruel and chaotic, when the paladin, noble and chivalrous, when the town guard, loyal and stern. Inject as much of your own personality into your roles as possible. Always remember, however, to be fair both to the characters and to yourself. As one of the best GMs to ever run a game once said: "When playing a monster or an NPC, temper your actions with disinterest in the final outcome and play only from the viewpoint of that particular monster or NPC." Being a GM is challenging—requiring more skill than that of the best player—but it is equally rewarding. Learn to wear all of your hats well, and to be fair while doing so, and your players will enjoy themselves immensely.

To assist you, we have provided "side boxes"—material in the margins which are specific GM notes deserving of special attention. Here you will find important things to remember, monster tactics, trap summaries, highlights of rule changes in the new edition and other material of specific use to you as the GM. We hope these notes make running this adventure as easy as possible.

We have also provided "boxed text"—pieces of narrative to be read directly to your players to describe key encounter areas and events. Normally, we believe that GMs should describe encounters in their own words. However, since this adventure is designed to be used "out of the box" with little preparation time by novice GMs, we decided to include the boxed text. You should, of course, use your own words if you desire.

Also, because this adventure module is designed for people using the new edition of the game rules for the first time (both novice and veteran GMs) we have provided a large amount of step-by-step material to help you make sure you are using the new rules properly.

One final note: Do not let disputes swallow the gaming session. Since this adventure is designed to be one of your first adventures under the new rules, there is a greater chance that you or your players will not be entirely familiar with all the new rule changes. If a dispute arises, listen briefly to the party's complaint. If you can remedy their problem without unnecessarily bending the rules, then do so. The point of the game is for everyone to have fun. If you intend to rule against the party, explain to them that after the session you can all discuss the matter at length but that you need to make a decision now and continue play. Then make the decision. Remember that your decision for that session is final. Continue with play. If, after discussion following the session, you determine that your decision was incorrect, then you should do your best to remedy the faulty ruling. Either let the players replay the particular encounter or, if a character was killed, allow that character to return to life.

Rules exist for a reason. They must be enforced, but not at the cost of damaging friendships and ruining everyone's fun. A good GM needs to be firm in his or her rulings but at the same time not afraid to admit he or she was wrong and correct that wrong. Remember, as GM you are a fair judge, not an opponent.

But most of all have fun.

Adventure Background

Long ago, **Eralion** was a good and kind wizard. He was devoted to his patron deity, a god of law and righteousness. As the shadow of his death grew long and he began to sense his own mortality, Eralion's heart darkened and his desire for power and fear of death became greater than his devotion to his god. He turned his attention to ways to lengthen his fading life. He learned the rumor of the fabled Mushroom of Youth in the dungeon of *Rappan Athuk*, the legendary Dungeon of Graves, but he lacked the courage to enter those deadly halls. He researched *wish* spells, but he did not have the power to master such mighty magic, being himself a mage of only meager power.

Finally, in his darkest moment, Eralion turned to **Orcus**, the Demon-lord of the Undead, imploring the dread demon for the secret of unlife—the secret of becoming a **lich**. Orcus knew that Eralion lacked the power to complete the necessary rituals to become a lich, as Eralion had barely managed the use of a scroll to contact him in the depths of the Great Abyss in his Palace of Bones. Orcus smiled a cruel smile as he promised the secret of lichdom to Eralion. But there was a price. Orcus required Eralion to give to him his shadow. "A trifling thing," Orcus whispered to Eralion from the Abyss. "Something you will not need after the ritual which I shall give to you. For the darkness will be your home as you live for untold ages."

In his pride, Eralion believed the demon-lord. He learned the ritual Orcus provided to him. He made one final trip to the city of Reme to purchase several items necessary for the phylactery required by the ritual. While there, he delivered a letter to his friend **Feriblan the Mad**, with whom he had discussed the prospect of lichdom—though only as a scholarly matter. Feriblan, known for his absent-mindedness, never read the letter, but instead promptly misplaced it and its companion silk-wrapped item.

Eralion returned to his keep and locked himself in his workroom. He began his ritual, guarded by zombies given to him by Orcus—sent more to make sure Eralion went through with the ritual than to offer him aid. As he uttered false words of power and consumed the transforming potion, he realized the demon's treachery. He felt his life essence slip away—transferring in part to his own shadow, which he had sold to the Demon Prince. Eralion found himself Orcus' unwitting servant, trapped in his own keep. And there he would have stayed, forgotten by the world, had it not been for the actions of a lowly apprentice.

Some twenty years later, a young wizard's apprentice named **Corian** learned of Eralion accidentally. During his final days under his uncle's tutelage, Corian and his master had traveled to the library of Feriblan the Mad in the city of Reme. Corian was never pleased to visit Feriblan, for while there he was always forced to have contact

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with **Vortigern**, Feriblan's apprentice, and his loathsome raven familiar **Talon**. Luckily for Corian, this day he managed to avoid Vortigern. While perusing mundane documents in an outer sitting room as his master and Feriblan studied ancient scrolls, Corian nervously fiddled with a clasp on the back of a small reading stand. Quite to his surprise, a secret compartment opened which contained a small, bound piece of parchment and an item wrapped in silk cloth. Checking to see that his actions were unobserved, Corian slipped both items into the folds of his robe. The parchment proved to be the letter Eralion had left for Feriblan on his last visit before his ritual, and the item wrapped in the silk cloth an amulet of some unknown design.

The Sorcerer's Amulet?

Corian is a sorcerer with a draconic bloodline. He casts his spells with the aid of a focus: a special ring, staff, wand, weapon ... or amulet.

An interesting twist for this adventure and Corian's background would be if Eralion's amulet is somehow tied to the source of Corian's power! When Corian touched it for the first time, he felt a charge of arcane energy pass through him, and his powers as a sorcerer were truly awakened in that moment. What does this bode for the young sorcerer? Does this bond also link him with the powers of Orcus? Does the Demon Lord of the Undead have special plans for Corian? Who knows? It's your game and what this ultimately means is up to you!

Note that after Vortigern steals the amulet, Corian will be unable to cast spells that require material components until he acquires either a spell component pouch or another focus item. That can be a big disadvantage! Make sure the player using Corian is aware of this; no one is happy playing a certain type of character and then having the rug pulled out from under them!

Corian's actions, however, did not go unnoticed. Vortigern was fast becoming a wizard of some power. It was whispered that had the old wizard Feriblan not been mad, he would have discharged Vortigern from his apprenticeship long ago. It was believed—correctly—that Vortigern had learned all the skills of an apprentice and was remaining with Feriblan under the guise of an apprentice in order to have continued access to Feriblan's legendary library. Among the many musty volumes and forbidden tomes, Vortigern discovered a tract describing how to call forth an imp from the lower planes. Sacrificing the familiar that Feriblan had called for him, Vortigern summoned the small, devilish creature in secret to act as his familiar. The imp took the form of Vortigern's prior familiar—a raven—to prevent suspicion. It was this imp who, while in raven form, saw Corian take the amulet and parchment. Talon reported what he saw to his master, though neither knew the significance of the letter and the amulet at that time.

Freed from his apprenticeship, Corian returned to Feriblan. Taking the risk of asking a direct question of the addled wizard, Corian learned that Eralion was nowhere near powerful enough to become a lich. "Eralion! A lich?!" the old wizard exclaimed. "He was no apprentice, my son, but neither was he a mage with the mastery of the eldritch powers necessary for such a dangerous undertaking! If you have heard such rumors, boy, I shall put them to rest. The magics required for such a transition were far beyond his grasp." Once on the topic of his old friend, Feriblan spoke at length, though in a disjointed fashion. He told Corian of Eralion's keep near the village of Fairhill. Feriblan made reference to a staff that Eralion possessed which apparently had magical powers. He also mentioned that Eralion had never returned several valuable magical tracts and spell books. Corian left the old wizard determined to find this tower and the items it contained—for if Eralion was not a lich, the items should be there for the taking!

Once again, Corian's actions did not go unobserved.

Vortigern commanded his imp familiar Talon to watch the old mage

and Corian as they met together. And so it was that Talon overheard their conversation. Once informed by Talon, Vortigern guessed the connection between Corian's visit and the purloined letter and item. To solidify his suspicion, Vortigern commanded Talon to consult his devilish patron—Dispater—who confirmed that the amulet Corian possessed was somehow a link to Eralion's sanctuary within his keep.

Readying himself with the necessary equipment for travel to Fairhill, Corian visited a local tavern—the *Starving Stirge*. There he posted a notice seeking the aid of able-bodied adventurers willing to join him in an expedition to a wizard's tower. Promising an equal division of all gold recovered, he soon gathered a group of comrades-at-arms eager for adventure and glory. Corian was also joined by Galdar, a priest, who was instructed in a vision from his god to seek out Corian and to follow where the amulet led him. Someone or something, it appeared, had angered the God of Retribution. Corian was glad for his company.

But Corian was reluctant to give the full story to his new friends, having on more than one occasion seen Talon, the familiar of Vortigern, peering into his chamber window in raven form. Corian, worried that his theft of the amulet and letter had been seen by the wicked bird, did not wish to risk further discovery while still in Reme. The party set out from Reme some four days prior to the start of this adventure, with light hearts and heavy packs—only Corian nursing the nagging fear that Vortigern and his loathsome bird somehow knew of his goal.

Their hearts would not have been so light had they known of Vortigern's plotting, for Vortigern had not been idle. While Corian gathered his allies, Vortigern assembled several magical items and two unsavory companions. Delayed with his magical preparations, Vortigern and his henchmen set out from Reme two days behind Corian and his band, intent on recovering the amulet at any cost. And that is where our story begins ...

If you choose not to locate this adventure in your own world, the following description of the area will help you describe the setting to your players. Reme is a large port city on the eastern coast of an Inland Sea. The tradeway—a merchant road—runs directly east from Reme to the city of Bard's Gate and on toward the forest kingdoms of the east. North of the tradeway and running parallel to it lay the Stoneheart Mountains. South of the tradeway, and also parallel to it, is the river Greywash. The vale between the river and the mountains through which the tradeway runs is verdant green and dotted with pine forests, though the forests have mostly been cleared back from the road. Fairhill lies just north of the tradeway about 8 days march from Reme, approximately halfway from Reme to Bard's Gate. Hawks and falcons are a common sight, as are larger eagles. The vale is plentiful with game.

Players' Introduction

Read the following text to your players:

You have traveled four days from Reme with your newfound companions. Rain and cloudy weather have marred your travels since you left, slowing your pace and forcing you to keep off the main road and travel under the eaves of the light woods to the north of the tradeway. It seems odd at this time of year to have such strange weather. Sunshine can be seen on the far horizon, and you all have a feeling that something is amiss, as if a dark cloud is following you from Reme. Each of you thinks back to the *Starving Stirge*—the inn where you formed your fellowship. You shift your packs, which seem even heavier in the rain, and recall Corian's notice: "Seeking Fellow Adventurers," it read. "Companions to share in glory and gold and adventures unnumbered." As you look down at your muddy boots, you think to yourself that you would gladly trade Corian's promises of gold for dry clothes and a warm fire.

Running the Adventure

Now that you have read the **Player's Introduction**, proceed through the adventure presented below in **Act and Scene** format. Each scene begins with a section of boxed text to be read to your players. It then contains information for you to use to run the particular scene.

Act I: A Safe Haven

The First Watch

Weary from the long walk, you finally find a nice sheltered area and build your campfire. One of your scouts makes a quick catch of a small brace of conies and soon the smell of roasting rabbit wafts through the air. Each of you feels as if you can finally relax, rest your sore feet and change into dry clothing. It appears your luck may be changing.

The party makes their camp to get out of the rain. Draw up a map of a small clearing against the base of a hill, amidst a grove of trees. The small clearing is about 20 feet in diameter. The hillside is steep and gives protection from the wind and rain, and the light trees give some protection from the rain as well. Stress that the characters should take off their armor and stow their weapons to keep them dry. Make a point of mentioning rust and the problems of sleeping in armor. Ask the players what they do with their other equipment. Figure out where they build their fire—if they build it in the open of the clearing, they have trouble keeping it lit. The better location would be either against the hillside or by one of the trees under cover from the rain. Regardless of what your players decide to do, draw a map of the camp they set up. Ask the party if they set a watch and if so in what order the characters stand watch. Make them arrange their characters on the map—where they sleep, etc. Once this is determined, darkness begins to fall, leading to the next scene.

Act and Scene Format

Now all you have to do is proceed through the adventure scene by scene. Veteran GMs should feel free to flesh out actions between scenes as they see fit.

A Voice in the Darkness

Wait!

Before you read the boxed text, determine which encounter you are going to use—the leucrotta or the stirges.

Read the subsection entitled Encounter Modification, below, and determine what monster your players encounter. Then determine who has the first watch. If you decide not to use the leucrotta, read the boxed text provided under Encounter Modification. If you choose to use the leucrotta, then the person on watch has the following encounter:

Darkness falls, and the fire begins to die down. As the characters not standing watch drift off to sleep, a child's voice can be heard, crying in the darkness. Taking a brand from the fire, [the person on watch] leaves the fireside to investigate, when suddenly he is attacked from the rear by a hideous stag-like creature with the head of a badger, large, yellowish-gray fangs and demonic red glowing eyes. The beast smells of rotting corpses. Twenty feet away is another, larger than the first, crying in the voice that you thought was the child's. You are stunned that such a beautiful and innocent sound could come from so evil-looking a beast.

Encounter Modification: If you are a new GM and running the leucrotta encounter seems too complicated, then replace the leucrotta with 3 stirges. Note, however, that 3 stirges are more dangerous than one young leucrotta. Obviously, since the leucrotta are no longer involved, the player on watch is not lured away from the fire. Instead, the stirges come flying in with a horrible buzzing, concentrating their attacks on the character on watch. If the players encounter stirges they do not encounter the leucrotta and if they encountered the leucrotta they don't encounter the stirges. One encounter is enough for 1st-level characters! If you decide to use the stirges, read the following to your players:

With a horrible buzzing, three strange flying insects the size of large rats with bat wings, grasping claws, and hideous mosquito-like snouts swarm all around you. You shout to wake your comrades as the grotesque monstrosities are upon you—seeking your warm flesh with their evil beaks.

We are going to presume for the following description that you have chosen the leucrotta encounter. If you haven't, turn to the end of this section for information on running the stirge encounter.

Running the Leucrotta Encounter

OK, so here it is. The first encounter. If you are a new GM, this is probably your first time refereeing a combat. So you might be a little concerned about running the encounter properly. Even if you aren't a new GM, the recent edition of the rules is probably new to you. For these reasons, we have provided a substantial amount of detail on how to run this encounter step-by-step, so that novices and experts alike feel comfortable running the encounter under the new rules.

The person lured away from the camp has been drawn ten feet into the woods surrounding the clearing in which the party has made camp and there has been attacked by a young leucrotta. The mother leucrotta is making the noise of the crying child, drawing the character on watch right past where the young leucrotta is hiding, ready to spring. As the character passes by its hiding place, the young leucrotta jumps out of the darkness to strike. Though the boxed text makes it seem as if the character has been surprised by the leucrotta, that has yet to be determined.

Starting Combat: The first thing you need to do is determine if the character lured into the woods is aware of the leucrotta prior to the attack. See the sidebar "Determining Surprise" for instructions on how to find out whether the character is ambushed. The second leucrotta (the one making the noise) doesn't need to make a Dexterity (Stealth) check yet, because it's farther away and completely hidden by trees.

Surprise round: If the character is surprised then, he or she can't do anything during the first round of combat. In that round, the young leucrotta steps out of hiding and attacks the character from the rear with its bite. Don't forget that the leucrotta's bite is armor piercing—see its stat block for details.

Initiative: After the surprise round or if the character is aware of the leucrotta, you need to roll initiative. All combatants aware of each other must make Dexterity checks. The higher roll moves and attacks first. If there is a tie, you decide who goes first based on the situation—or, if you're not comfortable with that, you can just roll a tie-breaker. Record the order of initiative. Persons who subsequently enter combat roll initiative

Determining Surprise

Before revealing what's happening to the players, make a Dexterity (Stealth) check for the leucrottas; they have a +3 bonus on Stealth checks and they gain another +5 (total +9) for having advantage in this situation (the leucrottas get advantage because the character is focused on the sound of the child, and the crying animal is intentionally trying to misdirect the character away from its hidden partner). Compare the result to the character's passive Wisdom (Perception) score. The character notices the silent leucrotta in time to spoil its ambush if the character's passive Wisdom (Perception) score is higher than the leucrotta's Stealth check result. Otherwise, the character will be surprised and unable to do anything for one round when the leucrotta attacks. See the rulebook for the complete rules on surprise.

and are added to this ranking.

What the Young Leucrotta Will Do: If the character is not surprised, the leucrotta still takes the action described above—it steps forward and attacks. The leucrotta then, next round, turns around and retreats, using its kicking retreat attack. It hasn't mastered this technique, so it isn't nearly as dangerous as a fully grown leucrotta. If the kick knocks the character down, the leucrotta spins around and comes back to bite again! Being young, this leucrotta is easily distracted. If it encounters another character, it forgets about the initial victim and attacks the new target instead.

What the Mother Leucrotta Will Do: The other, larger leucrotta that's making the crying sounds is the young beast's mother, who stands about 20 feet away and watches to see how well her offspring has learned to fight. The mother joins in only if the youngster is killed or if she is attacked.

Ending the Combat: If the young leucrotta takes 6 points of damage or more, it tries to run away, and the mother follows a round later. If more than three player characters show up to fight against the young leucrotta, the mother calls out in their foul language and the two retreat. Finally, if the fight is going poorly for the party, the GM in his or her discretion can decide that the beasts have had enough practice and have them retreat (mercifully). If any of these occur, the GM should have the mother tease the party for the next two nights from the darkness beyond their campsite: the characters continually hear a baby crying off in the distance or a wounded animal in pain, but the leucrottas don't attack again.

The Leucrottas

YOUNG LEUCROTTA

CE Medium magical beast
Initiative +4

DEFENSE

AC 13
hp: 13 (2d10 + 2)

ACTIONS

Speed: 30 ft.
Melee Attack—Bite: +3 to hit (reach 5 ft.; one creature). *Hit:* 1d4 piercing damage.
Melee Attack—Kick: +7 to hit (reach 5 ft.; one creature). *Hit:* 1d6 bludgeoning damage and the target is knocked prone.

STATISTICS

Str 10 (+0), Dex 18 (+4), Con 8 (-1), Int 8 (-1), Wis 9 (-1), Cha 8 (-1)
Languages: Leucrotta
Skills: Deception +4, Stealth +3
Senses: Darkvision 60 ft.

TRAITS

Armor-piercing Bite: The bony ridges that a leucrotta has for

teeth can chew through metal or wood. When a leucrotta scores a critical hit with its bite attack, the target's armor or shield (GM's choice), if any, loses one point of armor protection; e.g., a damaged shield provides just one point of AC instead of two, or chainmail provides AC 12 + Dex mod instead of AC 13 + Dex mod. This damage is cumulative, but it can be repaired by an armorer for 20% of the armor or shield's new cost per critical hit inflicted on it. Magical properties continue to function while the armor or shield is damaged.

Kicking Retreat: When a leucrotta turns to flee, it instinctively kicks with both rear legs as a bonus action before racing away. The leucrotta still provokes an opportunity attack when it leaves a character's reach.

Mimic Voice (Ex) A leucrotta can mimic the voice of a man, woman, child, or a domestic animal in pain. This is often used to lure a victim into attack range. To mimic a voice, the leucrotta must make a Charisma (Deception) check opposed by the passive Wisdom (Perception) of any listeners. Characters who expressly try to determine whether the sound is mimicry can make an active Wisdom (Perception) check instead.

ECOLOGY

Environment: Temperate or tropical hills and mountains
Organization: solitary, pair, or pack (3-12)
Treasure: Standard

LEUCROTTA

CE Large magical beast
Initiative +2

DEFENSE

AC 14
hp: 39 (6d10 + 6)
Saving Throws: Dex +4, Con +5

ACTIONS

Speed: 40 ft.
Melee Attack—Bite: +7 to hit (reach 5 ft.; one creature). *Hit:* 1d8 + 2 piercing damage.
Melee Attack—Kick: +7 to hit (reach 5 ft.; one creature). *Hit:* 1d6 + 3 bludgeoning damage and the target is knocked prone.

STATISTICS

Str 14 (+2), Dex 14 (+2), Con 12 (+1), Int 8 (-1), Wis 9 (-1), Cha 8 (-1)
Languages: Leucrotta
Skills: Deception +8, Stealth +3
Senses: Darkvision 60 ft.

TRAITS

Armor-piercing Bite: The bony ridges that a leucrotta has for teeth can chew through metal or wood. When a leucrotta scores a critical hit with its bite attack, the target's armor or shield (GM's choice), if any, loses one point of armor protection; e.g., a damaged shield provides just one point of AC instead of two, or chainmail provides AC 12 + Dex mod instead of AC 13 + Dex mod. This damage is cumulative, but it can be repaired by an armorer for 20% of the armor or shield's new cost per critical hit inflicted on it. Magical properties continue to function while the armor or shield is damaged.

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ECOLOGY

Environment: Temperate or tropical forests or hills

Organization: solitary, pair, or pack (3d4)

Treasure: Standard

A leucrotta is a horrible, unbearably ugly beast. It has the body of a stag, the head of a badger and a leonine tail. It has bony, yellow-gray ridges for teeth and burning, feral red eyes. Their bodies are tan, darkening to black at the head. The stench of rotting corpses surrounds the beast and its breath reeks of the grave. A full-sized male can reach seven feet tall at the shoulder, though they average six feet. Other animals shun this foul creature.

Leucrotta are intelligent and speak their own language. They are evil and malicious. Because of their mountain goat-like surefootedness, leucrotta normally make their lair in treacherous, rocky crags accessible only to them.

Running the Stirge Encounter

The stirges are not particularly quiet. The character on watch hears the stirges' approach and is not surprised if his or her passive Wisdom (Perception) score is 12 or higher. The stirges concentrate on one victim until they drain enough blood to sate their thirst, at which time they detach themselves and fly away at one-half their speed—bloated from their recent feast. If an attached stirge sustains a hit and takes damage—even if not enough to kill it—that stirge detaches itself and flies away seeking less resistant prey elsewhere. See the Running the Leucrotta Encounter section above for information on initiative, surprise, surprise rounds, and other general advice.

Stirge: AC 13, hps 2; Blood Drain (+5, 1d4 + 2 and 1d4 + 2 at start of stirge's turn).

See the 5th Edition rules for the stirges' complete stat block.

GM Tip

You should get into the habit of drawing up the night's campsite on the battle map even if you know there won't be an encounter. Otherwise, players quickly figure out that you only draw the map when they're about to be attacked. Keep them on their toes. Don't ignore drawing up the map just because you know there is nothing special about this hill.

The Smiling Skull

You have driven off the beasts, though some of you are wounded. You know that you must get out of this wilderness soon. You travel for two more days [until finally, those haunting, childlike cries are behind you]. At last, the weather starts to clear, and as you stop for a water break along a stream, you see a strange rock formation atop a hill to the west. You can't be sure, but from your current angle it looks as if the rocks have been placed purposefully. You venture closer and discover that someone has arranged large rocks on the top of the hill in the shape of a grinning human skull.

This is a red herring and has nothing to do with this adventure. In fact,

it is an homage to a classic old adventure, which had just such an arrangement of stones on the hill in which a certain tomb was located. The party may wish to waste a lot of time and energy here, but there is nothing to find. One of the rocks, however, has been enchanted with a *hallow* spell that causes fear. Every creature that approaches within 10 feet of the stone skull must make a DC 17 Charisma saving throw. Characters who succeed are unaffected, but those who fail become frightened of the arrangement of stones (as the frightened condition), so they refuse to get closer than 10 feet to the skull and they have disadvantage on ability checks and attack rolls while the skull is within their line of sight. The spell also causes the area to detect as moderate evocation magic if someone casts a *detect magic* spell.

Act II: A Bird in the Hand

A Pleasant Camp

Today's travels were a pleasant change from the previous four days. You even found some fresh blueberries and two of your group downed a small deer. You make camp in the open, near a copse of trees, and bask in the warmth of the late afternoon sun with full bellies and dry clothes. You figure your party is still four days' travel from Fairhill.

At this point, draw up a camp on the battle map. Feel free to modify the clearing map provided for the previous encounter. Talk about a proposed watch order, as if you are going to proceed to spending the night. Once those matters are all settled, continue on to the next scene.

Corian's Tale

As the sun drops below the horizon and the fire dims, Corian asks you all to gather. You have been waiting for Corian to explain more of his purpose behind the formation of your group, wondering at his true motives. Before tonight, he has always rebuffed your questions, saying that he will speak further when you are far from prying eyes and ears in Reme. It appears that time has come.

This scene is entirely for the players, and you should stay out of it as much as possible. Let the player who is playing Corian tell as much or as little of Corian's backstory as he or she wishes. Encourage the player to speak to the group extemporaneously rather than simply reading from the provided background sheet. But remember that this is probably the first major block of roleplaying in this adventure and that it is being done with pregenerated characters, not characters the players made themselves, so the Corian player has less of a connection than usual with his or her character.

Let the other players ask questions of Corian. The length of this scene should be dictated entirely by the interaction of the players. Just sit back and watch. You should only intervene if Corian's player makes an obvious mistake. But even in that situation, don't correct it immediately—the player may be having Corian lie on purpose. Let them, not you, bring the scene to a conclusion. Just as they seem to be coming to a comfortable conclusion, shift immediately to the next scene.

Talon

Just before Corian finishes speaking, one of you notices that you are not the only listeners. About fifteen feet away is the largest raven you have ever seen, and its eyes glow with red fire. You jump up, frightened, as the raven flies off into the night with a shriek. This must be Talon, the familiar of Corian's nemesis, Vortigern. You fear that your enemies are near at hand.

There is no way the PCs can kill Talon now; he automatically gets away in the round it takes the characters to grab their weapons. He turns invisible and flies away at full speed. Play up the fear of the impending attack which never comes and make them hear plenty of "things that go bump in the night" for the rest of the night (2–3 noises disturb the watch). Vortigern, however, remains a day behind the group and does not appear until **Act III**. He sent Talon ahead to scout ... successfully, it seems.

The characters may be frightened into traveling at night—which is unwise. If they do, halfway through the night they are attacked by **3 stirges**. The stirges are completely unrelated to Vortigern and Talon and are a random encounter. The party does have this encounter if they remain in their camp through the night. Use the stirge statistics from the alternate encounter described in the **Encounter Modification** section of the **Voice in the Darkness** scene, above.

Act III: Vortigern's Trap

The Farmhouse

You have traveled two days and nights since the attack at your camp, drawing within two days' travel of Fairhill. Finally, you feel as though your enemies have lost your trail. You see a farmhouse off in the fields, near the woods, and you decide to see if the farmer will let you rest in his barn for the night. As you approach the small dwelling, you notice that something is terribly wrong. The farmer—or what is left of him—lies in the front yard of the home, partially eaten and missing one arm. His wife and three small children lie in contorted positions, the smallest boy completely disemboweled. Blood covers the hay in the yard, and a chicken pecks at the corpse of a young girl lying in front of the barn.

You need to **draw this map**. Depict a simple farm dwelling with one door and several windows, as well as a barn, with an open front and small three-foot high wooden-fenced pen enclosing the front area. The gate in the wooden fence is open, allowing the animals out of the barn and pen. The farmer's body lies in front of his home. His wife's body and two of their children lie just inside the door to the farmhouse. Their young daughter's body is inside the animal pen in front of the barn.

Examination of the bodies by a character with training in Medicine skill or by any fighter familiar with combat wounds easily determines that they were all killed with swords or axes and that the murderers were enthusiastic in their work. A successful DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) check reveals that two of the children have dagger-like wounds that drip a strange poison. Following that up with a successful DC 15 Wisdom (Medicine) check reveals that the poison is from some magical creature. If the Wisdom check fails, the character doesn't recognize the poison.

Searching the House: Four pigs, 30 chickens, and a draft horse are

running loose around the farm. In the trees a few hundred feet away—in the opposite direction of Vortigern—are 3 cows. There is little of value in the house. An old short sword hanging above the fireplace is in fact a +1 *short sword*, though it has no outward appearance of being magical. A skillfully hidden compartment in the bed can be found with a successful DC 20 Wisdom (Perception) check. It contains 22 silver and 45 copper pieces. Two lanterns and numerous other dry goods are about as well. If the party buries or consecrates the bodies, they won't have to fight these zombies when Vortigern springs his trap (see **Ambush!**, below), but there are other zombies besides these. If they wish to search or bury bodies, let them do so. As soon as they either make camp at the farm or leave the farm to make camp somewhere else, proceed to the next scene immediately. Don't let the party get set up inside the house. The encounter with Vortigern is at hand...

GM Tip

There is a really cool picture of the farmhouse included. You should show it to your characters as they approach. Hey, we give you this art for a reason. Use it!

Draw This Map

Use the farmhouse picture and the description here to help you. Make sure that off to one side of the farmhouse (we suggest to the left, a little to the back) you place a copse of trees about 60 feet away. This is where Vortigern is hiding to set up his ambush.

Ambush!

All right, here it is—the grand finale. But before we begin the fight itself, a little background is in order.

Vortigern's Plan: Vortigern orchestrated this encounter to get the amulet from Corian. He has underestimated the party and believes he can simply take the amulet by force. Vortigern and his thugs have been following behind the characters for some time. Using Talon as a scout, Vortigern learned the party's direction of travel. Projecting the party's path, Talon scouted and found this farmhouse. Vortigern and his thugs came here and slaughtered the farmers, figuring that would draw Corian and his comrades to investigate—setting the perfect trap. Using *scrolls of animate dead* stolen from Feriblan's library, he animated the farmer and his family as zombies and ordered them to literally "play dead" until he utters the word that commands them to rise and attack.

So far the plan has worked exactly as Vortigern envisioned. Vortigern plans to summon additional undead to surround the characters while he and his thugs hide in the nearby trees and fire missiles and spells at them. He then intends to send Talon to retrieve the amulet from Corian. In preparation for this encounter, Vortigern casts *mage armor* on himself. See his description for more details.

Ambush!



Once the characters start to make camp or start to bury the bodies of the farmers, you need to think about having Vortigern spring his trap as detailed in the next scene. Take a break (it will put your players at false ease), read the next section, and decide what you want to do.

Encounter Difficulty: Now that you know the basics of Vortigern's plan, you have to decide how difficult you want the combat to be.

Difficult: This level of difficulty should be used only if your players are veterans and if they are relatively uninjured going into the combat. Now is a good time to remember the GM advice we gave you at the beginning of the adventure—don't be out to get your players. Only use this level of difficulty if your players can handle it. If you decide on using this level of difficulty:

- Vortigern springs the trap at the most strategically advantageous time—just as the characters are burying the farmers' bodies (which veterans will certainly do).
 - Vortigern leans toward attacking after dark if the players are still outside, since all his allies have darkvision.
 - Vortigern knows the whereabouts of every character because Talon, who has been flying around invisible, is telling him this information telepathically.
 - The thugs shoot into the circle of skeletons, unconcerned about possibly hitting the undead. Characters can't get any cover bonus by sheltering behind skeletons or zombies.
 - Vortigern concentrates his spells against Corian. The only exception is if someone charges Vortigern's location.
 - Vortigern commands Talon to use his sting attack on Corian; he can wait to recover the amulet until after the sorcerer is dead.
- This is probably the most true to what Vortigern would do in this

situation. It is also probably going to result in one or two dead characters. Don't worry. If you continue on to Fairhill, Shandril the priestess can raise them from the dead. Though there might be a small price...

Average: This is the default level of difficulty and the one that you should use unless your players are veterans. You may even use this level of difficulty if your players are veterans but several of the characters are injured. The general set up is the same as above, with the same number of foes, except:

- Don't send Talon out to use his sting on Corian. Send Talon out invisibly to retrieve the amulet.
- Have Vortigern use his *ray of sickening* on Corian, but have him reserve his *witch-fire bolt* for his own protection if someone charges him. He uses *ray of enfeeblement* on a fighter.

At this difficulty, Vortigern has not been using Talon as an invisible spy, so he might not know the location of all the characters. He, therefore, might not spring the trap at the best possible time—meaning that all the characters may not be inside the circle of summoned skeletons.

Easy: If your players are all new to D&D or if they have some experience but several of the characters are injured, you should use this level of difficulty. At this level of difficulty:

- Vortigern has only one thug with him.
- Vortigern doesn't cast any offensive spells at Corian.
- Vortigern sends Talon out to steal the amulet, but Talon is visible.
- Vortigern fails to surround all the characters within the ring of summoned skeletons.
- There are only 4 skeletons, not 5.
- Vortigern did not animate the farmer and his family as zombies.
- If someone charges Vortigern's location, the thug with Vortigern flees rather than defending him.

Starting the Encounter:

Watch what your players do around the farmhouse. When it seems like a good time to spring the trap, read the following text:

As you move about the farm, Corian suddenly hears a familiar voice. He looks over and sees Vortigern and two large men with bows drawn, just inside the cover of the surrounding woods some 60 feet away. Vortigern has his familiar—the devil-eyed raven—perched on his shoulder and he is reading a scroll. As Vortigern finishes reading the scroll, the raven transforms into a small, devilish, winged creature and with a hideous shriek flies off Vortigern's shoulder and immediately goes invisible. Instantly, the ground comes alive.

Skeletal hands claw through the ground and skeletons begin to encircle the party.

Read the following only if the farmer's bodies were not buried and if you are not using the *Easy* difficulty setting:

The corpses of the dead farmers also rise and move slowly towards you.



wounds, scroll of animate dead, scroll of conjure animals, +1 dagger

Vortigern

XP 800

Male human wizard (necromancer), level 3
LE Medium Humanoid
Initiative +1

DEFENSE

AC: 11 (14 after casting *mage armor*)
hp: 17 (3d8 + 3), or 24 after casting *false life*
Saving Throws: Int +5, Wis +2

ACTIONS

Speed: 30 ft.
Melee Attack—Dagger: +3 to hit (reach 5 ft.; one creature).
Hit: 3 (1d4 + 1) piercing damage.
Ranged Attack—Dagger: +4 to hit (range 20 ft./60 ft.; one creature). *Hit:* 4 (1d4 + 2) piercing damage.

STATISTICS

Str 10 (+0), **Dex** 13 (+1), **Con** 12 (+1), **Int** 16 (+3), **Wis** 10 (+0),
Cha 12 (+1)
Languages: Common, Abyssal,
Skills: Arcana +5, Insight +2

TRAITS

Life Harvest: When Vortigern kills a creature with a spell (not a cantrip), he regains hps equal to 2x the spell's level, or 3x the level if the spell is from the school of Necromancy. Vortigern can regain hit points this way once per turn, but never for killing undead or constructs.

Spellcasting: Vortigern is a level 3 wizard whose arcane tradition is necromancy. His attack bonus with spells is +5; saving throws against his spells are DC 13. Vortigern prepares the following spells:

Cantrips (at will): *blade warding, chill touch, shocking grasp*
1st level (x4): *false life, mage armor, ray of sickening, witch-fire bolt*

2nd level (x2): *blindness/deafness, ray of enfeeblement*
Combat Gear: *dust of disappearance, potion of cure light*

ECOLOGY

Environment: Any
Organization: Solitary, but accompanied by 1-2 bodyguards and 1-10 undead
Treasure: 123 gp

Talon (Imp Familiar)

An imp is a more powerful familiar than a 3rd-level wizard would typically have. Talon, however, comes with a significant drawback. Vortigern has grown psychically dependent on his telepathic link to the imp. If Talon is killed, Vortigern has disadvantage on all ability checks, attack rolls, saving throws, and skill checks until the end of the combat.

Grenag and Slaaroc

Grenag and Slaaroc are half-orc thugs who work for Vortigern. Besides doing most of his menial labor and heavy lifting, they also act as his bodyguards and bully-boys when danger threatens.

Half-Orc: AC 14, hps 10; Greataxe (+3, 1d12 + 1) or Heavy Crossbow (+2, 1d10). See the 5th Edition Rules for the half-orcs' complete stat block. For Grenag and Slaaroc, use the half-orc racial baseline stat block but give each of them an extra 5 (1d8) hit points.

5 Skeletons

Vortigern prepared the site by burying five animated skeletons around the spot where he intends to ambush Corian.

Skeleton: AC 11, hps 13; Longsword (+2, 1d8) or Shortbow (+4, 1d6).

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See the 5th Edition Rules for the skeletons' complete stat block.

s Zombies

Besides the skeletons, Vortigern also animated the corpses of the slain family as zombies, although that fact won't be obvious to the player characters until the zombies attack. If characters bury the bodies quickly or sanctify them with religious rites before Vortigern can spring his ambush, then the zombies don't take part in the final battle.

Adult Zombie: AC 8, hps 22; Fist (+2, 1d4 + 1).

Child Zombie: AC 8, hps 14; Fist (+2, 1d4).

See the 5th Edition Rules for the zombies' complete stat block. Note that the three zombies created from the children have only 14 hit points apiece, and their fist attacks cause only 2 (1d4) bludgeoning damage.

Summary of Tactics:

Before we spell out the combat step-by-step, here is a summary of what the various combatants do.

Vortigern: Vortigern uses his spells from a distance, focusing first on taking out Corian, as detailed in the difficulty level you selected. He uses the trees on the fringe of the farm to gain three-quarters cover, which gives him +5 to his AC. Vortigern prepares himself by casting *mage armor* and *false life* prior to the encounter. He should be very difficult for characters to hit from distance. If the battle goes against him, he uses his *dust of disappearance* to escape. If Talon recovers the amulet, Vortigern and Talon flee; Vortigern using his *dust of disappearance* and Talon simply becoming invisible. See the section entitled **Escape?** below.

Difficulty Level

This encounter can kill characters. So before you run it, you need to pick the difficulty level. The default level of difficulty is Average. Don't use the Difficult level without good reason.

Vortigern's Thug(s): Neither of Vortigern's thugs engages the party in hand-to-hand combat unless directly attacked. They prefer to shoot their heavy crossbows into combat, letting the summoned undead handle melee. Vortigern and his thugs take advantage of the natural cover provided by the grove of trees, but they get only half cover while using their crossbows. If any members of the party break through the ring of undead and charge Vortigern's location, the two thugs drop their bows and engage any such characters to prevent them from reaching Vortigern. They foolishly protect Vortigern with their lives. He, of course, won't hesitate to leave them behind to save his own skin.

The Undead: The skeletons emerge from the earth in a ring around the player characters, encircling them. If the party is in the process of burying the farmers when Vortigern springs his ambush, they attack inside of the ring of skeletons (unless you are running the encounter as *Easy*, in which case there are no zombies). The skeletons and zombies (if present) attack the characters mindlessly. Remember that the zombies are not present if the characters buried and consecrated the bodies of the farmers prior to Vortigern launching his trap. Of course, on seeing what the characters are up to, Vortigern would most likely spring his trap immediately, before his zombies are neutralized.

Talon: Vortigern telepathically commands Talon to attempt to steal the amulet from Corian—or whoever else obviously possesses it. If you are running the encounter as *Easy*, then Talon is visible, otherwise he uses his invisibility. To get the amulet, Talon first uses his infernal counsel ability, suggesting to the amulet's bearer that the amulet would be safer if tossed on the ground. Talon is invisible when he does this, so don't tell the players what's happening. Just ask the character who has the amulet to make

a DC 12 Wisdom saving throw. You don't even need to tell the player that this saving throw is against being charmed, although you can if you run a completely open table. If the character has special bonuses against being charmed, you need to take those into account—for example, if the character is an elf, you can tell the player to roll twice for the saving throw without indicating whether the double roll is because they have advantage or disadvantage. If the saving throw fails, the character must spend his or her next action removing the amulet and tossing it to wherever Talon suggested. The imp then simply scoops up the amulet and flies away with it. If the saving throw succeeds, the character is aware of a vague whispering regarding the amulet—no one else can hear it. To get the amulet after that, Talon must make a successful melee attack against the character to steal the amulet if it is exposed (remember that attacking causes the imp to become visible). If the amulet is concealed inside a pouch or under someone's armor, then the attack roll is made with disadvantage.

Note that using infernal counsel causes the imp to become visible, but that doesn't necessarily mean anyone spots him. The characters have their hands full dealing with the undead all around them, and the imp is skillful at not being noticed (Stealth +5). When Talon becomes visible, make a Dexterity (Stealth) check for him and compare it to the characters' passive Wisdom (Perception) scores. Talon is noticed only by characters whose scores are higher than the imp's Stealth check result; the situation remains unchanged on a tie, which means characters don't notice the creature. Talon avoids notice by staying low, by staying behind nearby characters, and by keeping Corian between him and the others.

Once the imp has the amulet, he flies away with it. Retrieving the amulet is his primary goal, no matter who has it. If you are running the encounter as *Difficult*, Talon tries to kill Corian with his sting if he can't find the amulet. But even at *Difficult*, Talon's number one concern is always seizing the amulet.

Aside from stinging (if you are running the encounter as *Difficult*) or trying to snatch the amulet, Talon does not fight directly unless wounded or cornered, because Vortigern commanded him not to. If frustrated in his attempt to obtain the amulet and injured in combat, Talon flees to Vortigern. He does not want to risk being killed—that would damage Vortigern and would result in his imprisonment in Hell for 66 years before he would be allowed to serve as a familiar again, and he likes his current job here on the Material Plane. If Talon does get the amulet, he becomes invisible and returns to Vortigern, and the two flee. See the section entitled **Escape?** below.

Running the Combat

You got a taste of running combat with the leucrota/stirge encounter. Now things get tricky—multiple opponents, missile fire, and NPC spell casters. If you can run this encounter, then you have definitely graduated from the novice GM ranks. It's our job to help you do it. So here are step-by-step instructions on running this encounter. Even experienced GMs should appreciate having this encounter spelled out.

Determining Surprise: At this point, make one Dexterity (Stealth) check for Vortigern and one more for both of the half-orcs. Make a note of these results, because they might be important later in the encounter. The imp is invisible and the undead are either buried or indistinguishable from being dead, so they don't need to make the check. Vortigern's Dex bonus is +1 and the thugs' bonus is +0, but they get an additional +5 for advantage in this situation (they have excellent cover and they had plenty of time to conceal themselves). Compare these two results to the characters' passive Wisdom (Perception) scores to see which, if any, of the NPCs are noticed before the ambush is sprung. If Vortigern isn't noticed by any of the PCs, then the necromancer gets a surprise round. The same goes for his two thugs. If Vortigern and his allies are noticed by some characters but not by others, then only those characters who spotted at least one enemy can act during the first round.

Surprise Round: Vortigern should manage to surprise at least some members of the party. On the first round, Vortigern commands the buried skeletons to rise and attack. They are buried so shallowly that they can rise from the ground as easily as standing up (using half their movement) and still move up to 15 feet and attack. The zombie farmers lurch into action as well, also rising and attacking. Vortigern and the thugs stay inside the cover provided by the fringe of trees. The thugs will shoot their crossbows, thus revealing their positions if they hadn't been spotted. Vor-

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tigern, however, stays under heavy cover and doesn't do anything to give away his position. If none of the characters noticed him with their passive Wisdom (Perception), then the only way they'll spot him is by making active Wisdom (Perception) checks against Vortigern's original Dexterity (Stealth) check result. (You wrote it down, right?)

First Regular Round of Combat: Have everyone make an initiative roll, if they haven't done so already. Make the initiative list in order of initiative from top to bottom. This round, Vortigern casts *ray of sickening* at Corian (unless you are using the *Easy* level of difficulty, in which case he just watches). The thugs reload, stay behind the trees, and launch another round into melee. The skeletons and zombies attack. If any characters try to run past the skeletons or zombies, they open themselves up to attacks of opportunity, even if the skeletons or zombies have already attacked!

Subsequent Rounds of Combat: Here is what we suggest the combatants do. This isn't a script, however. These NPCs are under your control, and you're free to run this fight as you think best. If a different plan of action seems better, use it!

The Undead: The skeletons continue to stay in a circle around the characters, attacking them. They take attacks of opportunity on any characters that pass by them—always taking the first attack of opportunity they can. They are too mindless to delay their attacks of opportunity. They continue to fight until they are destroyed.

The Thugs: The thugs continue to reload and shoot their bows at the characters. If any character has broken free from the circle of skeletons, the thugs focus their shots on those characters. If a character moves within 30 feet of their location, they drop their bows and draw their axes. They remain in front of Vortigern and protect him.

Vortigern: Vortigern uses his spells to best advantage. His main target is Corian. If Talon hasn't recovered the amulet yet, then Vortigern keeps attacking Corian in an effort to aid the imp, probably by casting *blindness* on the sorcerer. If another character is destroying Vortigern's undead rapidly in melee, the necromancer might use *ray of enfeeblement* against that character. If a person gets close enough to engage in melee with his two thugs, Vortigern steps back into the woods, out of view from the ring of skeletons. He'll cast *witch-fire bolt* at anyone who charges toward him, or to keep an enemy away from his thugs if the undead are doing well and Vortigern has reason to believe Talon will secure the amulet. If things get tough, the necromancer uses his *dust of disappearance*. He does not actually flee, however, until Talon recovers the amulet, Talon is injured and forced to retreat, or his thugs are killed. Then he flees. See the section entitled **Escape?** below.

Talon: Talon directs all his attention toward whichever character is wearing the amulet openly, which probably is Corian. If no one is wearing it openly, Talon uses his infernal counsel ability on Corian to ask who has it. If that doesn't work, then all the imp can do is to retreat and wait for the others to kill everyone so he can search the corpses. If he is injured, Talon flees back to Vortigern. Vortigern is more concerned with keeping Talon alive than with finding the amulet today. He can always try again to capture the amulet on another day, but if Talon is killed, it might be years before Vortigern can get another imp to sign on as his familiar.

Ending the Combat

Basically, you just have to play this out until one of four things happens: everyone in the party dies, all of the bad guys are killed (which would be quite an accomplishment), Vortigern and Talon get away with the amulet, or Vortigern and Talon run away without the amulet. Once any of these conditions occur, go to the next section entitled **Escape?** Everyone agrees that the first ending (the party dies) is not very fun. So how do we avoid that result without using some cheesy "bolt from the blue" to save the party? Easy—use an "escape hatch."

Escape Hatch: Facing all those undead, two crossbow-shooting half-orcs, an invisible imp, and a 3rd-level wizard is a daunting prospect for 1st-level characters. What can you do if things are really going poorly for the party? Here are a few suggestions:

- Commanding this many undead is taxing for a necromancer of Vortigern's level. If it has been several rounds of combat, or if Vortigern comes under direct attack, you could have several of the undead stop fighting, wander away, or simply fall to the ground in pieces.

- If the zombies are in the fight, maybe Vortigern doesn't control them as completely as he thought. They could attack the skeletons instead of the characters, or even turn against the necromancer and the thugs; the zombies retained just enough of their memories of life to rebel against their new evil master! Make a die roll behind your GM screen and look disappointed, as if the fact that the undead might fight each other is a legitimate but unlikely result of Vortigern's necromantic magic.

- Vortigern's thugs are cowards at heart. Vortigern treats them badly, and the imp plays cruel tricks on them. They might see this as their best opportunity to get free. After a round or two, when Vortigern is completely distracted by the combat, Grenag and Slaaroc could simply slip away into the trees. If events are really going against the characters, the half-orcs might even launch a pair of crossbow bolts at Vortigern as their parting gift to him. After all, the hardest thing about being a bad guy is that "good help is hard to find."

You don't need to use these escape hatches just because it looks like Vortigern and Talon are about to escape with the amulet—that's OK. That just leads to more adventure. Escape hatches are for situations where it looks like the party is about to get wiped out. Here is a good rule of thumb: if two or more characters are out of the fight, use an escape hatch. Or, in this particular adventure, if Corian dies, use an escape hatch.

If you do decide to use an escape hatch, whatever you do—and this is a key GM skill—don't let on to the players that you are saving the party. That's just between us. Don't worry, everyone has done it. Remember these two important rules: first, give the characters a full and fair opportunity to win on their own—meaning, don't use the escape hatch too early. Second, don't do this often. Your players need to understand that death is a consequence of adventure. You can't let your players come to expect that you will always save their bacon. A dead character isn't the end of the world. In fact, in this case, a dead character is incentive for the party to get to Fairhill as soon as possible

GM Tips

Opportunity Attacks

Opportunity attacks can occur when a combatant leaves an enemy's reach. Even if the enemy has already had its turn that round, they can use their reaction to attack the moving figure. However, a combatant gets just one reaction per round—and therefore, just one opportunity attack—no matter how many enemies leave their reach (unless a feat or other special ability allows more). Consult the 5th Edition rules for "Special Attacks" for more details on reactions and opportunity attacks.

Resistance and Vulnerability

Remember that Talon has resistance against damage from non-magical, non-silver weapons, which means he will take only half damage from the characters' weapons (none of the pregenerated characters have magical or silver weapons). The skeletons, on the other hand, take double damage from bludgeoning weapons.

Initiative for Monsters

Don't just make one initiative roll for all the bad guys. Make one roll for each group of monsters: one for Vortigern, one for Talon, and one for both thugs. For simplicity, you can let the skeletons and zombies act on Vortigern's initiative, or you can roll their own initiative. At the very least, all the skeletons should act at the same time, and the same goes for the zombies.

Cover

Cover provides a bonus to AC. See the 5th edition "Cover" rules. In this case, Vortigern gets the benefit of three-quarters cover (+5 to AC) and the thugs get half-cover (+4 to AC) because they are behind trees.

Escape?

If Talon manages to snatch the amulet, read the following:

Vortigern's devilish familiar seizes the amulet and with a shriek flies off, becoming invisible. Vortigern, too, ducks back into the surrounding woods, escaping from your sight. You search everywhere, but you cannot seem to locate the evil apprentice. Yet his laughter is all around you.

If the tide of battle turns against Vortigern and Talon and they have the opportunity to escape without the amulet, read the following:

Sensing defeat, Vortigern yells a command to Talon, his devilish familiar. Leaving his henchmen to finish the battle, Talon and Vortigern disappear into thin air. You search everywhere, but you cannot seem to locate the evil apprentice. At least you have prevented Vortigern from obtaining the amulet—for the time being.

In either case, Talon uses his innate *invisibility* and Vortigern uses his *dust of disappearance* to render himself invisible. Neither stays to harass the party. They immediately flee the area. If they have the amulet, they proceed toward Fairhill, though they do not enter the village. They have abandoned their henchmen, but should the thugs manage to survive, Vortigern and Talon link up with them. Before long, Vortigern and Talon head toward Eralion's keep with the amulet. If Vortigern and Talon were forced to flee without the amulet, they still head toward Fairhill and wait a short while for the half-orcs to rejoin them. Proceed to the section entitled **Concluding the Adventure**, below.

If the party vanquishes Vortigern and Talon and his evil minions—an accomplishment well worth retelling—you should congratulate the party and read the following:

Your foes are defeated. Talon, Vortigern's devilish familiar, writhes and smokes as he dissolves into a stinking mass of slime. The hired thugs, routed or slain, shall trouble you no more. And the foul undead conjured by Vortigern have found their final rest at the end of your blade. This farmhouse, previously a scene of slaughter, is now a scene of vengeance.

Concluding the Adventure

Following the final encounter with Vortigern, regardless of the ending, read the following text to your players:

Corian's worst fear has come to pass. But now your encounter with Vortigern and his minions is over. It has become too dark to look for other lodging, so you light a fire in the fireplace of the farmhouse and bar the door. You clean the blood from your blades and tend to your wounds as well as those of your comrades. You set watch, and each of you says a silent prayer to your respective gods that the spirits of your foes find their rest and trouble you no further this night. You eventually drift off to sleep, but your sleep is fitful—filled with Talon's devilish screams. You wake to the sound of rain and gray skies. The sun, even hidden behind the clouds, is a welcome sight.

If any of the party was slain in the encounter with Vortigern, remind them that Fairhill is two days away. Suggest that perhaps someone there can aid them; possibly the party could trade something or pledge their service in return for having their friend restored to life. If not, the survivors almost certainly can find other adventurers who will take the place of their fallen companions (so the players who lost their characters can rejoin the party with new, 1st-level characters).

Awarding Experience

Finally, after you handle any healing and other record keeping, you can determine experience for the night's session. Experience point values for defeating each of the monsters encountered in this adventure are included in the new 5th Edition rules; you should look up the values there and hand out XPs accordingly. You can award some bonus XPs, too, based on how well the characters performed out of combat.

First Watch: If the party made a good camp and were smart about their preparations, let them split 50 XP.

A Voice in the Darkness: If the party fought and defeated both leucrottas, or if it managed to drive off the ambushing leucrottas without having to fight its mother, award full points for defeating both of them. If you had to use an escape hatch to save the characters, cut the XP in half. If the party fought the stirges, give them the XP for three stirges instead.

The Smiling Skull: Award 50 XP to be split between the characters if they investigated the hill and figured out what was causing the fear effect.

Corian's Tale: This award is for good roleplaying. Give 25 XP to anyone who participated in the scene and who stayed in character. If Corian told his tale well, give that player 50 XP instead.

Farmhouse: If characters examined the bodies to determine cause of death, the group earns 50 XP. If someone correctly identified the poison, that's another 25 XP. Deciding to bury and sanctify the bodies gets 25 XP per character, regardless of whether they were able to complete the task before they were attacked; they had the right idea, and that deserves a reward.

Ambush!: If Vortigern and the thugs were spotted among the trees, spoiling their surprise, then characters who spotted them gain 25 XP.

- Award full XP for every skeleton and zombie that was turned or defeated in combat and for each of the thugs who was defeated in combat.

- If Talon was killed, award full XP for the imp and a bonus of 100 XP for delivering an especially harsh blow to Vortigern.

- If Vortigern was killed, award full XP for defeating him.

- If Vortigern fled without the amulet, award one-half XP for defeating him.

- If Vortigern escaped with the amulet, award no XP for defeating him.

- Once you've tallied all of that, you need to make an adjustment. If you ran the encounter according to the Difficult tactics, award an extra 25% (multiply the total XP from this encounter by 1.25). If you used an escape hatch to keep the characters alive, award 20% less (multiply the total XP from this encounter by 0.8). If both conditions apply, give characters the full XP value of the encounter (in effect, you're making both adjustments; $1.25 \times 0.8 = 1$).

With the dawn, Fairhill awaits two days' march ahead. What will your characters find there? What will become of *The Wizard's Amulet*? What secrets lay buried with Eralion?

Continuing the Story

The story started in this adventure can be continued however you choose. If Vortigern escaped the final encounter in this adventure, he can become a continuing antagonist for the party. Eralion's lair can be placed in any keep or tower near some small out of the way village in your own campaign world. Eralion would not have set up shop in a highly visible area—he sought privacy. Place a secret door somewhere in the tower or keep that is enchanted so that only Eralion or a person who possesses the amulet can open it. You should detail a small wizard's lair, which is now

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haunted by Eralion. Or perhaps the rumors are wrong. Perhaps Eralion did succeed in becoming a lich but is somehow trapped in his lair—the limiting enchantment on the secret door no longer allowing him to pass since he is no longer truly Eralion, nor is he a lich. Perhaps he has some task for the party. Or perhaps he wishes to undo what he has done. A party of 1st-level characters encountering a lich and being asked by him for aid would certainly make an interesting adventure. Or maybe he is some other twisted form of undead. It's your adventure; let your imagination run wild!

Vortigern

XP 800

Male human wizard (necromancer), level 3

LE Medium Humanoid

Initiative +1

DEFENSE

AC: 11 (14 after casting *mage armor*)

hp: 17 (3d8 + 3), or 24 after casting *false life*

Saving Throws: Int +5, Wis +2

ACTIONS

Speed: 30 ft.

Melee Attack—Dagger: +3 to hit (reach 5 ft.; one creature).
Hit: 3 (1d4 + 1) piercing damage.

Ranged Attack—Dagger: +4 to hit (range 20 ft./60 ft.; one creature). *Hit:* 4 (1d4 + 2) piercing damage.

STATISTICS

Str 10 (+0), **Dex** 13 (+1), **Con** 12 (+1), **Int** 16 (+3), **Wis** 10 (+0),

Cha 12 (+1)

Languages: Common, Abyssal,

Skills: Arcana +5, Insight +2

TRAITS

Life Harvest: When Vortigern kills a creature with a spell (not a cantrip), he regains hps equal to 2x the spell's level, or 3x the level if the spell is from the school of Necromancy. Vortigern can regain hit points this way once per turn, but never for killing undead or constructs.

Spellcasting: Vortigern is a level 3 wizard whose arcane tradition is necromancy. His attack bonus with spells is +5; saving throws against his spells are DC 13. Vortigern prepares the following spells:

Cantrips (at will): *blade warding*, *chill touch*, *shocking grasp*

1st level (x4): *false life*, *mage armor*, *ray of sickening*, *witch-fire bolt*

2nd level (x2): *blindness/deafness*, *ray of enfeeblement*

Combat Gear: *dust of disappearance*, *potion of cure light wounds*, *scroll of animate dead*, *scroll of conjure animals*, +1 dagger

ECOLOGY

Environment: Any

Organization: Solitary, but accompanied by 1-2 bodyguards and 1-10 undead

Treasure: 123 gp,



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Pre-Generated Characters



Bannor

Background

As a young child, you were abandoned at a monastery of Mitra. Your physical gifts led you to serve as a squire to the holy order of knights. However, almost one year ago, while sweeping the stables, you were struck by an overpowering vision of Muir, a long-forgotten Goddess of Valor. A lesser deity, worship of Muir has all but died out. Her temples are few and most are in ruin or long abandoned by all but a handful of dedicated followers. The revelation of your vision was met with scorn by the brother knights. “Why would Muir appear at a monastery of Mitra to a stable boy,” they asked. Yet in your heart you knew the truth of your vision. You asked for and were granted permission to leave the order. The brother knights gave you your armor and your trusty longsword. Though they advised that it would be better to stay in the service of Mitra, you set out alone to do the will of Muir. Your travels brought you to Reme. There, you stopped for supplies and came across Corian’s notice at the Starving Stirge. You agreed to follow Corian’s path, as it leads towards Fairhill and Bard’s Gate, where it is said there is still a temple of Muir.

BANNOR

XP 200

Male human paladin of Muir (Goddess of Paladins), level 1
LG Medium humanoid (human)

Initiative +0

DEFENSE

AC: 16 (scale mail, shield)

hp: 11

HD: 1d10

Saving Throws: Wis +3, Cha +4

ACTIONS

Speed: 30 ft.

Melee Attack—Longsword: +5 to hit (reach 5 ft.; one creature). *Hit:* 1d8 + 3 slashing damage.

Melee Attack—Mace: +5 to hit (reach 5 ft.; one creature). *Hit:* 1d6 + 3 bludgeoning damage.

STATISTICS

Str 17 (+3), **Dex** 11 (+0), **Con** 12 (+1), **Int** 10 (+0), **Wis** 13 (+1),
Cha 15 (+2)

Proficiency Bonus: +2

Languages: Common, Celestial

Skills: Athletics +5, Persuasion +4

TRAITS

Divinely Inspired Senses: By spending an action, Bannor can detect the presence and location of any celestial, fiend, or undead within 60 feet of himself. He learns the type and number of beings but not their specific identities. Within that same distance, he also senses the presence of consecrated or desecrated objects or places. He can use this ability three times (Cha modifier + 1) between long rests.

Lay On Hands: By touching a creature and spending an action, Bannor can restore lost hit points. He can heal up to 5 hit points between long rests. Alternatively, he can expend all 5 hit points of healing to instead cure the target of a disease, remove a level of exhaustion, or neutralize a single poison.

Combat Gear: Scale mail, shield, longsword, mace, backpack, bedroll, flint and steel, holy water, wooden holy symbol of Muir, 50 ft. hemp rope, sack, 5 torches, 8 days’ trail rations, waterskin, belt pouch with 27 gp, 7 sp, and 5 cp.

Belfin

Background

As most of your race and profession, you are a loner. Yet you are even more reserved than most. Quiet and grim, you prefer the silence of the woodlands to the din of the city. Those few who know you learn that beneath your gloomy exterior lies a noble heart—a person whose word is his bond. Those who do not know you find you to be a pessimist, seeing doom and ill fortune in all paths. Your dark demeanor is not surprising, given that you are

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the sole survivor of a troll raid on your elven village. You have pledged your life to seek out these foul creatures and slay them wherever they may lurk without quarter. Stopping in Reme only to acquire some needed equipment, you noticed Corian's post in the Starving Stirge. Intrigued, and against your better judgment, you approached the young sorcerer. Sensing a kindred spirit, you agreed to travel with him wherever the road may take you.

BELFIN

XP 200

Male elf ranger, level 1

CG Medium humanoid (elf)

Initiative +4

DEFENSE

AC: 16 (studded leather, shield)

hp: 11

HD: 1d10

Saving Throws: Str +5, Dex +2

STATISTICS

Speed: 30 ft.

Melee Attack—Longsword: +5 to hit (reach 5 ft.; one creature). *Hit:* 1d8 + 3 slashing damage.

Melee Attack—Shortsword: +5 to hit (reach 5 ft.; one creature). *Hit:* 1d6 + 3 slashing damage.

Ranged Attack—Longbow: +2 to hit (range 80/320 ft.; one creature). *Hit:* 1d6 piercing damage.

ABILITIES

Str 12 (+1), Dex 18 (+4), Con 12 (+1), Int 10 (+0), Wis 14 (+2), Cha 10 (+0)

Proficiency Bonus: +2

Languages: Common, Elvish, Orc

Skills: Animal Handling +3, Athletics +5, Insight +3

TRAITS

Favored Enemy: Orcs, half-orcs, and giants. Belfin has advantage on Insight, Investigation, Nature, and Perception skill checks related to those three races.

Explorer's Sense: Belfin's proficiency bonus is doubled when he makes Intelligence or Wisdom checks related to forest terrain and using a skill he's trained in. He cannot become lost in forest terrain, and difficult forest terrain doesn't re-

duce his group's long-distance travel speed.

Combat Gear: Studded leather armor, longsword, shortsword, longbow, 20 arrows, backpack, bedroll, flint and steel, 50 ft. hemp rope, sack, 8 days' trail rations, water-skin, belt pouch containing 8 gp and 8 sp.

Cedric

Background

You are a follower of the dryad Ossyniria. You reside in her grove in a forest near Bard's Gate with your fellow druids. You, however, are the only non-elf. You do not know your parents. Your human half has led you to have a fascination of human civilization. Following the end of your apprenticeship, you requested Ossyniria to allow you to leave the grove and observe men and their cities. Seeing the honesty of your request, she granted your wish. You have since wandered along the Tradeway from Bard's Gate to Reme. There, at the Starving Stirge, you met Corian. You had been away from the grove for some time and longed to return. When Corian asked for your aid you agreed to travel with him on your way back to Bard's Gate and the grove that is your home.

CEDRIC

XP 200

Male half-elf druid, level 1

N Medium humanoid (half-elf)

Initiative +0

DEFENSE

AC: 15 (leather armor, wooden shield)

hp: 9

HD: 1d8

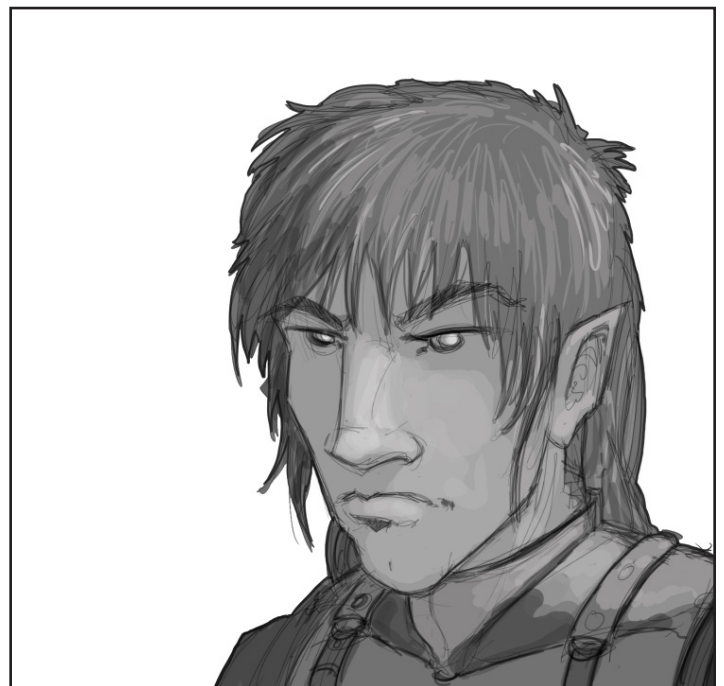
Saving Throws: Int +2, Wis +5; advantage on saving throws vs. charm

Immunity: Cannot be put to sleep by magic

STATISTICS

Speed: 30 ft.

Melee Attack—+1 Scimitar: +5 to hit (reach 5 ft.; one creature). *Hit:* 1d8 + 3 slashing damage.



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Ranged Attack—Sling: +2 to hit (range 80/320 ft.; one creature). *Hit:* 1d6 piercing damage.

STATISTICS

Str 12 (+1), **Dex** 15 (+2), **Con** 12 (+1), **Int** 10 (+0), **Wis** 17 (+3),
Cha 12 (+1)

Proficiency Bonus: +2

Languages: Common, Druidic, Elvish, Goblin

Skills: Medicine +5, Survival +5

Senses: Darkvision 60 ft.

TRAITS

Spellcasting: Cedric is a level 1 druid. His attack bonus with spells is +5; saving throws against his spells are DC 13. Cedric can cast cantrips at will, and can cast two 1st-level spells per day, from the following lists:

Cantrips: druid's craft, mending

1st Level: animal-friendship, cure wounds, fog cloud, goodberry

Combat Gear: Leather armor, +1 scimitar, sling, 20 bullets, 10 silver bullets, herbalism kit, sprig of mistletoe (substitutes for spell components), backpack, bedroll, 8 days' trail rations, waterskin, belt pouch with 13 gp and 5 sp.



Corian

Background

You have lived all your life with your uncle, a mage in the city of Reme. Your parents died when you were a very young child and your uncle has never bothered to hide the insinuation that you were somehow responsible for the fire that took your mother's and father's lives. Your uncle, seeing little other use for you, put you to work as an apprentice. Your innate knack for magic led your uncle to begin teaching you the arcane principles of wizardry. As a student, however, you were an utter failure. You could never seem to grasp the use of all the rote memorization forced on you by your uncle. Why did a mage need to learn such things, you wondered, when all one needed to do was imagine the desired effect and it happened?

Despite your stubbornness, you learned the basics of spellcraft—though your instincts still rebelled against the formalism of your uncle's methods.

Finally, in a fit of anger over your lack of interest in your studies, your uncle released you from your apprenticeship. This suited you just fine, for you recently discovered a strange amulet that you were interested in learning more about...

CORIAN

XP 200

Male human sorcerer, level 1

CG Medium humanoid (human)

Initiative +1

DEFENSE

AC: 14 (no armor, draconic toughness)

hp: 8

HD: 1d6

Saving Throws: Con +3, Cha +5

STATISTICS

Speed: 30 ft.

Melee Attack—Dagger: +3 to hit (reach 5 ft.; one creature).

Hit: 1d4 + 1 piercing damage.

Ranged Attack—Light Crossbow: +3 to hit (range 80/320 ft.; one creature). *Hit:* 1d8 + 1 piercing damage.

ABILITIES

Str 10 (+0), **Dex** 13 (+1), **Con** 13 (+1), **Int** 14 (+2), **Wis** 12 (+1),

Cha 17 (+3)

Proficiency Bonus: +2

Languages: Common, Draconic, Elven

Skills: Arcana +4, Persuasion +5

TRAITS

Dragon Blood: Corian's proficiency bonus is doubled whenever he makes a Charisma check while interacting with dragons.

Spellcasting: Corian is a level 1 sorcerer with the bloodline of copper dragons. His attack bonus with spells is +5; saving throws against his spells are DC 13. Corian can cast cantrips at will, and can cast two 1st-level spells per day, from the following lists:

Cantrips: acid splash, light, mage hand, ray of frost

1st Level: burning hands, magic missile

Combat Gear: Dagger, light crossbow ("Betsy"), 20 bolts, Eralion's amulet (used as spellcasting focus), flask of acid, backpack, bedroll, map case, flint and steel, vial of ink, inkpen, 5 sheets of parchment, 8 days' trail rations, waterskin, sack, 5 torches, belt pouch with 12 gp, 6 sp, and 5 cp.

Drebb

Background

Falsely accused of leaving your post during an orc raid by a superior with a grudge against you, you were expelled from your homeland and disowned by your family. Travelling down the coast road from your homeland in the north, you sought to put your shame behind you and prove your worth by a life of adventure. You dream every day of returning to your homeland, your reputation established, ousting the coward who stained your good name and being accepted by your father. Because the dwarf who falsely accused you was from a noble family, and thus his accusation was not questioned, you have no love for those of wealth and power. You see them as weaklings who cannot match their words with deeds. Finding yourself in Reme at the end of the coast road, you took a room at the Starving Stürge. There, you read Corian's note and decided that

Drinnin

Background

You were sent by your master from the Monastery of the Standing Stone to retrieve for him a fine ruby. He provided you with a purse of coins and sent you on your way to Reme. He did not explain his purpose, other than to caution you that material possessions often cloud those on the path of truth. Not one to question your master you dutifully traveled to Reme and traded your coins for a brilliant ruby. As you passed through an alleyway within the city, near a tavern called the Starving Stirge, you were set upon by thugs. They apparently were unfamiliar with the uses to which a stout staff may be put in combat. You provided them their education. A likeable fellow named Corian emerged from the tavern and offered you his assistance. When you explained you were unhurt and had an errand requiring your attention he explained he was seeking companions to uncover a mystery. When he mentioned he would be traveling to Fairhill—back towards the Monastery of the Standing Stone—you agreed to accompany him.

DRINNIN

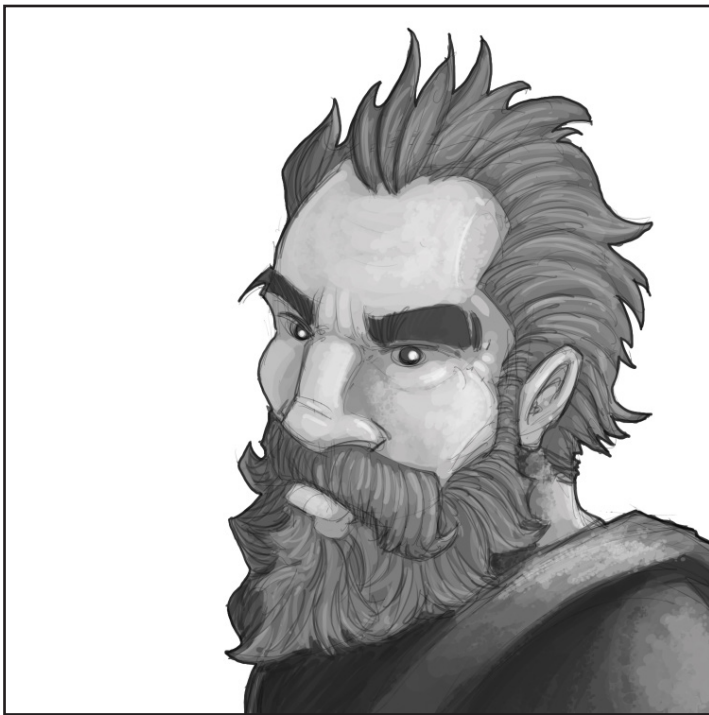
XP 200
Male human monk, level 1
LG Medium humanoid (human)
Initiative +2

DEFENSE

AC: 13 (no armor)
hp: 9
HD: 1d8
Saving Throws: Str +6, Dex +4

ACTIONS

Speed: 30 ft.
Melee Attack—Quarterstaff: +6 to hit (reach 5 ft.; one creature). *Hit:* 1d6 + 4 bludgeoning damage, or 1d8 + 4 bludgeoning damage if wielded with two hands.
Melee Attack—Unarmed Strike: +6 to hit (reach 5 ft.; one creature). *Hit:* 1d6 + 4 bludgeoning damage.
Melee Attack—Dagger: +6 to hit (reach 5 ft.; one creature).



joining with Corian would lead you to glory and fame. And redemption.

DREBB

XP 200
Male dwarf fighter, level 1
NG Medium humanoid (mountain dwarf)
Initiative +1

DEFENSE

AC: 17 (scale mail, shield)
hp: 13
HD: 1d10
Saving Throws: Str +6, Con +5

ACTIONS

Speed: 25 ft.
Melee Attack—Battleaxe: +6 to hit (reach 5 ft.; one creature). *Hit:* 1d8 + 6 slashing damage.
Melee Attack—Heavy Crossbow: +3 to hit (range 100/400 ft.; one creature). *Hit:* 1d10 + 1 piercing damage.

STATISTICS

Str 18 (+4), **Dex** 12 (+1), **Con** 16 (+3), **Int** 10 (+0), **Wis** 10 (+0),
Cha 6 (-2)
Proficiency Bonus: +2
Languages: Common, Dwarvish, Orc
Skills: Athletics +6, History +2
Senses: Darkvision 60 ft.

TRAITS

Resilient: Drebb has advantage on saving throws vs. poison and resistance to damage from poison.
Mason: Drebb has proficiency with mason's tools.
Stonecunning: Drebb adds double his proficiency bonus when making Intelligence (History) checks involving stonework.
Gather Strength: On his turn, Drebb can use a bonus action to regain 1d10 + 1 hit points. He can do this once between long or short rests.
Combat Gear: Scale mail, shield, battleaxe, heavy crossbow, 15 bolts, backpack, bedroll, 8 days' trail rations, waterskin, belt pouch with 5 gp and 4 sp.

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Hit: 1d6 + 3 piercing damage.

Ranged Attack—Dagger: +4 to hit (range 20/60 ft.; one creature). *Hit:* 1d6 + 2 piercing damage.

STATISTICS

Str 18 (+4), **Dex** 14 (+2), **Con** 13 (+1), **Int** 10 (+0), **Wis** 13 (+1),
Cha 9 (-1)

Proficiency Bonus: +2

Languages: Common, Giant

Skills: Insight +3, Stealth +4

TRAITS

Martial Artist: Drinnin's unarmed strikes and weapon attacks cause a minimum of 1d6 damage. When he uses an Attack action to attack with an unarmed strike or a monk weapon, Drinnin can make a bonus unarmed strike. Clubs, daggers, handaxes, light hammers, maces, quarterstaffs, shortswords, sickles, and spears are monk weapons.

Combat Gear: Quarterstaff, 2 daggers, backpack, bedroll, 8 days' trail rations, waterskin, belt pouch with 9 gp and 9 sp.

Farkle Hurp

Background

As a youth, a band of orcs raided your home cave in the Under Realms. Many of your brethren were slaughtered and a great gem—an heirloom of your clan—was stolen. At the time, you were a student of illusion magic. You left those studies because they seemed to offer little practical means of revenge. Instead, you began the study of the ways of the warrior.

Setting off on your own, you left your underground home to take revenge on the orcs. However, fate has not brought you the vengeance you seek. You have not located the marauding orc band, nor heard word of the whereabouts of the missing gem. You still carry with you the orcs' token, taken from their fallen chief: a poorly worked medallion bearing the image of a red severed arm over two crossed axes. You also plan one day to resume your study of illusion magic, perhaps to allow you to infiltrate the vile orcs when you find them.

Intrigued by Corian's post in the Starving Stirge, you have agreed to join his company. Hopefully, his powers will be able to aid you in finding the orcs responsible for the slaughter of your relatives.



FARKLE HURP

XP 200

Male gnome fighter, level 1

NG Small humanoid (forest gnome)

Initiative +1

DEFENSE

AC: 14 (chain mail)

hp: 14

HD: 1d10

Saving Throws: Str +4, Con +6; Farkle has advantage on Int, Wis, and Cha saving throws vs. magic.

ACTIONS

Speed: 25 ft.

Melee Attack—Warhammer: +4 to hit (reach 5 ft.; one creature). *Hit:* 1d10 + 2 bludgeoning damage, or 1d8 + 2 bludgeoning damage if wielded with one hand.

Melee Attack—Dagger: +4 to hit (reach 5 ft.; one creature). *Hit:* 1d4 + 2 piercing damage.

Ranged Attack—Light Crossbow: +3 to hit (range 80/320 ft.; one creature). *Hit:* 1d8 piercing damage.

STATISTICS

Str 14 (+2), **Dex** 12 (+1), **Con** 18 (+4), **Int** 10 (+0), **Wis** 9 (-1),
Cha 11 (+0)

Proficiency Bonus: +2

Languages: Common, Gnome

Skills: Perception +1, Survival +1

Senses: Darkvision 60 ft.

TRAITS

Minor Illusionist: Farkle can cast *minor illusions* at will, using Int as his casting ability.

Speak to Small Creatures: Farkle can communicate simple ideas with beasts of size Small or smaller, by using gestures and sounds.

Two-Handed Weapon Fighter: If Farkle rolls a 1 or 2 on a damage die when he is using a melee weapon two-handed, he can reroll that die. He must use the second result.

Gather Strength: On his turn, Farkle can use a bonus action to regain 1d10 + 4 hit points. He can do this once between long or short rests.

Combat Gear: Chain mail, warhammer, dagger, light crossbow, 20 crossbow bolts, backpack, bedroll, 8 days' trail rations, waterskin, belt pouch with 14 gp and 9 sp.

Flarian

Background

Few of your race leave the confines of your forest realm. You, however, have long been drawn to humans, who live their short lives with a passion that you feel your race lacks. You wish to travel on to the legendary city of *Bard's Gate*, there to learn the songs of legend. Recently, while performing at the Starving Stirge in Reme, you met an engaging human named Corian. He told you of a strange amulet he possessed. He did not know its history, though his veiled comments made you believe there was an epic story behind it. He told you he wished to unlock its secret and asked you to travel with him. You agreed, believing you might learn the tale of the amulet and thereafter compose a song of its history.

FLARIAN

XP 200

Male elf bard, level 1

CG Medium humanoid (wood elf)

THE WIZARD'S AMULET



Initiative +3

DEFENSE

AC: 14 (leather armor)

hp: 9

HD: 1d8

Saving Throws: Dex +5, Cha +5; Flarian has advantage on saving throws vs. being charmed, and he can't be put to sleep magically.

ACTIONS

Speed: 35 ft.

Melee Attack—Rapier: +5 to hit (reach 5 ft.; one creature).
Hit: 1d8 + 3 piercing damage.

Melee Attack—Dagger: +5 to hit (reach 5 ft.; one creature).
Hit: 1d4 + 3 piercing damage.

Ranged Attack—Shortbow: +2 to hit (range 80/320 ft.; one creature). *Hit:* 1d6 piercing damage.

STATISTICS

Str 12 (+1), **Dex** 16 (+3), **Con** 12 (+1), **Int** 12 (+1), **Wis** 8 (-1),
Cha 16 (+3)

Proficiency Bonus: +2

Languages: Common, Elvish, Goblin

Skills: Perception +1, Performance +5, Persuasion +5, Stealth +5

Senses: Darkvision 60 ft.

TRAITS

Sleepless: When taking a long rest, Flarian enters a trance-like, meditative state for four hours instead of sleeping for eight hours.

Wilderness Mask: Flarian can attempt to hide when lightly obscured by natural surroundings (not by structures, furniture, or other trappings of civilization).

Spellcasting: Flarian is a level 1 bard. His attack bonus with spells is +5; saving throws against his spells are DC 13. Flarian can cast cantrips at will, and can cast two 1st-level spells per day, from the following lists:

Cantrips: *blade warding*, *prestidigitation*

1st Level: *charm person*, *detect magic*, *sleep*, *hideous laughter*

Bard's Cheer: Through song and poetry, Flarian can inspire one creature (not himself) who is within 60 feet of Flarian

and who can hear the bard. That target gains 1d6 that can be rolled and added to one saving throw, attack roll, or ability check that it makes in the next 10 minutes. The target decides whether to add the bonus die after seeing the result of the initial d20 roll. Flarian can use this ability three times between long rests, but no creature can have more than one bonus die at a time.

Combat Gear: Leather armor, rapier, dagger, shortbow, 20 arrows, harp, flute, pennywhistle, 50 ft. silk rope, backpack, bedroll, 8 days' trail rations, waterskin, spell component pouch, belt pouch with 17 gp and 9 sp.

Galdar

Background

You are a cleric of Vanitthu, the god of the steadfast guard. Following divine law is your all-encompassing mission in life, regardless of whether the result is for good or evil. It is enough that the law of your deity commands an action. While an acolyte at the temple of Vanitthu in Reme, you received a divine vision instructing you to seek out a man named Corian who you were instructed had an amulet in his possession. You were commanded by your god to follow that amulet wherever it might lead. You have found Corian at an inn called the Starving Stirge and you have agreed to travel with him — so long as he retains possession of the amulet.

GALDAR

XP 200

Male human cleric of Vanitthu (god of the Steadfast Guard), level 1

LN Medium humanoid (human)

Initiative +1

DEFENSE

AC: 13 (hide armor)

hp: 9

HD: 1d8

Saving Throws: Wis +5, Cha +3

ACTIONS

Speed: 30 ft.

Melee Attack—Spear: +4 to hit (reach 5 ft.; one creature).



THE WIZARD'S AMULET

Hit: 1d8 + 2 piercing damage, or 1d6 + 2 piercing damage if wielded one-handed.

Ranged Attack—Heavy Crossbow: +3 to hit (range 100/400 ft.; one creature). *Hit:* 1d10 + 1 piercing damage.

STATISTICS

Str 14 (+2), **Dex** 12 (+1), **Con** 13 (+1), **Int** 12 (+1), **Wis** 16 (+3),
Cha 13 (+1)

Proficiency Bonus: +2

Languages: Common, Celestial

Skills: Medicine +5, Persuasion +3

TRAITS

Spellcasting: Galdar is a level 1 cleric. His domain is war, and his attack bonus with spells is +5; saving throws against his spells are DC 13. Galdar can cast cantrips at will, and can cast two 1st-level spells per day, from the following lists:

Cantrips: *light, spare from dying, thaumaturgy*
1st Level: *bless, cure wounds, guidance bolt, protection from evil, shield of faith*

War Domain: Up to three times between long rests, Galdar can make one extra weapon attack as a bonus action after using an Attack action.

Combat Gear: Hide armor, spear, heavy crossbow, 20 bolts, backpack, flint and steel, hooded lantern, 5 flasks of oil, sack, silver holy symbol of Vanitthu, spell component pouch, 8 days' trail rations, waterskin, belt pouch with 19 gp and 4 sp.

Helman

Background

The youngest of twenty-three brothers and sisters, you were always overlooked and forgotten. You did not help matters in that regard for you learned at a young age the skills of coming and going unobserved. With twenty-three siblings, that was not an easy task. You decided on your thirty-first birthday to set out on your own. It was weeks before your brothers and sisters even noticed you were gone. Fascinated all



your life with tales of the city, you set out for Reme—the great port city to the north of your homeland. Your curiosity coupled with your nimble fingers and knack for disappearing at just the right time caught the attention of a band of thieves in Reme and soon enough you were a cutpurse of some renown. But you enjoyed your profession more for the thrill of the theft than for the greed of the haul and you quickly ran afoul of your employers who were none too keen on your cavalier disregard for keeping an accurate accounting of your night's takes. As you have always done before, you gave them the slip as well. While laying low at the Starving Stirge, you noticed Corian's post and decided then and there that a life of adventure was just the thing for you—particularly a life of adventuring that would take you away from Reme...at least until you decide on something better to do.

HELMAN

XP 200

Male halfling rogue, level 1

CG Small humanoid (lightfoot halfling)

Initiative +0

DEFENSE

AC: 16 (studded leather)

hp: 7

HD: 1d6

Saving Throws: Dex +6, Int +3; Helman has advantage on saving throws vs. fear.

ACTIONS

Speed: 25 ft.

Melee Attack—Shortsword: +6 to hit (reach 5 ft.; one creature). *Hit:* 1d6 + 4 piercing damage.

Melee Attack—Dagger: +6 to hit (reach 5 ft.; one creature). *Hit:* 1d4 + 4 piercing damage.

Ranged Attack—Dagger: +6 to hit (range 20/60 ft.; one creature). *Hit:* 1d4 + 4 piercing damage.

STATISTICS

Str 11 (+0), **Dex** 18 (+4), **Con** 12 (+1), **Int** 13 (+1), **Wis** 10 (+0),
Cha 14 (+2)

Proficiency Bonus: +2

Languages: Common, Elvish, Halfling, thieves' cant

Skills: Acrobatics +6, Deception +4, Sleight of Hand +6, Stealth +6

TRAITS

Lucky as a Halfling: Helman can reroll any 1s that he rolls on ability checks, attack rolls, or saving throws.

Nimble as a Halfling: Helman can move through the space of creatures that are Medium size or larger.

Sneaky as a Halfling: Helman can use a creature of size Medium or larger as an obscurement when attempting to hide.

Master of Fingers: Helman's proficiency bonus is doubled when he makes a skill check involving Sleight of Hand or the use of thieves' tools.

Sneak Attack: When one of Helman's allies is within 5 feet of the creature Helman is attacking or when Helman has advantage on an attack roll, his attack deals an extra 1d6 damage. Helman can inflict this bonus damage once per round.

Combat Gear: Studded leather armor, short sword, dagger x4, backpack, bedroll, thieves' tools, 8 days' trail rations, waterskin, belt pouch with 11 gp and 9 sp.

THE WIZARD'S AMULET



Krel

Background

The unwanted progeny from an orc raid on your village in the frozen north, you were despised by your father, who showed mercy on you at your mother's request by selling you into slavery rather than killing you at birth. For the last ten years you have served as a galley slave and rowed, chained to an oar, on various ships as they sailed the length and breadth of the known world. For all of your life as a slave you suffered cruel beatings for being a half-breed and you learned to hate that part of yourself—the part you feel is responsible for your miserable lot in life. Yet, even as you learned to despise your orc half, you found that it gave you strength and an animal rage that you have slowly learned to control. On your most recent voyage, the ship's captain released you from your chains and made you a member of the crew after you aided the ship in repelling a pirate attack. At landfall in Reme, the captain made you a free man.

With but a few coins to your name, a chainmail shirt given to you by the captain and the greatsword you liberated from a dead pirate, you sought out a pub as far from the docks as possible—desiring to make a new life for yourself. You made your way to the Starving Stirge where you met Corian. He greeted you as a friend. For the first time in your life a person saw you not as a half-breed but as an equal. You agreed at that moment to follow Corian anywhere. You are fiercely loyal to him.

KREL

XP 200

Male half-orc barbarian, level 1

N Medium humanoid (half-orc)

Initiative +1

DEFENSE

AC: 14 (no armor)

hp: 15

HD: 1d12

Saving Throws: Str +6, Con +5

ACTIONS

Speed: 30 ft.

Melee Attack—Greatsword: +6 to hit (reach 5 ft.; one creature). *Hit:* 2d6 + 4 slashing damage.

Melee Attack—Greatclub: +6 to hit (reach 5 ft.; one creature). *Hit:* 1d8 + 4 bludgeoning damage.

STATISTICS

Str 18 (+4), **Dex** 13 (+1), **Con** 17 (+3), **Int** 7 (-2), **Wis** 10 (+0),
Cha 8 (-1)

Proficiency Bonus: +2

Languages: Common, Orc

Skills: Athletics +6, Intimidation +1, Survival +2

Senses: Darkvision 60 ft.

TRAITS

Berserker Rage: Krel can enter a berserk rage on his turn, as a bonus action. When raging, he has advantage on Str checks and saving throws, does an extra 2 points of damage with melee attacks, and takes only half damage from slashing, piercing, and bludgeoning attacks. The berserk rage ends when Krel is knocked unconscious, when a full round passes in which he neither attacks an enemy nor takes damage, when he chooses to end it, or after 1 minute, whichever comes first. He can enter a berserker rage twice between long rests.

Hard to Kill: When Krel is reduced to 0 hit points without being killed outright, he is reduced to 1 hit point instead. He can use this ability once between long rests. Also, when not wearing armor (with or without a shield), he can add both his Dex and Con bonuses to his AC.

Savage Critical: When Krel scores a critical hit with a melee weapon, he gains one bonus damage die beyond what's usually allowed in a critical hit.

Combat Gear: Hide armor, greatsword, greatclub, backpack, bedroll, 8 days' trail rations, waterskin, belt pouch with 26 gp and 8 sp.

Marren

Background

From a young age, you displayed strong logic skills. Aware of your obvious aptitude, your family worked to send you to wizard school. Your family wasn't poor—but they also weren't wealthy, and sacrifices were necessary to afford your education. Your younger brother, who lacked your wits and logic, resented your parents' efforts to provide you an arcane education while he was stuck toiling at the shop. He knew he couldn't take his frustrations out on you, and so he became a bully among his peer group. After years of covering up for him and paying for his mistakes, your father finally had enough and threw your brother out of the house. As he left, he yelled at you, said it was all your fault. Worse, he vowed to get even with you some day.

Freshly removed from your apprenticeship, you eagerly await your fortune in the world, anxious to see where your arcane talents can take you, excited by the possibilities, but also wary of someday encountering your brother.

MARREN

XP 200

Female human wizard, level 1

NG Medium humanoid (human)

Initiative +0

DEFENSE

AC: 12 (no armor) or 15 (*mage armor*)

hp: 8

HD: 1d6

Saving Throws: Int +6, Wis +3

ACTIONS

Speed: 30 ft.

THE WIZARD'S AMULET



hp: 1

ACTIONS

Speed: 50 ft. flying, 10 ft. walking

Melee Attack—Beak: +2 to hit (reach 5 ft.; one creature).

Hit: 1 piercing damage.

STATISTICS

Str 2 (-4), **Dex** 14 (+2), **Con** 8 (-1), **Int** 2 (-4), **Wis** 12 (+1), **Cha** 6 (-2)

Languages: none

Skills: Perception +3

TRAITS

Imitation: Poe can repeat simple sounds. A creature hearing the sounds must make a successful DC 10 Wisdom (Insight) check to realize they are imitations instead of the real thing.

Phelps

Background

Slender and nimble, you are a jack-of-all-trades. You were born a street urchin and during your youth learned to live through hard experience. Desiring to escape your gutter life, you indentured yourself to a rich merchant where you learned the customs that accompany wealth. You now move comfortably in either world—the alleyway or the noble's court. Certain “unfortunate situations” which you are reluctant to discuss in detail have made you desperate to leave Reme. When you read Corian's posting at the Starving Stirge promising gold and adventure, you decided that maybe a little adventuring “vacation” from Reme was exactly what you were looking for. Besides, Grenish would never bother sending assassins into the wilderness over a few little gems...or so you hope.

PHELPS

XP 200

Male human rogue, level 1

CN Medium humanoid (human)

Initiative +3

DEFENSE

AC: 14 (leather armor)



Melee Attack—Dagger: +4 to hit (reach 5 ft.; one creature).

Hit: 1d4 + 2 piercing damage.

Ranged Attack—Light Crossbow: +4 to hit (range 80/320 ft.; one creature). *Hit:* 1d8 + 2 piercing damage.

STATISTICS

Str 8 (-1), **Dex** 14 (+2), **Con** 14 (+2), **Int** 18 (+4), **Wis** 12 (+1),

Cha 10 (+0)

Proficiency Bonus: +2

Languages: Common, Draconic, Elvish, Goblin, Sylvan

Skills: Arcana +6, Investigation +6

TRAITS

Spellcasting: Marren is a level 1 wizard. Her attack bonus with spells is +6; saving throws against his spells are DC 14. Marren can cast cantrips at will, and can cast two 1st-level spells per day, from the following lists:

Cantrips: *firebolt*, *light*, *mage hand*

1st Level: *burning hands*, *detect magic**, *find familiar**, *mage armor*, *magic missile*, *sleep*

Ritual Spellcasting: Marren can cast *detect magic* directly from her spellbook as a ritual. Casting time becomes 10 minutes, but the spell doesn't need to be prepared and it doesn't count against her allotment of daily spells.

Spell Recovery: Once per day, after casting at least one prepared spell, Marren can recover the ability to cast one 1st-level spell by taking a short rest.

Familiar: Marren has a raven familiar named Poe. It follows all the normal rules for familiars and has the statistics listed below.

Combat Gear: Dagger, light crossbow, 10 bolts, backpack, bedroll, 5 candles, scroll case, ink vial, inkpen, 10 sheets of parchment, spellbook, spell component pouch, 5 days' trail rations, waterskin, belt pouch, 5 gp, 2 sp.

Poe

Unaligned Tiny beast (raven)

Initiative +0

DEFENSE

AC: 12

THE WIZARD'S AMULET

hp: 7
HD: 1d6
Saving Throws: Dex +5, Int +4

ACTIONS

Speed: 30 ft.

Melee Attack—Rapier: +5 to hit (reach 5 ft.; one creature).

Hit: 1d8 + 3 piercing damage.

Melee Attack—Dagger: +5 to hit (reach 5 ft.; one creature).

Hit: 1d4 + 3 piercing damage.

Ranged Attack—Sling: +5 to hit (range 30/120 ft.; one creature). *Hit:* 1d4 bludgeoning damage.

STATISTICS

Str 10 (+0), **Dex** 16 (+3), **Con** 13 (+1), **Int** 14 (+2), **Wis** 14 (+2),
Cha 12 (+1)

Proficiency Bonus: +2

Languages: Common, Halfling, thieves' cant

Skills: Acrobatics +5, Athletics +2, Perception +5, Stealth +5

TRAITS

Second-story Skills: Phelps's proficiency bonus is doubled when he makes a skill check involving Acrobatics or Stealth.

Sneak Attack: When one of Phelps's allies is within 5 feet of the creature Phelps is attacking or when Phelps has advantage on an attack roll, his attack deals an extra 1d6 damage. Phelps can inflict this bonus damage once per round.

Combat Gear: Leather armor, rapier, sling, 20 bullets, acid, alchemist's fire, backpack, bedroll, flint and steel, 50 ft. silk rope, grappling hook, hammer, 6 pitons, sack, thieves' tools, 8 days' trail rations, waterskin, belt pouch with 18 gp and 5 sp.

Warrid

Background

Even among your people, your lack of height stands out. While always relatively strong and healthy, your small stature made you unfit for physical jobs — or so it was said. Instead, you were taught the Arts, with a heavy focus on illusions. A bit lazy, you were happy to avoid all that nonsense about learning to use hooked hammers and slings. Just the thought of wearing armor makes your skin break out in a rash. Having your nose buried in a book was the right path for you. During your studies, you found necromancy to be vile and filthy and evocation to lack the subtlety necessary from a true practitioner. No, enchantment and illusion — tricks of the mind — were clearly your proper tools.

Wanderlust, however, took hold of your heart and you set off, out into the world to seek fortune, glory, and fame. And gold. Lots of gold. While doing as little work as possible, of course. Being likeable helps, of course, and people seem to soak in your bubbly personality. Those around you realize you're a bit lazy but write it off as part of your charm.

WARRID

XP 200

Female gnome wizard, level 1

CG Small humanoid (forest gnome)

Initiative +1

DEFENSE

AC: 11 (no armor) or 14 (*mage armor*)

hp: 8

HD: 1d6

Saving Throws: Int +5, Wis +3; Warrid has advantage on Int,



Wis, and Cha saving throws vs. magic.

ACTIONS

Speed: 25 ft.

Melee Attack—Quarterstaff: +2 to hit (reach 5 ft.; one creature). *Hit:* 1d10 bludgeoning damage, or 1d8 bludgeoning damage if used one-handed.

Melee Attack—Dagger: +3 to hit (reach 5 ft.; one creature). *Hit:* 1d4 + 1 piercing damage.

STATISTICS

Str 10 (+0), **Dex** 13 (+1), **Con** 15 (+2), **Int** 16 (+3), **Wis** 12 (+1),
Cha 12 (+1)

Proficiency Bonus: +2

Languages: Common, Gnomish

Skills: Arcana +5, Insight +3

Senses: Darkvision 60 ft.

TRAITS

Spellcasting: Warrid is a level 1 wizard. Her attack bonus with spells is +5; saving throws against her spells are DC 13. Warrid can cast cantrips at will, and can cast two 1st-level spells per day, from the following lists:

Cantrips: *dancing lights*, *mage armor*, *minor illusions*, *prestidigitation*

1st Level: *color spray*, *silent image*

Spell Recovery: Once per day, after casting at least one prepared spell, Warrid can recover the ability to cast one 1st-level spell by taking a short rest.

Communicate with Forest Creatures: Warrid can communicate simple ideas with beasts of size Small or smaller, by using gestures and sounds.

Combat Gear: Quarterstaff, dagger, alchemist's fire, backpack, bedroll, ink, inkpen, mirror (small, steel), 10 sheets parchment, 5 days' trail rations, spell component pouch, spellbook, waterskin, belt pouch, 9 gp, 9 sp

THE WIZARD'S AMULET

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Corian's Supplemental Information

You have chosen to play the character of Corian, the Sorcerer. You are the motivating force behind the formation of the party. For that reason, you have additional background information. Read the following information so that you will be better able to play your character. It is up to you whether or not to reveal this information, and if so whether you reveal all or only some of the information contained here.

Initially, if the other characters press you for information, rebuff them by saying "We are not yet far enough from Reme," or "There are still too many ears that may hear us." Be cryptic. At a specific time later in the adventure, you will be prompted by the GM to reveal your story. Again, even when that time comes, it is up to you how much to reveal and whether or not to tell the truth. You should begin to think now about what you will tell the group later so that you will be prepared.

Your Background: During the final days under your uncle's tutelage, you and your master traveled to the library of Feriblan the Mad in the city of Reme. You were not pleased to visit Feriblan, for while there you are always forced to have contact with Vortigern, Feriblan's apprentice, and his loathsome raven familiar—Talon. Luckily for you, this particular visit you managed to avoid Vortigern. While perusing mundane documents in an outer sitting room as your uncle and Feriblan studied ancient scrolls, you nervously fiddled with a clasp on the back of a small reading stand.

To your surprise, a secret compartment opened which contained a small, bound piece of parchment and an item wrapped in a silk cloth. Checking to see that your actions were unobserved, you managed to slip the amulet and parchment into the folds of your robe. The parchment proved to be a letter from a person—apparently a wizard—named Eralion. It appears that Eralion left this letter for Feriblan on his last visit to Reme before some "ritual" that he spoke of in the letter. The letter apparently also refers to the amulet you found with the letter. A copy of the letter from Eralion can be found at the end of this section. You should read that letter now.

Intrigued by the letter, you returned to visit Feriblan some months later, once you were freed from servitude to your uncle. Figuring the old mage was addle-brained you took the risk of asking him direct questions about Eralion. You learned that Eralion was nowhere near powerful enough to make the transition into a lich. "Eralion! A lich?!" the old wizard exclaimed. "He was no apprentice, my son, but neither was he a mage with the mastery of the eldritch powers necessary for such a dangerous undertaking! If you have heard such rumors, boy, I shall put them to rest. The magics required for such a transition were far beyond his grasp." Once on the topic of his old friend, Feriblan spoke at length—though in a disjointed fashion. He told you about Eralion's keep, which was located to the east of Reme some six days travel, near the village of Fairhill. Feriblan made reference to a staff that Eralion possessed which apparently had magical powers. He also mentioned that Eralion had never returned several valuable magical tracts and spell books. You left the old wizard determined to find this tower and the items it contained—for if Eralion was not a lich, the items should be there for the taking!

Readying yourself with the necessary equipment for travel to Fairhill, you visited a local tavern—the Starving Sturge. There you posted a notice seeking the aid of able-bodied adventurers willing to join with you

in seeking out a wizard's tower. Promising an equal division of all gold recovered, you soon gathered a group of comrades-at-arms eager for adventure and glory. Quite unlooked for, you were also joined by Galdar, a Cleric of St. Cuthbert, who was told in a vision from his deity to seek you out and to follow wherever the amulet led. The god of retribution and justice, it seems, has business with Eralion.

You have been reluctant to give the full story to your new friends, not for lack of trust in them but rather because you have on more than one occasion seen Talon, the raven familiar of Vortigern, peering into your chamber door. Nevermore will you believe your theft of the amulet and letter went unseen by the wicked bird, and you don't wish to risk further discovery while still in Reme. Who knows what spells Feriblan or Vortigern might have at their disposal to read your thoughts or hear your words? You promised your new friends that you would reveal more to them once you had left Reme. So you and your companions set out from Reme some four days ago, with light hearts and heavy packs—only you harboring the nagging fear that Vortigern and his loathsome bird would somehow know of your goal: Eralion's keep and its unguarded treasure.

Eralion's Letter

My Dear Feriblan—

I must confess to you—my closest friend—that I was not entirely truthful with you at our last meeting. I feel compelled now to tell you of it, as this may be the last time I write with mortal hands. Do you recall our discussion some months past regarding liches and how users of the arcane arts might achieve that particular state? I must admit to you that the topic for me was not entirely scholarly, as I led you to believe. And for that I am sorry.

I know that you, my friend, have gazed into darkness in the name of knowledge. That is why I sought your learned counsel. For I too have gazed into darkness. And like you, I found knowledge—knowledge beyond imagining. From the demon-lord Orcus himself I have wrested the secret to lichdom, and I plan to move beyond scholarly talk and bring myself immortality. Imagine it, my friend! An eternity to study the arts, to master arcane power!

As I pen these words I have arrayed before me unguents and phials, instruments and tomes, all necessary for my transformation, save only one—an arcane phylactery of elaborate design. The ingredients for that item will bring me once again to your city. By the time you read this letter, I shall have retrieved the necessary items and shall be on my way back to my keep.

Yet, as I begin to prepare my mind for my wondrous fate, my thoughts turn to you, my oldest friend. Accompanying this missive there is a small silk pouch. In that pouch is an amulet—an amulet I have created for you. I know of your thirst for knowledge. With this amulet, you will have access to my keep where I shall reside in immortality. If you wish to learn that which I have learned, you may visit me.

Long have others of our kind called you "mad." Perhaps it is I whom they will now call mad. But I do not care for their appellations. Let them say what they will. I have won something far greater than words—I have won immortality, and with it, power. I shall share that knowledge with you, my friend. Visit me soon. Gaze into the darkness again.

— Eralion