

Quests of Doom 3

ADVENTURES WORTH WINNING



FIFTH EDITION
COMPATIBLE

5th Edition Rules,
1st Edition feel



FROG GOD
GAMES

Quests of Doom 3

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GENERAL RESOURCES

Swords & Wizardry Complete^{S&W}
The Tome of Horrors Complete^{PF, S&W}
Tome of Horrors 4^{PF, S&W}
Tome of Adventure Design^{S&W}
Monstrosities^{S&W}
Bill Webb's Book of Dirty Tricks
Razor Coast: Fire as She Bears^{PF}
Book of Lost Spells^{5e}
Fifth Edition Foes^{5e}
Book of Alchemy*^{5e, PF, S&W}

THE LOST LANDS

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Razor Coast: Freebooter's Guide to the Razor Coast^{PF, S&W}
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LL1: Stoneheart Valley^{PF, S&W}
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LL3: Sword of Air^{PF, S&W}
LL4: Cults of the Sundered Kingdoms^{PF, S&W}
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LL6: The Northlands Saga Complete^{PF, S&W}
LL7: The Blight*^{PF, S&W}
LL8: Bard's Gate Complete*^{PF, S&W}
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QUESTS OF DOOM

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Quests of Doom (includes the 5e Vol. 1 and 2, but for PF and S&W only)^{PF, S&W}
Quests of Doom 2^{5e}
Quests of Doom 3^{5e, S&W}
Quests of Doom 4*^{5e, PF, S&W}

PERILOUS VISTAS

Dead Man's Chest (pdf only)^{PF}
Dunes of Desolation^{PF}
Fields of Blood^{PF}
Mountains of Madness*^{PF}

* (forthcoming from **Frog God Games**)

Introduction

With pride and fanfares of trumpets we introduce *Quests of Doom 3*, another volume of *adventures worth winning!* With this trove of places and challenges, you can explore the perils of the Maighib Desert, or the druid Niavark's forested demi-plane of vengeance, and many other locations where only brave-hearted adventurers would want to set foot.

What you'll find in this book is a carefully crafted adaptation of adventures originally written for the Pathfinder system into the fifth edition rules, designed to take best advantage of fifth edition's particular strengths. We didn't just apply numerical formulas to the existing material, we took into account the different tactics, skills, and options available in fifth edition and re-crafted the adventures as if they had been written with the fifth edition rules from the beginning. We convert adventures for the *system*, not just by the *numbers*, and we're very proud of the results here.

Each chapter of the book is a stand-alone module that can be placed anywhere in your own campaign world, wherever you need it. The adventures are not a series, and are not linked to each other. So pick and choose them in whatever order you want, switch them up, break them into parts and

A Brief Note About Book Numbering

Don't forget; *Quests of Doom 1* has two volumes. *Quests of Doom 2* is a third volume of adventures for lower-level characters. So this is actually the fourth volume of the series, even though it's labeled *Quests of Doom 3*. This might seem strange to you. Ultimately, it seems strange to us, too. It seemed like a good idea at the time.

—Matt

reassemble them — this is a free-form resource for the resourceful game master!

If you're using the *Lost Lands* world setting by **Frog God Games**, each chapter contains information about where it is located in the world. Like we said, though, don't feel constrained by the way we organize *our* campaign world, because we're talking about *your* campaign world.

Enjoy!

Matt Finch

President, Necromancer Games

September 6, 2015

King of Beasts

By Tom Khauss

Riddle of the Sands

I may elude those who seek me even though I cannot hide. I may be in plain sight, but they do not see me. I may be at the tip of their tongue, yet they cannot remember me. What am I?

I am an answer.

King of Beasts is an 8th-level desert adventure that takes the PCs on a whirlwind journey through a small village and its outlying area in the Pesh River Delta and then into the heart of the Maighib Desert. A case of mistaken identity sets a chain of events into motion that transforms the hunters into the hunted, as wild beasts under the direction of a vengeful creature turn the tables on mankind. The lives of the guilty and the innocent are at stake unless someone can solve the true riddle of the sands.

Adventure Background

The desert is riddled with secrets, though some do not enjoy being kept that way. Before the Kharitsines arrived to settle the fertile Pesh River Delta, the comparatively primitive Omaruri people farmed the fertile soil, hunted along its nurturing banks and revered the forces of nature for granting them their bountiful harvests and fresh meat. They paid homage to a pantheon of gods that governed the land, the beasts, the water and the weather, yet when they sought counsel their elders and high priests trekked across the sands of the Maighib Desert to a mysterious and ancient structure that predated their arrival to this land. They called the place Chass. Within its cluttered rooms and majestic chambers dwelt a wise and seemingly immortal creature that they knew as Chasshagra, though he referred to himself by another name in his native tongue. Though the Omaruri's first encounters with Chasshagra the androsphinx were tension-filled battles of wits and intellect, over time the gruff and territorial beast grew to appreciate their company and insight about the outside world. He even came to regard their most remarkable sages and leaders as dear friends whom he entertained for days and sometimes weeks at a time while they debated topics of particular interest to him. Foremost among his inquiries were man's role in the natural world as well as who should rule the land — man or beast. Chasshagra always championed the supremacy of beasts. In the end, the Omaruri deferred to Chasshagra's vast intellect and accepted nature's triumph over the forces of civilization, though their successors were not as accommodating.

The Kharitsine's arrival and the subsequent, rapid decline of the Omaruri culture forever changed the dynamic between men and Chasshagra. Though they never openly expressed it, many Omaruri revered the astute sphinx as a living deity, a belief that the worshippers of Mah-Barek considered blasphemous. Within the span of a generation, the pilgrimages to Chass ended. The once highly sought after Chasshagra retreated to the sanctity and loneliness of his treasured library, only venturing into the outside world on rare occasions vainly searching for any signs of his long-lost friends. After the passage of a century, he accepted that his Omaruri admirers were dead and that the Kharitsines were very much alive and probably headed in his direction.

The Kharitsines had no desire to conquer trackless expanses of searing dunes under the Kingdom of Guurzan's nominal control, but they were interested in new business opportunities. They were particularly keen on establishing an overland route from the fertile Pesh River Delta to the distant Guurzan settlement of Qiram far to the east, one that would take

them through Chasshagra's territory or even past Chass itself. The reclusive sphinx greeted the prospect of new visitors with mixed feelings. He greatly missed his discussions with his old friends, yet suspicions persisted about the newcomers. His nagging doubts proved prophetic. Chass itself and the surrounding fresh water springs garnered the traders' interest; however they had no time or patience for the crafty sphinx's philosophical debates or his lively conversation. Much to his dismay, the merchants offered Chasshagra treasure in exchange for his hospitality and access to his water supplies. The proposal insulted the haughty beast. To make matters worse, the merchant leaders misinterpreted his overtures as a negotiating tactic aimed at exacting more gold and riches from them. Dialogue with Chasshagra inevitably broke down denying the traveling merchants access to his water supplies and safe passage through his territory. That was an outcome that some refused to accept. Conflict became unavoidable, yet those that dared to rouse the anger of the immortal being soon came to regret it. After a few hard-fought lessons, the caravan leaders abandoned their attempts to wrest Chass and its resources from the territorial sphinx's control and instead steered a wide berth around the area. Occasional skirmishes erupted over the passing years, but for the most part both sides honored their uneasy, tacit truce.

Though the men sidestepping his territory gave no thought to the ancient sphinx dwelling within Chass, the increasingly misanthropic creature became obsessed with proving beasts' superiority over man. The endeavor consumed nearly every waking moment as he alternated between pouring through his vast library looking for evidence to support his hypothesis and conducting field research following and observing wild animals, particularly lion prides, scattered through the Pesh River Delta. He struggled to maintain his objectivity on the subject, especially when someone killed a wild beast for sport or to protect his property. His contempt for man grew with each affront to nature, yet it all became a distant memory when his path crossed with another of his kin — the gynosphinx Savvith. In the blink of an eye, his obsession with men vanished and was replaced with a new purpose. After a lengthy repartee of riddles, puzzles and logic problems, Chasshagra's sharp intellect and persistence won over the object of his affections. Savvith accompanied him back to his library, and his ill feelings towards man faded into a distant memory. The beautiful and brilliant gynosphinx occupied his every thought. In a few months, she captured his heart and soul. Less than a year later, she became pregnant with his offspring. Chasshagra doted on his beloved mate, yet she still enjoyed her occasional freedom wandering through the desert in search of new discoveries. But her curiosity brought her face to face with an old enemy that altered their destinies forever.

Game Over

Lost in complex thought, Savvith paid little attention to her surroundings, as she walked across the Maighib Desert's desolate sands where an unexpected band of predators lay in wait. The three men and one woman that comprised Game Over, a renowned troupe of big-game hunters, carefully stalked their coveted prey from a distance. Though they normally targeted wild animals, an ambitious caravan leader named Ameht Bakhtar offered them a hefty bounty to rid Chass of its resident sphinx. The group of skilled archers and swordsmen followed her every step for nearly an hour until the opportune moment presented itself. Two archers armed with lethal magical projectiles let fly a volley of arrows followed by a headlong charge towards the startled Savvith. She fought back with every ounce of strength she could muster, severely injuring two of them in the wild melee before succumbing to their coordinated attack. They decapitated

her and returned to their hunting lodge at the edge of the Maighib Desert with proof of their kill and a prized trophy — Savvith's head which they proudly mounted on the wall. And all along they had no idea that they killed the wrong sphinx.

Time passes slowly for sphinxes, yet for Chasshagra every passing hour seemed like a thousand years without Savvith. When morning broke without any sign of her, he could not justify any further delay. The nervous sphinx took to the skies in search of his missing love. Eight miles from Chass, his worst fear came true. He saw Savvith's headless, dead body lying on the burning sands. Overcome with grief, the normally reserved beast devolved into a heaving mass of inconsolable flesh and bone. He laid his head against her belly until the following morning desperately longing to hear his unborn offspring in her womb, but no signs of life stirred within her. Profound sadness and melancholy steadily gave way to anger and resentment as he carried her corpse back to Chass. The arrows in her belly left no doubt in his mind about who was responsible for this atrocity. It could only be his old nemesis — man. He used his divination magic to gather a few cryptic facts and deduced that Savvith's killers could only be the hunting group Game Over. He resolved that thought must now give way to action.

Memories of the Omaruri

Chasshagra returned to Chass searching for an ancient magical book given to him centuries earlier by a hermetic Omaruri high priestess named Nawalapuura. While she walked the earth, the benevolent sphinx avoided the wicked cleric whenever possible because of her reputation for worshipping the Omaruri's dark earth mother, Owomarari. Rumors persisted that she animated corpses into undead abominations and summoned sinister beasts to her aid during her evil rituals. Nawalapuura always took an interest in Chasshagra, presumably borne of some desire to corrupt the soul of an inherently good creature. Her dark magic gave her unnaturally long life, and just before she departed this world to join her divine mistress she gave him her book entitled *King of Beasts*. She claimed that he could use it to summon aid from her vile goddess during his greatest time of need. Though Chasshagra never considered the evil priestess' proposition for nearly a thousand years, the current tragedy sparked his interest. He opened its vile pages and began reading through its dark incantations, all of which demanded the freshly spilt blood of a magical beast. Chasshagra considered it apropos that he should sacrifice his own blood to exact his revenge. As he read the accursed words, his spilt blood bubbled and roiled on the floor. With each passing phrase, the life fluids took substance, transforming into bone, flesh and hair as they grew in size. After the vengeful sphinx finished reading the spell, the wicked tome burst into black flames, and three therianthrope lionweres stood before him ready to perform his bidding. He bid his servants to avenge Savvith's death and prove to men that beasts are the world's true masters, not men. He commanded them to find the men who killed Savvith using any means necessary, while he monitored their progress via a *sending* spell that linked master and servants.

Full Circles

The lionweres dashed off from Chass and headed towards the closest settlement to Chass and the hunting group's reputed home — the village of Ramaashta along the Pesha River. The cunning shapechangers assumed their human form and visited the village square seeking information about their quarry's whereabouts. Though no one could provide specific details about Game Over, they learned that Ameht Baktar, a prominent caravan leader offered a massive bounty on Chasshagra's head to give him unfettered access to Chass. The discovery outraged the sphinx. Once again, man's greed and avarice claimed an innocent life, that of his beloved mate. The enraged sphinx took to the skies and captured Ameht Baktar in the open desert as he led his caravan en route to Qiram. Several caravan members perished in the attack while most of the others fled into the desert only to succumb to the scorching heat and native denizens. However, two survivors escaped the carnage and embarked on the perilous journey across the sands. On their way to Ramaashta, they encountered Caleb and Guadalupe Ansiki, two members of Game Over. Vaguely familiar with

the siblings, the two survivors conveyed their account of Chasshagra's recent attack on their caravan to the stunned listeners. The Ansiki siblings suddenly realized that they made a grave mistake. They killed the wrong sphinx. Troubled by this news, they returned to their hunting lodge and relayed the information to their perturbed and increasingly paranoid leader, Ammar Tareq. After some internal debate, Ammar demanded that the group must kill the two survivors to spare them any embarrassment from their mistake and to prevent the villagers from blaming them for any repercussions that might result from their error.

Meanwhile, Chasshagra's lionweres grow frustrated with the villagers' lack of cooperation and the need to suppress their inherent murderous instincts. No one knew where to find their quarry, or at least that is what they told the lionweres posing as three strangers. The situation reached its boiling point during a particularly tense encounter with an elderly farmer and his grandniece. Conversation devolved into an argument, and the disagreement then escalated into violence. The lionweres slew both family members. As an unintended consequence, the murders loosened the villagers' tongues. To further improve their surreptitious ruse, the lionweres committed additional murders in their lion form and claimed that they were also game hunters seeking Game Over's assistance in ridding the village of these man-eating beasts. In addition to creating the desired effects among the villagers, the lionweres' murderous deeds inadvertently stirred an ancient evil from her slumber. Sensing the presence of residual magic from her long-forgotten tome, the slumbering Nawalapuura rose from the banks of the Pesha River as a bog mummy where she stalked the El-Rauf Farm on the village's outskirts in search of live bodies to swell the ranks of her minions. When the PCs arrive in Ramaashta events seemingly come full circle, as the PCs must contend with the savage lionweres' murderous rampage, the malevolent bog mummy and the hunting troupe that set everything into motion.

Adventure Synopsis

The PCs first become involved in the adventure when they are asked to investigate and stop a series of brutal wild animal attacks in the village of Ramaashta along the banks of the Pesha River. Shortly after arriving at the scene, they learn that the beasts exclusively target men and do not harm livestock or other wild animals. The assaults coincide with the sudden appearance of three strangers — gruff men more akin to beasts that seek information about Game Over, a renowned hunting troupe that dwells beyond the village's borders. It is unclear how the mysterious strangers and the hunting group are related to the recent animal attacks. As the PCs dig deeper, they discover that the savage beasts committing the killings and the mysterious visitors are one and the same. They are lionweres sent by the androsphinx Chasshagra to avenge the death of his beloved mate Savvith at the hands of Game Over. The PCs must solve the mystery and stop the lionweres' murderous ways, but they are just one piece to the rapidly evolving puzzle.

The lionweres' killings stir *King of Beasts'* former owner, Nawalapuura, from her watery grave along the banks of the Pesha River. She rises from the muck as a malevolent bog mummy and infects Mesut Azaz, a local farmhand from the El-Rauf Farm with her evil curse. The day after the PCs arrive in the village, two survivors from Chasshagra's assault against Ameht Baktar's caravan make their way into Ramaashta with Game Over following close behind. Game Over's rash and violent leader, Ammar, searches the village for the two survivors only to discover that three mysterious strangers are looking for Game Over instead. In addition to contending with the lionweres, the PCs now find themselves standing between Game Over and the two innocent men they seek to kill. The situation comes to a head as the PCs must simultaneously halt the lionweres' attacks against the village, take sides in the conflict between Game Over and the two caravan survivors, and defeat the bog mummy stalking the banks of the Pesha River. The PCs must deal with all three threats before they can set out into the Maighib Desert to confront the architect behind the entire plan.

The long trek across the burning sands pits the PCs against the forces of nature and the inhospitable realm's indigenous denizens. Along the way the PCs may also come upon the remnants of Ameht's caravan or the location of Savvith's killing. After braving the dangers of the Maighib

Desert, Chass and its vengeful master await. Intrigued by the power of Nawalapuura's demonic tome, Chasshagra scoured its surviving pages and created other wicked creatures to exact his revenge. The PCs must overcome these minions as well as the ancient citadel's devious traps and ancient inhabitants before confronting the wrathful sphinx within his grand library. The intelligent beast has dabbled in evil rituals and burns with rage, but he is still not beyond redemption. If the PCs can devise a way to restore life to Savvith, Chasshagra may atone for his sins. Otherwise, the PCs are left with no option but to destroy him and bring this sad chapter of his lengthy existence to a permanent end.

Starting the Adventure

An interested party may contact the PCs anywhere in northern Khar-tous, including Qamara or any of the villages and towns scattered throughout the Pesha River Delta. The person employing their services requires the PCs to accomplish three fundamental, intertwined tasks — safeguard the local residents against additional attacks, unmask the culprits and put a stop to the vicious assaults. The adventure itself begins in the small village of Ramaashta on the southern branch of the Pesha River close to where the mighty waterway splits into two, though PCs traveling to the region from far away must traverse the treacherous Maighib Desert to reach the remote location. Regardless of who engages the PCs to look into these strange events, their employer provides them with some basic information about the attacks. So far, there are no survivors to relay any rhyme or reason for the assaults. The wounds and tracks left behind by the assailants bear the telltale hallmarks of at least one large, predatory feline. Every attack took place at night under the cover of darkness in a remote and isolated location except for the first attack in a farmhouse. Speculation abounds as to the cause. Theories range from a group of sick beasts driven mad by some disease to fiendish brutes under the sway of a demonic power to everything in between. In addition to the human toll, the vicious assaults are also having a chilling effect on the region's economy. Farmhands are increasingly frightened to till the fields, harvest the crops or tend to the livestock even during the day. Any significant disruption to the Pesha River Delta's ability to produce food would result in major food shortages or famine throughout northern Khar-tous. This dire prospect is enough to force the most miserly politicians and merchants alike to take action regardless of the monetary cost.

Hooks

Many parties are concerned about these developments prompting them to potentially employ adventurers to resolve the matter. PCs far from the Pesha River Delta are more likely to be contacted by a political official than anywhere else especially if they have an ongoing relationship with that person. If the PCs completed the preceding adventure Child's Play and are still in Qamara, Salamun ibn Saddesh directly approaches PCs seeking their assistance with another urgent matter. Those closer to the scene are more apt to be hired by a local merchant with business ties to the affected area or become personally involved in the matter. Regardless of the circumstances, the GM may use one of the following hooks or create another one in order to get the adventure underway.

Murder Most Foul

The brutal deaths of so many citizens cause great concern among Khar-tous's rulers. Salamun ibn Saddesh, Yamun's abaya, or Sultan Faud Umarr himself summons the PCs to an urgent meeting about the matter. Neither party has additional information about the killings other than they are believed to be caused by wild animals and are concentrated in and around the village of Ramaashta on the southern bank of the Pesha River's eastern branch. Either party offers the PCs a 4,000gp reward to kill the beasts committing the slayings. PCs may attempt Cha (Persuasion) checks to increase the reward, but no matter how successful the check, the reward never increases beyond 5,000gp. Salamun or Faud directs the PCs to the remote village of Ramaashta and gives them an official letter that they should present to the settlement's local administrator, Aramses Ottama (LN human male **noble**), indicating that they were personally sent by either of them.

Bad for Business

No one fears the economic fallout from the murders more than Cirat the Swift-Lipped (N human male **noble**), a fabulously wealthy merchant with deep, economic ties in the affected region. The portly, gregarious businessman owns breweries and bakeries that depend upon the village's crop yields. Early reports suggest that the killings directly affected several farms that supply grain to his operations and caused farmhands on adjacent lands to abandon their harvests and seek work elsewhere. The wily Cirat desperately needs the PCs' assistance to protect his assets and revenue stream. Renowned for his ability to crunch numbers to his greatest benefit, the cunning merchant offers them the odd sum of 3,568gp and 2sp to stop the creatures responsible for the murders and restore order to the area. Needless to say, the reward amount is non-negotiable unless it favors Cirat. He also directs the PCs to Aramses Ottama for assistance in the matter.

Local Affairs

If the PCs begin the adventure in the local vicinity, their stature attracts tremendous interest among those living in the area, none more than Aramses Ottama, the local administrator. The young, capable official wants to make a name for himself and impress the Abaya as well as the Sultan himself with his ability to handle this pressing matter. He realizes that this situation is beyond his area of expertise; therefore he recruits the PCs to investigate and stop the killings. As a local official in a rural district, Aramses is short on coin and manpower, so he tugs at the PCs' heartstrings and appeals to their sense of honor. Should that fail the crafty politician employs an unusual strategy. He presents his stunningly beautiful younger sister Kadin Ottama (CG human female **noble**) to the PCs and offers her hand in marriage to an appropriately aged PC willing to undertake this important mission. Though he fully expects the PCs to relent on their demand to marry the young woman, he follows through with his promise if the PC insists.

Sandy Trails and Watery Roads

Unless the PCs are in remote village of Ramaashta at the beginning of the adventure, they must still negotiate the treacherous Maighib Desert and the Pesha River Delta to reach the distant settlement of Ramaashta. The GM may challenge those making the arduous trek across the burning sands with one or more of the encounters found in Part 2 of this adventure with the exceptions of Ameht's Caravan and Scene of the Slaughter. Though the journey through the Pesha River Delta does not pose the same natural obstacles as the Maighib Desert, travelers moving through the area still encounter several formidable problems. The Pesha River is too deep to walk across, so travelers must seek alternate means to ford the waterway. The current is relatively still, therefore anyone may attempt DC 10 Str (Athletics) check to move across the water by that means. On average, the river is 80 feet wide and 20 feet deep, so it takes multiple successful Swim checks to get to the other side. A successful DC 12 Int (History) or Int (Nature) check directs the PC towards a narrower crossing. Checks that succeed by 10 or more reveal the location of a bridge. Though the water route is the safer and less grueling method of travel, the actual distance may be substantially longer depending upon the journey's starting point. On average, boats navigating these waters charge passengers 5sp to travel to the opposite river bank and a standard rate that roughly equals 1gp per mile.

Part One: Fields of Blood

After securing passage on a vessel navigating the Pasha River or making the overland journey across the fertile delta, the PCs arrive in the coastal village of Ramaashta, the focal point of the attacks. It is important to remember that the adventure's events do not happen in a vacuum. The PCs' arrival and Chasshagra's actions influence the adventure's outcome. The following timeline of events describing the main antagonists' activities and whereabouts is intended to serve as a guide for adjudicating the outcome of these events. Events that occurred before the PCs' involvement are static; however the GM may modify subsequent incidents accordingly. The timeline's starting point is based upon their arrival in Ramaashta, not when they are first contacted. Since the killings began five nights before the PCs' arrival in Ramaashta, the culprits have claimed six victims.

Cast of Characters

The following sections further describe the actions and activities of the four parties involved in the sad events at Ramaashta. The GM should fully familiarize himself with each group as their actions and reactions depend largely upon what the PCs do in the village. Unlike conventional adventures, there are no set encounters involving any of these parties; therefore the PCs and the GM are free to determine where and when the encounters take place based upon the PCs' travels within the village. For instance, the PCs may surreptitiously run into the lionweres in the village square, or the PCs may get extremely lucky and catch the lionweres in the act during a covert stakeout. In the event that the PCs appear to be struggling with unearthing leads or solving the mystery, the GM may bring the action to the PCs by having the lionweres ambush them or have an important NPC with information seek them out instead.

Lionweres (Difficulty Hard)

From his distant residence in Chass, the vengeful sphinx used Nawalapuura's ancient book to breathe life into **6 lionweres** that search the small village of Ramaashta for the hunting troupe Game Over. In human form, the lionweres present themselves as Aswan, Leu and Sanga. Their aggressive demeanor and abrasive rudeness shine through even in their human form which hampers their efforts to garner information from the insular locals. They initially portrayed themselves as three wayward travelers, because they believed that a few questions would quickly lead them right to their intended quarry. When they realized that finding Game Over would be more difficult than they suspected, they assumed the guise of three big-game hunters on the trail of three man-eating lions. They use this ruse in the hope that it lures Game Over to Ramaashta. After the initial assault in the farmhouse, the lionweres lured subsequent victims out into the open while in human form under the guise that they wanted the person to give them a "lay of the land" to aid them in their pursuit of the beasts. Though they are most adept at attacking in their hybrid form, they committed the murders in their animal form to perpetuate the belief that wild animals are responsible for the slayings. Despite their bestial nature and ability to detect scents, the lionweres are poor trackers. In addition to these obstacles, they experience tremendous difficulty suppressing their inherent bloodthirstiness. Though it seems obvious that more killings are not bringing them any closer to new information about the hunting group's current whereabouts, they still indulge their innate cruelty strictly for twisted kicks.

During their first few days in Ramaashta, the trio frequented the village square listening for rumors about Game Over and asking questions of the locals. They focused extra attention on Harkuul Gristlebeard, the village's smith whom they suspected outfitted the group with weapons and armor. The gruff dwarf admitted to them that he occasionally supplies Game Over, but he gave them no other information. They were reluctant to assault someone capable of fighting back, so they pursued other leads instead. By the time the PCs arrive in Ramaashta, the lionweres abandoned any hopes of finding Game Over by investigative means and now hope that the killings draw the hunting group into the village in search of answers. The timeline of events describes the lionweres' movements

Timeline of Adventure Events

-1 month ago: Ameht Baktar offers a bounty on Chasshagra's head.

-21 days ago: Caleb and Guadalupe Ansiki, two members of Game Over, learn of Ameht Baktar's proposal during a visit to Ramaashta.

-14 days ago: Caleb and Guadalupe meet with Ameht Baktar at the Hook and Sickle to discuss the terms of his offer. The parties agree on a suitable price. The pair purchases a dozen *magical beast bane arrows* from Harkuul Gristlebeard's armory in Ramaashta.

-13 days ago: Game Over heads into the Maighib Desert in search of Chasshagra.

-10 days ago: Game Over encounters and kills Savvith outside of Chass.

-9 days ago: Chasshagra discovers Savvith's corpse.

-8 days ago: Chasshagra reads from *King of Beasts* breathing life into the lionweres who immediately head out to Ramaashta. Ameht Baktar leads his caravan of twenty camels and ten men out of Ramaashta and into the Maighib Desert en route to distant Qiram.

-7 days ago: Game Over returns to their lodge with their kill and then heads to Ramaashta's village square to boast about their prize.

-5 days ago: The lionweres arrive in Ramaashta and kill their first victims at the Khottam farmhouse.

-4 days ago: The lionweres learn of Ameht Baktar's bounty and relay the information back to Chasshagra. The lionweres kill their next victim at Ramaashta's catacombs.

-3 days ago: Chasshagra locates Ameht Baktar's caravan. He captures Ameht Baktar and drives off his men. The lionweres kill their next victim in the fields of the Bizayad Farms.

-2 days ago: The lionweres kill another victim on the road near the Cuzek Farm.

-1 day ago: The lionweres slay another victim on the grounds of the El-Rouf Farm. The evil deed stirs the corpse of their former master, Nawalapuura, a bog mummy buried along the banks of the Pasha River.

Present: The PCs arrive in Ramaashta. Nawalapuura infects her first victim, Mesut Azaz, with bog rot. That evening, the diseased Mesut is brought from the El-Rauf Farm to Sholamara's House of Respite for treatment. Caleb and Guadalupe Ansiki encounter the caravan survivors and discover their mistake. The lionweres do not attack this evening.

+1 day: The lionweres stalk the grounds of the El-Rauf Farm asking questions during the day and then attacking another victim at night. The caravan attack's two survivors arrive in Ramaashta followed shortly afterward by Game Over. Nawalapuura is first sighted on the banks of the Pasha River.

+2 days: The lionweres move to the neighboring Al-Hoda Farm and kill another victim that night.

+3 days: The lionweres move to Aramses Ottama's estate and slay one of his family members that evening. Nawalapuura infects a second victim, Jazeel Sharif, with bog rot.

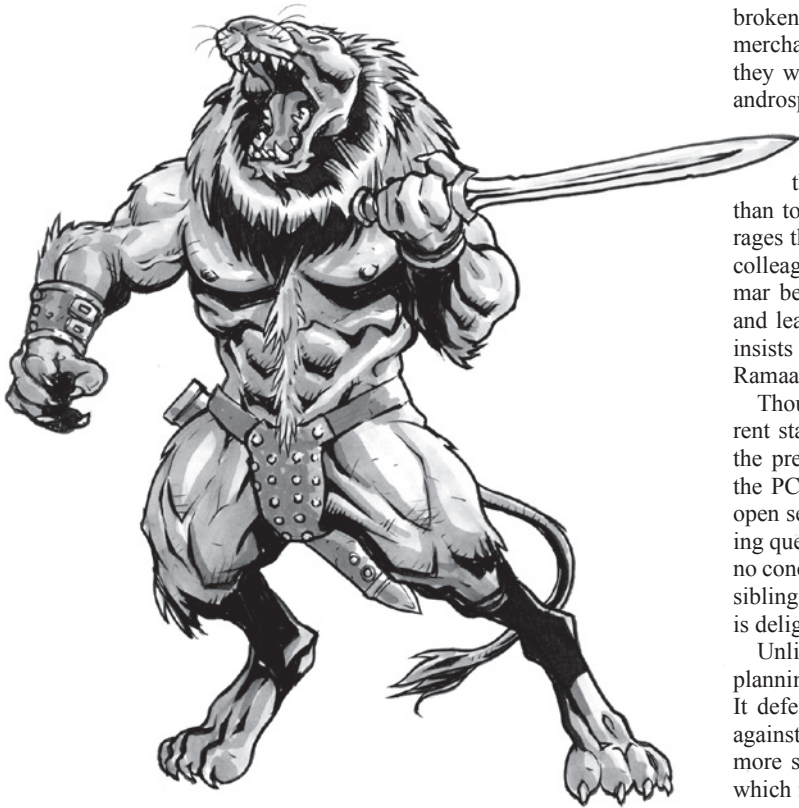
+4 days: The lionweres move to the Sharif Farm and claim their last victim.

+5 days and beyond: Nawalapuura's curse spreads through Ramaashta, as she and her undead minions perpetrate more attacks and swell their ranks.

during the course of the adventure, though they still periodically frequent the village square for supplies, food or water.

If the lionweres cross paths with the PCs or the PCs make their presence abundantly known in the village, they incorrectly mistake them for Game Over. Unlike the unarmed villagers, the lionweres do not directly approach the PCs. They instead follow them from a distance and wait for nightfall before launching a sneak attack in their hybrid form. The lionweres do not avoid the PCs even if they are accompanied by the village's soldiers or Aramses. The lionweres also communicate the PCs' presence to their distant master, Chasshagra via a *sending* spell, which Chasshagra must initiate.

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Chasshagra communicates with all three simultaneously in order for it to function properly, and Chasshagra can only use it once per day.

In addition to their gear, the lionweres also carry six potions — *gaseous form*, *hill giant strength*, *greater healing*, *heroism*, *invisibility*, and *resistance (fire)* distributed evenly amongst the lionweres. They also have a rare Omaruri obsidian votive figure worth 1,000gp.

Therianthrope, Lionwere (6): AC 13; HP 30 (4d10+8); Spd 40ft (lion form), 30ft (human or hybrid form); **Melee** bite (+6, 1d6+4 piercing), claw x2 (+6, 1d6+4 slashing), greatsword (+6, 2d8+4 slashing, human or hybrid form), **SA** multiattack (lion or hybrid form: bite, claw x2); **Resist** bludgeoning, piercing and slashing damage from nonmagical and nonadamantine weapons; **Str** +4, **Dex** +3, **Con** +2, **Int** +0, **Wis** +1, **Cha** +2; **Skills** Deception +4, Stealth +5; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; **Traits** lethargy (all creatures within 60ft that can hear lionwere must make DC 12 Con save or be affected as if by *slow* spell lasting 1d6 rounds; creature that saves successfully is immune to lethargy until after its next long rest; therianthropes are immune to lethargy), shapechanger (can change from its lion form or human form to its hybrid form as a bonus action; changing from lion form directly to human form or vice versa takes an action; lionwere is Large in lion form but Medium in human or hybrid form; in lion form, it is indistinguishable from a normal lion); **AL** CE; **CR** 2; **XP** 450. (*Fifth Edition Foes*, 228)

Game Over (Difficulty Hard)

The renowned hunting troupe plays an unwitting role in the troubles plaguing the nearby village of Ramaashta. The group consists of the Al-caldarian siblings Caleb Ansiki and his sister Guadalupe along with Gabriel Ammaska and its half-elf leader Ammar Tareq. They joined forces as teenagers and have been together for two decades. Caleb and Guadalupe are the group's trackers and archers. Gabriel is its ferocious barbarian, and Ammar is its former professional soldier. They dwell in a hunting lodge beyond Ramaashta's outlying farmland and venture to the neighboring settlement on an infrequent basis. On Ammar's rare visits to the village, he openly proclaims that he hunts trespassers on sight. He is famous for saying "Game Over finds you alive and well at your home, but dead and

broken if you dare try to find ours." Their partnership with the traveling merchant, Ameht Baktar, sets the entire chain of events into motion when they wrongly slew Savvith, the gynosphinx, instead of Chasshagra, the androsphinx, on the open sands of the Maighib Desert.

Until Caleb and Guadalupe's chance encounter with the caravan survivors, they were completely unaware that they killed the wrong sphinx because Ameht never provided any specifics other than to kill the sphinx at Chass. The news changes everything and outrages their increasingly paranoid and cruel leader Ammar. He berates his colleagues for not detaining or better yet killing the two survivors. Ammar believes that their eyewitness accounts could embarrass the group and lead some to blame them for the surviving sphinx's retribution. He insists that they capture or preferably kill the two survivors who fled to Ramaashta.

Though the residents initially welcome the legendary hunters, the current state of affairs is too much for Ammar. The savage animal attacks, the presence of three strangers asking many questions about them and the PCs' arrival in the village feed his paranoid delusions. He declares open season on the two caravan attack survivors, the three strangers asking questions about them and the PCs in no particular order. He expresses no concerns about stopping the animals terrorizing the village. The Ansiki siblings reluctantly go along with Ammar's violent plans, while Gabriel is delighted by the chance to just "let loose" and do whatever he pleases.

Unlike the group's typical hunts, the jittery Ammar is too impatient for planning. He wants to eradicate all of their threats as quickly as possible. It defeats the purpose of the adventure to have Game Over square off against the lionweres and do the PCs' dirty work for them, so it makes more sense for Game Over to pursue the PCs or the caravan survivors which may bring Game Over into conflict with the PCs anyway. Despite Ammar's orders to the contrary, Caleb and Guadalupe take defensive positions prior to any anticipated battle, preferably atop a building or at a minimum behind some type of cover. Ammar and Gabriel fight to the bitter end. Caleb and Guadalupe may surrender if the PCs kill or incapacitate Ammar and one of the siblings dies or is gravely injured. Caleb and Guadalupe willingly divulge everything they know about the caravan survivors, Ameht Baktar's bounty and Savvith's death.

If the PCs decide to take the fight to Game Over and track them back to their lodge, see the "Game Over's Trail" section in Part Two of this adventure.

Caleb and Guadalupe Ansiki, male and female human

Rgr5 (hunter): AC 15; HP 37 (5d10+12); Spd 30ft; Melee +1 scimitar (+7/+7, 1d6+4, slashing); Ranged longbow (+8/+8, 150ft/600ft, 1d8+3 piercing); **SA** spells (DC 13, Wis +5); **Str** +1 (+4), **Dex** +3 (+6), **Con** +1, **Int** +0, **Wis** +2, **Cha** +1; **Skills** Animal Handling +5, Athletics +4, Nature +3, Stealth +6, Survival +5; **Senses** passive Perception 12; **Traits** favored enemy (monstrosities), fighting style (archery), hunter's prey, primeval awareness; **AL** CG; **CR** 4; **XP** 1,100.

Spells (slots): 1st (4)—*animal friendship*, *cure wounds*, *hunter's mark*; 2nd (2)—*pass without trace*

Equipment: studded leather armor, longbow, 60 arrows, +1 scimitar, 207gp, hunting lodge key

Gabriel Ammaska, male human Brb5 (berserker): AC 14; HP

42 (5d12+10); **Spd** 40ft; **Melee** maul (+6/+6, 2d6+3 bludgeoning); **Ranged** spear (+5, range 20ft/60ft, 1d6+2 piercing); **SA** reckless attack; **Str** +3, **Dex** +2, **Con** +2, **Int** -1, **Wis** +1, **Cha** +0; **Skills** Acrobatics +5, Athletics +6, Intimidation +3, Survival +4, ; **Senses** passive Perception 11; **Traits** rage 3/day, reckless attack, danger sense; **AL** CN; **CR** 4; **XP** 1,100.

Equipment: *potion of lesser restoration*, maul, spear, 299gp, hunting lodge key.

Ammar Tareq, male half-elf Ftr6 (champion): AC 17; HP 43

(6d10+6); **Spd** 30ft; **Melee** +1 scimitar (+8/+8, 1d6+7 slashing, critical 19-20); **Str** +4, **Dex** +0, **Con** +1, **Int** +1, **Wis** +0, **Cha** +1; **Skills** Athletics +7, Deception +4, Intimidation +4, Stealth +3; **Senses** passive Perception 10; **Traits** action

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surge, fighting style (dueling), second wind; **AL** NE; **CR** 5; **XP** 1,800.

Equipment: +1 ring mail, +1 scimitar, shield, 165gp, hunting lodge key, key to room G10 in the lodge.

Nawalapuura

The lionweres' residual mystical energy from her dread tome *King of Beasts* proved sufficient to wake the vile priestess from her eternal rest as a **bog mummy** and unleash her on an unsuspecting world. The force of her will and the corruption of her soul were so great that four unfortunate men that drowned countless ages ago also rose from the mire as **4 draugrs**. Like others of her kin, Nawalapuura stays close to her grave along the banks of the Pasha River near the El-Rouf farmhouse. She remains partially submerged during the day and stalks the river bank in the evening along with her draugr allies who rise from their resting places at the bottom of the river. PCs searching the area around the Pasha River must succeed on a DC 20 Wis (Perception) check to spot the concealed bog mummy during the day. A successful DC 16 Wis (Perception) check spots Nawalapuura at night. However, her proximity to the river makes it relatively easy to track her movements. A successful DC 10 Wis (Perception) or Wis (Survival) check detects her tracks, and the PC can follow the tracks to Nawalapuura's concealed hiding place with a Wis (Survival) check. If the PCs track her to her lair, she and her minions rise from the muck and attack.

The hateful bog mummy aspires to create more minions to serve her; therefore she slams her victims to the precipice of death so that they rise as bog mummies under her command. She abandons all restraint when faced with superior numbers or a powerful enemy. Though her evil endured the transformation to undeath, her intellect did not. Nawalapuura harbors no grand ambitions and furthers no plans other than to create more creatures in her image and slay any living being she encounters. When the PCs arrive in Ramaashta her first victim, Mesut Azaz, lies in the village's hospital under the care of its resident priestess, Sholamara. Over the course of the adventure, others soon follow as discussed in the preceding timeline of events.

Nawalapuura, female Bog Mummy: **AC** 14; **HP** 84 (12d8+30);

Spd 20ft; **Melee** slam (+6, 2d6+3 bludgeoning plus 3d6 necrotic plus bog rot); **Immune** charm, exhaustion, frightened, necrotic, paralyzed, poison; **Resist** bludgeoning, piercing and slashing from nonmagical weapons, fire; **Vulnerable** cold; **SA** bog rot (DC 14 Con save or victim takes 4d6 necrotic damage/24 hours, no natural healing and one-half normal magical healing); **Str** +3, **Dex** +0, **Con** +3, **Int** -2, **Wis** +2, **Cha** +2; **Skills** Perception +8, Stealth +3; **Senses** darkvision 60ft, passive Perception 12; **Traits** marsh move (normal movement through mud, marshes, and swamps with no penalty); **AL** CE; **CR** 6; **XP** 2,300. (**Appendix**)

Draugr (4): **AC** 14; **HP** 24 (3d8+9); **Spd** 30ft, swim 30ft; **Melee** greataxe (+5, 1d12+3 slashing plus nausea); **Immune** poison; **Resist** bludgeoning and slashing by nonmagical weapons, fire; **SA** nausea (if damaged by draugr, make DC 11 Con save or be poisoned for 1 round); **Str** +3, **Dex** +0, **Con** +3, **Int** -1, **Wis** +0, **Cha** +1; **Senses** darkvision 60ft, passive Perception 10; **AL** CE; **CR** 2; **XP** 450. (**Appendix**)

Caravan Survivors

Nasir and Samir al-Hoda (N male human **veteran**, no armor AC 11), two cousins originally from Ramaashta, are the sole survivors of Chasshagra's assault against Ameht Baktar's desert caravan. The exhausted pair stumbles into Ramaashta's main square the morning after the PCs' arrival in the village. Worn out by the long trek across the hot sands, they immediately make their way to the Hook and Sickle for food and water. After they sate their privation, the experienced desert travelers relay their story to anyone in earshot.

They explain that they left Ramaashta nine days ago. Five days into their otherwise uneventful trip, the ancient sphinx from Chass swooped down from the skies and grabbed Ameht Baktar, their caravan's leader. He then unleashed three fearsome roars that slew many camels and men and

sent the terrified survivors fleeing in every direction. To the best of their knowledge, the sphinx carried Ameht back to his lair and left the caravan's remnants to rot in the desert. Along the journey back to Ramaashta, they encountered Game Over's two siblings who questioned them at length about their encounter with the sphinx. They acknowledge that Ameht offered a bounty on the sphinx, but they presumed that Game Over had not accepted the offer or was preparing to hunt down the magical beast in the near future.

After telling their tale, the news of the attacks in the village greatly unnerves them. To make matters worse, they also hear rumors about Game Over slaying a sphinx before their encounter with Chasshagra in the desert. They come to the realization that the hunting troupe killed the wrong sphinx. Not only is this information potentially embarrassing to Game Over, it may also lead some to implicate them in the rash of killings. They are now certain of two things. They are convinced that their encounter with the sphinx and the subsequent killings in Ramaashta are not coincidences, and they are in grave peril from Game Over. They fear for their safety and seek protection from Aramses and his soldiers or the PCs. If the PCs are in the village square at the time of their arrival, Nasir and Samir find the PCs first. They tell the PCs their tale and insist that there is a connection between the caravan attack, Ramaashta's killings and Game Over's colossal blunder. Otherwise they seek assistance from Aramses at the administration building.

Ramaashta

The peaceful, quiet village of Ramaashta lies 35 miles upriver from the much larger settlement of Xamesh on the eastern branch of the Pasha River near the heart of the Pasha River Delta. Since its establishment nearly 400 years ago, Ramaashta is renowned for producing some of the finest and tastiest grains in the region. Several beer makers, most notably Cirat the Swift-Lipped, rely exclusively upon the village's cereal grains to craft their legendary brews. Ramaashta's grains have a distinct taste that appeals predominately to aficionados who can truly appreciate the unique flavors and underlying elements found in these specialty products. In addition, the taste of the beers and breads produced in the region vary wildly from one batch to the next, whereas those made in Xamesh taste the same year after year, making them much more popular among the general public. The same principle applies to Ramaashta's livestock. Connoisseurs prize the meat's distinctive qualities and unique flavoring, while the average household considers them to be too gamey. Despite its lofty reputation among Khartous's elite citizens and its ideal location near the confluence of the Pasha River's northern and southern branches,

Ramaashta

CG village
Corruption -1; **Crime** -5; **Economy** -1; **Law** +2; **Lore** -1;
Society +2
Qualities insular, superstitious
Danger +0

Government autocracy
Population 183 (109 humans; 24 dwarves, 20 elves, 10 half-elves, 20 others)

Notable NPCs

Aramses Ottama, Administrator (NG male human noble)
Harkuul Gristlebeard, Armory Owner (CN male dwarf **Ftr**3)
Athman al-Qasaad, Proprietor Tariq's Emporium (CG male human **Rog**1)

Base Value 500gp; **Purchase Limit** 2,500gp;
Spellcasting 1st;
Minor Items 2d4; **Medium Items** 1d4

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the village lags far behind its more conventional counterparts in terms of overall sales and popularity.

The settlement itself consists of a rudimentary wharf for waterborne traffic and a square with administrative buildings and shops. The majority of the population lives on the sprawling farmland outside of the central square. Most residents venture to the main square on a recurring basis to procure supplies, ship their agricultural products to distant markets or catch up on local gossip. Though the farms stretch across many miles, Ramaashta is a tight-knit community of long-term settlers. In fact, nearly every family tending to its fertile soil can trace its lineage in the area back to Ramaashta's founding four centuries earlier.

These economic influences and the residents' ancestral ties to the land account for the village's overall demeanor. Its residents are generally friendly and outgoing, but they are also very superstitious and protective of their own. Though they harbor no particular allegiance to Game Over, they still consider the village's infrequent visitors as kin rather than strangers even to the point of risking their own well-being to protect them. Figuring that the newly arrived strangers may be bounty hunters too, the villagers freely admitted that Ameht Baktar, a wealthy merchant that monopolizes Ramaashta's grain trade across the overland route to the distant settlement of Qiram offered a bounty to anyone who would kill a sphinx that refused to share his water supplies with his caravans and blocked a shorter route to the east. However, the villagers mention nothing about Game Over's involvement with Ameht Baktar, though many are aware of their connection to the caravan leader. As news of the killings spread, the deaths produced the desired effect — the villagers began talking. For the first time, the residents acknowledged that they knew of Game Over and that they maintained a hunting lodge somewhere nearby, but no one knew its precise location or even general location.

For his part, the village's competent administrator, Aramses Ottama, does what he can, but he lacks the resources to protect everyone and stop the killings. He has a small garrison of **12 soldiers** (NG male human **guard**) to keep the peace. Two of his men patrol the main roads leading to the surrounding farmhouses. Two others maintain wary vigilance in the central square, while the remainder sleeps allowing the unit to maintain around-the-clock surveillance. Whenever possible, Aramses himself lends a hand along with the most able-bodied citizens. The lionweres' ability to blend in with the populace allows them to keep a watchful eye on the groups' activities and avoid them with little difficulty.

Rumors

News about the animal attacks spreads through Ramaashta like wildfire and the explanations for them run the gamut from the plausible to the farfetched. Everyone in the village is aware of the attacks, so PCs new to the area hear about the attacks against the villagers without succeeding at a skill check, though their employer likely told them already. The PCs may learn the following information by succeeding on a Cha (Persuasion) or Int (Investigation) check. The GM may supplement these rumors with additional outlandish or conceivable explanations for the attacks and the force behind them. For each successful check at that level, provide one new rumor at that DC or from a lower one if the ones at that level have already been heard.

DC 10

- The animal attacks began about a week ago at the Khottam household. The beasts killed an elderly man and his grandniece. They must have brought these events upon the village, because an angry spirit now haunts the home. (The portion about the Khottam's responsibility for these events is false.)
- The creatures responsible for these attacks recently escaped captivity and are exacting their revenge against their human captors. (This is a false rumor.)
- Someone who saw the killings said that he watched a large, predatory cat flee the scene. The tracks left behind at the scene support the man's version of events.
- There is a curse on this village. Some malevolent force seeks to claim

this accursed soil for some hidden purpose. (This is a false rumor.)

- The Sultan and the Abaya are troubled by the killings. They are seeking the aid of adventurers or more soldiers to protect the villagers.
- The beasts never attack livestock or pets. They kill people only.

DC 15

- Game Over is a group of game hunters that infrequently visits the village. No one knows where they live, because they slay trespassers on sight. No one has seen them since the killings began. They would be well-suited to handle this matter.
- Ismael Ka and Jezabel Arashka disappeared last night. The beasts must have killed them, but their bodies are still missing. (This rumor relates to the events in **Area A: The Wharf**.)
- Three strangers arrived in town shortly before the killings started. The men asked many questions about the renowned hunting group Game Over.
- Ameht Baktar, a local merchant, offered a large bounty to evict an ancient sphinx that inhabits Chass, a virtual oasis en route from Ramaashta to the distant town of Qiram.
- The first victims died inside of their homes with their doors closed and intact. These creatures must be restless spirits. Beasts cannot pass shut doors. (Most of this is true except for the speculation about restless spirits.)
- A young man suffers from a horrid disease and is now under the care of Sholamara at the House of Respite. (This rumor does not begin until the evening of the PCs' arrival.)
- A ghastly corpse now haunts the banks of the Pesh River. (This rumor does not begin until one day after the PCs' arrival.)
- A sphinx has inhabited a mysterious building about 60 miles east of Ramaashta in the Maighib Desert for hundreds of years. The cantankerous creature discourages visitors and keeps a close eye on his bountiful fresh water springs, attacking anyone who attempts to drink from them.

Specific NPCs are the only individuals aware of these rumors.

- Two members of Game Over appeared in town one week ago. They bragged about killing a sphinx in the Maighib Desert that would fetch them a handsome price.
- Ordinary animals are not committing these attacks. Legend says that the Omaruri, the ancient people that inhabited Ramaashta before the Kharitsine's arrival, used dark magic to summon beasts to serve their nefarious purposes.

Ramaashta Proper

Though the surrounding farmland is technically part of Ramaashta, the residents only use the village's proper name to describe the main square which consists of six permanent structures and the wharf. Ramaashta has no formal streets per se. Instead, the village square is a haphazard cluster rather than an organized design. The PCs' first steps in the village likely occur on its wharf as they search for their likely point of contact, Aramses. Any PC who succeeds on a DC 10 Wis (Insight) check notices that the residents are on edge. Nervous glances and whispers greet the PCs as they move through Ramaashta and its environs.

A: The Wharf (Difficulty Medium)

The nearly 100-foot-long wharf provides direct access to the nearby Pesha River. A seasoned crew of **8 longshoremen** (N male human **thug**) under the supervision of Salaam Rabbin (N male human **bandit (pirate) captain**) and **12 sailors** (NE male human **guard**) are currently loading barrels of grain onto *The Concubine of Qamara*, a merchant ship that is bound for Cirat the Swift-Lipped's brewery on the outskirts of Zakkesh. He and his men are single-mindedly focused on the task at hand under the constant urging of Karem Abbad, the ship's captain. The wiry, middle-aged man nervously paces the wooden planks and mumbles angrily to himself as the men fill the ship's hold. He is particularly anxious to set sail from this accursed village. Meanwhile, his **2 mates** rest their backs against the adjacent warehouse's wall. They flank **2 shrouded figures** that lie on the ground.

Karem is outwardly friendly and accommodating, especially if the PCs portray themselves as acting on behalf of the Sultan or the Abaya. In any case, he reveals only basic knowledge about the village and the animal attacks, other than to declare them a tragedy. He claims that he arrived on the wharf a few hours earlier and immediately set about the task of preparing the vessel for launch, though a successful opposed Wis (Insight) check foils his attempt to bluff the PCs. He responds to any questions about the two shrouded figures with a rehearsed answer that they are two mummified bodies destined for burial at the Necropolis of Rabakka. He, the 6 sailors loading the ship and his 2 mates politely refuse to answer any further questions under the guise that they are on a tight schedule.

Action: The PCs' sudden appearance unnerves Karem far more than the recent killings. Though he earns a fair living from the shipping industry, his true profession is much more lucrative and sinister. Karem traffics human beings. He abducts attractive young men and women from remote villages in the Pesha River Delta and sells them to the brothel owners in Khartous's Flame District for a hefty profit. The shrouded figures are his latest victims, Ismael Ka and Jezebel Arashka. Last night, Karem and his crew plied the comely, young couple with enough alcohol to render them unconscious and plan to sell them to their middleman in Zakkesh before offloading their goods at the brewery. They believe that the lion attacks provide the perfect cover story to account for the young people's unexplained disappearance. They try to pass off the shrouded figures as two dead bodies awaiting entombment at the Necropolis of Rabakka.

Karem is short on details about the deceased or religious rituals. A PC may attempt a DC 12 Int (Religion) check to recognize that the burial process does not comply with traditional practices. If any PC approaches Ismael and Jezebel, Karem rushes forward and bars the PC from moving any closer. Even from a distance, a successful DC 12 Wis (Perception) check notices the smell of alcohol, while a successful DC 18 Wis (Perception) check notices that they appear to be breathing. Karem attempts a Cha (Deception) check to allay the PCs' suspicions claiming that the alcohol smell is actually a "salt wash" and that the figures appear to be breathing or moving because their bodily fluids are "settling in their chest cavity." If the ruse fails, Karem, his 2 mates, and the 6 sailors rush the PCs. Karem and his 2 mates maneuver around in combat looking for flank attacks or trying to catch an opponent flat-footed. The 6 sailors fight to the best of their abilities, but they are badly overmatched. They surrender or flee into the Pesha River and swim for the other side. Likewise, Karem and his 2 mates lose the boat's moorings and feverishly row away from shore. If escape is not realistic, Karem and his crew reluctantly surrender.

For their part, Salaam and his 5 longshoremen willingly answer the PCs' questions. They are aware of all of the rumors in the first two categories of the preceding **Rumors** section. Inquiries directed at Salaam alter Karem's demeanor making him extremely edgy and agitated. He stammers about deadlines and loudly declares that the PCs are wasting his time and money. If his protestations do not halt the PC's questions, he directly intervenes and physically nudges the PCs aside until they leave. As soon as combat breaks out, Salaam and his 5 longshoremen retreat to a safe location and take in the spectacle from afar. They do not intervene under any circumstances and flee into the adjoining warehouse or the village square whenever the circumstances warrant a hasty escape.

Karem Abbad, male human Rogé (assassin): AC 17; HP 36 (6d8+6); Spd 30ft; Melee +1 shortsword (+7/+7, 1d6+3 piercing); SA assassinate, sneak attack 3d6; Str +2, Dex +4, Con +1, Int +0, Wis +0, Cha +1; Skills Acrobatics +7, Deception +4, Intimidation +7, Investigation +3, Persuasion +4, Stealth +11; Senses passive Perception 10; Traits cunning action, uncanny dodge; AL NE; CR 5; XP 1,800.

Equipment: *potion of speed, potion of healing (2), studded leather armor, +1 shortsword, cloak of protection, disguise kit, poisoner's kit, thieves' tools, 290gp.*

Karem's Mates, male human Ftr4 (battle master) (2): AC 17; HP 34 (4d10+8); Spd 30ft; Melee rapier (+6, 1d6+4 piercing); Str +4 (+6), Dex +1 (+3), Con +2 (+4), Int -1 (+1), Wis +0, Cha +1; Skills Athletics +6, Intimidation +3; Senses passive Perception 10; Traits maneuvers (feinting attack, pushing attack, riposte); AL NE; CR 3; XP 700.

Equipment: *+1 breastplate, shield, rapier, 273gp*

Development: The wily captain has one more hand to play. As he and his mates moved through the village last night, they overheard other residents talking about three strangers asking questions about Game Over. During his travels, Karem heard that the reclusive hunters maintain a hunting lodge on the edge of the Maighib Desert alongside a remote stretch of grassland outside of Ramaashta. Though he does not know the exact location, he claims that the structure stands near a small hill that the locals refer to as Traitor's Ridge. If the PCs provide this information to the local residents, they can point the PCs towards Game Over's general vicinity. The clever businessman does not divulge this information for nothing. Ever the opportunist, Karem's asking price is his and his crew's freedom. If the PCs balk at his initial proposal, he drops his demands to free his sailors and as a final offer — his mates. Should that fail, he refuses to negotiate any further and instead looks for an opportunity to escape.

Once revived, Ismael and Jezebel recall little from the night before other than drinking very heavily in the company of Karem and his two shipmates. Like most other villagers, they know something from the first category in the **Rumors** section, but cannot provide any additional useful information.

B: Warehouse

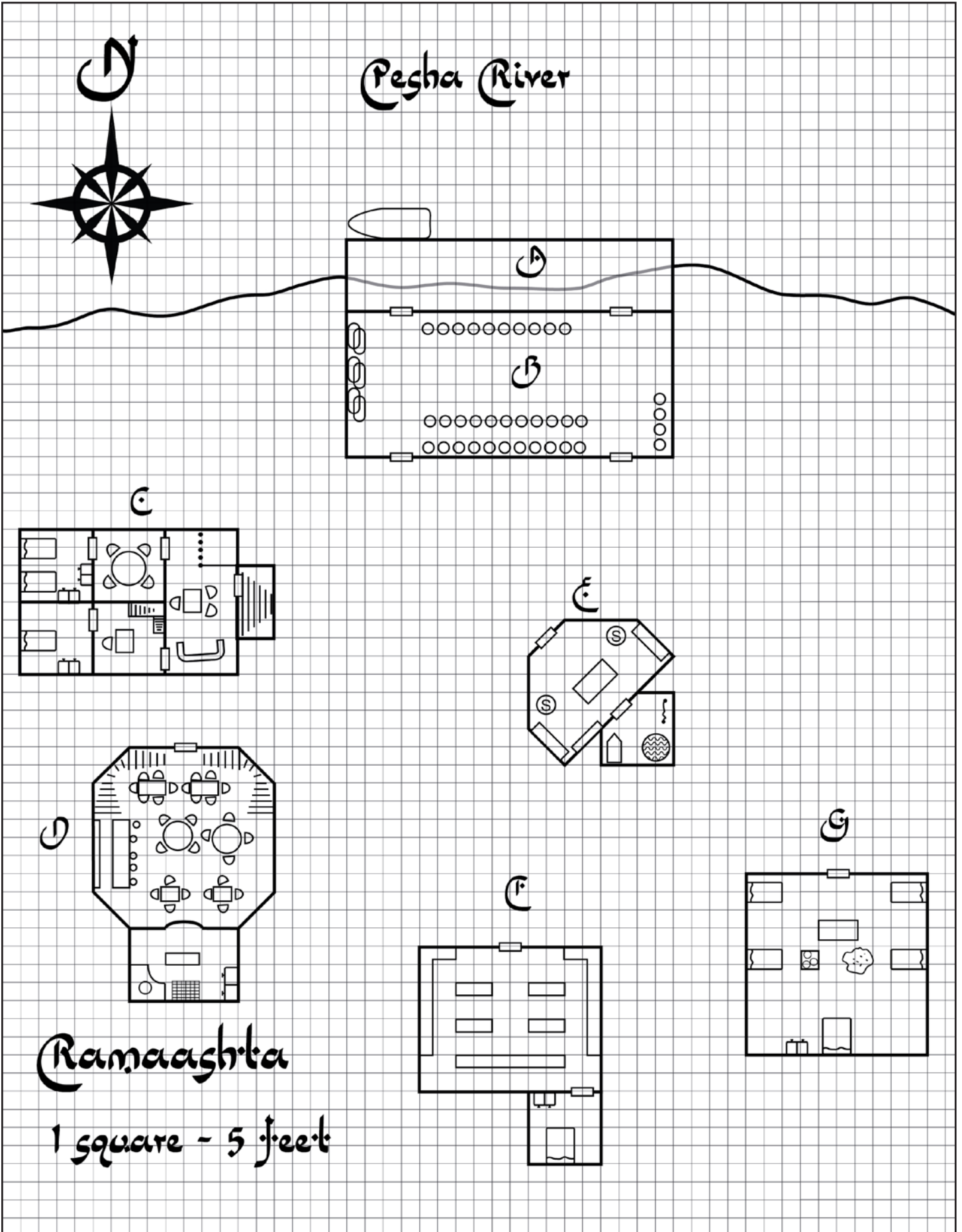
Salaam and his longshoremen are responsible for the warehouse's maintenance, security and operation. Under normal circumstances his team mans the building from dawn until dusk. After hours, they lock the doors granting access to the wharf and the village square proper. Salaam keeps the key on his person, though he also has a spare key that he keeps hidden in his rented room at the Hook and Sickle. Any attempts to forcibly open one of the warehouse's doors may attract attention from bystanders in the village square or possibly the soldiers on duty.

Strong Wooden Door: AC 15; HP 18; Immunity cold, lightning, poison, psychic; Resistance thunder, weapon damage; Break DC 20 Str.

The warehouse currently stores 24 full barrels of wheat, 8 barrels of barley and 6 crates of cured meat. The items' values range from 5gp for each barrel of wheat, 10gp for each barrel of barley and 25gp for each crate of cured meat. These products are awaiting shipment to various locations along the Pesha River as well as Qamara, Qiram and the city of Khartous, so they are technically belong to the village's farmers who did not get paid for these items yet. Stealing these commodities and attempting to resell them within Ramaashta creates a major complication for the PCs who may face an accusation of theft.

C: Administration Building

Ramaashta's government functions out of this small, multipurpose building. The structure houses **Aramses Ottama's** personal quarters, barracks chambers for the village's tiny garrison of **6 soldiers** (NG hu-



QUESTS OF DOOM 3

man **guard**), a courtroom that doubles as a meeting chamber, a jail cell, a common room and Aramses private office. Aramses occupies the building for most of the day and night with occasional jaunts to the village square for food, supplies or a brief respite from the stress plaguing his tiny settlement. The soldiers work in 8 hour shifts, so two soldiers are always asleep in the barracks chambers, while the remaining four soldiers patrol the village with two in the main square and the other two scattered across the surrounding farmland. Though the front entrance is normally open to the public, Aramses locks the administration building after dark.

Strong Wooden Door: AC 15; HP 18; **Immunity** cold, lightning, poison, psychic; **Resistance** thunder, weapon damage; **Break** DC 20 Str.

Aramses' Information

Aramses is not suited for handling this type of situation so he is extremely relieved that someone responded to his request for aid. He and at least two of his soldiers surveyed each of the crime scenes, though they are not trained or skilled investigators. They were adept enough to secure two eyewitness accounts blaming the attacks on at least two large male lions. The bite marks and slashing wounds found on the victims corroborate these accounts. The attacks follow the same *modus operandi* in each case with one notable exception for the first killing. The first two victims were found in their homes; the other victims died outside of their residence and alone. In each case, the beasts assaulted their prey at night. Despite Aramses' warnings to remain inside with the doors and the windows firmly shut and locked, he and his soldiers discovered the bodies outdoors with no signs of forced entry. After the killings, the beasts' telltale trail seems to vanish without a trace. In addition to the preceding information, Aramses may divulge one rumor from each of the first two categories presented in the Rumors section. Aramses is also aware of Ameht Baktar's bounty to rid Chass of its resident sphinx. He sees no connection between the village's current crisis and this event, so he makes no mention of it unless the PCs directly ask him about Ameht Baktar or the sphinx.

Aramses eagerly agrees to cooperate with the PCs during their stay in Ramaashta. He can direct them to all of the murder scenes and introduce them to other NPCs in the village. (The murder scenes are described in later in the adventure.) His soldiers also obey his orders, including those directing them to follow or accompany the PCs during their travels through the village.

D: Hook and Sickle Inn

The Hook and Sickle Inn is the place to go for Ramaashta's best food, drink, conversation and local gossip. Hartuz Takram (CN male human **commoner**) and his wife, Amara Takram (N female human **commoner**) own the establishment. The cantankerous older couple dotes on their patrons and guests, while hurling an endless barrage of insults and disparaging remarks at one another. Locals marvel at the pair's ability to twist the Common tongue to create hilarious, new expressions to describe each other's shortcomings. Phrases such as "hag's rectal wart", "flaccid maggot wand", "camel vomit breath", "beetle dung brain" and "goopy gelatinous breast" ring out from behind the bar and the kitchen with alarming regularity. Though the contemptuous display violates every rule of decorum, Ramaashta's residents are so accustomed to the vulgarity that they consider it part of the Hook and Sickle's signature charm. In fact, some believe that the confrontations are actually staged for entertainment purposes.

The Hook and Sickle Inn's bar and restaurant area opens at varying times during the mid-morning and closes a few hours after sunset. Residents and guests receive a key to lock and unlock the front door during non-business hours.

Good Wooden Door: AC 15; HP 15; **Immunity** cold, lightning, poison, psychic; **Resistance** thunder, weapon damage; **Break** DC 18 Str.

The multipurpose institution serves as a bakery, restaurant, tavern, coffee house, hookah lounge and inn. Local residents and traveling merchants pack the tables and bar throughout the day. Food, drink and rumors

fly across the room on a regular basis, including those listed from the first two categories in the Rumors section. Some of the regulars include retired miner Graz Quartzbane (CN male dwarf **commoner**) who sports an entire mouth full of quartz teeth; local courtesan Ciril Mambai (NG female human **commoner**) whose looks greatly outshine her intelligence; hookah smoker Khomar the Inhaler (CN male human **Rog1**; Escape Artist +5) who is the source for any illicit drugs; and resident ladies' man Rallam ibn-Maktuush (CG male human **noble**) who runs at the mere mention of an angry husband. In addition to its patrons, Kharita (CG female half-elf **commoner**), an attractive and friendly woman waits the tables on most days. If directly questioned about Ameht Baktar or Game Over, she distinctly recalls that the caravan master and the hunting troupe's sibling pair met at the inn a few weeks ago to discuss some business venture. She did not hear the specifics of their conversation, though she is certain that the meeting ended with firm handshakes and a rousing toast. As an aside, she mentions that three strangers also asked questions about Game Over and a bounty for killing some powerful beast several days earlier.

The lionweres visited the Hook and Sickle on their first three days in Ramaashta hoping the locals could quickly steer them in Game Over's direction. After Aramses deployed two of his soldiers in the village square, the trio stopped visiting the Hook and Sickle regularly and instead focused their efforts in the outlying areas with occasional jaunts to the village square to keep a tab on current events.

E: Skin and Bow

Hurkuul Gristlebeard (CG male dwarf **commoner**), a retired dwarf miner from the Al-Illam salt plains, is the proprietor of Skin and Bow, Ramaashta's sole armory. The gruff, foul-mouthed craftsman manufactures a variety of leather armor and wooden weapons from local products. He is also the village's only source of non-healing related magic items which he acquires from passing merchants in exchange for his wares. He always keeps at least one suit of masterwork leather and masterwork studded leather armor in stock at all times along with a complement of composite longbows and shortbows. If he is not minding his shop, Hurkuul tans leather in his attached work area or carves bows and arrows from freshly cut wood. Skin and Bow is open from mid-morning until supper time. At night he securely fastens both doors and sleeps in a pull-out bed built into the wall.

Strong Wooden Door: AC 15; HP 18; **Immunity** cold, lightning, poison, psychic; **Resistance** thunder, weapon damage; **Break** DC 20 Str.

Hurkuul exclusively supplies Game Over with some of their weapons and armor. He is particularly friendly with Caleb Ansiki and his sister Guadalupe Ansiki, the hunting group's two archers. Because of his close personal relationship with the pair, he is extremely hesitant to say anything about them or their activities other than he occasionally does business with them. He also relays that the PCs are not the first individuals asking him about his relationship with Game Over, though he says nothing else about the encounter. The PCs may overcome his reluctance with a successful DC 16 Cha (Persuasion) check, though he provides answers about the group under direct questioning only. A PC may add +1 to the Cha (Persuasion) check for every 100gp he spends in Hurkuul's shop. If the check succeeds, Hurkuul acknowledges his relationship with the Ansiki siblings and relays that they visited him about two weeks ago. They purchased twelve magical arrows specifically imbued to harm magical beasts. He also tells the PCs that three strangers with unusual accents also asked him about Game Over several days ago. He told them virtually nothing, and he never saw them again. If the Cha (Persuasion) check succeeded by 5 or more, Hurkuul begrudgingly admits that Caleb and Guadalupe returned a week later bragging that they killed a sphinx near an ancient building known as Chass in the Maighib Desert. They also mentioned that they would soon spend plenty of coin in his store because they were poised to receive a large payment from Ameht Baktar, a local merchant who offered a sizable bounty to kill a sphinx inhabiting an important way station on his route to Qiram. Hurkuul has no direct knowledge about Game Over's hunting lodge other than it lies south of Ramaashta along the edge of the Maighib Desert. Hurkuul has never been to Chass either, though he knows its purported general location.

F: Tariq's Emporium

A Ramaashta institution, Athman al-Qasaad (NG male human **commoner**), the general store's current owner, purchased it from its founder a decade ago. The shop features an eclectic collection of local food products, clothing and other sundry items as well as an assortment of exotic goods and wares purchased from passing merchants and visitors. The store opens shortly after dawn and closes in the late afternoon. Athman lives in a small room connected to the store. The emporium's proprietor is a chatty busybody with a reputation for knowing exactly what his customers want within a minute of meeting them, but the detail-oriented merchant fails to see that his assistant Maritza Huumdal (CG female human **commoner**) is madly in love with him. The caravan master, Ameht Baktar is one of Athman's main suppliers, so he is aware of Ameht's hefty bounty to eradicate the sphinx that stands in his way of securing a quicker route across the Maighib Desert. Yet, the nosy Athman is less willing to part with information than he is to inquire about it. The PCs may learn of his involvement with Ameht Baktar as well as his bounty offer with a successful DC 18 Cha (Persuasion) check. If the check succeeds by 5 or more, he also reveals that the hunting troupe Game Over accepted his bounty and is now waiting to collect their spoils.

Strong Wooden Door: AC 15; HP 18; **Immunity** cold, lightning, poison, psychic; **Resistance** thunder, weapon damage; **Break** DC 20 Str.

G: Sholamara's House of Respite

In keeping with the traditions of the Church of Fatimashan, **Sholamara**, Ramaashta's resident cleric and healer operates a rudimentary hospital that serves as a gathering place for fellow believers. The makeshift house of worship remains open and unlocked at all times. In light of recent events, the hallowed shrine is more akin to a morgue than a house of healing, as mummification is the church's common practice. In fact, Sholamara is so overwhelmed by the recent demand that she hired three local farmhands, Erdogu (CG male human **commoner**), Habbas (CG male human **commoner**) and Raheem (CG male human **commoner**) to assist her with the embalming process. The rash of killings tests Sholamara's faith, but she is up to the task and more resolved than ever to assist her followers during their greatest time of need. She holds daily prayer services at noon, and she welcomes the PCs' arrival as Mah-Barek's answers to the pleas of the faithful.

Sholamara and her assistants could not help but see the decedents' graphic injuries during the mummification process. As a healer, she recognized that the wounds are consistent with teeth and claw marks dealt by a large, predatory cat; however she also noticed that the attackers left three different bite patterns in the victims' skin. She is very animated about this point and believes that it is clear-cut evidence that a team of beasts works together to perpetrate these atrocities. She eagerly shares her opinion that the coordination and planning involved in these attacks indicate the work of intelligent monsters rather than wild animals. Sholamara is less reluctant to discuss an ancient religion's involvement in these events without a successful DC 15 Cha (Persuasion) check. If the PC succeeds on the check, Sholamara conveys that a lost race known as the Omaruri once inhabited these lands centuries ago. Rumors claim that the priests of the Omaruri's dark earth goddess participated in rites and rituals that gave them dominion over monstrous beasts. The secrets of their magic are lost to the race of men, but many believe that a sphinx dwelling in the ancient stronghold of Chass undoubtedly has access to their forgotten mysteries.

If Mesut is here, his case confounds Sholamara. She cured his injuries, yet the disease lingers and seems to be worsening. She correctly believes that beasts did not cause the trauma and a strange contagion is afflicting the terrified young man. The overwhelmed cleric also tells the PCs that his fellow farmhands found him near the banks of the Pasha River on the El-Rouf farm which may prompt the PCs to investigate the area.

Mesut is conscious, but catatonic. He stares blankly at the nearest object and says nothing even when someone directly addresses him. The damage is psychological so any magic short of a *heal* fails to snap Mesut from his catatonia. Mesut recalls little of that night other than the haunting

image of a monstrous cadaver covered in mud attacking him. The creature said nothing during the assault and seemingly left the traumatized farmhand for dead.

Sholamara happily agrees to tend to the PCs' wounds and spiritual needs, though she is unwilling to accompany them in their further adventures. She insists that her place is with the devoted, and not traipsing across the Maighib Desert meting out punishment and bloodshed.

Sholamara, female human Clr4 (Mah-Barek; Church of Fatimashan; life domain): AC 14; HP 25 (4d8+4); Spd 30ft; **Melee** quarterstaff (+1, 1d8-1 bludgeoning); **SA** spells (DC 13, Wis +5); **Str** -1, **Dex** +0, **Con** +1 (+3), **Int** +1, **Wis** +3 (+5), **Cha** +3; **Skills** Medicine +5, Religion +3; **Senses** passive Perception 13; **Traits** channel divinity 1/rest, domain of life (disciple of life, channel divinity: preserve life); **AL** NG; **CR** 3; **XP** 700.

Spells (slots): Cantrips (at will)—*light, resistance, sacred flame, spare the dying*; 1st (4)—*bles*, command, cure wounds*, protection from evil, sanctuary, shield of faith*; 2nd (3)—*aid, lesser restoration*
*Domain Spell

Equipment: leather armor, quarterstaff

Ramaashta's Outskirts

During the course of their investigation, the PCs are likely to explore the farmland surrounding Ramaashta's central square in search of clues and witnesses to the killings or to pursue the lionweres moving about the area. Eight families, including Arames Ottama, own spacious tracts of land along the settlement's outskirts. The individual farms are all accessible by a central road that leads out of the village and runs parallel to the Pasha River. Vast fields of wheat, barley and rice border the main thoroughfare. Smaller trails periodically split off from the road and cut a path through the waves of grain to the distant farmhouses perched atop the properties' highest point. The following section provides a brief overview of each property and its residents.

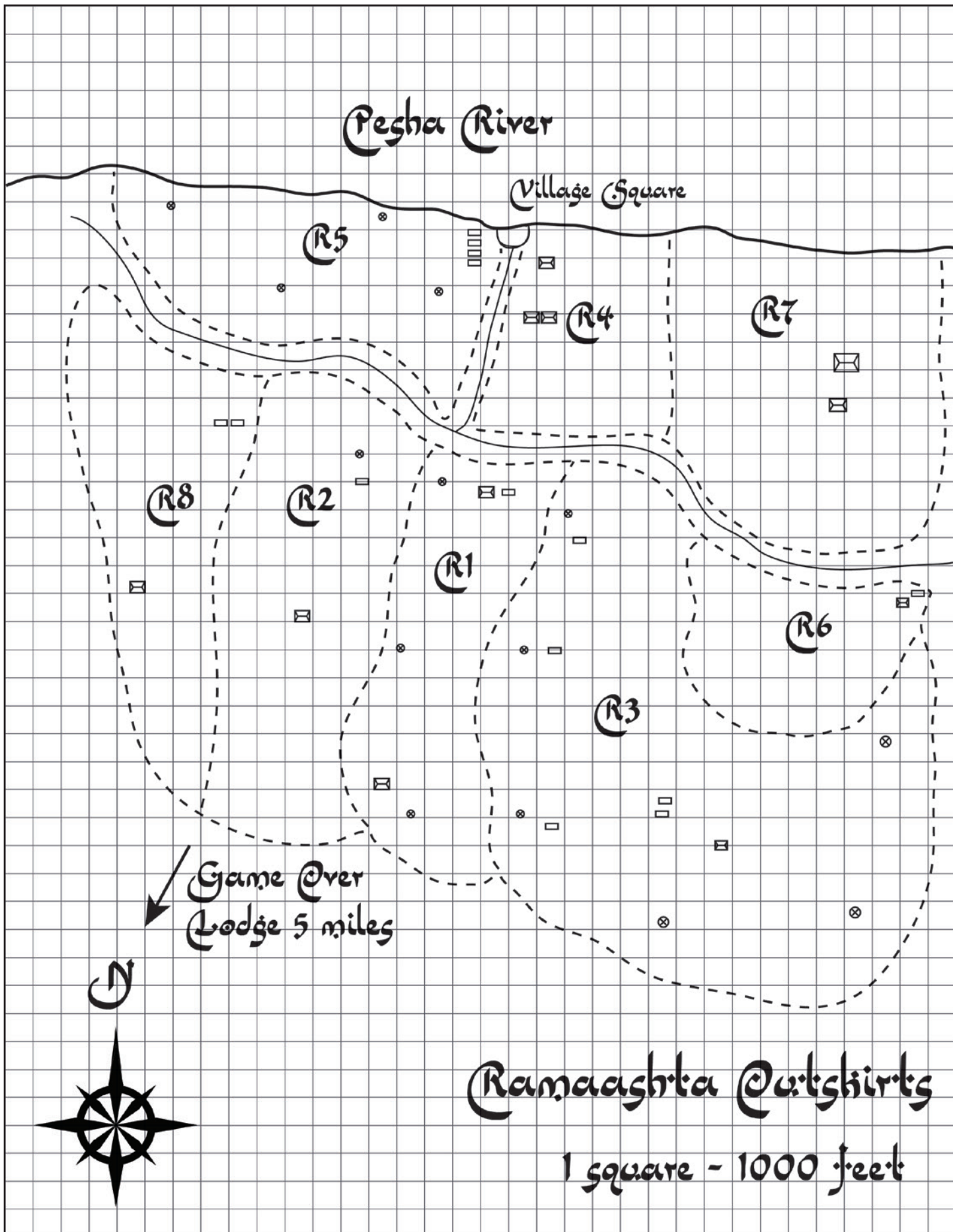
Rr: Al-Hoda Farm

The Al-Hoda estate includes large fields of wheat and barley, a small vineyard with a winery and three silos for storing grain. The land's middle-aged owner, Jafraazi Al-Hoda (CG male human **commoner**) fancies himself an amateur winemaker. He lives in a spacious farmhouse along

Witness Accounts

If an attack already took place on that property, the PCs have a 20% chance of encountering someone who actually saw a killing or its aftermath. In this case, the witness provides the PCs with one of the following bits of information. The GM should avoid providing duplicate information and instead grant a new clue for each witness from the following choices.

- I saw three lions seemingly appear out of nowhere. They ignored the other animals they encountered along the way. The beasts then surrounded the victim and slew him with their claws and teeth before running off.
- A few minutes before I heard the victim scream, I saw those three strangers talking to him. I turned away to finish my chores, but when I ran back to investigate I saw a large beast running from the scene.
- Although I am not sure, I swear I heard the beasts conversing with one another during the attack. I could not hear what they were saying, though I am certain that they spoke Common.
- A few minutes before the attack, the victim told me that he was going outside for a few minutes to give some hunters an overview of the property.



KING OF BEASTS

with his wife **Talia** (CG female human **commoner**) and their three teenage children Habriz (NG male human **commoner**), Zafrez (NG male human **commoner**) and Peshwari (CG female human **commoner**). They are courteous, polite people that refrain from talking about their neighbors or even strangers in a disparaging light. Their **8 farmhands** (CG male human **commoner**) live in a cozy, well-maintained servants' residence adjacent to the main house. Like their employers, these workers are gracious, but subdued.

R2: Kalifa Farm

The Kalifas own one of the smaller tracts of land in Ramaashta, but their patriarch, Mamelak Kalifa (N male human **commoner**) still harbors grandiose ambitions. He tends to the land with his two surviving sons, Mustafa (CN male human **commoner**) and Khalif (N male human **commoner**), along with a complement of **6 farmhands** (CN male human **commoner**). Unlike most estates, the Kalifa family and their workers occupy the same quarters atop a hill overlooking their land. Mamelak exclusively grows wheat that he stores in the family's lone silo or that he mills into flour used to make bread and other cereal products in their bakery. Mamelak and his sons are scheming blowhards that see an opportunity to subtly annex additional land from their deceased neighbors, the Khotoms. They are outwardly friendly to friends and strangers alike, though one cannot help but take everything they say with a heaping spoon of salt.

R3: Cuzek Farm

Naheem Cuzek (CG male human **noble**) operates the largest and most lucrative farm in Ramaashta. His parcel is nearly double the size of his competitors and supports a diverse array of crops including wheat, barley and quinoa as well as a vast expanse of grassland to support his sheep and cattle. Naheem and his team of **6 laborers** (NG male human **commoner**) handle the livestock, while his daughter Zumia (CG female human **commoner**) and her husband Kabbar (CG male human **commoner**) oversee and supervise a crew of **10 men and women** (CG male and female human **commoner**) to tend to their fields. Naheem and his immediate family live in a resplendent manor house more akin to a cosmopolitan setting than a country estate. Their workers predominately occupy modest living quarters close to the fields and grasslands, though a few take up permanent or transitory residence at the Hook and Sickle in the village square. The property also includes a slaughterhouse, smoke house and six silos for grain storage. The Cuzek family members are hardworking people who mind their own business, though they are always willing to help a neighbor in need.

R4: Sharif Farm

This property's main residence is the only farmhouse visible from Ramaashta's village square. The family's elderly, iron-willed matriarch Elijah Sharif (LG female human **commoner**) still works the property's rice fields with the help of her two grandsons, Umar (LG male human **commoner**) and Padeem (CG male human **commoner**) and granddaughter Lalah (NG female human **commoner**). She and her grandchildren live in the meticulously maintained, elevated farmhouse that has stood for more than two centuries. Elijah is an extremely pious, good-hearted woman with a rugged, no nonsense exterior, qualities that she instilled in her descendants. The family's **6 farmhands** (CG male human **commoner**) live in a small residence more akin to a military barracks further away from the nearby Pesha River. They are fiercely loyal to their employer and consider the Sharif's land as their ancestral home.

R5: Aramses Farm

Ramaashta's resident administrator, Aramses Ottama, owns a prime location along the Pesha River next to the village square. Aramses' civic duties occupy most of his time; hence his son Rahaab (CG male human **commoner**) manages the farm in his absence. The family grows a diverse array of rice, wheat, barley and other niche grains that they use to bake breads in their bakery or ship to Qamara and Khartous for their usage in specialty products. They store the excess grain in four silos scattered about the property. Under normal circumstances, Aramses would return

to his comfortable home in the evenings to his wife Ullema (LG female human **noble**) and his two children, but the current crisis prevents him from doing so. The Ottama family gladly offers their assistance to anyone investigating the brutal slayings, as do their **11 farmhands** (NG male human **commoner**) who live in four cottages close to the village square.

R6: Bizayad Farm

Like his much larger neighbor, Omar Bizayad (CG male human **commoner**) also uses his farm to raise livestock, though he devotes a much higher percentage of his available land towards animal husbandry. Nearly 100 goats and sheep feed on the fertile grasses which the family uses to produce wool, milk and cheeses as well as meat and leather. In fact, Omar's wife Tarania (CG female human **commoner**) and his three daughters, Jamiyah (CG female human **commoner**), Sabah (CG female human **commoner**) and Zahra (CG female human **commoner**) manufacture clothing, while the remaining **6 laborers** (CG male human **commoner**) feed and care for the animals. The farm includes a dairy facility, a slaughterhouse and a smoke house. The Bizayads are hyperactive, disorganized people with good hearts. They live in a ramshackle, older residence at the far end of their property, while their help lives in a dilapidated shack next door.

R7: El-Rouf Farm (Difficulty Hard)

The village's most fertile soil is found in the El-Rouf Farm which is also the village's oldest farm. The historic tract of land is in great danger of falling into ruin or being devoured by its neighbors, as its owners, Youssef El-Rouf (CG male human **commoner**) and his wife Khari (NG female human **commoner**) enter their thirties without any children. The farm exclusively grows rice and is renowned throughout Khartous for its extremely flavorful and flood-resistant variety of rice. Youssef is a rather oafish figure, so Khari manages much of the family's affairs including managing the farm's **8 farmhands** (CN male human **commoner**) and making decisions on behalf of her husband. Youssef is an adequate carpenter, so he maintains the family's stylish, yet modest residence as well as the cottages where their employees live.

Though the recent killings greatly concern Youssef and Khari, Nawalapuura and her **4 draugr** minions represent a more immediate and pressing danger to them than the lionweres. The bog mummy and her servants hide in the tall reeds on the banks of the Pesha River during the day and emerge from their hiding place at night to attack anyone that crosses their path. She remains partially submerged during the day and stalks the river bank in the evening along with her draugr allies who rise from their resting places at the bottom of the river. PCs searching the area around the Pesha River must succeed on a DC 20 Wis (Perception) check to spot the concealed bog mummy during the day. A successful DC 16 Wis (Perception) check spots Nawalapuura at night. However, her proximity to the river makes it relatively easy to track her movements. A successful DC 10 Wis (Perception) or Wis (Survival) check detects her tracks, and the PC can follow the tracks to Nawalapuura's concealed hiding place with a Wis (Survival) check. If the PCs track her to her lair, she and her minions rise from the muck and attack. Nawalapuura already infected one of their farmhands with bog rot. (See the preceding "Nawalapuura" section for details on her actions and her complete stats.)

R8: Khottam Farm (Difficulty Medium)

The lionweres began their carnage at this remote farm, killing its elderly owner Yeshua Khottam and his grandniece Shadara. Unlike the subsequent killings, the lionweres did not plan to kill the frail patriarch and his young relative. The lionweres falsely believed that the old man would lead them to Game Over's doorstep with a few simple questions. As their inquiries progressed and their frustration increased, Yeshua's suspicions about the mysterious strangers grew. He accused them of working as agents of the Khalifas trying to strong arm him into selling his property. An argument ensued, and the lionweres morphed into their hybrid form and killed Yeshua and Shadara.

The deaths left the land and the business in disarray. Shadara was Yeshua's last living heir, so the property's ownership and the land itself remain in limbo. The **3 farmhands** (LN male human **commoner**) that remain still tend to the wheat and rye fields, but they are uncertain whether they

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can legally sell the crops or stay in their cottages for much longer. Since the killings, strange sounds emanate from the main residence. Though they did not see anything, the eerie activity keeps them awake for most of the night. To make matters worse, they feel their neighbors' greedy eyes bearing down on the land so much that they initially suspected them of committing the killings until other victims started perishing. Because of these complications, the workers are reluctant to say anything about the slayings or anything else that took place here. In fact, they vigorously discourage the PCs from investigating the main residence out of fear.

Investigation: The main house is a neglected building in a state of utter disrepair. Though the bodies were removed the telltale signs of a deadly struggle are plainly evident in and around the residence. Streaks and droplets of dried blood stain the front door and interior walls, furniture is toppled over or smashed and the walls bear various holes and impact marks as if struck by a heavy object. Bloody footprints and even partial paw prints are still visible on the floor. The exterior doors and windows are intact and undamaged.

A week has passed since the killings, but some unusual tracks remain. A PC that succeeds on a DC 17 Wis (Survival) check notices that the paw prints on the floor originate from inside the home rather than outside. In other words, the beasts did not leave a trail leading into the residence. Instead, it seems that they spontaneously appeared in the center of the room and then left through the front door. The trail then leads into the fields and becomes impossible to follow. In addition, a PC that succeeds on a DC 15 Wis (Perception) check notices an unusual hole in the wall that is too clean to have come from a claw or tooth. Though the PC cannot identify the exact source, it is apparent that it was made by a manufactured weapon driven into the wall with tremendous force unlikely to have come from an elderly man or petite woman.

As the PCs rummage through the Khottam residence, they encounter its lone occupant — a **spectre**. Yeshua's restless spirit emerges from a back room to confront the PCs. He cannot bear to leave his ancestral home, especially given the circumstances of his death. The translucent spectre resembles a wizened man with no teeth and deep wrinkles crisscrossing his face. He is powerless in sunlight, so Yeshua preferably attacks at night or somewhere indoors away from the doors or windows. After hitting his first victim, he mumbles something about "confounded lion-men" and "greedy Khalifas" before resuming the offensive. The angry spectre says nothing else and refuses to engage in any further conversation. Yeshua defends his residence at all costs even if it destroys him.

Spectre: AC 15; HP 787 (12d8+24); Spd fly 80ft; **Melee** incorporeal touch (+6, 2d8 necrotic plus energy drain); **Immune** necrotic damage; cold, poison, charmed, exhaustion, frightened, grappled, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned, prone, restrained; **Resist** acid, fire, lightning, thunder; bludgeoning, piercing and slashing from nonmagical weapons; **SA** energy drain (creature touched by spectre must succeed on DC 15 Con save or have maximum HP reduced by amount equal to damage); **Str** -5, **Dex** +3, **Con** +2, **Int** +2, **Wis** +3, **Cha** +2; **Senses** darkvision 60ft, passive Perception 15; **Traits** create spawn (humanoids slain by spectre become lesser spectres in 1d4 rounds, under spectre's command), resurrection vulnerability (*raise dead* or similar spell destroys spectre, Wis save negates), sunlight powerlessness (powerless in natural sunlight and flee); **AL** LE; **CR** 6; **XP** 2,300. (**Appendix**)

R9: Burial Vault

Like nearly all other Khartous communities, Ramaashta inter the mummified remains of its deceased residents in a nearby, subterranean burial vault. Sholamara, the local priestess of Mah-Barek serves as the tomb's caretaker. Under normal circumstances, the burial vault is tranquil and reassuring; however the recent untimely deaths are taking their toll on the residents' emotions and the village's resources. At least **1d4 mourners** (CG male and female human **commoner**) moan and wail the loss of a departed family member or friend. These individuals know the first two categories of **Rumors**. The complex is kept open during the day to accommodate visitors and locked at night. Sholamara has the only key.

Strong Wooden Door: AC 15; HP 18; **Immunity** cold, lightning, poison, psychic; **Resistance** thunder, weapon damage; **Break** DC 20 Str.

The burial vault consists of ten separate rooms including one for each of the eight farm-owning families and two more for the common citizens. Most corpses lie in a simple wooden coffin though a few of the village's wealthiest residents spend eternity in a bronze or stone sarcophagus. Gifts of fresh grain, rice plants and burning incense can be found atop or near the burial vault's most recent additions.

M: Murder Scenes

It is very likely that the PCs may want to investigate Ramaashta's other murder scenes at some point during the adventure. Unlike the carnage at the Khottam Farm, the lionweres meticulously planned these slayings, so they are virtually identical in all major respects. The killings took place outdoors in a quiet, remote area a good distance away from any homes or other common areas. A successful Wis (Survival) check detects the presence of large animal tracks around the victim's body. The check's DC is +1 for every day since the killing. The lionweres' trail leads away from the murder and eventually joins up with the main thoroughfare. Inexplicably, the animal tracks suddenly disappear after reaching the road and blend with the other humanoid footprints traversing the path on a daily basis.

Part Two: The Road to Chass

After stopping the lionweres' murderous rampage in Ramaashta, the next stage of the adventure takes the PCs out of the village and onto the unforgiving road to Chasshagra's abode. In addition to the perilous journey across the forbidding Maighib Desert, the PCs may decide to search for Game Over's hunting lodge to obtain additional information or perhaps to return Savvith's head to her bestial lover. The prevailing weather conditions and the dunes' native denizens make the trek to Chass a dangerous one indeed.

Game Over's Trail

After learning of the hunting troupe's unwitting role in the current crisis and the lionweres' interest in them, the PCs may be inclined to take the hunt to them rather than await their arrival in the village. The sheer volume of foot traffic makes it impossible to follow a trail from the square to their lodge on Ramaashta's outskirts, so the PCs must rely upon the locals' word of mouth as well as trial and error to find their hideout. In general terms, the residents believe that Game Over lives several miles beyond the Ramaashta's southernmost farms near the edge of the Maighib Desert; however if the PCs mention its proximity to Traitor's Ridge, the locals provide more specific directions. Even if the PCs stumble in the right direction, the group always covers its tracks to the best of its ability. Nonetheless, PCs searching for tracks within a five-mile radius of the hunting lodge have a 20% chance of coming across a discernible trail for every 10 minutes spent moving through the area. The mere presence of tracks does not ensure that the PCs find them. If there are tracks in the vicinity, the PCs must still succeed on a DC 15 Wis (Survival) check to actually follow their footsteps. In addition to deliberately hiding their path through the grasslands and farms, Game Over uses animal traps and concealed pits to trap game and maim trespassers violating their privacy. The PCs have a 10% chance of encountering an animal trap or a concealed pit for every 10 minutes spent moving in the vicinity of their lodge. The GM may randomly determine or select one of the following traps.

ANIMAL TRAP

Perception DC 16; **Disable** DC 12 Dexterity with thieves' tools

Effect Melee +12, 2d8+4 piercing; target must make DC 18

KING OF BEASTS

Dex save or be restrained. The creature can escape with a DC 20 Str check or a DC 20 Dex check with thieves' tools.

CAMOUFLAGED PIT TRAP

Perception DC 20; **Disable** The trap can be covered over with logs or other objects, but must be filled in to be fully disabled

Effect 30-foot deep pit; target must make a DC18 Dex save or fall, taking 4d10 points of damage. All targets in a 10-foot square are effected.

PCs that trigger these traps not only sustain damage from the insidious devices, but they must also devise a means of escape. In most circumstances, this should not be too difficult for experienced adventures; however the unexpected surprise may elicit a loud reaction from the afflicted PC that alerts the lodge's residents to their presence. During the day there is a 30% chance that the Ansiki siblings roam somewhere within a one mile radius of the lodge in search of fresh game or to check the pits and snares scattered about the residence. Otherwise they are inside the lodge with the rest of their group. If Game Over detects someone's presence outside of the home, Gabriel rushes out to investigate and the siblings rush to the second floor windows for a better vantage point and a clear shot from a position of cover. Ammar trails roughly 30 feet behind Gabriel. If the PCs gain access to an entry point undetected or slip into the lodge without being noticed, Game Over reacts differently. Gabriel and Ammar engage the PCs in melee, while Caleb and Guadalupe fire arrows from behind furniture or any other available cover. If possible, the siblings attempt to exit the building and shoot their bows through open windows and doors at visible targets inside. In the event that Caleb and Guadalupe are roaming the grounds, Ammar and Gabriel call for their aid. They arrive 2d4 rounds later. No member of Game Over surrenders in or around the lodge under any circumstances.

Hunting Lodge

Originally designed for short-term usage, the group's small communal residence expanded over the years to accommodate their burgeoning trophy collection. The great room housing their display of severed heads is nearly as large as the rest of the house. The residence sits on the edge of the Pasha River Delta's grasslands, though the vegetation in the home's immediate vicinity is more akin to scrubland than the waves of grain found on Ramaashta's farms or even the sparse grass south of the building. In fact, the rolling dunes of the Maighib Desert lie approximately 1 mile south of the hunting lodge. The ground is relatively flat and devoid of large obstacles, so it is relatively easy to see the Game Over's abode from 1,000 feet away. When the PCs come within visual range of the building, the GM may read or paraphrase the following description.

The outline of a large building looms on the edge of the horizon. The L-shaped adobe structure stands 30 feet high and measures roughly 70 feet in width and length at its largest points. A portion of the first story appears to be a later addition from the main residence, because the apparent second floor does not sit atop this extension. Two strong wooden doors denote the residence's presumed entrance. A small opening fitted with interlocking iron bars serves as a window on the first floor. There are five similar windows 25 feet above the ground, though these openings are not fitted with interlocking iron bars. Plumes of dark gray smoke emanate from somewhere on the opposite side of the building.

Further exploration of the building reveals the presence of three additional windows — two on the west wall and one on the north wall — as well as another strong wooden door on the north wall. Game Over keeps the entry and exit doors locked at all times. The interlocking iron bars are present on all of the first floor windows.

Strong Wooden Doors: AC 15; HP 18; **Immunity** cold, lightning, poison, psychic; **Resistance** thunder, weapon damage; **Break** DC 20 Str.

The windows are 2 feet square, making them an extremely tight, yet doable fit for most humans. However, trespassers cannot gain access to the first floor without removing the iron bars or devising a way to bypass them. The bars form roughly 6-inch squares, so a Tiny or smaller creature can squeeze through the barrier without significant difficulty.

Iron Bars: AC 20; HP 20; **Immunity** cold, fire, lightning, poison, psychic, thunder; **Resistance** acid, weapon damage; **Break** DC 24 Str.

If Game Over is present, interior rooms without windows are lit by small oil lamps burning in recessed niches at all times. These oil lamps are also used to light occupied rooms with windows during the overnight hours.

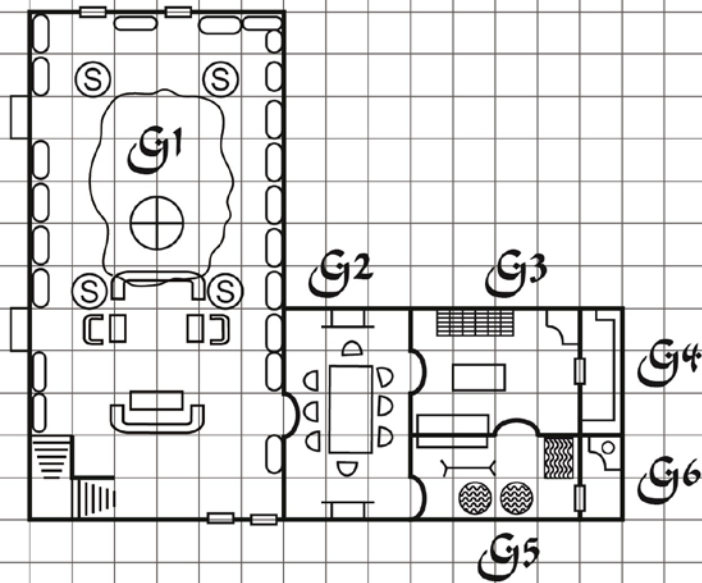
Gr: Great Room

Nearly two dozen preserved, lifeless heads hang from the walls of a spacious, rustic great room. A massive carpet stitched together from exotic furs covers most of the floor and is bordered by four life-sized stuffed creatures including an upright juvenile blue dragon, an ogre, a young desert giant and a fetid, desiccated mummy. Two exquisitely carved cherry wood couches upholstered with fine leather face each other near the main entrance. Two high backed fur chairs are placed between the two couches. An archway leads into an adjoining dining area, while a wooden staircase near the front door ascends to the second level.

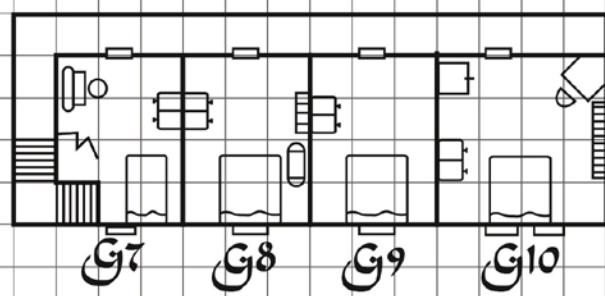
The 22 heads on the walls represent a diverse collection of beasts, animals, aberrations and monstrous humanoids including a lamia, dire lion, a sea hag and other creatures of the GM's choosing. Its most notable recent addition is Savvith the gynosphinx. Recovering her head presents an opportunity for the PCs to communicate with her. Savvith relays the general circumstances surrounding her death and her love for Chasshagra, but she does not convey any information that the PCs could use to harm her former lover. She indicates that she worries greatly about him and believes that he is sinking further into despair and straying closer to the path of evil, though she cannot explain why. She knows nothing about *King of Beasts* or the lionweres' murderous activities.

The trophies are well preserved though somewhat macabre especially among desert cultures. On average, each head is worth 25gp. The PCs can remove the heads from the wall with brute force necessitating a successful DC 15 Str check or by disabling the fastening devices which requires a successful DC 15 Dex check. The upright taxidermy pieces are significantly more valuable than their incomplete counterparts on the wall. The gruesome ogre and mummy are worth a mere 20gp each; however the desert giant is valued at 250gp and the juvenile blue dragon is worth 750gp. The figures are bulky and heavy making it difficult to transport them over long distances. The same principle applies to the couches, chairs and carpet which are worth 100gp each, 50gp each and 150gp respectively. Small wooden tables sit in front of one couch and the two chairs. They are worth 10gp each. When the house is occupied at night, the candles in the iron chandelier hanging over the room are lit, providing illumination for the great room. During daylight hours, the windows provide the chamber with sufficient natural light.

Game Over's movements and actions are not static. As described in previous sections, the PCs may encounter the hunting troupe in their residence, in which case, they are always found in some combination in this area during the day and evenings hours. During the overnight hours, each member takes a 2-hour guard shift in the main room while the others sleep. The lone member periodically walks around the outside of the premises looking for intruders or prey animals. Obviously, if the PCs killed or captured Game Over in Ramaashta or the troupe is currently in the village, the PCs encounter no one in the residence.



First Floor



Second Floor

Game Over's Hunting Lodge

1 Square = 5 Feet

G2: Dining Room

Three archways join this ornate dining room with the residence's great room, kitchen and wash room. Its centerpiece is an exquisitely carved wooden table supported by four legs chiseled in the image of an elephant's leg. Eight chairs crafted in the likeness of the table surround the room's focal point. Two paintings depicting a man with elven features hang from opposite walls. One shows the man proudly standing over a dire lion carcass and the other shows the same man beaming over a slain rhinoceros.

Similar to the furniture in the great room, the table and chairs are valuable, yet they are extremely heavy and cumbersome to transport. The table is worth 250gp, and the chairs are worth 25gp each. Ammar is the subject of both paintings, a fact that the PCs can discern if they already encountered him or by rolling a successful DC 12 Int (History) check.

G3: Kitchen

The lingering smell of smoldering charcoal hangs heavy in the air. It clearly emanates from a cast-iron grill abutting the near wall. The smoke wafting from the dying fire within the grill rises into an iron overhang that leads to an exterior vent. Warm air also flows out of a rapidly cooling hearth in the far corner. The kitchen has two work areas. There is a central hardwood island used for cutting, chopping and butchering and a second hardwood work area situated beneath a row of shelves fastened to the wall. A full complement of pots, pans and cutlery rests on the shelves.

Because of their reclusive and secretive nature, Game Over does not rely upon servants to perform the menial household tasks. Instead, all four members share the cooking responsibilities, though the majority of them fall upon Guadalupe. There is also an unlocked door leading into the pantry that opens without effort.

Simple Wooden Door: AC 12; HP 10; **Immunity** cold, lightning, poison, psychic; **Resistance** thunder, weapon damage; **Break** DC 12 Str.

G4: Pantry

Four rows of shelves span the entire length of the walls. Numerous jars, bags, small barrels, containers and other storage implements rest upon the shelves.

The pantry is well-stocked with an assortment of herbs, spices, cooking ingredients, oil and even cured meats. None of the food items is particularly valuable or significant, though the oil is used to light the lanterns recessed into the wall.

G5: Wash Room

The unique smell of ammonia is the first scent to greet visitors followed shortly thereafter by the even less pleasant stench of bodily waste that seems to seep out from a closed, wooden door. The initial aroma originates from a half-full barrel of the cleansing liquid near the archway and adjacent

to a nearly full barrel of water. Nine fashionable outfits, six men's and three women's rest on wooden hangers supported by a wooden drying rack. There is also a washboard near the far corner and a hardwood table affixed to the wall for folding and storing clean clothes.

The clothing on the drying rack includes four traveler's outfits, three explorer's outfits, a courtier's outfit and a noble's outfit with the latter two designed for women. The ammonia has caustic properties and can be used as weak acid or a weak base. If substituted for more commonly used stronger acids, it only deals half damage to any creature or object that comes in contact with it. The barrel holds approximately four gallons of ammonia. The door to the privy opens with minimal effort.

Simple Wooden Door: AC 12; HP 10; **Immunity** cold, lightning, poison, psychic; **Resistance** thunder, weapon damage; **Break** DC 12 Str.

G6: Privy

There is no mistaking the purpose of this tiny alcove in the residence. A foul stench of rot and decay roils out of a simple circular hole cut in the center of a chairlike apparatus.

Though it smells terrible, the privy is safe to use.

G7: Guadalupe's Bedroom

The sweet aroma of chic perfume gently nudges the senses. The apparent source is a nearby vanity table covered by nearly a dozen jars of cosmetics. A circular mirror attaches to the vanity table and a small, leather upholstered stool is neatly tucked beneath it. There is a wooden dressing panel covered with images of unicorns and other magical beasts in the far corner adjacent to a four-poster bed layered with silk sheets and lace pillow shams. A cool breeze flows through the window above the bed. An exquisitely carved teakwood dresser with two drawers is slightly ajar revealing several frilly undergarments.

Though she appears to be a rugged outdoorswoman, Guadalupe also has a softer, feminine side that she conceals in her private quarters. Her vanity table includes four jars of perfume worth 10gp each and four containers of makeup worth 5gp each; however mixed in among her beauty aids are a *potion of greater healing* and a *potion of resistance (poison)*. The dressing panel is old, outdated and barely functional, so it has no value. The silk sheets and the lace pillow shams are worth a total of 65gp. Guadalupe's dresser contains an assortment of woman's undergarments, three folded outfits and four pairs of shoes. She hides her diary beneath the lower drawer. It can be accessed by pulling the drawer completely out of the dresser or with a successful DC 15 Wis (Perception) check.

The diary is very personal and contains Guadalupe's impressions of various people in Ramaashta and the outlying farms. She professes to greatly admire Aramses Ottama and Sholamara whom she considers to be the sister she never had. Older entries describe her life in Alcalear before relocating with her brother across the desert to Khartous to join Game Over. It then describes her early hunts in exacting details as well as her pride in her accomplishments. The more recent entries tell a much different story. She expresses concern about Ammar's increasingly dour personality and reservations about slaying the "noble sphinx" for a "bag of loot." She is fiercely loyal to her brother whom she views as a father figure more than a sibling. The diary is written in Common and has no monetary value.

QUESTS OF DOOM 3

Simple Wooden Door: AC 12; HP 10; **Immunity** cold, lightning, poison, psychic; **Resistance** thunder, weapon damage; **Break** DC 12 Str.

G8: Caleb's Bedroom

A strange collection of unusual bows and scimitars hangs from pegs hammered into the near wall, while a badly worn leather saddle sits atop a display stand bolted into the floor. In sharp contrast to these oddities is an ordinary wooden bed covered with linen sheets and a simple, open armoire containing men's clothing, shoes and hats. Light filters in through a window above the bed.

Caleb's collection of weaponry ranges from the impractical to the bizarre. It includes six jade arrows that deal only half damage, but are worth 5gp each for their component parts; a decorative longbow constructed from ivory that is worth 150gp, yet is too rigid to fire arrows; a worthless, ornamental quartz scimitar that shatters upon impact and a masterwork shortbow worth 330gp that is inexplicably adorned by concentric white and red circles painted onto the weapon's surface. The saddle is a riding saddle with historical significance. Intended to be used for a camel, careful inspection coupled with a successful DC 18 Wis (Perception) check reveals the name Carath ibn-Hayuzet cut into a piece of leather that is partially obscured by a later repair. A successful DC 16 Int (History) check identifies Carath as the first Khartous merchant to make the journey from Qamara to Qiram, making it a collector's item. The saddle is worth 500gp if the seller is aware of its historical significance; otherwise it is valued as an ordinary, rather abused riding saddle. Caleb's bed, armoire and personal effects are more conventional and also worthless.

Simple Wooden Door: AC 12; HP 10; **Immunity** cold, lightning, poison, psychic; **Resistance** thunder, weapon damage; **Break** DC 12 Str.

G9: Gabriel's Bedroom

Three falchions with bejeweled handles are mounted on a display rack attached to the near wall. A simple, military style bed covered in linen sheets abuts the far wall beneath an open window. Men's undergarments, socks and shoes overflow from two open drawers within a tightly packed dresser.

Gabriel's three falchions are all masterwork blades featuring decorative hilts inset with pearls, garnets, sapphire chips and pieces of ivory. They are worth 375gp each. The clothing and shoes stuffed into the drawers are worth a total of 50gp. The bed furnishings are only worth 10gp.

Simple Wooden Door: AC 12; HP 10; **Immunity** cold, lightning, poison, psychic; **Resistance** thunder, weapon damage; **Break** DC 12 Str.

G10: Ammar's Bedroom (Difficulty Medium)

This spacious, breezy bedroom features a wooden corner desk, a bookshelf stuffed with at least fifty tomes, a freestanding cedar armoire and a comfortable bed covered with silk sheets. Fresh air flows into the bedchamber through an oversized window above the bed. A rugged, iron chest occupies the near corner.

The increasingly paranoid and irrational Ammar keeps his bedroom door locked at all times thus the PCs must force it open, pick the lock or climb in through the window to get inside the room. Ammar treats his bedroom as his sanctuary, allowing him to read his collection of books at his leisure and without interruption. None of the 48 tomes in his library is particularly valuable, though the subject matter gives some insight into his current state of mind. Most focus on philosophical musings regarding the nature of good and evil as well as treatises on the morality of killing other sentient creatures. The works appeal to a specialized market only making them worth a meager 2gp each. Ammar's armoire includes three pairs of masterwork sandals and three masterwork desert robes. The silk sheets covering his bed are worth 50gp.

Simple Wooden Door: AC 12; HP 10; **Immunity** cold, lightning, poison, psychic; **Resistance** thunder, weapon damage; **Break** DC 12 Str.

The iron chest is unlocked, but not unprotected. Whenever anyone other than Ammar opens the chest, that person triggers the **trap** which immediately summons **2 air elementals** that fight to the death. The chest contains 1,590gp, six rubies worth 250gp each, a scroll case, *6 arrows of dragon slaying* and *5 arrows of beast slaying*. The case contains a *spell scroll (revivify)*.

SUMMON MONSTER TRAP

Perception DC 21; **Disable** This trap can be physically disabled with a DC 21 Dex check using thieves' tools or a successful DC 18 *dispel magic* check.

Effect when triggered the trap summons two air elementals.

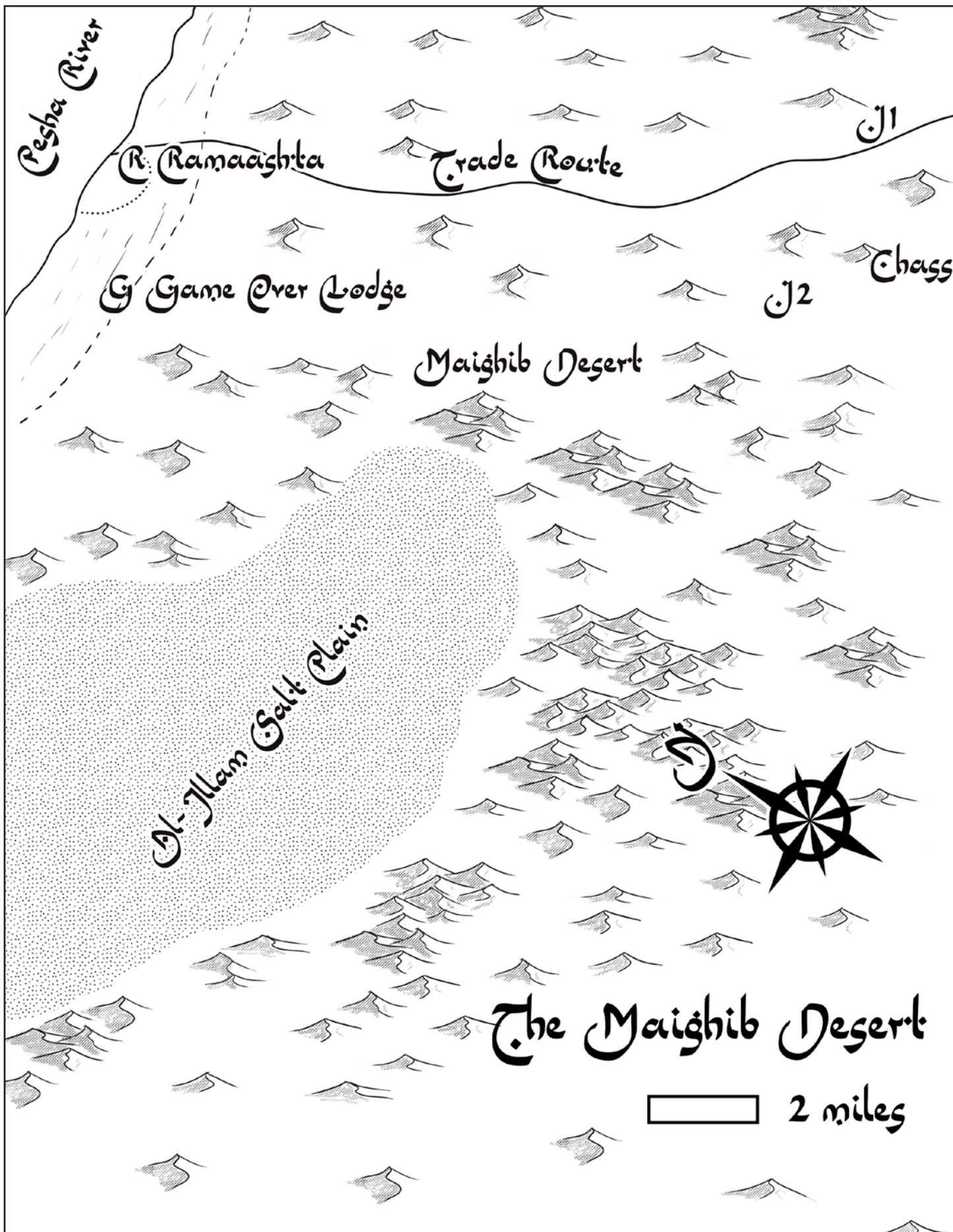
Air Elemental (2): AC 15; HP 90 (12d10+24); **Spd** fly 90ft; **Melee** slam (+8, x2, 2d8+5 bludgeoning); **Immune** poison; **Resist** lightning, thunder; bludgeoning, piercing and slashing from nonmagical weapons; **SA** whirlwind (creature in same space makes DC 13 Str save or take 3d8+2 bludgeoning, be thrown 20ft away and knocked prone, half damage and no knockback on success; if target strikes object, takes 1d6 bludgeoning for every 10ft thrown; if another creature is struck, creature must make DC13 Str save or be knocked prone and take same damage, recharge 4-6); **Str** +2, **Dex** +5, **Con** +2, **Int** -2, **Wis** +0, **Cha** -2; **Senses** darkvision 60ft, passive Perception 10; **AL** N; **CR** 5; **XP** 1,800.

Maighib Desert

The only obstacle now standing in the way of the PCs and Chasshagra is the forbidding Maighib Desert. The events depicted in this adventure occur at some point in the late summer. This portion of the adventure includes two set encounters — Ameht's Caravan and Scene of the Slaughter plus three additional encounters that may take place at any point during the PCs' journey to Chass. The three additional encounters appear first followed by the two set encounters. The additional encounters can take place in any order that the GM chooses or can be supplemented with more random encounters.

Encounter 1: How Bazaar? (Difficulty Medium)

It is safe to say that no humanoid race adapted to life in the desert better than the rahadas and Shazzab Rumun is the perfect example of this fact. The solitary desert merchant treks across the burning sands accompanied only by his trusty **al-haloon**. In fact, his beast of burden is the only creature that believes anything he says. Though most of his race travels as a family unit, his kin disowned him long ago because of his endless scheming and innate treacherous nature. Shazzab is not evil per se. He simply



QUESTS OF DOOM 3

looks out for himself first, second, third and so on.

As the PCs make their way across the desert, they come across a lone rahada sitting atop an al-haloon that appears to be lugging a tremendous amount of junk across the searing sands. In most likelihood, Shazzab's keen senses alerted him to the PCs before they became aware of his presence. If this is the case, Shazzab heads in the PCs' direction. Shazzab is always interested in selling one or more of his items or information, but his primary goal is to steal items of value from the PCs and add them to his hoard.

If the PCs decide to interact with Shazzab, he comes across as the consummate snake oil salesman of the Old West. He is gregarious, witty, charming and not averse to telling fantastical tales and blatant exaggerations, though he portrays himself as a humble, hard-working merchant barely eking out a living. Throughout his conversation with the PCs, Shazzab makes self-deprecating comments to put the PCs at ease. Shazzab is particularly pleased these days thanks to Chasshagra's destruction of his most hated rival — Ameht Baktar, a fact that he happily relays to the PCs. He minces no words in describing the caravan leader as an overpriced scoundrel who gouged his customers to pay for his numerous mistresses and opium addiction. (The latter allegations are a lie.) He also offers no niceties regarding Chasshagra, whom he describes as the miserly sphinx in Chass that hoards his water and withholds his hospitality from struggling desert merchants such as himself. He can point the PCs in the general direction of Chass for a small fee, but he knows nothing about Savvith's killing or the recent events in Ramaashta. If told of these unfortunate events, Shazzab feigns sadness and recites random lines of poetry from obscure elegies to express his false regret.

Shazzab's inventory includes an eclectic collection of items. Shazzab offers fair prices for his wares and may even grant a discount if the PCs purchase items in bulk. During his interaction with the PCs, he takes careful notice of their valuables, as he looks to pilfer something of great value from their person or preferably from an unattended mount. Shazzab relies upon his exceptional Sleight of Hand abilities to rob the PCs without them noticing it. If the PCs catch him in the act, Shazzab falls back upon his Bluff abilities to convince his accuser that he just wanted to take a closer look at the item and intended to give it back. Shazzab then decides not

to tempt fate again and concludes his business with the PCs without any further ado. He rebuffs insistent PCs with a hurried claim that he is already late for a scheduled delivery.

Shazzab does everything he can to avoid a physical confrontation short of parting with his goods on anything but his own terms. If he cannot avoid a fight, he always positions himself for a flank attack using his al-haloon as his ally, or he attempts Cha (Deception) check to feint and then sneak attack his opponent. As soon as he is reduced to less than one-quarter of his original hit points, Shazzab pleads for his life and claims that poverty drove him to a life of thievery. If the ruse works, Shazzab gratuitously thanks the PCs for their mercy and begins plotting an opportunity to exact revenge on the PCs at a later date. If the PCs do not accept his bargain, he begs them to let him offer the PCs a valuable gift as recompense. He searches through his items and finds a *potion of invisibility* that he quickly quaffs before trying to escape. He leaves everything behind if necessary, though he plans on returning at a later point in time to reclaim his lost possessions.

Shazzab Rumun, male rahada Rog9 (thief) (see Sidebar):

AC 16; **HP** 53 (9d8+9); **Spd** 30ft; **Melee** +1 short sword (+8, 1d6+4); **SA** sneak attack +5d6, **Str** +3, **Dex** +3 (+7), **Con** +1, **Int** +1 (+5), **Wis** -1, **Cha** +4; **Skills** Deception +11; Insight +3; Persuasion +11; Stealth +7; **Senses** darkvision 60ft, passive Perception 9; **Traits** cunning action, evasion, uncanny dodge; **AL** CN; **CR** 8; **XP** 3,900.

Equipment: *potion of greater healing* (2), *potion of invisibility*, *bracers of defense*, +1 short sword, *ring of protection* +1, thieves' tools, 740gp including inventory.

Al-Haloon: **AC** 13; **HP** 75 (10d8+30); **Spd** 40ft, burrow 5ft;

Melee hoof x2 (+6, 1d8+4 bludgeoning); **SA** multiattack; **Str** +4, **Dex** +1, **Con** +3, **Int** -4, **Wis** +1, **Cha** -2; **Senses** passive Perception 11, scent; **Traits** extend neck (can extend neck to 10ft, and to 15ft with DC 15 Str check); scent (advantage on Wis (Perception) checks involving scent); smell water (can detect surface water at one mile, un-

Rahada Characters

Rahadas are a race of humans that trace their lineage back to an extinct race of purely reptilian humanoids. Over the centuries, they became more human though they retained a few vestigial features of their distant heritage. Their ancestry, their habitat and their societal role have shaped a race of physically strong, charismatic humanoids that are quick to act, but too rash to sort out the consequences of their actions ahead of time. Rahadas are ill-suited for sedentary life in crowded cities, so most make their way in the world as traveling merchants wandering the desert plying their wares.

Rahadas are always accompanied by their herd animals bred for desert survival, such as camels or al-haloons. The wealthiest rahadas are said to have a caravan of dire camels literally hauling tons of goods across the desert sands. Though often perceived as wandering vagabonds, rahadas travel through the desert sands along predetermined routes, stopping at designated cities and towns to sell and replenish their eclectic inventory of goods. In fact, rahadas are very proprietary about their trade routes, which are sometimes handed down from generation to generation. Territorial disputes between competing rahada merchants and their families almost always come to blows.

Rahadas live and travel in family units ranging from a few individuals for a poor family to several hundred for an extremely wealthy and successful family. Only the wealthiest rahadas take up permanent roots in a major city or another stopping point along their trade route. Experienced merchants and commercial dealers perceive rahadas as fast-talking but hard-nosed businessmen, but the average man on the streets opinion is less flattering. Though they are unmistakably humanoid, it is not uncommon for disgruntled customers to derogatorily refer to them as snake-men, forked-tongued or much worse. Whatever the perception, there is no

denying that rahadas are talkative and outwardly friendly people whose livelihood depends upon their ability to successfully interact with others.

Rahadas are squat and muscular, though their fingers and toes are long and quite dexterous. They have olive skin, round heads, stubby ears, yellow eyes, a large nose, a small mouth and a vestigial tail. They are completely hairless, but close examination reveals a thin layer of porous scales beneath their skin. They are well-respected within the business community, but most others see them as shady merchants trying to squeeze a few extra gold pieces from their coin purse.

Rahada Traits

Rahada characters have the following characteristics:

Ability Score Increase: +2 Strength, +1 Charisma

Age: Rahada age as humans, reaching maturity in their late teens and rarely living more than a century.

Alignment: Rahada tend toward chaotic alignments.

Size: Rahadas average 5 feet tall and weigh 150 pounds. They are medium size.

Speed: The base walking speed for a rahada is 30ft.

Darkvision: Rahada have darkvision to a range of 60ft.

Natural Armor: Rahada receive a +1 natural bonus to AC.

Convincing: Rahada have proficiency in the Persuasion skill.

Gregarious: If a Rahada successfully uses his or her Persuasion skill against another creature, the Rahada has advantage on any Charisma-based skills against that creature for 24 hours.

Languages: Rahada speak Common and one extra language of their choice.

KING OF BEASTS

derground water at 1,000ft); **AL** Unaligned; **CR** 2; **XP** 450.
(Appendix)

Encounter 2: Sands in the Hourglass (Difficulty Medium)

It is generally easy to see creatures moving atop the searing dunes, but it is much more difficult to spot the cunning creatures that reside beneath the sands waiting for unfortunate prey to happen upon them. The reviled dust diggers are one such predator. This loathsome gang of desert aberrations generally hunts at night, so this encounter should take place during the cooler evening, overnight or early morning hours. Dust diggers are rather slow, so they rely upon their tremorsense ability to detect potential targets before moving in for the kill. They generally attack their prey at campsites or other fixed locations rather than engaging in a futile effort to run down much faster opponents. These **3 dust diggers** approach the PCs using their earth glide ability so it is impossible to detect their presence on the surface unless the PC possesses tremorsense or a similar ability. The cunning predators surround the PCs from all four sides as they move towards the surface. One round before they attack, a PC may attempt a Wis (Perception) check to notice something amiss underfoot, otherwise the dust diggers surprise the unwary desert travelers. Each positions itself beneath a potential target and uses its sinkhole ability to subject that victim to its tentacle attacks. The cunning creatures rely upon their tentacles to grab opponents and either bite them or swallow them whole depending upon the circumstances. The dust diggers do not retreat, and they have no treasure.

Dust Digger (3): AC 13; **HP** 44 (8d8+8); **Spd** 10ft, burrow 10ft; **Melee** tentacle slam (+5, reach 10ft, 1d8+3 bludgeoning, target grappled), tentacle crush (automatic hit on grappled creature, 1d8+3 bludgeoning, target grappled and restrained), bite (+5, 2d8+3 piercing on one grappled creature, target must make DC 13 Str save or be swallowed); **SA** multiattack (5 attacks, no more than one bite), swallow (swallowed creature is blinded and restrained, takes 1d8+1 bludgeoning and 1d8 acid at start of dust digger's turn, 1 medium or 2 small creatures can be inside dust digger at one time); **Immune** prone, unconscious; **Str** +3, **Dex** +0, **Con** +1, **Int** -4, **Wis** +0, **Cha** +0; **Skills** Stealth +4; **Senses** tremorsense 60ft, passive Perception 10; **Traits** earth glide (can move freely through sand or loose earth),

earthly camouflage (advantage on Dex (Stealth) checks when buried), sinkhole (can deflate as bonus action, attack with all five tentacles on surprise round), swallow; **AL** Unaligned; **CR** 3; **XP** 700. (Appendix)

Encounter 3: Waters of Death (Difficulty Hard)

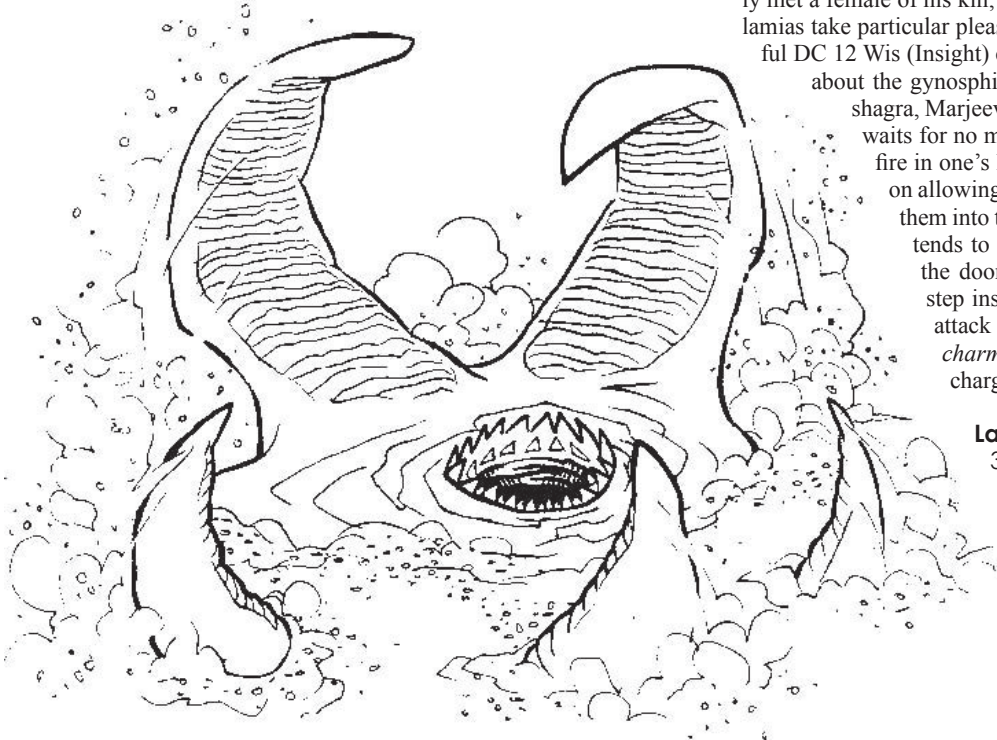
Lamias are among the most despised and feared denizens of the desert. They typically reside in places formerly devoted to the cause of good, such as a temple or shrine dedicated to a righteous deity. In this particular instance, a pair of lamias inhabits a long forgotten and abandoned Guurzan crypt that is half-buried beneath the desert sands. When the PCs notice the structure, the GM may read or paraphrase the following description.

The featureless, adobe structure is 30 feet square and 15 feet high with a 10-foot wide entrance facing to the west. Much of the structure's exterior is partially buried beneath the sand.

Shortly after arriving a few years ago, **3 lamias** removed the crypt's stone door, allowing them an unobstructed view of the surrounding area. Whenever they detect intruders, one of the lamias uses *major image* to conjure a heavy stone door covered in hieroglyphics. Since the lamia not maintaining the image knows that the stone door is an illusion, she can see through it, allowing her to cast her own *major image* in the likeness of an emaciated, wizened sadhu emerging from inside the crypt. The elderly man claims that his name is Marjeev, a sadhu (holy man) and hermit who searches for insight and knowledge. To further the ruse, Marjeev tells the PCs that he is partially deaf so they must speak loudly, allowing the lamia to clearly hear what the PCs are saying so that she can continue to converse with them. The illusion's goal is to lure the unsuspecting PCs into the crypt and an ambush by the lamias. PCs that directly interact with both illusions are entitled to a DC 13 Int (Investigation) check or DC 13 Int save to disbelieve the figments. A successful save dispels the intended image and replaces it with a faint outline.

Marjeev only directly answers questions about Chasshagra, whom the lamias hate with tremendous passion. The wise monk tells them that he lives in an ancient structure known as Chass. He also knows that he recently met a female of his kin; however she died before they could mate. The lamias take particular pleasure in that turn of events; therefore a successful DC 12 Wis (Insight) check reveals that Marjeev seems very pleased about the gynosphinx's death. Absent any questions about Chasshagra, Marjeev offers the PCs esoteric advice such as "the sun waits for no man," "the desert's heat is cold compared to the fire in one's heart" and other half-baked truisms. He insists on allowing him to offer the PCs his hospitality and invites them into the crypt. When he approaches the door, he pretends to run his fingers across the hieroglyphs causing the door to magically disappear. As soon as the PCs step inside, the lamias end the illusions and viciously attack the PCs. If the ruse fails, each lamia uses its *charm person* spell against a PC of her choice before charging out of the crypt to attack.

Lamia (3): AC 13; **HP** 97 (13d10+26); **Spd** 30ft; **Melee** claw (+5, 2d10+3 slashing) and dagger (+5, 1d4+3 piercing) or intoxicating touch (+5, target has disadvantage on Wis saves and all ability checks for 1 hour); **SA** spells (DC 13); **Str** +3, **Dex** +1, **Con** +2, **Int** +2, **Wis** +2, **Cha** +3; **Skills** Deception +7, Insight +4, Stealth +3; **Senses** darkvision 60ft, passive Perception 12; **AL** CE; **CR** 4; **XP** 1,100.



Innate Spells: at will—*disguise self* (any humanoid), *major image*; 3/day—*charm person*, *mirror image*, *scrying*, *suggestion*; 1/day—*geas*

Treasure: The crypt's interior is empty other than a lone sarcophagus holding an ancient, mummified body and the lamias' ill-gotten treasure. The sarcophagus can be pried open with a successful DC 18 Str check. In addition to the desiccated corpse, the PCs also find *boots of elvenkind*, a *cloak of elvenkind*, a diamond worth 1,000gp and 692gp.

J1: Ameht's Caravan (Difficulty Hard)

The enraged Chasshagra attacked Ameht Bakhtar's caravan roughly 10 miles due north of his home and left a wake of carnage in his stead. The devastating aftermath of his fury litters the desert road leading to Qiram with sundered vehicles, slain animals and shattered men. The stench of decay and rot is so powerful that it can be detected from a mile away with a successful DC 15 Wis (Perception) check, and it is noticeable from a quarter mile away without making a Wis (Perception) check.

The powerful odor also attracted the unwanted attention of a small raiding party that picks through the broken remains in search of any valuables. Like vultures descending upon a week old kill, the fetid stench of death drew a hunting party of 3 **al-hajans** to the scene. The opportunistic scavengers feast on the festering meat and sift through the wreckage seeking anything useful. In fact, their single-minded focus causes them to suffer a -2 penalty on Wis (Perception) checks made to notice anyone approaching. Like others of their kin, they zealously guard their prize and attack anyone that approaches the area. The cruel monsters forego their usual tactics and instead use their howl special ability to drive off as many trespassers as possible and then envelope any creatures that successfully resisted the fear effect. They use their expertly crafted quarterstaves to beat their opponents to a bloody pulp.

Al-Hajan (3): AC 15; HP 133 (14d10+56); Spd 40ft; **Melee** claw x2 (+6, 2d6+4 piercing) or quarterstaff x2 (+6, 1d8+4 bludgeoning); **SA** multiattack; **Resist** fire; **Str** +4, **Dex** +0, **Con** +4, **Int** -1, **Wis** +1, **Cha** +0; **Skills** Intimidate +2, Perception +3, Survival +3; **Senses** darkvision 60ft, passive Perception 11, scent; **Traits** scent (advantage on Wis (Perception) checks involving scent); **AL** NE; **CR** 5; **XP** 1,800. (**Appendix**)

Development: After driving off the al-hajans, the PCs can fully assess the scene. There are two busted and toppled caravan wagons that held fresh water, fruits, vegetables and 30 barrels of stored grain. These items are now spilt onto the hot sands causing the water to evaporate and the grains to blow away on the wind. There are 3 dead camels and 6 dead men lying on the ground around the caravan. It is impossible to tell the exact manner of their death because of the post-mortem damage caused by the al-hajans and other desert scavengers, but a DC 15 Int (Nature) check reveals that their level of decomposition strongly supports the belief that these creatures died around the time of Chasshagra's attack.

Treasure: The al-hajans found 642gp among the wreckage as well as a scrimshaw pendant worth 250gp, a ruby and gold ring worth 200gp and six chunks of raw platinum ore worth 100gp each.

J2: Scene of the Slaughter (Difficulty Medium)

Chasshagra hauled Savvith's lifeless body back to Chass, so there are few indications that a battle actually took place here roughly a week ago. The site is an otherwise nondescript tract of bare hardpan approximately 8 miles west of Chass that is now marked by an upright bronze ankh imbedded deep into the sandy earth. The ankh is 6 feet high and is worth 250gp. It can be removed from the ground with a

successful DC 17 Str check. A successful DC 15 Int (History) check determines that Guurzan craftsmen manufactured the ankh roughly 500 years ago. Chasshagra left the relic here to forever identify the location where Savvith fell. Any PC that closely examines the surrounding area notices a patch of discolored earth with a successful DC 12 Wis (Perception) check and 1d4 broken arrows with a successful DC 18 Wis (Perception) check. The discolored earth is dried blood from Savvith's decapitation and the projectiles are evidence of Caleb and Guadalupe's involvement in the attack.

Within 1d4 minutes after the PCs arrive on the scene, a **hallaraq** appears on the horizon. The monstrous scavenger continuously scours the sands searching for scraps left behind by other predators. In a pinch, the hungry vermin even resorts to eating inorganic matter, and it sets its sights on the bronze ankh looming over the dunes. If the PCs removed the ankh from the sand, its reflection attracts the hallaraq like a shimmering fishing lure. The mindless critter has no interest in attacking the PCs unless they stand in the way between it and its inanimate meal. In the event that a battle does take place, the hallaraq abandons the cause and burrows into the sand whenever it is reduced to less than half its original hit points. The hallaraq has no treasure, but cracking its shell open reveals a camel's skull, (DC 13 Int (Nature) check to successfully identify), a ragged suit of studded leather armor, pieces of a javelin and a wooden wheel presumably from a caravan wagon. The hallaraq acquired these items from the slaughter and wreckage of Ameht's caravan.

Hallaraq: AC 16; HP 142 (15d10+60); Spd 40ft, burrow 10ft; **Melee** bite (+7, 1d8+4 piercing), claw x2 (+7, 1d6+4 bludgeoning plus grapple), sting (+7, 1d6+5 piercing plus poison); **SA** grapple (target grappled if both claws hit, DC 15 Str check to break, can make claw attacks on grappled target, claws hit automatically), multiattack, poison (1d4 Str and poisoned for 1 hour, DC 15 Con save negates); **Immune** piercing; **Str** +4 (+7), **Dex** -1, **Con** +4 (+7), **Int** -4, **Wis** +0, **Cha** -2; **Senses** darkvision 60ft, passive Perception 10; **AL** Unaligned; **CR** 8; **XP** 3,900. (**Appendix**)

Part Three: Chass and Mate

Having endured the arduous trek across the Maighib Desert, the PCs now face the final portion of the adventure — the confrontation with Chasshagra within his mysterious citadel of Chass. The PCs must overcome his first line of defense — a gang of lion beasts of chaos before they can enter the sphinx's ancient structure. Inside the walls of Chass, the PCs must rely upon more than might and magic to defeat Chasshagra. A sharp mind and quick reflexes are needed to solve the magical beast's puzzles and traps if they aspire to make it out alive.

Approaching Chass (Difficulty Hard)

Though its original purpose and intent are unknown, Chass' mysterious builders seem to have picked a strategic location for a desert outpost. The oddly-shaped structure sits atop a plateau overlooking the surrounding dunes. At least forty fresh water springs are located within a 2-mile radius of Chass. The vegetation and date palm trees flowering from these oases make Chass look more like a swank resort than an oddity. At one time, the building sat further above the surface; however over the last several thousand years, the shifting sands have gradually leveled out the area around Chass, making its elevation less pronounced. Nonetheless, Chasshagra's bizarre abode is still visible from 6d6 x 20 feet away despite the undulating mounds of sand and dust surrounding the building. When the PCs first enter visual range, the GM may read or paraphrase the following description.

At least a dozen small oases measuring no more than 50 feet in diameter are scattered about what could best be described as an oddity of architectural engineering or at worst the haphazard design of a rambling mind. Crafted entirely from stone quarried from an unknown source, this unusually shaped structure rests atop a shallow plateau roughly 5 feet higher than the tallest nearby dune. The building reaches a maximum height of 30 feet near its northwestern corner, though in most places it averages 15 feet. Various bizarrely shaped extensions protrude from its walls, indicating that construction likely started and stopped multiple times during its long history. There are no windows or openings of any kind other than a pair of stone doors expertly fitted onto the western wall.

These creatures are present only if the PCs slew the lionweres; otherwise the entrance to Chass is unguarded. Though the building is visible from quite a distance away, its guardians are not. Scattered among the oases near the western entrance are **3 lion beasts of chaos** that spring upon any creature that approaches Chass' stone doors. The creatures are well camouflaged in the reeds and grasses that grow around the fresh water springs. Each occupies its own spring. A PC can spot any of them amidst the greenery by succeeding on a DC 16 Wis (Perception) check. Whenever the PCs attack one of the lion beasts, the other emerge from hiding and converge on the PCs. They never retreat. Like the lionweres, Chasshagra can relay messages to the lion beasts via a *sending* spell; however they lack the requisite intelligence to communicate anything of note to their master.

Lion Beast of Chaos: AC 15; HP 60 (8d10+16); Spd 40ft; **Melee** claw x2 (+8, 1d6+5 slashing), bite (+8, 1d6+5 piercing); **SA** multiattack, pounce (if claw attack hits after 20ft of movement, target must make DC 13 Str save or be prone, can make bite attack on prone target as bonus); **Immune** fear, *hold monster*, *slow*; **Str** +5 (+8), **Dex** +4 (+7), **Con** +2, **Int** -4, **Wis** +1, **Cha** +0; **Skills** Athletics +8, Perception +4, Stealth +7; **Senses** darkvision 60ft, passive Perception 11; **Traits** frightful presence (roar, every creature with fewer HD within 30ft must make DC 12 Wis save or be frightened for 1 round), magic resistance (advantage on saves vs spells and magical effects), rage (berserk rage when in bright light, gains +4 Str, +4 AC, attacks until it or opponent is dead); **AL** CN; **CR** 5; **XP** 1,800. (**Appendix**)

Chass

Chass conforms to no known architectural style or building technique. In addition the materials used to build it are not indigenous to the area. Omaruri oral tradition claims that Chass predates their arrival in the Maighib Desert, but it does not provide any details about its creators or its intended purpose. Their historical record also indicates that Chasshagra inhabited the structure when the Omaruri arrived in the area. Chass shows little wear for its immense age and strange design features. For instance, its ceiling is not sloped like conventional structures; however rain falls so infrequently in the Maighib Desert that any pools of water that may collect on the roof quickly evaporate. Sandstorms left pockmarks on the outer stone wall, but other than this cosmetic damage, the material itself remains intact with no structural damage. The same can be said for its massive, completely undecorated stone doors. Despite their immense weight, these expertly crafted portals open with virtually no effort thus granting access to Chass.

Strong Wooden Doors: AC 17; HP 25; **Immunity** acid, cold, fire, lightning, poison, psychic; **Resistance** thunder, weapon damage; **Break** DC 25 Str.

Unless otherwise noted, all of the doors within Chass share the same characteristics; they are all crafted from stone and open with minimal effort.

C1: Entry Hall (Difficulty Medium)

Two alabaster statues of massive lions abut opposing walls, forcing visitors to pass between them to enter the rest of the room. A pair of archways beyond the statues leads to adjoining chambers. At the far end of the room is a stone pedestal that supports a weathered, ancient tome that lies beneath a protective glass case.

Chasshagra once greeted his guests in this grand entry hall, but today it serves more as his first line of defense against intruders than a welcoming chamber. However, the crafty sphinx still takes great pleasure testing the wits and intellects of other creatures. Whenever a creature passes between the two lion statues or past one of them, a *magic mouth* spell activates. It says the following in Common.

“You cannot pass until you answer my riddle.

I have feet, but do not have legs.

I have no shape, but I have at least one line.

I have rhythm, but require no music.

What am I?”

The correct answer is a poem. The first line refers to the measurement of classical meter in poetry, the second line refers to the fact that a poem consists of at least one line, and the third line refers to poetic rhythm. The riddle is particularly apropos because the book beneath the case is an extremely rare book of handwritten poetry penned by the master poet Suqri himself, a fact that a PC can determine with a successful Knowledge (history) check. Though it has no magical properties, the tome is worth 3,000gp to any serious collector.

After the riddle is presented, one of the lions immediately transforms into a **mythical lion**. As the PCs ponder the answer to the riddle, the massive animal menacingly taps its paw against the ground, furling and unfurling its claws as it does so. The creature immediately attacks if a creature attacks it, a creature passes through one of the archways, the PCs give an incorrect answer to the riddle, or 1 minute passes. The mythical lion attacks until slain or until it runs out of enemies to attack.

Mythical Lion: AC 18; HP 102 (12d10+36); Spd 50ft; **Melee** bite (+9, 2d6+6 piercing), claw x2 (+9, 1d8+6 slashing); **SA** multiattack, pounce (if claw attack hits after 20ft of movement, target must make DC 13 Str save or be prone, can make bite attack on prone target as bonus); **Str** +6, **Dex** +5, **Con** +3, **Int** -4, **Wis** +2, **Cha** +0; **Skills** Perception +3, Stealth +6; **Senses** passive Perception 13, scent; **Traits** pack tactics (advantage on attacks if ally is within 5 feet), scent (advantage on Wis (Perception) checks based on scent); **AL** Unaligned; **CR** 8; **XP** 3,900. (**Appendix**)

Development: If the PCs correctly answer the riddle, the mythical lion returns to its statue form and a *magic mouth* speaks again.

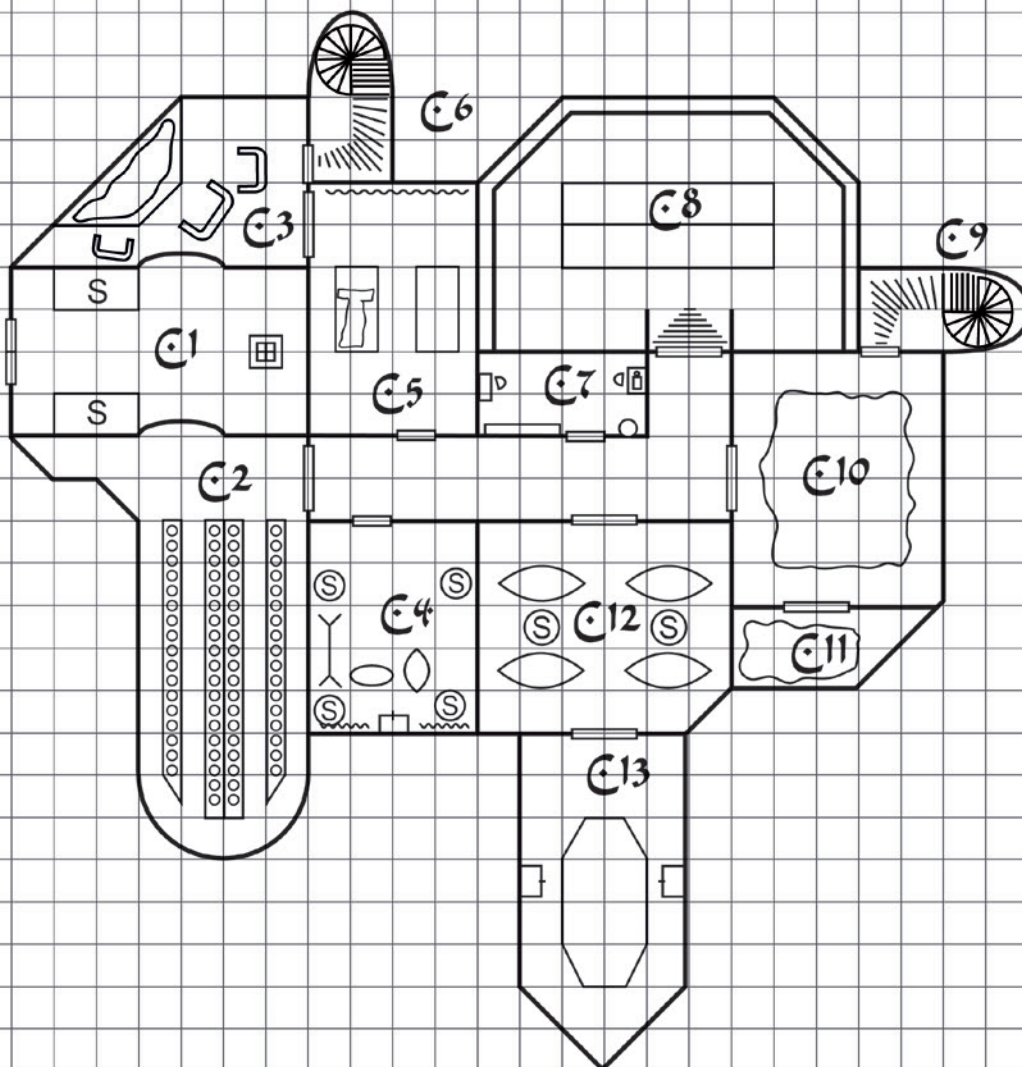
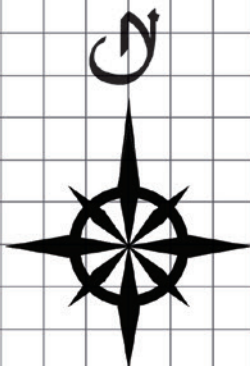
“Well done stranger. You are worthy of entrance into my humble abode.”

Ad Hoc XP Award: The GM may award the PCs 1,800 XP for correctly solving the riddle.

C2: Solarium

Sunlight inexplicably pours through the dome-shaped ceiling bathing dozens of brightly colored, potted flowers in warm light. The plants are arranged in four long rows that span the entire length of the room. A gentle, low buzzing sound fills the chamber as ordinary bees fly from flower to flower and back to their hive affixed to the ceiling.

Though the ceiling covering the dome appears to have been crafted from stone on the outside, it is actually made from 4-inch-thick glass that is made



Chess

1 square - 5 feet

KING OF BEASTS

to appear like stone by a permanent *minor image* spell cast by Chass' architects. Chasshagra took advantage of this structural anomaly to hone his horticultural skills. In fact, he intended to use the flowers grown in the solarium to craft perfumes for Savvith and shower their offspring in a bed of flowers harvested from his vast collection. Any PC that succeeds on a DC 10 Nature identifies the flowering plants as indigenous desert species including lilies and poppy plants that can be used to produce opium. The bees are ordinary honeybees used to pollinate the flowers. If a PC opts to brave the insects' wrath and retrieve the bees' sweet delicacy, the honeycomb in the hive 25 feet above the ground contains 50gp worth of honey. A creature can safely gather the honey with the use of smoke; however the bees deal 1d6 points of damage to any creature that sticks its hand into the hive and fails a DC 11 Con save. A successful save halves the damage. The stone door leading into the adjoining chamber opens with ease.

C3: Audience Chamber

Two dusty, upholstered couches marred by visible tears and holes face in the general direction of a raised dais 3 feet above the floor. A smaller upholstered couch on the opposite side of the room also faces the elevated platform. The dais is featureless other than a badly stained wool and silk rug.

During Chass' heyday, the resident sphinx and his Omaruri guests engaged in lively debates in this spacious audience chamber. Since those conversations ended centuries ago, the hall is largely neglected and unused. The carpet, chair and couches are in extremely poor condition and worthless.

C4: Reliquary (Difficulty Medium)

Grotesquely deformed faces adorn four wooden totems standing around the chamber's perimeter. Primitive wooden staves, dull blades, spears and javelins are propped against a makeshift weapons' rack between two of the totems. Two oval wicker shields emblazoned with frightening images of eviscerated beasts lie on the floor near the far end of the chamber. An open, wicker chest containing several small votive statues, phylacteries, prayer beads and sinister looking stuffed dolls that resemble men and women abuts the far wall between a pair of tapestries depicting skeletal figures with oversized skulls and mouths full of razor sharp teeth.

In addition to bequeathing *King of Beasts* to Chasshagra, the Omaruri priestess Nawalapuura also gave him other relics and items of particular significance within their culture. A successful DC 13 Int (History) or Int (Religion) check identifies the items as Omaruri in origin. If the Int (Religion) check succeeds by 5 or more, the PC also learns that the objects are commonly associated with the race's dark earth goddess, Owomarari. Chasshagra collected these oddities and stored them in this reliquary for safekeeping and occasional study. The items never displayed any magical properties until Chasshagra recited his first ritual from *King of Beasts*. Under the right conditions, the inherent evil in these long forgotten items now stirs to life.

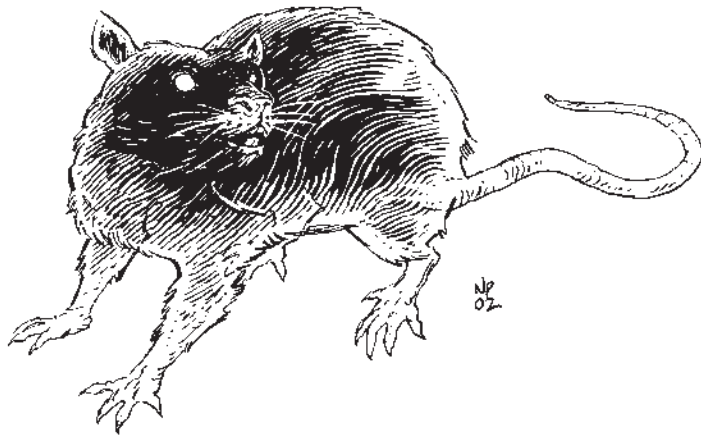
Whenever a PC attempts to move or remove any of these objects from the reliquary, they unwittingly spring a devious **trap**. The four totems' mouths open slightly, allowing 3 **shadow rat swarms** to pour into the room. The undead vermin display visible signs of decomposition and burning red eyes belying their inherent wickedness. Each totem produces one swarm. The swarms attack until destroyed, even if the offender leaves the room or returns the touched object back to its original location. The shadow rat swarms only assume incorporeal form if the PCs leave the room; otherwise they remain corporeal.

SUMMON MONSTER TRAP

Perception DC 18; **Disable** This trap can be physically disabled with a DC 20 Dex check using thieves' tools or a successful DC 16 *dispel magic* check. A separate disable check must be made on each of the four totems.

Effect When triggered any undisabled totem summons a shadow rat swarm (up to 4 swarms total).

Shadow Rat Swarm (3): AC 11; **HP** 39 (6d8+12); **Spd** 40ft, climb 60ft; **Melee** bite (+4, 3d6 necrotic plus disease plus strength drain); **SA** disease (DC 12 Con save or contract filth fever, effect in 1d3 days, 2d6 HP damage/day, poisoned condition, 2 consecutive Con saves to cure); strength drain (Str reduced by 1d4, lasts until long or short rest); **Immune** exhaustion, frightened, grappled, necrotic, paralyzed, petrified, poison, prone; **Resist** acid, cold, fire, lightning, thunder; bludgeoning, piercing and slashing from nonmagical weapons; **Str** -2, **Dex** +2, **Con** +1, **Int** -4, **Wis** +1, **Cha** +2; **Senses** darkvision 60ft, passive Perception 11; **Traits** shadow blend (gain total cover as move), swarm (can occupy another creature's space, can move through opening large enough for tiny creature, cannot regain hp or gain temporary hp); **AL** Unaligned; **CR** 3; **XP** 700. (**Appendix**)



Treasure: Though grisly and macabre, the Omaruri relics are valuable. The totems lose their magical properties after the trap is activated, but they are still worth 100gp each. The wooden totems are heavy and cumbersome. The two wicker oval shields are purely ceremonial and date back more than 600 years. Once held by a legendary king, the shields are worth 250gp each. The weapons resting against the rack are ordinary and impractical. There are fifteen in all worth a total of 150gp based solely upon rarity and historical value rather than usefulness. The assorted items in the chest include votive figures, prayer beads, mysterious dolls and phylacteries. None of the objects is magical, yet as a collection they are worth 1,500gp. The tapestries behind the chest are exquisitely crafted. They are worth 325gp each.

C5: Savvith's Tomb

Ear-piercing screams and prolonged peals of hysterical laughter intermittently echo against the heavy stone walls. The disconcerting shrieks and histrionic display come from a disheveled man chained in a seated position to an alabaster slab. Scraps of rancid food lie on the floor around an empty wooden plate, while small pools of water fill the recesses in the floor around an overturned cup. The man faces in the direction of a large creature with the body of a lion, the wings of a falcon and a woman's torso that lies atop an adjacent alabaster slab. The beast is motionless and also headless. Five

arrows protrude from the creature's body and freshly picked flowers form a perimeter around her body. A magnificent tapestry hanging on the wall depicts ancient Omaruri people conversing with a majestic winged creature with a lion's body and a man's handsome face.

After her death, Chasshagra brought Savvith's body here and cast a *gentle repose* spell upon her to preserve her body in the event that he finds a way to bring her back to life. He repeats the casting every 6 days when the spell is set to expire. A PC that succeeds on a DC 14 Int (Nature) check identifies her as a gynosphinx. Savvith can be restored to life with a *resurrection* spell; however *raise dead* and lesser spells fail because she lacks a head. Even if the PCs have her head with them, it cannot be reattached to a dead creature via *regenerate* and similar magic.

The flowers surrounding her body come from the solarium. The five arrows stuck into her body proved her undoing. All five arrows are *arrows of slaying (monstrosities)* which may prove useful against Chasshagra. The alabaster slab next to Savvith is intended for Chasshagra when he deems it time for him to join her in the afterlife. The tapestry hanging from the wall is worth 600gp.

The man chained to the slab is Ameht Baktar (N human **noble**) As punishment for his crime, Chasshagra chained him to the slab, forcing him to stare at Savvith's dead body to see the consequences of his actions. The spiteful sphinx even forces Ameht to apologize to Savvith every day and beg her forgiveness. After at least a week of captivity and constant shaming, the pampered and confident Ameht is a shell of his former self. He is largely uninjured, at least in a physical sense, though his mind is another matter. Ameht bursts into tears when he first sees the PCs, blubbering about his guilt. The PCs can settle Ameht down and speak with him using magical means, such as a *calm emotions* spell or by succeeding on a DC 18 Cha (Persuasion) check; otherwise he incoherently babbles and wails whenever anyone attempts to communicate with him. In a semi-rational state, Ameht tells the PCs that Game Over accepted his bounty to kill Chasshagra, not Savvith. Several days after meeting with the hunting troupe, the vengeful sphinx assaulted his caravan and carried him away to Chass. He has been imprisoned in this chamber ever since. His captor feeds him and gives him water on an irregular basis. Freeing Ameht from his manacles requires a successful DC 15 Dex check (with thieves' tools if they are available).

Development: This information may prompt the PCs to wait for Chasshagra to appear in the room and ambush him. In this case, the resident sphinx appears in the room 2d4 hours after the PCs' arrival here. However, if the PCs left any indications of their presence in the building, Chasshagra moves through the complex with tremendous caution and may bolster his ranks by casting any available summoning spells, including another attempt to summon more lion beasts of chaos or lionweres using *King of Beasts*. (See the *King of Beasts* entry in **Area C8** for additional details on the book's usage.) In this case, he and his charges split up and enter the room from both sides.

C6: Abandoned Guard Tower

Stone stairs slowly ascend to an elevated landing and a stone spiral staircase that sharply rises to a height of 30 feet and abruptly ends.

In keeping with the building's seemingly haphazard design, the original creators apparently intended to turn this tower into a guard outpost and then inexplicably abandoned the effort. Any attempts to locate secret or concealed doors result in failure.

C7: Scriptorium

Two simple wooden desks with chairs oddly face the walls. One desk is completely empty, while an open book, vial of ink and a quill pen rest atop the other. A strange, large glove with fingerlike appendages also lies upon the desk's surface. A foul-smelling, sealed barrel sits in the near corner, and a series of shelves bolted into the near wall contain sheets of papyrus, vellum and parchment as well as bookbinding materials and leather bound covers.

During Chass' heyday, Omaruri scribes and scholars used this scriptorium to transcribe works from Chasshagra's collection or to pen original manuscripts. On occasion, the brilliant sphinx dictated his thoughts to a waiting scribe who put pen to paper and brought them to life. Since the Omaruri's demise, Chasshagra has been forced to transcribe his materials himself, using the strange glovelike apparatus sitting on the cluttered desk to manipulate and hold a pen in his paw. The item is clever and unique in design, though its limited market appeal reduces its value to a mere 100gp. The desk against the far wall is empty, but the one close to the entrance holds an open book that is partially completed. The book is written in Sphinx and is entitled *The Nature of Man and Failings of Creation*. PCs most likely require magical assistance to actually read its contents. Chasshagra wrote the book over the course of the past 200 years, so it tends to wander and stray from its themes on a frequent basis. The vast majority of the work is scholarly and historical, citing various incidents throughout human history demonstrating man's darker side and evil nature; however the book takes an abrupt turn from its intellectual musings over the course of the last five pages. It becomes a self-serving diatribe sharply criticizing humanity's failings and questioning the necessity of man's continuing existence. Chasshagra strongly condemns civilization's exploitation of nature and beasts, calling for the children of the earth to rise up and overthrow their humanoid oppressors. He focuses on trying to find a justification for killing Savvith, and as predicated, he cannot find any. Other than providing a glimpse into Chasshagra's angry mind, it provides no useful information about the complex or the sphinx's many abilities.

Is Chasshagra Evil?

At some point in the adventure, the PCs are likely to conclude that Chasshagra fell from grace and succumbed to the temptations of evil. On the surface, that assertion appears valid, but Chasshagra is not beyond hope. So far, the ageless sphinx has resisted the evil effects of Nawalapuura's accursed book and would seek forgiveness from the people of Ramaashta if Savvith were to be restored to life. Though Chasshagra seeks to punish Game Over and Ameht Baktar regardless of the collateral damage, he has no plans to raze Ramaashta to the ground or wantonly kill all humans he encounters, despite his protestations in his written works. Chasshagra's acts are more akin to him being chaotic neutral than chaotic evil. In time, it is possible that further usage of *King of Beasts* may sway him to becoming chaotic evil, but for now he is chaotic neutral.

C8: Library (Difficulty Deadly)

There are three lines of numbers etched onto the stone door with a small button recessed into the stone beneath each numeral. The first line contains the numbers 81, 70, 59 and 92. The second line contains the numbers 75, 49, 98 and 21. The third line contains the numbers 43, 97, 70 and 16.

Chasshagra uses this combination lock to protect his treasured library. In order to enter the library without triggering the *glyph of warding* trap, the PC must push the buttons beneath numbers 59, 75 and 97 in no particular order. The combination trap is based upon the number 7. In the first line, when the second digit is subtracted from the first digit, the result is 7 except for 59. In the second line, all of the numbers are divisible by 7 except for 75. In the last line, the sum of both digits added together equals 7 except for 97. Forcing the locked door open or pushing the wrong buttons immediately triggers the trap, setting off explosive runes, inflicting 5d8 points of fire damage (20ft radius sphere, DC 13 Dex save for half damage).

After the PCs open the door, the GM may read or paraphrase the following description.

Stone stairs sharply descend 10 feet before opening into an immense library. Hundreds of books, scrolls and weathered pages rest atop shelves that span the perimeter walls as well as a freestanding bookstand in the middle of the room. An almost equal number of written works lie strewn about the floor along with scraps of torn parchment, papyrus and vellum. A large creature with the body of a lion and majestic birdlike wings reclines atop the central bookstand. Annoyed by the intrusion, the beast looks up to reveal the handsome face of a regal man adorned by a pharaoh's golden raiment. The creature appeared to be deep in study porveying an ancient tome covered in thick fur and secured by a locking mechanism resembling a beast's claw.

Hundreds of books, scrolls and sheets of writing materials line the shelves and floor of this magnificent library. Most of the works are quite ancient, predating the Omaruri's arrival in the Pasha River Delta. Unfortunately, the materials show the obvious signs of age and poor upkeep by the highly intelligent, yet somewhat absent-minded sphinx. A complete inventory of the works could take several weeks or even a few months; however roughly 114 books stand out as being noteworthy with a total value of 3,904gp. Making this determination requires a successful DC 20 Wis (Perception) check or a DC 15 Int (Investigation) check. The works cover a variety of topics, but the majority focuses on obscure philosophical matters. In addition to the tomes, the library contains six *spell scrolls*. They contain the divine spells — *dispel magic*, *glyph of warding*, *magic circle*, *lesser restoration*, *tongues* and *water walk*, all cast at 6th level. In addition to these items, the fur-covered book atop the bookshelf is the dreaded minor artifact *King of Beasts* described in the sidebar.

Triggering the trap on the outer door gives Chasshagra the **androsphinx** an opportunity to prepare for a confrontation. If he is aware of the lion beasts of chaos' death, he may have sufficient downtime to create three more lion beasts of chaos to replace those that the PCs killed. Regardless of whether Chasshagra gets an opportunity to ready for a fight or not, the proud beast appears disturbed by this turn of events. He undoubtedly realizes that the PCs are likely responsible for thwarting his designs for revenge in Ramaashta and traced the plot's origins back to him. Yet, he does not attack the PCs on sight. Instead he asks them about the fate of Game Over. If the PCs killed or captured them, he seems pleased with the outcome though skeptical in the absence of any proof. Presenting Chasshagra with satisfactory evidence of Game Over's demise is sufficient to satiate his appetite for revenge. He is willing to let bygones be bygones and allow the PCs to leave unharmed and also swear off any further plans of revenge against Ramaashta and its residents. If the PCs drive a hard bargain and demand compensation for his actions, Chasshagra is willing to part with all of his treasures except for his beloved library and its contents including *King of Beasts*. The GM should note that good PCs aware of the loathsome book should not accept such a compromise in light of the magical tome's reputation for evil which likely brings them into conflict with Chasshagra.

On the other hand, the haughty sphinx immediately attacks PCs that took no actions against Game Over or who may have even brought one or more of its members with them. Whether he attacks the PCs or not, Chasshagra's main topic of discussion when not otherwise engaged in casting

Minor Artifact: King of Beasts

Nearly all of the original six copies vanished with the demise of the Omaruri civilization except for two that were preserved by others. The evil work is covered in thick black fur, and its corners are shaped into the likeness of beast paws that are used to keep the book closed, though they have no detrimental effects or locking ability other than to tightly close the book's bindings. Dedicated to the Omaruri earth goddess Owomarari, this vile book confers its powers upon its reader at a terrible price. By spilling a drop of chaotic monstrosity blood from a living creature onto one, two or three of the tome's pages and then reading the page's incantations within 1 minute afterward, the reader brings an equal number of monstrosities into being.

It takes the reader 1 minute to read a single page. The created creatures must be a chaotic monstrosity that shares common lineage with the blood's donor. Therefore blood from a creature with leonine heritage could conjure a lionwere or a lion beast of chaos, but it could not create a lupine creature.

Furthermore, the Hit Dice of each individual creature cannot be greater than half the blood donor's Hit Dice; otherwise the attempt fails. The created creatures obey the reader's instructions without question and to the best of their ability based upon their intelligence. The book grants the reader the ability to communicate with the created creatures via a *sending* spell once per day. When the reader uses this ability, it simultaneously affects all created creatures in existence at that time. The reader can have only one group of created creatures in existence at any time; therefore the reader cannot use the book again until all previously created creatures are slain. Each creation attempt, whether successful or not, consumes the pages containing the spilt blood. There are twenty-six pages remaining in the book.

In exchange for its power, the book draws the reader closer to the entropic, dark entity bestowing these powers. Every time a non-chaotic evil creature attempts to create creatures from the tome, that creature's alignment moves one step closer to chaotic evil on a failed Wis save. The save's DC is 10 + 2 for each alignment step between the reader and chaotic evil + 2 for each additional creature beyond the first that the reader is attempting to create and +2 for each prior usage of the book. If the creature succeeds on the Wis save, the spiteful book bursts into black flames burning an additional number of pages equal to the number of creatures created as added incentive for the reader to bend to its will.

DESTRUCTION

King of Beasts can be destroyed only by sprinkling a drop of blood from a living lawful good celestial on each page.

spells or roaring is the supremacy of beasts over men. His tenor during the conversation depends upon his attitude towards the PCs. He engages in a civil discourse with PCs that punished Game Over, while ranting and raving about the subject with PCs that did not. It is impossible to convince Chasshagra that he is wrong and any statements contrary to his opinion cause him to attack the PCs if he has not done so already.

Chasshagra is simultaneously horrified and elated if the PCs present him with Savvith's head. The grisly sight infuriates him, but he also real-

izes that he can now communicate with her departed spirit via *speak with dead*. Chasshagra grills them about their motives for returning it to him. If he judges them to be sincere, he expresses his gratitude. Furthermore, if the PCs restore Savvith to life, he becomes extremely remorseful for his actions and begs forgiveness. In this case, he is even willing to part with *King of Beasts* or aid in its destruction. He also offers Ramaashta and its citizens any assistance that he can provide. PCs that he judges to be insincere feel his full wrath. The outraged sphinx launches into a brief tirade about Savvith's unjustified murder, Ameht's bounty and man's propensity for cruelty before he attacks the person whom he believed slighted Savvith's remains or memory.

Chassahagra, Androsphinx: AC 17; HP 199 (19d10+95); Spd 40ft, fly 60ft; **Melee** claw (+12, 2d10+6 slashing, magical); **SA** roar (3/day, affects all within 500ft, 1st: DC 18 Wis save or frightened for 1 minute, 2nd: DC 18 Wis save or deafened for 1 minute, 3rd: DC 18 Con save or take 8d10 thunder damage, knocked prone, half damage and no knockdown on save), spells (DC 18, Wis +10); **LA** 3/turn: claw attack, teleport (2 actions), cast a spell (3 actions); **Immune** charmed, frightened; psychic damage; bludgeoning, piercing and slashing from nonmagical weapons; **Str** +6, **Dex** +0, **Con** +5, **Int** +3, **Wis** +4, **Cha** +6; **Skills** Arcana +9, Perception +10, Religion +15; **Senses** truesight 120ft, passive Perception 20; **Traits** inscrutable (immune to any spell that reads its thoughts, any divination spell it chooses, Wis (Insight) checks to determine its intentions are at disadvantage), spell casting (DC 18, spell attack +10); **AL** LN; **CR** 17; **XP** 18,000.

Spells (slots): 0 (at will)—*sacred flame, spare the dying thaumaturgy*; 1st (4)—*command, detect evil and good, detect magic*; 2nd (3)—*lesser restoration, zone of truth*; 3rd (3)—*dispel magic, tongues*; 4th (3)—*banishment, freedom of movement*; 5th (2)—*flame strike, greater restoration*; 6th (1)—*heroes' feast*

Equipment: *Suqri's talisman against monumental favor* (See sidebar), golden raiment worth 2,500gp.

Chasshagra refuses to concede defeat and fights to the bitter end, opining that he would rather leave this world and spend eternity with Savvith in the next than bow to the two-legged beasts that trample nature and its wondrous creations underfoot.

Suqri's Talisman Against Monumental Failure

Throughout his lifetime the talisman's namesake, Suqri, constantly bemoaned his terrible luck. When he received his inheritance, Suqri promptly lost it in a rigged dice game. He lived his few remaining years alone and in abject squalor, devoting all of his energies to his poetry. Despite his best efforts, Suqri failed as a poet and died as a young man in total anonymity. A decade after his death, Suqri's book of poetry fell into the right hands, and the man who lived and died in utter obscurity became one of the most beloved and celebrated poets in all the land.

This wooden talisman is shaped in the image of a small book and dangles around the neck from a cotton cord. One of Suqri's verses is always inscribed somewhere on the talisman. Three times per day, whenever the wearer rolls a natural 1 on an attack roll or saving throw, the wearer may elect to reroll that attack or saving throw. This does not stack with other effects that allow the wearer to reroll an attack roll or saving throw. The wearer may make only one reroll and must use its results even if he rolls another natural 1.

C9: Abandoned Guard Tower

Stone stairs slowly ascend to an elevated landing and a stone spiral staircase that sharply rises to a height of 30 feet and abruptly ends.

Like **Area C6**, the original creators apparently intended to turn this tower into a guard outpost and then inexplicably abandoned the effort. Any attempts to locate secret or concealed doors result in failure.

C10: Living Quarters

Wilting flower pedals line the borders of a massive, red, green and white floral print carpet that nearly covers the entire floor. Thick tufts of tan-colored fur are embedded in the carpet's fibers.

Though this spacious chamber technically serves as Chasshagra's living quarters, he rarely spends any time here other than to occasionally nap or give his weary eyes a rest from pouring through his voluminous written works. The decaying flower pedals spread across the carpet's edge came from the flowers in his solarium and were intended for Savvith's enjoyment. Since her death, he has not set foot in this chamber and its adjoining chamber out of inconsolable grief. The chamber's carpet is extremely large, heavy and in poor shape. Prior to his gynosphinx's arrival, Chasshagra dug his sharpened claws into the heavy fabric creating numerous pulls, tugs and holes in the massive textile. PCs that decide to salvage the 1,000 pound carpet get only 500gp for the monumental effort.

C11: Nursery

Though smaller than the adjoining chamber, this oddly shaped room is similarly decorated. Another large gray and red carpet adorned with images of mythical beasts and playful fey creatures covers much of the floor. Dozens of mathematical equations and extremely detailed hieroglyphs are etched onto the stone walls.

It is almost impossible not to share the profound sadness that Chasshagra experienced when first setting eyes upon this painstakingly crafted nursery. Unlike the carpet in the sphinx's living chambers, this less cumbersome wool and silk carpet is in good shape and is worth 500gp. Savvith etched the mathematical equations and riddles onto the wall to amuse her offspring. The mathematical equations etched onto the wall include the calculations to determine the area and size of various geometric shapes. PCs can discern this fact by making a successful DC 15 Int (Investigation) check. The hieroglyphs are written in Sphinx, likely requiring the PCs to use magical means to read and understand them. They are children's riddles interspersed with classic riddles from antiquity.

C12: Omaruri Crypt (Difficulty Medium)

Unlike most doors in this complex, this stone door is stuck requiring a successful DC 19 Str check to break it down.

Four ancient reed boats each hold skeletal remains clad in tattered linens with flecks of color now faded with age. Thick layers of dust and a few strands of straw still cover some of the bones. Two lion-headed mahogany statues holding a spear stand amidst them.

In accordance with Omaruri tradition, four of Chasshagra's long departed friends are laid to rest in the accoutrements of their people near the being they venerated as a living deity. For the better part of the first century after their deaths, their sphinx companion frequently visited and spoke with them using a *Speak with Dead* spell. Several decades after the Omaruri stopped visiting Chass the spiteful Chasshagra reciprocated and never set foot in the crypt again. Since then, the signs of neglect are everywhere. Thick layers of dust, cobwebs and a stagnant odor fill the room.

If the PCs opt to examine the skeletons, they can determine that they are human with a successful DC 10 Int (Nature) check. A check that succeeds by 5 or more reveals that they are the skeletal remain of Omaruri men. If the check succeeded by 10 or more, the PCs' examination reveals no signs of trauma indicating that they likely died from natural causes. Their clothing fell into tatters long ago, but some valuables remain within each of the reed boats that act as coffins. PCs that opt to search the bodies discover an ivory necklace worth 150gp, a bone pendant worth 100gp, a mahogany ring worth 75gp, an amber bracelet worth 50gp and nine gems worth 10gp each with a successful DC 10 Wis (Perception) check. However, disturbing the remains triggers the wrath of the chamber's two guardians.

Any physical contact with the bodies or the contents of their coffin immediately animates the **3 graven guardians** that watch over the crypt. The monsters' Omaruri creators fashioned them in Chasshagra's humanoid likeness, though their powers are based upon their archaic nature deities. The two constructs attack until destroyed.

Graven Guardian (3): AC 15; HP 102 (12d10+36); Spd 40ft; Melee spear x2 (+7, 1d8+4 piercing); **Ranged** spear (+6, range 20/60, 1d6+2 piercing plus returning); **SA** dazzling (on critical hit, DC 12 Con save or target blinded for 1d4 rounds), spells (DC 12), magic weapon (spear treated as +1 while wielded by guardian, if thrown it returns as a bonus action); **Immune** charmed, exhaustion, frightened, paralyzed, poisoned; **Resist** bludgeoning, piercing, slashing damage from nonmagical weapons; **Str** +3, **Dex** +2, **Con** +3, **Int** -1, **Wis** +1, **Cha** -5; **Senses** darkvision 60ft, passive Perception 11; **Traits** faith bond (cannot attack creature that displays symbol of its deity unless first attacked); **AL** N; **CR** 4; **XP** 1,100. (Appendix)
Innate Spells: 3/day—*entangle*

C13: Chasshagra's Tomb

Countless sundry items, scraps of shredded linen, bits of construction material and numerous other objects are strewn about the floor or fall out of two overstuffed wooden chests against the walls. The debris is so dense, that it is nearly 2 feet deep and covers every available space in the room. The chamber's centerpiece is a massive, marble sarcophagus exquisitely crafted in the image of a reclining sphinx. The sealed lid is painstakingly detailed down to ridges in the golden raiment adorning the creature's head.

Contemporaneous with the construction of the Omaruri crypt, Chasshagra built this tomb for himself, but since the Kharitsines' arrival, the solitary sphinx abandoned his original plan and left the tomb and its treasures undisturbed. Most of the objects are useless junk that Chasshagra did not need, so he dumped them here when he forsook his plan to be buried here.

Treasure: Even if the PCs thoroughly scrounge the area, the moldy textiles, chunks of raw materials and ordinary items are worth a grand total of 100gp. However, buried within the chests and piles of garbage are many valuable items. A PC that searches the chests uncovers the following treasures with successful Wis (Perception) checks. Subsequent successful Wis (Perception) checks reveal no additional items.

DC 10: +2 *shield*, a +1 *scimitar*, a suit of elven chain, a *cloak of protection* and a 3-foot high bronze sculpture of a pouncing lion worth 1,500gp.

DC 20: 16 gems worth 100gp each and 3,402gp.

Concluding the Adventure

When all is said and done, Chasshagra either ends the adventure as a dead villain or a flawed character that miraculously found redemption and is bent on atonement. In the end, there is no right or wrong way per se — just choices and consequences. Ridding Chass of its resident sphinx opens the locale for traveling merchants seeking to make use of its fresh water springs for their caravans and its spacious rooms for shelter. The mad dash to claim ownership of Chass is likely to result in tense standoffs at best and prolonged armed conflict at worst between rival business owners. It is possible that the Abaya or the squabbling parties themselves ask the PCs to intervene and negotiate a settlement, though it is equally likely that one of the rival factions ask the PCs to eliminate his competitors. Theoretically the PCs can solve this matter by declaring themselves as the new masters of Chass since they were responsible for evicting its prior tenant and have the strongest claim. The Sultan or the Abaya support the PCs' position if they originally hired them to undertake this mission. If the situation appears poised to spiral out of control, the Abaya or the Sultan steps in and declares Chass to be state property, a resolution that leaves all interested parties unhappy, but powerless to stop it.

In the more unlikely event that Chasshagra survives the adventure, he begrudgingly grants traveling merchants access to his water supplies. More importantly, he extends a heartfelt invitation to Khartous's greatest minds to join him for lively discussions on any topic, though he steers clear of man's role in the world. He also offers Chass' treasures to the families of the lionweres' victims as well as those slain by Nawalapuura. If the PCs or another party restores Savvith to life, the haughty sphinx becomes a driveling mass of gratitude and happiness.

The moral ambiguities surrounding Game Over also leaves their ultimate fate in the balance as well, if they survived the adventure. Caleb and Guadalupe Ansiki remain popular figures in Ramaashta despite their complicity in Ammar's efforts to kill the caravan survivors in cold blood to maintain the group's lofty reputation. Like Chasshagra, they too can atone for their mistakes, though the villagers are unwilling to forgive Ammar and his willing henchman, Gabriel. The PCs must determine whether they face conventional justice or frontier justice.

On the other hand, there are no ethical questions surrounding what to do with Nawalapuura if the PCs did not destroy the bog mummy and her growing legion of minions before setting off for Chass. Upon returning to Ramaashta, Aramses and Sholamara approach the PCs to enlist their aid in defeating the undead monstrosity before the entire village becomes infected with her vile disease.

As a result of their actions, the PCs' reputation in Khartous only increases. If the Abaya or the Sultan were not aware of these heroes, they now take a keen interest in their exploits. In fact, Sultan Faud turns to the PCs in the future for their assistance in defeating Eyegouger, the blue dragon, in the sourcebook's next adventure "My Blue Oasis."

The adventure ends with one enduring mystery — who built Chass and why. Even its resident sphinx does not know the answer to that question, but the PCs may uncover the answer in the next adventure.

Canyons of Arcuri

By Tom Knauss

Canyons of Arcuri is a jungle adventure suitable for four characters of 9th level. It is set in a series of narrow, tree-lined canyons that can be placed near any coastal region. As a wilderness-based adventure, the characters have a wide variety of choices to make, many of which can get them into a great deal of danger.

GM Background

The warrior-king Del'Mashon, a worshipper of the demon god Tsathogga, devoted himself to acquiring ancient relics to further his god's power. In his fervor, Del'Mashon ordered holy relics of other temples brought to him, and demanded that all priests and worshippers of "unworthy" gods be slain. Del'Mashon's three daughters, secret converts to Arden, an ancient god of the sun, led a small number of Arden's faithful away from their father's executioners to safety, guiding them out of the city through secret escape routes known only to the royal family. Their plan was to find a group of Arden's faithful in a temple built deep within a narrow jungle-filled canyon. When Del'Mashon discovered this betrayal, he ordered the fleeing worshippers, including his daughters, put to the sword. Arden's temple was burned, and riders were dispatched to hunt down and slaughter the escaping worshippers.

Arden's faithful suffered many casualties on the arduous journey, leading many to despair and question their faith. But even through their hardships, the sun god directed his faithful to safety through dreams and visions. Following these dreams, Arden's faithful discovered a series of jungle-filled canyons that eventually led to a door fused with an iron-streaked rock wall. The door opened into a forgotten vault dedicated to Arden. The priests hid, nourished through *create food and water* spells that created fruits and vegetables and fresh water, and uplifted with ancient texts praising their god. For a while the worshippers thought themselves safe, but it wasn't long before the thunderous rumblings of horses reverberated through the canyon walls. The riders had found the faithful.

The faithful were put to a final test as the riders galloped closer. Many fell to their knees weeping, while others prayed for Arden's mercy. Arden heard their cries, and hid the door behind illusions. The riders thundered past, riding down the long canyon in search of prey that cowered nearby.

Arcuri, the eldest daughter of Del'Mashon, could not believe the riders would be allowed to pass without some sort of vengeance being exacted. Her anger splintered the faithful, causing many to turn away from the woman whose heart was so overflowing with anger. Some say Tsathogga took advantage of her ire, promising her power to destroy her enemies — if she sacrificed those in the vault with her. Arcuri fought the malevolent urgings, but her desire to destroy the riders led to her doom. When the rumbling of the riders returning shook the canyon walls, she gave in to the whispered voices urging her to evil. Giving in to the offered temptations, Arcuri allowed Tsathogga's dark forces to infuse her with demonic power. She was her father's daughter after all.

The transformed Arcuri initiated an orgy of death that allowed her to summon a demon for each of Arden's faithful that she destroyed. With each new sacrifice, a demon appeared in the jungle, bent on slaying the overmatched riders. Trapped in the sealed vault with her, only a handful of Arden's priests escaped Arcuri's initial wrath. Before Arcuri could kill them all and leave to wreak terror on the world, however, the surviving followers of Arden concocted a desperate plan to trap her here. Knowing she could never be allowed into the world, the worshippers pooled their remaining powers to enchant the vault around her, forming a spiritual cage to hold her. The worshippers knew they would be trapped with the newly

spawned demonic knight, but they freely sacrificed themselves to keep her from opening the vault's door. Denied escape, Arcuri came for them in a bloodlust that knew no bounds. But even as she slew her former brethren, she found she could not escape their trap. The door to the vault sealed and a magical current flowed through the walls to prevent Arcuri from simply teleporting away. As a final insult, the demon lord who created her abandoned the demonic knight, leaving Arcuri utterly alone among the dead.

The demons loosed on the valley utterly destroyed the riders sent to retrieve the worshippers, and the jungle-filled canyons became a deadly home to their many foul, tainted offspring. In time, many demons returned to their own plane, some left for other parts of the world, while others fell upon their own kind out of sheer boredom. Arcuri, however, remains in the vault. Her anger burns as fiercely as the day she was trapped.

Adventure Hooks

The characters can become involved in a number of ways, some involving the simple desire for treasure, and others as a struggle for good.

- Stranded in Storm Haven by a storm-damaged ship, the characters might decide to investigate rumors of gold and diamonds in the canyons.
- The characters are recruited or interested in Javialt's tale of lost relics and a lost vault.
- A lone priest of Arden, a faith almost completely lost to the world, asks the characters to seek out Javialt and help him recover relics and religious items that might rekindle the religion.
- The characters are hired bounty hunters seeking the "Dogs of Orcus" and come to Storm Haven hot on their trail.

Running the Adventure

As a site-based wilderness adventure, the characters are able to explore vast canyons as they search for treasure, the vault, or even the Dogs of Orcus. Actually opening the vault, which contains the deadly, bloodthirsty death knight Arcuri, requires recovering a "lost" key presently in the possession of bugbears who have no idea what its real purpose might be.

During their travels, the characters have ample opportunity to negotiate or fight with a variety of creatures. Diplomatic characters might assist some warring factions in finding a peaceful solution to their problems. Whatever tactics they use, the characters are certain to be attacked by the Dogs of Orcus, who don't want any outsiders interfering with their plans.

While the vault of Arden and the relics within are a major part of the adventure, the GM should not force the characters down any particular path. If the characters prevent the Dogs of Orcus from opening the vault, this too should be considered a success. In fact, stopping Arcuri by any means is a win for the characters.

For the GM

This adventure can be placed near any coastal region possessing a few mountains or steep hills to house the canyons. If you are running this adventure in the *Lost Lands* setting of **Frog God Games**, Storm Haven lies on the southeastern coast of the continent of Libynos, south of the Seething Jungle on the Reaping Sea. The main canyon is slightly wider (600ft) along the main branch of the Goltray River that runs through it. The river

itself widens to 300ft at its widest. Tributaries feeding the main river are considerably narrower, with the towering walls often no more than 40ft apart and barely a trickle of water running down their center.

Umbrella-shaped canopies of 150ft trees block the narrow paths sheltered by 500ft-tall cliffs. Vines hang from the treetops, dropping to a secondary canopy layer composed of 60ft to 80ft tall trees, completely blocking sunlight and trapping moisture for a constant humidity. Near the rivers and openings in the canopy, palm shrubs and bamboo palms thrive. Most of the jungle floor is left in complete darkness, leaving the cliff walls virtually invisible to anyone beneath the canopy. Within the canyons, it is twilight during the day, and completely dark at the night.

Storm Haven grew as a port east of the canyons many years after they were explored. The GM is welcome to substitute any port town. Settlers named the canyons based on the words “Beware Arcuri” found gouged into a rock wall near the entrance to the canyons. Rumors say an ancient priest carved the words after looking down the canyon mouth and declaring, “Evil lives here.”

Storm Haven

The village of Storm Haven is a port on a river delta fed by the Goltray River. While not a major trade stop, frequent storms along the coast force many ships headed to Bargarsport or Chologadi into port to seek shelter or repairs. Storm Haven is sheltered from the high waves of the ocean by an offshore coral reef, and is usually home to 15-30 ships that ply the dangerous waters.

Storm Haven is a village where no one cares what you did in life, just what you can do to help the village. The community values fishing, net mending and ship repair, and some of the best at these skills hang signs on pier-front businesses. Men wander the decks when new ships arrive, offering to unload a current catch or seeking work on the voyage out. A handful of arrivals seek riches, and legends of diamonds as big as a fist in the canyons are common. Most treasure seekers, however, fail to return.

Piers extend throughout Storm Haven, with the biggest along the seafront to anchor merchant vessels. Other piers along the delta entrances allow smaller vessels to moor safely inland. The village can moor 60 ships.

Throughout town, 20ft wooden spikes rise from buildings and jut up from the streets. Villagers erected the spikes after a roc snatched a small boat and dropped it on the inn. The spikes and ballistae around town prevent the giant birds from snatching away sailors, cattle and other small boats.

Two miles to the west of the city, the mineral-rich cliffs of the Canyons of Arcuri soar 500ft in the air. The Goltray River, also called the River of Veins because of its many forks and the heavy mix of clay and silt that turn the waters a muddy red, emerges from a narrow break in the mighty wall before traveling two miles east to Storm Haven. Streaks of iron show along the cliff walls.

The Hollow Spire Mountains rise out of the jungle to the North and West, forming a wall of twisting peaks.

Storm Haven

Roc-plagued village at the mouth of a jungle-filled canyon on the edge of a storm-wracked sea.

CN Village

Government autocracy

Population 600

Notable NPCs

Mayor Anton Sidhall (CN male human **Ftr8**)

Harbormaster Benvallat (N human male **courtier**)

Javialt, Scribe (CG human male **priest**)

Jek, Owner of the Low Point (CG male dwarf **veteran**)

Town guards: **Ftr4** (x5), **Rog4** (x4), **Ftr2** (x10), human **guards** (x15)

Keyed Areas in Storm Haven

A few other shops — all dealing with fishing in some regard — sit along Storm Haven’s main docks, placards hanging out front advertising their trade. Consult the following keyed areas for locations within Storm Haven:

A. The Wayward Sail

The Wayward Sail sits in the center of Storm Haven, just up from the main docks. It is easy to see from the piers, as it is the only two-story structures within the village. Atop the structure, a 20ft boat sits angled through a section of the roof. The boat was dropped by an enraged roc after the villagers fired a ballista at the creature. The owner couldn’t decide how to get the boat down, so it stayed and became a focal point for the Wayward Sail.

The Wayward Sail, or “The Sail” as residents call it, is a tavern, an inn, and a meeting hall. In times of trouble, it also serves as a hospital and shelter. Mayor Sidhall (CN male human **Ftr8**) built the structure of stone cut from the iron-rich walls of the canyons, and claims the Sail can withstand even the hurricane-force winds of the Reaping Sea. The Wayward Sail is home to the mayor and his grown children, Keleen (N human female **Sor3**) and Stavron (CN human male **Ftr4**). The village’s sailors often stop at the small tavern to relax whenever they arrive in port.

The Wayward Sail’s small tavern serves simple beer and ale, and Mayor Sidhall himself often cooks the meals requested by the occasional visitor. The sailors who frequent the place are more interested in the liquors than the food, however, so Sidhall doesn’t have to step behind the stove often. A good thing, too, as his cooking leaves something to be desired. Food and drink are fairly priced (2cp for a cup, 5cp for a meal). A single staircase from the tavern rises to the second floor.

The six rooms currently for rent are 10ft-by-15ft spaces located on the second floor. Each room is furnished with a bed, a desk and a window that opens onto the shingled roof of the inn. The six rooms are all that remain of the second floor; the rest lie crushed beneath the boat dropped on the inn. A room costs 5sp per night, although Javialt (human male **priest**) secured his room for the month for 12gp paid in advance, and others can probably negotiate as well.

B. Haar’s Net Mending

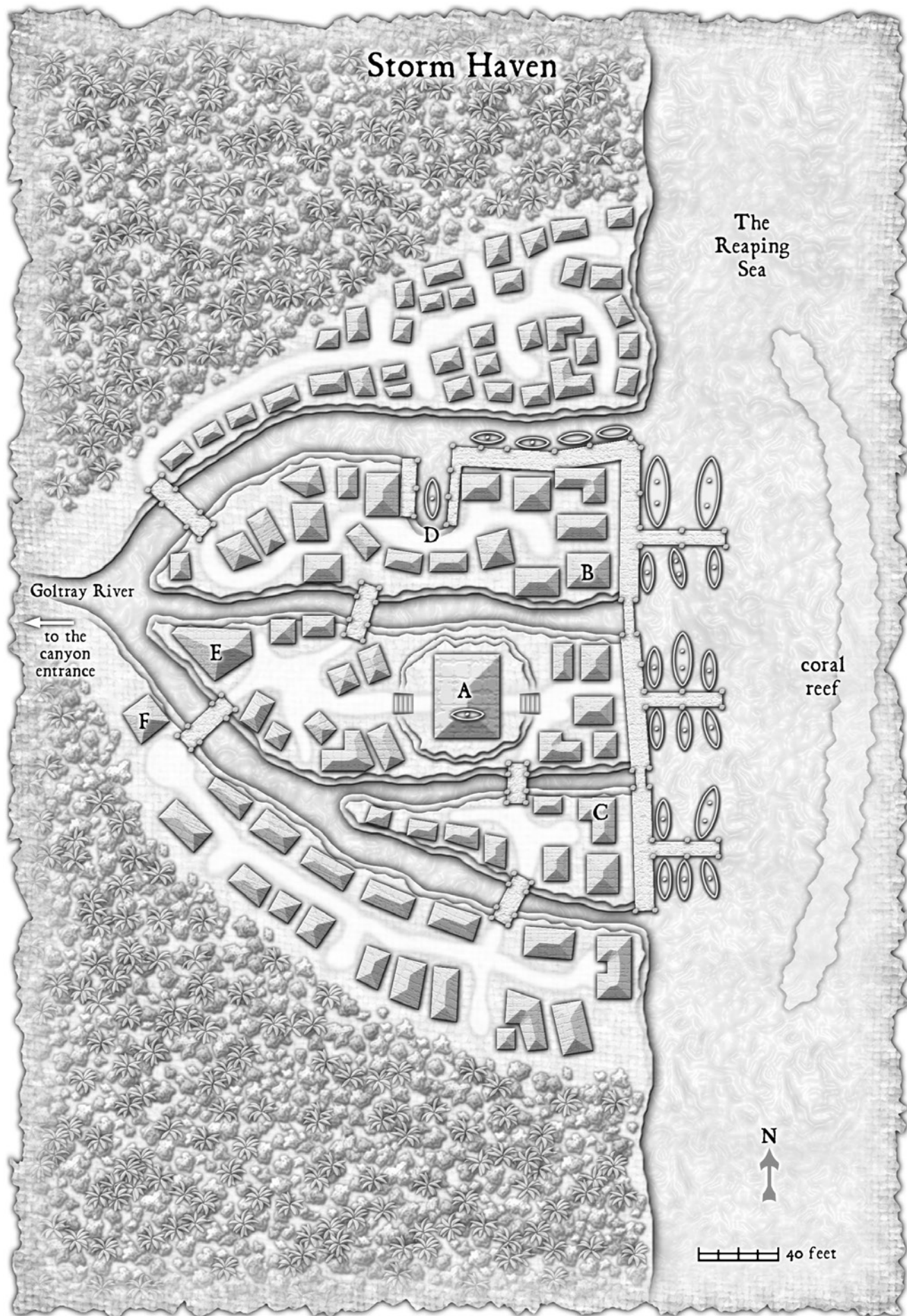
Basht Haar’s (N human male **Ftr5**) shop is a ramshackle collection of shipping tools, supplies, and odds and ends. Despite its name, he does much more than mend nets for the fishermen of the village. Haar is also a skilled carpenter and helps repair boats when he can. He often shares jobs with the harbormaster Benvallat (N human male **courtier**). Haar also sells and purchases equipment, but most of his wares sport a nautical theme. The few swords he has all have fish carved into the handles or engraved along the blade. Compasses and similar equipment usually have mermaids or other sea creatures adorning them. Haar likes to haggle for his wares and usually starts his prices around 1-1/2 times their worth.

C. Corielle’s Fish Market

The matron Corielle Amn (NG human female **commoner**) sells various fish in an open-air market along the dockfront. Agreements with most of the captains provide her with the best catches. She also has a contract with Mayor Sidhall to provide fish for the Wayward Sail’s larders now that Sidhall no longer plies the waves. Her prices vary according to the quality of the latest catch.

D. Lushar and Sons Boat Repair

Tenvo Lushar and his sons, Mald and Edas (all three, NG male **commoners**), repair ships damaged at sea. Their shop rests on the waterfront, where they have elaborate blocks and tackles to pull smaller boats out of the water to work on them. Larger boats are taken into an enlarged delta



tributary and braced before being worked on. The three can repair even the most heavily damaged craft, although their fees are exorbitant (200gp for a simple patch to 2000gp or more to repair a damaged hull). Fortunately for Storm Haven, they accept trade, and many captains owe the Lushars for their “generosity.”

E. The Low Point

A gambling hall, the Low Point is run by the free-spirited Jek (CG male dwarf **Ftr5**) and his bouncer, Mog (CN male half-orc **Bbn6**). Jek welcomes all-comers to his establishment, hoping to provide them a little entertainment while lightening their coin purses. Mog makes sure things don’t get out of hand. The name of the gambling den was coined by sailors who said they’d have to be at a “low point” to get conned by a dwarf. Still, many enter and lay down their money for a little entertainment.

Javialt’s Request

Javialt is a new addition to Storm Haven, having ridden out the dangers of the Reaping Sea to visit the village. He’s come into town with the shirt on his back and information in his head, all in the hope of finding the lost vault of Arden.

Javialt has posted numerous fliers about the village asking adventurers to meet him at the Wayward Sail. The fliers direct anyone interested in an expedition into the Canyons of Arcuri to seek him out at his second-floor room. Manuscripts in his possession detail a vault where Arden’s followers hid from riders bent on slaughtering them. The scrolls also describe a key to the vault lost somewhere in the valley. Javialt hopes he can either find the key, or find some other way to open the vault. Javialt only reveals the existence of the key to a party he trusts enough to hire for the expedition.

He believes that the vault contains holy relics and the bones of the deceased. He can give reasonable directions to where the vault is supposed to be, but he knows virtually nothing about where the key might be found. Claiming to be too infirm for the journey, he hopes to convince someone to recover the bones and relics so that he can give the bones a proper rest, and study the relics and history of Arden’s faith. In the back of his mind, Javialt is hoping that the discovery of Arden’s relics might rekindle faith in a god of good that has faded to almost nothing. Javialt gives characters he trusts information as well as promising 1000gp to the party for the right to study the artifacts once they are recovered.

The Dogs of Orcus

One other group in Storm Haven is also very interested in Javialt’s claims of a hidden vault within the canyons. The necromancer Sverge and his dwarven co-hort Howlbast were one step away from being hanged for animating corpses. They fled in the night with the help of Brar Unger and Hoek as soldiers came for them, and have stayed one step ahead of soldiers ever since. Once they reached Storm Haven, the pair hired Delmyr and Otato! to watch their backs. Several people around town suspect that the group is wanted, but the general mood of Storm Haven is that if you aren’t wanted here, and aren’t hurting anyone here, you should be left alone as well.

They arrived a week before Javialt and have been listening to the scholar’s ramblings ever since, with Sverge and Howlbast researching some of the claims of “holy relics” on their own. They’ve finally decided that the scholar is onto something, and intend to find the relics. As a bonus, Howlbast believes the vault of Arden would make a fitting shrine to Orcus. Two days ago, Howlbast and Sverge met with Javialt to glean whatever remaining information they could from the talkative scholar. They’ve since decided to head into the canyon.

Rumors

The people of Storm Haven have heard many legends and rumors, most from those lucky enough to return from the canyons. The characters can gather various bits of information through role-playing conversations in the Wayward Sail or with the NPCs who live and work around the port town. While many of the rumors are indeed false, some are at least partly true. Use the following rumors to provide information to the characters:

DC	Rumor
DC 10	Arcuri is a fabulous beast with two heads, a tail and claws! (False)
DC 10	There are some dangerous types running around these days. I saw an ugly dwarf with an ogre wandering through town the other day. (Partially true)
DC 10	Demons boil forth from the canyon mouth when the moon is full. (False)
DC 10	The rocs avoid you if you don’t bother them. (False)
DC 10	Javialt is trying to get people to search for relics in the canyons. (True)
DC 15	Arcuri visits the town occasionally — to drink the blood of our innocent! She comes in the night and vanishes when the sun rises. (False)
DC 15	Be wary traveling the river by boat. A group of miners went in on boats once, and all that came back were shattered pieces of wood floating on the river. The wood was scratched and broken. (True)
DC 15	Giants occasionally wander out of the canyons. They don’t come near town, probably because of how well armed we are, but I think a tribe of them lives in the canyons. (Partly true)
DC 15	There’s a new dam in the canyon, and the scaly folk that live there don’t take kindly to strangers. (True)
DC 15	A dragon lives deep in the canyons, red and as large as a boat! I saw it fly out of the trees once, roaring fire into the sky as it passed. (Partly true)
DC 20	I saw an elf get turned into glass. She was standing by a lake, and then she was nothing but amber. I didn’t get any closer. (Partly true)
DC 20	Arcuri ain’t nothing but a legend. Sure, she was the daughter of a warlord or something up north, but that’s all. (Mostly true)
DC 20	A small tree village is hidden in the canyons. (True)

Events

While random encounters within the canyons can help make life very interesting, a few events are provided here to help spark things when they are needed. Aside from Events 2 and 7, these events are only to be used at the GM's option, and are not required for game play. The GM should feel free to add or alter events depending upon the characters' abilities, plans, and reactions. The events are not listed in any particular order and can be used at the GM's discretion.

Event 1: The Robbery

Before the characters leave for the canyons, Pok (NE male human **Ftr4**) and Enala Madas (NE female half-elf **Rog4**) rob Javialt while he is downstairs eating dinner in the Wayward Sail. Javialt interrupts the thieves but they get away with several books and papers. While nothing of real importance is taken, Javialt's problem is that he can describe Pok and Enala. The husband and wife team decide to come back in the middle of the night and kill Javialt to prevent him from getting them run out of town.

Enala Madas, Female Half-Elf Rog4: AC 16; HP 21 (4d8); Spd 30ft; **Melee** rapier (+6, 1d8+4 piercing); **Ranged** shortbow (+6, 80ft/320ft, 1d6+4 piercing), throwing dagger (+6, 20ft/60ft, 1d4+4 piercing); **SA** cunning action (bonus for dash, disengage, or hide), fast hands, sneak attack (+2d6); **Str** -1, **Dex** +4 (+6), **Con** +0, **Int** +2 (+4), **Wis** +1, **Cha** +3; **Skills** Acrobatics +6, Deception +5, Investigation +4, Nature +4, Perception +3, Persuasion +5, Sleight of Hand +6, Stealth +8; **Senses** darkvision 60ft; **Traits** expertise (thieves' tools, Stealth); **AL** NE; **CR** 1; **XP** 200.

Equipment: studded leather armor, rapier, shortbow, 20 arrows, 5 throwing daggers, *potion of healing* (x2), thieves' tools, coin pouch (2d4pp, 5d6gp, 5d10sp, 3d12cp)

Pok Madas, Male Human Ftr4: AC 18; HP 36 (4d10+8); Spd 30ft; **Melee** longsword (+6, 1d8+6 slashing); **Ranged** handaxe (+6, 20ft/60ft, 1d6+4 slashing); **SA** action surge (recharge on rest, extra action), second wind (recharge on rest, bonus, heal 1d10+4); **Str** +4 (+6), **Dex** +0, **Con** +2 (+4), **Int** +0, **Wis** +1, **Cha** +2; **Skills** Athletics +6, Insight +3, Intimidation +4, Survival +3; **Traits** dueling style (+2 on 1-H damage), improved critical (critical on roll of 19 or 20); **AL** NE; **CR** 1; **XP** 200.

Equipment: chain mail, shield, longsword, 2 handaxes, *potion of healing* (x2)

Tactics: Pok and Enala hoped to work their way into the Dogs of Orcus by conveniently coming across some new information and bringing it out to the canyons for Sverge and Howlbast. They know little about the Dogs of Orcus, only that their friend Delmyr claims that becoming a member is a swift route to wealth and fame, something both desire. They try to sneak back into Javialt's room a little after midnight to "finish the old man." If they run into a large party, they run away and attempt to head for the canyons in hopes the Dogs of Orcus might protect them (they won't).

Event 2: Rear Guard

Hoek (CE male half-orc **Ftr4/Rog4**) and the ranger Brar Unger (NE male drow **Rgr8**) went ahead of the rest of the Dogs of Orcus to secure the entrance to the canyons. After the main group passes into the canyons, they then serve as a rear guard. The pair camp in the trees near the canyon's mouth and watch for anyone traveling upriver or along the paths on the sides of the canyon. If they see anyone approaching, they attack using ranged weapons before fleeing into the jungle. If they escape, they attempt to ambush the characters at every opportunity. Hoek's favorite technique is to get ahead of the characters and use his roc call, a special

wooden whistle designed to make the sound of an injured roc as soon as the characters come into a clearing. If the characters are overly powerful, the pair flees as far away from them as possible.

Brar Unger, Male Half-Orc Rog4/Ftr4: AC 19 or 17 without shield; HP 67 (4d8+12 plus 4d10+12); Spd 30ft; **Melee** rapier (+8, 1d8+5 piercing); **Ranged** longbow (+10, 1d8+5 piercing); **SA** action surge (recharge after rest, bonus, extra action), cunning action (bonus to take dash, disengage, or hide), second wind (recharge after rest, bonus, heal 1d10+4); **Str** +2, **Dex** +5, **Con** +3, **Int** -1, **Wis** +1, **Cha** +0; **Skills** Acrobatics +8, Athletics +8, Deception +3, Intimidation +3, Perception +4, Sleight of Hand +8, Stealth +11, Survival +4; **Senses** darkvision 60ft; **Traits** archery (+2 attack bonus with ranged), assassinate (tactical advantage on target that hasn't had turn, critical hit on surprised), expertise (Athletics, Stealth), improved critical (natural 19-20), sneak attack (+2d6 if tactical advantage or ally is within 5ft of target); **AL** CE; **CR** 3; **XP** 700.

Equipment: studded leather armor, shield, rapier, longbow, 40 arrows, thieves' tools, backpack, 50ft silk rope.

Hoek, Male Drow Rgr8: AC 16; HP 48 (8d10); Spd 30ft; **Melee** shortsword (+7, 1d6+4 piercing); **Ranged** longbow (+7, 1d8+4 piercing); **SA** extra attack (shortsword x2 or longbow x2), innate spells (Cha, DC 13), spells (Wis +6, DC 14); two-weapon fighting (bonus, extra shortsword); **Str** -1, **Dex** +4, **Con** +0, **Int** +1, **Wis** +3, **Cha** +2; **Skills** Insight +6, Investigation +3, Perception +6, Stealth +7, Survival +6; **Senses** darkvision 120ft; **Traits** colossus slayer (1/turn, extra 1d8 on wounded), favored enemy (human, elf, halfling), land's stride (normal difficult terrain costs no extra move), multiattack defense (after 1st strike, +4 AC on subsequent attacks for the turn), natural explorer (Under Realms, forest), primeval awareness, sunlight sensitivity; **AL** NE; **CR** 3; **XP** 700.

Innate Spells: at will—*dancing lights*; 1/day—*darkness*, *faerie fire*.

Spells (slots): 1st (4)—*cure wounds*, *ensnaring strike*, *hunter's mark*; 2nd (3)—*cordon of arrow*, *silence*.

Equipment: studded leather armor, 2 short swords, longbow, 20 arrows, wooden "roc call" whistle.

Event 3: The Jovial Halfling

An halfling strolls down a path near the river, skipping rocks across the flat water. The halfling is actually a **doppelganger** pretending to be a halfling, and appears to be oblivious to the presence of the characters until approached. Acting startled, Barnikoal feigns happiness to see visitors and introduces himself as a wandering guide for hire. Claiming he has scoured the entire canyon in search of trinkets and baubles, he says that all he has found are old damp ruins and dusty tunnels. If asked about Sverge and Howlbast, he claims he saw them upriver. They didn't look friendly, so he didn't approach. He says he once saw a door upriver, but cannot remember exactly where. He offers to guide characters for a small fee to the many wonderful sights throughout the beautiful canyons. He accepts any amount offered.

Barnikoal, Doppelganger (Halfling): AC 15; HP 52 (8d8+16); Spd 30ft; **Melee** slam (+6, 1d6+4 bludgeoning, true form only) or shortsword (+6, 1d6+4 piercing); **Ranged** shortbow (+6, 80ft/320ft, 1d6+4 piercing); **SA** multiattack (slam x2 or shortsword x2 or shortbow x2), read thoughts 60ft, surprise attack (extra 3d6); **Immune** charm; **Str** +0, **Dex** +4, **Con** +2, **Int** +0, **Wis** +1, **Cha** +2; **Skills** Deception +6, Insight +3; **Senses** darkvision 60ft; **Traits** ambusher (tactical advantage on attack with surprise); **AL** N; **CR** 3; **XP** 700.

Equipment: leather armor, shortsword, shortbow, 20 arrows, *potion of healing* (x2), belt pouch with 28gp.

CANYONS OF ARCURI

Tactics: Barnikoal attempts to lead characters into danger at every opportunity. His plan is to catch the characters at a disadvantage and finish off anyone left after a battle goes badly. He knows the layout of the canyons and the perils therein. Barnikoal is mainly bored with his solitary life and relishes the challenge of directing others into peril. He gladly relieves the characters of any treasure he deems useful if the opportunity presents itself. He plays up the part of a mischievous but innocent halfling thief. He conveniently gets lost and turned around while apologizing for placing the characters in any treacherous situations.

Event 4: The Chimera

A **chimera** making its home in the jungle notices the characters inside its hunting territory. It watches them for a few minutes before deciding how best to attack, and then rushes into battle in an effort to turn the characters into its next meal. Hidden inside the chimera's lair in the bolls of a tree are some old holy symbols of Arden as well as a moldy old journal in an oiled leather bag. While most of the journal is beyond legibility, a few notes in different places describe "trapping the demon" and mention "the key is hidden where the hollow man's staff leads the way."

Chimera (Green Dragon Head): AC 14; HP 114; Spd 30ft, fly 60ft; Melee bite (+7, 2d6+4 piercing), horns (+7, 1d12+4 bludgeoning), claws (+7, 2d6+4 slashing); **SA** poison breath (recharge 5–6, 15ft cone, 7d8 poison, DC 15 Con half), multiattack (bite, horns, claws; fire breath can replace bite or horns); **Str** +4, **Dex** +0, **Con** +4, **Int** –4, **Wis** +2, **Cha** +0; **Skills** Perception +8; **Senses** darkvision 60ft; **AL** CE; **CR** 6; **XP** 2300.

Event 5: A Falling Bulette

While traveling near the canyon wall, one of the many **bulettes** living off the rich minerals found in the canyon walls breaks through the stone about 20ft above the characters. This particular bulette locates prey and then tunnels through the inside of the cavern wall to come out above them so that it can leap down onto the characters and attack.

Bulette: AC 17; HP 94 (9d10+45); Spd 40ft, burrow 40ft; Melee bite (+7, 4d12+4 piercing); **SA** deadly leap (jump at least 15ft into space of one or more; 3d6+4 bludgeoning plus 3d6+4 slashing and knocked prone, DC 16 Str or Dex half and pushed 5ft); **Str** +4, **Dex** +0; **Con** +5, **Int** –4, **Wis** +0, **Cha** –3; **Skills** Perception +6; **Senses** darkvision 60ft, tremorsense 60ft; **Traits** standing leap (long 30ft, high 15ft); **AL** U; **CR** 5; **XP** 1800.

Treasure: The tunnel left by the bulette conveniently reveals a vein of gold in the wall. The rich vein is rather small, but a skilled miner using the proper tools can extract 850gp worth of gold ore over a period of 3 days. Of course, this requires a character to climb 20ft up the rough stonewall to look into the tunnel just to have a chance of seeing vein of ore, DC 15 Wis (Perception) check.

Event 6: Knights of the Wasp

The characters encounter a group of **elite hobgoblin scouts** searching for a new home for their tribe. Riding massive **giant wasps** raised specifically to be mounts, the hobgoblins attack any armed party they see for several purposes. First, they want to know how powerful other residents of the canyons might be. Second, they want to capture someone that can tell them more about the canyons.

The tribe recently moved to the hills and mountains surrounding the canyons and have found the rocs and giants of the area simply too difficult to deal with and now seek to move into the canyons.

Verbin, Male Hobgoblin Elite Captain: AC 18; HP 52 (8d8+16); Spd 30ft; Melee greatsword (+5, 2d6+3 piercing); **Ranged** javelin (+5, 30ft/120ft, 1d6+2 piercing); **SA** martial advan-

tage (1/turn, extra 2d6 to target within 5ft of ally), multi-attack (greatsword x2), leadership (recharge after rest, 1 min, 30ft to hear and understand, add d4 to hobgoblin attack or save); **Str** +3, **Dex** +2, **Con** +2, **Int** +1, **Wis** +0, **Cha** +1; **Senses** darkvision 60ft; **AL** LE; **CR** 3; **XP** 700.

Equipment: plate armor, greatsword, 2 javelins, *potion of healing* (x2).

Bardkel, Male Hobgoblin Shaman: AC 16; HP 27 (5d8+5); Spd 30ft; Melee flail (+3, 1d8+1 bludgeoning); **Ranged** longbow (+3, 150ft/600ft, 1d8+1 piercing); **SA** martial advantage (1/turn, extra 2d6 to a target within 5ft of ally), spells (Wis +5, DC 13), touch of death (bonus, expend spell slot to extra 3d6 necrotic with melee, increase by 1d6 for each level above 1st); **Str** +1, **Dex** +1, **Con** +1, **Int** +1, **Wis** +3, **Cha** +1; **Skills** Medicine +7, Persuasion +3, Religion +4; **Senses** darkvision 60ft; **AL** LE; **CR** 2; **XP** 450.

Spells (slots): 0 (at will)—*resistance, sacred flame, thaumaturgy*; 1st (4)—*bane, inflict wounds, protection from evil and good*; 2nd (3)—*hold person, silence, spiritual weapon*; 3rd (2)—*bestow curse, spirit guardians*.

Equipment: chain mail, flail, longbow, 20 arrows, *potion of healing* (x3).

Hobgoblin Elite (12): AC 16; HP 16 (3d8+3); Spd 30ft; Melee lance (+3, 10ft, 1d12+1 piercing), longsword (+3, 1d10+1 slashing); **Ranged** longbow (+3, 150ft/600ft, 1d8+1 piercing); **SA** martial advantage (1/turn, extra 2d6 to a target within 5ft of ally); **Str** +1, **Dex** +1, **Con** +1, **Int** +1, **Wis** +0, **Cha** –1; **Senses** darkvision 60ft; **AL** LE; **CR** 1/2; **XP** 100.

Equipment: chain mail, lance, longsword, longbow, 20 arrows.

Wasp, Giant (14): AC 12; HP 13 (3d8); Spd 10ft, fly 50ft; Melee sting (+4, 1d6+2 piercing plus 3d6 poison, DC 11 Con half, at 0hp stable but paralyzed); **Str** +0, **Dex** +2, **Con** +0, **Int** –5, **Wis** +0, **Cha** –4; **AL** U; **CR** 1/2; **XP** 100.

Tactics: The hobgoblins are cautious, but aggressive. They do their best to use the advantage of the flying wasps to make their attacks if pushed into battle. If clearly outmatched in a fight, the hobgoblins flee or even surrender. Their primary goal is to learn more about the canyons, so Bardkel might negotiate for information, though he has little to offer himself.

Event 7: The Dogs of Orcus

This event would normally be saved for the end of the adventure near the actual entrance to the Vault (area 12), but the characters might come upon the Dogs of Orcus much earlier in the canyons, especially if they use all of their magical abilities and are adept at tracking. Use of this event is up to the GM. If the characters' goal is the capture of the Dogs of Orcus, they may be using all of their abilities to track them down. On the other hand, if the goal is to discover the Vault of Arcuri, it is most likely that they encounter the Dogs of Orcus at area 12 or somewhere nearby. The Dogs of Orcus are cautious, and have almost certainly been warned of another party of adventures by Hoek and Brar Ungar (see **Event 2**), who may also be with them if they have successfully fled the characters. They do their best to maintain a careful watch to help them prepare for battle if required.

This should be one of the toughest battles in the jungle. If the characters are caught by surprise or not properly prepared, it could be quite deadly. Rewards for the capture or slaying of Sverge and Howlbast should be determined by the GM and should be appropriate to the resources spent by the characters as well as appropriate to the GM's campaign world.

Howlbast, Male Hill Dwarf Ftr5/Clr5 (Orcus): AC 19; HP 90 (5d10+15 plus 5d8+15); Spd 25ft; Melee +1 warhammer (+8, 1d10+4 bludgeoning); **SA** action surge, extra attack (warhammer x2), second wind, spells (Wis +7, DC 14), touch of death; **Resist** poison; **Str** +3 (+7), **Dex** +0, **Con** +2 (+6), **Int** +0, **Wis** +3, **Cha** +0; **Skills** Athletics +6, Perception



+6; **Senses** darkvision 60ft; **Traits** dwarven resilience, dwarven toughness, improved critical, great weapon fighting; **AL** CE; **CR** 5; **XP** 1800.

Spells (slots): 0 (at will)—*chill touch, guidance, resistance, thaumaturgy*; 1st (4)—*bane, bless, false life, inflict wounds, ray of sickness*; 2nd (3)—*blindness/deafness, hold person, ray of enfeeblement, spiritual weapon*; 3rd (2)—*animate dead, bestow curse, dispel magic, spirit guardians, vampiric touch*.

Equipment: +1 plate armor, +1 warhammer, *potion of healing, holy symbol of Orcus*.

Description: The leader of the Dogs of Orcus, Howlbast is a dour dwarf with a long mustache that falls in braids from his face. He has no beard. He desperately wants to establish a shrine to his master, but recent run-ins with the law have stalled his efforts. Howlbast wears dark gray plate armor trimmed with polished bone.

Sverge, Male Half-Elf Necromancer Wiz9: **AC** 16 (19 with mage armor); **HP** 38 (9d6); **Spd** 30ft; **SA** spells (Int +9, DC 17); **Str** +0, **Dex** +3, **Con** +0, **Int** +5 (+9), **Wis** +3 (+7), **Cha** +1; **Skills** Arcana +9, Religion +9; **Senses** darkvision 60ft; **Traits** grim harvest, undead thralls; **AL** CE; **CR** 5; **XP** 1800.

Spells (slots): 0 (at will)—*blade ward, chill touch, fire bolt, true strike*; 1st (4)—*mage armor, magic missile, ray of sickness, witch bolt*; 2nd (3)—*mirror image, ray of enfeeblement, web*; 3rd (3)—*animate dead, bestow curse, fire shield, vampiric touch*; 4th (3)—*blight, ice storm*; 5th (1)—*conjure elemental*.

Equipment: black cloak, bracers of defense, ring of

protection, wand of magic missiles, potion of healing, potion of gaseous form, holy symbol of Orcus, blood hawk familiar named Razorwing.

Razorwing, Blood Hawk Familiar: **AC** 12; **HP** 7 (2d6); **Spd** 10ft, fly 60ft; **Melee** beak (+4, 1d4+2 piercing); **Str** -2, **Dex** +2, **Con** +0, **Int** -4, **Wis** +2, **Cha** -3; **Skills** Perception +4; **Senses** keen sight; **Traits** pack tactics; **AL** U; **CR** 1/8; **XP** 25.

Description: Second in command, Sverge is a pale half-elf who shies away from sunlight, keeping a large cloak bundled about him. He keeps his body devoid of all hair. He wears red-and-black tattoos representing Orcus, demons, and the undead, which make him appear to be a devout cleric of Orcus as well. He has filed his front teeth to add to his sinister appearance, ensuring that others remember his presence.

Delmyr, Male Human Rog8: **AC** 17; **HP** (8d8+8); **Spd** 30ft; **Melee** rapier (+8, 1d8+5 slashing); **Ranged** hand crossbow (+8, 30ft/120ft, 1d6+5 piercing); **SA** cunning action, expertise, evasion, fast hands, second-story work, sneak attack (+4d6), uncanny dodge; **Str** +2, **Dex** +5 (+8), **Con** +1, **Wis** +0, **Int** +2 (+5), **Cha** +1; **Skills** Acrobatics +8, Athletics +8, Sleight of Hand +11, Stealth +11; **AL** N; **CR** 3; **XP** 700.

Equipment: studded leather armor, rapier, hand crossbow, 20 bolts, *potion of healing, thieves' tools*.

Combat Tactics: Sverge and Howlbast are brutal, ruthless, and focused on their goals. If they can kill the characters to eliminate a threat, they do so. If the characters become more than they can handle, they leave Delmyr, and Hoek and Brar behind as a rear guard while they flee.

CANYONS OF ARCURI

With Hoek and Brar keeping watch, and with Sverge sending out his blood hawk to patrol, they probably are warned that the party is on the way.

If Sverge and Howlbast are killed, flee, or surrender (unlikely), the rest of the Dogs of Orcus are likely to flee or surrender. As long as either Sverge or Howlbast are involved in the battle, none of the others surrenders or let up in their attacks. Delmyr, who has virtually no survival skills in the wilderness, chooses surrender over death, or even running. If captured, Delmyr is willing to give up whatever information he might possess. Hoek and Brar simply keep quiet and try to escape into the jungle later.

Chimera with green dragon heads also live deeper in the canopies, making their homes in boughs of lower branches. The chimeras are extremely territorial, and destroy any creature intruding on their lairs unless that creature is clearly larger than they are.

Random Encounters

Many wandering creatures roam the canyon area. Check for wandering monsters every 4 hours of travel through the jungle by rolling a 1d20 and consulting the table below.

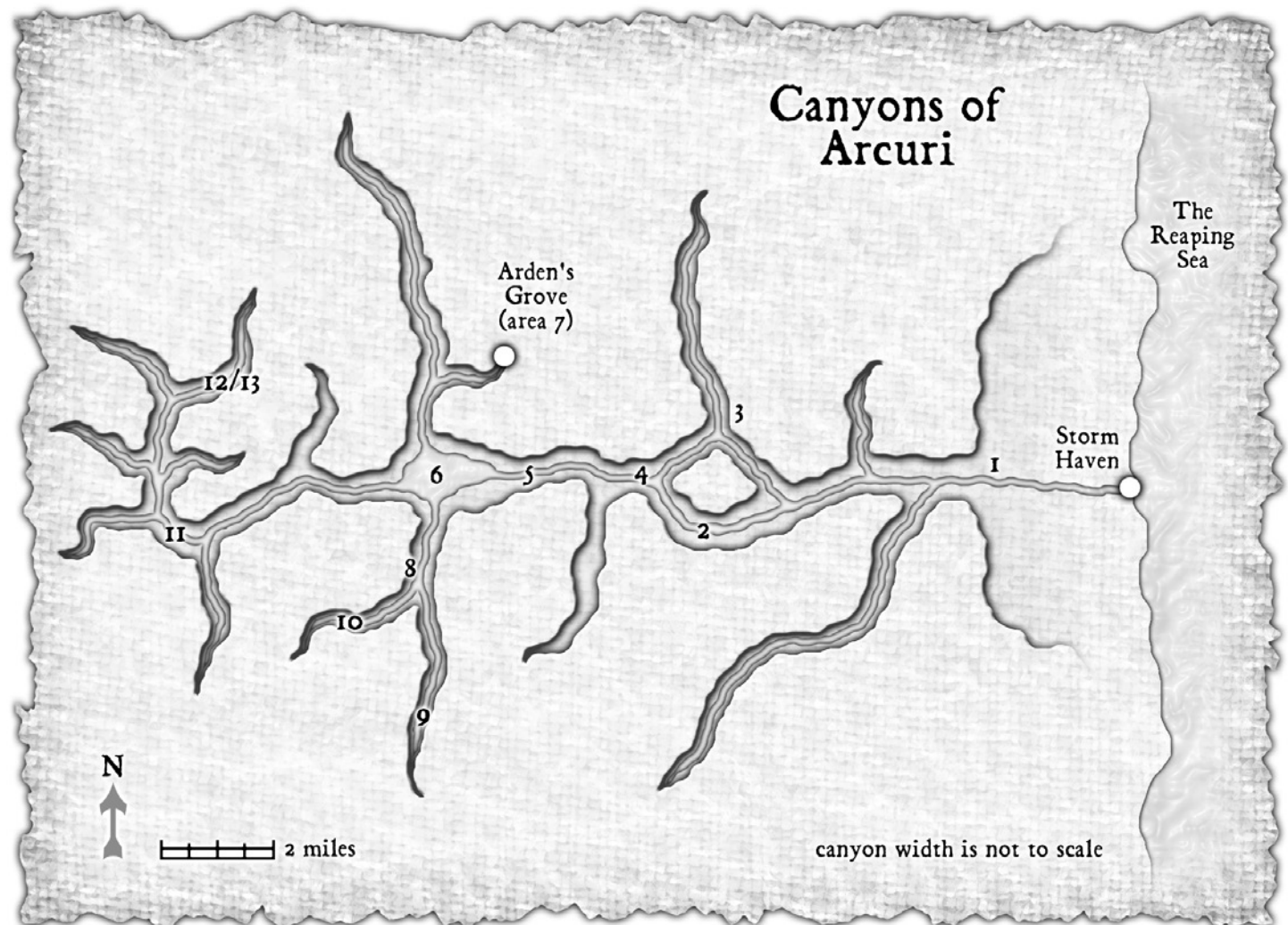
Entering the Canyons

The entrance to the canyons is two miles west of Storm Haven, through recently cleared land. The Goltray River exits the canyon to run past the village to the sea. Boating upriver is difficult, but manageable. Unfortunately, anyone on the river is easy to spot from the air, presenting an easy target for the rocs and chimera deeper in the canyons. The current is not terribly strong, but it still impedes travel upriver.

Walls within the canyons are pitted and stand roughly 600ft apart. The river carves out an uneven path through the center of the stone walls, often hitting a width of 300ft. Branches feeding the main canyon are considerably narrower, with some a mere 20ft wide.

The rocs and chimeras nesting in the upper branches of the jungle trees pose a risk to flight above and through the treetops. At any given time, 1d4 rocs wheel above the updrafts from the ravines, searching for meals to scavenge from the trees' upper branches. Anyone foolish enough to fly above the treetops is just too inviting a morsel for the birds to pass up. The birds chase anything flying above the tree canopy, but usually give up if the creature dives into the tops of the branches. The rocs cannot push deep into the tree canopy.

1d20	Encounter
1	Event (GM choice, but Events 3,4, 5, 6 or 7 are most likely)
2	1 aurumvorax
3	1d3 cave bears
4	1 roc
5	1d4+2 minotaurs
6	1d6+4 ogres , tribal war band
7	1d4+1 phase spiders
8	1 tendriculos
9	1d2 hill giants
10	1d4+2 wyverns
11-20	No Encounter



QUESTS OF DOOM 3

Aurumvorax: AC 16; HP 78 (12d6+36); Spd 30ft, burrow 10ft; **Melee** bite (+8, 1d8+5 piercing plus locking jaws), claws (+8, 2d6+5 slashing), rake (if locking jaws, 0ft, 4d6+5 slashing); **SA** multiattack (bite, claws x2, if locking jaws then use rake only); **Immune** poison; **Resist** fire; **Str** +1, **Dex** +5, **Con** +3, **Int** -4, **Wis** +1, **Cha** +0; **Traits** locking jaws (auto hit until escape DC 16, Str only); **AL** U; **CR** 5; **XP** 1800. (*Fifth Edition Foes* 20)

Bear, Cave: AC 12; HP 42 (5d10+15); Spd 40ft, swim 30ft; **Melee** bite (+7, 1d8+5 piercing), claws x2 (2d6+5); **SA** multiattack (bite, claws x2); **Str** +5, **Dex** +0, **Con** +3, **Int** -4, **Wis** +1, **Cha** -2; **Skills** Perception +3; **Senses** darkvision 60ft, keen smell; **AL** U; **CR** 2; **XP** 450.

Giant, Hill: AC 13; HP 105 (10d12+40); Spd 40ft; **Melee** greatclub x2 (+8, 10ft, 3d8+5 bludgeoning); **Ranged** rock (+8, 60ft/240ft, 3d10+5 bludgeoning); **Str** +5, **Dex** -1, **Con** +4, **Int** -3, **Wis** -1, **Cha** -2; **Skills** Perception +2; **AL** CE; **CR** 5; **XP** 1800.

Minotaur: AC 14; HP 76 (9d10+27); Spd 40ft; **Melee** great-axe (+6, 2d12+4 slashing), gore (+6, 2d8+4 piercing); **SA** charge (10ft move, gore, extra 2d8 piercing, DC 14 Str or pushed 10ft and knocked prone); **Str** +4, **Dex** +0, **Con** +3, **Int** -2, **Wis** +3, **Cha** -1; **Skills** Perception +7; **Senses** darkvision 60ft; **Traits** labyrinthine recall, reckless; **AL** CE; **CR** 3; **XP** 700.

Ogre: AC 11; HP 59 (7d10+21); Spd 40ft; **Melee** greatclub (+6, 2d8+4 bludgeoning); **Ranged** (+6, 30ft/120ft, 2d6+4 piercing); **Str** +4, **Dex** -1, **Con** +3, **Int** -3, **Wis** -2, **Cha** -2; **Senses** darkvision 60ft; **AL** CE; **CR** 2; **XP** 450.

Roc: AC 15; HP 248 (16d20+80); Spd 20ft, fly 120ft; **Melee** beak (+13, 10ft, 4d8+9 piercing), talons (+13, 4d6+9 slashing plus grapple, target restrained, escape DC 19); **SA** multiattack (beak, talons); **Str** +9, **Dex** +0 (+4), **Con** +5 (+4), **Int** -4, **Wis** +0 (+4), **Cha** -1 (+3); **Skills** Perception +4; **Senses** keen sight; **AL** U; **CR** 11; **XP** 7200.

Spider, Phase: AC 13; HP 32 (5d10+5); Spd 30ft, climb 30ft; **Melee** bite (+4, 1d10+2 piercing plus 4d8 poison, DC 11 Con half); **SA** ethereal jaunt (bonus, shift out of phase and vice versa); **Str** +2, **Dex** +2, **Con** +1, **Int** -2, **Wis** +0, **Cha** -2; **Skills** Stealth +6; **Senses** darkvision 60ft; **Traits** spider climb, web walker; **AL** U; **CR** 3; **XP** 700.

Tendriculos: AC 8; HP 93 (11d10+33); Spd 20ft; **Melee** tendril (+4, 10ft, 1d8+2 bludgeoning plus grapple, escape DC 12); **SA** multiattack (tendrils x2, swallow), swallow (if grappled on next turn, blinded and restrained, 1d8+3 bludgeoning plus 1d8 acid); **Immune** charm, fright, poison, prone, psychic, restraint, stun, unconscious; **Resist** bludgeoning, slashing; **Vulnerable** fire; **Str** +2, **Dex** -2, **Con** +3, **Int** -4, **Wis** +0, **Cha** -3; **Skills** Athletics +4; **Traits** false appearance (haystack); **AL** U; **CR** 4; **XP** 1100.

Wyvern: AC 13; HP 110 (13d10+39); Spd 20ft, fly 80ft; **Melee** bite (+7, 10ft, 2d6+4 piercing), claws (+7, 2d8+4 slashing), stinger (+7, 10ft, 2d6+4 piercing plus 7d6 poison, DC 15 Con half); **SA** multiattack (bite, stinger or in flight, claws for one attack); **Str** +4, **Dex** +0, **Con** +3, **Int** -3, **Wis** +1, **Cha** -2; **Skills** Perception +4; **Senses** darkvision 60ft; **AL** U; **CR** 6; **XP** 2300.

1. The Cliff Wall

The cliff wall rises 500ft straight up, with the river running through a wide, 600ft gap. The river leaves a narrow 150ft swath of thick growth

to each side. The thick jungle trees grow to more than 150ft tall with protection from the wind provided by the nearby cliffs. Near the river, the underbrush is thick with palm fronds and bamboo, while farther in lichens and mosses grow in the dark, damp atmosphere sheltered from the sun by the high trees.

Wheeling rocs fly from large nests barely visible near the edge of the upper cliff. At least 4 rocs (see stats above) patrol the skies and nests near the cliff wall. They are generally more interested in flying creatures than hunting for food on the canyon floor. If left alone, they do not attack. The rocs brutally defend their nests against anyone seen climbing or flying toward their nests. Nests that have eggs are generally occupied by at least one roc that stands a very good chance of hearing or sensing invisible characters attempting to pilfer eggs.

2. The Wall of Sorrow

The smell of burnt wood and flesh carries down the canyon. Jeering laughter echoes along the path, and many blackened and ashy footprints cover the trail. A 25ft tall wall divides the canyon, blocking the path from further exploration. The river sweeps among sharpened tree trunks supporting the center of the wall. The path on the southern side of the river ends 500ft from where the wall attaches to the edge of the canyon.

A 15ft-tall archway bisects the wall on the northern trail. A wooden door covered in rusted spikes bars the entrance, and a gatehouse has been built near the entrance. Arrow slits dot the 40ft-tall gatehouse's surface. A thick blackened layer of mud covers the walls. Bones of various creatures decorate the frightening obstacle. Trees and brush have been cleared by fire 90ft away from the fortification.

Crab Bawm, a particularly brutal ettin barbarian, generally stands near the entrance of the fortification. He always keeps two spiked clubs within easy reach as he stands guard and periodically shouts at his bugbear servants. Crab Bawm is a frightening sight in his singed hides and rusted armor, and his scarred faces and burned hair give him an aura of invincibility. Fires behind the wall send trails of smoke into the sky that are visible for quite a distance, making it clear Crab Bawm and the bugbears that serve him here have little to fear from others in the canyons.

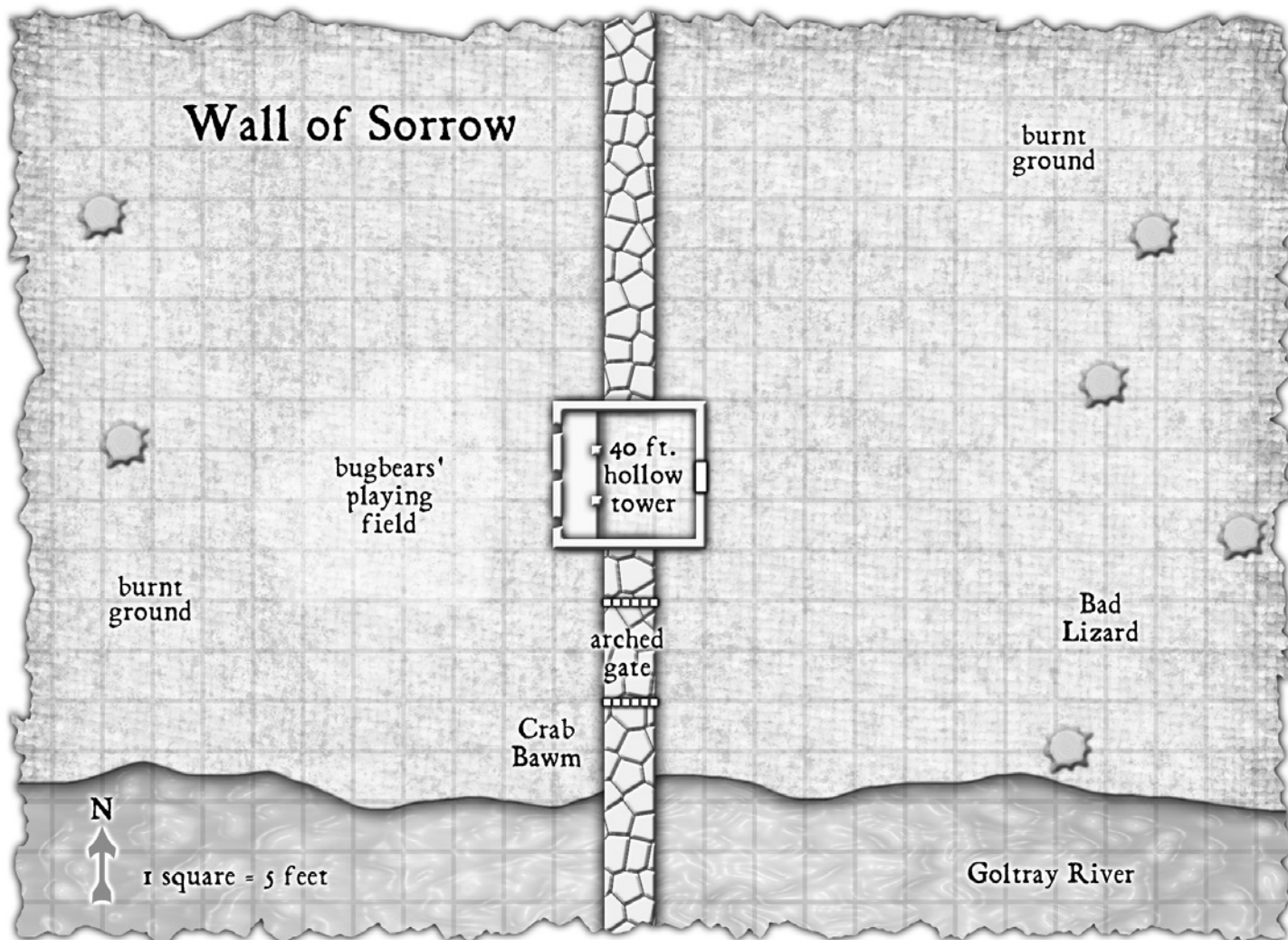
The builders of the gatehouse are lost to history, but the gatehouse itself remains. Now rather decrepit, the interior is nothing more than a burnt shell that stands as a testament to the builder's skill. A huge barred door on the opposite side of the wall allows access to the interior. The bugbears found it and built large scaffolding to access the many arrow slits for combat. They have little else in the large open room aside from furs to sleep on and a few personal belongings.

Hidden under the chieftain's sleeping mat is a locked chest. The chest contains rations, 237gp, 435sp, 12cp, 16 onyx nuggets (25gp each), a silver dagger, 3 vials of holy water and a *figurine of the onyx dog* (Bawm thinks it's a "toy" and hasn't figured out how to use it).

Besides the ettin and bugbears, the fortification is home to Crab Bawm's "pet," which rests on the other side of the wall. "Bad Lizard" is a red dragon wyrmling Bawm stole from its nest in the mountains (which is where his treasure map leads). The dragon has suffered concussions and brain injury due to harsh treatment and lessons on how to play "head bonk," a game where large rocks are thrown into the air and bounced off one's head. The dragon is blind in one eye, and not always the most reliable pet. The dragon is aggressive, but often doesn't act like a dragon at all. It often suffers spasms, memory loss and fits of sorrow. The poor creature has given up trying to escape, for its breath weapon has had little effect on Crab Bawm other than to upset the ettin. The dragon responds to its name, but has learned little else, although it knows the ettin's call usually means a meal. Its wings were painfully removed, but it can easily climb over the wall. A thick chain hangs from its neck and serves as a leash. The other end of the chain is not attached to anything, but characters might not realize this fact.

The mother of this dragon has searched in vain for her offspring. The thick trees of the canyons prevent her from viewing the land, not to mention the size of the canyons themselves she's had to search. She may reward clever characters for such information, but be warned: Her "reward" is usually to let the helpful creature live. Due to the young dragon's current state, the mother likely slays it out of pity.

CANYONS OF ARCURI



Crab Bawm, Ettin Bbn2: AC 15; HP 102 (10d10+30 plus 2d10+6); Spd 40ft; **Melee** battleaxe (+8, 2d8+5 slashing), morningstar (+8, 2d8+5 piercing); **SA** multiattack (battleaxe, morningstar), rage (bonus, 2/day, 1 min, +2 damage, resist bludgeoning, slashing, and piercing, tactical advantage on Str checks and saves); **Str** +5 (+8), **Dex** -1, **Con** +3 (+6), **Int** -2, **Wis** +0, **Cha** -1; **Skills** Perception +6, Survival +3; **Senses** darkvision 60ft; **Traits** danger sense, reckless, two heads—tactical advantage on Wis (Perception) checks and on saves against blinded, charmed, deafened, frightened, stunned, and unconsciousness), wakeful (one head is always awake); **AL** CE; **CR** 7; **XP** 2900.

Equipment: gooey +1 shield (used to scrape his teeth), 2 clubs, javelin of lightning (Bawm's "nose pick"), ring of fire resistance, necklace made from human heads, a gold tooth in his mouth (obviously belonging to someone else, 2gp), several shiny rocks (quartz), and an illegible map to his treasure.

The map states in broken giant "treasure." Crab Bawm wrote the map describing indistinct directions to a dragon's lair high in the mountains. The treasure belongs to the mother of his pet, although there is no mention of dragons on his map.

Description: Crab Bawm is a none-too-bright ettin, and the inventor and frequent player of the game of "head bonk." Crab Bawm's sloping forehead's hide his dark eyes and his right hand constantly twitches from the numerous "wins" he's claimed over the years in head bonk tournaments. The ettin wears dirty hides made from animals he has inexpertly skinned.

"Bad Lizard," Red Dragon Wyrmling: AC 17; HP 75 (10d8+30); Spd 30ft, climb 30ft, no fly; **Melee** bite (+6, 1d10+4 piercing plus 1d6

fire); **SA** fire breath (recharge 5-6, 15ft cone, 7d6 fire, DC 13 Dex half); **Immune** fire; **Str** +4, **Dex** +0 (+2), **Con** +3 (+5), **Int** +0, **Wis** +0 (+2), **Cha** +2 (+4); **Skills** Perception +4, Stealth +2; **Senses** blindsight 10ft, darkvision 60ft; **AL** CE; **CR** 4; **XP** 1100.

Bugbear (12): AC 16; HP 27 (5d8+5); Spd 30ft; **Melee** morningstar (+4, 2d8+2 piercing); **Ranged** javelin (+4, 30ft/120ft, 1d6+2 piercing); **Str** +2, **Dex** +2, **Con** +1, **Int** -1, **Wis** +0, **Cha** -1; **Skills** Stealth +6, Survival +2; **Senses** darkvision 60ft; **Traits** brute, surprise attack (extra 2d6); **AL** CE; **CR** 1; **XP** 200.

Note: The weakest bugbears (3 have 50% hit points, 3 have 75% hit points) have suffered heavy injuries due to "head bonk" games.

Magluk, Bugbear Chief: AC 17; HP 65 (10d8+20); Spd 30ft; **Melee** morningstar (+5, 2d8+3); **Ranged** javelin (+5, 30ft/120ft, 1d6+3 piercing); **SA** multiattack (morningstar x2); **Str** +3, **Dex** +2, **Con** +2, **Int** +0, **Wis** +1, **Cha** +0; **Skills** Intimidation +2, Stealth +6, Survival +3; **Senses** darkvision 60ft; **Traits** brute, surprise attack (extra 2d6), warrior's heart (save tactical advantage against charm, fright, paralysis, poison, stun, and sleep); **AL** CE; **CR** 3; **XP** 700.

Equipment: chain shirt, wooden shield, morningstar, potion of healing, iron key.

Tactics: Crab Bawm demands 500gp each (or shiny rocks) from all who seek passage across the wall. (It doesn't really matter if the rocks are valuable or not.) The bugbears have learned the value of such an imposing ally. If the payment is made to the ettin, the bugbear chieftain steps out and demands his payment of the same amount. He does not find any value in shiny rocks, however, and does not accept these as means of payment.

QUESTS OF DOOM 3

Crab Bawm and the bugbears attack anyone who refuses to pay. The ettin calls for his pet at the beginning of combat. Two rounds later, 6 bugbears fire bolts from the arrows slits. There are 10 arrow slits facing the front of the wall. “Bad Lizard” responds in the third round with his breath weapon, not caring if Crab Bawm or the bugbears are in the area.

3. The Raging Hill Giant

A wyvern impaled upon a huge chiseled pillar of stone dominates the entrance to this canyon. The wyvern has been dead a week and was slain by a huge slashing weapon. The stony ground is littered with crushed bones and animal remains. A faint breeze from the north bears the smell of rot.

A mile down the 200ft canyon is a 20ft-wide cavern opening atop a 50ft mound of crushed rock and debris. Several half-eaten large deer carcasses lie about the entrance. Clumps of fur lie in round balls among the bodies of the dead animals. The trees are cleared in the area, snapped at the trunk. The larger trees are missing bark from their lower 25ft.

An intelligent and aggressive **hill giant barbarian** named Haggurt lives in this lair with his pet, a massive **cave bear**. The giant adopted the bear during his travels and trained it to obey his commands. The 100ft-deep-by-40ft-wide one-room cavern is the lair of the giant and the bear, and smells strongly of burnt hair and dung. A large extinguished fire pit sits to one side, with a spit with the burnt carcass of a rotting mule hanging above it on an iron skewer. Five large leather bags dangle from iron spikes driven into the walls. The head of a grisly dwarf sticks from the middle sack. The dwarf appears to be sleeping.

Haggurt, Hill Giant Bbn2: AC 17; HP 126 (10d12+40 plus 2d12+8); Spd 40ft; **Melee** greatsword (+9, 10ft, 6d6+5 bludgeoning); **Ranged** rock (+9, 60ft/240ft, 3d10+5 bludgeoning); **SA** multiattack (greatsword x2), rage (bonus, 2/day, 1 min, +2 damage, resist bludgeoning, slashing, and piercing, tactical advantage on Str checks and saves); **Str** +5 (+9), **Dex** -1, **Con** +4 (+8), **Int** -3, **Wis** -1, **Cha** -2; **Skills** Athletics +9, Perception +3; **Traits** danger sense, reckless; **AL** CE; **CR** 10; **XP** 5900.

Haggurt doesn't believe in bathing, and his long beard and straggly hair are greasy and tangled. He is missing the tip of his index finger after an overly playful nip by Nebb. Haggurt was a threat to the chieftain of his tribe and was expelled under threat of death. He obtained a huge greatsword during a battle with a fire giant and over the years has learned to use the weapon with devastating force.

Nebb, Huge Cave Bear: AC 13; HP 57 (6d12+24); Spd 40ft, swim 30ft; **Melee** bite (+8, 1d10+6 piercing), claws (+8, 2d8+6); **SA** multiattack (bite, claws); **Str** +6, **Dex** +0, **Con** +4, **Int** -4, **Wis** +1, **Cha** -2; **Skills** Perception +3; **Senses** darkvision 60ft, keen smell; **AL** U; **CR** 3; **XP** 450.

Tactics: Nebb almost always sleeps curled near the fire pit in the cave. He is a very light sleeper and relies on his keen smell when he naps. Haggurt is usually hunting or causing trouble with his canyon neighbors. There is a 50% chance he is present during the day. About 25% of the time, he is within earshot of the bear. The rest of the time, he wanders the canyons looking for his next meal. If Nebb is slain, Haggurt tracks down the murderers.

The two sacks contain boulders, bricks, cooking utensils, decaying haunches of meat, lumps of red clay, and a still-alive dwarf named Mad Jauk (male dwarf **veteran**). The dwarven miner Mad Jauk has scoured these canyons for years with his trusty mule. He was on his latest expedition when Haggurt captured him and the mule for dinner. Luckily for Mad Jauk, the larger, tastier mule was the first eaten. Mad Jauk's mining tools are in the third sack. The fourth sack contains a small amount of treasure the giant has collected over the years. He has a stone head of Arden, a silver chafing dish (25gp), 16 rough agates (20gp each), a large flea-infested wool tapestry (used as a blanket, 150gp), a porcelain chamber pot, a dozen canine skulls on a chain, a goat hide pillow (made from the skin of a satyr), a copper flask holding the equivalent of 3 *potions of healing*, a very large and very broken chastity belt, a gold holy water font from a

temple to Arden (1375gp), a greatsword, a large conch horn, a bag full of polished rocks of various sizes and a roc statue carved from a single piece of ivory (350gp).

If freed, Mad Jauk berates the mule corpse for not outrunning the giant. He grumbles and criticizes his rescuers, but never thanks them. He points out their bad timing (for not saving his mule) and comments on how foolish they were for attacking such a nasty giant in the first place. He gathers as many tools as he can carry and makes his way to Storm Haven to buy another mule, complaining the entire way.

4. Who's for Dinner?

This area is cleared of trees. Charred and clawed stumps remain. When the mother of “bad lizard” (see **Area 2**) found the canyons, she devastated this area with her fiery breath. But destroying the massive trees eventually proved too much even for her, and she gave up her search for her stolen child. Now that the 800ft-wide area is open to the sky, it is a perfect hunting ground for the rocs of the canyon. It is easier to see prey here, and the fallen trees and debris can be used to line their nests. The rocs also like to preen and splash in the river as if it is a giant birdbath. Roc droppings cover the trails and canyon walls. Currently, a **roc** is strutting in the clearing by the river. It is 800ft to the other side of the clearing where the trees grow and the canyon narrows enough to provide better cover. Anyone moving cautiously along the canyon wall has cover hiding from the giant bird due to the shadows and rock overhangs.

Roc: AC 15; HP 248 (16d20+80); Spd 20ft, fly 120ft; **Melee** beak (+13, 10ft, 4d8+9 piercing), talons (+13, 4d6+9 slashing plus grapple, target restrained, escape DC 19); **SA** multiattack (beak, talons); **Str** +9, **Dex** +0 (+4), **Con** +5 (+4), **Int** -4, **Wis** +0 (+4), **Cha** -1 (+3); **Skills** Perception +4; **Senses** keen sight; **AL** U; **CR** 11; **XP** 7200.

5. The Hag and the Willow

A massive weeping willow tree grows from the soft, moss-covered soil. The drooping branches create a natural dome-like enclosure near the trunk of the ancient tree. A baseless statue of a comely woman stands in the shade of the tree beside the tree's trunk. The statue is carved of polished amber, and the woman has a slight elven appearance. Her simple dress and delicate features are incredibly lifelike. The long, curly hair is decorated with berets of leaves of ivy. She stands with her eyes closed, arms to her side, and bends slightly forward at the waist. From her pursed lips, she appears to be in the midst of a gentle kiss.

A particularly wicked **green hag** named Drellu'Ga hides high in the treetop above the statue, waiting to spring her trap. She is using invisible passage and mimicry to make it sound like a colony of songbirds lives in the tree.

The lips of the statue are coated with a layer of adhesive glue. Due to the statue's color and the way it glistens in the light, the glue is hard to detect (1-in-6 chance). If *detect magic* is cast, the statue radiates an enchantment. Anyone touching — or worse, kissing — the lips of the statue becomes stuck.

Drellu'Ga carved the statue from amber quartz, spending a month painstakingly mimicking a captured dryad's features. Drellu'Ga preys on unwary adventurers and gallant heroes who think this might be a damsel in distress. Drellu'Ga's lair is a small cave hidden by the thick branches of the willow tree 25ft above the canyon floor.

Drellu'Ga the Heinous, Green Hag Sor8: AC 18; HP 82 (11d8+33); Spd 30ft; **Melee** claws (+7, 2d8+4 slashing); **SA** illusory appearance, innate spells (Cha +7, DC 14), invisible passage; **Str** +4, **Dex** +1, **Con** +3, **Int** +1, **Wis** +2, **Cha** +4; **Skills** Arcana +4, Deception +7, Perception +5, Stealth +4; **Senses** darkvision 60ft; **Traits** amphibious, mimicry—imitation detect on DC 14 Wis (Insight); **AL** NE; **CR** 8; **XP** 3900.

Innate Spells: at will—*dancing lights*, *minor illusion*, *true strike*.

Spells (slots): 0 (at will)—*acid splash*, *blade ward*, *fire bolt*, *poison spray*, *ray of frost*; 1st (4)—*magic missile*,

ray of sickness; 2nd (3)—*detect thoughts, hold person, web*; 3rd (3)—*dispel magic, fly, lightning bolt*; 4th (2)—*greater invisibility, ice storm*

Equipment: *cloak of protection, wand of fear.*

Drellu'Ga has dark green skin, over which she has tattooed blue swirls that run down her arms and legs. Her matted hair is long, reaching her waist, and braided in many different strands with willow leaves. She has long immaculately maintained nails also highlighted blue.

Drellu'Ga waits to see if her trap tempts an unsuspecting victim into kissing the statue to “revive” the maiden, then casts *hold person* on any spellcasters. She then casts *ice storm* on fighters. She continues attacking from her treetop perch until forced to fly down into melee.

Treasure: Besides the items Drellu'Ga carries, she has amassed a small hoard from previous meals. Her cave above the canyon requires a DC 20 Str (Athletics) check. A cauldron and several crude shelves with miscellaneous grotesque alchemy equipment sit in the lair. A bag hanging from a wall holds dried humanoid lips and tongues (removed from the statue). She also has a suit of plate (dwarf sized), two suits of chainmail, a large steel shield, a +1 *short sword, potion of hill giant strength* and a *wand of enemy detection*. These items lie strewn about the cavern.

6. The Creature in the Lagoon

A wide lake is contained within the walls of the canyon here, with only narrow ledges running past the lake to each side. Narrow, tree-free ledges run around the rim of the lake, slanting toward the water. The ledges meet at the far end of the lake where a natural gap in the wall leads farther into the canyons away on the other side. The water ripples with the slow current of the Goltray River flowing into and then out of the deep lake.

The bottom of the lake is cone-shaped, dropping 40ft to an opening into underground, water-filled caverns. A **gray nisp** traveled from the Reaping Sea via these deep tunnels to this abode. It lives off fish and the unfortunate mountain goat washed into the lake by frequent flash floods. Any disturbance in the water (someone falling in or swimming) causes the nisp to investigate.

Anyone falling into the lake must make DC 15 Str (Athletics) check to climb up the slick rock walls. In addition to the gray nisp, passing through the tree-free area makes an encounter with a roc very likely. The GM should roll on the random encounter table with any positive result being a roc. A cautious party has a DC 10 Wis (Perception) chance to spot the circling roc before they attempt to make the crossing.

Gray Nisp: AC 15; HP 95 (10d10+40); Spd 10ft, swim 40ft; **Melee** bite (+6, 1d12+3 piercing), claw (+6, 1d10+3 slashing plus rend); **SA** innate spells (Wis +4, DC 12), multiattack (bite, claw x2), rend (bonus, if both claws hit, add 1d10+3 slashing); **Str** +3, **Dex** +3, **Con** +4, **Int** -3, **Wis** +1, **Cha** -2; **Senses** darkvision 60ft, tremorsense 180ft; **Traits** keen scent, water dependent; **AL** CN; **CR** 6; **XP** 2300. (*Fifth Edition Foes* 133)

Innate Spells: at will—*detect thoughts, minor illusion* (auditory only); 1/day—*confusion, hold monster, slow*.

Roc: AC 15; HP 248 (16d20+80); Spd 20ft, fly 120ft; **Melee** beak (+13, 10ft, 4d8+9 piercing), talons (+13, 4d6+9 slashing plus grapple, target restrained, escape DC 19); **SA** multiattack (beak, talons); **Str** +9, **Dex** +0 (+4), **Con** +5 (+4), **Int** -4, **Wis** +0 (+4), **Cha** -1 (+3); **Skills** Perception +4; **Senses** keen sight; **AL** U; **CR** 11; **XP** 7200.

Tactics: The gray nisp assesses creatures in the water before attacking. If those in the water flail or sink, it concentrates on creatures on the ledges or on those helping people in the water. It attacks with its innate spells. If the beings on the ledge survive, the nisp grabs a swimming creature and submerges into the underground tunnels.

7. Arden's Grove

A tribe of villagers, descendants of those who escaped the demons Arcuri released into the secluded canyon, live in these treetop villages. They have forgotten much of their history, however, and now are little more than a diminishing tribe trying to survive against a tribe of bugbears. The bugbears feel trapped in the canyon as well and blame the villagers of Arden's Grove for the recent infestations of biting ivy that have divided the tribe's loyalties. Both sides diligently guard a tree bridge linking the two tribes. Further, no one sets foot on the ground in this canyon because of bulettes that breed among the giant trees' roots.

Danger in the trees

While within the village of Arden's Grove, the characters have little to fear. Numerous paths and platforms fill the tree branches, and only by venturing out onto the pathless branches is one in danger of falling. The villagers of Arden's Grove have been at work for decades creating a stable village, so walking anywhere within the boundaries of their village is considered safe.

The bugbears likewise have created safe paths to walk through the trees in their territory, although ivybound plants now reside in many of these areas. Also, the tree hounds the bugbears use have free run of the place, making walking around freely dangerous at best.

Wandering off the paths requires a DC 10 Dex (Acrobatics) to stay on the sturdy branches. Failure means the person falls and suffers 12d6 points of damage. Anyone taking extreme actions (running, jumping, fighting) while on branches increases the DC to 15.

Danger Underfoot

The villagers of Arden's Grove have lived in the tree canopy for centuries after being forced into the trees by a herd of migrating bulettes that entered the mineral rich area. The bulettes remain, using the jungle floor as a breeding ground and nursery. Approximately 30 bulettes live in the bowl of the canyon. Anyone walking on the ground attracts 1d6 bulettes within 2d4 rounds. Crisscrossing the ground are cave-ins where the bulettes burrowed near the surface.

Bulette: AC 17; HP 94 (9d10+45); Spd 40ft, burrow 40ft; **Melee** bite (+7, 4d12+4 piercing); **SA** deadly leap (jump at least 15ft into space of one or more; 3d6+4 bludgeoning plus 3d6+4 slashing and knocked prone, DC 16 Str or Dex half and pushed 5ft); **Str** +4, **Dex** +0; **Con** +5, **Int** -4, **Wis** +0, **Cha** -3; **Skills** Perception +6; **Senses** darkvision 60ft, tremorsense 60ft; **Traits** standing leap (long 30ft, high 15ft); **AL** U; **CR** 5; **XP** 1800.

Random Encounters

Many other creatures call the trees of Arden's Grove home. Roll 1d20 to check for wandering monsters every two hours.

1d20	Encounter
1	1d4 phase spiders
2	1d6 wild tree hounds . See Sidebox.
3	1d4 villager commoners , see area 7-2. (Only possible if on Arden's Grove side of canyon; otherwise, roll again.)
4	1d4 ivybound bugbears , see area 7-10. (Only possible if on bugbear side of canyon; otherwise, roll again. See Sidebox for more on ivybound creatures.)
5	1d4 bloodsuckles

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1d20	Encounter
6	10ft patch of witch grass
7	1d2 ettercaps with 1d4 giant spiders
8	1d2 poisonous (tree) frog swarm
9	1d4+1 kech
10	1 chimera with a green dragon head
11–20	No Encounter

Bloodsuckle: AC 13; HP 57 (6d10+24); Spd 0ft; **Melee** constrict (+5, 10ft, 1d4+3 bludgeoning plus 1d12 piercing plus grapple, escape DC 13); **Immune** blindness, charm, deafness, fright, prone, stun, unconscious; **Str** +3, **Dex** +0, **Con** +4, **Int** –2, **Wis** +0, **Cha** +0; **Senses** blindsight 60ft; **Traits** create host (*dominate person*, DC 14 Wis), host sense, seed; **AL** U; **CR** 3; **XP** 700. (*Fifth Edition Foes* 30)

Ivybound Bugbear: AC 17; HP 27 (5d8+5); Spd 30ft; **Melee** morningstar (+5, 2d8+3 piercing); **Ranged** javelin (+4, 30ft/120ft, 1d6+2 piercing); **SA** spore cloud (2/day, 5ft, DC 10 Con or become infected); **Str** +3, **Dex** +2, **Con** +1, **Int** –1, **Wis** +0, **Cha** –1; **Skills** Stealth +8, Survival +2; **Senses** darkvision 60ft; **Traits** brute, surprise attack (extra 2d6); **AL** CE; **CR** 1; **XP** 200.

Chimera (Green Dragon Head): AC 14; HP 114; Spd 30ft, fly 60ft; **Melee** bite (+7, 2d6+4 piercing), horns (+7, 1d12+4 bludgeoning), claws (+7, 2d6+4 slashing); **SA** poison breath (recharge 5–6, 15ft cone, 7d8 poison, DC 15 Con half), multiattack (bite, horns, claws; fire breath can replace bite or horns); **Str** +4, **Dex** +0, **Con** +4, **Int** –4, **Wis** +2, **Cha** +0; **Skills** Perception +8; **Senses** darkvision 60ft; **AL** CE; **CR** 6; **XP** 2300.

Ettercap: AC 13; HP 44 (8d8+8); Spd 30ft, climb 30ft; **Melee** bite (+4, 1d8+2 piercing plus 1d8 poison plus poisoned for 1 min, DC 11 Con repeat), claws (+4, 2d4+2 slashing); **SA** web (recharge 5–6, +4, 30ft/60ft, restrained, escape DC 11 Str, webbing has AC 10, 5hp, resist to bludgeoning, immune to poison and psychic); **Str** +2, **Dex** +2, **Con** +1, **Int** –2, **Wis** +1, **Cha** –1; **Skills** Perception +3, Stealth +4, Survival +3; **Senses** darkvision 60ft; **Traits** spider climb, web sense, web walker; **AL** NE; **CR** 2; **XP** 450.

Kech: AC 13; HP 27 (5d8+5); Spd 40ft, climb 20ft; **Melee** bite (+4, 1d8+2 piercing), claws (+4, 1d6+2 slashing); **SA** multiattack (bite, claws, if both hit plus 1d6); **Str** +1, **Dex** +2, **Con** +1, **Int** +0, **Wis** +1, **Cha** +0; **Skills** Perception +3, Stealth +4, Survival +3; **Senses** darkvision 60ft; **Traits** leafy camouflage, mobility, pass without trace; **AL** NE; **CR** 1/2; **XP** 100. (*Fifth Edition Foes* 155)

Spider, Giant: AC 14; HP 26 (4d10+4); Spd 30ft, climb 30ft; **Melee** bite (+5, 1d8+3 piercing plus 2d8 poison, DC 11 Con half); **SA** web (recharge 5–6, +5, 30ft/60ft, restrained, escape DC 12 Str, webbing has AC 10, 5hp, vulnerable to fire, immune to bludgeoning, poison, and psychic); **Str** +2, **Dex** +3, **Con** +1, **Int** –4, **Wis** +0, **Cha** –3; **Skills** Stealth +7; **Senses** blindsight 10ft, darkvision 60ft; **Traits** spider climb, web sense, web walker; **AL** U; **CR** 1; **XP** 200.

Spider, Phase: AC 13; HP 32 (5d10+5); Spd 30ft, climb 30ft; **Melee** bite (+4, 1d10+2 piercing plus 4d8 poison, DC 11 Con half); **SA** ethereal jaunt (bonus, shift out of phase and vice versa); **Str** +2, **Dex** +2, **Con** +1, **Int** –2, **Wis** +0, **Cha** –2; **Skills** Stealth +6; **Senses** darkvision 60ft; **Traits** spider climb, web walker; **AL** U; **CR** 3; **XP** 700.

Swarm of Poisonous Frogs: AC 14; HP 36 (8d8); Spd 30ft, swim 30ft; **Melee** bites (+6, 0ft, 2d6 piercing or 1d6 piercing if swarm is at half hp or fewer plus 4d6 poison, DC 10 Con half); **Immune** charm, fright, paralysis, petrify, prone, restraint, stun; **Resist** bludgeoning, piercing, slashing; **Str** –1, **Dex** +4, **Con** +0, **Int** –5, **Wis** +0, **Cha** –4; **Senses** blindsight 10ft; **Traits** swarm; **AL** U; **CR** 2; **XP** 450.

Tree Hound: AC 14; HP 32 (5d8+10); Spd 40ft, climb 20ft; **Melee** bite (+4, 1d6+2 piercing plus grapple, escape DC 12), claw (+4, 1d4+2 slashing); **SA** pounce (20ft move then hit with claw, DC 12 Str or knocked prone, bite as bonus), rake (if grappled, then claw x2 as bonus); **Str** +2, **Dex** +3, **Con** +2, **Int** –4, **Wis** +1, **Cha** +0; **Skills** Perception +3, Stealth +7; **Senses** darkvision 30ft, keen smell; **Traits** camouflage; **AL** U; **CR** 1/2; **XP** 100. (*Monster Appendix*)

Witch Grass: When an arcane spellcaster tries to cast a spell with 20ft of a patch, the caster must make a DC 11 Int or Cha save according to class. If the save succeeds, the spell is cast normally. If the save fails, the spell is not cast but the spell slot is not expended. Only arcane magic is affected. The seeds attach themselves to anything they come in contact. The range is 10ft and the DC as above. The effect lasts for 12 hours then the seeds lose their potency. (*Fifth Edition Foes* 248)

Ivybound Creatures

Biting ivy is a parasitic ivy found in 10ft thorny patches in many deep jungles. Anyone walking through a patch of the ivy must make a DC 10 Dex save or be scratched and infected by the thorns. Once infected, the creature lives for about 1d4 months before collapsing dead and sprouting a new patch of ivy. While the creature lives, the ivy grows from the skin, wrapping it in thorny branches, which grant the creature +1 natural AC bonus.

The ivybound creature can deliver biting ivy spores with its natural attacks. It can also expel a spore cloud (2/day) within 5ft. Any creature struck by the creature or that breathes the spores must make a DC 10 Con save or become infected as well.

The ivybound creature is harder to spot in the jungle giving a +2 Stealth bonus. The ivy also increases their strength as it augments their musculature. The creature gains a +3 Str score bonus.

Lesser restoration kills an outbreak of biting ivy infecting a creature. Once vines begin growing from the victim's skin, however, the spell deals 1d6 piercing damage and forces the victim to make a DC 15 Con save or permanently lose 1d4 Cha.

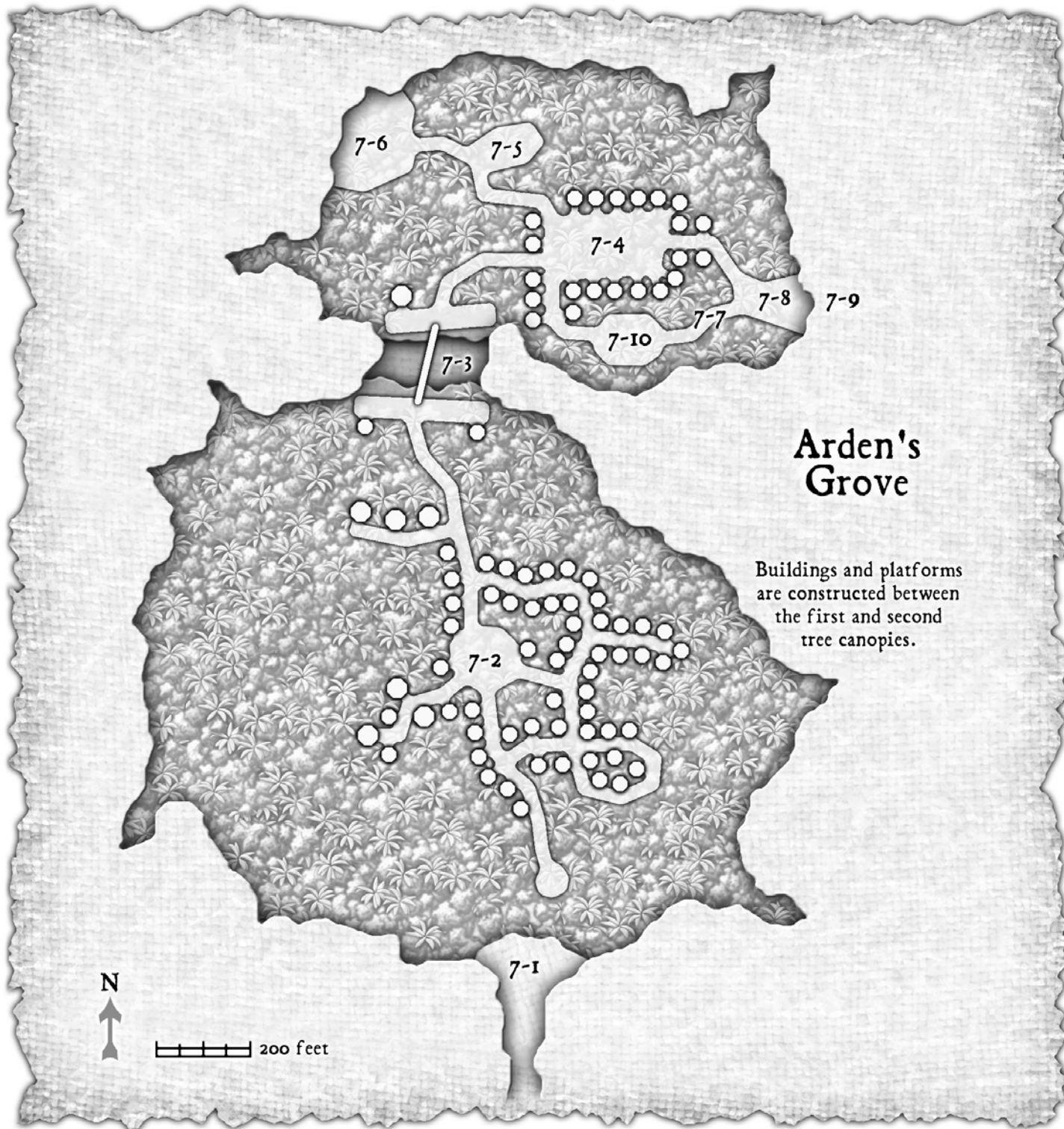
7-1. The Plateau (Event)

The rocky trail climbs steeply upward between the close canyon walls, finally ending on a breathtaking vista that overlooks an expanse of treetops. The canyons widen here, spreading into a 5-mile-wide bowl in which the trees grow. The tops of the trees are about 100ft below the level of the rocky plateau.

Directly below the plateau, a **roc** screeches at the treetops, flapping its wings and digging its massive claws into the wood. Every so often, it comes out with a trunk, which it bends its neck to peer at before again scratching at the branches below.

Beneath the shrill cries of the bird, a child's panicked shrieks echo in the canyon. Three children of the village of Arden's Grove were playing in the branches looking at the forbidden plateau (a popular pastime with the youth of the village) when the roc spotted them. They are hiding in the treetops, but every time one tries to scramble to a lower branch and safety, the roc attacks.

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Roc: AC 15; HP 248 (16d20+80); Spd 20ft, fly 120ft; **Melee** beak (+13, 10ft, 4d8+9 piercing), talons (+13, 4d6+9 slashing plus grapple, target restrained, escape DC 19); **SA** multiattack (beak, talons); **Str** +9, **Dex** +0 (+4), **Con** +5 (+4), **Int** -4, **Wis** +0 (+4), **Cha** -1 (+3); **Skills** Perception +4; **Senses** keen sight; **AL** U; **CR** 11; **XP** 7200.

If the children are rescued, they'll gladly lead the characters into Arden's Grove and vouch for their admission. The boys are **Hollyn** and **Malk Larl**, and the girl is **Relean Homst**.

GM Note: This event is not necessary, and it is the GM's option to remove or alter it. The characters receive more friendly treatment in the village if they rescue the children, but are still treated politely otherwise.

7-2. Arden's Grove

Arden's Grove is a village of roughly 300 people who live in the tree-tops between the lowest and middle canopies of the jungle trees about 80ft above the ground. Supports connected to the massive trunks support myriad platforms and homes, and keep a central gathering platform stable. The villagers are descendants of Arden's faithful who worshipped in a jungle temple until Arcuri's deal unloosed Tsathogga's demonic servants into the canyons. The villagers themselves remember little about their past other than legends and Arden's name handed down from their ancestors. The name Arcuri to them speaks of hideous evil. They adopted Arden's name for their village and consider him a "tree spirit." The villagers are current-

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ly a mix of tribalism and spirituality based on a belief that the trees sustain them in times of pain and suffering. The members of the tribe live in huts built of castoff limbs and palm fronds that are actually quite comfortable.

The village has few amenities other than those that tribe members provide. In fact, the tribe is on the edge of surviving, as the neighboring bugbear tribe has begun aggressively attacking the village, attempting to cross the single bridge linking the two forests. The villagers treat strangers cautiously, unless someone vouches for their presence.

Arden's Grove is the repository of the final days of the vault of Arden. The tribe has preserved the journal pages of their ancestors, placing them in clear resin and attaching them to carved tree branches as they dried.

The protected pages form a ring around the main platform of the village proper. No one within the village can read the texts, but they treat them with holy reverence just the same. Marring a page is a crime punishable by immediate death. The preferred method is to throw the offender from the tree bridge into the chasm in area 7-3.

The 32 journal pages were written by a worshipper of Arden named Delston of the Golden Bows, who was visited with horrific dreams one night showing the last stand of the faithful trapped in the vault with the demonic Arcuri. The accounts accurately detail the faithful of Arden hiding within the vault, and their despair when Arcuri turned on them. The pages also tell of the hordes of demons, and the battles that followed their summoning. Arcuri is mentioned as a "knight whose anger finally cracked her golden armor." While the pages do not detail Arcuri's transformation into a demonic knight, they do detail the rudimentary plan the worshippers hatched to trap the paladin. If the players read the journal pages, summarize the history of the vault, leaving out details of Arcuri's transformation.

K'thu Junoc (male human **Drd8**) minds the pages, keeping a close eye on them if visitors are around. He considers himself a priest of the "tree spirit Arden" since he doesn't know the god no longer exists. He knows little more about the pages, although he can fill guests in on the history of Arden's Grove. Once he warms up, K'thu Junoc regales listeners with many tales of the treetop village, from the first days of the tribe taking to the trees to escape the bulettes, to the arrival of the bugbears across the chasm.

Treemaster Amyx Tull (male fighter **Ftr9**) sees the arrival of characters as prophetic, as the tide has recently been turning against the small village as the bugbear's attacks have intensified. He beseeches characters to aid the village in destroying the bugbear menace. He offers whatever aid he can (although he does not offer the help of any of the villagers). The only fighter willing to accompany the characters into the bugbear stronghold across the tree bridge is the leader of the warriors, Angash Larl (male human **Ftr10**), who first designates his replacement should he not return.

7-3. The Tree Crossing

A deep chasm opens here on the jungle floor, splitting the forest. The warriors of Arden's Grove maintain a constant guard at a tree trunk stretching over the gaping chasm. The tree bridge, put here in the early days of the village to span the gulf, links the treetops of the forests. The tree bridge is a single massive tree in itself, 40ft in diameter, supported on both sides of the forest by equally massive trunks. It spans 200ft. The chasm below drops nearly 600ft to a rocky floor. Anyone falling from the tree bridge who can't save himself or who isn't rescued quickly dies from the massive damage.

The bridge is a heavily contested link between the forests, with the tribe of Arden's Grove on one side, and a village of tree-dwelling bugbears on the other. The bugbear village lies farther into the forest across the tree bridge.

The bugbears occasionally make forays across the bridge, but the archers of Arden's Grove more often than not turn them back. Similarly, the warriors of Arden's Grove have been unable to cross because of bugbear archers, a flight of trained wyverns and numerous tree hounds. Both sides now guard the tree bridge against invasion.

Arden's Grove keeps a minimum of 20 archers (**guard**) stationed in the trees on its side of the bridge. These archers keep a close eye out for any bugbears or other creatures attempting to cross to the village.

Crossing the bridge

Crossing the bridge is easy, if one dodges the bugbears' arrows and their guard creatures. Extreme movements such as running, fighting or jumping require a DC 15 Dex (Acrobatics) check to stay on the tree bridge.

The bugbears keep 15 **guards** here to protect their side of the bridge. All are ivybound. In addition, the bugbears have trained 4 **wyverns** to fly out of the tree branches and quickly attack anything flying near or walking across the tree bridge. The wyvern do not stay in the open for very long for fear of attracting a roc's attention, so they work together to pick off flying creatures before retreating into the treetops.

The bugbears also have a pack of 10 **tree hounds** they care for. Of these, 6 hounds are ivybound, having succumbed when their masters fed them. The others have resisted the ivy's presence so far. The tree hounds scamper out along the tree, breaking and running along the sides and even the underside of the tree bridge if attackers target them. Six dogs try to keep the front ranks of attackers occupied, while the others travel beneath the tree to attack characters in the rear of the party. They have been trained to bite an opponent, drag it to the side of the tree, and let it fall.

Ivybound Bugbear Guard (15): AC 17; HP 27 (5d8+5); Spd 30ft; Melee morningstar (+5, 2d8+3 piercing); **Ranged** javelin (+4, 30ft/120ft, 1d6+2 piercing); **SA** spore cloud (2/day, 5ft, DC 10 Con or become infected); **Str** +3, **Dex** +2, **Con** +1, **Int** -1, **Wis** +0, **Cha** -1; **Skills** Stealth +8, Survival +2; **Senses** darkvision 60ft; **Traits** brute, surprise attack (extra 2d6); **AL** CE; **CR** 1; **XP** 200.

Tree Hound (4): AC 14; HP 32 (5d8+10); Spd 40ft, climb 20ft; Melee bite (+4, 1d6+2 piercing plus grapple, escape DC 12), claw (+4, 1d4+2 slashing); **SA** pounce (20ft move then hit with claw, DC 12 Str or knocked prone, bite as bonus), rake (if grappled, then claw x2 as bonus); **Str** +2, **Dex** +3, **Con** +2, **Int** -4, **Wis** +1, **Cha** +0; **Skills** Perception +3, Stealth +7; **Senses** darkvision 30ft, keen smell; **Traits** camouflage; **AL** U; **CR** 1/2; **XP** 100. (**Monster Appendix**)

Ivybound Tree Hounds (6): AC 15; HP 32 (5d8+10); Spd 40ft, climb 20ft; Melee bite (+5, 1d6+3 piercing plus grapple, escape DC 12), claw (+5, 1d4+3 slashing); **SA** pounce (20ft move then hit with claw, DC 13 Str or knocked prone, bite as bonus), rake (if grappled, then claw x2 as bonus), spore cloud (2/day, 5ft, DC 10 Con or become infected); **Str** +3, **Dex** +3, **Con** +2, **Int** -4, **Wis** +1, **Cha** +0; **Skills** Perception +3, Stealth +7; **Senses** darkvision 30ft, keen smell; **Traits** camouflage; **AL** U; **CR** 1/2; **XP** 100. (**Monster Appendix**)

Wyvern (4): AC 13; HP 110 (13d10+39); Spd 20ft, fly 80ft; Melee bite (+7, 10ft, 2d6+4 piercing), claws (+7, 2d8+4 slashing), stinger (+7, 10ft, 2d6+4 piercing plus 7d6 poison, DC 15 Con half); **SA** multiattack (bite, stinger or in flight, claws for one attack); **Str** +4, **Dex** +0, **Con** +3, **Int** -3, **Wis** +1, **Cha** -2; **Skills** Perception +4; **Senses** darkvision 60ft; **AL** U; **CR** 6; **XP** 2300.

7-4. Bugbear village

The bugbear village sits above the lowest level of tree branches, although it is more haphazardly laid out than Arden's Grove. Once a part of Arden's Grove, a group of bugbears crossing the dangerous upper reaches of the canyons rappelled into the trees three years ago and quickly overwhelmed the villagers living on this side of the chasm. They would have taken the main village of Arden's Grove, but they were repulsed at the tree bridge.

For years, the bugbears devised ways to attack and enslave the villagers, usually only meeting failure. One unlucky scout, however, has changed the bugbears' plans. The scout ran into some **biting ivy** (see Sidebox) a month ago and has spread the infestation to several villagers. While some of the ivybound villagers believe the ivy is a gift meant to strengthen the tribe, others believe it is a curse set against them by the human villagers. The creatures don't realize the ivy is a death sentence unless cured. It is also clouding their minds and driving a growing obsession to take the main village. The bugbears are desperate to cross the bridge and overwhelm the humans. The constant battles have depleted the resources of both villages to the point that they are both barely surviving.

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Recent weeks have led to some serious power struggles within the village. Kor the Bald believes the ivy is a curse, while Tonnjo, one of the most powerful bugbear warriors, revels in the added strength and power the ivy gives him. Several weeks ago, Kor and Harim the Brash, the former chieftain of the tribe, led a small group along the canyon walls and into the main canyon to find a way to lead the rest of the village out of their present location. Kor also wanted to find a cure for the biting ivy that was starting to infest the villagers. A stone golem (area 10) killed Harim, but not before he broke the already damaged golem down. Kor took the strange staff the golem was holding and used it as a sign that he was deserving of leadership. Afraid of his clerical powers, the rest of the tribe, other than Tonnjo, quickly agreed. Whatever the political outcome of their power struggle, the human village is certain to face an overwhelming attack out of simple desperation on the part of the bugbears.

Besides Kor and Tonnjo, the bugbear tribe is made up of 25 **bugbears**, 15 of them ivybound. This number does not include the archers stationed along the bridge crossing.

A pack of 13 **trained tree hounds** also patrols the village platforms. These tree hounds run freely through the village and enter huts, Tonnjo's great hall and even Kor's cave if chasing an enemy. Eight of the animals are ivybound.

Bugbear (10): AC 16; HP 27 (5d8+5); Spd 30ft; Melee morningstar (+4, 2d8+2 piercing); **Ranged** javelin (+4, 30ft/120ft, 1d6+2 piercing); **Str** +2, **Dex** +2, **Con** +1, **Int** -1, **Wis** +0, **Cha** -1; **Skills** Stealth +6, Survival +2; **Senses** darkvision 60ft; **Traits** brute, surprise attack (extra 2d6); **AL** CE; **CR** 1; **XP** 200.

Ivybound Bugbear (15): AC 17; HP 27 (5d8+5); Spd 30ft; Melee morningstar (+5, 2d8+3 piercing); **Ranged** javelin (+5, 30ft/120ft, 1d6+3 piercing); **SA** spore cloud (2/day, 5ft, DC 10 Con or become infected); **Str** +3, **Dex** +2, **Con** +1, **Int** -1, **Wis** +0, **Cha** -1; **Skills** Stealth +8, Survival +2; **Senses** darkvision 60ft; **Traits** brute, surprise attack (extra 2d6); **AL** CE; **CR** 1; **XP** 200.

Tree Hound (5): AC 14; HP 32 (5d8+10); Spd 40ft, climb 20ft; Melee bite (+4, 1d6+2 piercing plus grapple, escape DC 12), claw (+4, 1d4+2 slashing); **SA** pounce (20ft move then hit with claw, DC 12 Str or knocked prone, bite as bonus), rake (if grappled, then claw x2 as bonus); **Str** +2, **Dex** +3, **Con** +2, **Int** -4, **Wis** +1, **Cha** +0; **Skills** Perception +3, Stealth +7; **Senses** darkvision 30ft, keen smell; **Traits** camouflage; **AL** U; **CR** 1/2; **XP** 100. (**Monster Appendix**)

Ivybound Tree Hound (8): AC 15; HP 32 (5d8+10); Spd 40ft, climb 20ft; Melee bite (+5, 1d6+3 piercing plus grapple, escape DC 12), claw (+5, 1d4+3 slashing); **SA** pounce (20ft move then hit with claw, DC 13 Str or knocked prone, bite as bonus), rake (if grappled, then claw x2 as bonus), spore cloud (2/day, 5ft, DC 10 Con or become infected); **Str** +3, **Dex** +3, **Con** +2, **Int** -4, **Wis** +1, **Cha** +0; **Skills** Perception +3, Stealth +7; **Senses** darkvision 30ft, keen smell; **Traits** camouflage; **AL** U; **CR** 1/2; **XP** 100. (**Monster Appendix**)

Tactics: If a fight breaks out within the village, the bugbears swarm en masse to destroy the intruders. The tree hounds are sent above to pounce on intruders as the bugbears attack from the front. In the chaos of the battle, ivybound bugbears and their normal counterparts begin to fight each other as well as the vines wrapping around the ivybound victims drive them into a battle frenzy.

7-5. The Dog Pens

The bugbears feed their tree hound pets here. Scraps of meat and bone litter the platforms, and the trees around the area are deeply gouged from the dogs sharpening their claws or climbing into the heights. Three packs are kept by the village, and are rotated to various areas. One pack is always at the tree bridge (area 12-3). Another is allowed to run free in the village. The third is allowed to sleep or hunt in this area. Currently, 9 **tree**

hounds (see stats above) hide high in the branches, waiting to pounce on prey crossing below them. Five are ivybound.

Tactics: The hounds allow intruders to get as near the center of their platform before pouncing out of the trees and attempting to hit as many people as possible. They then form into two snarling packs to circle intruders, darting in to bite and trying to yank people off the platform. The hounds later climb down the trees and retrieve anyone not consumed by bullets.

7-6. Bugbear Cemetery

Dying bugbears are brought to this treetop cemetery to die when they become too weak from the ivy vines draining the life from them. Huge patches of **biting ivy** grow from the myriad bodies left in the trees. Vines also hang from tree limbs and lie in patches on the platforms. Walking through the area risks infestation by the biting ivy unless the character makes a DC 10 Dex save.

7-7. Entry walkways

Kor the Bald, once the tribe's ruler, now faces competition from Tonnjo and the ivybound bugbears. He fears being attacked and has placed 2 trained **tree hounds** on the walkways. The tree hounds bark as soon as they see someone coming up one of the walkways. The sound warns Kor that someone is coming.

Tree Hound (2): AC 14; HP 32 (5d8+10); Spd 40ft, climb 20ft; Melee bite (+4, 1d6+2 piercing plus grapple, escape DC 12), claw (+4, 1d4+2 slashing); **SA** pounce (20ft move then hit with claw, DC 12 Str or knocked prone, bite as bonus), rake (if grappled, then claw x2 as bonus); **Str** +2, **Dex** +3, **Con** +2, **Int** -4, **Wis** +1, **Cha** +0; **Skills** Perception +3, Stealth +7; **Senses** darkvision 30ft, keen smell; **Traits** camouflage; **AL** U; **CR** 1/2; **XP** 100. (**Monster Appendix**)

7-8. Undead Guards

Kor guards his cave with 6 **human zombies** made from the corpses of several villagers that attempted to attack the bugbears a few months ago. The small platform before the cave entrance is flat and easy to traverse. It is also an excellent place for the zombies to attack.

Zombie (6): AC 8; HP 22 (3d8+9); Spd 20ft; Melee slam (+3, 1d6+1 bludgeoning); **Immune** exhaustion, poison; **Str** +1, **Dex** -2, **Con** +3, **Int** -4, **Wis** -2 (+0), **Cha** -3; **Senses** darkvision 60ft; **Traits** undead fortitude (upon 0hp, Con save with DC 5 + damage taken, then drop to 1hp); **AL** NE; **CR** 1/4; **XP** 50.

GM Note: While the zombies are no match for the characters, they are designed slow them down enough for Kor to prepare for an attack

7-9. Kor's Cave

The cave opens up into a 100ft-by-90ft cavern where Kor the Bald, a **bugbear shaman** makes his home. The vast cavern is filled with various totems, mostly the skulls of various jungle animals but also a wide variety of human skulls. The far corner of Kor's cave is a sleeping area while the center portion of the cave floor has been cleared. Unholy symbols are carved into the stone.

When Kor hears the barking of the tree hounds and the sounds of battle outside his cave he begins preparing for battle. He is expecting Tonnjo and some of his supporters, not the characters.

Kor the Bald, Male Bugbear Shaman: AC 14; HP 44 (8d8+8); Spd 30ft; Melee stone staff (+4, 2d8+2 piercing); **SA** spells (Wis +5, DC 13); **Str** +2, **Dex** +2, **Con** +1, **Int** +0, **Wis** +3, **Cha**

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+0; **Skills** Stealth +6, Survival +2; **Senses** darkvision 60ft; **Traits** brute, surprise attack (extra 2d6); **AL** CE; **CR** 3; **XP** 700.

Spells (slots): 0 (at will)—*resistance, sacred flame, thaumaturgy*; 1st (4)—*bane, inflict wounds, protection from evil and good*; 2nd (3)—*hold person, silence, spiritual weapon*; 3rd (2)—*bestow curse, spirit guardians*.

Equipment: stone staff, unholy symbol of Orcus.

Negotiating: As mentioned above, Kor believes the biting ivy is going to overwhelm his tribe. He can't understand why Tonnjo and the other infected bugbears won't let him cure them. And he doesn't understand why they aren't more concerned by the recent deaths caused by the ivy. If given an opportunity to rescue the remainder of his tribe, he is willing to keep his supporters back while the characters fight Tonnjo and the ivybound bugbears. He can also be convinced to take his remaining uninfected supporters to a different part of the jungle. But he secretly plans to return and destroy the human village when his tribe is strong enough. No amount of negotiation can get Kor to relinquish his staff.

Kor's Staff: Kor seized power after the former chieftain, Harim the Brash, was killed on an expedition. While the stone golem (area 10) pummeled Harim, Kor tried to intervene, but only succeeded in breaking free the staff held by the golem. The bronze staff is tipped with a sphere decorated with holy symbols of Arden on one end and the head of a falcon on the opposite end. One half of the key to Arcuri's vault (**Key 1A**) is inside the sphere, which rattles slightly when the staff is shaken. The staff is not magical. Kor believes otherwise, and cannot be convinced to part with it. The portion of the key itself is a fist-sized, complicated piece of lead with Arden's symbol engraved upon it. The globe has a small door in the side to retrieve the key.

If this half of the key is joined with **Key 1B** (area 10), it can be used to open the door to Arcuri's vault without setting off any of the traps found there (see area 12). **Key 1A** can be used alone to unlock the locks on the door, but doing so sets off the entire series of traps and wards.

Treasure: In addition to the staff and his belongings, Kor has a chest holding the following items: *potion of flying*, a ruby encrusted holy symbol of Arden (350gp), 2 garnets worth 50gp each, 30pp, 150gp, and several sets of black robes.

7-10. Tonnjo's Hall

Once a dining hall for the human villagers of Arden's Grove, the invading bugbears used this as a meeting place. The hall is the largest structure in either of the tree villages, using the nearby trees to support the massive walls and roof. The walls are freestanding structures supported by vines looped into the treetops, while stout vines suspend the roof overhead. No central supports are within the hall. Numerous vines and ivy strands hang from the ceiling 30ft overhead. Tree limbs grow through the vast hall's upper reaches, further supporting the ceiling. Dried flaps of bulette hide cover the open sides of the hall to block the wind.

Tonnjo has converted the area into his headquarters. The ivybound bugbears following him sleep here as well. Unless called to battle elsewhere, Tonnjo is usually attended by six of his ivybound warriors. Tonnjo and his soldiers attack any humans on sight.

Tonnjo, Ivybound Bugbear Chief: **AC** 18; **HP** 65 (10d8+20); **Spd** 30ft; **Melee** morningstar (+7, 2d8+5); **Ranged** javelin (+7, 30ft/120ft, 1d6+5 piercing); **SA** multiattack (morningstar x2); **Str** +5, **Dex** +2, **Con** +2, **Int** +0, **Wis** +1, **Cha** +0; **Skills** Intimidation +2, Stealth +6, Survival +3; **Senses** darkvision 60ft; **Traits** brute, surprise attack (extra 2d6), warrior's heart (save tactical advantage against charm, fright, paralysis, poison, stun, and sleep); **AL** CE; **CR** 3; **XP** 700.

Ivybound Bugbears (6): **AC** 17; **HP** 27 (5d8+5); **Spd** 30ft; **Melee** morningstar (+5, 2d8+3 piercing); **Ranged** javelin (+5, 30ft/120ft, 1d6+3 piercing); **SA** spore cloud (2/day, 5ft, DC 10 Con or become infected); **Str** +3, **Dex** +2, **Con** +1, **Int** -1, **Wis** +0, **Cha** -1; **Skills** Stealth +8, Survival +2; **Senses** darkvision 60ft; **Traits** brute, surprise attack (extra 2d6); **AL** CE; **CR** 1; **XP** 200.

Combat Tactics: The ivy has made Tonnjo and his minions rather overconfident and aggressive. They are presently planning an all-out attack on Kor the Bald, followed shortly thereafter by an all-out attack on the village. Tonnjo and his group attack any non-bugbears they see and do not stop until they or their foes are dead. Tonnjo prefers to demonstrate his superiority by fighting a single opponent by himself while the other bugbear warriors prefer to surround targets and attack until a single target is dead.

8. The Mad Centaur

The ground is rocky and few weeds push through. An 80ft-diameter, pebble-covered clearing opens from the narrow ravine. The path narrows on the other side. A 20ft-wide hole, steam rising from its depths, mars the ground near the center of the clearing. Broken ruins extend from the walls of the canyon toward the hole.

Rugurah, an outcast **centaur shaman**, worships at this pit. Rugurah belonged to a nearby tribe of centaurs, but he lived as an outcast because of his unusual aggression and strange ideas. Recognizing Rugurah's innate skill with nature magic, the tribal shaman took the centaur under his guidance, but the tribe simply did not accept him. Rugurah's mind finally clouded with dementia and paranoia, and his actions became chaotic and compassionless. Eventually, after an unfortunate incident with a miscast *giant insect* spell and a scorpion, Rugurah was declared unfit and exiled.

Rugurah made his way to the canyons where he has found some measure of solace trying to befriend a hydra. The **hydra** has not yet been as open to the relationship. The centaur has not given up on peace offerings to the untamable beast, however. Rugurah feels a deep kinship with the hydra and does everything in his power to aid and protect his "friend."

Rugurah, Centaur Drd8: **AC** 14; **HP** 97 (6d10+12 plus 8d10+16); **Spd** 80ft; **Melee** pike (+7, 10ft, 1d10+4 piercing), hooves (+7, 2d6+4 bludgeoning); **Ranged** longbow (+5, 150ft/600ft, 1d8+2 piercing); **SA** charge (30ft move, pike, extra 3d6 piercing), multiattack (pike, hooves or longbow x2), spells (Wis +6, DC 14); **Str** +4, **Dex** +2, **Con** +2, **Int** +0, **Wis** +3, **Cha** +0; **Skills** Athletics +7, Perception +4, Survival +4; **Traits** wild shape, circle of the land (forest); **AL** N; **CR** 5; **XP** 1800.

Spells (slots): 0 (at will)—*druidcraft, poison spray, resistance, thorn whip*; 1st (4)—*cure wounds, faerie fire, entangle, thunderwave*; 2nd (3)—*barkskin, flaming sphere, hold person, spider climb, spike growth*; 3rd (3)—*call lightning, dispel magic, plant growth, sleet storm*; 4th (2)—*divination, freedom of movement, giant insect, grasping vine*.

Equipment: hide barding, pike, longbow, 40 arrows, horseshoes of speed

Rugurah is tattooed with crude images of a multi-headed beast and wears his long, tangled hair in braids entwined with bones of small animals. His teeth are filed to points. Rugurah self-medicates himself with herbal intoxicants when he feels forlorn. He carries a greatclub and his pike, which is the only item he kept from his days with his tribe and a longbow. He worships the hydra as a deity, but even he is unclear how he receives his spells.

Hydra: **AC** 15; **HP** 172 (15d12+75); **Spd** 30ft, swim 30ft; **Melee** bite (+8, 10ft, 1d10+5 piercing); **SA** multiattack (bite x5+); **Str** +5, **Dex** +1, **Con** +5, **Int** -4, **Wis** +0, **Cha** -2; **Skills** Perception +6; **Senses** darkvision 60ft; **Traits** hold breath (1hr), multiple heads (25+ damage in single turn kills one head; grows 2 heads for each head killed unless fire, +10hp/head regrown), reactive heads (extra reaction for each head for opportunity attacks), wakeful; **AL** U; **CR** 8; **XP** 3900.

Rugurah is fully aware of the approach of any visible creatures. Several friendly birds sound warning cries of approaching intruders. He waits for characters to approach the hole before he attacks.

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Inside the pit is the cavernous lair of the hydra. Amid the bones and debris lies the hydra's treasure and Rugurah's multiple offerings. 230pp, 2330gp, 5623sp, 12cp, a gold-plated wooden shield embossed with the holy symbol of Freya (250gp), a silver elf skull with a black widow etched into the forehead (400gp), a scorched scroll (useless), a full suit of plate mail, a *wand of magic missiles*, a +1 *dart* (1-in-6 chance of roaring like thunder when it hits for 1d6 additional points of damage), 12 varied rusted swords and 10 shields.

9. The Searing Sarcophagi

The stench of rotting eggs fills the clearing, which is noticeably warmer where the path leads around a huge pool of surging water. Ruddy clay coats the banks around the boiling pool, but the water is clear except for occasional rust-colored streaks. The hot spring churns up ochre-colored clay and mineral deposits. During the rainy season, this is just one of the many springs that contribute to the reddish color of the river.

The 70ft-diameter pool reeks of sulfur. Gurgling and splashing disrupts the otherwise peaceful ravine. The soaked ground and wet rocks are evidence this spring occasionally develops into a geyser. The majority of the exposed water is covered with a crust of yellow-and-orange mineral deposits. The pool is approximately 50ft deep.

Three half-submerged sarcophagi tilting at various angles sit in the middle of the pool. Radiant light shines from the center tomb through thin cracks in its broken outer stone layer. The coffins rest on a large pillar of rock that disappears into the waters. The lower third of each tomb is below the water level. Thick clumps of orange and copper rock encrust each coffin. Elaborate, mineral-encrusted decorations adorn each coffin, although it is difficult to make out details from the bank.

The sarcophagi are the tombs of three followers who served Hel, the goddess of pestilence. Arden cursed the temple that once sat here for mar-

ring the beauty of the canyons, causing it to sink deep into the earth. The temple fell into the volcanic waters, leaving only a 20ft-wide pillar supporting the three tombs that survived the destruction. The center coffin is the home of 2 cunning **will-o'-the-wisps** that share the space with the entombed body of a priest. The wisps enter the coffin through the small cracks in the outer layer and have no treasure. The coffin to the right is the resting place of Nika tal' Shazar, a **mummy priestess** of Hel whose mummified body has been altered by the sulfur springs.

The third watertight tomb contains the dried remains of another priestess. She wears her ceremonial robes, jewelry and prized possessions. The body is adorned with a gold-and-ruby encrusted death mask (1750gp), golden bracers (500gp), two gold band rings with solitaire rubies (750gp each), a *staff of healing*, and a *necklace of fireballs*.

The pool is under Hel's protection. Anyone not wearing a holy symbol of the goddess suffers a -1 penalty to attacks and saves, and is hit by a *dispel magic* (9th level spell slot). The pool is also much larger than it appears. A thin 10ft-wide crust of calcite minerals covers the edge of the pool. More than 100 pounds on the crust causes the crust to break. Any creature exceeding these limits punches a hole through the coating and plunges into the boiling water, DC 10 Dex (Acrobatics) check to leap backward from the hole and avoid falling in. Those in the water take 8d6 points of heat damage each round they are submerged. Victims in the water also find it very difficult to climb out as the crust crumbles.

Will-o'-Wisp (2): AC 19; HP 22 (9d4); Spd 0ft, fly 50ft (hover); Melee shock (+4, 2d8 lightning); SA consume life (bonus, 0hp still alive, DC 10 Con, regain 3d6 hp), invisibility, variable illumination (bonus, 5ft to 20ft bright with equal dim); Immune exhaustion, grapple, lightning, paralysis, poison, prone, restraint, unconscious; Resist acid, cold, fire, necrotic, normal weapons, thunder; Str -5, Dex +9, Con +0, Int +1, Wis +2, Cha +0; Senses darkvision 120ft; Traits ephemeral, incorporeal movement; AL CE; CR 2; XP 450.

Nika tal' Shazar, Mummy Priestess of Hel Clr9: AC 13; HP 116 (9d8+18 plus 9d8+18); Spd 20ft; Melee rotting fist (+6, 2d6+3 bludgeoning plus 3d6 necrotic plus mummy rot, DC 14 Con); SA dreadful glare (60ft, frightened until next turn, DC 13 Wis), multiattack (rotting fist, dreadful glare), spells (Wis +6, DC 14); Immune charm, exhaustion, fright, necrotic, paralysis, poison; Resist fire, normal weapons; Str +3, Dex +0, Con +2, Int -1; Wis +3 (+6); Cha +2; Senses darkvision 60ft; Traits divine strike (+1d8 necrotic), touch of death (1/day, extra 14 necrotic); AL LE; CR 7; XP 2900.

Spells (slots): 0 (at will)—*chill touch, guidance, resistance, thaumaturgy*; 1st (4)—*bane, bless, false life, inflict wounds, ray of sickness*; 2nd (3)—*blindness/deafness, hold person, ray of enfeeblement, spiritual weapon*; 3rd (2)—*animate dead, bestow curse, dispel magic, spirit guardians, vampiric touch*; 4th (3)—*blight, freedom of movement, death ward*; 5th (1)—*antilife shell, flame strike, cloudkill*.

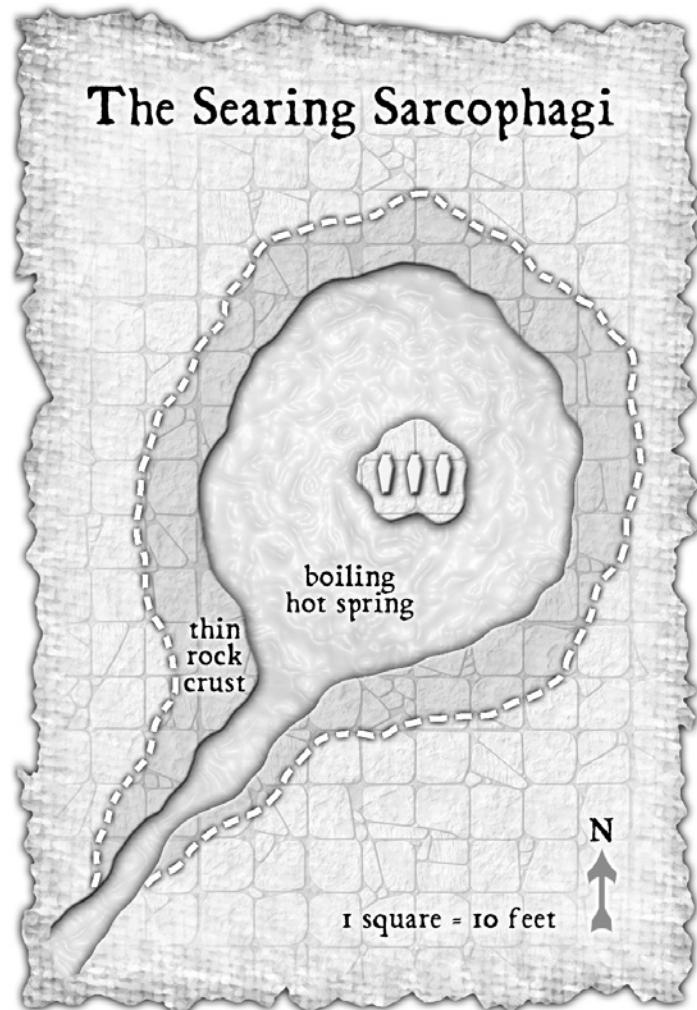
Equipment: *ring of protection* (also allows the wearer to walk atop any body of water)

Nika tal' Shazar is encrusted with mineral deposits from the boiling waters of a hot spring. She appears to be made of stone at first glance. She still wears an imitation of the jeweled crown she wore in life, and numerous other worthless trinkets peek through the mineral-encrusted bandages wrapped about her body.

The atmosphere and steam inside Nika tal' Shazar's coffin toughened her weathered hide over the past few centuries, making her fire resistant. Her wrappings are hardened with mineral deposits. The hardened cloth wrappings do not add to her armor class, but they do present a stone-like appearance that may confuse characters as to her true nature.

Tactics: The wisps attack if someone breaks through the stone crust. If characters cross the boiling water, the wisps retreat, but return once the mummy awakens. It has been awhile, but they have worked with Nika tal' Shazar before.

Nika tal' Shazar calls on her goddess for aid inside the tomb before characters open the lid. Hel grants the request and sends 2 **giant devilfish sharks** to protect her priestess. Nika removes her ring and sinks into the





depths of the spring if combat goes against her. The sharks leap from the water to snatch anyone swimming, boating, walking on the surface or flying within 10ft of the boiling water.

Shark, Giant Devilfish (2): AC 13; HP 126 (11d12+55); Spd 0ft, swim 50ft; **Melee** bite (+9, 3d10+6 piercing); **Immune** fire, poison; **Str** +6, **Dex** +0, **Con** +5, **Int** -2, **Wis** +0, **Cha** -3; **Skills** Perception +3; **Senses** blindsight 60ft; **Traits** blood frenzy, water breathing; **AL** LE; **CR** 5; **XP** 1800.

10. The Golem in the Vines

The brush flourishes here, because the soaring trees are thin and sparse. Large stone foundations of ancient buildings rise from the ground, a sign of a lost settlement. Vines and other plants envelop the stones in a living arbor that hangs throughout the area.

A building near the center of the ruins is partially intact. Large pillars ring a 60ft-square base, but the wooden roof they supported is rotted, overgrown by a canopy of flowering vines. The vine-covered columns surround a smaller enclosed room in the center of the structure protected by a huge door of bronze. The corroded and weather-beaten door once displayed intricate designs and patterns. The legs and lower torso of a large stone statue stand to the right of the door, a symbol of Arden still visible on what remains of its chest. On the left stands a complete 9ft-tall statue of a muscular, hawk-headed man. Time and nature have not been kind to the idol. Despite few recognizable features, the statue is obviously a god or similar being. The statue holds a bronze staff tipped with a sphere. The other end of the staff displays the head of a falcon.

This small temple and settlement was dedicated to Arden before it fell into ruin long before Arden's followers fled to the canyons and the vault. The center room's ceiling collapsed, and the treasure was looted or carried away by the river. A **stone golem**, one of the temple's original guardians, remains here adhering to its assigned duties. The golem attacks any living creature that approaches the door. This has provided extra food for 4 **bloodsuckles** that now grow within the ruined temple.

Golem, Stone: AC 17; HP 178 (17d10+85); Spd 30ft; **Melee** slam (+10, 3d8+6 bludgeoning); **SA** multiattack (slam x2), slow (recharge 5-6, 10ft, 1+ creatures, 1 min, DC 17 Wis repeat or can't use reactions, speed halved, and only 1 attack per turn); **Immune** charm, exhaustion, frighten, non-adamantine normal weapons, paralysis, petrify, poison, psychic; **Str** +6, **Dex** -1, **Con** +5, **Int** -4, **Wis** +0, **Cha** -5; **Senses** darkvision 120ft; **Traits** immutable form, magic resistance, magic weapons; **AL** U; **CR** 10; **XP** 5900.

Bloodsuckle (4): AC 13; HP 57 (6d10+24); Spd 0ft; **Melee** constrict (+5, 10ft, 1d4+3 bludgeoning plus 1d12 piercing plus grapple, escape DC 13); **Immune** blindness, charm, deafness, fright, prone, stun, unconscious; **Str** +3, **Dex** +0, **Con** +4, **Int** -2, **Wis** +0, **Cha** +0; **Senses** blindsight 60ft; **Traits** create host (*dominate person*, DC 14 Wis), host sense, seed; **AL** U; **CR** 3; **XP** 700. (*Fifth Edition Foes* 30)

Tactics: The golem activates when any living creature approaches within 5ft of the door. It attacks until defeated or until all intruders are driven at least 50ft from the portal. While the golem attacks, the vines drop tendrils from above to snare creatures. It is very likely a vine could suspend a character while the golem pummels the victim like a tetherball. The vine does not attack the golem, as it only attacks living creatures.

One of the golems was recently destroyed by several bugbears, partly through a great deal of luck, and its staff was stolen. That golem's staff is presently held by Kor the Bald (area 7-9). The body of Harim the Brash, one of the bugbears, is still decaying at the base of one of the bloodsuckles.

Key 1B is hidden in the sphere atop the staff of the golem currently protecting the lost temple. This half of the total key will not open the locked vault door. Characters need **Key 1A** to unlock the door (area 7-9). On the other hand, it does deactivate several of the magical traps and wards placed on the vault door (area 12). If **Key 1B** is joined with **Key 1A**, the door can be opened and the traps bypassed.

GM Note

This area, or the vault itself (area 12), could be used as locations for large, expansive dungeons that were forgotten over time. Once opened, trapped demons or other creatures could rapidly move in to use the treasure-rich dungeons as a base of operations.

pushed 10ft and knocked prone); **Str** +4, **Dex** +0, **Con** +3, **Int** -2, **Wis** +3, **Cha** -1; **Skills** Perception +7; **Senses** darkvision 60ft; **Traits** labyrinthine recall, reckless; **AL** CE; **CR** 3; **XP** 700.

12: The Lead Door

The bend in the canyon exposes halves of rooms lining the eroded walls. Over the years, the river has eroded through the levels of the vaults, leaving them open to the canyons. The worked stone chambers and passages lead to debris-filled barriers blocking the entrance into the catacombs. A partial staircase leads down from the upper levels. At the top of the shattered steps is a grand chamber with one side entirely open to the canyon. Near the base of the steps is a lead door. The door is intact and securely embedded into the iron-streaked wall. The raised symbols and decorations on the door have been worn down by years of exposure, but symbols and representations of Arden, and Arden's faithful, are still easy to identify.

The Key

A traveling priest named Injaiod returned to the vault of Arden shortly after Arcuri's conversion to evil. Before he could open the door, Arden showed him horrible visions of the dangers awaiting him inside. Injaiod decided that sealing the vault from the outside would help stop the demonic Arcuri should she ever escape the trap set by the worshippers who had sacrificed their lives within. A wizard companion helped him set a series of traps on the door, and Injaiod split the key into two pieces to make it more difficult to open the portal. He took the halves of the key to a fallen temple of Arden and hid the pieces in the heads of two staves held by stone golems.

If **Key 1A** (area 7-9) and **Key 1B** (area 7-10) are joined, they can be used to open the door safely, if releasing a demonic knight could be considered "safe." If one half of the key is discovered, a *locate object* spell reveals the location of the other half. Without the key, the door is very difficult although not impossible to open.

As one would expect of an unopened door left openly exposed to the world, the door itself is locked and very heavily warded by magical traps. The door possesses an extraordinarily complex lock that must be opened with a key to avoid setting off a series of traps. Without the key, opening the door is a monumental task because of the godly intervention sought to seal the portal (a DC 25 Dex check with proficiency in thieves' tools). Failure sets off one of the traps listed below, however. *Dispel magic* has DC 25 of disabling one of the five magical traps cast on the door. Failure sets off the currently active trap. If the door is unlocked and opened without the key, any remaining traps that have not been triggered or disabled activate. Traps reset 1 minute after being triggered, unless disabled by *dispel magic*. There is no mechanical way to disable these traps.

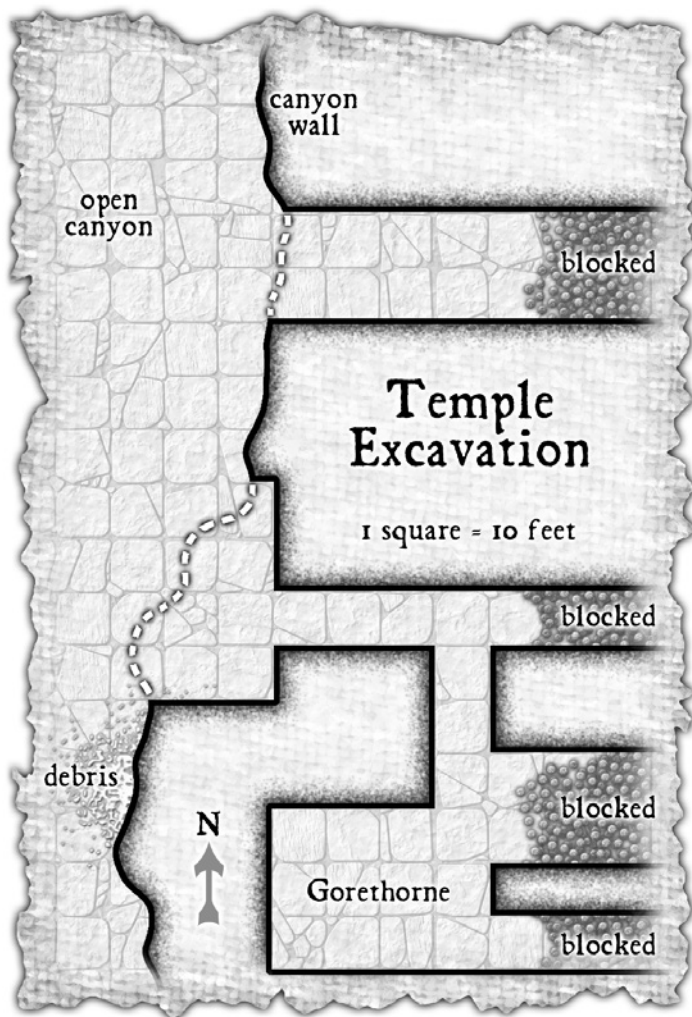
The traps must be disabled one at a time in the order given:

Trap 1: Prismatic Spray: 60ft cone, *prismatic spray*, DC 15 Dex half.

Trap 2: Acid Fog: 20ft radius, 2d6 acid damage for 10 rounds, DC 15 Con half.

Trap 3: Radiant Fire: 30ft-radius burst, 10d6 radiant damage vs. Evil creatures, DC 15 Dex half. Good unaffected.

Trap 4: Ice Spray: 60ft cone, *cone of cold*, 8d8 cold damage, DC 15 Con half.



II. The Bull Driver

The canyon walls are cross-sections of worked stone passages leading into empty chambers. The river carved through the underground catacombs of one of the original hidden temples to Arden. Centuries of earthquakes, floods, and land shifts have destroyed much of the remaining temple rooms. A band of 4 **minotaurs** led by a **demonic minotaur** named Gorethorn are presently working on excavating farther into the temple rooms hidden here. While traveling, Gorethorn discovered one of the first rooms and found several valuable diamonds inside. Although little more treasure has been discovered, he drives his band to excavate farther. Gorethorn believes that there is a network of hidden catacombs and crypts somewhere beneath the temple. He is convinced that the forgotten graves contain a wealth of abandoned treasure.

Gorethorn and his subordinates fight desperately to protect their treasure, convinced that anyone coming into the area is going to try to get into the catacombs first.

Gorethorn, Demonic Minotaur: **AC** 15; **HP** 123 (13d12+39); **Spd** 40ft; **Melee** greataxe (+8, 3d12+5 slashing), gore (+8, 3d8+5 piercing); **SA** charge (10ft move, gore, extra 3d8 piercing, DC 16 Str or pushed 10ft and knocked prone), multiattack (greataxe x2); **Immune** poison; **Resist** cold, fire, lightning; **Str** +5 (+8), **Dex** +0, **Con** +3 (+6), **Int** -2, **Wis** +3 (+6), **Cha** -1; **Skills** Perception +9; **Senses** darkvision 120ft; **Traits** labyrinthine recall, magic resistance, reckless; **AL** CE; **CR** 7; **XP** 2900.

Minotaur (4): **AC** 14; **HP** 76 (9d10+27); **Spd** 40ft; **Melee** greataxe (+6, 2d12+4 slashing), gore (+6, 2d8+4 piercing); **SA** charge (10ft move, gore, extra 2d8 piercing, DC 14 Str or

Trap 5: Incendiary Cloud: 20ft radius, *incendiary cloud*, 10d8 fire damage per round for 10 rounds, DC 15 Dex half for each round in cloud.

Obviously, opening the door without the key can be quite a trial. Using other spells on the door (such as *disintegrate*) will destroy a single trap. All of the traps must be destroyed before the door can be opened in this manner, however.

Attempts to bypass the door entirely meet with failure because of the lead walls and magical energies active inside the vault. Characters trying to get in without finding the keys are likely to expend a great deal of effort and spells to do so. If the characters use up their high level spells before getting into the vault and freeing Arcuri, well, it was their decision.

13. The Vault of Arden

Cracked and broken, the walls and floors of this vast room hum with power. Sitting against the far wall, a golden coffer glows with a radiant, peaceful light. The dais the coffer sits upon is pristine and unmarked, in contrast to the widespread damage to the rest of the room. More than 20 skeletons fill the room, all posed in elaborate displays, incorporating broken stone and bits of cracked tile. Statues of knights pulled from their pedestals are incorporated into the displays, with the skeletons standing on or genuflecting to the knights.

The **demonic knight** Arcuri has been trapped within this room for thousands of years, cut off from her demonic master and waiting for someone to open the vault's door. During the first years of her imprisonment, Arcuri hacked at the floors and walls, scarring and destroying the frescos of Arden's life, and destroying one of the statues of Arden's sun knights. The only area off-limits to her was the dais where the coffer containing the relics of Arden sits. After her anger subsided, she took out her frustration on the bones of her victims by dabbling in a former passion: sculpture. The bones formed about the room are the remains of Arden's followers, posed as Arcuri saw fit for her "art." Three of the statues of knights are carved stone with bits of glass and chips of stone adorning their armor. Arcuri has similarly added broken glass and chips of stone to her own armor.

The skeletons, decorated with chips of broken mosaics and glazed glass driven into their remains, stand silently in their displays. Bits of glass shoved inside their skulls cause their eye sockets to glint when light strikes them. The extra material added to the remains holds the skeletons together.

The magic imprisoning Arcuri here is broken when the vault door is opened, or when the walls are somehow breached from the outside. Once freed, she gains access to all of her innate spell abilities, including the ability to summon a glabrezu (50%).

Arcuri, Demonic Knight: AC 18; HP 136 (16d8+64); Spd 30ft; **Melee** greatsword (+9, 2d6+4 slashing); **SA** breath of unlife (recharge 5–6, 10ft cone, 6d10 necrotic, DC 17 Con half, if reduced to 0hp becomes shadow demon in 1d4 rounds), innate spells (Cha, DC 16), multiattack (greatsword x2, breath of unlife if available), summon demon (1/day plus special, DC 18 Cha, 1 glabrezu); **Immune** poison; **Resist** cold, fire, lightning, normal weapons; **Str** +5 (+9), **Dex** +1, **Con** +4 (+8), **Int** +2, **Wis** +3 (+7), **Cha** +4 (+8); **Skills** +4 proficiency bonus to all ability checks; **Senses** truesight 120ft; **Traits** aura of fear (60ft, frightened, 1min, DC 16 Wis repeat), magic resistance; **AL** CE; **CR** 10; **XP** 5900.

Innate Spells: at will—*detect magic*; 2/day—*dispel magic*; 1/day—*fireball*, *wall of ice*, *power word stun*.

Special: Arcuri's foul agreement with Tsathogga allows her an additional attempt to summon a glabrezu for each living, intelligent creature she kills.

Tactics: Once her powers are restored, Arcuri immediately attempts to summon 1 **glabrezu**. She then charges toward the characters using her breath of unlife ability on as many as she can before entering melee combat. If she notices spellcasters staying away from combat, she steps back to cast a *fireball* at them as she attempts to make her way out of the vault. She fights to slay those who released her, hoping to slow word of her escape until she can contact her demonic master and formulate a plan to terrorize the land.

Demon, Glabrezu: AC 17; HP 157 (15d10+75); Spd 40ft; **Melee** pincer (+9, 10ft, 2d10+5 bludgeoning plus grapple, escape



CANYONS OF ARCURI

All of the tablets and items of treasure listed below are housed in golden coffers protected by a *hallow* aura. The other valuable items include a *flame tongue longsword*, a *ring of evasion*, *slippers of spider climbing*, an *amulet of proof against detection and location*, a *horn of blasting*, and a *crystal ball*. The GM should feel free to alter or substitute items particular to their campaign or the difficulty the characters may or may not have had during the adventure.

Authors' Note

The following portion of the canyon was designed as part of the original *Canyons of Arcuri* adventure first published in *Glades of Death* by Necromancer Games. It was cut from the final adventure, however, but not lost. It is presented here as an additional challenge for characters navigating the massive canyon complex.

14. Broken Trees Gorge

A small, dirty stream is all that remains of a mighty waterway that until recently fed into the Quel River. Lush vegetation now lies shriveled and brown along the stagnant trickle of dirty water remaining in the dry riverbed. All but the toughest trees have succumbed to the dwindling water supply. Dead trunks stand at odd angles, some trees collapsed into the brown mud, their brittle roots sticking upward.

The reason for the dying river is easy to discover: A new dam built from fallen tree trunks fills a narrow gorge between the canyon's high walls. The sloping structure is the creation of a vicious tribe of troglodytes and their leader, Jomit Vorg. The troglodytes are now setting up huts at the base of the massive tree dam. Jomit lives in a sanctum within the dam itself. The marshland in front of the dam is perfect for the troglodytes, and the new lake filling the canyon behind the dam provides an abundant food source. Jomit sends the troglodytes out into the canyons to attack travelers and a few of the smaller outposts. He plans to eventually move against nearby villages and towns with a growing force of unique troglodytes he is fathering. Jomit's "children" are one of the few clues that the troglodyte leader isn't what he seems.

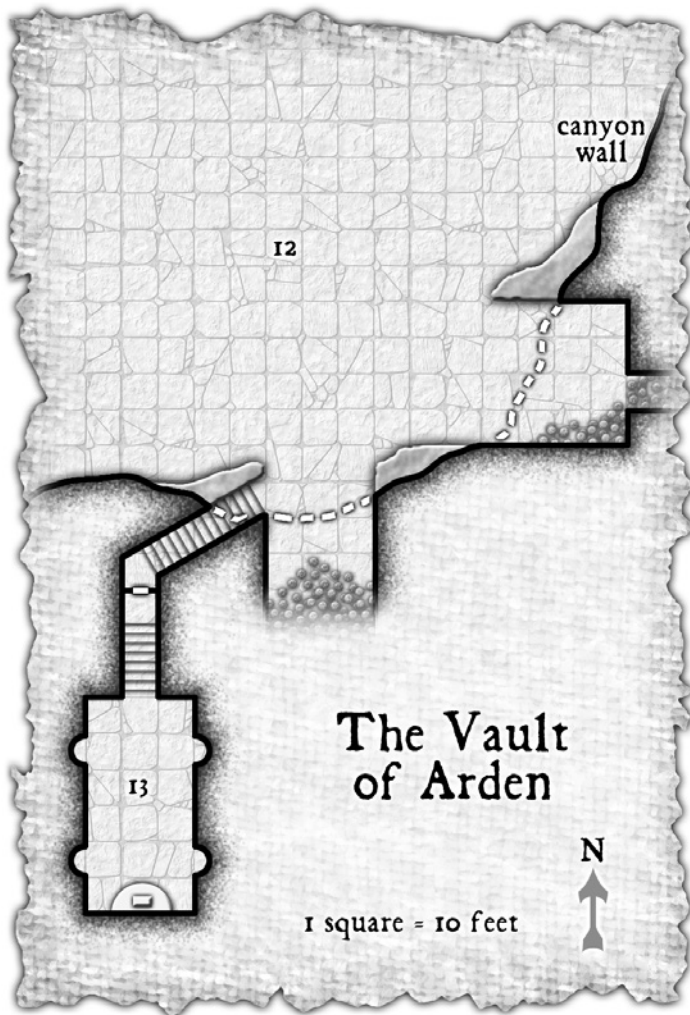
Years ago, a power-hungry mage named Zanadt Gray summoned a hezrou demon into his tower — but the mage failed to take proper protections to contain the beast. Jomit Vorg easily killed the mage, but found his way home blocked by the spellcaster's magic. Since that time, Jomit has used his influence and power — and a hat that disguises his true form — to take over the tribe of troglodyte zealots. The self-proclaimed quasi-deity rules the tribe with an iron fist.

Jomit doesn't care who he hurts. Anyone who has moved against his dam and troglodyte servitors has met the wrath of the hezrou. The last attempt was by a lowly band of gnolls somehow convinced they could take down the troglodyte tribe. Jomit assumes the gnolls simply came down out of the mountains and saw the new village as easy pickings.

The gnoll attack was actually orchestrated by the dryad Ileana, who is suffering greatly from the dam's construction. The dryad lives farther downstream in a centuries-old willow tree that is wasting away since the river was blocked. She keeps a wary eye on the tribe's activities, but dares not move against them again on her own. The water grows fouler each week, and her tree's health is rapidly deteriorating. Ileana makes dangerously long and distant excursions in hopes of finding someone to save her tree and put a stop to the evil thriving upstream. Although she is not proud of her actions, she goes as far as charming beings into helping her. She senses an unnatural evil behind the tribe, and fears confronting the troglodytes directly. While she can indeed feel his presence, Ileana does not know Jomit's true nature.

14-1. The Grotto of the Willow

A sludge-filled brook trickles water down a wide creek bed of what was once a thriving stream. Algae and a slick olive coating cover the rocks. Dry plants line the cracked riverbanks and surrounding land. Cracks



DC 15), fist (+9, 2d4+2 bludgeoning); **SA** innate spells (Int, DC 16), multiattack (pincers x2, fist x2 or pincers x2, spell); **Immune** poison; **Resist** cold, fire, lightning, normal weapons; **Str** +5 (+9), **Dex** +2, **Con** +5 (+9), **Int** +4, **Wis** +3 (+4), **Cha** +3 (+7); **Senses** truesight 120ft; **Traits** magic resistance; **AL** CE; **CR** 9; **XP** 5000.

Innate Spells: at will—*darkness*, *detect magic*, *dispel magic*; 1/day—*confusion*, *fly*, *power word stun*

Treasure

A vast amount of treasure is in this room, although most of it is in the form of magically preserved clay tablets detailing the prayers of Arden's faithful, the history of Arden's church and temples, and descriptions of certain rites and rituals. Despite being valued at more than 50,000gp, it is almost impossible to find a proper buyer because worship of Arden is all but extinct. Javialt gladly pays 1000gp for the right to study the tablets and record what is on them. There are 80 gold holy symbols of Arden, each worth 2gp in gold value or approximately 10gp to a collector.

New Faith

The relics and tablets discovered here might allow the characters to rekindle faith in Arden. The god is depicted as hawk-headed, muscular man wearing a short skirt of precious metals and jewels, and is thought of as a lesser avatar of the sun god Ra, though this is debatable. Arden was slain by Tsathogga, the demon frog god, and has virtually no worshippers left.

QUESTS OF DOOM 3

spread in patterns across the dried, gray mud. The taint is spreading outward from the streambed as nearby trees soak up the foul water and collapse. A drooping willow tree of colossal dimensions looks ready to fall over. Piles of brittle leaves and branches litter the ground around the dry trunk. The tree lives, but barely.

A gnoll sits quietly beneath the tree. An unnatural smile of joy crosses the gnoll's well-groomed face as it adjusts a tiara of dried dandelions resting atop its head. The **dryad** Ileana lives in the willow. She recently charmed Damjak, a **gnoll pack lord**, and persuaded Damjak's brethren to attack the newly built dam. The small gnoll band didn't fare very well against the well-trained troglodytes under Jomit's command. Damjak survived the ill-fated mission, but barely made it back to the willow. Ileana healed the gnoll and "retains" him to protect her tree from any wandering creatures. She isn't happy having the ill-mannered creature around, but feels more secure knowing she has some protection.

Ileana desperately pleads with any characters who approach her willow. She tells them everything she knows about the dam and the troglodyte village. While the dryad is as sickly and frail as her tainted willow, she is still intelligent and quite beautiful. She does not know Jomit's true demonic nature, but she feels there is something vile and aberrant about the troglodyte leader. If her pleas are refused, she tries to persuade the characters by magic or other means to aid her.

Damjak, Gnoll Pack Lord: AC 15; HP 49 (9d8+9); Spd 30ft; **Melee** glaive (+5, 10ft, 1d10+3 slashing) or bite (+5, 1d4+3 piercing); **Ranged** longbow x2 (+4, 150ft/600ft, 1d8+2 piercing); **SA** incite rampage (recharge 5–6, 30ft, rampage trait target that can hear then make melee attack as reaction), multiattack (incite rampage, glaive x2 or longbow x2), rampage (reduce target to 0hp with melee, bonus to move half speed and make a bite); **Str** +3, **Dex** +2, **Con** +1, **Int** –1, **Wis** +0, **Cha** –1; **Senses** darkvision 60ft; **AL** CE; **CR** 2; **XP** 450.

Ileana, Dryad: AC 11 (16 with *barkskin*); HP 22 (5d8); Spd 30ft; **Melee** wooden dagger (+2, 1d4 piercing or +6, 1d8+4 piercing with *shillelagh*); **SA** fey charm (30ft, DC 14 Wis), innate spells (Cha, DC 14); **Str** +0, **Dex** +1, **Con** +0, **Int** +2, **Wis** +2, **Cha** +4; **Skills** Perception +4, Stealth +5; **Senses** darkvision 60ft; **Traits** magic resistance, speak with beasts and plants, tree stride; **AL** N; **CR** 1; **XP** 200.

Innate Spells: at will—*druidcraft*; 3/day—*entangle*, *goodberry*; 1/day—*barkskin*, *pass without trace*, *shillelagh*.
Equipment: wooden dagger, *potion of healing* (x3).

Ileana won't send Damjak with characters, as she fears being attacked while unprotected. Damjak is still Chaotic, despite the dryad's control. He snarls at characters, jealous of any who gain the dryad's attention. He won't attack unless commanded to do so by Ileana, however. While in the company of the dryad, he is smitten by her beauty and as polite as a gnoll can be.

If the dam is destroyed and the river again runs through her grotto, Ileana offers characters a token of her goodwill. She presents the most charismatic male with a small, folded bundle of twigs she keeps inside her willow. When a command word is spoken, the twigs unfold into a small boat capable of carrying 6 people. A second command word causes the boat to fold back in on itself. She has little else to offer characters other than a safe place to rest if the troglodytes are slain and the river restored to normal. She sends Damjak away once the dam falls.

14-2. The Guard Pool

The trees and underbrush are still thick here, although most are near death. A 500ft-diameter pool of muck fills the center of the dwindling stream. A small stream of dirty water escapes the muck and continues downstream toward the dryad's tree.

An unhappy **chuul** lives in the pond. Jomit forced the creature out of its previous lair in a cavern above the dam and into this small cramped pool of sludge much farther downriver. It is fed quite well by a small band of troglodytes posted here, although it would like nothing more than to dine

on its reptilian keepers. It happily devours anything it can catch, so the troglodytes make sure to stay away from the muck's edge.

The troglodytes use the chuul as a first line of defense against unwanted visitors to their new village upstream. Watching over the creature are 5 **troglodyte warriors** and an exiled **troglodyte shaman**. The shaman flees to warn the village of hostile intruders if the battle goes against the group, although the overconfident Jomit dismisses the warning. Neither the troglodytes stationed here nor the chuul has any significant treasure aside from a few polished skulls.

The troglodyte shaman thinks alerting Jomit and the village might allow him back into the main tribe's good graces. Jomit actually exiled the troglodyte because he didn't want him turning his underlings against him. Jomit thought he might prove useful as a pawn later, so he let him live—just not in the village. He likely kills the shaman if he returns to the village against his orders.

Tactics: The troglodytes know where the chuul waits for prey. They attempt to lure characters closer to the waiting chuul by launching spears and retreating into the dried brush on the far side of the chuul's muck pool. Once the chuul attacks, the troglodytes throw another round of spears as the shaman casts *web* over the area. The troglodytes attack anyone trapped in the webbing with their spears.

Chuul: AC 16; HP 93 (11d10+33); Spd 30ft, swim 30ft; **Melee** pincer (+6, 10ft, 2d6+4 bludgeoning plus grapple, escape DC 14); **SA** multiattack (pincer x2, if grapple, add tentacles), tentacles (if grappled, poisoned and paralyzed for 1 min, DC 13 Con repeat); **Immune** poison; **Str** +4, **Dex** +0, **Con** +3, **Int** –3, **Wis** +0, **Cha** –3; **Skills** Perception +4; **Traits** amphibious, sense magic (120ft like *detect magic*); **AL** CE; **CR** 4; **XP** 1100.

Troglodyte Warrior (5): AC 13; HP 26 (4d8+8); Spd 30ft; **Melee** bite (+4, 1d4+2 piercing), spear (+4, 1d8+2 piercing); **Ranged** spear (+4, 20ft/60ft, 1d6+3 piercing); **SA** multiattack (bite, spear x2 or ranged spear x2); **Str** +2, **Dex** +0, **Con** +2, **Int** –2, **Wis** +0, **Cha** –2; **Skills** Stealth +2; **Senses** darkvision 60ft; **Traits** chameleon skin (tactical advantage to hide), pack tactics, stench (5ft, DC 12 Con or poisoned until start of creature's next turn), sunlight sensitivity; **AL** CE; **CR** 1; **XP** 200.

Equipment: spear (x5), shield, 1d6sp.

Troglodyte Shaman: AC 14; HP 39 (6d8+12); Spd 30ft; **Melee** bite (+4, 1d4+2 piercing), spear (+4, 1d8+2 piercing); **Ranged** spear (+4, 20ft/60ft, 1d6+3 piercing); **SA** multiattack (bite, spear x2 or ranged spear x2); **SA** spells (Wis +5, DC 13), touch of death (bonus, expend spell slot to extra 3d6 necrotic with melee, increase by 1d6 for each level above 1st); **Str** +2, **Dex** +0, **Con** +2, **Int** +0, **Wis** +3, **Cha** +0; **Skills** Medicine +7, Stealth +2, Religion +2; **Senses** darkvision 60ft; **Traits** chameleon skin (tactical advantage to hide), pack tactics, stench (5ft, DC 12 Con or poisoned until start of creature's next turn), sunlight sensitivity; **AL** CE; **CR** 2; **XP** 450.

Spells (slots): 0 (at will)—*guidance*, *mending*, *resistance*, *thaumaturgy*; 1st (4)—*bane*, *command*, *inflict wounds*; 2nd (3)—*blindness/deafness*, *hold person*, *spiritual weapon*; 3rd (3)—*bestow curse*, *dispel magic*, *spirit guardians*.

Equipment: leather armor, shield, spear (x5), feather pendant.

14-3. Crocodile Tears of Blood

The high canyon walls surrounding the tributary narrow to 100ft across. A large pool of stagnant water blocks the journey up the narrow gorge. The brackish water spans 350ft to dry land on the other side. Dead trees and snags jut from its murky depths. A wooden bridge made of logs floating lengthwise crosses to the opposite bank. Ropes tied to the rotting stumps hold the bridge in place. Torches on the far bank blaze in the near darkness.

CANYONS OF ARCURI

Aargarshh, the troglodyte tribe's former **high priest**, lives here with a retinue of 6 **troglodytes** who left the village after disagreeing with Jomit over his beliefs about the troglodyte pantheon. Aargarshh maintains an uneasy peace with Jomit, although the hezrou is happy to see the priest gone. The troglodytes in the village still revere Aargarshh's wisdom and power, however, so Jomit is hesitant to kill the old shaman outright. The troglodytes live in six crude mud huts along the far bank of the cesspool. The mud huts contain various troglodyte trinkets and totems.

Tactics: Aargarshh prepares his minions and **giant crocodile** pet if warned by the guards or cleric downstream (**Area 14-2**). He directs the crocodile into a gap in the bridge, letting the crocodile's body act as one of the floating logs. The crocodile takes up a 30ft-long section of the bridge. The troglodytes make a stand on the other side of the crocodile/log and launch spears while slowly retreating. They do not turn their backs; they want to see the chaos caused when the monstrous beast rears up. Characters on top of the crocodile when it attacks have a 35% chance of being flung 1d6x5ft into the swamp. The murky swamp is 25ft deep and filled with stagnant water. The crocodile cannot use its tail slap until it leaves the confines of the log bridge.

Unless the characters state they are examining the bridge (unlikely though it might be, given the troglodyte menace before them), they won't notice the waiting crocodile. If they are examining the bridge, a successful DC 15 Wis (Perception) check will spot the beast. Characters charging across the wooden bridge are caught off guard.

Aargarshh, Troglodyte High Priest: AC 15; HP 65 (10d8+20); Spd 30ft; **Melee** bite (+6, 1d4+3 piercing), +1 spear (+7, 1d8+4 piercing); **SA** multiattack (bite, spear x2); **SA** spells (Wis +7, DC 15), touch of death (bonus, expend spell slot to extra 3d6 necrotic with melee, increase by 1d6 for each level above 1st); **Str** +3, **Dex** +1, **Con** +2, **Int** +1, **Wis** +4 (+7), **Cha** +1 (+4); **Skills** Medicine +8, Stealth +3, Religion +3; **Senses** darkvision 60ft; **Traits** chameleon skin (tactical advantage to hide), pack tactics, stench (5ft, DC 12 Con or poisoned until start of creature's next turn), sunlight sensitivity; **AL** CE; **CR** 5; **XP** 1800.

Spells (slots): 0 (at will)—*guidance, mending, resistance, thaumaturgy*; 1st (4)—*bane, command, inflict wounds*; 2nd (3)—*blindness/deafness, hold person, spiritual weapon*; 3rd (3)—*bestow curse, dispel magic, spirit guardians*; 4th (3)—*banishment, death ward, freedom of movement*; 5th (2)—*flame strike, insect plague*.
Equipment: hide armor, +1 spear, ring of animal influence, sashes, jar of ochre dye.

Description: Aargarshh is larger than the other troglodytes and often bullies the others to remind them of their proper place. His scales are dyed deep ochre, and he wears sashes of teeth and leather. His armor is made of the hardened scales of troglodytes he has slain. Aargarshh wants to win acceptance back into his beloved tribe and wishes wholeheartedly to see Jomit Vorg dethroned — and dead, if possible. The giant crocodile has belonged to Aargarshh's family for decades, with each new generation passing on control of their beloved "pet." The tribe controls and trains the giant crocodile using a *ring of animal influence*, an heirloom in the family. The crocodile is none too happy about the dam restricting its hunting area.

Troglodyte (6): AC 11; HP 13 (2d8+4); Spd 30ft; **Melee** bite (+4, 1d4+2 piercing), claw (1d4+2); **SA** multiattack (bite, claw x2); **Str** +2, **Dex** +0, **Con** +2, **Int** -2, **Wis** +0, **Cha** -2; **Skills** Stealth +2; **Senses** darkvision 60ft; **Traits** chameleon skin (tactical advantage to hide), stench (5ft, DC 12 Con or poisoned until start of creature's next turn), sunlight sensitivity; **AL** CE; **CR** 1/4; **XP** 50.

Crocodile, Giant: AC 14; HP 85 (9d12+27); Spd 30ft, swim 50ft; **Melee** bite (+8, 3d10+5 piercing plus grapple, target is restrained, escape DC 16), tail (+8, 10ft, target not grappled, 2d8+5 bludgeoning, DC 16 Str or knocked prone); **SA** multiattack (bite, tail); **Str** +5, **Dex** -1, **Con** +3, **Int** -4, **Wis** +0, **Cha** -2; **Skills** Stealth +5; **Traits** hold breath (30min); **AL** U; **CR** 5; **XP** 1800.

14-4. The Mud Wall

A crude 30ft-tall dam made of dried earth stands in ruins across the canyon floor. The mud wall stretches from canyon wall to canyon wall. A 30ft-wide expanse is missing from its center. This early attempt at a dam didn't hold back the river and collapsed outward soon after it was finished. The larger dam farther upstream has been much more successful.

Six mud shelters are built on the upstream side of the failed dam. Around the huts are 12 **troglodytes** and 5 **troglodyte warriors**. Wooden drums surround a large fire pit in the mud. The troglodytes sleep in four of the huts, and use the others to house slaves.

Troglodyte (12): AC 11; HP 13 (2d8+4); Spd 30ft; **Melee** bite (+4, 1d4+2 piercing), claw (1d4+2); **SA** multiattack (bite, claw x2); **Str** +2, **Dex** +0, **Con** +2, **Int** -2, **Wis** +0, **Cha** -2; **Skills** Stealth +2; **Senses** darkvision 60ft; **Traits** chameleon skin (tactical advantage to hide), stench (5ft, DC 12 Con or poisoned until start of creature's next turn), sunlight sensitivity; **AL** CE; **CR** 1/4; **XP** 50.

Troglodyte Warrior (5): AC 13; HP 26 (4d8+8); Spd 30ft; **Melee** bite (+4, 1d4+2 piercing), spear (+4, 1d8+2 piercing); **Ranged** spear (+4, 20ft/60ft, 1d6+3 piercing); **SA** multiattack (bite, spear x2 or ranged spear x2); **Str** +2, **Dex** +0, **Con** +2, **Int** -2, **Wis** +0, **Cha** -2; **Skills** Stealth +2; **Senses** darkvision 60ft; **Traits** chameleon skin (tactical advantage to hide), pack tactics, stench (5ft, DC 12 Con or poisoned until start of creature's next turn), sunlight sensitivity; **AL** CE; **CR** 1; **XP** 200.

Equipment: spear (x5), 1d6sp.

Goblin (12): AC 12; HP 7 (2d6); Spd 30ft; **Melee** club (+1, 1d4-1 bludgeoning); **SA** nimble escape (disengage or hide as bonus); **Str** -1, **Dex** +2, **Con** +0, **Int** +0, **Wis** -1, **Cha** -1; **Skills** Stealth +6; **Senses** darkvision 60ft; **AL** NE; **CR** 1/8; **XP** 25.

Kobold (8): AC 12; HP 5 (2d6-2); Spd 30ft; **Melee** club (+0, 1d4-2 bludgeoning); **Str** -2, **Dex** +2, **Con** -1, **Int** -1, **Wis** -2, **Cha** -1; **Senses** darkvision 60ft; **Traits** pack tactics; **AL** LE; **CR** 1/8; **XP** 25.

Tactics: The troglodytes command the slaves to attack while they launch spears. The troglodytes don't care if they hit a few slaves during the assault. The slaves attack with spades, clubs and rocks.

Three slaves don't follow the troglodytes' commands. The halflings Irving and Noggun (both **scouts**) are weak from weeks of mistreatment at the hands of the troglodytes, while the dwarf Peeble Duk (male dwarf **scout**) is just a happy-go-lucky sort enjoying his latest adventure. The halflings just want to go home. They attack alongside their fellow slaves, but intentionally miss at every opportunity. If it weren't for Peeble Duk, the goblins and kobolds would have slain the halflings long ago. The troglodytes get little use from Irving and Noggun, but keep them around to torture and neglect.

If the troglodytes order the slaves to attack, it takes Peeble Duk a few rounds to figure out what all the commotion is about. He follows the halflings' example by intentionally missing the characters with rocks, thinking this must be what the troglodytes want.

Peeble Duk and the halflings know of a narrow ledge along the canyon wall that leads to the top of Jomit Vorg's dam. This dangerous path circumvents the main troglodyte village being established in front of the dam, and might allow characters to get around the larger force without an alarm sounding. The halflings and Peeble Duk know that the Troglodyte King lives inside the dam, but they aren't aware of his true identity.

Description: Peeble Duk lives in an eternal state of filth. He is bald on top and wears his russet-colored hair in long, unwashed strands. His tattered beard contains debris, grime and portions of his last few meals. He has worn his meager clothing so long that his chest hairs grow through it.

Peeble Duk does not act like a mistreated slave. He sees the silver lining in even the worst situation. He is a mystery to the troglodytes, who hav-

en't been able to break his indomitable spirit. He has an incredible tolerance for pain and often whistles as he completes daunting and disgusting tasks. If he weren't such a dedicated worker, the troglodytes would have devoured him long ago. Peeble Duk often gets facts and events confused; by his best recollection, he has been the troglodytes' prisoner for several years (he's wrong; it's been just a few months). Peeble Duk is foolish and kindhearted, and wants nothing more than to please his master or companions. If the troglodytes are disposed of, he seeks out the leader of the party (preferably a paladin or other highly charismatic character) and attempts to become his loyal follower. He is quite a nuisance. Despite his good intentions, his actions usually end in complete disasters.

14-5: The Troglodyte Village

A 100ft-tall dam constructed of timber and hardened clay blocks the ravine. The canyon narrows here to 100ft wide between the walls. The logs are stacked in perfect symmetry, forming a huge sloping wall to contain the water. A small waterfall cascades down the center of the stair-step dam. Near the top of the wooden structure, a hole tunnels into the face of the dam. The 8ft-diameter hole is 80ft from the floor of the ravine and 20ft down from the top of the dam. The area reeks of sulfur and troglodyte musk.

Fifteen small huts of brushwood and soil are built haphazardly at the base of the dam. Troglodytes moving through the small village punish goblin and kobold slaves with leather whips and pointed spears. The goblins and kobolds work at patching wet spots in the dam's base with fresh clay carried in wicker baskets. A large drum made from stretched gnoll skin sits in the middle of the huts. The severed heads of Damjak's gnoll brethren sit on pikes stuck into the mud around the troglodyte village. Torches cast feeble light throughout the village.

The village contains 20 **troglodyte warriors** and 30 **troglodytes**, plus 48 **goblins** and 25 **kobolds** they force to build and reinforce the dam. Most of the troglodytes sleep in the cool, dark shelters. The troglodytes force the numerous slaves to complete tasks such as repairing the dam, skinning deer or building more shelters.

Troglodyte (30): AC 11; HP 13 (2d8+4); Spd 30ft; Melee bite (+4, 1d4+2 piercing), claw (1d4+2); **SA** multiattack (bite, claw x2); **Str** +2, **Dex** +0, **Con** +2, **Int** -2, **Wis** +0, **Cha** -2; **Skills** Stealth +2; **Senses** darkvision 60ft; **Traits** chameleon skin (tactical advantage to hide), stench (5ft, DC 12 Con or poisoned until start of creature's next turn), sunlight sensitivity; **AL** CE; **CR** 1/4; **XP** 50.

Troglodyte Warrior (20): AC 13; HP 26 (4d8+8); Spd 30ft; Melee bite (+4, 1d4+2 piercing), spear (+4, 1d8+2 piercing); **Ranged** spear (+4, 20ft/60ft, 1d6+3 piercing); **SA** multiattack (bite, spear x2 or ranged spear x2); **Str** +2, **Dex** +0, **Con** +2, **Int** -2, **Wis** +0, **Cha** -2; **Skills** Stealth +2; **Senses** darkvision 60ft; **Traits** chameleon skin (tactical advantage to hide), pack tactics, stench (5ft, DC 12 Con or poisoned until start of creature's next turn), sunlight sensitivity; **AL** CE; **CR** 1; **XP** 200.

Equipment: shield, spear (x5), 1d6sp.

Goblin (48): AC 12; HP 7 (2d6); Spd 30ft; Melee club (+1, 1d4-1 bludgeoning); **SA** nimble escape (disengage or hide as bonus); **Str** -1, **Dex** +2, **Con** +0, **Int** +0, **Wis** -1, **Cha** -1; **Skills** Stealth +6; **Senses** darkvision 60ft; **AL** NE; **CR** 1/8; **XP** 25.

Kobold (25): AC 12; HP 5 (2d6-2); Spd 30ft; Melee club (+0, 1d4-2 bludgeoning); **Str** -2, **Dex** +2, **Con** -1, **Int** -1, **Wis** -2, **Cha** -1; **Senses** darkvision 60ft; **Traits** pack tactics; **AL** LE; **CR** 1/8; **XP** 25.

Tactics: If attacked in a frontal assault, the troglodytes send the slaves to attack while they launch spears. They strike the large drum in the center of the village to warn Jomit and his elite guards inside the dam. The clay-covered huts are flame retardant, so fire-based spells and attacks have little effect on those inside (resist fire).

Scaling the Dam

While the path along the canyon wall offers the best route to the top, enterprising — or just plain foolish — characters may attempt a frontal assault on the massive structure. While this isn't impossible, it is quite difficult.

The troglodyte dam rises 100ft from the dry riverbed, sloping upward at an angle of 65 degrees. Narrow stairs up the center of the dam access the center hole where Jomit lives. From the ground to the hole, characters must climb 80ft upward. Climbing the stairs is strenuous, requiring DC 10 Con save to ascend without becoming fatigued and suffering a level of exhaustion. Creatures falling down the steps take 1d4 points of damage for every 10ft climbed. The clay packed around the logs at the base of the dam somewhat cushion the fall.

The troglodytes in the village immediately see anyone trying to climb the stairs, and sound the alarm to warn Jomit of intruders. Jomit is likely to "greet" these unexpected visitors by sending out his demonic troglodyte spawn to make the climb much more difficult. The demon Jomit casts spells from the top of the dam if necessary to aid his offspring.

14-5A. The Ledge

Just before rounding a bend and entering the outskirts of the troglodyte village, characters come across a 2ft-wide ledge that rises steadily upward along the canyon wall. Slaves used the ledge to get to the dam during its construction, but the winding path is now mostly forgotten. The ledge starts at ground level and eventually winds its way to the top of the dam 100ft above the village. Dead tree branches and the natural darkness within the canyon provide ample cover to anyone creeping quietly along the ledge.

Although characters might still want to move with caution and care, there is little chance of falling from the ledge unless combat or other extreme actions are attempted. The overconfident troglodytes post no lookouts or guards on the ledge, but characters who make a lot of noise are sure to be noticed. Peeble Duk may need to be told not to yodel or repeatedly spit over the edge. The troglodytes have no real reason to pay attention to anyone climbing along the ledge, and even if they do, they're likely to think the characters are just more slaves heading to Jomit's throne room. The GM could require characters to make DC 10 Dex (Stealth) check once they reach the top of the dam. If a check fails, a young troglodyte warrior spots the characters and runs to an adult. The older troglodytes ignore the whelp.

14-5B. The Top of the Dam

The wedge-shaped dam is 30ft wide at the top and more than 100ft thick at its base. The structure spans the width of the canyon. The clay covering the dam is hardened to brick-like firmness. The other side of the dam reveals a long narrow lake that winds through the ravine upstream for as far as the eye can see. A thick layer of olive sludge cakes the water for hundreds of feet. The tops of submerged trees rise from the still water in some places. Vultures and other scavengers lead comfortable lives in the unnatural sanctuary above the stagnant water. Layers of dead fish and oily vegetation wash up against the dam.

A set of stairs carved into the face of the dam leads 20ft down to a 10ft-wide ridge formed from a massive tree trunk. An 8ft-wide hole in the center of the ridge slopes down into the dam's interior.

If an alarm sounds, Jomit and his guards direct combat from the top of the dam. Jomit stays at the top and orders his guards and children into battle, if needed. He *teleports* to attack obvious clerics.

14-5C. The Throne Chamber of the Troglodyte King

The hole in the face of the dam descends into a large room within the upper portion of the dam. The ceiling is 20ft above the packed-clay floor. The cut and splintered ends of logs supporting the dam jut into the room. A putrid stench violates the vicinity. A huge chair of tree trunks and bones sits against the far wall. Tattered skins and rotting furs lie in piles. An extinguished fire pit fills the center of the room. A spit with a burnt and partially devoured satyr corpse stands over the hearth. Numerous bones and skulls hang from twine attached to the ceiling. Hundreds of pale leathery eggs protrude from a sand pile in a side nook.

Standing near the fire pit are 4 **demonic troglodytes** with huge bat-like wings. Each has red smoldering eyes. Around the base of the throne rest 6 **troglodyte concubines**. **Jomit Vorg**, who appears to be a troglodyte of immense proportions, sits idly in the chair. He roars with pleasure at unexpected guests.

The half-fiend troglodytes are Jomit's spawn. He is proud of his offspring, and literally expects to raise an army of these foul creatures. He plans to eventually march on neighboring villages when his children are grown. The other female troglodytes are his chosen mates to bear and raise his offspring.

The seat of Jomit's throne opens to reveal a cache of collected treasure. The lid is **trapped** with thick porcupine quills worked into the wood and tipped with poison. Anyone raising the lid must make a DC 15 Con save or be pricked by one of the poisoned quills (poisoned until *lesser restoration* cast). The cache contains 647gp, a silver serving platter (15gp), handfuls of cheap gemstones (100gp total; Jomit uses them as trinkets for his troglodyte concubines), six diamonds (200gp each), a small onyx cube covered in strange brass symbols (100gp if sold to a collector), a bone and fish scale "crown" (from Jomit's predecessor), and a *horn of blasting*.

Tactics: The demonic troglodytes attack anyone entering the room without proper escort. The concubines attempt to flank intruders. Jomit drops his guise only if any of his "children" are slain. He then tears into the killer with unbound vengeance. Jomit fights to the death, believing he is invincible.

The troglodyte village ignores the sounds of normal battle from the king's chamber (they've heard much worse). But the tribe responds en masse to unusual sounds caused by a *lightning bolt* or similarly destructive spells. If alerted, the troglodytes arrive at the top of the dam in 5 rounds. They must climb the 65-degree angle and are fatigued when they arrive at the top (1 level of exhaustion).

Jomit Vorg, The Troglodyte King, Hezrou Demon: AC 16; HP 136 (13d10+65); Spd 30ft; Melee bite (+7, 2d10+4 piercing), claw (+7, 2d6+4 slashing); SA multiattack (bite, claw x2); Immune poison; Resist cold, fire, lightning, normal weapons; Str +4 (+7), Dex +3, Con +5 (+8), Int -3, Wis +1 (+4), Cha +1; Senses darkvision 120ft, telepathy 120ft; Traits magic resistance, stench (10ft, DC 16 Con or poisoned until start of creature's next turn); AL CE; CR 8; XP 3900.

Equipment: *hat of disguise*.

Demonic Troglodyte, Spawn of Jomit Vorg (4): AC 14; HP 60 (8d8+24); Spd 30ft; Melee bite (+5, 1d8+3 piercing), claw (+5, 1d6+3); SA multiattack (bite, claw x2); Immune poison; Resist cold, fire, lightning; Str +3 (+5), Dex +2, Con +3 (+5), Int -3, Wis +0 (+3), Cha -2; Skills Stealth +4; Senses darkvision 120ft; Traits chameleon skin (tactical advantage to hide), stench (10ft, DC 13 Con or poisoned until start of creature's next turn), sunlight sensitivity; AL CE; CR 2; XP 450.

Troglodyte Concubine (6): AC 11; HP 13 (2d8+4); Spd 30ft; Melee bite (+4, 1d4+2 piercing), claw (+4, 1d4+2); SA multiattack (bite, claw x2); Str +2, Dex +0, Con +2, Int -2, Wis +0, Cha -2; Skills Stealth +2; Senses darkvision 60ft; Traits chameleon skin (tactical advantage to hide), stench (5ft,

DC 12 Con or poisoned until start of creature's next turn), sunlight sensitivity; AL CE; CR 1/4; XP 50.

Destroying the Dam

The dam is built of soft clay, rock and waterlogged wood. Days of manual labor would be needed to dismantle the dam to its bursting point. It is much stronger at its base than in the top 20ft. It holds up well against assault and won't burn because of the wet wood.

The dam does have one weak point, however: Jomit Vorg's throne chamber. If the *horn of blasting* in his treasure cache is blown within the chamber, it causes cracks to spread down the entire structure as the seams burst under the sonic assault.

Anyone who remains in the throne room after blowing the horn sees water blast into the room within two rounds with considerable force. The geysers require anyone in the chamber to make a DC 10 Dex save to avoid being blown out the entrance by the water pressure (and possibly falling 80ft to the base of the dam). At the end of 5 rounds, the pressure on the walls crushes the chamber like an egg (killing anyone still in the chamber). The GM should give characters intent on staying in the chamber some warning of the coming disaster: the walls shake; logs split from the pressure and fall into the room; and holes explode as jets of water shoot into the chamber.

The room's disintegration weakens the dam, causing cracks to spread all the way to the base. Once the cracks spread, the rest of the dam crumbles within 1d6+2 rounds, releasing millions of gallons of water down the ravine to lay waste to all in its path.

Fortunately for Ileana, the smaller abandoned dam (area 14-4) slows the destructive force of the rushing water. The second dam, although ruined, is strong enough to save everything downstream from complete devastation.

Those standing on the ledge (area 14-5A) have no trouble staying out of harm's way as the water sweeps the dam away in a destructive wave. They'll have to wait hours until the water subsides to a tolerable current to climb down, however. Anyone caught in the flood suffers 6d8 bludgeoning damage each round (DC 15 Dex half) as the water tumbles the creature downstream, slamming them into the canyon walls the entire way. After 5 rounds, characters still in the water must make another save (DC 15 Dex) or take 4d6 bludgeoning damage as they slam into the abandoned dam (area 14-4). In any case, characters and troglodytes caught in the maelstrom reach the end of the turbulent water at the old dam in 5 rounds. Here, the water is simply rough and characters may swim the rapids to escape the deluge and pull themselves up the muddy banks.

Once the dam is destroyed, the river quickly washes away the taint spread by the troglodyte tribe. The unnatural "lake" contained behind the dam quickly washes downriver, carrying away dirt and debris. The river returns to its normal depths within a day. Ileana greets returning characters with open arms. She already looks much healthier just from the murky water already flowing past her willow home.

Ending the Adventure

The adventure ends once Arcuri is destroyed or released into the canyons bearing her name. Characters may still face more encounters as they leave the canyons. The canyons also can be used as a home for forgotten dungeons, lost temples, or other locations that fit into the GM's campaign. Entering and leaving the canyons should become easier over time as the characters learn of different hazards, but one can just as easily claim that other demons and creatures trapped in various parts of the canyons might get free over time.

Discovering Arden's tablets and relics can allow the characters to help rekindle a faith in a god of good. While trying to restart the fledgling religion, evil gods, especially Tsathogga, might send their priests to put an end to Arden's returning power.

If Arcuri escapes, she becomes a constant thorn in the characters' sides, hunting them endlessly out of devotion to her dark god. She does her best to foil any plans they might have to resurrect Arden.

The canyons themselves might also become a source of income, with the characters selling their knowledge of the canyons to prospectors searching for gems or precious metals. They might also sell their services as guards. They could even set up mines of their own hoping to strike it rich.

My Blue Oasis

By Tom Khauss

It is far better to rule one oasis than lord over a continent of endless sand. At least that is what a popular proverb says, but what if one could turn that same barren wasteland into a blue paradise? In the desert, water is worth its weight in gold, especially in the eyes of the environment's most rapacious creature and a wizard obsessed with unlocking the secret of transforming a tiny crystalline rock into a lush desert spring.

My Blue Oasis is a 12th-level adventure that takes the participants across the desert's burning sands and into the depths of the earth beneath the Oasis of Al-Marak in search of the last remaining fragment from a cosmic impact in the very distant past. Hidden within this minute bit of space debris is a monumental discovery capable of replanting the seeds of life in a desolate landscape or sowing devastation on a mass scale. The birth of new civilizations or the demise of existing ones depends upon who uncovers the find first — the heroes, a greedy beast, or a man consumed by his own obsession.

Adventure Background

The land itself never forgets. Time may bury or conceal its wounds, but they never truly heal. The injuries left behind from primordial impacts fade over the ages, though some residual scars always remain for those who know where to look. Ages ago, a race of subterranean fey creatures excelled at finding these gouge marks. These intrepid explorers scoured the ravaged planetary surfaces and the depths of the earth searching for the remnants of these extraterrestrial collisions. Their expertise yielded astounding finds, unearthing precious minerals and metals with alien properties and newfangled uses. Yet, some things buried deep below the ground are not meant to be discovered, and the consequences for those that do can forever alter the destiny of an individual — and an entire race.

Origins of Chass

One day while traveling across a remote stretch of desert, a large group of fey colonists stumbled upon a massive, freshwater lake that defied all rational explanation. The strange anomaly puzzled them. They sought an explanation, so some of their party delved into the earth in search of an answer, while the remainder built a settlement atop a scenic plateau overlooking the lake. Four months into the expedition, a lone explorer spelunking in the depths below the lake encountered an eerie pulsating blue light. He followed the mysterious luminescence into a vast cavern where he discovered its source, a tiny shard of blue crystal no larger than a small pebble. He marveled at the breathtaking mineral, yet he noticed that he and the world around him began to change. Time ebbed and flowed for no apparent reason. His body steadily withered in its presence. Alarmed by these strange events, he fled the cavern and returned to the surface; however upon arriving at the settlement, he found that the warm rays of the sun seared his skin. Frightened by this new development, he sought an explanation from his people's most powerful sorcerer, Thozzaggard.

For his part, the power hungry Thozzaggard saw a perfect opportunity to take advantage of this situation for his betterment. Though his kin were brilliant in many regards, they were also highly superstitious and fascinated with omens. Thozzaggard boldly proclaimed that the discovery was in fact a "god particle," a small chip of divine essence that would only reveal its origins and secrets to a powerful practitioner of arcane magic. Mesmerizing them by his rousing tale, the charismatic Thozzaggard then led his spellbound followers into the bowels of the earth to pay homage to their newfound deity and its exalted high priest. When they arrived in the

cavern, his brethren fell to their knees and worshipped the minute crystal emitting fluctuating blue light, while it simultaneously tore away the fabric of time and space. Their elation soon turned to terror, as their bodies and then their minds atrophied in the midst of the "god particle." The development even frightened the ambitious Thozzaggard who inexplicably resisted its detrimental effects better than his rapidly withering kin. In an act of desperation, the resourceful sorcerer called upon his mystical powers to utterly disintegrate what would have been the cornerstone of his new faith. Thozzaggard reduced the crystal into fine dust, but the damage was already done. The race that slowly rose to its feet was forever scarred by their encounter with the "god particle." Insanity ravaged their beleaguered minds, while their very skin ached from even the slightest contact with sunlight. Consumed by their madness, they abandoned the settlement to spread their affliction to their descendants. Within the span of several generations, Thozzaggard's disillusioned followers corrupted their entire race giving birth to the derro.

Despite his close call with irreparable insanity, the moderately deranged Thozzaggard became obsessed with unraveling the secret of the "god particle." As he wandered the lonely depths beneath the earth, he encountered a small enclave of his kin beneath another large oasis. Within their complex, he recognized the telltale flashes of blue light as the unmistakable presence of his elusive crystal; however unlike his previous followers, these fey greatly feared the strange mineral. They encased it within a prison sealed by heavy, metallic alloy portals that kept its harmful emanations tucked safely behind closed doors. Despite his impassioned pleas and relentless cajoling, his kin refused to open the reinforced doors. Undeterred, Thozzaggard used his magic to transport himself into the cavern behind the door. This time, the wily sorcerer would not escape the god particle's grasp. Madness overcame him shortly before the alien substance sucked the last vestiges of life from him and hurled his ravaged soul into the void beyond reality. What later rose where his corpse now lay was an undead monstrosity that longed to spread its curse to every living creature. It hurtled his massive body against the alloy doors, allowing some of the god particle's emanations to escape. Before his fey brethren completely succumbed to insanity, they reinforced the alloy doors with a stone and mortar wall that would seal the ungodly abomination behind it forever. In the shadow of Thozzaggard's folly, the derros endured in their subterranean hell for countless millennia to come, ruing the fateful day when a mad sorcerer ruined their race forever.

Obsession Reborn

Unlike Thozzaggard's kin, terrestrial anomalies are nothing more than a source of wonderment and curiosity for most men, but for one man, they consumed his thoughts since childhood. From an early age, Ahmad Pachwari knew he was destined to do something extraordinary. The child prodigy excelled in all his studies, though he took a particularly keen interest in the earth sciences, particularly geology. His enthusiasm for the subject was so great that at the age of thirteen, he set out into the forbidding Maighib Desert in search of a renowned shaitan pasha named Agateye. Using his extensive knowledge of geology, the intrepid teenager discovered previously unknown water sources as he scoured the dunes and gravel looking for the most likely entrance to the noble genie's underground kingdom. After three weeks of searching, the youngster's ingenuity and sharp mind were rewarded. In the depths beneath an unusual rock formation, Ahmad met his newfound tutor for the first time.

The precocious Ahmad spent the next three months in the company of his immortal host, watching and listening as the noble genie

MY BLUE OASIS

explained the wonders of his vast, subterranean realm. He cataloged countless new varieties of gems, metals and stones, but one legendary mineral fascinated him. Agateye referred to the substance as warilium. Even though the noble shaitan doubted its very existence, he told the wide-eyed pupil the legend about the mysterious cosmic stone. The story told that the incredibly dense material fell from the skies during the world's infancy and imbedded itself deep beneath the surface. These tiny warilium fragments are no larger than a small crystal and weigh less than a pound, yet each allegedly contains enough water to fill a small lake. Throughout the ages, numerous races and beings scoured countless worlds and planes in a futile search for the elusive substance they dubbed "watery stars" or less commonly known as "god particles." The lack of success led the overwhelming majority to eventually abandon the quest; however a few stalwarts persisted in the face of consistent failure and growing ridicule. Over time, the hunt for watery stars escaped the bonds of reality and became a full-blown myth. Scientific hypotheses gave way to esoteric folklore and fanciful tales. The search for watery stars was no longer a topic for discussion in recognized intellectual circles. Instead, scholars relegated warilium to the stuff of children's stories and old wives' tales.

Agateye's tutelage changed Ahmad forever. After he returned from his desert journey, his interest in watery stars steadily grew. His part-time hobby and diversion soon bordered on obsession. His other learned pursuits fell by the wayside as Khartous's brightest scholar focused all of his energy, efforts and mind towards finding the obscure object of his desire. The young genius disassociated himself from the world of academia and immersed himself in pseudoscience and the occult in his mission to solve the age-old mystery of the watery stars. He chased every conceivable lead, meeting with shady and malevolent outsiders, arcane charlatans and false prophets in the faint hope of discovering even the slightest trace of evidence to support the fable's existence. His efforts appeared to be in vain until one day when reality intervened.

Nothing moves faster through the desert than gossip followed shortly thereafter by half-truths, sandstorms and real news. The strange details about the remote structure of Chass reached his attentive ears and piqued his curiosity. Down to his last few coins, the reclusive genius gambled his remaining fortunes on a mysterious building in a remote corner of the Maighib Desert. Within moments of arriving, Ahmad knew that his fate was about to change for the better.

Despite spending much of his young adulthood dabbling in quackery, Ahmad was still one of the brightest minds of his age. As soon as he surveyed the landscape around Chass, he realized something that no one else could. He recognized that Chass once stood atop a plateau in the middle of a vast, ancient lake — a body of water that should not have existed and could only be explained by the presence of warilium. Ahmad surmised that Chass' unknown architects also reached the same conclusion and thoroughly mined the area before abandoning the site eons ago leaving the lake to slowly evaporate into the much smaller oases that now exist. Though Ahmad was convinced about warilium's existence, others would not follow suit without being able to touch or at least glimpse a sliver or chip of the legendary mineral. Ahmad pondered the dilemma for several hours and then proposed a bold hypothesis. What if warilium were responsible for creating Khartous's largest source of water — the Oasis of Al-Marak? Unlike Chass, there were no permanent fixtures to suggest that someone else had mined the area before, so if the watery stars were responsible for creating the massive freshwater spring, it is likely that they are still there. Ahmad had the inspiration and the idea, but no resources and only a handful of coins. Still, he had a hunch about who could solve the latter problem for him.

Though he had distanced himself from his intellectual peers more than a decade earlier, the memories of the boy genius were still strong enough to grant him an audience with the one man in Khartous that could fulfill his childhood dream — Sultan Faud. Ahmad previously met the kingdom's ruler on several occasions during his youth; however Faud was a prince at the time. In a heartfelt plea, the animated man presented his case to his old acquaintance, claiming that a few chips or slivers of watery stars would meet the city's future water needs and those of the entire kingdom for millennia to come. Ahmad's proposal intrigued the Sultan. He deliberated the idea for several days. He sought additional counsel from his advisors and based upon their insight and his own gut instinct,

Faud declined to fund the massive undertaking citing the enormous costs and the likely prospect that the massive operation would turn up nothing. The disappointed Ahmad politely accepted Sultan Faud's decision, yet he remained determined to find another way to make his vision a reality.

Ahmad refused to let the Sultan's decision halt his ambitious project. Over the course of the next several weeks, the resolute wizard pitched his idea to many of Khartous's wealthiest citizens, yet like the kingdom's ruler, they also balked at the hefty price tag and the precipitous risk of failure. Disheartened but not defeated, the bitter Ahmad left the capital city determined to fulfill his boyhood dream regardless of how he did it. However, before he departed, he posited a theory. He traded a magical ring to another wizard in exchange for a scroll containing two spells beyond his ability to cast himself — *disintegrate* and *reverse gravity*. Ahmad's scientific mind deduced that the only way to unlock the watery star's full potential would be to reduce it to its basest components and then unravel the primal bonds holding the matter together.

Ahmad had the brains, the tools and an ingenious theory; all he lacked was the manpower. Undeterred, Ahmad set out from Khartous to survey his intended target and possibly sway some desert travelers or even its monstrous denizens to his cause. The seasoned desert traveler blazed his own trail across the trackless dunes, hoping to run across more like-minded individualists and pioneers along the way. More than halfway through his journey, the swirling winds on the horizon kicked up an angry funnel of blistering sand. He immediately recognized the telltale beginnings of an intense sandstorm, so he fled towards a large cavernous opening carved into the face of an odd rock formation. Before he reached his intended shelter, the earth beneath his feet gave way and much to his surprise and horror he plummeted 50 feet into a subterranean chamber. When the startled Ahmad looked up at his new surroundings, the terrified young man soon discovered that he was not alone.

Dragon Hoard

A steaming blast of hot air charged with static electricity tingled across his entire body as a huge blue dragon stared menacingly at the proverbial fly caught in the spider's web. Ahmad landed in the lair of Eyegouger, an avaricious, intelligent mature adult blue dragon with a penchant for grandiosity. The arrogant reptile sized up his stunned prey and dismissed the ragged, young man as no threat. But before the dragon could utter a word, Ahmad regained his senses and in a daring move began pitching his bold plan to his captor. The epic scale of the proposal instantly grabbed Eyegouger's attention. With every passing moment, Ahmad strengthened his grip over the seemingly spellbound dragon. Visions of unfathomable riches frolicked in his greedy mind. Ten minutes later, Ahmad had accomplished the impossible. He sold his idea to the desert's most feared resident — an evil blue dragon.

After concealing the entrance to his lair and securing his immense treasure hoard for the journey across the desert, the pair headed off to the Oasis of Al-Marak to begin their search for the legendary watery stars. Still titillated by the prospect of acquiring instant wealth, Eyegouger flung his immense body headfirst into the sand around the oasis and burrowed beneath the ground. Much to Eyegouger's chagrin, laying claim to Ahmad's promised treasure would not be easy or quick. Over the course of the next few days, the antsy blue dragon recruited more of the desert's denizens to the great undertaking. As more evil monsters and mindless brutes trickled into the area to perform Eyegouger's bidding, Ahmad realized that he made a bargain with the proverbial devil. He watched with dismay as his lifelong ambition became the grand design of a sinister creature bent on exploiting what could potentially be mankind's greatest discovery since fire for his own wicked purpose. At that moment, he understood that genius is no match for obsession.

As the digging progressed and Eyegouger's legions of followers swelled around the oasis, the caravans and travelers that normally frequent the vital watering hole found the location closed for business. The few brave souls that dared to defy the covetous blue dragon and attempted to drink from the refreshing waters met a grisly and electrifying end at the claws and flaring nostrils of the oasis' new resident caretaker. Under Eyegouger's direction, the oasis was off-limits to all humanoid traffic, as he and his minions delved deep below the surface in search of Ahmad's fabled watery stars.

Under pressure from his generals, ministers and merchants alike, Sultan Faud must take action to wrest control of the critical water supply from the scaly nemesis that hoards it. Though a military operation is a possible option, the logistics of securing provisions for a full scale assault requires time and resources that the kingdom does not have. In addition, Eyegouger and his allies are certain to inflict mass casualties to a large army with devastating aerial attacks and searing bolts of lightning capable of felling an entire column of men in seconds. After much consideration, the Sultan believes that a small group of highly skilled adventurers is much better suited to deal with Eyegouger than a larger force of ordinary soldiers. Meanwhile, as Faud moves to respond to the crisis, the brilliant Ahmad rues the day he made a foolish deal with his untrustworthy partner. He secretly wishes that he was terribly wrong about the existence of watery stars; otherwise Eyegouger is sure to use the mineral to advance his own interests regardless of the consequences. As they follow in the ancient footsteps of the mad Thozzaggard, Ahmad fears that the object of his lifelong desire lies perilously close to the eager dragon's clutches and certain ruination unless someone more powerful than he stops him.

Adventure Synopsis

Regrets sometimes endure for an eternity, and Ahmad's dilemma personifies this adage to a tee. Though he spent his entire life searching for the fabled watery stars, his current predicament leaves him, and the whole kingdom, wishing he never thought of them. The gifted man appealed to a dragon's avarice and soon learned that its greed knows no bounds. Now, the Sultan or one of several other concerned parties contact the PCs to undo Ahmad's terrible mistake and permanently evict the Oasis of Al-Marak's new, unwanted resident. The PCs soon discover that the normally safe road to the watery paradise is overrun by Eyegouger's loyal and wicked minions making the arduous trek across the Maighib Desert all the more difficult.

After dispatching of the dragon's cohorts and the native denizens, the PCs complete the long, harrowing journey across the windswept dunes and arrive at the Oasis of Al-Marak or at least what remains of it. The malevolent Eyegouger and his servants have transformed the lush, vibrant spring into a mammoth excavation site. Guarded by two desert drakes and a pair of brutish desert trolls, the PCs must defeat or somehow circumvent these sentinels and descend into the boreholes carved into the earth. From there, the PCs must navigate their way through the treacherous subterranean tunnels in pursuit of the blue dragon and the eldritch watery stars. As they descend further below the surface, the PCs contend with the monstrous creatures that constructed this labyrinth of passages and chambers before entering the realm of Thozzaggard's demented descendants.

In addition to contending with the derros inhabiting this underground complex, strange anomalies also plague the area, suggesting that someone or something is altering the very laws of nature themselves. The watery star's powerful gravitational pull and simultaneous coexistence in another dimension warps the boundaries of time and space. The passage of time randomly slows in some areas and accelerates in others. Eerie momentary bursts of bright, blue light suddenly irradiate the underground passages and chamber, temporarily blinding anyone who fails to turn away from the intense flash. After overcoming these obstacles, the PCs finally come face to face with the brawn and the regretful brains behind this ambitious scheme.

The derros' network of chambers and passageways culminate before ominous, reinforced metallic doors at the far end of a massive chamber that Eyegouger recently unearthed behind a hastily constructed stone wall. Though the ancient portal appears to have stood for millennia, a loud pummeling sound emanating from the other side causes it to violently shudder with each successive strike. There, the PCs encounter the apprehensive Eyegouger and his rueful partner Ahmad, as they watch the primordial door helplessly teeter from the constant bashing. Despite his preoccupation, the dragon's insatiable greed drives Eyegouger to immediately attack the PCs to defend his prized treasure from the newcomers. Meanwhile, the conflicted Ahmad stares wide-eyed at the portal. Throughout the struggle, the bonds of reality fluctuate with greater regularity and intensity, affecting both the PCs and their reptilian adversary.

Several minutes later, the battered doorway eventually yields, and a monstrous devourer bursts into the chamber attacking anything in its path. Countless millennia ago, Thozzaggard also found the watery star; however he succumbed to its power and became an undead abomination. Now

that its former guardian is out of the way, the PCs are free to step foot in an immense, cavern of indeterminate age containing nothing other than a pulsating crystal, Thozzaggard's journal and his worldly possessions. Relieved of his trepidations, the watery star's mystical allure once again captivates the awestruck Ahmad; however the PCs realize that the watery star poses a tremendous danger to all living things. They must convince the obsessed wizard to abandon his lifelong quest or he attempts to fulfill the elusive dream that consumed him for most of his adolescence and adulthood. After resolving this crisis, the PCs face their final and most critical dilemma — what to do with a tiny crystal that is simultaneously capable of improving countless lives or destroying them in an instant. Ultimately, the PCs' decision determines many fates including their own.

Starting the Adventure

The events taking place at the Oasis of Al-Marak trouble many concerned parties, including the kingdom's absolute ruler, Sultan Faud. Ideally, the PCs begin the adventure in the city of Khartous or its nearby environs; however the GM is free to incorporate his own setting into the adventure provided that the locale includes desert terrain and a distant oasis. While there, a prospective employer contacts them to resolve the situation at the Oasis of Al-Marak. Because Ahmad presented his proposal to multiple persons throughout the city, everyone involved in the matter is fairly certain that the current events at the important location are somehow associated with his grand plan to excavate the mysterious watery stars from the depths below its refreshing waters. However, details about what is actually transpiring at the watering hole are sketchy at best. Witnesses claim that monstrous beasts constantly circle the skies around the area, while foul creatures patrol the nearby road. A few daring souls attempted to get a closer look, though none were even seen or heard from again. Though Khartous's business interests are primarily worried about regaining accessibility to the vital water supply for their overland caravans, the Sultan is especially fearful of the potentially dire consequences if the watery stars fell into the wrong hands. All involved parties express skepticism about their actual existence, yet the mere possibility that they could be used for nefarious purposes is enough to frighten even the most jaded cynic.

Adventure Hooks

If the PCs already performed services for the Sultan in a previous adventure, he dispatches his most trusted lieutenants to summon them for a private audience. Likewise, merchant interests that worked with the PCs in the past directly contact them for their assistance in this important matter. Alternatively, Jamaal Dakkar, a renowned scholar and secret member of the Church of Hafaz, solicits the PCs to recover Ahmad's watery stars. In addition to the adventure hooks presented here, the GM is free to create another adventure hook tailored specifically for the group's PCs.

Political Crisis

Usman Al-Naddar (NG male human **Ftr5**; Str 17; Intimidation +5), one of Sultan Faud's most trusted and loyal subordinates approaches the PCs with an urgent request that they meet with the monarch to discuss a vital matter. From the outset of the meeting, it is readily apparent that the current situation weighs heavily on his fretful mind. He explains to the PCs that several weeks ago, Ahmad Pachwari presented him with an ambitious proposal to excavate the Oasis of Al-Marak in search of a legendary rare mineral he referred to as a watery star. Faud declined his request citing his skepticism about the material's existence as well as the immense costs that would be incurred financing such an undertaking. According to Ahmad's account, the mysterious substance weighed no more than a small stone, but contained enough water to fill a small lake under the proper conditions. He expresses to the PCs that the discovery of such an item could be an incredible boon for his people, but in the wrong hands, it could be used as a devastating weapon to flood an entire metropolis. The Sultan is certain that Ahmad began the excavation, though he has no knowledge of who is supporting him in the endeavor. Faud offers the PCs 10,000gp to free the Oasis of Al-Marak from its occupiers' grip and prevent the watery stars, if they do exist, from falling into the wrong hands.

Fell by the Way Station

Taliya Maakhana (LN female human **commoner**) and Mehmet Asikkurra (N male human **noble**) seek out the PCs and offer them a business proposition. The pair controls the vital trade routes from Khartous to the distant settlements of Qiram and Olappo, so their caravans depend upon the oasis to supply them with water for the long journey across the Maighib Desert. Taliya is aware of Ahmad's possible involvement in this affair based upon his proposal to her just a few weeks earlier. Though Ahmad impressed her with his enthusiasm and intellect, she believed the risks greatly exceeded the rewards. Taliya and Mehmet expect two of their caravans returning from Qiram and Olappo to pass through the area over the next several days. Because their caravan leaders are unaware of these recent developments, they are greatly concerned for the safety of their personnel and their goods. In exchange for their assistance, Taliya and Mehmet each offer a payment of 5,000gp to rid the oasis of its unwanted intruders and secure the critical junction for the foreseeable future.

Esoteric Research

Jamaal Dakkar (N male human **Wiz6**; Int 18; Arcana +7), one of Khartous's most renowned scholars and secret member of the Church of Hafaz, approaches the PCs regarding recent events at the Oasis of Al-Marak. Unlike the PCs' other prospective employers, Jamaal is far more interested in recovering the watery stars, rather than expelling the oasis' current occupiers. The somewhat scatter-brained intellectual has his doubts about their existence, but the prestige associated with such an important find is too great to let the opportunity slip through his fingers. Though he never directly met with Ahmad, several parties that attended one of Ahmad's presentations approached him for his insight and advice. Jamaal's only request is that the PCs prove or disprove the watery star's existence. Of course, by proof he means for the PCs to actually bring him the watery stars. He presumes that in doing so, the PCs would have to deal with the oasis' current occupants, but he never specifically says anything about it unless directly asked. Jamaal offers the PCs an extremely rare golden idol of a winged woman valued at 8,500gp.

Rumors

Learning additional information about Ahmad himself, the watery stars or the current troubles at the Oasis of Al-Marak is extremely difficult. Few people have ever heard of watery stars, let alone know anything about them. Similarly, the reclusive Ahmad spent much of his adulthood in solitary study. The PCs may attempt Int (Investigation) checks to gather information about Ahmad and the Oasis of Al-Marak while in Khartous and its immediate vicinity. In addition, PCs with access to specialized knowledge, such as a member of the Church of Hafaz, may also learn about the watery stars from a reliable source with a successful Int (History) or Cha (Persuasion) check. For each successful check at that level, provide one new rumor at that DC or from a lower one if the ones at the current DC have already been heard.

DC 15

- Ahmad was a child prodigy excelling in the earth sciences. In his early teens, Ahmad devoted himself to pursuing his studies in pseudoscience and the occult. His peers no longer took him seriously, and he fell out of favor with established academia. PCs can obtain this rumor with a successful Int (History) or Cha (Persuasion) check.
- Monsters overran the road from Khartous to the Oasis of Al-Marak. They even say that massive flying beasts circle overhead, attacking any travelers that attempt to approach the watering hole. PCs can obtain this rumor with a successful Int (History) or Cha (Persuasion) check.
- During his adolescent years, Ahmad ventured into the Maighib Desert and studied under the tutelage of a genie who first told him about the watery stars. After his return, the studious young man changed dramatically and became a recluse. PCs can obtain this rumor with a successful Int (History) or Cha (Persuasion) check.

- Ahmad made a bargain with a powerful devil. The foul denizens of Hell toil under his oppressive whip, digging day and night around the oasis in search of his fabled watery stars. PCs can obtain this rumor with a successful Int (History) or Cha (Persuasion) check. (This is a false rumor.)

- Ahmad fell under the influence of a mysterious woman during his time in the desert. Some say that she is a demon. Others believe she is a hag, while a few are convinced that she is a sorcerer from the depths of the earth. She has been the guiding hand in all his actions over the past decade including his current undertaking at the Oasis of Al-Marak. PCs can obtain this rumor with a successful Int (History) or Cha (Persuasion) check.

DC 18

- The so-called watery stars are primordial meteors with mystical and unusual scientific properties. Though they are small and virtually weightless, they are said to hold enough water to fill a small lake under the right circumstances. No one knows for certain how to unlock their stores of water, but it is believed that casting several arcane spells in the proper sequence alters their chemistry enough to release the stored reservoir. PCs can obtain this rumor with a successful Arcana or Int (History) check.

- After Ahmad learned about the mysterious events at Chass, he traveled to the remote outpost and became convinced that watery stars created the numerous desert springs surrounding the unusual structure. He also asserted that Chass' builders also came to the same conclusion and mined the area for any watery stars. PCs can obtain this rumor with a successful Int (History) or Cha (Persuasion) check.

- A subterranean, alien race worships the watery stars in their bizarre temple deep beneath the surface. The odd chemistry of the legendary mineral warps their minds and bends space and time in ways previously unimaginable. PCs can obtain this rumor with a successful Int (Investigation) check. (This rumor is mostly true except for the part about the derros worshipping the watery star.)

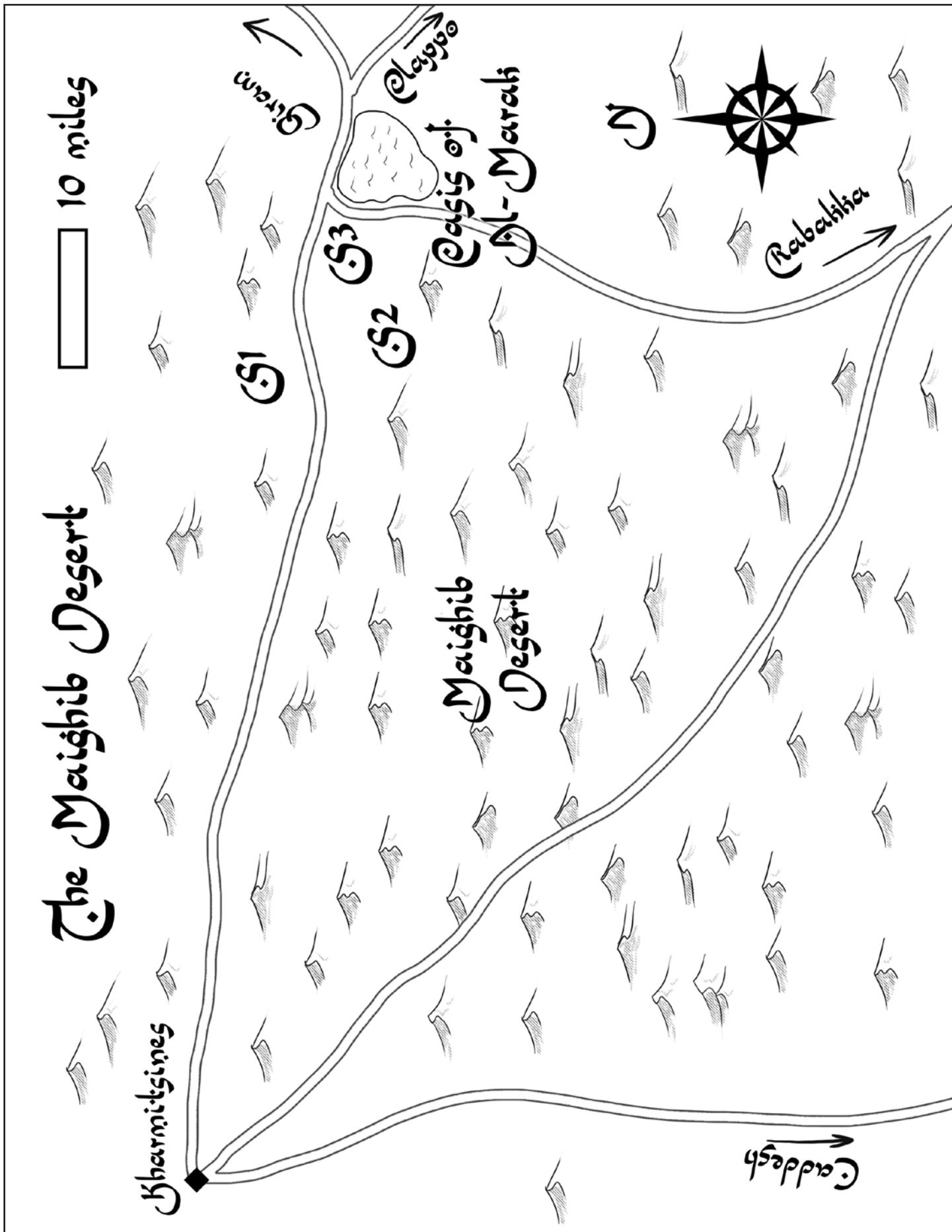
- Watery stars are the last living remnants of Ellashah and Rema. Powerful magic cast upon these stones could restore the creators back to life. PCs can obtain this rumor with a successful Investigation or Int (Religion) check. (This is a false rumor.)

DC 24

- If they do exist, watery stars must simultaneously coexist on this plane of existence and another dimension. Despite their small size, the gravitational pull from the object must be so great that it alters the fabric of time and space. It would be impossible to actually touch the object or even spend more than a brief period of time around it without feeling any undo effect from the mineral. PCs can obtain this rumor with a successful Int (Arcana) or Int (Investigation) check.

Part One: Long Days' Journey

After gathering background information in Khartous or another suitable locale, all roads point to the Oasis of Al-Marak as the PCs' next destination. The oasis lies roughly 70 miles east of Khartous; therefore it likely takes the PCs several days to reach their goal. The PCs must decide whether to travel via the established trade route from Khartous to the Oasis of Al-Marak or blaze their own trail across the trackless dunes to reach their intended destination. Each option presents its own benefits and pitfalls. Obviously, travel across the established road is faster and more direct; however Eyegouger's minions pay closer attention to the thoroughfare than the desert expanses. On the other hand, the uncharted trail across the burning sands is slower and more populated by monstrous denizens that Khartous's soldiers and merchants usually beat back away from the vital trade route. The PCs may avoid some of these dangers if they have the ability to fly for long distances, though it may also prevent them from



gathering important clues if they omit all of the overland encounters in their entirety. In addition, several of Eyegouger's minions may also take to the skies to slay any perceived intruders. Regardless of the chosen route or method of transportation, foul beasts and sinister beings block the way to the Oasis of Al-Marak.

Encounters

As the PCs make their way to the Oasis of Al-Marak there are eight possible encounters along the journey. A few of them are set encounters that occur at fixed locations in the desert, while the remainder may take place anywhere in the desert. (These encounters do not include those that the PCs may face in and around the oasis itself.) The set encounters are addressed first followed by the random ones. These encounters are denoted as S1, S2 and S3 on the accompanying map of the Maighib Desert. The GM is free to use the Appendix to generate more random encounters or create additional ones of his own design to further challenge the PCs.

S1: Troll Collectors (Difficulty Medium)

Like nearly all desert kingdoms, Khartous operates toll collection booths at strategic locations along its major trade routes. In this particular case, the tariff station lies at the base of a steep canyon surrounded by high, windswept dunes. These conditions persist in a 6 to 12 mile radius around the toll collection site. Creatures traveling along the road may attempt to circumvent the area by going around it; however the deep dunes of loose sand and sharp elevation changes make it virtually impossible to navigate a vehicle through the area. Anyone passing through this inhospitable terrain must succeed on DC 5 Str (Athletics) check to move through the dunes which are also treated as difficult terrain. (The Maighib Desert's airborne predators are also aware of the hazards of moving through this region and typically circle overhead searching for prey attempting to pass across this treacherous landscape.)

If the PCs remain on the road, they come across the remnants of the toll collection station that Eyegouger destroyed shortly after arriving in the area. When they come within visual range of the scene, they can easily make out the remains of a crude, wooden building that has been reduced to splinters and displaced stones as well as the severely charred and desiccated corpses of its presumed former occupants. The stench of burnt flesh and wood is so strong, that the PCs can detect it from 400 feet away with a successful DC 10 Wis (Perception) check.

Eyegouger left **2 desert trolls** to man the critical juncture in the road. The mated pair of ignorant giants immediately attacks anything that crosses their path. The monstrous brutes fight to the death, as the clever dragon posted them here to constantly remind them of the fate that awaits those that dare to stand in his way. If they are forced to surrender or are temporarily incapacitated, the desert trolls have no information of any consequence other than Eyegouger's responsibility for destroying the toll collection booth.

Desert Troll (2): AC 17; HP 152 (16d10+64); Spd 30ft; Melee claw x2 (+8 slashing, 2d6+5), bite (+8, 1d8+5 piercing plus disease); **SA** multiattack (2 claws), pustules (1/1d4 rounds, 10ft cone, poisoned for 2d4 rounds, DC 14 Con save negates); **Str** +5, **Dex** -1, **Con** +4, **Int** -2, **Wis** +1, **Cha** -2; **Skills** Athletics +8, Perception +4, Stealth +2; **Senses** passive Perception 14; **Traits** disease (*desert rot*, DC 13 Con save or contracts rot, in 1d4 days victim must make another Con save or lose 3d6 max hp, must make save 1/day or continue to lose hp); regeneration (regains 10 hp/turn unless it took acid or fire damage on previous turn); **AL** NE; **CR** 8; **XP** 3,900. (Appendix)

Development: In the aftermath of their encounter with the desert trolls, PCs may investigate the surrounding area and the dead bodies to gather clues about the prior attack. The obvious scorch marks on the collection site's stone foundations and the charred condition of the structure's wood-

en components and the corpses are all telltale signs that intense heat destroyed these objects and burned the defenders' flesh. These facts indicate that the desert trolls are not responsible for the carnage. PCs that examine the dead bodies learn that an extremely intense and focused blast of heat burned through their flesh with a successful DC 15 Int (Nature) check. With that information in hand, a successful DC 17 Int (Arcana) check points to an electrical attack as the injuries' likeliest cause.

Treasure: The desert trolls have no treasure of their own; however a singed, iron chest buried beneath fallen timbers in the adjacent structure still contains the toll proceeds collected during the week preceding the attack. A PC can spot the concealed chest with a successful DC 13 Wis (Perception) check. Though heavily damaged by the subsequent fire and the impact of crashing beams, the chest is still securely locked. There are 396gp inside the chest. Technically, the money still belongs to the Sultan, so taking it may create some future complications

Iron Chest: AC 19; HP 10; **Immunity** cold, lightning, poison, psychic; **Resistance** acid, fire, thunder, weapon damage; **Break** DC 18 Str.

S2: Giant Trouble (Difficulty Medium)

Desert giants are one of the landscape's apex predators. These massive humanoids roam across the desolate sands traveling from one oasis to another in search of food and water. Though they lead a nomadic lifestyle, they still lay claim to vast swaths of territory that they deem their own. In this particular instance, the desert giant Fazzellon called the stretch of desert west of the Oasis of Al-Marak as his domain. That is until Eyegouger arrived on the scene. Fazzellon fought valiantly against the reptilian intruder, but in the end the potent dragon proved to be too much. Fazzellon ceded his land to Eyegouger in life; however he is unwilling to relinquish his claim so easily. His burning desire to rule over his fiefdom fueled his transformation into something unnatural.

After his destruction at Eyegouger's claws, Fazzellon rose from death as a **juju zombie desert giant**. As in life, Fazzellon fends off all intruders, roaming a 1-mile radius around his battered and broken yurt. Relieved of the burdens of finding food, water or rest, Fazzellon completes an endless circle around his former camp in a desperate effort to keep all intruders off his land. The incredibly powerful giant charges any creature it perceives as threat, which in most cases is anything larger than a small rodent. It attacks with his grand scimitars, hacking and slashing its opponents into a bloody stump of gashes and lacerations. Fazzellon says nothing other than mumbling under his breath about trespassers, thieves and interlopers.

PCs moving through the 1-mile area around Fazzellon's yurt may find the undead monster's tracks with a successful DC 10 Wis (Perception) or Wis (Survival) check. (Prevailing weather conditions may further alter the chances of finding tracks. In his undead state, Fazzellon wants creatures to be aware of his presence.) PCs may follow the tracks back to the desert giant's yurt where he kept a large sack buried in the sands nearby his busted tent.

Juju Zombie Desert Giant: AC 18; HP 204 (24d10+72); Spd 50ft; Melee scimitar x2 (+14, 1d8+10 slashing), slam (+14, 1d8+10 bludgeoning); **SA** multiattack (2 scimitar); **Immune** cold, electricity, fire; **Resist** piercing and slashing from non-magical weapons; **Str** +10, **Dex** +4, **Con** +3, **Int** +1, **Wis** +1, **Cha** +0; **Skills** Athletics +14, Intimidation +4; **Senses** dark-vision 60ft, passive Perception 11; **Traits** immune to *magic missile*, sandwalking (full speed across sand, rocky ground or dust, leaves no trail); **AL** LE; **CR** 10; **XP** 5,900. (Appendix)

Treasure: A PC may locate the desert giant's sack of treasure beneath 3 feet of sand with a successful DC 22 Wis (Perception) check. The sack contains 1,059gp, an elephant's tusk worth 500gp and a cloak spun from dire camel fur worth 300gp. If anyone examines Fazzellon's body, they notice deep, circular singe marks akin to a narrowly focused beam of intense heat with a successful DC 13 Wis (Perception) check.

S3: Soul Survivor (Difficulty Easy) Guide Me To the Dunes (Difficulty Medium)

Four days ago, Mustafa Kansha, (LN male human **Ftr**5, **Str** 16), a freelance merchant and former caravan guard, made the fateful mistake of attempting to replenish his water supply at the Oasis of Al-Mararak. Unfortunately for his sake, one of the desert drakes hovering above the locale spotted him and attacked him. The seasoned veteran of many desert battles proved no match for the fierce dragon. Mustafa disappeared in a cloud of electrified dust waiting for the inevitable. Yet as luck would have it, (at least for Mustafa), another trespasser appeared on the scene. The oasis' guardian flew off in the direction of the new intruder leaving Mustafa for dead under a pile of sand and dust. That would have spelled the end for most, but the unconscious Mustafa stabilized and slowly recovered from his ordeal. After spending three days beneath a thin layer of sand, the staggered Mustafa dusted himself off, rose to his feet and started off in the direction of the nearby trade route and perceived safety. He did not get very far. After consuming his last drops of water from his flask, Mustafa collapsed atop the sands only a few miles away from his life-altering battle. As the life ebbs from him, several scavenger birds circle overhead and patiently wait for him to breathe his last.

Mustafa is not difficult to find or spot. PCs scanning the skies in the area notice the fowl flying above Mustafa with a successful DC 10 Wis (Perception) check modified by the PCs' actual distance to Mustafa. In addition, Mustafa made no effort to cover his tracks; therefore PCs can spot his trail with a successful DC 10 Int (Nature), Wis (Perception) or Wis (Survival) check. Of course, PCs can follow his trail with a successful Wis (Survival) check only.

Mustafa is currently staggered and hovering between consciousness and unconsciousness. He also has the exhausted condition, having been fatigued from taking nonlethal damage from thirst and then pushing himself to the absolute limit. The PCs must revive him by relieving his dehydration and healing his damage. A *cure wounds* should be sufficient for him to regain consciousness, though he remains badly injured and exhausted. Mustafa is in no condition to fight nor does he look forward to another encounter with the desert drake that nearly killed him, but he can provide the PCs with some valuable information. He tells the PCs that he was en route from Khartous on his way to Olappo when he encountered the desert drake. He spotted two of the beasts soaring above the northern edge of the oasis near two recently excavated holes in the ground. The excavated sand forms two massive piles that are the equivalent of a 100-foot-tall pyramid. He saw no other activity other than the desert drakes.

Mustafa thanks the PCs for saving his life, but he is unable to offer them anything other than his gratitude.

Flying Lions (Difficulty Medium)

More so than any other type of creature, giant vermin thrive in the hot, dry climate of the world's deserts. These mindless beasts scour the sands in search of prey to satiate their voracious appetites. Several days ago, a small cloud of giant adult ant lions emerged from their cocoons and took to the skies looking for their first meal. Unfortunately for the PCs they would seem to be the first dish on their menu.

This encounter may take place at any time during the day either on open ground or in the vicinity of the road. As the PCs trudge across the sandy dunes, **4 ant lions** become visible on the horizon. The creatures fly low to the ground and in a ragged V-shaped formation. They lack any semblance of intelligence, so like their ordinary kin the huge, ravenous insects travel in a beeline to the closest target and attack with their savage bite. Hunger consumes every thought in their primitive brains, so the concept of retreat never crosses their limited minds. They attack until destroyed, or until they eat their fill, whichever comes first.

Ant Lion (4): AC 15; **HP** 93 (11d10+33); **Spd** 30ft, burrow 10ft; **Melee** bite (+4, 3d10+2 piercing plus grapple); **Immune** charm; **Str** +2, **Dex** +0, **Con** +3, **Int** -4, **Wis** +0, **Cha** -3; **Skills** Stealth +2; **Senses** darkvision 60ft, tremorsense 60ft; **AL** unaligned; **CR** 4; **XP** 1,100. (*Fifth Edition Foes* 11)

A long, hard trudge across the scalding desert is the furthest thing in the minds of most humanoids, but for a select few individuals the windswept dunes represent one of the world's last frontiers. These intrepid beings devoted themselves to a life of discovery and exploration in the harshest climate possible. Sadly, somewhere along the way, the very sands that they loved claimed their broken bodies as their own. However, their devotion to duty and their quest for knowledge were so strong, that they rose from their dusty graves and resumed their life's work albeit as members of the living dead. Despite their unnatural transformation, they are still guided by the same principles from their former existence. Though this encounter may ultimately result in a confrontation, combat can be easily avoided in most circumstances depending upon the PCs' actions. It may take place at any time of day at any location in the open desert.

For the last twelve years, the exploratory society known as the Brotherhood of the Desert has been crisscrossing its way across the Maighib Desert. For the better part of their first decade, they did so in their human form; however for the last few years, they have done so as undead wanderers. The group consists of **6 el-aurens** that move across the barren terrain in their quest to discover and catalogue the wonders of the desert. When they first take notice of the PCs, the inquisitive trailblazers march towards the PCs. From a distance, it is difficult to tell that they are no longer human. The creatures are unarmed and do not take any overtly hostile actions as they come closer. The el-aurens are driven by curiosity and want to learn what the PCs discovered in their travels. If the PCs attack the undead explorers, they attempt to disorient them and leave the area. The creatures only use their slam attacks against the PCs as a measure of last resort. Otherwise, the el-aurens seek to strike up a dialogue with the PCs and may even offer their services to them under the right conditions.

El-Aurens: AC 16; **HP** 90 (12d8+36); **Spd** 30ft; **Melee** slam (+7, 2d8+4 bludgeoning); **SA** disorient (1/day, 30ft, living target must make DC 13 Wis save or be disoriented moving in random direction for 1d4+1 minutes, may save again each round); **Immune** poison damage; poisoned; **Resist** cold, fire; **Str** +4, **Dex** +0, **Con** +3, **Int** +0, **Wis** +1, **Cha** +2; **Skills** Athletics +7, Intimidation +5, Nature +3, Survival +4; **Senses** passive Perception 11; **AL** N; **CR** 4; **XP** 1,100. (**Appendix**)

Development: Incredibly, death had no effect on these creatures' attitudes and outlook towards others. They are still haughty and aloof as they were in life and exude a grandiosity only seen among the noblest and wealthiest of Khartous's citizenry. Boran Ahombra acts as the troupe's leader and unofficial spokesman. He is very interested about what the PCs have seen along the way in the Maighib Desert. The el-aurens are very detail oriented and ask numerous questions about the PCs travels. For their part, the el-aurens are very familiar with this portion of the desert and are aware of what is transpiring at the Oasis of Al-Mararak. They use phrases such as "an affront to common decency," "a bloody scandal," and "altogether ungentlemanly" to describe the current situation at the Oasis of Al-Mararak. They confirm that large portions of the earth around the water's edge have been excavated, and that two monstrous serpents circle overhead in the area around the oasis. They do not know who initiated the activity around the watery hole or the reasons why.

Boran offers to guide the PCs to the oasis for a nominal fee equivalent to 5gp worth of opals or turquoises. He refuses to accept any payment other than these gemstones. They become extremely indignant about any suggestions to fight on behalf of the PCs. The el-aurens abhor violence and show disdain for any creatures that seem to relish it. In addition, Boran can lead the PCs to set encounters **J1** and **J2** in the Maighib Desert. If the PCs accept his offer to guide them to the oasis, he and his troupe bring them to the very edge of the oasis' visual range and then depart back into the open desert.



Release the Kraken (Difficulty Easy)

One of the dangers of straying from the tried-and-true paths through the desert is the chance of encountering strange beasts that take up permanent residence beneath the sands. This random encounter only occurs someplace in the untracked desert at any time during the day. As the PCs walk across the swirling dunes and gravelly soil, a carnivorous monstrosity lies in wait beneath the surface. A PC may notice the beast's wicked tentacles with a successful DC 15 Wis (Perception) check. Likewise anyone with ranks in Knowledge (nature) or Survival may also use one of these skills to spot the creature at the same DC as the preceding check. Otherwise, the hapless victim falls into the clutches of the horror that waits below it.

Buried several feet underneath the ground is a **sand kraken**. The creature lashes out with its tentacles attacking any creature directly above it. The monster senses its prey using its tremorsense ability. The creature's main body sits beneath the surface; therefore damage dealt to its writhing tentacles does not reduce those of the creature itself. The only way to truly rid the desert of this vile filth is to dig up the sand and gravel around it and deal damage to the central body. The unintelligent predator has no treasure.

Heaven's Alive (Difficulty Hard)

The barren wastelands of the desert are the ideal location for performing vile rituals and bizarre experiments. Far from the prying eyes of the general populace, wicked practitioners of the dark arts can indulge their wildest fantasies without interference from meddlers and curiosity seekers. While trekking en route to the Oasis of Al-Marak, the PCs come face to face with two fearsome examples of what is possible when men subjugate ethics for raw power. This encounter can take place at any time of day either on the road or on the sand dunes.

Though all appears quiet in the desert, **2 mantidrakes**, a pair of abominable creations that are the malevolent offspring of a black dragon and manticore, soar in the heavens searching for their next victims. These monstrosities share common draconic heritage with Eyegouger, yet they are neither his prodigy nor involved in his activities at the oasis. The opportunistic predators scour the skies in search of their next meal. When it appears on the horizon, the creatures swoop down and unleash their terrifying breath weapon. They follow this attack with a volley of spikes or a whirlwind of razor sharp claws and teeth. The mantidrakes always remain slightly aloft during combat. From a distance, the creatures appear to be ordinary manticores; however after they close the distance between themselves and their intended target, their scaly, black draconic heads and wings remove all doubt as to the creature's true identity.

Mantidrake (2): AC 16; HP 126 (12d10+60); Spd 30ft, fly 50ft; Melee bite (+11, 1d8+7 piercing), claws x2 (+11, 1d8+7 slashing); **Ranged** spikes x6 (24 spikes/day, +6, 180ft, 1d6+7 piercing, one attack per target, targets must be within 30ft of each other); **SA** acid breath (30ft line, DC 14 Dex save or take 8d8 acid damage, save for half, recharge 5–6); **SA** multiattack (2 claws, 1 bite or 6 spikes); **Immune** acid damage; paralyzed; **Str** +7, **Dex** +2, **Con** +5, **Int** –1, **Wis** +2, **Cha** +1; **Skills** Perception +6; **Senses** darkvision 60ft, passive Perception 16; **Traits** immune to magical sleep; **AL** LE; **CR** 9; **XP** 5,000. (Appendix)

Treasure: Tracking the mantidrakes back to their lair is extremely difficult as the creatures predominately fly across the desert thereby not leaving any discernible tracks. The mantidrakes' lair is built into the side of a rock face approximately 5 miles north-northwest of where the PCs encountered them. If the PCs locate the lair via magical means or sheer luck, the covetous creatures have 2,055gp, 6,702sp and 12 turquoise gems worth 500gp (x2), 250gp (x6) and 100gp (x4) in a large pile in the corner of the chamber.

Sand Kraken: AC 16; HP 94 (8d10+50 plus tentacles); Spd 10ft, burrow 10ft; Melee tentacle x10 (+13, 1d4+5 bludgeoning plus grapple), bite (+13, 2d6+2 piercing); **SA** grapple (on tentacle hit, make +8 grapple check), multiattack (10 tentacles), tentacles (10 tentacles, AC 15, 15 hp, cannot be used once destroyed, damage to tentacles doesn't damage total hp); **Str** +5, **Dex** +0, **Con** +5, **Int** –4, **Wis** +1, **Cha** –1; **Skills** Athletics +8; **Senses** tremorsense 60ft, passive Perception 11; **Traits** camouflage (DC 15 Wis (Perception), Wis (Survival) or Int (Nature) check to detect buried kraken before it attacks); **AL** N; **CR** 9; **XP** 5,000. (Appendix)

Development: Though the sand kraken has not moved from this spot for quite some time, it did not accumulate any treasure over that time. Any efforts to search the area for valuables or cut the foul beast open in search of devoured items results in failure and a queasy stomach.

Your Cheitan Heart (Difficulty Hard)

Desert peoples are more familiar with genies than any other creature from another plane. These capricious outsiders played an important role in Khartous's creation myth, and they lorded over men for centuries from their stronghold of Iljanna. The relationship between man and genie is so pervasive in many realms that on occasion, the lustful beings take a human spouse or concubine that gives birth to their offspring. Eventually, these hateful creatures return to their human roots and dwell in the lands of their human ancestors, sowing misery and discord wherever they go. This encounter may take place at any time of day and at any location in the desert.

The sun glistens off the bronze skin of **4 cheitan jann** as they float a few feet above the sands in their endless journey across the desert. Their fiery red eyes constantly scan the terrain hunting for sentient creatures to torment and kill. Rather than waste their energy flying across the burning sands, the cunning beings employ a clever ruse to lure their prey to them. The creatures make camp around a naturally occurring mirage, where they pretend to be refilling their water supplies and idly chatting around the refreshing waters. To conceal their otherworldly identity, they wear headdresses that hide their faces and partially obscure their eyes. PCs that approach the area can recognize the mirage for what it truly is with a successful DC 15 Wis (Perception) check modified by the PCs' distance from the mirage. In addition, any creature compromised by extreme thirst may succumb to "mirage delirium".

QUESTS OF DOOM 3

The cheitan jann appear preoccupied with refilling their water flasks and exchanging idle banter with each other, while occasionally glancing back at the approaching PCs. If they notice the PCs attempting to avoid them, the cheitan jann watch the PCs from a distance and then use their *invisibility* trait to pursue them undetected. They use their telepathy to silently communicate their proposed battle plan to one another and then attack when the PCs decide to rest or occupy themselves with another endeavor. The cheitans then wade into battle swinging their scimitars, hoping to surprise the bewildered PCs.

If the PCs maintain their present course and move towards the cheitan jann, the outsiders feign disinterest in the approaching creatures. As soon as the PCs recognize the mirage for what it truly is, the cheitan jann become invisible and fan out across the area in an attempt to surprise and flank the PCs. They can use their *invisibility* trait three times per day, so they use it to maximum effect by attacking, becoming invisible, regrouping and then attacking again.

Though they are driven in their actions by innate hatred and malice, they are also interested in self-preservation. Whenever one of their kin falls in battle, the remaining cheitan jann use their spell-like abilities to flee to another plane of existence. They may even return at a later point in the PCs travels to square off against them again under the right circumstances.

Cheitan Jann: AC 16; HP 120 (16d8+48); Spd 30ft, fly 40ft, fly 30ft in chainmail; **Melee** scimitar x2 (+8, 1d8+5 slashing), slam (+8, 1d6+5 bludgeoning plus 1d4 fire); **Ranged** longbow (+7, 150/600ft, 1d8+4 piercing); **SA** change size (2x/day, *enlarge/reduce* on another creature, DC 13 Con save); **Resist** fire; **Str** +5, **Dex** +4, **Con** +3, **Int** +2, **Wis** +3, **Cha** +2; **Skills** Insight +6, Nature +5, Perception +6, Religion, +5, Stealth +7; **Senses** darkvision 60ft, passive Perception 16; **Traits** elemental endurance (can remain on plane of Air, Earth, Fire or Water for up to 48 hrs, 1 pt damage per additional hour on plane without returning to Material Plane); **AL** NE; **CR** 6; **XP** 2,300. (**Appendix**)

Equipment: chainmail, scimitar, longbow, 20 arrows.

Treasure: In addition to their gear, the cheitan jann also keep some of their treasures buried beneath the sand near the mirage approximately 50 feet north of where they congregated. Noticing the disturbance where it is buried is quite difficult requiring a successful DC 27 Wis (Perception) check. The coffer containing their goods lies 2 feet beneath the sand. The intricately carved teakwood coffer contains 1,230gp, a bronze necklace with a diamond pendant worth 1,000gp and a silver brooch with an amber inset worth 250gp. In addition to their concealed goods, each carries 10d10gp on their person along with an item of jewelry worth 1d4 x 100gp. In the event that the PCs capture or detain one or more of the cheitan jann for questioning, they know nothing about the Oasis of Al-Marak. Inquiries regarding watery stars generate a response that they know these items are the subjects of genie legends. Few creatures believe that they actually exist and no one, including any genie they know, has ever seen one. They attribute the legend of the watery stars to the overactive imagination of a bored shaitan or marid noble.

Part Two: The Oasis of Al-Marak

After completing the hazardous journey across the Maighib Desert, the PCs arrive at their intended destination — the Oasis of Al-Marak. As with nearly all oases, the large, fresh water spring lies at a lower elevation than the surrounding terrain. In fact, the contrast is so noticeable that a successful DC 5 Wis (Perception) check detects the descending gradient. The oasis is literally shaped like a bowl with a roughly circular, raised lip approximately 1 mile from the water's edge. A character that succeeds on a DC 18 Int (Nature) check recognizes the crater as the remnants of a primordial impact site spawned by a collision with a celestial body. Because of this topographical feature, PCs cannot see their intended destination until they stand atop, pass over or position themselves above the elevated boundary. The oasis itself sits at the bottom of an immense depression

formed by a primordial impact countless millennia ago. When the PCs enter visual range, the GM may read or paraphrase the following description.

An immense pool of crystal clear water shimmers in the distance, its edges lined by tall, lush grasses and reeds. An eclectic collection of colorful desert flowers blooms amidst the vibrant greenery. Date palm trees soar above the adjacent sands and fertile soil, offering precious shade to the small animals and minute insects moving through the foliage and swimming across its refreshing waters. Crude paths intermittently cut through the reeds and grasses allowing large land creatures to drink the oasis' precious liquid.

The center of Eyegouger's activity is along the northwestern corner of the oasis. Here, he and his minions dug deep tunnels into the earth in their pursuit of the elusive watery stars. The GM may read or paraphrase the following description for this area. The desert drakes' and desert trolls' locations depend upon the PCs' actions; therefore the GM may need to adjust the descriptions accordingly to include these creatures.

Two large gouges in the earth and two massive piles of sand, earth and loose stone blight the oasis' edge. The boreholes in the ground are wide enough to accommodate a huge giant and are spaced approximately 60 feet apart from one another. Behind these two fissures are their former contents. Two 100-foot-high mounds tower above the desert surface.

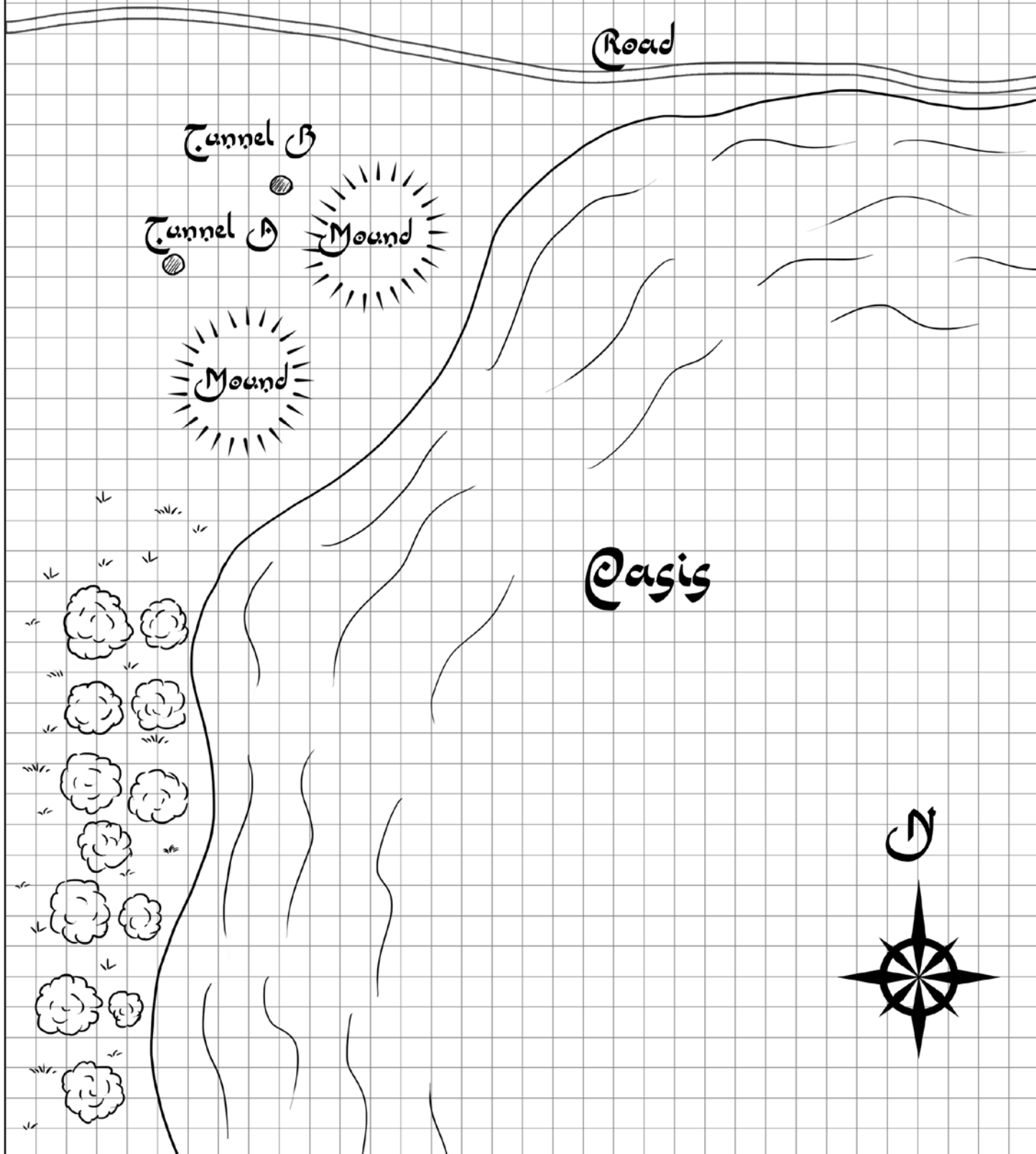
The heaps of sand, earth and loose stone measure roughly 80 feet in diameter. At most times one of the desert drakes sits or even sleeps atop the immense pile, while the desert trolls enjoy the shade offered by the large earthworks. The tunnels are approximately 15 feet in diameter and descend to a depth of 160 feet. Sunlight illuminates the upper half of both tunnels. Any creature that falls into the tunnel from the surface takes 15d6 points of falling damage. A successful DC 15 Str (Athletics) check allows the character to shimmy up or down the rough-hewn stone walls. A creature that falls into the tunnel can attempt to grab hold of a handhold or foothold with a successful DC 24 Str (Athletics) check.

With the initial excavations finished, the level of activity around the oasis itself has died down substantially. The only telltale signs of any unnatural presence are the two massive holes burrowing into the ground on the northwestern corner of the oasis and the two immense piles of sand, dirt, gravel and loose soil next to the gouges in the earth. In fact, the eastern and southern sections of the oasis are largely unmonitored and easily accessible. Eyegouger's minions are concentrated in the immediate vicinity around the two boreholes with a wary eye cast in the direction of the trade route passing to the north of the watering hole.

Oasis' Defenses

Eyegouger deployed two lines of defenses against would be heroes that would dare stop his grand plan. The first and most formidable are two desert drakes that circle overhead or perch atop the gigantic mounds adjacent to the tunnels. From the air, the vicious dragons can visually see the entire oasis, though they cannot discern precise details such as a lone figure or even a group of figures moving across the area. The drakes could see an army from approximately 10 miles away, but seeing a small adventuring party is much more difficult. Their earthbound counterparts lack the reptiles' flying abilities, but they are still fearsome opponents. Two desert trolls sit near the water's edge in a seemingly bored state. They pay virtually no attention to their surroundings and indulge their wandering, pea brains in mindless, repetitious activities such as striking stones with their claws or tormenting small insects and arachnids that cross their path. They correctly figure that the drakes are bound to spot intruders long before they do, so the trolls see no reason to expend any precious energy. The following sections describe the encounters with these two sets of creatures as well as an additional meeting with the oasis' resident fey.

Oasis of Al-Maraki 1 square - 20 feet



Outer Perimeter (Difficulty Medium)

The defense of the outer perimeter is left to **2 desert drakes** that survey the surrounding area from an elevated position either soaring through the skies or sitting upon one of the 100-foot high earthwork adjacent to the tunnels. While the desert drakes can scan a massive area, creatures looking up at the heavens can also make out the outline of the creatures from quite a distance away. In general, Wis (Perception) checks made by either party begin at a distance of 3 miles, treating every intervening tenth of a mile as if it were 10 feet. Therefore, at a distance of three miles, each group can notice the other with a successful DC 30 Wis (Perception) check under normal circumstances. Weather conditions, the use of the Stealth skill and other factors may further modify the Wis (Perception) check's DC. PCs also spot the piles of earth and sand, though a successful Wis (Perception) check is not needed to notice them.

Desert Drake (2): AC 17; HP 152 (16d10+64); Spd 30ft, burrow 20ft, fly 60ft; Melee bite (+8, 2d6+5 piercing), tail slap (+8, 1d8+5 bludgeoning plus DC 13 Str save or target pushed 1d6x5ft); **SA** dazzling emergence (on surprise round, drake can make a Cha (Intimidation) check on foes within 30ft as bonus action), multiattack (1 bite, 1 tail slap); sandstorm breath (60ft, 15ft radius, 3d6 fire, 4d8 electricity, DC 15 Dex save for half damage, remains 1d4 rounds as *fog cloud*, recharge 6), speed surge (3/day, may make additional move); **Immune** paralyzed; **Resist** lightning; **Str** +5, **Dex** +2, **Con** +4, **Int** -1, **Wis** +0, **Cha** +2; **Skills** Intimidation +5, Perception +3, Survival +3; **Senses** darkvision 60ft, tremorsense 30ft, passive Perception 13; **Traits** immune to magical sleep; **AL** NE; **CR** 8; **XP** 3,900. (Appendix)

Tactics: The desert drakes focus their attention predominately on the northern and western approaches to the oasis. They make also cursory glances to the east and south back across the oasis itself. It is possible for a character to steer a wide berth around the oasis and approach the tunnels from the south or even cross the oasis itself to possibly avoid the desert drakes. In addition, the drakes sleep in shifts during the peak daylight hours, figuring that travelers are less likely to brave the midday heat. The sleeping drake always lies atop the mound of dirt and earth, as the other sits on the adjacent pile or hovers overhead scanning the horizon for signs of life. The oasis' edge offers some concealment, allowing the PCs to close the gap to 2 miles before the drakes may begin attempting Wis (Perception) checks to notice them. Like the preceding case, treat every tenth of a mile as if it were 10 feet for determining the modifiers to the drakes' Wis (Perception) checks to spot characters moving through the area. Though swimming across the oasis appears to be a viable alternative, there are several pitfalls. The noise generated by the character's splashing as well as the resulting ripples in the water make it relatively easy for the drakes to notice someone taking the watery route. The drakes may attempt Wis (Perception) checks at a distance of 4 miles, once again treating every tenth of a mile as if it were 10 feet for determining the modifiers to the drakes' Wis (Perception) checks. On the other hand, a creature that breathes underwater and swims beneath the surface is virtually undetectable. The drakes do not begin making Wis (Perception) checks unless the character is less than 180 feet away. In this instance, the check's modifiers for distance function normally.

The drakes' response to an intruder's presence depends upon where they spotted them. If they noticed the character from at least a mile away, the airborne dragons descend from their lofty heights and dive towards the surface several hundred feet away from their intended target. The crafty reptiles then burrow into the sand and continue to move underground towards the PCs. Using their tremorsense ability, they wait to detect the creature's presence and then emerge from the sands. After their initial surprise attack, the reptiles expel a cloud of electrified dust. The monsters then attack with their ferocious bite and wicked tail. Whenever the drakes notice a creature at close range, they use their speed surge ability to close the gap and once again blast their victims with a cloud of electrified dust. After their initial action, they resort to using their bite and tail slap to deal damage to their opponents.

The drakes fear nothing except for Eyegouger. They would rather die at the hands of adventurers than face the wrath of an angry blue dragon; therefore they never surrender and do not retreat. In truly desperate circumstances, the drakes attempt to rendezvous with the desert trolls and launch a concerted ground and air assault against their enemies.

Treasure: The drakes store their treasure beneath the northern mound of sand and dirt. Locating the cache of hidden items requires a successful DC 18 Wis (Perception) check. Their treasures include *boots of striding and springing*, a *bead of force* and a *potion of fire breath* along with a pouch containing six turquoise gems worth 100gp each.

Inner Defenses (Difficulty Medium)

The desert drakes are tasked with the assignment to protect the oasis' outer perimeter against intruders leaving **2 desert trolls** as the tunnels' last line of defense. The stupid, lazy creatures rely on their draconic counterparts to mind the proverbial store, while they occupy themselves with monotonous activities or devouring anything edible within reach. They always take positions in a shady spot at the base of either mound where they occasionally feign a scrutinizing glance towards the water or out onto the open desert. Under these circumstances, use the trolls' Passive Perception score rather than making opposed skill checks. If the drakes react to an intruder's presence, the trolls follow the drakes' lead and act accordingly.

The trolls' primary goal is to figure out a way to do as little as possible without incurring Eyegouger's wrath. In keeping with this philosophy, the monstrous brutes snooze during the scorching hot midday hours and perform their cursory patrols during the cooler evening and overnight hours. During these brief walkabouts, they are predominately looking for a fresh meal rather than a fight against formidable opponents. That said, the desert trolls do not back down from combat, especially if the drakes are also involved in the battle.

Desert Troll (2): AC 17; HP 152 (16d10+64); Spd 30ft; Melee claw x2 (+8 slashing, 2d6+5), bite (+8, 1d8+5 piercing plus disease); **SA** multiattack (2 claws), pustules (1/1d4 rounds, 10ft cone, poisoned for 2d4 rounds, DC 14 Con save negates); **Str** +5, **Dex** -1, **Con** +4, **Int** -2, **Wis** +1, **Cha** -2; **Skills** Athletics +8, Perception +4, Stealth +2; **Senses** passive Perception 14; **Traits** disease (*desert rot*, DC 13 Con save or contracts rot, in 1d4 days victim must make another Con save or lose 3d6 max hp, must make save 1/day or continue to lose hp); regeneration (regains 10 hp/turn unless it took acid or fire damage on previous turn); **AL** NE; **CR** 8; **XP** 3,900. (Appendix)

Tactics: Though the desert trolls are somewhat lacking in intelligence, they are cunning adversaries. The savage giants use their size and strength to maximum advantage lashing out with their vicious claws and sinking their rotting teeth into their enemies' exposed flesh. Whenever possible they attempt to push or hurl their opponents into one of the tunnels or the oasis. They are fearful of magic, so they focus their attacks against enemy spellcasters. They attempt to grapple magic-wielding foes that are smaller than they are; however they forego this tactic and instead take full attack actions if the PCs badly outnumber them and the drakes. Their innate fear of electricity drives them to fight to the bitter end rather than face the gruesome prospect of being electrocuted by the desert drakes or worse yet, Eyegouger himself. Their feeble intellect and poor communication skills limit the breadth of their knowledge if the PCs subdue, capture or magically compel the trolls to divulge information. In that case, the trolls relay that a blue dragon and a human wizard dug the massive tunnels along with a huge worm. They do not know the reason why they excavated in this area.

Treasure: The desert trolls keep a cache of items in a filthy sack near one of the mounds. It contains 973gp, 6 gems worth 100gp each and a bronze pendant worth 50gp.

Femme Fatales (Difficulty Medium)

Natural forces are responsible for creating the deserts' vital oases, but their continued survival, maintenance and expansion often depend upon external factors. The majestic wadira ranks at or near the top of the list in terms of importance. These wondrous fey creatures spend their lives in close proximity to the chosen oasis, tending to its flora and defending it against large-scale exploitation or the machinations of evil creatures bent on destroying it. The Oasis of Al-Marak is no exception to this rule. As the Maighib Desert's largest body of water, the resident wadiras have dwelt along its fertile banks for centuries where they harmoniously coexisted with the caravan teams and travelers that used the oasis to replenish their water supplies and quench their pack and riding animals' thirst. Throughout the generations, the naturally attuned fey always noticed something peculiar about the oasis, as if some mysterious presence cohabitated its placid waters alongside them. They never sensed any semblance of life or intelligence — just something unnatural.

Under Ahmad's guidance, the adult blue dragon dove into the sands along the oasis' edge in an apparent quest to find something. Disgusted by the upheaval left in his wake, 7 wadiras attempted to reason with the human wizard and his reptilian cohort. Negotiations quickly broke down and combat ensued. The overmatched wadiras' futile attempt to expel the greedy monster from their ancestral home proved disastrous. In less than a minute, Eyegouger and his lackeys reduced them to charred dust and crackling ashes. Since the disheartening bloodbath, the remaining wadiras hide along the oasis' banks and only emerge on rare occasions. The PCs' arrival at the oasis offers the first glimmer of hope to the downtrodden fey. At first, the wadiras remain concealed and reconnoiter from afar to gauge their motives. Any character that recklessly despoils the oasis feels the angry creatures' full wrath as **3 wadiras** reveal themselves and savagely attack the intruder. Otherwise, they keep a wary eye on them for several hundred feet before tentatively approaching the PCs. The wadiras err on the side of caution and treat the PCs with great suspicion; however if the PCs mention that they are acting under the Sultan's direction or belong to the Church of Fatimashan, the wadiras dispense with their pretenses and warmly greet them. Under all other circumstances, the PCs must overcome the wadiras' wariness and gain their trust through words or deeds. After they accomplish this task, the wadiras willingly divulge their information.

Wadira (3): AC 16; HP 91 (14d8+28); Spd 30ft; Melee +1 quarterstaff x2 (+7, 1d6+4 bludgeoning); SA multiattack (2 quarterstaff), pacify (gaze, 30ft, DC 15 Con, target affected as *calm emotions* for 1d6 rounds), serenity (all creatures within 30ft that try to attack wadira must make DC 15 Con save or be unable to attack as per *sanctuary* for 1 minute); Str +3, Dex +4, Con +2, Int +2, Wis +2, Cha +5; Skills Acrobatics +7, Athletics +6, Nature +5, Perception +5, Performance +8, Survival +5; Senses passive Perception 15; Traits oasis bound (cannot go more than 500 yards from home body of water), replenishment (oasis water removes blinded, deafened, incapacitated or stunned conditions); AL NG; CR 5; XP 1,800. (Appendix)

Development: They relay that two flying dragons and two disgusting trolls guard the entrance to the subterranean tunnels. The monsters concentrate their efforts on the nearby road and pay little attention to the eastern and southern banks of the oasis as well as its still waters. They do not know how far down the tunnels go or why Eyegouger dug them in the first place, but they confirm that a blue dragon is responsible for their construction. In addition, they also advise the PCs that a human wizard accompanied the mighty reptile. Though they believe the cause to be noble, they refuse to participate in any attacks against the desert drakes or the desert trolls. They fear that their involvement in an assault could force Eyegouger to destroy large swaths of the oasis, a fate they fear and loathe more than death. However, the wadiras offer the PCs water from the oasis which removes the fatigued, shaken and sickened conditions from any living creature that partakes of their offer.

Part 3: Into the Wormholes

Even without the wadiras' information, the obvious next step is to follow Eyegouger's and Ahmad's footsteps into the belly of the earth. The two boreholes are crudely carved from the loose sand and descend at a precipitous angle into the earth. In the subterranean depths below the oasis, the dragon and his companion realize that they are not the only creatures to stumble upon the elusive watery stars. Long before their arrival, the mysterious mineral altered the fortunes of an erstwhile derro who also attempted to claim the watery star. They soon learned that the task is a fool's errand, as they greatly fear the eerie glow that emanates from the strange object that fell from the skies during their distant ancestors' lifetimes. In addition to warping and twisting the derros' minds, the watery star also tears holes in the fabric of time and space, altering the basic laws of physics in ways previously unimaginable.

In his lust to lay claim to his prized treasure, Eyegouger hurled his massive body against the earth and began digging. The incredibly powerful dragon ripped two massive holes into the ground, piling the accumulated sand, gravel, loose stones and damp earth into gargantuan piles. Eyegouger halted his excavation at a depth of 160 feet because a surreptitious find altered his initial plan. In the darkness of a subterranean cavern, Eyegouger and Ahmad stumbled upon a purple worm that could perform their "dirty" work for them. Ahmad used his repertoire of magic to control the beast and compel it to forge new tunnels from the bare rock. In addition to this fortuitous development, the underground passages and chambers also host the rare dracolisk and a forgotten tribe of morlocks that serve as food and captives for their more powerful counterparts.

Tunnels A and B

Though the boreholes are labeled as Tunnel A and Tunnel B on the corresponding map, they share the same characteristics and roughly end up in the same place. At their current level, it is very likely that the PCs have magical items or abilities that allow them to easily negotiate their way down the tunnels without any risk of falling. This could include the ability to use *feather fall*, *fly*, *spider climb* or even *teleport*, though there is some inherent danger transporting to an unknown location. If the PCs must physically climb down the boreholes, they must succeed on a DC 15 Str (Athletics) check to negotiate the treacherous handholds and footholds lining the roughly hewn passage walls. Whenever a character loses his grip and falls, the character can grab hold of an intervening object such as a rocky outcropping or an exposed handhold with a successful DC 22 Str (Athletics) check. Otherwise the character suffers 1d6 points of falling damage per 10 feet beyond the first 10 feet. Any creature with the stone-cunning ability can tell that a large beast recently created these tunnels, though the subsequent passages and chambers are significantly older and made by other creatures.

Underground Level

The underground level is the first level of subterranean passages constructed predominately by the purple worm over the years with a few recent additions that opened up into the derros' area on the subterranean level. The tunnels are generally cylindrical in shape, so their dimensions are the same on all sides, i.e. a 15-foot wide passageway is also 15 feet high. All of the corridors and chambers are unlit, as its residents are accustomed and adapted to life in a pitch black environment. At this depth, the characters and monsters inhabiting the area do not feel the effects of the watery star; however the GM may add a few hints or a bit of flavor to prepare them for what is to come. The PCs may periodically experience a brief but harmless flash of blue light, an invisible tug on their arm as if something were holding it back or an accelerated step forward while moving through the tunnels that nearly caused the character to trip. For every 10 minutes spent exploring the underground level, the PCs have a 1 in 4 chance of running across either of the subsequent random encounters. The description for area U1 follows this section.

Morlock Raiding Party (Difficulty Hard)

Morlocks are ignorant in the traditional sense, but they are cunning hunters and predators. Over the centuries, this band of **4 morlock warriors** became particularly adept at fighting larger beasts in the crowded passages and chambers that comprise their homeland. In addition, the perpetual darkness enhanced their visual capabilities. Their darkvision extends to a range of 120 feet, allowing them in most circumstances to see enemies long before their opponents can spot them. They are immediately attracted to any light source and position themselves in preparation of an attack. The morlocks prefer to ambush and then swarm their foes. Half of them climb atop the ceiling so they can drop down on their targets while the remainder line themselves along the walls in an effort to get sneak attacks. The morlocks never surrender, even in the face of a superior foe. In the contingency that the PCs somehow subdue these creatures, the morlocks' stupidity inhibits their ability to provide any useful information.

Morlock Warrior (4): AC 16; **HP** 120 (16d8+48); **Spd** 40ft, climb 30ft; **Melee** club x2 (+7, 1d6+4 bludgeoning), bite x2 (+7, 1d4+4 piercing); **SA** leap attack (may make attack at any point during its move, does not provoke attack of opportunity), multiattack (2 club or 2 bite), rage (4/day, 1 minute, advantage on Str checks and saves, +2 to damage, resistance to bludgeoning, piercing and slashing), reckless attack (gain advantage on first turn, but granting advantage on all attacks on morlock until its next turn), swarming (2 morlocks can occupy the same square, both have advantage if they attack the same target); **Immune** poison damage; poisoned; **Str** +4, **Dex** +4 (+7), **Con** +3 (+6), **Int** -3, **Wis** +2, **Cha** -2; **Skills** Climb +7, Perception +5, Stealth +7; **Senses** darkvision 120ft, passive Perception 15; **Traits** cavern stealth (advantage on all Dex (Stealth) checks in caves), expert climber (advantage on all Str (Athletics) and Dex (Acrobatics) involved in climbing), immune to disease, light blindness (blind in daylight or its equivalent); **AL** CE; **CR** 6; **XP** 3,900. (Appendix)

Development: Other than their combat gear, the creatures have no treasure. If the PCs opt to follow the creatures back to their lair, the PCs must succeed on a DC 13 Wis (Perception) or Wis (Survival) check to locate their tracks. Retracing their steps to their origin can be accomplished only with a successful Wis (Survival) check.

Stone and Acid (Difficulty Easy)

In addition to the morlocks, another reptilian predator stalks the underground level's passages and chambers. A lone creature resembling a six-legged black dragon with shimmering scales and gleaming eyes also attacks anything it encounters. The monster is a **dracolisk**. Like other subterranean species, the creature is well-adapted to a life of perpetual darkness. Any visible light source immediately gains its attention, though the lumbering beast makes no sudden moves towards the illumination. Instead, it slowly creeps in its direction and then waits for its prey to draw close. The crafty dragon always takes its place in a passageway rather than a chamber. Just before the creature's light source is about to expose its position, the creature inches towards its targets exposing them to its petrifying gaze. It then unleashes a crackling bolt of lightning down the passageway before engaging its intended meal in melee.

Dracolisk: AC 14; **HP** 105 (10d10+50); **Spd** 20ft, fly 40ft; **Melee** bite (+9, 1d8+7 piercing), claw x2 (+9, 1d4+7 slashing); **SA** acid breath (30ft line, 11d8 acid, DC 14 Dex save for half), petrifying gaze (30ft, DC 12 Con save or target restrained, must check again following round, on failure target is petrified), multiattack (1 bite, 2 claws); **Immune** acid damage; paralyzed; **Str** +6, **Dex** -1, **Con** +5, **Int** -3, **Wis** +1, **Cha** +1; **Senses** darkvision 60ft, passive Perception 11; **AL** N; **CR** 6; **XP** 2,300. (Appendix)

Development: The dracolisk has no treasure, but it is easy to track it back to its lair. The large creature leaves telltale claw marks on the floor as it moves. Locating its tracks requires a successful DC 10 Wis (Perception) or Wis (Survival) check, and it can be followed back to its abode with a successful Wis (Survival) check using the preceding DC.

U1: Grand Opening

The two tunnels abruptly end and open into a large cavernous chamber with craggy, stone walls and three passageways leading out in different directions. Several mineral deposits are visible on the walls along with the shattered bodies of three lightly armored men littering the cavern floor. Two corpses lie below the western tunnel, and the other is beneath the eastern tunnel.

The purple worm once resided here but moved on after its encounter with Eyegouger and Ahmad. In fact, Eyegouger stopped digging at this point because of the massive creature's presence. Though the pair pressed the creature into service building new tunnels, the three adjacent passageways have existed for quite some time. From the cavern floor, light is visible at the top of the boreholes drilled into this chamber's ceiling which is 20 feet above the cavern floor. Climbing back up the boreholes is virtually impossible from the ground; however a rope or other climbing implement securely fastened to the borehole's surface provides a means of allowing a creature to reach the passage carved into the ceiling. The mineral deposits are concentrated on the western walls. They consist predominately of salt.

Development: The desert trolls tossed the three dead bodies down the boreholes to amuse themselves, but the dim-witted monsters failed to realize that they could not see the corpses hit bottom despite performing the task multiple times. A character may determine the cadavers' injuries with a successful DC 15 Wis (Medicine) or Int (Nature) check. Careful scrutiny of their battered bodies reveals that they suffered tremendous electrical burns and several slashing wounds. The fall inflicted substantial postmortem damage in the form of shattered bones. The bodies are clad in desert cloaks. The morlocks scavenged their remaining treasures as tribute to their deity.

U2: Ancient Tunnel Collapse

The underground passageway culminates in a massive pile of loose fitting rocks that impedes all further progress.

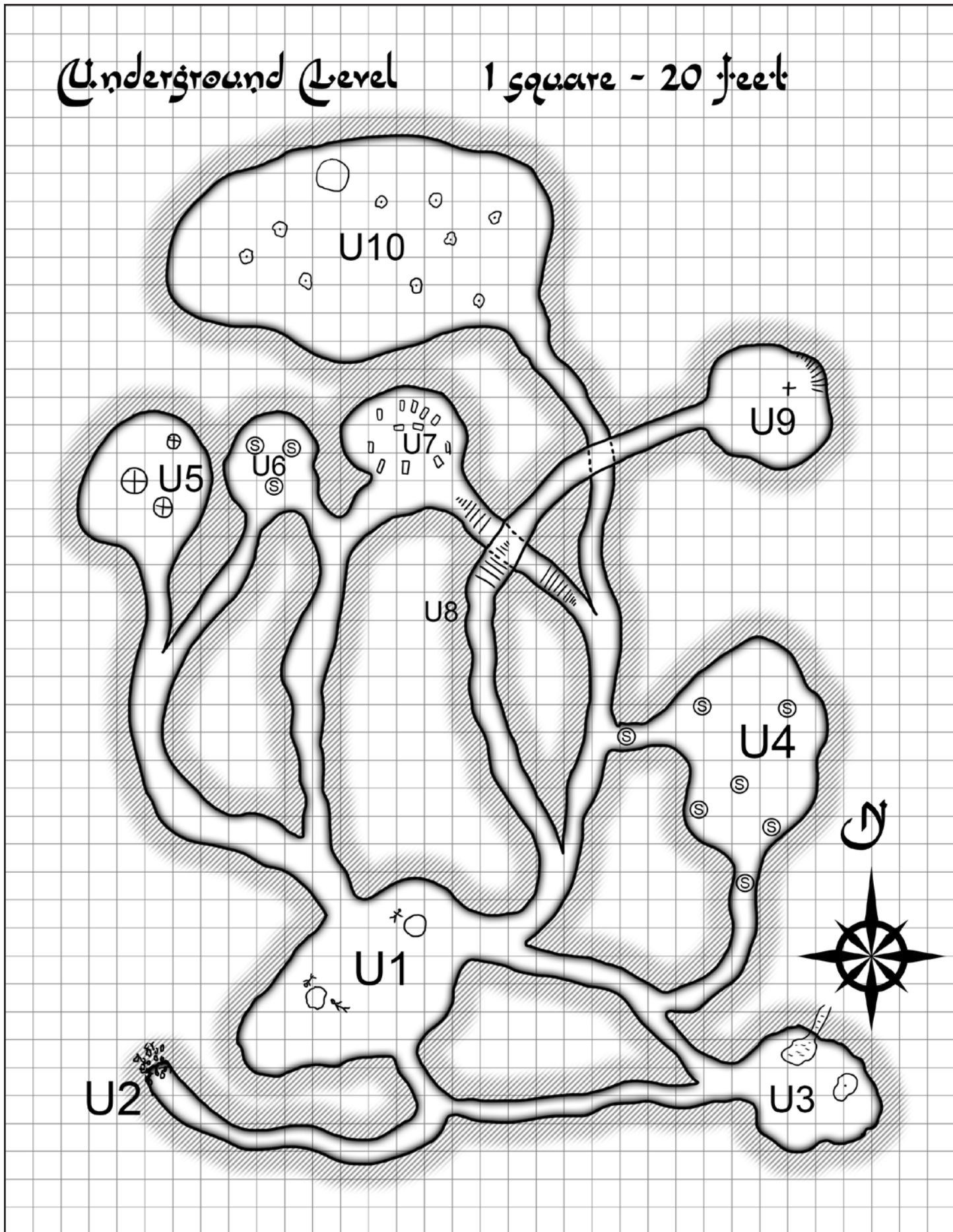
Centuries ago, the ceiling collapsed in this section of the complex strewing loose rocks, sand and gravel throughout the entire area. The cave-in stretches for hundreds of feet towards the west. The debris appears undisturbed, though it is possible for a Fine or smaller creature to navigate its way through the earth and stone to the other side. There is no evidence that Eyegouger or Ahmad ventured in this direction. If the PCs insist on attempting to excavate the collapse or attempt another means to bypass it, their journey ends in a long-forgotten chamber filled with the skeletal remains of a massive, serpentine creature.

U3: Morlock Shrine

The soft sound of flowing water echoes against the stone walls as the precious liquid flows through the near wall and replenishes a subterranean pond. Small, eyeless fish navigate its waters, while tiny cave spiders scuttle around the water's edge. A man-sized stalagmite carved into the crude image of a grotesquely pregnant woman greets would be visitors with a wide-eyed stare and the grimace of excruciating pain etched onto her stone countenance.

Underground Level

1 square - 20 feet



QUESTS OF DOOM 3

An underground river feeds the chamber's pond. The water is safe to drink, though its high sediment content gives it an unpleasant taste. Likewise the fish and spiders are edible with similar aftereffects as the water. The carved stalagmite depicts one of the ancient morlock deities. A successful DC 12 Int (Religion) check reveals that the stalagmite appears to pay homage to an unknown fertility goddess; however there are no further details regarding the deity's name or her intended worshippers. The morlocks frequently visit this area to pay homage to their ancestral goddess and partake in its food and drink. PCs spending more than a few minutes in this area have a 50% chance of encountering the wandering morlock raiding party during their stay.

U4: Dracolisks' Lair (Difficulty Medium)

An oddly posed stone statue stands at the precipice of a much larger chamber, where several more of these unusual art pieces are scattered about the room. Two six-legged reptilian creatures covered in glistening, black scales slither among the statues.

The statues are not decorative art pieces, but rather the petrified remains of the 2 dracolisks' past victims. These two vicious monsters comprise a mated pair. With that in mind, the creatures fight to the death to protect each other and the prospects of any future offspring. The dracolisks initiate combat by using their breath weapons against any creatures still in the adjoining passageways. Afterward, the dracolisks concentrate their attacks against any creature with a light source, forcing all creatures looking at them to resist their petrifying gaze while fending off their vicious melee attacks. As with others of their kin, these creatures have no worldly possessions.

Dracolisk (2): AC 14; HP 105 (10d10+50); Spd 20ft, fly 40ft; Melee bite (+9, 1d8+7 piercing), claw x2 (+9, 1d4+7 slashing); **SA** acid breath (30ft line, 11d8 acid, DC 14 Dex save for half), multiattack (1 bite, 2 claws), petrifying gaze (30ft, DC 12 Con save or target restrained, must check again following round, on failure target is petrified); **Immune** acid damage; paralyzed; **Str +6, Dex -1, Con +5, Int -3, Wis +1, Cha +1; Senses** darkvision 60ft, passive Perception 11; **AL N; CR 6; XP 2,300. (Appendix)**

U5: Morlock Living Quarters (Difficulty Medium)

Eerie phosphorescent purple light bathes the outlines of three rudimentary hut-shaped, stone structures in an unusual glow. The illumination emanates from dozens of crystals affixed to the ceiling. Lichens, molds and fungi grow on the damp walls and the structure's outer lining. Eight pale-skinned humanoids with bulging eyes move about the chamber performing a variety of tasks such as harvesting the plant materials flourishing on the room's many surfaces.

The morlocks occupy Area U5 and Area U6. The 8 morlocks that dwell here represent the tribe's females and juveniles. A character that succeeds on a DC 10 Wis (Perception) check notices that two of the horrific humanoids appear to be pregnant. The morlocks attack on sight and raise a tremendous ruckus in the process that alerts their kin in the adjoining chamber to the presence of intruders. Likewise, the morlocks in this chamber react to any alarms sounded in the connecting room.

The morlocks rely upon the fungi, molds and lichen as their primary food source; however Eyegouger's tunnel to the surface offers them the

possibility of fresh kills. The adept climbers can easily climb up and down the treacherous boreholes' walls. The crystals imbedded into the ceiling are enchanted by *continual flame* spells. Under normal circumstances, they would be much brighter; however many of the crystals are hundreds and even thousands of years old. As the crystalline structures grew, the magic light steadily dimmed. The illumination emitted by the crystals is half that of a normal *continual flame* spell and is treated as dim light thus creatures with low-light vision can see normally within the affected area.

Morlock (8): AC 15; HP 52 (8d8+16); Spd 40ft, climb 30ft; Melee club x2 (+4, 1d6+2 bludgeoning), bite (+4, 1d4+2 piercing); **SA** leap attack (may make attack at any point during its move, does not provoke attack of opportunity), multiattack (2 club), swarming (2 morlocks can occupy the same square, both have advantage if they attack the same target); **Immune** poison damage; poisoned; **Str +2, Dex +4 (+6), Con +2 (+4), Int -3, Wis +2, Cha -2; Skills** Climb +4, Perception +4, Stealth +6; **Senses** darkvision 120ft, passive Perception 14; **Traits** cavern stealth (advantage on all Dex (Stealth) checks in caves), expert climber (advantage on all Str (Athletics) and Dex (Acrobatics) involved in climbing), immune to disease, light blindness (blind in daylight or its equivalent); **AL CE; CR 2; XP 450. (Appendix)**

U6: Morlock Temple (Difficulty Deadly)

The echo of rhythmic chanting fills the air as six hideous humanoid creatures bow in homage before three heavily damaged stone statues depicting a handsome, strapping nobleman, a voluptuous woman clad in royal garb and a muscular warrior armed with a sword. Another of their kin leads them in this bizarre ritual. Unlike his brethren, this creature wears a magnificent crown and wears a ring on one of his outstretched hands. A small pile of coins and other objects rests on the ground between the three statues.

It is rare that a dragon would turn down any opportunity to add to his treasure hoard, but he deemed the risks of doing battle with the morlocks and their high priest to outweigh the rewards. The morlocks are incapable of advanced tactics so their high priest uses his magic to enhance his combat abilities rather than aid his allies. If the morlocks are aware of the PCs' presence, they use the same strategy as the morlock raiding party. Half of them climb onto the ceiling and attempt to drop down on their foes, while the remainder split up and attempt to flank their outnumbered enemies. The morlocks fight to the death and never surrender, especially within the sanctity of their crude temple.

Morlock Warrior (4): AC 16; HP 120 (16d8+48); Spd 40ft, climb 30ft; Melee club x2 (+7, 1d6+4 bludgeoning), bite x2 (+7, 1d4+4 piercing); **SA** leap attack (may make attack at any point during its move, does not provoke attack of opportunity), multiattack (2 club or 2 bite), rage (4/day, 1 minute, advantage on Str checks and saves, +2 to damage, resistance to bludgeoning, piercing and slashing), reckless attack (gain advantage on first turn, but granting advantage on all attacks on morlock until its next turn), swarming (2 morlocks can occupy the same square, both have advantage if they attack the same target); **Immune** poison damage; poisoned; **Vulnerable** radiant; **Str +4, Dex +4 (+7), Con +3 (+6), Int -3, Wis +2, Cha -2; Skills** Climb +7, Perception +5, Stealth +7; **Senses** darkvision 120ft, passive Perception 15; **Traits** cavern stealth (advantage on all Dex (Stealth) checks in caves), expert climber (advantage on all Str (Athletics) and Dex (Acrobatics) involved in climbing), immune to disease, light blindness (blind in daylight or its equivalent); **AL CE; CR 6; XP 3,900. (Appendix)**

MY BLUE OASIS

Morlock High Priest: AC 15; HP 65 (10d8+20); Spd 40ft, climb 30ft; **Melee** club x2 (+4, 1d6+2 bludgeoning), bite (+4, 1d4+2 piercing); **SA** leap attack (may make attack at any point during its move, does not provoke attack of opportunity), multiattack (2 club), spells (DC 13, Wis +7), swarming (2 morlocks can occupy the same square, both have advantage if they attack the same target); **Immune** poison damage; poisoned; **Str** +2, **Dex** +4 (+7), **Con** +2 (+5), **Int** -3, **Wis** +2, **Cha** -2; **Skills** Climb +5, Perception +5, Stealth +7; **Senses** darkvision 120ft, passive Perception 15; **Traits** cavern stealth (advantage on all Dex (Stealth) checks in caves), expert climber (advantage on all Str (Athletics) and Dex (Acrobatics) involved in climbing), immune to disease, light blindness (blind in daylight or its equivalent); **AL** CE; **CR** 8; **XP** 3,900. (**Appendix**)

Spells (slots): 0 (at will)—*guidance, poison spray, shillelagh, thorn whip*; 1st (4)—*charm person, entangle, fog cloud, thunderwave*; 2nd (3)—*barkskin, flame blade, hold person*; 3rd (3)—*dispel magic, sleet storm*; 4th (3)—*blight, stoneskin*; 5th (2)—*insect plague*.

Treasure: The pile of coins and objects between the statues include 1,007gp, 689sp, three garnets worth 100gp each and a bronze belt buckle worth 50gp.

U7: Morlock Barracks

The foul stench of bodily waste, rotting flesh and mold immediately bombards the senses. Multiple piles of excrement, half-eaten meats and gnawed bones litter the floor amidst a dozen fetid, leather and fur bedrolls stained with blood, pus and phlegm. Four splintered wooden clubs are scattered amidst the debris.

The morlock barbarians call this disgusting hovel home. The odor is so fierce that any creature that remains here for more than 1 minute becomes sickened for 1d3 minutes with a failed DC 11 Con save. Likewise any character that physically searches the area must also succeed on the aforementioned save or be sickened. Despite the quantity of material here, there is nothing of value in the room.

U8: Morlock Dead

The battered bodies of four hideous humanoids lie broken in the middle of the passageway that descends at a sharp decline. Chunks of rended flesh, streaks of blood and fragments of bone splatter the walls, floor and ceiling.

Eyegouger utterly obliterated his four morlock adversaries in his search for the watery star. A successful DC 10 Heal or Knowledge (nature) check confirms that the dragon broke nearly every bone in these creatures' bodies with only a few blows. As a result of this easy tussle with this group of morlocks, Eyegouger decided to focus on his objective rather than waste his time and effort destroying these pathetic humanoids.

U9: Dragon Warning

The pungent aroma of freshly dug earth fills the air along with another unusual scent. The chamber beyond is structurally featureless; however freshly carved runes cover much of the far wall as a viscous substance drips from the ceiling. Affixed to a steel pole embedded into the ground are the

eviscerated remains of a battle-hardened man clad in sun-dered full plate armor. He still holds an exquisite greatsword in his decaying hands.

Ahmad's purple worm guardian began construction on this section of tunnel only to abandon it after they noticed another substance mixed with the rock. The material is asphalt which is commonly used as glue or for embalming. Correctly identifying it requires a successful DC 20 Int (Religion) check as it is also used to waterproof ships. There is enough asphalt readily available to fill two barrels, though transporting them to the surface presents a significant challenge.

The runes are written in Draconic and are intended to serve as a warning to any creature that dares follow in Eyegouger's footsteps. They state the following.

Eyegouger the destroyer, lord of the desert and master of rock and cavern issues this warning. Certain death and excruciating agony lie ahead. Hail Eyegouger ruler of the deepest reaches! Hail Eyegouger king of those that crawl! Bow before his might and worship at his knee or meet this unfortunate soul's fate.

Development: The remains are those of Alajaddin Unhara, a renowned dragon slayer throughout Khartous. He was one of the first to arrive at the oasis to do battle against Eyegouger, though he failed in his quest several days ago. Unlike most desert warriors, Alajaddin wore heavy armor enchanted with magic to protect him from the ravages of extreme heat. Unfortunately for the PCs, Eyegouger destroyed his armor making it irreparable. His +1 *flame tongue greatsword* is broken, but it can be repaired. Ahmad used the asphalt to glue the weapon to his dead hands. A character recognizes Alajaddin as a well-known dragon hunter with a successful DC 15 Int (History) check.

U10: The Worm Has Turned (Difficulty Hard)

Massive stalagmites rise from the floor in some areas, rivaling the height and girth of an ogre or even a giant. Slithering its way through this tangled forest of rough hewn stone is a gargantuan worm covered in sturdy, purplish plates of hardened exoskeleton. Razor sharp teeth fill its gigantic maw which is easily large enough to swallow a dire camel in a single gulp. Another massive tunnel wide enough to accommodate even this immense creature sinks deeper into the earth. Brief, intermittent flashes of eerie blue light pulsate upward from the fissure.

The creature slithering among the stalagmites is a **purple worm**. Eyegouger and Ahmad used brute force and magic to cajole the immense worm to protect this chamber against any intruders. Their guardian knows only one battle tactic — bite, sting, eat. The beast attacks until destroyed. It has no visible treasure, though a character with the stomach for it may cut the monster's belly open where they find sixty-three gem stones worth 100gp each.

Purple Worm: AC 18; HP 247 (15d20+90); Spd 50ft, burrow 30ft; **Melee** bite (+9, reach 10ft, 3d8+9 piercing plus DC 19 Dex save or be swallowed if size Large or smaller, swallowed target blinded, restrained, takes 6d6 acid damage/turn), tail stinger (+9, reach 10ft, 3d6+9 piercing plus 12d6 poison, DC 19 Con save for half); **SA** multiattack (1 bite, 1 stinger); **Str** +9, **Dex** -2, **Con** +6, **Int** -5, **Wis** -1, **Cha** -3; **Senses** blindsight

QUESTS OF DOOM 3

30ft, tremorsense 60ft, passive Perception 9; **Traits** tunneler (move through solid rock at 1/2 burrow rate and leaves 10ft diameter tunnel behind); **AL** Unaligned; **CR** 15; **XP** 13,000.

The stalagmites scattered throughout the room are ordinary rock formations; however the tunnel is a recent creation. The tunnel leads into darkness momentarily pierced by fleeting blasts of blue light. It descends at a 45-degree angle towards the southeast, presumably bringing it directly below the oasis itself. The rough-hewn rocky surface provides adequate traction; therefore Str (Athletics) checks are not necessary to negotiate the descent towards the final destination — the realm of the watery star and Eyegouger.

Part 4: The Watery Star

The PCs' pursuit of Eyegouger leads them into the purple worm's make-shift tunnel. The passageway meanders and winds through the rock and stone beneath the oasis for nearly 4 miles where it reaches a depth of nearly 2 miles below the surface. Within the confines of this subterranean passageway, the watery star's effects become more noticeable. The flashes of eerie blue light occur at more regular intervals. Time accelerates and decelerates without rhyme or reason. In fact, the mineral's gravitational pull is so strong that it occasionally inhibits a character's blood flow to his brain. Eyegouger's tunnel ends at a sundered wall that leads into an ancient derro complex that has stood for countless centuries. The rapacious dragon and his rueful subordinate realize that someone else found the watery star first begging the question of which came first — the derros' madness or the watery star?

Guidelines of Physics

Within such close proximity to the watery star, the laws of nature and physics bend to become more akin to guidelines rather than laws or rules. Time momentarily speeds up and then later screeches to a grinding halt. Blood rushes from one part of the brain to another causing confusion or greater clarity. In addition, the irradiating blue light becomes more menacing rather than a nuisance. Every 1d4+1 minutes, the watery star alters time and space in a random manner as outlined on the following table.

Table 13-1 Watery Star Random Effects

d%	Effects
01-30	Speed increases by 25%. Ranged weapons suffer a 20% miss chance.
31-60	Speed decreases by 25%. Ranged weapons suffer a 20% miss chance.
61-90	Bright flash of blue light dazzles all creatures that fail a DC 16 Con save for 1d4+1 rounds. Creatures that do not rely upon visual organs for sight are unaffected. (Reroll this result in Area S8: Cavern of the Watery Star).
91-00	Gravity affects the creatures' circulation. Creatures must succeed on a concentration check (Con Save, DC = 10 + spell level) in order to cast any spell. If the character must attempt a concentration check for another reason, i.e. casting defensively, the DC for that check instead increases by +10.

These effects last for 1d4+1 rounds before space and time revert back to normal. This is not a magical effect; therefore spell resistance and spell effects that ignore impediments to movement such as *freedom of movement* do not negate the watery star's warping effects.

The walls, floors and ceilings throughout the derro complex are crafted from finely cut stone. Similarly, the doors are also made from stone, though the derros' engineering prowess allows them to open with minimal effort unless otherwise noted in the room's description.

Stone Doors: **AC** 17; **HP** 28; **Immunity** acid, cold, fire, lightning, poison, psychic; **Resistance** thunder, weapon damage; **Break** DC 20 Str.

Despite their diminutive stature, the doorways and chambers are vastly oversized to accommodate creatures of their size. The ceilings are 20 feet high in all areas except for **Area S5** and **Area S7** which are 10 feet lower and 10 feet higher than the others respectively. Though they are adept at seeing in complete darkness, the watery star basks the entire complex in an eerie blue light that is the equivalent of dim light. Creatures with dark-vision and low-light vision can see normally, while those without either ability still require a light source.

Sr: Derro Laboratory

Large blocks of finely cut stone litter the floor of an oddly shaped chamber. Several open books rest upon a triangular table surrounded by three small chairs. The battered bodies of three small, pale blue-skinned humanoids with bulbous eyes lie nearby the table. Pieces of an elaborate diagram are strewn throughout the chamber, whereas an intact version of a similar diagram hangs on the near wall.

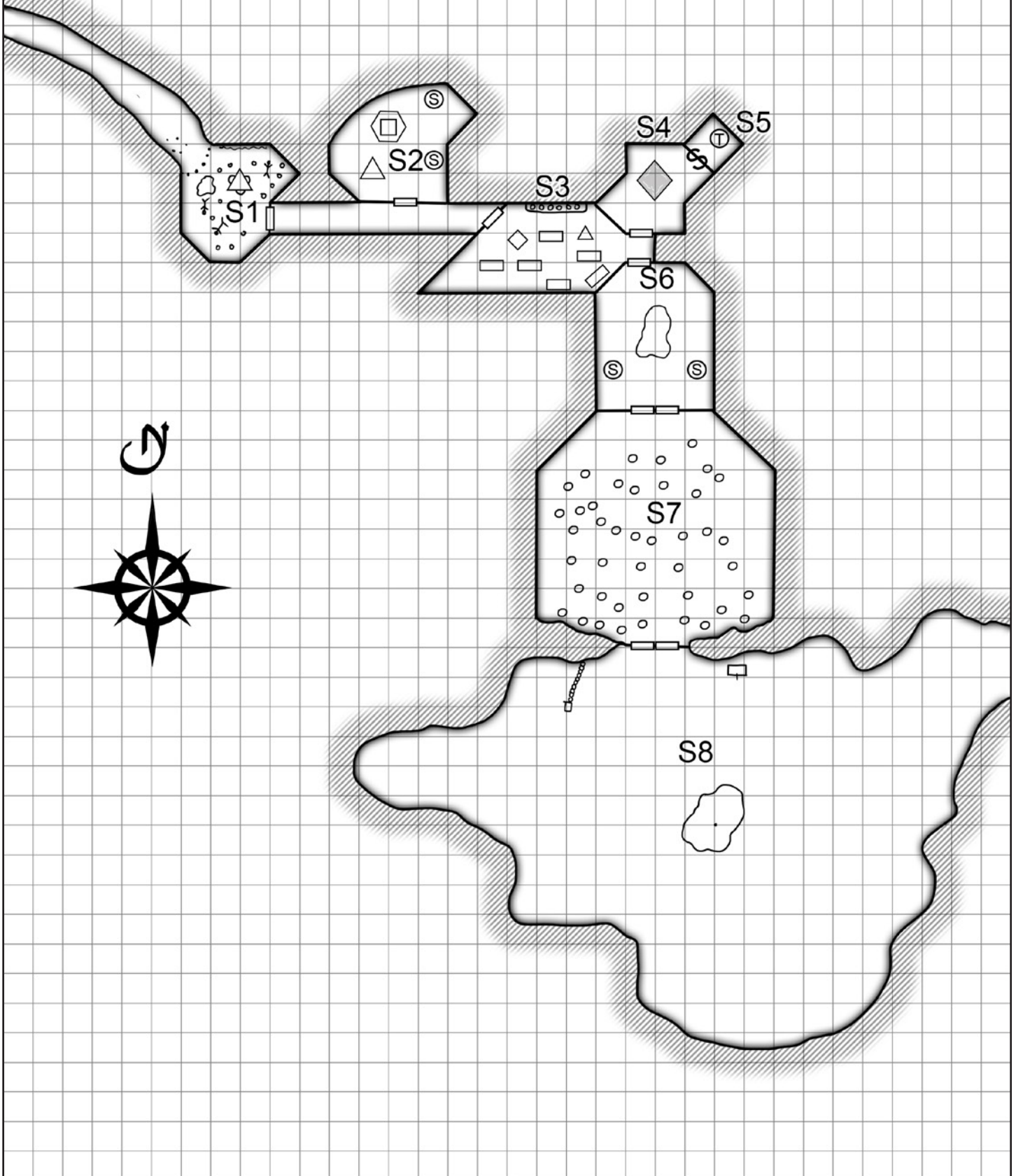
The purple worm cut the vast majority of the preceding tunnel from the rock and stone; however Eyegouger finished the job when they reached the outer wall of the derros' complex. The dragon battered the structure into quick submission, hurling massive chunks of rock and stone throughout the chamber resulting in the injuries to the room's three occupants. The massive bruising and open wounds on their heads clearly indicate that they sustained blunt force trauma, but several plainly visible deep gashes suggest that something or someone finished the job. Eyegouger stripped the bodies clean of everything but their clothing.

The open books and the diagrams on the floor and wall all depict and discuss human physiology. Though the drawings' intent is self-evident, the writings are another matter. Penned in Aklo, their theories on human anatomy range from the plausible to the outright bizarre. The works fixate on man's abilities to withstand the damaging effects of sunlight and devising ways of duplicating the process so that the derros can return to the surface world. Radical surgical ideas such as skin graphs are discussed at length and then inexplicably dismissed, while far stranger ideas like coating the skin with hot asphalt or crossbreeding their race with furry animals are advanced as more likely solutions to the problem. In the end, the derros' written works are nothing more than the ramblings of madmen making them utterly worthless.

S2: Derro Living Quarters (Difficulty Medium)

Loud squabbling and insane rants fill the air as 8 pale blue-skinned humanoids with bulging eyes vigorously argue amongst themselves. The creatures are primarily congregated around a triangular stone table near the door and a multilayered furniture piece consisting of a square block resting atop a six-sided stone block. They appear to be contesting ownership of two hunks of raw meat akin to a large herbivore's leg that sit atop the triangular table and the square block. Two 4-foot tall statues depicting a wizened member of their race adorn the chamber for no obvious purpose.

Subterranean Level 1 square - 10 feet



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The **8 derros** are so immersed in a heated discussion that the PCs' intrusion likely surprises them, though they attack with unbridled ferocity once they notice the PCs. Several of them use their poisoned crossbow bolts whenever possible, whereas the remainder surround a designated enemy allowing them to make sneak attacks against foes they flank. If the battle goes badly, the survivors plunge their enemies into darkness and attempt to escape to warn the others. The derros are hopelessly mad and never surrender regardless of the circumstances. Helpless or subdued derros provide little useful information other than to acknowledge Eyegouger's presence at the "Wall of Stones" as they call it. They know nothing about the watery star's properties and have accepted the complex's temporal and spatial anomalies as "normal."

Derro (8): AC 14; HP 60 (8d6+32); Spd 20ft; Melee short sword (+4, 1d6+2 piercing) or aklys (+2, 1d6 bludgeoning); **Ranged** hand crossbow (+4, 30/120ft, 1d6+2 piercing plus poison) or aklys (+4, 30/120ft, 1d6+2 piercing plus poison); **SA** spells (DC 13); **Immune** charmed; **Str** +0, **Dex** +2, **Con** +4, **Int** +0, **Wis** -3 (+5, see below), **Cha** +3; **Skills** Perception -1, Stealth +4; **Senses** darkvision 60ft, passive Perception 9; **Traits** madness (use Cha modifier on Wis saves, immune to charm and confusion), poison (2d8 poison damage, DC 11 Con save for half), vulnerable to sunlight (1 pt fire damage/hour exposed to natural sunlight); **AL** CE; **CR** 2; **XP** 450. (**Appendix**)

Innate Spells: at will—darkness, minor illusion; 1/day—crown of madness, thunderwave.

The derros in this chamber have no additional gear beyond those described under their complete statistics. The statues are ancient representations of Thozzaggar carved at his direction shortly after his arrival at the derro enclave. Carved countless millennia earlier, these derros have no idea what they depict or why they are here; however an astute PC examining the statue notices that the subject appears slightly different than his kin with a successful DC 20 Wis (Perception) check. For lack of a better description, the derro depicted in the sculpture appears somewhat sane, at least for the derro.

S3: Derro Laboratory (Difficulty Medium)

At first glance, this clinical chamber appears to be a house of healing, but the bloodcurdling screams and terrified shrieks of its so-called "patients" immediately dispel that notion. Thick cords bind two men, a woman and a gnome female to examining tables scattered about the rooms. Their exposed limbs and torsos bear multiple lacerations and gashes that are crudely sewn shut. Shiny metallic devices akin to a tiara wrap around the front of their skulls. They writhe in horrific pain as three pale-skinned humanoids poke, prod and slice their skin with cruel torture implements that they use as makeshift medical instruments. Two examining tables are unoccupied while an assortment of blood-stained bearers, jars and flasks rest upon a shelf affixed to the near wall as well as a triangular and square shaped piece of furniture.

The derros abducted their captives 6 days ago, prior to Eyegouger's arrival in their complex. They can access the surface and return to their subterranean abode via two linked *teleportation circles*. One is concealed behind the secret door in **Area S5**, and the other is located in the sewers beneath the Flame District in Khartous. The derros' current prisoners are two indigents, a prostitute and a thrill-seeking wild girl from a wealthy family. The derros periodically subdue them by casting *hold person* upon them or in rare instances, a *sleep* spell, as they perform gruesome and inane experiments on their skin. They endeavor to figure out how other humanoids survive above the surface; however their scientific methodology and hypotheses are so severely flawed that none of their research has

any chance of making a breakthrough. They perform their activities in the name of pseudoscience and not an accepted field of study.

The horrific experience mentally traumatized its four victims to such an extent that they all suffer from some type of psychosis. In addition to their frightening interactions with their captors, they also endured Eyegouger's psychological torture and taunts shortly after his arrival. In their current state, the victims are unresponsive to questioning unless they are magically compelled to do so, or someone heals their underlying mental conditions with spells such as *calm emotions* or a *heal* spell. Under these circumstances, the victims reveal that Eyegouger and a man arrived several days ago. After a tense standoff with the derros, the dragon and his companion proceeded further into the complex, though they sense that the man accompanying the beast seemed reluctant to do so. They remember few details about their capture other than the fact that they were dragged into the sewers of Khartous and arrived here. Ultimately even after regaining their freedom, the quartet resumes their former lives with even greater reckless abandon and debauchery in a deliberate effort to erase the memories of their harrowing ordeal.

Overseeing this charade of a medical laboratory are **3 derro sorcerers**. These quintessential mad scientists engage in a futile effort to find a way to protect their bodies from sunlight by examining other humanoid races. Their recent encounter with Eyegouger left the normally haughty and arrogant creatures humbled, yet even more disturbed. They normally outright slaughter their victims or return their broken captives to the surface after a few days; however they continued experimenting on this lot in new and even more bizarre ways. Eyegouger's presence and his decision to excavate the Wall of Stones trouble their twisted minds even more. Being forced to bend to the will of a greedy dragon does not sit well with the derros' triad of leaders. The PCs' appearance may be the straw that breaks their warped brains once and for all.

Though most of their repertoire of spells is geared to subdue and restrain their "patients" the sly derros quickly adapt to their new circumstances. The adjoining corridor offers the perfect confined space to unleash a deadly *lightning bolt*, otherwise they attempt to *sleep* and *slow* as many enemies as possible. Despite their innate insanity, the derro sorcerers work well as a team and seem to have a method to their proverbial madness. One of them wields a *staff of fire* that they use to seal off the adjoining corridor with a *wall of fire* or hurl a *fireball* down the same corridor if the PCs are clustered in that area. The derros never surrender and fight to the death. Interrogating the derros proves nearly pointless as they babble incoherent phrases and espouse ridiculous ideologies, though they unwittingly offer one vital piece of information. A successful opposed Wis (Insight) check and the proper questions reveal that they fear the strange blue light and blame it for their race's confinement to their subterranean lair.

Derro Sorcerers (3): AC 15; HP 60 (8d6+32); Spd 20ft; Melee short sword (+5, 1d6+2 piercing) or aklys (+2, 1d6 bludgeoning); **Ranged** hand crossbow (+4, 30/120ft, 1d6+2 piercing plus poison) or aklys (+5, 10/20ft, 1d6+2 bludgeoning); **SA** poison (2d8 poison damage, DC 11 Con save for half), spells (DC 14, Cha +6); **Immune** charmed; **Str** +0, **Dex** +2, **Con** +4, **Int** +0, **Wis** -3 (+6, see below), **Cha** +3; **Skills** Perception +0, Stealth +5; **Senses** darkvision 60ft, passive Perception 10; **Traits** madness (use Cha modifier on Wis saves, immune to charm and confusion), vulnerable to sunlight (1 pt fire damage/hour exposed to natural sunlight); **AL** CE; **CR** 5; **XP** 1,800. (**Appendix**)

Innate Spells: at will—darkness, minor illusion; 1/day—crown of madness, thunderwave.

Spells (slots): 0 (at will)—acid splash, chill touch, dancing lights, fire bolt, poison spray, ray of frost; 1st (4)—mage armor, magic missile, sleep; 2nd (3)—hold person, shatter; 3rd (2)—lightning bolt.

Equipment: spell scroll (magic circle), spell scroll (silence); +1 leather armor, short sword, aklys, hand crossbow with 10 poisoned bolts, ring of protection +1

S4: Derro Fishery (Difficulty Easy)

Hundreds of sightless, albino fish ranging in size from tiny minnows to large bass swim feverishly around a large, diamond-shaped pool of clear water recessed 5 feet into the floor. Creepy depictions of pale, blue-skinned humanoids devouring wriggling fish are painted onto the walls. The graphic images show blood oozing from the creatures' mouths as their foul, jagged teeth rip into the unfortunate animals' flesh. Six smaller versions of the creatures are gathered around the pool, engaging in the very activity depicted in the artwork.

In a rarity for derro enclaves, the vicious humanoids raise fish as a supplemental food source. The **6 derros** that occupy this chamber are juveniles. They are half the size of the adults, and they are unarmed and unequipped to fight. The frightened youngsters immediately drop their meals and huddle in the farthest corner where they point at the intruders, while they keep a wary eye on them. These noncombatant juveniles offer no resistance or assistance. They do not speak or otherwise engage the PCs in any manner.

The water in the pool is pure and safe to drink, though it tastes somewhat fishy. Concealed 1 foot beneath the surface in the western corner is a tiny lever. Though the water is clear, the fishes' constant motion and the apparatus' minute size make it difficult to see. Spotting the device requires a successful DC 20 Wis (Perception) check. The lever is used to disarm the **trap** on the secret door leading to **Area S5**. The trip is triggered whenever anyone attempts to open the hidden portal without disarming it first.

Secret Door: AC 15; HP 18; Perception DC 18; Immunity cold, lightning, poison, psychic; Resistance thunder, weapon damage; Break DC 30 Str

INSANITY MIST

Perception DC 18; **Disable** The trap can be disabled with a DC 15 Dexterity check using thieves' tools

Effect if triggered, the gas effects affects all targets in a 10ft by 10ft area. All affected targets must make DC 15 Wis checks. On a failed check characters are subjected to random short-term madness effects for 1d10 minutes (see 5e Core Rules, "Madness Effects").

The insanity mist has no effect on the derros; however they disarm the trap whenever they move prisoners into or out of **Area S5**.

S5: Derro Teleportation Circle

The faint outline of a 10-foot-diameter circle emblazoned with mystical runes covers the floor at the far end of a small chamber. Reddish-brown streaks are visible on the walls and floor in the vicinity of the circle.

Not surprisingly, the streaks on the floor and walls are caused by dried blood from the derros' waylaid victims. They are more prevalent on the floor than the walls, especially in and around the *teleportation circle* itself. The *teleportation circle* and its corresponding *teleportation circle* beneath the streets of Khartous date back thousands of years, giving credence to the possibility that these derros were the first to go insane and later spread their madness to other members of their race through breeding. Identifying the circle as a *teleportation circle* requires a successful DC 18 Int (Arcana) check. Likewise, the *teleportation circle* can be disabled for 10 minutes with a successful DC 24 Dexterity check.

To protect themselves against incursions by surface creatures that acci-

dentally find the corresponding circle, the magical construct in Khartous is protected by a failsafe protocol. It can only be activated by a living derro or by any creature as long as it is activated within 1 minute of the *teleportation circle* in the derro lair. In addition, the *teleportation circles* function only once every 10 minutes even in the presence of a derro. Activating the *teleportation circle* is as simple as standing within its confines for 1 round. There is no chance of error, and the *teleportation circle* always transports the user to the same destination — the corresponding *teleportation circle*.

The PCs can discern the specific functions of the *teleportation circle* with a successful DC 22 Int (Arcana) check. PCs that accidentally or purposely travel to Khartous find themselves in a cramped, foul-smelling sewer section almost directly beneath the Anything Goes For Gold brothel in the Flame District section of the capital city. The teleportation circle offers a viable means of returning to the city after completing the adventure, yet its usage can be extremely problematic at this point in the adventure.

S6: Derro Temple (Difficulty Medium)

Two small, pale blue-skinned humanoids lead six of their kin in an ominous drone of rhythmic chanting. The creatures' language seems perfectly suited to accommodate the foul prayers of dread emanating from their guttural voices. As they speak the words, two of their brethren paint the image of a blue dragon's head upon the floor. Likewise, two stone doors at the far end are emblazoned with a similar depiction of a gaping dragon's maw. The new draconic artworks are much different than the demonic statues that flank the group's two apparent leaders.

Prior to Eyegouger's arrival, the derros worshipped demonic lords which they believe gave power to the watery star that illuminates their area and tears at the fabric of space and time. The egotistical dragon changed all that. In addition to being greedy, Eyegouger is narcissistic and domineering. Using Ahmad's *tongues* spell, he cajoled the derros into worshipping him since he is destined to rule the mysterious mineral that they fear so much. For their part, the derro priests feign venerating Eyegouger by painting his images on the floor and doors; however they are currently singing their praises to their demonic patrons represented by the two statues flanking their high priests.

The worshippers are so fixated on their maintaining their precise incantations that they likely do not immediately react to the PCs' presence unless they are alerted by their cohorts from **Area S3** or hear the sounds of battle emanating from that area. If that happens, the **2 derro high priests** and the **6 derros** do not join the fray. Instead, the priests and their followers beseech their Abyssal overlords for strength in battle manifested in the form of a *bless* spell one priest casts on the group and *shield of faith* spells cast upon themselves. The followers fire their poisoned crossbow bolts at the intruders, while one priest further bolsters the group with a *aid* spell and the other casts *spiritual weapon* on himself. The enraged priest wades into melee combat as his counterpart uses his offensive spells such as *hold person*, *bestow curse* and *sacred flame* against the enemies.

As with others of their kind, the derros do not willingly surrender under any circumstances, especially within their temple. Derros compelled to speak against their will deride Eyegouger and his wizard "lackey" for daring to break through the "Walls of Stone" that keeps them safe from the blue light.

Derro (6): AC 14; HP 60 (8d6+32); Spd 20ft; Melee short sword (+4, 1d6+2 piercing) or aklys (+2, 1d6 bludgeoning); Ranged hand crossbow (+4, 30/120ft, 1d6+2 piercing plus poison) or aklys (+4, 30/120ft, 1d6+2 piercing plus poison); SA poison (2d8 poison damage, DC 11 Con save for half), spells (DC 13); Immune charmed; Str +0, Dex +2, Con +4, Int +0, Wis -3 (+5, see below), Cha +3; Skills Perception -1, Stealth +4; Senses darkvision 60ft, passive Perception 9; Traits madness (use Cha modifier on Wis saves, immune

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to charm and confusion), vulnerable to sunlight (1 pt fire damage/hour exposed to natural sunlight); **AL CE; CR 2; XP 450. (Appendix)**

Innate Spells: at will—*darkness, minor illusion*; 1/day—*crown of madness, thunderwave*.

Derro High Priests (2): AC 14; HP 60 (8d6+32); Spd 20ft; Melee short sword (+5, 1d6+2 piercing) or aklys (+3, 1d6 bludgeoning); **Ranged** hand crossbow (+4, 30/120ft, 1d6+2 piercing plus poison); **SA** poison (crossbow bolts, 2d8 poison damage, DC 11 Con save for half), spells (DC 14, Cha +6); **Immune** charmed; **Str** +0, **Dex** +2, **Con** +4, **Int** +0, **Wis** -3 (+6, see below), **Cha** +3; **Skills** Perception +0, Stealth +5; **Senses** darkvision 60ft, passive Perception 10; **Traits** madness (use Cha modifier on Wis saves, immune to charm and confusion), vulnerable to sunlight (1 pt fire damage/hour exposed to natural sunlight); **AL CE; CR 2; XP 450. (Appendix)**

Innate Spells: at will—*darkness, minor illusion*; 1/day—*crown of madness, thunderwave*.

Spells (slots): 0 (at will)—*guidance, resistance, sacred flame, thaumaturgy*; 1st (4)—*bane, command, inflict wounds, shield of faith*; 2nd (3)—*aid, hold person, spiritual weapon*; 3rd (2)—*bestow curse*.

Equipment: 3 potions of healing, +1 leather armor, short sword, aklys, hand crossbow with 10 poisoned bolts.

Treasure: The derro followers carry only the gear listed in their stats; however the priests also have four amethysts worth 50gp each and 179gp.

S7: Walls of Stone (Difficulty Deadly)

Sundered blocks of stone are strewn about in front of a set of polished, metallic doors at the far end of a vast cavern. A powerful force repeatedly hammers against the strange alloy portals from the other side, causing them to violently shudder from the tremendous impact. Ancient symbols adorn the outside of the doors. Despite the damage being dealt to the doors, the debris littering the floor appears to be the work of the chamber's largest and most terrifying occupant, a huge blue dragon. Fine, white dust covers the massive beast's entire tail that is partially coiled around a shimmering pile of coins and valuable objects. Jagged pieces of white rock and stone are imbedded between its rigid scales as it moves through the rubble littered across the floor. Jolts of static electricity course across its body and mouth as puffs of charged steam smolder from its flaring nostrils. A youthful man accompanies the mighty reptile, though he seems disinterested in the dragon's actions. He appears lost in thought while he frantically fumbles through the pages of a dusty, weathered tome and gazes inquisitively and nervously at the battered doors.

This rough-hewn stone cavern lacks the polished surfaces found in the adjoining derro complex indicating that the humanoids never annexed the area as part of their territory. However, the smashed stones and the doors themselves bear the obvious hallmarks of derro architecture and culture. The first derros that arrived here millennia ago experienced the watery star's debilitating effects firsthand, so they constructed the perfectly balanced and fitted alloy doors to negate the watery star's potent gravitational pull and temporal energy. The plan initially worked until Thozzagard arrived and foolishly teleported to the other side. Like Ahmad, the bizarre mineral captivated his imagination and poisoned his mind. In time, the watery star's extradimensional properties and his own madness got the better of him transforming him into the undead abomination on the other side of the door. To prevent him from escaping, his kin reinforced the

doors with a 10-foot thick stone wall. Their efforts to contain him succeeded, but in the interim he dealt enough damage to the doors to severely weaken the seal and allow the watery star's incredibly dense mass to create temporal and spatial anomalies throughout the derro complex. The degenerate race's insanity only got worse.

The cavern itself is rather featureless. The loose stones strewn across the cavern floor are 4-foot square blocks on average that may act as cover. The ceiling is exceptionally high reaching a maximum height of 50 feet near the center and tapering off to 30 feet around the walls. The metallic doors are comprised predominately from lead and adamantite with lesser concentrations of silver, nickel and copper. Properly identifying their metallic composition requires a successful DC 20 Wis (Insight) check. Likewise, a successful DC 20 Int (History) check verifies that they are at least several thousand years old and were constructed by the same race that built Chass, even though the materials are different.

The symbols adorning the portals are an archaic form of Aklo. The writing states "the madness of light and the light of madness." In their own warped way, even the derros realize that the watery star is extremely dangerous and altered their race's destiny in ways their minds could never imagine. The alloy doors are secured by an *arcane lock* spell; however the internal fastening devices have been damaged over the years making them vulnerable to collapse without the reinforced stone behind them. At the current pace, the doors give way in 6 minutes without outside intervention.

Metallic Alloy Door: AC 18; HP 30; Immunity cold, fire, lightning, poison, psychic; **Resistance** acid, thunder, weapon damage; **Break** DC 24 Str.

Ever the egotist, **Eyegouger**, an adult blue dragon, taunts his prospective opponents before engaging them in battle. Heroes that dare to challenge the supremely confident beast must first overcome his frightful presence aura. Unlike most of his kind, Eyegouger prefers a more direct approach to everything he does including combat. Rather than rely on subterfuge and deceit, Eyegouger has a *mage armor* spell in effect at all times to boost his melee prowess. He begins the assault with a line of electricity aimed at the largest number of targets whenever possible or at the most heavily armored foe if he cannot affect multiple targets. The vicious dragon concentrates his formidable melee attacks against one opponent as part of a deliberate plan to wipe out his enemies one by one.

Though never explicitly spelled out during their time together, Eyegouger expects Ahmad to assist him in battle in the unthinkable event that things go poorly for the conceited dragon. Ahmad's reaction, as discussed later, depends upon the PCs' actions towards him. If Ahmad turns on Eyegouger, the vicious dragon focuses his attention solely on his former ally. Eyegouger has nowhere to flee in the face of a superior foe, so bartering his treasure for his life is his absolute last resort. He starts the negotiations offering a paltry sum of 1,000gp, but he eventually relents to surrendering half of his hoard. If the PCs reject his offer, Eyegouger fights to the bitter end. He would rather be dead and wealthy than alive and penniless.

Ahmad, shows no aggression and generally reacts to the PCs' actions. He realizes he got himself into this predicament and wants nothing else to do with Eyegouger, yet the PCs are likely unaware of the wizard's trepidation. In many respects, the PCs solve Ahmad's dilemma perfectly. Though he fretted over Eyegouger acquiring the watery star for his own selfish purposes, the PCs provide him a second chance to kill two proverbial birds with one stone. They can rid the world of the conniving dragon and help him fulfill his nearly lifelong dream of discovering the watery star. However, Ahmad realizes that Eyegouger would not take betrayal lightly, so he focuses his attention on the mysterious portals and the force striking them from the other side to the exclusion of all other distractions including the impending combat.

He takes no offensive actions against his dragon companion or the PCs unless either party attacks him first. If the PCs attack him, Ahmad's response depends upon the severity of the assault. In the case of a magical attack, he first uses his Int (Arcana) ability to identify the spell. In the event that the check fails, he attempts a saving throw to resist the spell regardless of the circumstance. If it succeeds, he voluntarily forgoes his saving throw or pretends that he failed it against any spell that does not cause bodily harm

and allows him to feign temporary cooperation or incapacitation, such as charm and hold spells. On the other hand, he resists damage dealing magical attacks and similar debilitating spells; however they may also provide him with an ideal opportunity to fall to the ground and pretend to be dead. The specific circumstances dictate Ahmad's actions. It is plausible for him to collapse in the face of a high level spell that deals significant damage, but dying as a result of being struck by a *magic missile* is likely to raise suspicions. Under the right conditions, Ahmad slumps to the ground, holds his breath and remains perfectly motionless. A PC or even Eyegouger can see through the ruse by succeeding on an Insight skill contest with Ahmad; otherwise Ahmad feigns death for the remainder of the battle. Ideally, he positions himself in an isolated part of the room unlikely to be subjected to further area effect spells or similar attacks.

If the PCs continue to attack him, Ahmad first attempts to flee or avoid detection using *dimension door*, *rope trick* or *invisibility* before joining forces with Eyegouger to fight back against them, though he does so with great reluctance. The brilliant wizard does not regret his pursuit of the watery star; he resents his decision to involve Eyegouger in the process. In fact, Ahmad may even aid the PCs in their battle against the fearsome dragon in furtherance of an alliance with the newcomers, provided that the PCs did not attack him at any point during the battle. Ahmad generally interjects himself into the combat under one of two extreme circumstances — things are going extremely poorly for the PCs or the PCs are on the verge of victory. In the former case, the GM may use Ahmad as a *deus ex machina* to assist the PCs and cement an alliance between the two parties. This is a much riskier endeavor for Ahmad, because Eyegouger immediately turns on his former associate. Under this circumstance, Ahmad may temporarily distract the wrathful dragon, giving the PCs a brief opportunity to regroup before the cagey wizard does everything he can to escape. Ahmad does not flee in the latter case, staying with the PCs until the job is done.

Eyegouger, male adult blue dragon: AC 19; HP 225 (18d12+108); **Spd** 40ft, burrow 30ft, fly 80ft; **Melee** bite (+12, reach 10ft, 2d10+7 piercing plus 5 1d10 lightning), claw (+12, x2, 2d6+7 slashing); tail (+12, reach 15ft, 2d8+7 bludgeoning); **SA** frightful presence (each creature within 120ft must make DC 17 Wis save or be frightened for 1 minute, creature can save again on its turn), lightning breath (90 foot line, DC 19 Dex save or take 1d10 lightning, save halves), multiattack (frightful presence, 1 bite, 2 claws); **Lair Actions** collapse ceiling (target within 120ft, 3d6 bludgeoning, knocked prone and buried, DC 15 Dex save negates), sand cloud (within 120ft of dragon, 20ft radius, DC 15 Con save or targets blinded for 1 minute, can repeat save each turn), lightning arc (5ft line between two solid surfaces, creatures in line must make DC 15 Dex save or take 3d6 lightning damage); **LA** (3/round) detect (Wis (Perception) check), tail attack, wing attack (2 actions, all creatures within 10ft must make DC 20 Dex save or take 2d6+7 bludgeoning and be knocked prone); **Immune** lightning; **Str** +7, **Dex** +0 (+5), **Con** +6 (+11), **Int** +3, **Wis** +2 (+7), **Cha** +4 (+9); **Skills** Perception +12, Stealth +5, **Senses** blindsight 60ft, darkvision 120ft, passive Perception 22; **Traits** legendary resistance (3/day, can choose to succeed on a failed save); **AL** LE; **CR** 16; **XP** 15,000.

Ahmad Pachwari, male human Wiz10 (divination): AC 12; HP 47 (10d6+10); **Spd** 30ft; **Melee** dagger (+5, 1d4+1 piercing); **Ranged** dagger (+5, 20ft/60ft, 1d4+1 piercing); **Str** +0 (+1), **Dex** +1 (+2), **Con** +1 (+2), **Int** +5 (+10), **Wis** +2 (+7), **Cha** +2 (+3); **Skills** Arcana +13, History +13, Intimidation +6, Persuasion +6; **Senses** Third Eye, passive Perception 12; **Traits** Arcane Recovery, Portent, Expert Divination, Third Eye; **AL** LN; **CR** 9; **XP** 5,000.

Spells (slots): Cantrips (at will)—*blade ward*, *chill touch*, *dancing lights*, *minor illusion*, *shocking grasp*; 1st (4)—*charm person*, *color spray*, *comprehend languages*, *mage armor*; 2nd (3)—*darkvision*, *invisibility*, *rope trick*; 3rd (3)—*counterspell*, *protection from energy*, *tongues*;

Playing Ahmad

The preceding section addresses Ahmad's actions during the battle against Eyegouger; however his demeanor and goals abruptly change after the avaricious dragon's demise. With Eyegouger out of the way, Ahmad's obsession returns with a vengeance. The watery star consumes his every thought, even though he believes that the strange mineral may account for the derros' insanity. In spite of the inherent risks, the brilliant wizard forges ahead with his intention of proving his naysayers wrong and returning to Khartous a triumphant and vindicated hero. Though he has never seen a watery star and is basing his hypotheses on myths and legends, Ahmad is certain that he unlocked the secret to unlocking the star's true potential. He proposes to split the watery star into minute particles using a *disintegrate* spell from a scroll, immediately followed by a *reverse gravity* spell to sunder its molecular bonds releasing torrents of fresh water compressed to a subatomic level. He is convinced that his theory is correct, and he is ready, willing and eager to put his ideas to the test regardless of the potentially devastating consequences. To further demonstrate his loyalty towards the PCs, he willingly lends a hand during their subsequent encounter with the devourer bolstering their defensive abilities or using his magic against the undead creature.

With that said, Ahmad is not looking to pick a fight with the PCs. Instead, he calls upon his tremendous intellect and knowledge to demonstrate that he is correct. He blurts out complex mathematical formulae, obscure scientific principles, arcane mysteries and a few dashes of pseudoscience to demonstrate that he is the foremost expert on the subject and unequivocally knows what he is doing. Sample phrases may include "sundering the grasp of mutual attraction," "rending the protoplasmic features," "multidimensional polarization," "catastrophic emulsification," "primordial mystical energy," "sundering the bonds of reality" and any other colorful description the GM can devise suited for the situation. Ahmad relentlessly states his case, even as the evidence mounts that the watery stars are too dangerous to conduct tests upon via trial and error. If the PCs relent and allow Ahmad to perform his experiment, the results are devastating as described in **Area S8: Cavern of the Watery Star**.

Despite the PCs' cogent protestations, in the end, logic and reason lose out to obsession as Ahmad's temptations get the better of him. If the PCs refuse to let him test his theory, he pushes past everyone and makes a mad dash to grab the watery star. Unfortunately, doing so causes the effects described in the watery star side box found in **Area S8: Cavern of the Watery Star**. An insane Ahmad does everything in his power to see his plan to fruition. He knows he has only one chance to cast both spells in rapid succession, so uses his entire magical repertoire to allow him to do so without interruption. Hopefully, the PCs realize that they must stop Ahmad at all costs and by any means necessary to prevent a devastating cataclysm. This may include subduing him, incapacitating him, grappling him or if all else fails killing him. If the PCs opt for the last option, the watery star consumes Ahmad's psyche, and his body rises as a **devourer** 1d4+1 rounds later.

If the PCs later cure Ahmad of his insanity, he finally comes to his senses and realizes that further research and study must be conducted before the watery star's beneficial properties can be properly harnessed for the benefit of all. Proving their existence is enough satisfaction for him after his brush with insanity as long as the study of the watery star progresses and is taken seriously. (See the section **Concluding the Adventure** for more details).

4th (3)—*dimension door*, *greater invisibility*, *stoneskin*;
5th (2)—*contact other plane*, *passwall*

Equipment: *potion of healing* (5), *potion of greater healing* (3), *potion of superior healing* (1), *potion of invulnerability*, *potion of resistance (electricity)*, *potion*

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of vitality, potion of water breathing, spell scroll (disintegrate), spell scroll (reverse gravity), spell scroll (slow); scroll of disintegrate, scroll of reverse gravity, scroll of slow, dagger, cloak of protection, ring of feather falling, spell component pouch, spellbook, writing equipment, 50gp

Treasure: Eyegouger's treasure hoard is an impressive collection of coins and rare objects able to withstand damage from the dragon's breath weapon, physical attacks and the magical effects of ambitious dragon slayers. These include 7,511gp, 16,984sp, *flame tongue*, *rod of rulership*, *bracers of defense*, a suit of +1 *plate*, *leadership ioun stone*, *figurine of wondrous power (silver raven)* and a *bead of force*. Otherwise the chamber is empty.

Development: In the aftermath of their battle against Eyegouger, the PCs have precious little time to recover before the alloy doors finally buckle 6 minutes after they entered the room, releasing the terror from **Area S8: Cavern of the Watery Star**. If that happens, the GM may read or paraphrase the following description of what emerges.

A 10-foot tall withered corpse bursts through the doors lashing its claws at any creature that stands in its path. The undead abomination's chest is a prison of jagged ribs that form a bony cage around a small tormented ghostly form. Eerie blue light rushes out from the chamber beyond basking everything in a phosphorescent glow.

S8: Cavern of the Watery Star (Difficulty Hard)

If the PCs opened the door themselves, they encounter the undead monstrosity behind the door. In that case, the GM may read or paraphrase the creature's description from **Area S7: Walls of Stone** to supplement the following description of the cavern itself.

Peculiar blue light emanates from an asymmetrical depression in the ground illuminating every expanse of a vast chamber in a shimmering aura of deep azure. It pulsates at irregular intervals, though the cessation of light never lasts more than a few seconds. An ancient, weathered tome securely fastened to the wall by a metallic alloy chain hovers in midair, rising and sinking in accordance with the bursts of light emanating from the depression. Similarly, a metallic alloy chest appears to be welded to the stone floor beneath it.

The watery star's bright blue light is now inescapable. All creatures with line of sight to the strange mineral must succeed on a DC 16 Con save to avoid being dazzled for as long as they remain within visual range of the watery star plus an additional 1d4+1 rounds after leaving the area, turning their back towards it or closing their eyes. Characters that look away from the watery star have a 50% chance to avoid having to make a saving throw against the dazzling effect; however all opponents within the area gain concealment against that character. Characters that completely cover their eyes with a blindfold or shut their eyes are not affected by the dazzling effect, though all opponents within the area gain total concealment against that character. Random temporal or gravitational effects are still determined normally.

The creature imprisoned within this chamber is a **devourer**, the last remaining vestige of Thozzaggard who teleported into this cavern countless ages ago. The monster uses its devour soul attack to add to the ten essence points it already has. The intelligent creature singles out physically weak characters for this particular attack focusing on fellow arcane spellcasters. The creature uses these points to fuel its spell-like abilities. Unless it gains more essence points from one of the PCs or Ahmad, the devourer relies

upon its devour soul attack, its claw attacks or its innate spellcasting, particularly *inflict serious wounds*, *ray of enfeeblement*, *suggestion* and *vampiric touch* to destroy the PCs.

The devourer speaks to the PCs throughout the encounter, using its telepathic abilities to communicate with them. It suggests that it must feast on the PCs' souls just as the "blue stone" consumed it. The creature provides no additional details about its demise other than to boast that in the end, nothing can resist the devourer or the blue stone. The devourer fights until destroyed.

Devourer: AC 18; HP 133 (14d8+70); Spd 30ft, fly 20ft; **Melee** claw x2 (+10, reach 10ft, 108+9 plus energy drain); **SA** devour soul (can consume any victim killed by energy drain, providing 5 essence points per HD, that can be used to cast innate spells 1 spell pt/level), energy drain (target hit by claw attack must make DC 14 Con save or maximum hp are reduced by amount equal to damage claw inflicted), multiattack (2 claws), spells (DC 17); **Str** +6, **Dex** +3, **Con** +1, **Int** +4, **Wis** +3, **Cha** +5; **Skills** Deception +9, Intimidation +9, Perception +7, Stealth +7; **Senses** darkvision 60ft, passive Perception 17; **Traits** magic resistance (advantage on all saves against spells and magic effects), spell deflection (if *banishing smite*, *banishment*, *confusion*, *dispel evil*, *divine word*, *dominate person*, *fear*, *magic jar* or *suggestion* is cast on devourer and it fails its save, the spell affects devoured soul, caster makes DC 17 ability check and on success soul is released and can be restored to life); **AL** NE; **CR** 10; **XP** 5,900. (**Appendix**)

Spells: The devourer begins with 10 essence points and can expend essence points from devoured souls to cast the following spells at a rate of 1 spell point per level: 1st—*bane*, *inflict wounds*; 2nd—*hold person*, *ray of enfeeblement*, *suggestion*; 3rd level—*animate dead*, *bestow curse*, *vampiric touch*; 4th—*blight*, *confusion*; 5th—*contagion*, *dispel good*; 6th—*create undead*, *true seeing*.

Before his transformation into a devourer, Thozzaggard the derro sorcerer, conducted deranged, but nonetheless painstaking historical and scientific research on the watery star. He realized that the watery star's potent gravitational pull eventually dragged unattended objects into its vortex; therefore he securely fastened his journal and his items to the wall and floor respectively. The book tethered to the alloy chain is his journal. It is written in Aklo and contains detailed notes about the watery star's unusual properties and inherent dangers. The author claims that his people built a magnificent structure atop a plateau in the middle of an ancient lake, as they scoured the depths of the earth searching for what unnatural force created the anomalous body of water. A PC who succeeds on a DC 15 Int (Nature) check deduces that the writer refers to Chass, the scene of the climactic battle in the preceding adventure "King of Beasts." The story goes on to say that four months of searching eventually yielded a tremendous find, a mysterious, pulsating blue crystal in a subterranean cavern. He dubbed the mineral to be a "god particle" and demanded that his kin gather around it to worship it. In short time, the mineral took its toll on his companions, withering their bodies and minds in degenerative chaos. They could no longer bear the light of day, and the ravages of insanity coursed through their very beings. He resisted its powers better than his kin, and in the end he reduced it to ash with a powerful magical incantation. The damage was done, as he and his people abandoned the site. He continued his research, while they spread their madness to others of their kind and each other.

From there, Thozzaggard's journal discusses the temporal and spatial anomalies attributable to the god particle as well as its inherent dangers. He also opines that his actions likely lead his race to ruination, but he remains focused on discovering the god particle's full potential. Through various complex mathematical formulae, educated guesses and pseudo-scientific theories, the author proposes that the god particle is a compressed receptacle of unfathomable amounts of water. He believes that magic offers the secret to unlocking its mysteries, but he is not sure how to proceed from here. At this point, Thozzaggard's revelation makes it im-

MY BLUE OASIS

perative that Ahmad not be allowed to perform his impromptu experiment in such tight quarters.

The journal picks up again several weeks later, claiming that the author came across another group of his kin that dwelt alongside a god particle; however they feared it and hermetically sealed it behind alloy doors. Thozzagard questions his brethren's trepidation and criticizes them for being cowardly in the face of greatness. He then resolves to go it alone and magically transport himself beyond the doors and into the presence of the world's foundational building block as he refers to it. After a few semi-coherent entries and a set of crude diagrams, Thozzagard's journal goes downhill in a hurry and devolves into the ramblings of a madman. Outlandish theories are posited, discredited, reevaluated, rejected and then proven wrong, only to go through the whole process all over again. The last entry says it all. "The god particle breathed life into me, and I stand at the ready to reciprocate its marvelous gesture."

Thozzagard's journal takes approximately 3d4 minutes to read in its entirety. It should serve as a stern warning not to tussle with the strange mineral resting at the bottom of the depression.

Development: Obviously, allowing Ahmad to perform his experiment and release the watery star's water content proves disastrous in this small, confined space. Water instantly floods the entire derro complex including this chamber as well as the underground level and the surface dealing 20d6 points of damage to every creature and object in its path. A successful DC 16 Dexterity save reduces the damage by half. In addition, any creature caught in the deluge eventually drowns unless they can breathe underwater or escape to safety. The resulting tidal wave increases the oasis' dimensions by roughly 50%, completely submerging the nearby trade

route and the flora growing along the oasis' current banks. If the PCs read Thozzagard's journal, it becomes apparent that allowing Ahmad to unleash the watery star's full potential would be utterly disastrous given the current circumstances. Given these circumstances, the PCs must prevent him from doing so by any means necessary.

Treasure: Thozzagard feared that his journey beyond the alloy doors may be a one-way trip, so he brought his worldly treasures with him and placed them inside his alloy chest with an inset lock. The key has long since vanished. The chest contains 3,556gp, a *broom of flying*, a *headband of intellect*, a *wand of lightning bolts*, a *ring of mind shielding* and 8 opal gems worth 100gp each.

Alloy Chest: AC 20; HP 30; **Immunity** cold, fire, lightning, poison, psychic; **Resistance** acid, thunder, weapon damage; **Break** DC 24 Str.

Concluding the Adventure

Provided that the PCs defeat Eyegouger and prevent Ahmad from unleashing the watery star's torrent of water into the subterranean chambers and passageways, the PCs must decide what to do with the watery star. Naturally, the watery star is a valuable commodity for the kingdom as it would solve the land's water needs for the foreseeable future. The problem lies in where and how to do it. Though Ahmad knows the secret to realizing its full potential, he is at a loss for explaining how to physically move it to another location. Additional research over the course of the

The Watery Star (warilium)

The watery star lies at the bottom of a 3-foot deep, 10-foot diameter gouge in the ground. The translucent crystalline, blue stone is roughly cylindrical in shape and literally stands upright as if it were deliberately planted into the ground. It measures 2 inches in length and 1 inch in diameter and appears to weigh only a few ounces; however its small size belies its true mass. Locked within its molecular and subatomic structure, the tiny mineral contains 10 billion gallons of water, enough liquid to cover 330 acres of land up to a depth of 1 foot. Under normal circumstances, this volume of water would weigh approximately 42 million tons. The gravitational force exerted by such a massive object would duplicate the effects of a localized black hole, but warilium defies all such expectations by simultaneously existing on two planes — the Material Plane and extradimensional space created by its tremendous gravitational forces. As such, the watery star is anchored in place. It cannot be moved either physically or magically without creating a portable connection to the extradimensional space. This can be accomplished by casting a *wish* spell on the watery star itself. In this circumstance, the watery star weighs less than a pound and can be easily moved, though once the spell ends, the watery star crashes to the ground with tremendous force and is once again anchored in place. Incredibly, Ahmad correctly deduced the only way to release the mineral's water content — by disintegrating the watery star and then casting *reverse gravity* in the area of the disintegrated particles which immediately releases the entire volume of water. This procedure frees the water with potentially devastating consequences dependent upon the watery star's location at the time of casting. Cast in a confined space or a highly populated area, the torrent of water would be akin to an immense tidal wave destroying everything in its path and flooding a vast area. On the other hand, under controlled conditions, the watery star could be used to create an immense reservoir that would satisfy a desert community's water needs for decades or even centuries to come. Ahmad's fears are well-founded as the watery star can potentially achieve tremendous good or wreak mindboggling devastation.

Ahmad or the PCs may attempt to deduce these properties via magical means, such as *legend lore* and other appropriate spells or to a lesser extent by succeeding on a DC 28 Int (History) check. In the latter case, anyone that succeeds on the Int (History) check may then

attempt a DC 28 Int (Arcana) check to ascertain the means of moving the watery star and releasing its water content.

In spite of its benefits, the watery star's unique physical properties exact a tremendous toll on living organic matter. Warilium destroys tissue on a cellular level, so it does not cause visible wounds or injuries. For every 1 minute spent within the direct glow of the watery star, a living creature that fails a DC 15 Con save has its Con score reduced by 1. The Difficulty Class increases by +1 for every previous failed saving throw. Each time a creature loses 1 point of Con damage, it must also succeed on a DC 10 Wis save to avoid becoming insane (see below). The Difficulty Class of this saving throw increases by +1 for every previous saving throw. In addition, creatures outside of this range, but subjected to the watery star's warping effects do not suffer Con loss; however they may go insane. Each day, the creature must succeed at a Wis save using the preceding DC to avoid this fate.

This insanity differs from magical *confusion* or the Madness described in the Core Rulebooks. Creatures that go insane perceive that everyone means them harm, and they see creatures, objects and conspiracies that are not there. While insane, the creature has no allies and cannot be affected by spells that also affect the caster's allies; it suffers a 50% miss chance on all melee and ranged attacks; it treats all saving throws to disbelieve illusions as if it rolled a natural 1; and the character acts as if it were constantly distracted which prevents it from taking 10 in most circumstances.

Any living creature that comes in direct physical contact with the watery star has its Con score reduced by 1d4 and immediately becomes insane. There is no saving throw to resist these effects. Whenever the watery star reduces an arcane spellcaster's Con score to 0, the creature's psyche is pulled into the extradimensional space, while its body rises as a devourer. The decomposed remains of all other living creatures are eventually pulled into the void and utterly destroyed. The watery star exerts enough gravitational force to pull inanimate objects and nonliving organic matter weighing 1 pound or less towards itself at a rate of 10 feet per minute. Likewise it pulls materials weighing 50 pounds or less towards itself at a speed of 10 feet per hour. Heavier objects move at a proportionally slower pace, whereas inanimate matter weighing greater than 500 pounds is completely unaffected.

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next several months or even years may yield an answer, but that still requires securing the area against ignorant trespassers and other powerful, ambitious beings that might devise a mechanism for actually moving the watery star. This is particularly true in the case of a genie, demon or devil that may possess the magical means to move the watery star to a secure location until they figure out how to release its tidal wave of destruction.

Another alternative would be to deny the watery star's existence and reinter it deep within the earth. Without any visible aftermath from its discovery, the story is highly plausible especially in light of the skepticism surrounding its existence in the first place. The only variable in this plan is Ahmad. For a man who spent much of his adulthood searching for an elusive discovery, it is impossible to expect him to remain silent and not proclaim his controversial find to all of his detractors and naysayers. However, Ahmad vows not to discuss the watery star if the PCs promise to help him figure out a way to transport the watery star to a new location. In that case, Ahmad reluctantly keeps the secret as long as their research steadily progresses. If their research shows no progress or the PCs' assistance falls by the wayside, all bets are off and Ahmad tells everyone in earshot about his monumental discovery.

Sultan Faud and Khartous's merchants are pleased that the oasis is fully accessible to travelers even if the PCs flooded the surrounding area in the process. Upon their return to the capital, Sultan Faud expresses concern about the watery star's safekeeping and security, and he even debates stationing a garrison at the oasis to prevent anyone from excavating it for their own nefarious purposes or exerting their influence over the oasis again. Likewise, Khartous's merchants seem interested in its economic value, but they still have their doubts about its purported abilities. Without any concrete proof of its possible commercial benefits, they slough off the idea of pursuing the matter any further. On the other hand, Jamaal Dakkar is far more interested in the discovery than the PCs' battle against the dragon. He is most intrigued by Thozzagard's journal and claims that the PCs owe it to him as part of their original bargain. Jamaal is insistent about this point and does not take no for an answer, even if it costs him an additional 500gp to acquire the work to add to his impressive book collection. He is satisfied that the journal provides enough proof to verify their existence given the extreme danger of keeping the watery star in his physical possession.

At a future date, the PCs may finally possess the knowledge and means to safely use the watery star for the kingdom's everlasting benefit. Until that day comes, they are entrusted with the task of ensuring that no one else attempts to do something untoward with the monumental discovery.

Niavark's Revenge

By Patrick Lawinger

Niavark's Revenge is a short adventure designed for a group of 4 to 6 PCs of 17th to 19th level. The adventure is set on a demiplane created by a mad druid and can be placed into any campaign world through the use of planar travel spells or gates.

Synopsis

The PCs most likely begin on their home plane where they learn of Niavark and his plans to sequester and destroy the most powerful arcane relics and artifacts. These plans are used more as bait by Niavark to entice arcane magic users into his domain, a domain where he is far more powerful than they are, so that he can kill them. After discovering Niavark's demiplane and arriving there in search of him, they are set upon by various strange beasts, and eventually even Niavark himself in their quest either for magical items, or to get Niavark to cease his attacks against arcanists.

DM's Background

Niavark Whitethorn once held council over a vast group of druids that helped monitor and balance a large swath of forests. Known for his even temper, wisdom, and willingness to work peacefully with others, Niavark's personality underwent a drastic and unfortunate change when he tragically lost his only son. Niavark's young son was in the forest playing when the entire area was consumed by the magical energies released in a battle between two powerful wizards. Efforts to reincarnate the boy failed, that or the boy's soul simply did not want to return to the world, driving Niavark into a deep depression. Depression turned rapidly to madness and hatred when he discovered that the battle killing his innocent son had nothing to do with good or evil, but was simply a dispute over a powerful magical item. He began a sudden, mad quest for vengeance against wizards, sorcerers, and particularly those he viewed as greedy, opportunistic adventurers. His brutal and often unprovoked attacks slowed when his own aides and fellow druids did their best to stop him and calm him.

Suddenly bereft of the help and assistance he counted on, Niavark unfolded a new plan. Using the assistance of several elemental lords, and some of his vast magical knowledge, Niavark constructed a small demiplane of his own where he could grow a vast forest and populate it with creatures of his own desires. After a hundred years of work his demiplane and its vast forest are complete, and his new plan has gone into action. Niavark began attacking wizards and stealing their most valuable items and then leaving clues as to where they could be found. He knew that more wizards, sorcerers, and greed-driven adventurers would be attracted by the arcane riches he was storing and eventually begin to come directly to him, only to find themselves in a plane where he controls the rules of magic and has the greatest power.

Understanding his weaknesses in the arcane arts, Niavark sought out wizards and sorcerers he trusts, these usually being creatures he helped create in the first place using potent spells to convert animals into enlightened plant type creatures. Even though these creatures do serve him, he does not trust them completely and refuses to allow them to use the most powerful magic items he has collected.

Niavark's latest conquests have given him control of several valuable relics and two artifacts making his home an almost certain stop for anyone searching for greater arcane power. While many wizards and sorcerers have refused to heed the call of wealth and power, others cannot avoid the temptation. Niavark's desire for vengeance is difficult to quell, even the deaths of many wizards and sorcerers, and the fools that travel with

them, is not enough to sate his cold-hearted anger. Even now, Niavark is working to create epic spells granting him greater power with which to slay his enemies.

DM Notes

The majority of this adventure takes place in a demiplane with very specific characteristics. The DM should be familiar with these characteristics as they can alter game play significantly. As designed, the adventure gives the PCs very little time to rest unless they flee Niavark's Realm completely (see sidebar). Niavark and the creatures living here know their advantages and use them to the best of their abilities and do their best to prevent any PCs from leaving safely. If the PCs must flee to rest and formulate new plans, have Niavark and his denizens do the same. The adventure is designed with high level PCs and skilled players in mind, mistakes, as in any high level campaign, are deadly. Niavark himself is an epic level character and extremely difficult to defeat. The party should have a good mix of classes, and access to 9th level spells is presumed.

Adventure Hooks

The DM knows their group the best, and high level characters are certain to be in an already existing game world or campaign. Niavark's Realm is a demiplane that is attached to, though not quite part of, both the elemental plane of water as well as the elemental plane of earth. These elemental planes are not detailed here; the DM should consult other sources if the PCs are likely to enter these planes. The PCs can be enticed into the adventure several ways.

- The PCs require a rare, potent artifact or relic to accomplish an important goal. Their spells and research determine that Niavark has it in his possession.
- The PCs learn of the many magic items Niavark now has and come searching for him out of greed.
- Niavark is plaguing wizards with his constant attacks so a Wizard's Guild hires the PCs to put an end to them.
- The PCs know someone that has been attacked by Niavark, or his allies, and search him out.
- Due to items in their possession, Niavark sends several of his allies to attack them and steal some of their items. Whether or not this attack fails, the PCs have a new enemy that must be dealt with somehow.
- The PCs end up in Niavark's Realm through a magical mishap, such as a *teleport* or *plane shift* error, or even the destruction of a magical item.

Geography and Travel

As a demiplane, Niavark's Realm has certain anomalous geographic features. First, there are no cardinal directions, there is no north or south, this makes it almost impossible to travel in a particular direction easily. The plane itself is egg-shaped and surrounded by an envelope of air. The thick trees and underbrush make it impossible even for flying travelers to determine exactly which direction they are going, or even whether or not they are going in circles. A PC making a successful Wis (Survival) check (DC 24) can prevent the party from traveling in circles, but even this does not tell the PCs whether or not they are heading in the correct direction.

Niavark's Realm

Niavark's Realm is a specially constructed demiplane designed specifically to help inconvenience and weaken arcane spellcasters while making druids more powerful. The entire area is essentially filled with massive trees and thick underbrush; it is a demiplane consisting almost entirely of forest. Niavark's Realm has the following characteristics and effects:

Constant Light: While there is no sun, the very air of the demiplane glows with a powerful light both above and below the forest canopy allowing thick underbrush to grow beneath the massive trees and allowing the trees to have many thick branches throughout the length of their trunks. Despite the few gentle rains that fall several times a day, there is never a break in the constant light. This light is the equivalent of normal sunlight, any creatures that suffer penalties in sunlight or bright light conditions suffer those penalties here.

Restricted Travel: Transportation spells and other spells that involve folding or bending through other planes do not function here; this includes spells such as *ethereality*, *dimension door*, *teleport*, and related spells. *Gate*, *plane shift*, and similar spells only function in discrete locations (See the map) that are easily identified or sensed using an Int (Arcana) check (DC 12).

Magical Characteristics: Druids and rangers gain a +2 on their spell attack rolls and +2 to the DC of their spells due to the plane's natural energies. Other divine spellcasters are not affected. Conversely, arcane spellcasters suffer a -2 penalty to spell attack rolls and to the DC of their spells.

Planar Characteristics: Niavark's Realm has no special alignment, elemental, energy, or magical traits other than those described above. However, due to his familiarity Niavark himself can alter the shape of the plane through several days or weeks of constant concentration and magical modification. This characteristic also makes Niavark immune to certain types of spells while in his own realm (See the description of Niavark below)

Weather Control: Niavark has designed the climate and weather of his new home, any attempt to change or control the weather with spells requires a DC 24 save using the caster's spellcasting ability. Whether successful or not, the effort immediately tells Niavark that someone on his plane is trying to change things, and informs him of their location.

The only sure way to arrive at **Niavark's Hold** is to use a *find the path* spell seeking Niavark's home, the vault of stored magical items, or some other destination name determined by the DM. *Locate object* spells only work for objects not directly stored in Niavark's Hold which is protected by *nondetection* spells as well as lead sheeting.

Walking along the ground involves moving through very thick underbrush reducing the movement rate of the party considerably unless they use special means to overcome it. Using *fly* spells to travel beneath the canopy and above the underbrush is also slower than usual due to the many massive tree trunks and the wide variety of lower branches that can grow in the enhanced light. Negotiating these hazards reduces flying speed to half normal. Flying above the canopy has its own dangers, one being the constant light which reduces visibility at a distance rather than enhancing it, adding to the confusion about directions, another being a lack of landmarks, all the PCs can see is a sea of green leaves, and the last being the several flying creatures that patrol the skies at Niavark's request. If the PCs combine the use of *fly* spells and a *find the path* spell, they should make relatively good time traveling toward Niavark's Hold.

Beginning the Adventure

Using the adventure hooks described above, or some other manner devised by the DM, the PCs should obtain a small amount of information about Niavark. First, they should know that Niavark definitely has some-

thing against arcane spellcasters of all types, a small amount of additional research should reveal why. Second, until recently, Niavark has not been seen or heard from for almost 100 years. Third, Niavark now lives in some sort of plane of his own creation, and he has a castle or home where he stores a variety of powerful magical items and great wealth that he has stolen, or acquired over a long period of time.

Divination spells or research should reveal the name for Niavark's Realm and several possible ways to get there. While Niavark has taken precautions to keep the exact nature and powers of his demiplane secret, he has actually gone out of his way to make it "easy" to discover and learn about through the use of divination spells as well as by providing rumors about a "plane of trees and glorious life" and making it particularly easy to plane shift or gate to particular locations. The magic he used to restrict the use of planar traveling spells actually focuses the ability to arrive, or depart, to certain discrete locations. This can be used as an excuse for any sort of "off-target" arrival or magical mishap placing the PCs into the plane. Once the PCs arrive in Niavark's Realm, the adventure begins in earnest.

Research and Divination Spells

By this point in their careers the PCs should have a good knowledge of divination spells and how to use them. Magical divination and research through Int (Investigation) checks about Niavark's Realm will reveal only rumors and only vague information about the plane itself. As for Niavark, spells and research should reveal his background as well as the reason for his rage and hatred. A bit of research should also reveal that Niavark is extremely powerful, and has acquired a number of powerful friends to assist him. Rather than trying to restrict divination spells, try to force the PCs to use these spells and abilities simply to obtain enough information to enter Niavark's Realm.

The Forest Spirit

The forest of Niavark's Realm has a spirit and sentience of its own that was brought to life through Niavark's painstaking creation process. The forest bears the same animosity toward humanoid arcane magic users that Niavark does and actively seeks to hinder and harm the PCs while they travel in the forest. This comes in the form of letting creatures such as the treants and other specialized creatures of the realm know where the PCs are, and by enhancing vegetation the PCs have traveled past to help confuse their sense of direction.

A vast collection of wildlife fills the forest, making it a wonderful, vibrant, healthy place full of life. Included among the natural beasts, plants, and magical creatures, are a number of plant imbued creatures. These creatures are most often loyal to Niavark, and the spirit of the forest, making anything that sees the PCs potentially dangerous, either directly, or by letting other creatures know where the PCs are.

Locations and Encounters

In addition to a number of possible random encounters (see the sidebar), there are locations within the forest that could be considered homes or lairs. While most of these creatures agree with and support Niavark, and even his plans, many of the creatures living here are simply here to enjoy basking in the beauty of the forest Niavark has created, or to hide away from problems of their own in other places. These creatures have their own ideas and agendas and do not necessarily agree with Niavark's plans. At the same time, none of them wants to tempt Niavark's wrath.

There is a vast variety of creatures within the massive forest, with the majority being wild animals. At their present level, it is unlikely that even the largest of beasts can truly trouble the PCs, at the same time; these creatures are all a part of the forest and connected with the forest spirit. If the PCs don't actively avoid being seen by mundane animals through the use of magical spells or abilities, they are certain to help communicate the PCs whereabouts to other creatures wishing them harm.

Random Encounters

The vast forest of Niavark's Realm is filled with dangerous creatures that are actively seeking to kill or capture the PCs. Even the natural animals of the forest are driven to attack the PCs, slowing them down considerably if they don't take the time to avoid them. This makes random encounters far more likely and demands extreme caution on the part of the PCs. The fact that the forest itself is helping creatures find them gives any creatures searching for the PCs a +4 bonus on all Wis (Perception) checks. The DM should roll a d20 for every 30 minutes spent on this plane.

d20	Encounter (ground)	Encounter (air)
1	Zifran'di'mal (Area 7)	Jariel (Area 6)
2	1d4 Quenching treants (Appendix)	Jariel (Area 6)
3	Azitharn (Area 9)	Mildivic (Area 5)
4	1d6 Tendriculos	Air elemental
5	2d4 Basilisks	Spotted, even if invisible
6-8	Spotted, even if invisible	Spotted, even if invisible
9-11	Spotted, if visible	Spotted, if visible
12-20	No Encounter	No Encounter

1. Arrival Points (EL 16)

Whether the PCs arrive via *gate*, *plane shift*, or through a portal from the elemental planes of earth or water (see below), they find themselves facing a massive forest of made up of 300 ft. tall trees with wide, thick trunks supporting a massive canopy as well as a wide variety of interleaving branches shorter distances from the ground. The tree trunks range from 20 ft. in diameter to as large as 40 ft. in diameter with rare plants being even larger. Wide, twisting roots and thick underbrush including briars, thorny bushes, and a number of flowering plants blanket the ground. Light coming from the air all around combines with the brightly colored flowers to almost overwhelm the senses. The air is moist and warm, though not uncomfortably so, and heavy with the scent of the surrounding flowers. Despite rumors of abounding dangers, the first impression is one of peace, beauty, and tranquility.

The impression of tranquility is rapidly shattered as the PCs are attacked within 1d4 rounds of their arrival, whether they arrive through the forest, or by planar travel. The fact that this plane only has certain areas that can respond to *gate*, and *plane shift* spells, and only has two portals to other planes (described below), means that all of these areas can be guarded by sentinels. These creatures only pause to communicate the arrival of new creatures with others before attacking.

Plant-Imbued Creatures

Many of the creatures encountered in Niavark's Realm are plant-imbued — magically converted to a plant-like creature through the use of powerful druidic spells (see *plant enlightenment* below). These creatures not only gain some of the characteristics and abilities of plants, they also gain additional Wisdom and Intelligence. With their added abilities, many plant-imbued creatures may then gain class levels as noted in the creature stat blocks.

Plant-imbued creatures can be found in a wide variety of different locations, they are almost never found underground or in areas that get little sunlight. These mystical creatures are often in the company of druids, or found in areas where powerful druids reside. Once created, their additional Wisdom and Intelligence gives them the free will to go where they wish and learn new things about the world around them. Those plant-imbued creatures that do choose to learn more of the world can eventually become almost fey-like as they age.

Plant-imbued creatures share the following abilities:

Senses: Plant-imbued creatures gain darkvision to a range of 60ft if the base creature did not already possess darkvision. If it already possessed darkvision, its range is increased to 120ft.

AC: The base creature's AC increases by +2. This is considered natural armor.

Hit Dice: The base creature advances to 2HD if it began with fewer than 2HD.

Acute Senses: Plant-imbued creatures can instantly sense anything with 60ft. They automatically detect invisible or concealed creatures and are never disadvantaged in combat due to concealment or other obscuring conditions.

Resistance: Plant-imbued creatures gain resistance to bludgeoning and piercing damage.

Innate Spellcasting: Plant-imbued creatures' spellcasting ability is Wisdom. They can cast the following spells without material components: At will — *freedom of movement*; 3/day — *entangle*; 1/day — *sunburst*, *tree stride*.

Abilities: A plant-imbued creature gains a new 3d6 Intelligence score that replaces its previous score. Its Wisdom is increased by +1d6

and if the base creature's Cha was 10 or less, roll 2d6. If you roll 10 or less, add this number to the base creature's Cha score. If your roll 11-14, add +1d4 to the creature's Cha score. If you roll 14 or higher then the score is unchanged.

Skills: +4 bonus to Dex (Stealth) checks in forested terrain. This bonus stacks with any bonuses that the base creature possessed.

Languages: Plant-imbued creatures gain the ability to speak Sylvan in addition to any languages spoken by the base creature.

Woodland Stride: Plant-imbued creatures can move through any sort of undergrowth at their full movement rate without taking any penalties or suffering any damage. Magical effects designed to impede movement still affect them.

Plant Enlightenment

9th level transmutation

Druid

Components: V, S, M (herbs and oils worth 100gp/HD of creature enlightened, minimum of 500gp)

Casting Time: 24 hours

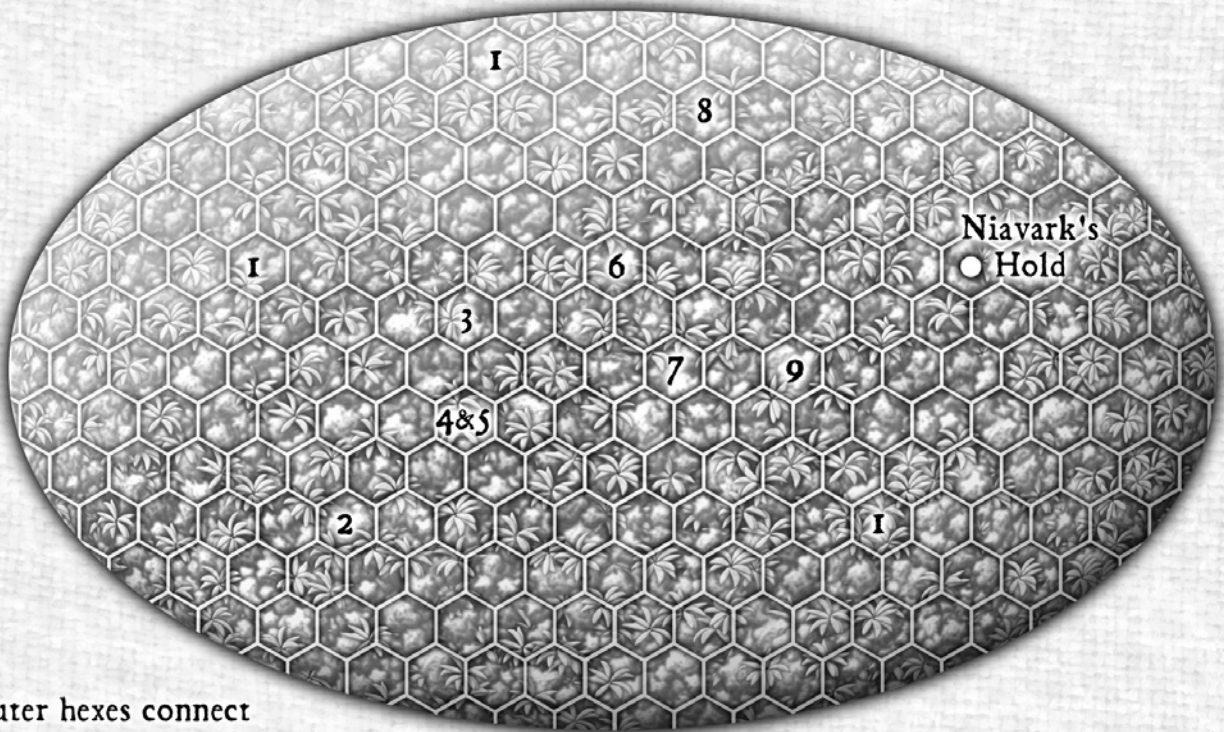
Duration: Instantaneous

Range: touch

Area of Effect: one beast

You use your divine knowledge of plants and plant growth combined with some of your own life energy to convert a beast into an enlightened, plant-type creature. You will need to make a Wis save (DC = 10 + HD of converted creature) in order to succeed. If successful the beast becomes plant-imbued as described above. The newly-enlightened creature is friendly toward you but you have no special empathy or connection with it. Plant-imbued creatures have their own free will and decide who they want to associate with and what they wish to do. At the same time they always view you as a friend unless you attack them. Plant-imbued creatures cannot serve as familiars or animal companions, although they might choose to travel with someone for a while on their own.

Niavark's Realm



outer hexes connect
to the opposite side

1 hex = 5 miles

Sentinels: These creatures are specifically left at each of the areas identified on the map of Niavark's Realm as locations where *gate* and *plane shift* spells function properly. They include 2 **quenching treants**, a **plant-imbued owl Drd14**, a **plant-imbued brown bear Ftr10**, and a **plant-imbued leopard Sor12**. Their orders are to slay or capture anyone coming through. The bear is more intent on slaying, but is sometimes held in check by the owl if there are helpless or surrendering PCs. These creatures start out as hostile toward the PCs, and attack without provocation, simply coming into their home was provocation enough, but it is not impossible for extremely diplomatic PCs to find a way to negotiate with them, usually by promising to leave immediately.

Quenching Treants (2): AC 16; HP 138 (12d12+60); Spd 30ft; Melee slam x2 (+10, 3d6+6 bludgeoning); **SA** foam blast (range 60ft, extinguished normal fires in a 5ft square and absorbs 5d4 pts magical fire damage), multiattack (2 slams), spell quenching (+2 ranged attack, 1/round treant can target spellcaster with foam blast, if hit spellcaster must make DC 13 Con check or spell is lost); **Resist** bludgeoning, piercing; **Vulnerable** fire; **Str** +6, **Dex** -1, **Con** +5, **Int** +1, **Wis** +3, **Cha** +1; **Senses** passive Perception 13; **Traits** false appearance (indistinguishable from normal tree when motionless), siege monster (double damage on objects and structures); **AL** N; **CR** 9; **XP** 5,000. (**Appendix**)

Plant-Imbued Owl Drd14: AC 13; HP 38 (2d4-2 plus 14d6-14); Spd 5ft, fly 50ft; **Melee** talons (+6, 1 point slashing); **SA** spells (DC 21*, **Wis** +13*); **Resist** bludgeoning and piercing damage from non-magical weapons; **Str** -4, **Dex** +1, **Con** -1, **Int** +2 (+7), **Wis** +6 (+11), **Cha** -1; **Senses** darkvision 120ft, passive Perception 16; **Traits** acute senses, circle form (CR4),

combat wild shape, druid circle (moon), elemental wild shape, flyby, keen hearing and sight, primal strike, thousand forms, wild shape (7 hours), woodland stride; **AL** N; **CR** 14; **XP** 11,500. (**The Tome of Horrors Complete** 730)

Innate Spells: at will—*freedom of movement*; 3/day—*entangle*; 1/day—*sunburst*, *tree stride*.

Spells (slots): 0 (at will)—*guidance*, *mending*, *produce flame*, *thorn whip*; 1st (4)—*charm person*, *cure wounds*, *fog cloud*, *thunderwave*; 2nd (3)—*barkskin*, *gust of wind*, *lesser restoration*, *moonbeam*; 3rd (3)—*call lightning*, *dispel magic*, *sleet storm*, *wind wall*; 4th (3)—*confusion*, *conjure woodland beings*, *wall of fire*; 5th (2)—*conjure elemental*, *mass cure wounds*; 6th (1)—*conjure fey*, *wall of thorns*; 7th (1)—*reverse gravity*.

*Adjusted for the plane's magical characteristics.

Plant-Imbued Leopard, Sor12: AC 13; HP 55 (3d8 plus 12d6); Spd 50ft, climb 40ft; **Melee** bite (+6, 1d6+2), claw (+6, 1d4+2 slashing); **SA** spells (Innate: DC 22*, **Wis** +14*, **Sor**: DC 14*, **Cha** +6*); **Resist** bludgeoning and piercing damage from non-magical weapons; **Str** +2, **Dex** +4, **Con** +0 (+4), **Int** +1, **Wis** +8, **Cha** +4 (+8); **Skills** Perception +12, Stealth +8 (+12 in forest); **Senses** darkvision 120ft, passive Perception 22; **Traits** acute senses, bend luck, font of magic (12 sorcery points), keen smell, metamagic (empowered spell, quickened spell, twinned spell), pounce, sorcerous origin (wild magic), tides of chaos, wild magic surge, woodland stride; **AL** N; **CR** 12; **XP** 8,400. (**The Tome of Horrors Complete** 730)

Innate Spells: at will—*freedom of movement*; 3/day—*entangle*; 1/day—*sunburst*, *tree stride*.

Spells (slots): 0 (at will)—*acid splash*, *blade ward*, *fire*



bolt, message, true strike; 1st (4)—*color spray, expeditions retreat, mage armor, ray of sickness*; 2nd (3)—*blur, mirror image, shatter*; 3rd (3)—*haste, protection from energy*; 4th (2)—*blight, greater invisibility*; 5th (1)—*insect plague*.

*Adjusted for the plane's magical characteristics.

Plant-Imbued Brown Bear, Ftr10: AC 15; HP 147 (4d10+20 plus 10d10+50) ; **Spd** 40ft, climb 30ft; **Melee** bite (+10, 1d8+6 piercing), claw x2 (+10, 2d6+6 slashing); **SA** multiattack (2 claws, 1 bite, spells (DC 17*, Wis +8*); **Resist** bludgeoning and piercing damage from non-magical weapons; **Str** +6 (+10), **Dex** +1, **Con** +3 (+7), **Int** +1, **Wis** +4, **Cha** -2; **Skills** Perception +8, stealth +5 (+9 in forest); **Senses** darkvision 120ft, passive Perception 18; **Traits** action surge, acute senses, fighting style (defense*), maneuvers (save DC 14; evasive footwork, indomitable, maneuvering attack, menacing attack, precision attack, riposte, sweeping attack, trip attack), martial archetype (battle master), second wind, superiority dice (5), woodland stride; **AL** N; **CR** 10; **XP** 5,900. (*The Tome of Horrors Complete* 730)

Innate Spells: at will—*freedom of movement*; 3/day—*entangle*; 1/day—*sunburst, tree stride*.

*The bear does not need to be wearing armor to gain the defense bonus.

**Adjusted for plane's magical characteristics.

Combat Tactics: These creatures work well together. The leopard and bear hang back for a bit while the leopard casts a *message* to let Niavark know of the new visitors and the bear uses its *entangle* spell-like ability to distract the PCs. Meanwhile the owl starts by casting a *wall of thorns* spell from her perch to trap or damage whatever PCs and NPCs have arrived.

While the owl and the centipedes do their work, the leopard takes the time to cast *haste* and then *protection from energy* on the bear while the quenching treants attack spellcasters with their *foam blast* ability. PCs that escape the swarms are set upon by the bear that does its best to grapple them and then claw them to death. The leopard sorcerer attacks using its *insect plague* spell to keep the PCs engaged while the treants and bear take up melee positions.

If the battle goes against them, the owl and leopard flee while the bear and the quenching treants remain behind to fight.

DM Note: The penalties to arcane spellcasters apply to all casters; this means that the leopard sorcerer's DCs are penalized. The owl's druidic spells are enhanced as described above. Immunities, surprise, and teamwork should easily make up for any lack of enhancing equipment.

After this initial battle, the PCs should realize that this is not a safe place for them, and that they need to accomplish their goals very quickly, or leave, if they want to survive.

2. Endless Mud (EL 16)

The underbrush parts away here to reveal what seems to be a deep puddle of soft mud between several massive trees. Despite its wet appearance, the "mud" is actually dry dirt that sifts and moves as easily as if it were water. Deep beneath the smooth soil is a portal to the elemental plane of earth. While on this side the portal lies beneath 3 ft. of moving earth, the other side of the portal exits into an open space on the elemental plane of earth that actually contains enough air for several creatures to breathe. Niavark used that point as a starting point for the creation of his own plane, and received the help of a powerful elemental lord in the creation of not only the portal, but also the actual beginnings of his new personal demiplane. This point is one of the arrival points for travelers using gate

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or planar shift spells, and is also the arrival point for anyone traveling here from the elemental plane of earth. It is guarded by **sentinels** who attack humanoid newcomers as described above. Beneath the portal, the gritty mud extends to an incomprehensible distance because it actually curves around and through the earth beneath the entire demiplane.

3. The Pond of Light (EL 16+)

A large, randomly shaped pool of glowing water surrounded by flowering bushes and massive trees is roughly 70 to 90 ft. in diameter. The highest branches above stretch almost all the way across it yet shed no shadows in a place where the air has a radiance of its own. This pool has a portal to the elemental plane of water, a portal that Niavark created in order to easily bring needed moisture into his new domain. In addition to the sentinels described under Arrival Points above, the pool also contains **5 water elementals** that may, or may not assist the sentinels at their own whim. PCs wanting to use the portal to the elemental plane of water, or that come through the portal from the other side, must either negotiate or fight with the elementals who demand 15,000gp in flawless diamonds for passage. Their price can be negotiated down to 5,000gp by extremely diplomatic PCs.

Water Elemental (5): AC 14; **HP** 114 (12d10+48); **Spd** 30ft, swim 90ft; **Melee** slam x2 (+7, 2d8+4 bludgeoning); **SA** multiattack (2 slams), whelm (each creature in elemental's space must make DC 15 Str save, on fail take 2d8+4 bludgeoning, grappled if Large or smaller); **Immune** poison damage, exhaustion, grappled, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned, prone, restrained, unconscious; **Str** +4, **Dex** +2, **Con** +4, **Int** -3, **Wis** +0, **Cha** -1; **Senses** darkvision 60ft, passive Perception 11; **AL** N; **CR** 5; **XP** 1,800.

4. Stones and Moss

The thick undergrowth here is broken by a path of moss-covered stones that meander around the some of the massive tree trunks. Almost 20 ft. wide, the path is easy to travel, and a fine break from the heavy undergrowth. Strangely, even the lower branches of the trees seem higher here, as if they are deliberately creating space for some sort of massive creature to walk by. From some angles it appears that even a massive creature could fly through the branches of the trees to land right along the stones. The path begins a short distance from the Endless Mud (Area 1 above), and ends before a massive oak tree in which there is a large, almost cave-like opening.

5. Mildivic's Tree (EL 18)

The massive opening within the base of the giant tree is home to **Mildivic**, an **old blue dragon** that has chosen this place as a home to rest and relax in. While somewhat humid, the air of the forest is warm enough for him, and the nearby portal to the Elemental Plane of Earth gives him an easy way to cover his tracks after raiding or hunting on the Material Plane. The massive lair itself is pleasantly warm and dry, for Mildivic, with a floor covered with a deep layer of soft, smooth sand. Electricity crackles through the hot, dry air above the sand. Over 40 ft. of sand covers Mildivic's treasure hoard. Mildivic, of course, can easily burrow through the sand and to access his own hoard. Niavark knows where this hoard is, but he doesn't really need any of the treasure, and prefers to deal with the dragon on fair terms. Unless aided by magic, the PCs have no idea that there might be treasure hidden deep beneath the sand.

Niavark himself helped create this home, for several reasons of his own. First, the dragon, while not a true ally, is a powerful foe that has already shown a willingness to help fight adventurers that come nearby even it is to more to protect his own lair than to actively help Niavark. Second, some of the dragon's treasure alone helps attract the very type of people that Niavark would like to see dead. Due to their mutual agreements, Mildivic won't help any adventurers that come by, at the same time, it does not mean he always intends to attack or fight them. Usually hidden

just beneath the surface of the sand, Mildivic usually emerges as adventurers approach, giving a friendly, if surprising greeting to them. He is cautious about getting into battle, usually just saying that this is one of his resting places due to the "easy hunting." At the same time, if the PCs are aggressive, or so bold as to attack him, he attacks with his breath weapon and takes to the air intending to slaughter the PCs from the above using his breath weapon and spells. If he has problems, or thinks the PCs might be overly strong, he is not so vain he won't ask for further help from Niavark.

Mildivic, male Adult Blue Dragon: AC 19; **HP** 225

(18d12+108); **Spd** 40ft, burrow 30ft, fly 80ft; **Melee** bite (+12, reach 10ft, 2d10+7 piercing plus 5 1d10 lightning), claw x2 (+12, 2d6+7 slashing); tail (+12, reach 15ft, 2d8+7 bludgeoning); **SA** frightful presence (each creature within 120ft must make DC 17 Wis save or be frightened for 1 minute, creature can save again on its turn), lightning breath (90 foot line, DC 19 Dex save or take 1d10 lightning, save halves), multiattack (frightful presence, 1 bite, 2 claws); **Lair Actions** collapse ceiling (target within 120ft, 3d6 bludgeoning, knocked prone and buried, DC 15 Dex save negates), sand cloud (within 120ft of dragon, 20ft radius, DC 15 Con save or targets blinded for 1 minute, can repeat save each turn), lightning arc (5ft line between two solid surfaces, creatures in line must make DC 15 Dex save or take 3d6 lightning damage); **LA** (3/round) detect (Wis (Perception) check), tail attack, wing attack (2 actions, all creatures within 10ft must make DC 20 Dex save or take 2d6+7 bludgeoning and be knocked prone); **Immune** lightning; **Str** +7, **Dex** +0 (+5), **Con** +6 (+11), **Int** +3, **Wis** +2 (+7), **Cha** +4 (+9); **Skills** Perception +12, Stealth +5, **Senses** blindsight 60ft, darkvision 120ft, passive Perception 22; **Traits** legendary resistance (3/day, can choose to succeed on a failed save); **AL** LE; **CR** 16; **XP** 15,000.

Mildivic's Hoard: Collected through years of hunting in various places, Mildivic's hoard is mostly made up of sapphires and magical items that happen to have sapphires, other blue gemstones, or have some sort of blue on them. When Mildivic acquires treasure, he tries to find ways to convert it into blue items, something that is more easily done on the Elemental Plane of Earth, and also with Niavark's assistance. The treasure is buried beneath 40 ft. of sand, PCs trying to obtain every last item in this hoard have to spend a considerable amount of time sifting through the sand leaving them open to attack within the enclosed lair. The hoard includes: 2,280 pp, 6240gp, 13 blue sapphires (1,200gp each), 4 violet garnets (650gp), 3 aquamarines (500gp each), 24 blue quartz (15gp each), a ceremonial rod decorated with jade tiles (850gp), 2 silver goblets studded with small garnets (200gp each), small silver earrings with sapphire clusters (2,500gp), silver ring with a single large sapphire (*ring of protection*, double value), +2 *mithral breastplate* trimmed with blue enamel, ornate blue silk cloak with silver trim (*cape of the mountebank*), *elemental gem* (emerald), *helm of teleportation*, and a *pale blue ioun stone*.

6. Jariel's Nest (EL 16)

Jariel is a **plant-imbued roc** that accepted Niavark's offer to convert him, granting him long life, in exchange for guarding the thin skies above the forest realm. No longer needing to hunt, Jariel takes pleasure in floating through the skies and contemplating both nature and life. His nest is rarely used, but always actively defended. Jariel has his doubts about Niavark's goals, but he enjoys life in this realm and is uncertain what would happen to his present home if Niavark were to be defeated. Jariel's constant circling of the skies makes it certain that he spots PCs flying above the canopy sooner or later, and he is certain to spot anyone climbing onto his nest with in eyed6 rounds.

Jariel, Plant-Imbued Roc Drd12: AC 17; **HP** 350 (16d20+80 plus 12d6+60); **Spd** 20ft, fly 120ft; **Melee** beak (+14, reach 10ft, 4d8+9 piercing), talons x2 (+14, 4d6+9 slashing plus target grappled (escape DC 19) and restrained); **SA** multiattack (2 talons, 1 beak), spells (DC 20*, Wis +12*); **Resist**

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bludgeoning and piercing damage from non-magical weapons; **Str** +10, **Dex** +0 (+4), **Con** +5 (+9), **Int** +1, **Wis** +6 (+10), **Cha** +4 (+8); **Skills** Perception +10, stealth +4 (+8 in forest); **Senses** darkvision 60ft, passive Perception 20; **Traits** acute senses, circle forms (CR4), combat wild shape, druid circle (moon), elemental wild shape, keen sight, primal strike, wild shape (6 hours), woodland stride; **AL** N; **CR** 16; **XP** 15,000. (*The Tome of Horrors Complete* 730)

Innate Spells: at will—*freedom of movement*; 3/day—*entangle*; 1/day—*sunburst*, *tree stride*.

Spells (slots): 0 (at will)—*druidcraft*, *poison spray*, *produce flame*, *resistance*; 1st (4)—*charm person*, *cure wounds*, *fog cloud*, *thunderwave*; 2nd (3)—*flaming sphere*, *gust of wind*, *hold person*, *locate animals or plants*; 3rd (3)—*call lightning*, *dispel magic*, *sleet storm*; 4th (3)—*confusion*, *control weather*, *ice storm*; 5th (2)—*awaken*, *mass cure wounds*; 6th (1)—*disintegrate*.

*Adjusted for the plane's magical characteristics.

Combat Tactics: Jariel prefers to simply cast *dispel magic* on flying PCs and then snatch them as they drop. He views anyone holding an axe or sword as the most immediate danger, progressively attacking more lightly armored foes. **Note:** Jariel is an arcane caster and is at disadvantage when casting spells as previously described.

7. The Golden Glade (EL 19)

The white marble fountain in the center of this large clearing glows with a golden light due to the powerful light of the air surrounding it. The clearing itself is a strange, welcome break to monotony of thick underbrush, although massive trees stand majestically all around it. Rather than bushes, the ground is covered with a thick coat of grass and wildflowers. A place of beauty and peace, it is home to a scarred, elderly unicorn named **Zifran'di'mal**. Alas, Zifran'di'mal dropped his good and peaceful ways years ago when his mate was slain for her horn. He hates and despises all humanoids, believing that they are all nothing more than opportunistic hunters with no respect for life. Once good, Zifran'di'mal is now Chaotic Neutral and starting to lean towards evil. So far, he does not relish in killing, he just deems it a necessary cleansing of the world, and happens to believe that all humanoids are evil. As soon as he spots the PCs, he attacks, not caring for any banter or negotiation, and fights to the death.

Zifran'di'mal, male Unicorn Sor15: **AC** 13; **HP** 67 (9d10+18 plus 15d6+30); **Spd** 50ft; **Melee** hooves (+10, 2d6+4 bludgeoning), horn (+10, 1d8+4 piercing); **SA** multiattack (1 hoof, 1 horn), spells (DC 16*, Cha +8*); **LA** (3/day) heal self (3 actions, gains 2d8+2 hp), hooves (one hoof attack), shimmering shield (2 actions, +2 AC to unicorn or another creature within 60ft, +2 AC until end of next turn); **Immune** charmed, paralyzed, poisoned; **Resist Str** +5, **Dex** +3, **Con** +2 (+7), **Int** +0, **Wis** +3, **Cha** +5 (+10); **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 13; **Traits** bend luck, charge, controlled chaos, font of magic (15 sorcery points), healing touch (3/day, touch heals 2d8+2 HP and removes diseases and poisons), magic resistance (advantage on saves against spells and magical effects), magic weapons (all weapon attacks are magical), metamagic (distant spell, extended spell, twinned spell), sorcerous origin (wild magic), teleport (1/day), tides of chaos, wild magic surge; **AL** CN; **CR** 19; **XP** 22,000.

Innate Spells: at will—*detect evil and good*, *druidcraft*, *pass without trace*; 1/day—*calm emotions*, *dispel evil and good*, *entangle*.

Spells (slots): 0 (at will)—*blade ward*, *fire bolts*, *friends*, *light*, *message*, *minor illusion*; 1st (4)—*charm person*, *color spray*, *witch bolt*; 2nd (3)—*hold person*, *web*; 3rd (3)—*haste*, *lightning bolt*; 4th (3)—*confusion*, *ice storm*; 5th (2)—*hold monster*, *wall of stone*; 6th (1)—*disintegrate*; 7th (1)—*reverse gravity*; 8th (1)—*sunburst*.

*Adjusted for the plane's magical characteristics.

Combat Tactics: Zifran'di'mal likes to approach the party peacefully, pausing about 60 ft. from the party to cast a *wall of stone* in an effort to split the party in half so that he can face only a few opponents at a time. Then he casts *web* or *hold monster* on the PCs on his side of the wall before using *disintegrate* on one of the others. He always moves before or after casting, and does his best to deal with anyone trying to get into melee combat with him first. He dismisses the *hold* and *wall of stone* spells (which he recasts as necessary) when he is ready to deal with those individuals. His overriding tactic is to divide the party and conquer each person individually. He likes to *disintegrate* his foes if he can, doing his best to simply erase their existence.

8. Aruvang the Tranquil (EL 19)

Aruvang, a tiger Niavark put through the *plant enlightenment* ceremony (see sidebar) in hopes of creating a powerful guardian, turned to a more peaceful, contemplative nature. Perhaps something went wrong with the spell, but Aruvang now prefers to commune with nature and move through it in peace. As a plant he no longer needs to hunt or kill, and sees no reason to do so. Instead, he has used time and patience to help direct the growth of plants and bushes, twisting a branch here, trimming one there, and then letting normal growth help create a beautiful, peaceful home for himself. His home is a hexagonal platform made of roots, with aromatic flowering bushes in each of the corners and a small natural pool of water at its center. Aruvang prefers to sit near the water, bask in the light coming from the air all around him, and ponder what further changes he might be able to make in his surroundings.

While he views Niavark as a friend, and wishes him no harm, he has tried to convince Niavark that there are better ways to deal with his anger. Aruvang prefers peace to fighting, and if he sees the PCs, or learns that they are about, he tries to warn them to leave. He tells them of Niavark's anger, as well as its source, and warns them that nobody attempting to harm Niavark in his own home has ever succeeded. He believes it would be better for both Niavark, and the PCs, if the PCs would simply leave and attempts to convince them that a few more years might temper Niavark's rage. In fact, he believes these constant intrusions are bad for Niavark because they don't give him time to heal. If the PCs insist on continuing, Aruvang does nothing to prevent it, simply shakes his head sadly and lets them go to their deaths. Anyone attacking Aruvang is sure to be sorry, as he does not tolerate violent intrusions into his peaceful domain. Aruvang fights back, driving any surviving PCs that flee him toward one of the elemental portals if he can.

Aruvang, Plant-Imbued Tiger Mnk15: **AC** 16; **HP** 135 (5d10+10 plus 15d8+30); **Spd** 65ft; **Melee** bite (+8, 1d10+3 piercing), claw (+8, 1d8+3 slashing); **SA** spells (DC 17*, Wis +9*); **Immune** disease, poison; poisoned; **Resist** bludgeoning and piercing damage from non-magical weapons; **Str** +3 (+8), **Dex** +2 (+7), **Con** +2, **Int** +0, **Wis** +2, **Cha** +2; **Skills** Perception +7, Stealth +7 (+11 in forest); **Senses** darkvision 120ft, passive Perception 17; **Traits** acute senses, cloak of shadows, deflect missiles, diamond soul, evasion, extra attack, flurry of blows, keen smell, ki (15 ki points), ki-empowered strikes, martial arts, monastic tradition (way of shadow), patient defense, pounce, purity of body, shadow arts, shadow step, slow fall, step of the wind, stillness of mind, stunning strike, timeless body, tongue of the sun and moon, unarmored defense, unarmored movement, woodland stride; **AL** N; **CR** 15; **XP** 13,000. (*The Tome of Horrors Complete* 730)

Innate Spells: at will—*freedom of movement*; 3/day—*entangle*; 1/day—*sunburst*, *tree stride*.

*Adjusted for plane's magical characteristics.

9. A Stone House (EL 15)

Rocks of any type seem rare on this plane, making this small stone house stand out in a sea of brown and green. Tucked between the massive roots of one of the many trees, the walls appear to be made from single

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slabs of granite that must certainly have been brought in from another plane. A simple stone door leads into the home which doesn't appear to have any windows.

The inside of the home is a grisly scene. A massive tapestry depicting a bloody battle between some orcs and elves hangs along the back wall while shelves along the side walls hold numerous human, elven, and dwarven skulls. A small stone bed rests in the center of the room beside a small table. A small chest at the foot of the bed holds some clothing, but the rest of the room seems oddly empty. There isn't even a space for a cooking fire.

This home belongs to Azitharn the Bold, an orcish ranger that not only supports Niavark's campaign to slay arcane spell casters, but also actively participates whenever and wherever he can. Azitharn uses this space to rest and recuperate after making forays back to the Material Plane to hunt wizards. He helped Niavark acquire some of the more potent magical items used as "bait" and is happy to continue helping him. There is a 50% chance that Azitharn is in his home, or nearby if the PCs approach. The rest of the time he is either out wandering the forest, or "hunting" on the Material Plane.

Azitharn the Bold, male orc Rgr15: AC 16; HP 127 (15d10+45); Spd 40ft; **Melee** +2 *shortsword* x2 (+11, 1d6+4 piercing); **Ranged** +2 *longbow* x2 (+12, 150ft/600ft, 1d8+3 piercing); **SA** multiattack (2 *shortsword*, 2 *longbow*), spells (DC 17*, Wis +9*); **Immune** type; **Str** +4 (+9), **Dex** +3 (+8), **Con** +3, **Int** +1, **Wis** +2, **Cha** +0; **Skills** Athletics +9, Nature +6, Perception +7; **Stealth** +8; **Survival** +7; **Senses** passive Perception 17; **Traits** defensive tactics (multiattack defense), favored enemy (beasts, elf, dwarf, halfling, human), fighting style (archery), hide in plain sight, hunter's prey (horde breaker), natural explorer (forest, grassland, mountain), primeval awareness, ranger archetype (hunter), superior hunter's

defense (uncanny dodge), vanish; **AL** NE; **CR** 15; **XP** 13,000.

Spells (slots): 1st (4)—*alarm*, *ensnaring strike*, *longstrider*; 2nd (3)—*barkskin*, *cordon of arrows*, *pass without trace*; 3rd (3)—*lightning arrow*, *wind wall*; 4th (2) — *freedom of movement*.

Equipment: *Ring of protection*, +2 *shortsword*, +2 *longbow*, 20 +1 *arrows*, 10 +2 *arrows*, studded leather armor.

*Adjusted for plane's magical characteristics.

Azitharn hates elves and humans, particularly wizards and sorcerers, and does his best to slay them as quickly as possible. Azitharn prefers to "soften up" targets with missile fire before closing in for melee combat.

Niavark's Hold

One of the few things that does separate Niavark's Hold from the rest of his realm is a 40 ft. wide river that circles the network of trees and intertwining branches that make up the strange, warped fortress. The river is noticeable because there are no other rivers in the forest realm, unfortunately, it is only noticeable to those who are traveling on the ground, or flying through the lower branches of the forest. Branches begin spanning the river 50 ft. above its surface, allowing only those creatures that can swim, climb, or fly to cross into the hold without assistance. The number of patrolling guardians and sentinels throughout his forest realm would suggest a heavier guard on his own home, as well as the treasure vaults deep beneath the base of his main tree, but this is usually only true if Niavark is expecting a full assault. He expects that anyone making this far is at least somewhat depleted of spells and special items and prefers to fight with only a few of his main, trusted allies. Unless the PCs have been amazingly lucky and cautious, Niavark knows they are coming and has plenty of time to prepare.

Special Characteristics

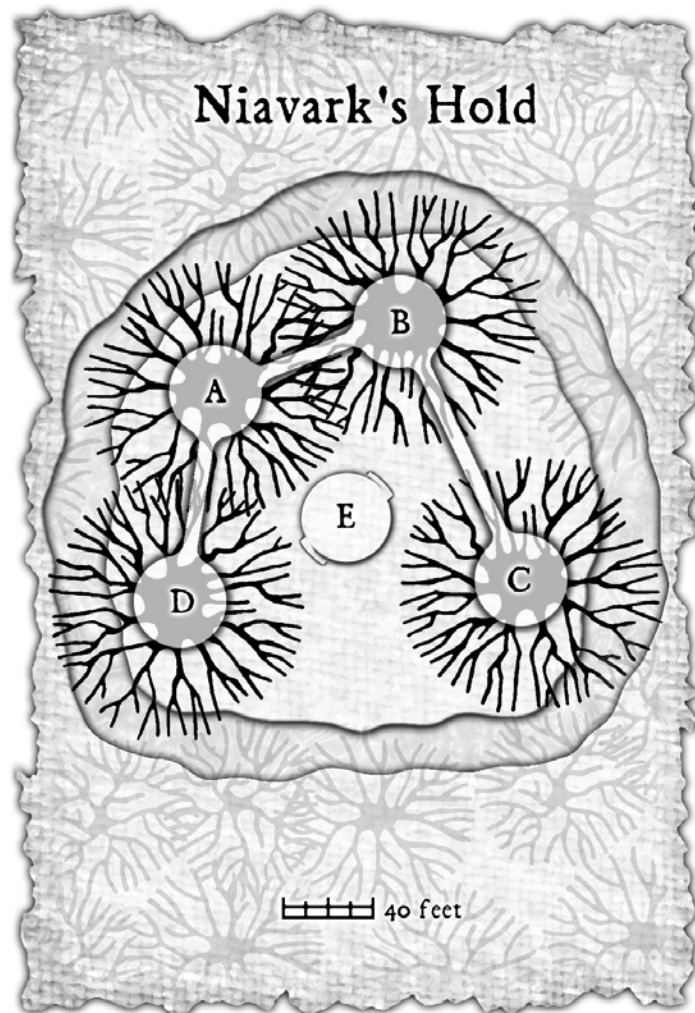
The canopy above the trees making up Niavark's Hold meets perfectly with that of the surrounding forest making it almost impossible to see from the air (Spot DC 23). Despite this, Jariel knows where it is, and is certain to see any PCs flying above the canopy here (See Area 5 above for Jariel's statistics and tactics). The trees of the hold have been magically modified to soak metallic minerals such as lead and iron into their wood, making *scrying* and locating spells almost worthless. These magical enchantments also give these trees and their limbs fire resistant to lightning and fire. Any damage the trees do take is healed by Niavark and his other druids later. The vault itself (see Area E2 below) is protected with a *sequester* spell, and anyone attempting to *scrying* on Niavark or any of his trusted aides sees only a large room with a wood table and chairs and a few minor decorations created through the use of modified illusion spells.

The hold itself is made up of 4 massive trees each 80 ft. in diameter near the base of their trunks. Wide, flat, interleaving branches connect the trees at several levels while stairs run along the outside of several trees, or even through some of the interior rooms. All of the rooms are open to the outside with windows and wide doorways (10 ft. wide and 15 ft. tall) as there is no weather that needs to be kept out, and the rain that does fall is gentle enough not to trouble the interior. The main rooms of the hold are all 40 ft. above the ground and interconnected by branching walkways.

These trees surround a central stone platform 40 ft. above the forest floor (Area E, below) that has two stairways that circle around the outer edge of the platform to reach the ground.

The Outer Guards

Eagles keep watch on all the upper branches, as well as lower branches, and raise an alarm as soon as anyone is spotted. Added to their ranks are several **plant-imbued leopards** and **bears** that can help raise the alarm by their ability to sense invisible or otherwise hidden creatures. The



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plant-imbued bears watching the ground are joined by shambling mounds that also patrol near the river, and help to insure that none of the disenchanters living in the forest can make their way across the river to disrupt Niavark's spells and magical protections. Once an alarm has been raised, all of the creatures converge on the PCs, using their *tree stride* innate spell ability to get as close as possible, and go so far as to chase them wherever they might go.

Aruvang, Plant-Imbued Leopard Mnk9: AC 14; HP 49 (11d8); Spd 50ft, climb 40ft; **Melee** bite (+4, 1d6+2 piercing), claw (+4, 1d4+2 slashing); **SA** spells (DC 17*, Wis +9*); **Resist** bludgeoning and piercing damage from non-magical weapons; **SA** spells (DC 17*, Wis +9*); **Str** +2 (+6), **Dex** +2 (+6), **Con** +0, **Int** -1, **Wis** +4, **Cha** +2; **Skills** Perception +8, Stealth +6 (+10 in forest); **Senses** darkvision 60ft, passive Perception 18; **Traits** acute senses, deflect missiles, evasion, extra attack, flurry of blows, keen smell, ki (9 ki points), ki-empowered strikes, martial arts, monastic tradition (open hand), open hand technique, patient defense, pounce (if leopard moves 20ft or more straight ahead then hits on claw attack, target must make DC 13 Str save or be knocked prone), slow fall, step of the wind, stillness of mind, stunning strike, tranquility, unarmored defense, unarmored movement, woodland stride; **AL** LN; **CR** 9; **XP** 5,000. (*The Tome of Horrors Complete* 730)

Innate Spells: at will—*freedom of movement*; 3/day—*entangle*; 1/day—*sunburst*, *tree stride*.

*Adjusted for plane's magical characteristics.

Plant-Imbued Brown Bear, Bbn5: AC 13; HP 58 (2d8+1 plus 5d12+15); Spd 50ft, climb 30ft; **Melee** bite (+6, 1d8+4 piercing), claw x2 (+6, 2d6+4 slashing); **SA** multiattack (2 claws, 1 bite); spells (DC 16*, Wis +8*); **Resist** bludgeoning and piercing damage from non-magical weapons; **Str** +5 (+8), **Dex** +0, **Con** +3 (+6), **Int** -1, **Wis** +3, **Cha** +0; **Skills** Perception +6, stealth +3 (+7 in forest); **Senses** darkvision 60ft, passive Perception 16; **Traits** acute senses, danger sense, extra attack, fast movement, frenzy, primal path (berserker), rage (3/day, damage +2), reckless attack, unarmored defense, woodland stride; **AL** CN; **CR** 10; **XP** 5,900. (*The Tome of Horrors Complete* 730)

Innate Spells: at will—*freedom of movement*; 3/day—*entangle*; 1/day—*sunburst*, *tree stride*.

*Adjusted for plane's magical characteristics.

Shambling Mound (6): AC 15; HP 136 (16d10+48); Spd 20ft, swim 20ft; **Melee** slam x2 (+7, 2d8+4 bludgeoning); **SA** engulf (mount engulfs grappled Medium or smaller target, target blinded, restrained, unable to breathe, must make DC 14 Con save on mound's turn or take 2d8+4 bludgeoning damage), multiattack (2 slams, if both hit a Medium or smaller target, target is grappled, escape DC 14, mound uses engulf); **Immune** lightning damage, blinded, deafened, exhaustion; **Str** +4, **Dex** -1, **Con** +3, **Int** -3, **Wis** +0, **Cha** -3; **Skills** Stealth +2; **Senses** blindsight 60ft (blind beyond radius), passive Perception 10; **Traits** lightning absorption (regains HP equal to lightning damage); **AL** Unaligned; **CR** 5; **XP** 1,800.

Eagle (14): AC 12; HP 3 (1d6); Spd 10ft, fly 60ft; **Melee** talons (+4, 1d4+2 slashing); **Str** -2, **Dex** +2, **Con** +0, **Int** -4, **Wis** +2, **Cha** -2; **Skills** Perception +4; **Senses** passive Perception 14; **Traits** keen sight (advantage on Wis (Perception) checks that involve sight); **AL** Unaligned; **CR** 0; **XP** 10.

Combat Tactics: These creatures have done this before, and are used to combat. They work together, usually with several casting *entangle* on the PCs while the others use their *freedom of movement* spell-like ability to easily move through the area to attack. They have been trained to go for the most lightly armored creatures first, leaving the heavily armored foes

for the bears and shambling mounds. **Mashorek** (see below) arrives to assist 1d4 rounds after combat begins, followed shortly by any elementals Niavark has already summoned (see area E1 below). Two rounds after Mashorek arrives, **Lortan** and **Simiul** come out to begin their magical attacks. Meanwhile, **Farel** remains in the main tree guarding Niavark while he conjures more elementals to send into the battle (See Area E1).

If the PCs sneak past the outer guards, they rush to anyone that is attacked by the PCs, or even the central platform if the PCs make it into Niavark's chamber.

Walking the Branches

The massive trees making up the hold are connected by bridges created by carefully growing tree limbs together. Shaped and enhanced magically, the 10 ft. wide bridges are flat and easy to walk along. If the PCs decide to damage the bridges somehow they are 5 ft. thick (average), have 250 hp and are hardness 8 due to magical enchantments, they also have the same fire resistance (20) as the other trees in the area.

Ar. Mashorek's Chamber (EL 16)

Mashorek is one of the first beasts Niavark converted into a plant-imbued creature, and is probably the most unswervingly loyal. Mashorek is considered the leader of the guards for the hold, and regularly leaves his large, lair-like home to move through the branches. His home is essentially what one would expect from a beast turned into an enlightened creature. A few broad blankets rest in one section of the room, but there is no furniture or other decorations. Openings in the walls look out over the forest and two wide openings lead out to branch bridges connecting to the two nearest trees. There are no other openings here.

Mashorek, Plant-Imbued Manticore, Ftr15: AC 17; HP 204 (24d10+72); Spd 30ft, fly 50ft; **Melee** bite (+11, 1d8+6 piercing), claw x2 (+11, 1d6+6 slashing); **Ranged** tail spikes x3 (+13, 100ft/200ft, 1d8+5 piercing); **SA** multiattack (2 claws or 3 tail spikes), spells (DC 18**, Wis +10**); **Resist** bludgeoning and piercing damage from non-magical weapons; **Str** +6 (+11), **Dex** +5, **Con** +3 (+8), **Int** +0, **Wis** +3, **Cha** +3; **Skills** Perception +5, Stealth +5 (+9 in forest); **Senses** darkvision 120ft, passive Perception 15; **Traits** acute senses, extra attack (x2), fighting style (archery, defense*), indomitable (2 uses), martial archetype (champion), remarkable athlete, superior critical, tail spike regrowth, woodland stride; **AL** LE; **CR** 16; **XP** 15,000. (*The Tome of Horrors Complete* 730)

Innate Spells: at will—*freedom of movement*; 3/day—*entangle*; 1/day—*sunburst*, *tree stride*.

*Manticore does not need to be wearing armor to gain defense bonus.

**Adjusted for the plane's magical characteristics

Combat Tactics: Mashorek's plant-imbued abilities include acute senses making it virtually impossible to surprise him in his home. If attacked here he sounds an alarm and fights back to the best of his ability. Mashorek prefers to take the battle outside where he can put his ability to fly to the best use. He likes to hang back and launch his tail spikes while directing other creatures in to attack. After watching the party for a round he decides which characters are trying to use magic and focuses further tail spike attacks and melee attacks against them. If necessary, he flies into combat above the ground. He prefers to *entangle* his opponents and use *freedom of movement* to move in to attack them if he is in melee on the ground. Mashorek is undyingly loyal to Niavark and would rather die than let the PCs anywhere near him.

Treasure: While of little use to him, Mashorek has a small hoard of souvenirs from other adventurers that tried their luck against him. He keeps these items hidden in a recess beneath all of his heavy blankets (Search DC 22). This hoard includes; +2 shield, a suit of *elven chain*, +1 *shortbow*, +1 *mace*, and a +2 *greatsword*.



Br. Lortan's Colorful Plaza (EL 15)

Lortan, a skelzi wizard who has chosen to serve Niavark of his own free will, maintains a large, ornate home here. The walls and floor are decorated with a complex wooden mosaic made up of interlaced pieces of mahogany, teak, oak, and walnut. His furniture is made of sturdy oak inlaid with walnut or mahogany and shows amazing artisanship. Wool rugs on the floor are extremely ornate (5 rugs worth at least 2,000gp each) and are clearly a sign of excellent taste. Flower vases throughout the room provide additional color, but often seem oddly out of place. Steps are carved into one portion of the room leading up to a second room above.

Lortan is one of the few wizards that Niavark would ever trust, and this is only because they have a mutual hatred. Lortan hates all humans and elves, and is more than happy to attack any other humanoid creatures as well. Association with Niavark gives him easy access to spell components, the spellbooks of slain wizards, and plenty of adventurers to kill. Lortan fully intends to use the knowledge and powers he gains through association with Niavark to return to the Material Plane and carve out a kingdom of his own. Niavark knows this, and is content to let him do it, as this should only lead to the death of more greedy wizards and sorcerers. Lortan is only found in this room when he is resting (30% chance), otherwise he is responding to an alarm or in his library upstairs studying.

Lortan, male Skelzi Wiz16: AC 17; HP 44 (8d8+8); Spd 30ft; **Melee** blood whip (+7, reach 10ft; 1d4+2 slashing plus DC 12 Con save to avoid bleeding), claw (+7, 1d8+2 slashing), *staff of striking* (+10, 1d6+2 bludgeoning plus 1d6 force/charge expended); **Str** +2, **Dex** +2, **Con** +1, **Int** +5 (+10), **Wis** +3 (+8), **Cha** +0; **Skills** Arcana +10, Investigation +10, Perception +8; **Senses** passive Perception 18; **Traits** arcane recovery, arcane tradition (evocation), blood whip (DC 12 Con save or target loses 1d6 HP per round from bleeding without healing or DC 12 Wis (Medicine) check), chameleon hide (+6 to Stealth, advantage on Stealth and Initia-

tive rolls when not clothed), empowered evocation, evocation savant, overchannel, potent cantrip, sculpt spells; **AL** CE; **CR** 15; **XP** 13,000. (*5th Edition Foes* 213)

Spells (slots): 0 (at will)—*chill touch*, *fire bolt*, *light*, *minor illusion*, *ray of frost*; 1st (4)—*alarm*, *charm person*, *detect magic*, *mage armor*, *magic missile*; 2nd (3)—*blur*, *cloud of daggers*, *invisibility*, *scorching ray*; 3rd (3)—*fear*, *haste*, *lightning bolt*; 4th (3)—*blight*, *greater invisibility*, *ice storm*; 5th (2)—*cloudkill*, *dominate person*; 6th (1)—*flesh to stone*; 7th (1)—*finger of death*; 8th (1)—*feblemind*; 9th (1)—*meteor swarm*; **Spell Save DC** 16*; **Spell Attack Bonus** +8*.

*Adjusted for plane's magical characteristics.

Equipment: *bracers of defense*, *ring of protection*, *potion of fire breath*, *potion of flying*, *potion of healing* x3, *potion of greater healing* x2, *potion of mind reading*, *staff of striking*.

Combat Tactics: If attacked within his own home, Lortan does his best to isolate PCs from each other and give himself a chance to escape to get more help. If he can attack a single PC at a time, he feels that he is in his element. He still raises an alarm, but continues the battle without worrying about potions. If he has the chance, Lortan likes to prepare for battle by quaffing potions of *heroism*, *resistance (fire)* and *resistance (acid)*. If responding to an alarm, he takes extra time to cast *resistance* on himself before flying out to join the battle. Lortan likes to hit characters with *chain lightning*, using unarmored foes as the primary target, before moving on to *feblemind* and *dominate person* spells. Lortan only uses area spells if the party is directly attacking him, if he has allies near the PCs he sticks to his other spells and abilities and attempts to help those in melee as much as possible. Lortan focuses his attacks on any obvious spellcasters. He only enters melee combat when the PCs look like they are nearing death.

B2. Lortan's Library

This upstairs room is not open to the forest, only to the stairs leading down. It is 20 ft. square and 20 ft. tall, with shelves lining every inch of the wall and an ornate desk standing in the center of the room. The desk and chair are sized to fit a large humanoid and constructed of the sturdiest oak. The books throughout the room cover battle tactics, leadership, and magical studies. The books include captured spellbooks from a variety of wizards. These books are all in the open and easily identified with *detect magic*. There is a total of 45 spellbooks, which, in total, contain all 0, 1st, 2nd, 3rd, and 4th-level spells and the following additional spells: 5th—*animate objects*, *cloudkill*, *cone of cold*, *creation*, *dominate person*, *dream*, *hold monster*, *planar binding*, *wall of force*; 6th—*chain lightning*, *disintegrate*, *eyebite*, *mass suggestion*, *programmed illusion*, *sunbeam*, *true seeing*. It requires a *read magic* spell and at least 4 hours of study simply to catalog the books and the spells.

Treasure: A thorough, but time consuming, search of the bookshelves turns up a variety of potential spell components (Search DC 17, takes several hours): 2,000gp worth of diamond dust, 15 pearls (100gp), spell components of the DM's choice worth an additional 1,000gp.

C1. Simiul's Sanctuary

This large chamber is not so much decorated with plants as it is a haven for them. Simiul prefers more jungle-like trees and vines and has created a large garden filling almost the entire inner diameter of the tree. Openings throughout the walls allow vines and branches to escape. One tree in the center grows up through a small opening (Spot DC 16) leading up into another room. Simiul rests and meditates here, enjoying the massive space that his close association with Niavark has given him. The room is about 75 ft. in diameter and has a 40 ft. ceiling. Wide doorways lead out toward Lortan's.

C2. Simiul's Library

Simiul's library is almost 60 ft. in diameter and has free standing bookshelves as well as shelves along the circular walls. He has several small desks covered with books and writing implements in different spots in the room. The shelves and desks are mundane when compared to Lortan's, but this library is far better organized and has considerably more books. One of the central shelves reaches up to the ceiling where there is a small trap door (Spot DC 20; Search DC 18 but only if flying near the ceiling) that leads into Simiul's Laboratory (Area C3, see below). Getting into the library first requires noticing it (see above) and then squeezing through the tiny entrance. If Simiul is in his library (60% chance) he automatically hears anyone Medium size or larger attempting to squeeze through the hole in the floor, and has time to react to their presence. Usually he tries to retreat to the laboratory where he makes preparations to attack the PCs. Simiul's spellbooks are here, and contain all 0–5th level spells. The DM should determine Simiul's additional spells, including spells unique to each campaign.

C3. Simiul's Laboratory (EL 18)

This 25 ft. diameter room is filled with sturdy wooden benches and shelves holding a wide variety of alchemical equipment. Simiul makes potions here, and does some additional experiments. There is a 30% chance he is here, otherwise he is in the library or with Niavark. When he needs to prepare for battle Simiul comes here to have easy access to some of his potions, and to safely cast his spells. If he hears someone coming into his library he retreats here to cast spells and quaff potions before moving into battle.

Simiul is a plant-imbued monkey that chose to study magic. Niavark has encouraged his studies, and given him some of the more powerful items he recovered to help him grow stronger. Simiul is responsible for many of the arcane defenses that protect the main tree and the vault beneath it. Simiul is loyal to Niavark and is willing to sacrifice his life to protect him.

Simiul, Plant-Imbued Monkey Wiz18: AC 16; HP 58 (2d4 plus 15d6); Spd 30ft, climb 30ft; **Melee** bite (+8, 1d4-3); **SA** spells (Innate: DC 21*, Wis +13*, Wiz: DC 17*, Int +9*); **Resist** bludgeoning and piercing damage from non-magical weapons; **Str** -3, **Dex** +3, **Con** +0, **Int** +5 (+11), **Wis** +4 (+10), **Cha** +0; **Skills** Perception +10, Stealth +9 (+13 in forest); **Senses** darkvision 60ft, passive Perception 19; **Traits** acute senses, arcane recovery, arcane tradition (evocation), empowered evocation, evocation savant, overchannel, potent cantrip, sculpt spells, woodland stride; **AL** N; **CR** 18; **XP** 20,000. (*The Tome of Horrors Complete* 730)

Innate Spells: at will—*freedom of movement*; 3/day—*entangle*; 1/day—*sunburst*, *tree stride*.

Spells (slots): 0 (at will)—*chill touch*, *dancing lights*, *minor illusion*, *prestidigitation*, *true strike*; 1st (4)—*charm person*, *detect magic*, *mage armor*, *witch bolt*; 2nd (3)—*blindness/deafness*, *flaming sphere*, *hold person*; 3rd (3)—*dispel magic*, *haste*, *lightning bolt*; 4th (3)—*greater invisibility*, *ice storm*, *stoneskin*; 5th (3)—*cloudkill*, *cone of cold*, *wall of force*; 6th (1)—*disintegrate*; 7th (1)—*forcecage*; 8th (1)—*maze*; 9th (1)—*power word kill*.

*Adjusted for plane's magical characteristics.

Equipment: Bracers of defense, ring of protection, wand of fireballs, potion of gaseous form, potion of mind reading, potion of resistance (cold), potion of resistance (fire), potion of resistance (lightning), potion of superior healing.

Combat Tactics: Simiul is not much for combat. If he hears someone entering his abode, or hears the alarm for battle, he casts *greater invisibility* and *stoneskin* before even trying to see exactly what is going on. He casts *mage armor* if anyone notices him. When coming on the scene of a battle Simiul takes one round to observe the actions of everyone involved. Knowing that Niavark and Farel are likely to attack spellcasters, Simiul focuses on those in melee combat. He uses *maze*, *imprisonment*, *forcecage*, and then his *power word kill* spells on those in melee combat simply to remove those threats until the spellcasters are dealt with. He moves to other spells, such as *hold person*, *dispel magic* spells, and area effect spells as he deems necessary.

D1. Farel's Sanctuary

The small room in the center of the tree is more of a widening of the 10 ft. passage connecting the tree limb bridges to the main tree and to Simiul's home. The center room widens to slightly over 20 ft. in diameter, and is irregularly shaped. A small, overstuffed sofa and bed sit to either side of a thin jade statue of a beautiful elf-like woman to one side of the room with a pool of water occupying the other half of the room. The jade statue is a representation of **Arialee**, a somewhat obscure neutral fey goddess of nature (Religion DC 17); and is worth a 20,000gp) but would be difficult to move.

Farel is a disillusioned pixie that has found some peace and purpose working with Niavark. She has used her powers and abilities to assist in the creation of this forest realm, and is more than happy to help in its defense. She rarely stays in her own room, usually choosing to wander the forest or to work with Niavark on new projects. She keeps little in the way of treasure here, always carrying her most powerful items.

E1. The Stone Circle (EL 22+)

This raised base of smooth stone is 80 ft. in diameter and rises 40 ft. above the forest floor. The massive trees nearby stretch their limbs out over the massive platform, cloaking it from anyone looking down from above. Ornate silver and stone planters surround the outer perimeter of the platform with openings for the two stone stairways that circle along the outside of the platform down to the forest floor. The center of the stone circle is occupied by a small silver fountain that Niavark likes to meditate beside. He sleeps in a soft patch of moss near the fountain and keeps his

Arialee, The Morninglight, Fey Goddess of Nature

Alignment: Neutral

Domains: Life, Light, Nature

Symbol: Reflection of the sun in a still pool

Garb: Clothing made from natural fibers such as leaves or flowers

Favored Weapon: Sling

Form of Worship and Holidays: Quiet dawn rituals at hidden forest pools. Special feast of fruits, summer grains, and wine at Summer Solstice involving pipers and frenzied dancing. Vow to eat no slain animal.

Typical Worshippers: Neutral and good fey, druids, intelligent animals, plant creatures, some elves

The Morninglight is a goddess who is viewed as a Princess of the Fey overseeing and protecting the natural world of plants and their cycle of seeding, growth, and rebirth. She is also seen as a patron of animals in that she forbids her followers to kill animals except in self-defense or as a mercy (if the animal is badly injured or rabid), and under no circumstances are they to eat the flesh of an animal. Her followers, however, can eat animal products such as honey, milk, or eggs. Most often appearing as a petite woman of a fey elven ancestry with extremely long, pointed ears and eyes of emerald green, her skin tone generally has a slight greenish cast though she can change it to any color at will. She is typically clad in a floating cloud of fresh leaves or flower petals that obscure her just enough to give a slight nod to modesty but covering little else. She is always accompanied by one or more exceptionally powerful, intelligent animals (some of which may have class levels), usually including some form of bird (hawks and swallows are among her favorites) and a larger creature like a great cat, bear, or some sort of canine. Little about her is known outside her typical worshippers, Arialee is sometimes considered to be a consort or servant to the god Pan.

desks and book cases toward the outer walls to have plenty of space to cast spells or perform rituals in the central area. Between patches of moss, and sweet-smelling flowers, the runes and symbols can be seen carved into the stone floor. While Niavark does keep some treasure hidden in a few of his desks, the real treasure is stored in a vault deep beneath the platform (see below). This room is protected by a magical effect that prevents any form of invisibility from functioning for a full 60 ft. above the floor of the platform, as well as for a 30 ft. radius around its outer edges.

Unless the PCs have had a great deal of mysterious luck, Niavark knows they are in his realm soon after they arrive. Whether spotted by sentinels or not, the spirit of the forest recognizes an intrusion and Niavark can sense a new presence through that. Niavark expects the PCs to come to him, he warns his outer guards to be on watch and retreats to this chamber with Farel to begin casting spells and preparing. **Shtil** and **Nawk**, his faithful guardians, take up positions near the doorways, and intend to move to flank anyone actually lucky enough to get this far.

Niavark Whitethorn, male human Drd20: AC 16; HP 114 (20d8+20); **Spd** 30ft; **Melee** *staff of the magi* (+8, 1d6+2 bludgeoning); **SA** spells (DC 24*, Wis +18*); **Str** +0 (+2), **Dex** +2 (+4), **Con** +1 (+3), **Int** +4 (+12), **Wis** +8 (+16), **Cha** +2; **Skills** Arcana +10, History +10, Insight +14, Perception +14; **Senses** passive Perception 24; **Traits** archdruid, beast spells, combat wild shape, circle forms (CR6), druid circle (moon), druidic, elemental wild shape, primal strike, thousand forms, timeless body, wild shape (unlimited); **AL** N; **CR** 20; **XP** 25,000.

Spells (slots): 0 (at will)—*druidcraft, guidance, resistance, thorn whip*; 1st (4)—*animal friendship, charm person, cure wounds, entangle, healing word*; 2nd

(3)—*barkskin, darkvision, flame blade, heat metal, hold person*; 3rd (3)—*dispel magic, plant growth, protection from energy, speak with plants*; 4th (3)—*freedom of movement, polymorph, stoneskin*; 5th (3)—*antilife shell, conjure elemental, greater restoration, tree stride*; 6th (2)—*heal, sunbeam*; 7th (2)—*plane shift, regenerate*; 8th (1)—*earthquake, feeblemind*; 9th (1)—*shapechange, storm of vengeance*.

Equipment: *Staff of the magi, bracers of defense, ring of protection, ioun stone of absorption, ioun stone of insight, ioun stone of protection, rod of rulership, potion of resist energy (fire), potion of resist energy (lightning), potion of resist energy (thunder), potion of healing (x3), potion of greater healing, holly sprig, oaken holy symbol*.

*Adjusted for the plane's magical characteristics.

Farel, female Pixie Clr17: AC 18; HP 56 (1d4+1 plus 17d8+17); **Spd** 10ft, fly 30ft; **Ranged** +2 *longbow* (+13, 150ft/600ft, #d#+# type plus special); **SA** spells (DC 20, Wis +12); **Resist** advantage vs. spells and other magical effects; **Str** -1, **Dex** +5, **Con** +1, **Int** +3, **Wis** +6 (+13), **Cha** +2 (+9); **Skills** Insight +12, Perception +12, Persuasion +8, Stealth +11, Survival +12; **Senses** passive Perception 22; **Traits** acolyte of nature, channel divinity (2/rest), dampen elements, destroy undead (CR4), divine domain (nature), divine intervention, divine strike, master of nature, superior invisibility; **AL** N; **CR** 17; **XP** 18,000.

Innate Spells: 1/day each—*confusion, dancing lights, detect evil and good, detect thoughts, dispel magic, entangle, fly, phantasmal force, polymorph, sleep*.

Spells (slots): 0 (at will)—*light, mending, resistance, sacred flame, thaumaturgy*; 1st (4)—*animal friendship*, bane, bless, cure wounds, inflict wounds, shield of faith, speak with animals**; 2nd (3)—*aid, barkskin*, hold person, silence, spike growth*, spiritual weapon*; 3rd (3)—*bestow curse, dispel magic, plant growth*, spirit guardians, wind wall**; 4th (3)—*divination, dominate beast*, freedom of movement, grasping vine*, guardian of faith*; 5th (2)—*dispel evil and good, flame strike, greater restoration, insect plague*, tree stride**; 6th (1)—*harm, true seeing*; 7th (1)—*regenerate*; 8th (1)—*antimagic field*; 9th (1)—*gate*.

*Domain spells

Equipment: +2 *longbow, bracers of defense, cloak of protection, holy symbol of Arialee*.

Shtil and Nawk, Plant-Imbued Wolverines Rog12: AC 14; HP 39 (6d8+12 plus 12d8+); **Spd** 30ft, burrow 10ft, climb 10ft; **Melee** bite (+4, 1d4+2 piercing), claw (+4, x2, 1d6+2 slashing); **SA** spells (DC 13*, Wis +7*); **Str** +2, **Dex** +2 (+6), **Con** +2, **Int** -1 (+3), **Wis** +3, **Cha** +0; **Resist** bludgeoning and piercing damage; **Skills** Athletics +10, Insight +11, Intimidation +8, Perception +11; **Senses** darkvision 120ft, passive Perception 21; **Traits** acute senses, assassinate, cunning action, evasion, expertise, infiltration expertise, rage (advantage on Str checks and saves, advantage on attack rolls based on Str, reliable talent, resistance to bludgeoning, slashing and piercing), roguish archetype (assassin), sneak attack (6d6), thieves cant, uncanny dodge, woodland stride; **AL** N; **CR** 12; **XP** 8,400. (**The Tome of Horrors Complete** 730)

Innate Spells: at will—*freedom of movement*; 3/day—*entangle*; 1/day—*sunburst, tree stride*.

Combat Tactics: The DM should spend ample time preparing for the final battle. Niavark does not have a large number of direct attack spells; he depends on his summoned elementals and his other helpers to weaken the party enough for him to take more direct action in combat. Farel is devoted to Niavark, but willing to flee if she must.

NIAVARK'S REVENGE

Niavark expects to have plenty of time to prepare. With Farel, Shtil, and Nawk guarding him he begins preparations as soon as he knows the PCs are on his plane. He wildshapes into an earth elemental and begins casting spells. First, he casts *conjure elemental*, fully expecting to be able to summon several earth and air elementals before the PCs arrive. The earth elementals are considered to be on their home plane when in contact with the stone circle.

Once the PCs are present, he uses the protection of his elemental guardians to cast *dispel magic* on any magic-using PCs before casting *feeblemind* on the most threatening. Once any arcane spellcasters are dead he focuses attacks on any divine casters and then on melee combatants. With the number of elementals certain to be around, it might be very difficult to determine exactly who is casting spells. Even then, Niavark does his best to move back and forth.

Farel's tactics are somewhat different. Once Niavark announces that more adventurers are coming to challenge them, she casts *shield of faith* on Niavark. If the PCs are engaged outside, or begin to enter the main area, Farel uses the protection provided by the elementals to cast some spells on herself and on Niavark. First, she casts *bless* on herself and Niavark, and then she follows with *true seeing* on Niavark. After these spells are cast she and Niavark move outside to join combat there, if the PCs are on the main platform by this time she stops casting protective spells and moves to using *harm* in an effort to rapidly eliminate spellcasters.

DM Note: Note that other creatures join in any battle on the stone circle. Simiul, Mashorek, Lortan, and all of the other weaker minions nearby come to Niavark's aid.

E2. The Vault

Access to the vault is attained through a secret passage hidden beneath the silver fountain in the room above. Both the passage, and the vault itself, are protected with *sequester* spells. Discovering the passageway requires both a *true seeing* spell and a Wis (Perception) check (DC 22) because the masterfully crafted silver fountain is extraordinarily difficult

to recognize as a trapdoor. Once opened, the trapdoor reveals a secret passage traveling straight down into a 20 ft. square chamber at the base of the stone platform. A lead door, also protected with a *sequester* spell, in one of the walls leads into the 10 ft. square, lead-lined vault storing some of the great arcane relics and artifacts that Niavark has acquired. In addition to the *sequester* spell, this final door is protected by a *glyph of warding* (10d8 sonic blast; DC 22 Dexterity save for half, all non-druids and non-rangers at disadvantage) and a *symbol of insanity* (DC 22 Intelligence save, all non-druids and non-rangers at disadvantage).

Treasure: The final vault contains the following items: *staff of power*, *rod of lordly might*, *eyes of charming*, *mantle of spell resistance*, *robe of eyes*, *robe of scintillating colors*, *stone of good luck* and a *necklace of fireballs*.

DM Note: Although the treasure listed above is made up only of magical items and artifacts, these items are extremely powerful and valuable. The DM should feel free to alter this treasure as necessary. It is very unlikely the PCs can acquire the treasure above without significant losses.

Ending the Adventure

The adventure ends when the PCs flee the demiplane, are killed, or find a way to defeat Niavark and acquire his treasure. If the PCs are capable of defeating Niavark it is a sign that they have reached a level of power significant enough to make even great demon lords, gods, and elemental lords take notice. It also means they have acquired some extremely powerful items that may once have belonged to others who want them back, and can make them a target for equally powerful foes that want to strip them of their new found wealth.

If Niavark is slain his demiplane continues to exist for several hundred years before contact with other planes becomes severed and the plane fades into itself destroying all of the creatures and plants within. The PCs, through research and experimentation might be able to find a way to allow the plane's continued existence, providing a haven for rare magical creatures that wish to reside in its vast forests.

Madness Grows

By Tom Knauss

*Hear them thunder across the plain
A hundred brave men strong
No fierce wind or driving rain
Shall slow their ride for long*
— **Tangjan College fight song**

Madness Grows is a 7th-level adventure that sprawls across the Campacha Plains, the southernmost portion of Akados' great Haunted Steppe. It lies not far west of the Crynomar Gap and legendary Wizard's Wall at the eastern verge of the Lost Caleen Colonies. The adventure takes the PCs from the sleepy village of Petyan to the raucous campus of Tangjan College in an effort to stop an insane sorcerer's fiendish plan to spread her plague of madness throughout the region.

Adventure Background

Eighty years ago, the great scholar Tiblu Ottika of Gtsang Prefecture took ship from his homeland to explore the natural wonders of Boros's greatest land feature — the Haunted Steppe. He and his escort traveled overland for weeks through the ruins of the pLost Colonies of the Caleen and eventually reached the settlements of the Conroi Expedition. There amidst this strange and frontier of both old and new, he first laid eyes upon the sprawling, untamed plains of Campacha and experienced a spectacular vision. He saw a college standing atop the feral grasslands, an institution that would serve as a beacon of knowledge for the brightest minds of his day. His contemporaries and colleagues scoffed at the notion of building a university in the middle of these haunted wildlands. Determined to prove the naysayers wrong, the relentless and charismatic intellectual sank his considerable personal fortune into the project and cajoled every last silver piece he could from his friends, family and acquaintances. In two short years, Tiblu raised enough money to make his vision a reality.

Despite the numerous obstacles, the newly constructed Tangjan College succeeded beyond his wildest expectations. Renowned professors and sages from as far as both Chi'en and Courghais clamored for an opportunity to teach and conduct research in its welcoming and supportive environment. Enrollment soared as great minds from near and far flocked to his institution. Tiblu Ottika could not be happier. Tangjan College thrived on every level, and nothing could seemingly end its meteoric rise. That is, until a chance discovery changed everything.

One day, an eccentric and erratic prospector brought Tiblu a gift from one of his mine stakes. He would not say at which of his claims he found the strange metallic ore with a pale, iridescent brownish glow, but he wanted to donate the object to the college. Though Tiblu had his reservations about the odd fellow and his unusual endowment, he never declined an offer to help the college, especially one that piqued his innate curiosity. The school's founder graciously accepted the unusual gift and thanked the anonymous donor for his generosity.

An accomplished wizard in his own right, Tiblu believed that the eerie, glowing metallic substance's true value was in its usage as a spell component and magical construction material rather than as a precious metal. In his spare time, Tiblu studied the object at length. At first, Tiblu attributed its luminescence to some mystical property, but the substance did not radiate any magical auras. He sought the opinion of other sages, though much to his surprise none expressed any interest in unlocking the secrets of the glowing, brown metal. Likewise, Tiblu's curiosity about the metal quickly waned, and it soon found its place as a forgotten decorative piece on his desk.

A week later, Tiblu first noticed burn marks on his hands and face. Thinking that he spent too much time outdoors under the bright sun, he cast *resistance* as protection against further sunburn damage. Much to his surprise, the spell proved ineffective, and the inexplicable burns grew more intense and painful. More alarmingly, Tiblu's personality abruptly changed. The friendly man and dispassionate scholar became an erratic and paranoid mess. Irrational, unprovoked outbursts became commonplace. In spite of any evidence, he frequently accused students and faculty members of committing plagiarism and academic fraud. Likewise, students and faculty who visited his office also experienced the same unusual burns and behavioral changes that plagued Tiblu, though the severity of their physical and mental injuries paled in comparison to his. In less than a month, the glowing brown metal transformed the brilliant genius into a delusional lunatic. With his last gasp of clarity, the gifted scholar and researcher suddenly realized that the mundane object resting atop his desk had caused his swift and frightening transformation. In the throes of his insanity, the renowned genius wryly smiled and accepted his new reality.

Birth of Madness

Ten years after its founding, Tiblu suddenly closed Tangjan College in the name of pursuing what he called "the greater truth." His longtime friends and associates begged and pleaded with him to recognize the madness of his folly, but the obstinate Tiblu refused. He even threatened to permanently transform his doubters into toads and newts. His friends and family reluctantly parted ways with Tiblu, leaving him to conduct his bizarre experiments and continue his quest to find "the greater truth" in solitude. In the absence of other people, Tiblu pored through his weathered books and tomes with maniacal and uninterrupted focus. There, he discovered the name Zuxaca from the local legends of the Shattered Folk. The tales told him that at the dawn of time, the great god Thaka defeated Zuxaca, the trickster serpent, by imparting his vast knowledge into the monstrous beast's mind in the span of an instant. The deluge overwhelmed Zuxaca and drove him mad. Thaka hurled the gibbering, monstrous snake onto the Plane of Limbo, where the deranged demigod remains to this very day, consumed by his insufferable madness and awash in a sea of chaos and entropy.

A sane man would not give Zuxaca's tale a second thought, but Tiblu's obsession with the mighty serpent consumed his every demented thought. In time, he came to believe that Zuxaca held the key to unraveling the mystery of his "greater truth." Somewhere deep within the labyrinth of the beast's twisted mind lay the secrets of the universe ready for the taking. All one needed to do was to ask. Tiblu used his powerful magic to do exactly that. He contacted Zuxaca and implored him to share his knowledge with him, though he did not receive the answer he expected. Instead, the insane serpent sent Tiblu his protean minions to spread the contagion of insanity to others and leave the world awash in a flood of chaos. Tangjan College became a full-fledged insane asylum. A motley assortment of alien monsters roamed the grounds and the countryside to test their absurd theories upon unwilling victims. Fortunately for humanity, they unwittingly picked a fight with the great Campacha wizard Tunicamna and his band of warriors.

Tunicamna and his fellows repelled the chaotic creatures' initial attack and followed their trail back to Tangjan College. They assaulted Tiblu's stronghold and eventually prevailed in a pitched battle that killed half of the band's braves and nearly claimed Tunicamna's life. After defeating Tiblu and his minions, Tunicamna came across Tiblu's glowing, brown metal. The strange substance intrigued him, but he also approached it

with great caution. After determining that it was not magical, he carefully placed it in a pewter receptacle with a lead glass window. Remarkably, Tunicamna did not suffer the ill effects that befell Tiblu. Though the metal had no mystical properties or aesthetic qualities, the learned wizard kept it as a keepsake. In his later years, he settled down in the village of Petyan. Shortly before his death 20 years ago, he donated the lead receptacle to the local Temple of Thaka where it remained as an unofficial relic and decorative ornament until its disappearance a few days ago.

Madness Reborn

Tiblu's road to madness was unintentional. The same cannot be said for Mila Sanguinatta. Born of a union between a hedonistic aristocrat and a seductive vampire in distant Castorhage, the dhampir sorcerer never fully embraced the concept of reality. She believed societal constraints and impressions fashioned during childhood shaped the world into something that was acceptable yet false. In her mind, sanity represented one's willingness to surrender to external pressures and live in a world of lies and pretenses created by others. On the other hand, the insane see their existence for what it truly is — ugly, futile and hopeless. In her mind, law was the glue that held sanity and the trappings of the real world in place. Chaos and entropy led the insane down the road to freedom. Mila Sanguinatta did not only want to liberate herself from the shackles of sanity, she also sought a way to emancipate others from the unwanted burden of reality.

In time, Mila learned of Tangjan College's dark history and its descent into chaos and insanity. The tales piqued her interest, so she and her demented followers traveled across the Wizard's Wall to the neglected campus to unearth its secrets. Though Tunicamna and his cohorts took everything of value they could find, they unwittingly left a valuable resource behind — Tiblu's writings. Mila pored through his rambling tomes that repeatedly referenced an odd metallic substance that inspired him to search for "the greater truth." He referred to the material as "metallurgic amber." Mila scoured the building and grounds looking for the object, but found nothing.

His incoherent writings also referred to Zuxaca as a guiding force during his descent into madness. Mila beseeched this powerful outsider for the assistance as well. The extraplanar entity responded to her pleas and dispatched his servants to aid her search for the missing substance. Mila grew to believe that Tunicamna took the metal with him after he defeated Tiblu. Finding Tunicamna became the key to unlocking the mystery. She spent three futile months searching the surrounding countryside for even the slightest trace of the legendary wizard until fortune finally smiled upon her. A distant cousin pointed her in the direction of the village of Petyan, where Tunicamna spent his final days. Fearful of losing the element of surprise, she immediately sent her bucentaur lieutenant and a company of four insane centaurs known as the Mad Stallions into the village to retrieve her precious metal. The quintet stormed the settlement and ransacked every building until they found their prize in the temple of Zuxaca's mortal enemy — Thaka. Tiblu's metallurgic amber hung from a chain in a pewter-and-lead glass receptacle above the altar.

They brought the metallurgic amber back to Tangjan College for further examination. There, Mila and Blake Acamu, a warlock with an interest in alchemy and devout anarchist of mixed Foerdewaith and Campacha heritage, studied the unusual ore. At first, the metal's relatively small size disappointed Mila, but the resourceful Blake quickly realized that the metal had another unique property — the ability to grow under the right conditions and with the proper additives. Blake immediately set upon the task of crystallizing the metallic material in a laboratory on campus. Meanwhile, Mila turned her attention to devising a way to deliver the metallic amber to as many unwitting recipients as possible so she could spread madness throughout the land. Mila pondered her options for several days, but the answer eluded her. As she nonchalantly watched three of her followers place wagers in a dice game, the means of spreading her madness suddenly hit her. She would mint counterfeit Reman coins (the primary currency used in the Conroi settlements) made from a copper alloy containing metallurgic amber and put them into circulation throughout the settlements. She and her bucentaur lieutenant acquired the coin-making equipment and expertise to set her maniacal plan into motion. At the present time, Blake crystallizes the strange metal in one of the college's laboratories, while Mila and her servants mint their tainted coins for widespread public usage. Just as Tunicamna had done years earlier, the challenge of thwarting Mila's insane plan falls upon the shoulders of fearless adventurers.

Adventure Synopsis

The PCs arrive in the shattered village of Petyan several days after a marauding band of centaurs devastated the small settlement. Most of the residents fled in the aftermath of the attack, leaving a handful of hardy survivors to pick up the pieces and rebuild their ruined community. Quanata, the village's resident cleric, approaches the PCs and asks for their assistance. He believes that the attack on Petyan is over, but he is certain that a far-more sinister plan is now afoot. The monstrous beasts came to his village for one purpose — to steal Tunicamna's amulet from the temple. The object has no known magical properties and no inherent monetary value, making it extremely odd that the wild beasts would attack the village to retrieve a worthless relic. Quanata explains that Tunicamna, a renowned wizard, found the item in the ruins of Tangjan College 70 years ago after an intense battle against Tiblu Ottika, the college's suddenly deranged founder, and his horde of chaotic, otherworldly denizens. He and Tunicamna intermittently studied the strange object, but never uncovered any link between it and Tiblu's downfall into madness. He theorizes that the object must hold some significance for these creatures that remains undiscovered. He suggests that the answer to this question is likely to be found in the same place where Tunicamna discovered the amulet — Tangjan College 50 miles north of Petyan. Before leaving, the PCs may engage in several side treks, including discovering the ultimate fate of a remorseful bride and disrupting a local resident's drug-trafficking operation.

From Petyan, the trail of mayhem leads the PCs across the sprawling Campacha grasslands in search of the attack's perpetrators and the missing amulet. Along the way, the PCs encounter several of the plains' native denizens, including a malevolent headless horseman, a trio of werewolves disguised as an acting troupe, and a pack of monstrous hounds bent on stopping anyone attempting to interfere with Mila's plans. Their journey also takes them across the treacherous Wanaheeli River as well as to the welcoming confines of the Galloping Ghost Inn. The trek ends on the outskirts of Tangjan College, where it is apparent that something is amiss on the formerly abandoned campus and its environs. There, the PCs must contend with the wicked beasts responsible for the attack on Petyan — the bucentaur and the three surviving Mad Stallions.

Insanity reigns at Tangjan College. Deranged monsters and Zuxaca's extraplanar servants freely roam the halls and classrooms. While adventuring through the campus, the PCs come upon several clues shedding insight on Mila's deranged intentions. Tiblu's cryptic writings about the luminescent brown metal's strange properties, and Blake's alchemical equipment and minting tools inevitably lead the PCs to a horrifying conclusion: Mila intends to create counterfeit copper coins infused with the metal from Tunicamna's amulet and circulate them among the general populace in an attempt to spread insanity throughout the region. In a first-floor laboratory, Blake Acamu, Mila's warlock assistant, uses a concoction of chemicals and heating devices to literally grow the radioactive metal from a seed crystal. Meanwhile in Tiblu's old laboratory on the third floor, Mila and her subjects forge the phony coins from an alloy containing the mysterious, radioactive brown metal. The PCs must halt both operations to prevent insanity from spreading throughout the surrounding area. In addition to combating their earthly foes, the PCs must also vanquish Zuxaca's entropic, otherworldly servants and forever sever the link between this world and his demented domain. Only then can the PCs fully eradicate the threat posed by the agents of chaos.

At this point, the PCs realize the metallurgic amber's danger to themselves and the world at large. They must devise a way to destroy the material or provide for its permanent safekeeping to prevent history from repeating itself.

Beginning the Adventure

The adventure begins several days after the centaurs attacked Petyan and took Tunicamna's amulet. The creatures responsible for the attack are long gone, and Mila now owns the metallurgic amber. The PCs may become embroiled in these events in several ways. They may be en route to another location when they notice the telltale signs of a recent assault against the small village. Likewise, they may encounter fleeing refugees

in the wilderness or in a nearby settlement. A local scholar may also contact the PCs and ask them to acquire Tunicamna's amulet from the temple in Petyan, though he is likely unaware of the recent attack and the disappearance of the object he desires. In any event, the adventure itself begins in the village of Petyan. The bewildered villagers solemnly attempt to rebuild their damaged homes and broken lives in the aftermath of the senseless assault against their humble community. The centaurs slew the village's defenders, including its leader Hintah. Quanata, its surviving priest, assumed de facto control over its few remaining residents. When the PCs arrive in Petyan, the stunned villagers direct them to Quanata, who tells them what happened and beseeches their help in resolving this matter.

Hooks

Though Petyan is a tiny settlement, news of the attack in the remote village spreads quickly among the nomadic peoples inhabiting the great plains of Campacha. Blood relations run deep as many refugees found shelter with cousins and other extended family members living in other communities scattered throughout the region. At their current level, the PCs' reputation precedes them in all but the largest cities. Political, religious and commercial interests as well as the common man seek the PCs' aid wherever they may be found. In that vein, the GM may use one of the following hooks or create one of his own to get the adventure underway.

Field of Nightmares

A local crime boss named Ciqala (LE male human **Rgr4**) contacts the PCs for assistance in a business matter. He conveys that he recently learned that someone in the remote village of Petyan is growing a variety of pumpkin with addictive and intoxicating effects. He wants the PCs to travel to Petyan to find out who is responsible for flooding the market with this dangerous product. He offers the PCs 500gp to provide him with the name(s) of the person(s) involved and offers them another 250gp to burn their fields and destroy their processing equipment. Ciqala is usually not one to interfere with another person's business, but he draws the line on the trafficking of narcotics. His oldest daughter is hopelessly addicted to opium, and he does everything he can to prevent the disease from affecting other families. He is fearful that his involvement in this matter may ignite a costly war with rival criminals. For that reason, he cannot take direct actions against the drug dealers, so he employs adventurers to covertly stamp out their clandestine operations. Ciqala has no knowledge of the centaur attack on the village or the disappearance of Tunicamna's amulet.

Refugees

Bidgaana (CG male human **commoner**) and his wife Yona (LG female human **commoner**) arrived in town a few hours ago and actively seek out adventurers to spare their village from any further attacks. The couple tells the PCs that a fearsome band of centaurs launched a surprise attack against their community, killing many of their bravest warriors. The rampaging monsters then stormed the temple and inexplicably fled immediately afterward. Yona is deeply concerned because she left behind her elderly grandmother Donhowee (LG female human **commoner**), as the infirmed woman was too weak and feeble to undertake the long journey across the grasslands even on the back of a strong horse. Yona offers the PCs one of Donhowee's handcrafted lapis lazuli bracelets as payment for their services. The bracelet is worth 50gp. She also assures the PCs that Quanata, the village's priest, remained behind and is also willing to offer the PCs substantially more payment in exchange for their services.

Magical Musing

Okhanzee (N male human **wiz3**; Arcana +5) greatly admires Tunicamna and desires to learn more about her lifelong hero. During the course of her studies, she learned that the legendary wizard spent the last two decades of his life in the remote village of Petyan. Okhanzee fears traveling alone to the rough-and-tumble settlement and offers to pay brave adventurers 100gp each to accompany her to Petyan and back. Unlike her hero, Okhanzee prefers a scholarly lifestyle over an adventuring one. When she and the PCs arrive in Petyan, she takes particular interest in Tunicamna's

A Note on Languages

The adventure takes place upon lands traditionally inhabited by the Campacha tribe of the Shattered Folk. The Shattered Folk (as they are called by southlanders) are the remnant peoples of the ancient Hundaei Empire after it collapsed in its annihilating civil war 2,000 years ago. Since then they have formed hundreds of individual tribes and clans that inhabit the Haunted Steppe. From their shared background, all of the Shattered Folk speak Kirkut, though each tribe has its own distinctive dialect. Some of these are very similar, but some are markedly different. Regardless, all of the dialects are mutually intelligible to speakers of Kirkut, though communication through different dialects is often slow and clumsy.

The NPCs encountered in the adventure are generally a combination of Campacha peoples or folk from the southern kingdoms of the Lost Lands. Folk from the southern kingdoms always speak Common. If they have been in the Campacha Plains for any length of time, then they likely speak the Campacha dialect of Kirkut as well. For monsters native to the region, if their stat block indicates that they speak Common, then substitute the Campacha dialect of Kirkut for them as well, since the Common that they speak is the common tongue of the region. Some of them speak both Common and Kirkut, and in these cases their stat blocks will reflect that both languages are spoken. Though it is not necessary for play, it is recommended that at least one PC speak Kirkut to ease communications in this adventure.

amulet, but she refuses to leave the village and pursue the centaurs across the grasslands. Okhanzee is a potentially valuable source of information regarding Tunicamna's amulet. She knows that he discovered it at Tangjan College after defeating the institution's insane headmaster and his extraplanar minions. The object has no known magical properties and emits a pale brownish glow. She also mentions that several scholars believe that the amulet drove Tiblu insane, but there is no proof to support this theory. In addition, anyone who had prolonged contact with the amulet began noticing burns on their skin. She cannot explain why Quanata spent the last 20 years around the amulet without any ill effects.

Part One: Thundering Hooves

The adventure's opening chapter introduces the PCs to the ransacked and nearly desolate village of Petyan. If the PCs traveled here from a distant locale, the GM may challenge the PCs with several of the random encounters generated in the **Appendix** or those that appear in **Part Two** of the adventure. The local priest Quanata and his temple are the only remaining symbols of stability and authority. During this portion of the adventure, the PCs are free to explore the village and its surroundings for clues that should point them in the direction of the attackers and the motive for their actions. After interacting with him and the ragtag band of survivors, the PCs soon discover that the marauding centaurs came here for one purpose — to steal a strange worthless relic associated with an abandoned college 50 miles north in the heart of the Campacha grasslands. While in Petyan, the PCs may pursue other adventuring opportunities, including breaking up Naykaw's narcotics business and solving a century-old mystery involving a missing young bride named Shana.

Petyan

Petyan is a small village of the Campacha tribe for which the plains of this region are named. The Campacha peoples are an extended tribe of the Shattered Folk who migrated southward centuries ago and settled primarily along the southern extent of the Haunted Steppe where they had

some limited contact with the kingdoms beyond the Wizard's Wall. It is from the Campacha peoples that the plainsmen clans of the Northmarches of Reme are primarily derived.

When the Conroi Expedition encountered the Campacha a century ago, the contact was peaceful with mutually beneficial trading occurring between the two groups. As settlements from the Conroi Expedition began to spring up, it was on the Campacha Plains with the permission of the tribes. When the Gtsang scholar Tiblu Ottika approached the Council of Chiefs to establish his university, they graciously donated the land to him.

Petyan itself lies at the northernmost extent of the Conroi settlements near the Wanaheeli River so that if contact with the folk of the settlements is not unusual it is still infrequent. Folk that visit Petyan are primarily Campacha hunters or traders, but travelers from the settlements and southern kingdoms are not unheard of, though their frequency has been greatly reduced since the closing of the university 70 years ago.

Like most settlements on the grasslands of Campacha, Petyan has a sizable transient population. The village lies a few miles west of a migratory buffalo route and grazing area, making it a popular destination for nomadic people during the spring and summer months. At the end of winter, hunters pitch their camps as close as possible to the well that supplies water to the settlement. When the weather turns colder, they uproot their temporary homes and head for warmer climes farther south.

In addition to its ideal hunting location, the underground rivers and aquifers that bisect the area are also perfect for sedentary farmers. Lush crops of corn and other food staples dot the landscape in every direction. The farmers who tend to these fields dwell in earth lodges built into the sides of small hills or excavated from the ground. These permanent structures feature a wooden dome covered by dirt, reeds, mud-bricks and similar materials. Because they are partially underground, these homes are better suited for the extreme temperatures encountered during the hot summers and the frigid winters.

Petyan's residents are entirely self-sufficient, so commerce in the traditional sense is far less prevalent than in conventional communities. It is possible to purchase goods and services within the settlement, though barter is the preferable method of acquiring valuables within Petyan, especially among family. In fact, its permanent and even temporary residents all share some degree of kinship. Naturally, those belonging to the full-time population are more closely related to one another than its transient settlers, who are typically first and second cousins several generations removed from the permanent residents. Still, the bonds of blood run strong, and even the most-distant relations respect the authority and wisdom of the village's patriarch. The patriarch is revered as a titular authority figure that provides wisdom and guidance, though he wields no real political and military authority. Instead, leadership is determined on the battlefield and the hunting grounds. The bravest and fiercest warrior from among the patriarch's immediate family assumes autonomy over the village. Hintah fulfilled that role in Petyan until the centaurs killed him. Since his death, Quanata, the resident cleric, has reluctantly accepted the role as the village's leader.

Quanata lives in a small, underground cell beneath the temple of Thaka, which is the only permanent structure in what is best described as Petyan proper. During the hunting season, numerous tipis sprout up around the holy site and the nearby well. In the attack's aftermath, six tipis are all that remain, and several of those are abandoned. The residents of the outlying farms escaped the carnage practically unscathed, and those brave and able enough to venture to the temple lend a helping hand to their neighbors as best they can.

First Impressions

It is impossible to enter the Temple of Thaka without seeing the farms that surround Petyan. Roughly half of the population lives on these sprawling tracts of land that make up twelve separate and distinct estates. Corn is the dominant plant, followed by various types of beans, squash, pumpkins, and, in a few isolated locations, wheat, which is rare in Campacha. The crops intermingle with one another, so it is common to see cornstalks towering above an adjacent pumpkin patch. Petyan's farmers usually spend their days in the fields tending to their crops. They do not raise animals for slaughter, milk or clothing. Horses are the only beasts found on the outlying farms, and they are used exclusively for riding.

When they are not minding their crops, they hunt wild game, usually setting their sights on smaller animals such as deer, rabbits and birds.

These farms are relatively small in comparison to most agrarian societies, and rarely encompass more than a few acres of land. Wild grasses cover the earth between the farms, creating a patchwork of interconnecting plains and cultivated land surrounding the temple and its environs. Though difficult in most spots, it is possible to walk a straight line from an external point to the temple's front door without setting foot on a single clod of farmland. Sadly, the carnage that befell Petyan only a few short days ago is visible from almost anywhere within a half-mile radius of the temple. The GM may read or paraphrase the following description.

Ahead in the distance, tendrils of smoke dance in the air on their ascent to the heavens. The faint stench of burnt flesh lingers in the breeze. A vast, open field appears to be virtually abandoned, as countless, smoldering wooden poles and vast sheets of charred hide and leather lie in ruins on the ground. Six tipis remain standing along with a large, vaguely diamond-shaped earthen structure. Two men and a woman wander about, staring in disbelief at the sight. A massive mound of freshly dug earth a few hundred yards south of the central area attests to the fact that whatever occurred here incurred a heavy cost in human life.

Three farmers, the oafish Iqaya, (N male human **commoner**); see **Area E: Atacheta's Teepee** and **Area P2: Naykaw's Farm** for more details), his younger cousin, Napashuk (CG male human **commoner**), and Napashuk's girlfriend, Winona (LG female half-elf **commoner**), wander about the area surveying the damage. This is the first time that the teenagers are actually seeing the devastation firsthand. They live on separate farms scattered around Petyan. The younger Napashuk and Winona are naturally timid and hide behind Napashuk's much-larger older cousin, Iqaya. The burly, young man cuts an imposing figure, though a few words with him reveals that he is all brawn and little brains. In spite of his appearance, the husky farmer is a gentle soul with a compassionate heart. He cannot bear to look upon his ruined village.

The trio has no direct information about the attack. Iqaya knows that the village's patriarch, Atacheta, lives in one of the tipis. The younger pair confirms that Hintah, Petyan's greatest warrior, died during the attack. He dwelt in the largest tipi. Napashuk and Winona also tell the PCs that Quanata, the resident cleric of Thaka lives in the nearby temple.

Trail of Fears

Unfortunately for the PCs, the ground in central Petyan is firm and well-worn. At least 100 individual footprints and hoof prints scar the earth. It is extremely difficult to distinguish the centaurs' trail from the numerous horses that trampled the ground in the days leading up to and after the attacks. This factor alone imposes a significant penalty on checks made to locate and follow the centaurs' trail. The marauding beasts made no effort to conceal their tracks, but it takes a successful DC 18 Wis (Perception) or Wis (Survival) check to follow their trail out of Petyan (so chaotic is the ground that GMs may impose disadvantage on these checks if they desire). The centaurs approached the village from the north and then doubled back the same way after acquiring the amulet from the Temple of Thaka. If the PCs opt to follow the trail in pursuit of the centaurs, it takes them into **Part Two** of the adventure — the Campacha Plains.

Events

Petyan is a shell of its former self. Nearly all of its transient residents fled after the attack, and the remaining survivors generally stay indoors and close to their homes, especially during the evening hours. Still, some brave souls venture into Petyan proper to see the carnage's aftermath firsthand and to check on the wellbeing of their fellow residents. The GM may insert some or all of the following events to give the PCs additional clues about the recent events that befell Petyan and pique their interest in

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several local adventuring opportunities.

Three adolescent girls hold hands and dance around the well just south of the temple. As they circle the well together, they sing a song:

*“Shana, Shana pretty bride, beautiful and full of pride
In the field she found one day, her groom and best friend gone astray
She thrust her knife into his heart, and tore his lover’s face apart
Then threw her bracelet in the well, and joined her husband there in Hell.”*

The girls tell the PCs that the song refers to the story of Shana, a young bride that killed her philandering husband and his lover and then reputedly killed herself. They claim that the events happened a long time ago, and know nothing other than what is in the song.

Zardrel (CG male elf **acolyte**), an old elf, is on his way to the Temple of Thaka to speak with Quanata, the local cleric, about the disappearance of Tunicamna’s amulet. Zardrel explains that he studied at Tangjan College shortly before its closure more than 70 years ago. He remembers seeing a strange, glowing ore on the headmaster’s desk. After spending time with the increasingly irrational man on several occasions over the course of a few days, Zardrel noticed strange burns developing on his hands and face. Bizarre thoughts ran through his mind, and horrific images consumed his dreams. When he left the college, the scorch marks slowly vanished, and the nightmares stopped. He believes that the odd metal is responsible for these drastic physical and mental changes, and insists that he must warn Quanata of the dangers.

Makan (LN male human **commoner**) and Ska (N male human **commoner**), two middle-aged men, are on their way back to their farms after visiting with Atacheta, the village’s patriarch. The pair behaves in a peculiar manner. Though they appeared to have been greatly moved by the tragedy that befell their neighbors, they burst into spontaneous laughter at the most inopportune times and then suddenly cower at the sight of imaginary monsters. They cannot explain these strange phenomena. The only possible clue to their unusual behavior is a trail of pumpkin seeds left in their wake. A PC may notice the seeds with a successful DC 12 Wis (Perception) check. If questioned about the seeds, they tell the PCs that they got them from Atacheta (see **Area E: Atacheta’s Tipi** for more details). They think nothing of the pumpkin seeds. The tasty morsels have hallucinogenic properties described in **Area P2: Naykaw’s Farm**.

A young man named Loopiya (NG male human **wiz1**; Investigation +5) practices cantrips as he participates in a mock battle against imaginary foes. He blasts *rays of frost* at inanimate objects and creates spheres of light using his *dancing lights* spell. The novice arcane magician greatly admires Tunicamna, a legendary wizard who dwelt in Petyan until his death 20 years ago. In fact, Loopiya and his family live in Tunicamna’s former cottage on the village’s outskirts. Tunicamna’s distant family claimed all of his earthly possessions after his death except for an odd, yet worthless, amulet that he donated to the Temple of Thaka. Tunicamna’s body rests in a mausoleum on his family’s property. (See **Area P4: Tunicamna’s Crypt** for more details.)

Rumors

During the course of their stay in Petyan, the PCs may overhear any of the following rumors, or they may learn them from speaking with the residents. These stories and tales are commonly heard throughout the village, so PCs do not have to succeed on ability checks to acquire these rumors:

- A few days ago, a pack of four centaurs stormed the village and killed 15 of its defenders, wounded an equal number, and killed 12 women and children. One of the centaurs also fell in battle. The surviving savage beasts then entered the Temple of Thaka and inexplicably left Petyan after acquiring a worthless, glowing amulet kept in the holy site.
- The centaurs killed Hintah, the village’s bravest warrior and son of its patriarch Atacheta. The villagers turned to Quanata, the cleric of Thaka, for leadership and guidance in this time of need.
- The centaurs attacked only the tipis and residents around the Temple of Thaka. They burned and destroyed 16 tepees during their murderous rampage. They did not venture into the surrounding farmland and instead headed back onto the open plains.

- A great wizard named Tunicamna lived in the village until his death 20 years ago. The monstrous creatures would never dare to attack Petyan if he were still alive.

Further Inquiries

In addition to the information readily available to the PCs, they may acquire more specialized details from certain individuals or may have heard these stories and legends during the course of their adventuring careers. The GM should make judgment calls as to who would be aware of particular facts. For instance, Zardrel and even Loopiya are a viable source of information about Tunicamna’s amulet and even Tangjan College, but they likely know nothing about Shana’s bracelet and her ultimate fate. PCs can acquire this information from the locals with a successful Cha (Persuasion) check. Likewise, the PCs may draw upon their recollections and obtain the information with a successful Int (History) check. Of course, the PC must be aware of the basic subject matter before he can attempt a check.

Tunicamna

The PCs may learn the following information about Tunicamna with a successful DC 12 Int (Investigation) or DC 15 Cha (Persuasion) check. The PCs may also know the same information with a successful DC 15 Int (History) check:

- The wizard Tunicamna is renowned for his victory in a great battle at Tangjan College, which lies 50 miles north of Petyan. The vicious combat nearly claimed his life, causing him to abandon his adventuring career and devote his attentions to academic pursuits.
- Though Tunicamna’s family ultimately claimed all of his valuable items, he donated a strange piece of glowing brown metal to the Temple of Thaka shortly before his death. The object had no known magical properties or aesthetic value, but its unusual properties intrigued him. His family entombed him in a crypt on his former property.
- Tunicamna is a celestial being who faked his death and returned to his home plane of existence. The person buried in his crypt is an impostor. (This is a false rumor.)

If the check succeeds by 5 or more, the PC also learns the following information:

- Tunicamna believed that the brown metal object played some role in the events at Tangjan College. He surmised that the metal, which he dubbed metallurgic amber, affected anyone in close contact with it even though he never personally exhibited any ill effects while he owned it.
- Tunicamna kept the metallurgic amber in a pewter amulet with a lead glass window to allow its aura to shine through it while making it easier to hold the item. He used this outer case solely because it was the only thing he had on hand at the time.

Tangjan College

The PCs may learn the following information about Tangjan College with a successful DC 12 Int (Investigation) or DC 15 Cha (Persuasion) check. A PC may also know the same information with a successful DC 15 Int (History) check:

- Tiblu Ottika founded Tangjan College on the plains of Campacha roughly 80 years ago. The college flourished during its first 10 years, but fell into ruin after a great battle took place there.
- If the check succeeds by 5 or more, the PC also learns the following information.
- For some inexplicable reason, Tiblu Ottika went mad. He closed the university and attracted crazed monsters and extraplanar creatures that shared his insane beliefs. Fortunately, the wizard Tunicamna and his associates defeated Tiblu and his minions in a fierce battle on the school grounds.

If the check succeeds by 10 or more, the PC also learns the following information.

- It is said that he fell under the sway of a powerful being from another

world. The entity opened a portal between his plane and the college, allowing his minions to cross over into this world.

- The college grounds are active once again. Strange creatures roam the campus, while an unknown person toils in its laboratories, attempting to recreate Tiblu's strange experiments.

Naykaw

The PCs may learn the following information about Naykaw and his operation with a successful DC 18 Int (Investigation) or Cha (Persuasion) check. PCs cannot learn about Naykaw with an Int (History) check:

- Naykaw and his oversized, but dumb younger brother Iqaya live on a farm south of the temple. Naykaw is an ambitious, fast-talking conniver always looking for the next get-rich-quick scheme. He is Petyan's most successful farmer, as his pumpkin seeds are in high demand in neighboring towns and villages, though Petyan's residents consider them ordinary. Naykaw sells his narcotic seeds exclusively outside of Petyan, but his brother Iqaya unwittingly gives them to certain residents without his brother's knowledge.

Shana

The PCs may learn the following information about Shana with a successful DC 18 Int (Investigation) or Cha (Persuasion) check. The PCs may also know the same information with a successful DC 18 Int (History) check:

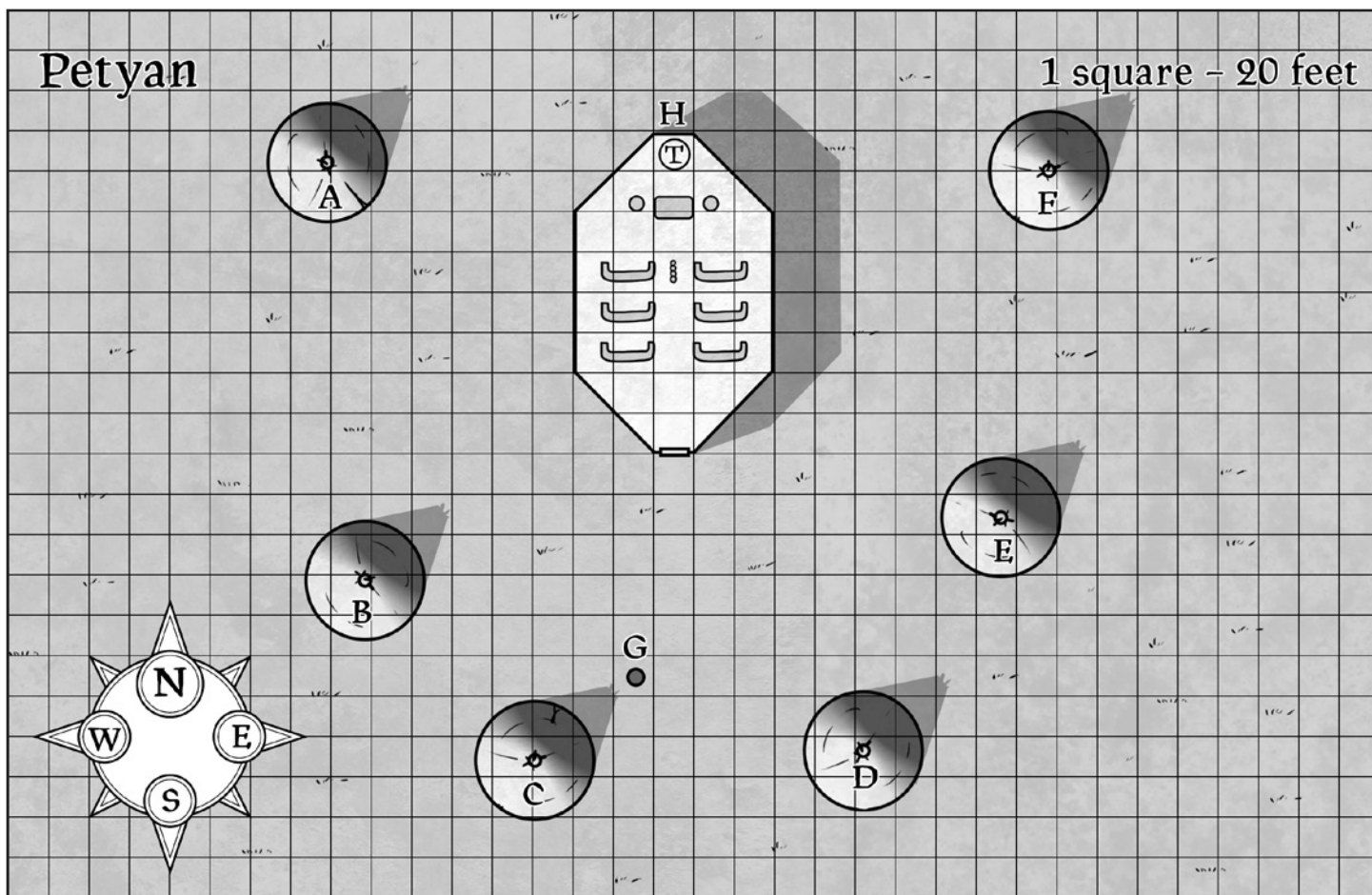
- Shana killed her adulterous husband and his lover in a field outside the village almost a century ago. She threw her wedding beads into the village well and then hung herself from a tree in a haunted field two miles west of Petyan (**Area P3: Field of Screams**). No one ever goes there.

Points of Interest

After conversing with the youngsters and partaking in some of the preceding events, the PCs may proceed directly to the Temple of Thaka and its environs to investigate what happened in Petyan, or they may decide to explore the surrounding farms looking for answers. In either case, the following sections provide greater details about specific locations found in the village.

Area A: Uzudati's Tipi

Uzudati (CG male human **fr2**; Athletics +5, Intimidation +3), one of Petyan's few surviving warriors, dwells in this tipi along with his wife, Rozene (LG female human **commoner**), and their two young daughters, **Galho** and **Leoti**. Uzudati still sports the scars from the battle, including a black eye, deep lacerations across his face, and a sling to support his badly injured left arm. The centaurs knocked Uzudati unconscious during the combat, a fact that greatly distresses Uzudati and probably saved his life. In spite of his wife's protestations to the contrary, he considers himself a coward for not dying alongside the other warriors. He refuses to discuss the incident at all unless the person conversing with him first succeeds on a DC 14 Cha (Persuasion) check. In that case, Uzudati reveals that the centaurs came out of the grasslands and caught the villagers by surprise. Though he is not completely certain, he remembers seeing a larger centaur-like creature with a bull's torso directing their actions. The marauders attacked anyone who stood in their way and burned numerous tipis before he fell. Others told him that they eventually found what they were looking for in the temple and then fled back into the grasslands. Uzudati longs to regain what he believes is his lost honor, but he refuses to leave his wife and two young children alone and defenseless in Petyan. He gladly offers to defend the village against future attacks, but declines overtures to accompany the PCs in pursuit of the centaurs.



Area B: Donhowee's Tipi

The elderly **Donhowee** (see the **Refugees** hook in the preceding section) sits alone in her tipi, surrounded by countless worthless trinkets and jewelry pieces as she braids beads onto a small necklace she is making. In her family's absence, Quanata has provided her with food and water. She is frail and weak, but unharmed from the assault. The old woman has a hearing impairment and is showing the early signs of dementia. She is still aware of her present surroundings and her granddaughter Yona, yet her long-term memory is significantly better than her short-term memory. Though she witnessed the centaurs' attack on her village, she intersperses details of that attack with other war recollections of her youth. She frequently refers to the centaurs as "horsemen," and it soon becomes apparent that she does not recognize the difference between a centaur and a man riding a horse. Donhowee's jumbled recollection of the centaur attack is useless, but the elderly woman accurately recalls her interactions with Tunicamna many years earlier. If the PCs ask her about the legendary wizard, she describes him as a brilliant scholar and arcane practitioner. She also relates that he found a curious object on the campus of Tangjan College that he later donated to the temple shortly before his death. The strange, glowing metal puzzled him for many years, yet he could never explain its mysterious luminescence.

Area C: Petamon's Tipi

The centaurs slew the brave warrior Petamon several days ago, leaving his young wife Lulu (CG female human **noble**) and their infant son to fend for themselves. Lulu is an emotional wreck. She grieves for her slain husband and feels overwhelmed by the responsibility of caring for herself and her newborn child in a battered village. Her mood alternates from weepy and depressed to irritable and angry. She saw her beloved Petamon fall victim to a charging centaur's blade and cannot erase the gruesome sight from her scarred memory. If questioned about what she witnessed, Lulu lies and claims that she hid in the tipi the entire time. A successful DC 14 Wis (Insight) check sees through her deception, but she still refuses to speak about the incident even though the PCs caught her in a lie. She demands that the PCs leave her alone and let her wallow in her grief and misery. A successful DC 13 Cha (Persuasion) check is needed to overcome her resistance and hear her version of events that fateful day. She frequently chokes up and her voice cracks throughout her eyewitness account.

Lulu claims that the centaurs seemingly appeared out of nowhere. At first, no one knew what to make of their wanton charge. The centaurs never attacked them in the past, so no one knew what their intentions were. Hintah strode out to speak with them. Instead of words, the centaurs greeted him with multiple spear thrusts to the chest that slew him on the spot. When the other warriors saw what happened, they rushed onto the field to fight them, but they were overmatched by the fearsome beasts. A charging centaur ran his blade through her husband's chest, and she watched in horror as his lifeless body slid off the weapon and crumpled to the ground. The carnage continued for several minutes as the rampaging monsters gleefully killed anyone who stood in their way and burned numerous tipis before turning their attention to the temple. After searching the building for a short time, one of them emerged from the temple holding a pale, glowing object that had hung above the altar. Though they seemed interested in continuing the onslaught, a loud voice boomed in the distance, and the centaurs disappeared as quickly as they appeared.

Lulu cannot fathom a motive for the centaurs' actions and knows nothing about the stolen object other than the fact that it hung from a chain in the temple. Though she still mourns her husband, Lulu looks kindly upon any man who displays sympathy for her. She realizes that she and her infant child face an uphill climb going it alone, especially in light of recent events. The attractive, young woman coyly flirts with a charming PC, hoping in time to sow the seeds of a deeper relationship in the future.

Area D: Hintah's Tipi

Petyan's greatest warrior, Hintah, lived here with his wife and four children. His tipi is the largest in the encampment and is filled with the trappings of his status as the village's greatest warrior. The bleached skulls of long-horned buffalo are placed around the tipi's edges in a location corresponding with each of the four winds. The skulls weigh 60 pounds each.

Otherwise, the only objects left behind are dozens of worthless stones and a ceremonial mahogany smoking pipe worth 75gp. Shortly after his death, his wife, Gahlahi, and their four children abandoned the tipi and sought refuge in another village.

Area E: Atacheta's Tipi

Atacheta (LN male human **noble**), the village's patriarch and Hintah's father, is a broken man. Already in ill health, the infirmed sage's spirit and mind are now as damaged as his body. Surrounded by his remaining family members including his daughter Blena (N female human **noble**) and his adolescent grandson Tokala (CN male human **noble**), the old man lives out his remaining days in a mad stupor, habitually chewing intoxicating pumpkin seeds and smoking an assortment of hallucinogenic herbs. In this pathetic state, he incoherently babbles about spirits dancing around him and ghosts haunting his dreams. Blena and Tokala relay that he has been in this state for the last several weeks, though his delirium greatly intensified in the wake of the centaurs' attack. Atacheta witnessed nothing during the attack, and in his current condition he would be of little use even if he had seen something. Blena and Tokala also hid in the tipi during the onslaught, though they unwittingly provide one piece of useful information. They attribute his drug-induced stupor to the narcotic herbs, and are completely unaware of the pumpkin seeds' addictive and intoxicating properties. They offhandedly remark that Atacheta never liked pumpkin seeds until the dimwitted Iqaya gave him a large bowl of them shortly before the attack. Naykaw, Iqaya's older brother, grows the psychedelic pumpkins on his farm 600 yards south of the temple. See the **Field of Nightmares** hook and **Area P2: Naykaw's Farm** for the relevance of these pumpkin seeds.

Area F: Elapay's Tipi (Difficulty Medium)

During his short life, the enigmatic Elapay gladly laid down his life for others he barely knew in the heat of battle, yet as soon as he stepped off the killing fields, the curmudgeon would not even acknowledge his fellow man's existence. Elapay fulfilled his lifelong ambition to die in a blaze of glory a few, short days ago, and no one noticed. The surly warrior lived alone and no one claimed his belongings or has even set foot in his tipi. Though Elapay lived out his dream, his angry spirit remains in the only place he felt comfortable — his tipi. If the PCs enter the tipi, the GM may read or paraphrase the following description:

The trophies of war are everywhere. Shattered spears, broken hafts, sundered wooden shields and scraps of torn armor lie strewn about the cluttered dwelling. The battle souvenirs clearly fall into the junk category with a few noteworthy exceptions. An exquisite longbow and an adjacent quiver of six arrows appear intact along with a sturdy, wooden shield. A wrathful humanoid spirit with a sunken nose, hollow eye sockets and semi-transparent flesh takes inventory of these objects with giddy delight. An angry scowl crosses the disheveled and raggedy apparition's twisted and transparent face at the sight of unwelcome visitors.

The misanthropic Elapay's death transformed him into a **demiurge**. The spiteful monster obsesses over the only things that brought him joy — the thrill of battle and his possessions. Unlike the typical demiurge, Elapay never leaves his tipi and keeps miserly guard over his beloved treasures. The malevolent spirit attacks on sight, using its transfixing gaze ability to temporarily paralyze as many enemies as possible. Opponents who resist its gaze are next subjected to its soul touch ability. If both attempts fail, Elapay uses his incorporeal touch attack to deal cold damage. Elapay never flees or surrenders. As in life, he would rather die than surrender.

Elapay, Demiurge: AC 13; HP 112 (15d8+45) Spd 0ft, fly 40ft; **Melee** icy touch (+6, 2d4 cold); **SA** soul touch (if demiurge moves through creature, target must succeed on DC 14 Wis save or be reduced to 0 HP); **Immune** cold, necrotic, poison damage; charmed, exhaustion, frightened, grappled, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned, prone, restrained;



Resist acid, fire, lightning, thunder; bludgeoning, piercing and slashing from non-magical weapons; **Str** +0, **Dex** +2, **Con** +3, **Int** +2, **Wis** +2, **Cha** +4; **Senses** darkvision 60ft, passive Perception 12; **Traits** transfixing gaze (if creature within 30ft meets demiurge's gaze, it must make DC 14 Wis save or be transfixed as *charm* for 1 minute, can attempt save again each round); **AL** CE; **CR** 6; **XP** 2,300. (**Appendix**)

Treasure: Scattered among the clutter is a longbow, six +1 *arrows* and a +1 *shield*. The rest of the armor and weapons are worthless.

Area G: Well

The stone and mortar well sinks 10 feet below the ground, granting access to an underground river. A PC can climb up and down the side of the well with a successful DC 10 Str (Athletics) check. A wooden winch attached to a large pail and several ropes is used to retrieve the water from the well. The subterranean aquifer is broad but shallow. A Tiny creature could negotiate the tight squeeze, but Small and larger creatures cannot. The underground passages lead nowhere in particular, but a successful DC 15 Wis (Perception) check notices a long-lost set of beads crafted from lapis lazuli and other precious stones. The beads are worth 350gp. More than a century ago, the newlywed Shana tossed the beads into the well after she caught her husband and another woman in a compromising position. Shana then murdered her husband and his lover before committing suicide. Identifying the beads as belonging to Shana requires a successful DC 15 Int (History) check.

Area H: Temple of Thaka

Built more than a century ago, the Temple of Thaka is the largest building in Petyan. The earthen structure reaches a height of 25 feet at the apex of its gently sloping dome. As a symbolic gesture, dried cornstalks cover much of the roof and outer walls. A crude wooden door on the building's south side serves as its only entrance.

Simple Wooden Door: 1 in. thick; AC 13; HP 10; Immunity cold, fire, poison, psychic; Resistance thunder, weapon damage; Break DC 18 Str; Unlock DC 13 Dex with thieves' tools proficiency.

The door is usually locked during the evening hours, but in light of the current crisis, the temple remains open 24 hours a day, and its resident cleric is also available to serve the worshippers' needs regardless of the late hour. The door is always left ajar during the daylight hours and is kept closed and unlocked during the overnight hours to prevent wild animals and vermin from freely entering the building. If the PCs enter the temple, the GM may read or paraphrase the following description:

Fresh ears of corn, gourds, melons and other edible fruits and vegetables lie atop and around a simple, wooden altar at the far end of a diamond-shaped chamber. A gentle flame flutters atop two 5-foot-tall ebony poles that flank each side of the altar. A trapdoor on the floor behind the altar apparently leads to a subterranean level. Three rows of crude benches face the altar. A 15-foot-long iron chain hangs from the apex of the ceiling. Painted images of the sun and lush cornfields adorn the walls, and an image of a calendar containing various symbols is painted on the wall behind the altar.

The residents of the outlying farms brought food offerings to the temple to aid those in need as well as to give thanks to the deity they believe watches over them. The temple's available food stores now exceed the demand as nearly all of Petyan's transient residents fled the village in the wake of the centaurs' attack. The depictions of the sun and corn plants on the walls are commonly associated with Thaka, a fact that a PC learns with a successful DC 10 Int (Religion) check. Likewise, Thaka's worshippers typically use the calendar behind the altar to keep track of the seasons. Most Campachan calendars are lunar calendars, and this one is no exception.

Oil is the primary fuel for the small flames burning atop the ebony poles that flank the altar. These decorative and spiritual pieces are the only objects with any monetary value. Each is worth 75gp, though stealing them from the temple would be considered a grave sin worthy of eternal damnation and corporal punishment. The act would even rouse the normally docile Quanata to take action against the thieves. The lit oil is a new development, as the temple previously relied upon the suspended receptacle of metallurgic amber to illuminate the building.

Quanata lives in the equivalent of an anchorite's cell that is accessible via the trapdoor on the floor behind the altar. The trapdoor opens into a 10-foot-long vertical shaft with a wooden ladder. At the bottom of the shaft is a claustrophobic, 10-foot-square room with a simple bed, and a chest filled with clothes and priestly vestments. Quanata keeps his magical items and gear on him at all times.

Trap Door: 1 in. thick; AC 15; HP 12; Immunity cold, poison, psychic; Resistance thunder, weapon damage; Break DC 20 Str; Unlock DC 15 Dex with thieves' tools proficiency.

Petyan's priest Quanata (LG male human, **clr5**; Religion +6) has not left the temple since the attack several days ago. He spends most of the daytime hours in solemn prayer unless he is busy counseling one of the villagers or providing food to the hungry. He sleeps downstairs during the overnight hours, though a loud shout or a rap on the trapdoor rouses him from his slumber. In that case, he quickly dresses and climbs up into the temple 2d4 rounds after the PCs wake him. Unfortunately for Quanata, it is very apparent that sleep eludes him in spite of his concerted efforts to



rest. He always appears harried and unkempt even during the day. Quanata is on the verge of exhaustion, and the PCs' arrival may finally give him a chance to get a good night's sleep.

Development: Quanata is very relieved to see the PCs and welcomes them with open arms, telling them that Thaka foretold their arrival and answered his prayers. At this point, he is more worried about what the centaurs and their masters plan to do with Tunicamna's amulet than he is about another attack on the village and the community's wellbeing. His poor physical and mental condition cannot dampen his passion about this particular subject. The normally reserved and placid priest becomes very animated as he discusses the potentially dire threat posed by the amulet.

Quanata's message and mission are the same — the PCs must recover the amulet from the centaurs. He believes his account of the centaurs' attack represents the best evidence of the amulet's critical role in the plot. Quanata explains that a renowned wizard named Tunicamna bequeathed the amulet to the temple shortly before his death 20 years ago. He acquired it many years earlier after he and his adventuring company defeated Tangjan College's insane founder and his chaotic minions. After acquiring the item, Tunicamna encased the strange chunk of luminescent metal in a pewter amulet with a thick glass window that allowed the substance to still emit its pale, brown glow. Tunicamna repeatedly assured Quanata that the material had no mystical properties, though he never explained why it glowed and why he placed the amulet in its pewter container. Quanata also studied the odd metal and confirmed its nonmagical nature, yet he too was at a loss to explain how or why it emitted pale, brown light. This inexplicable property is what worries Thaka's cleric the most. He fears that someone else knows the answer and intends to harness its power for some hidden purpose.

The lawful good priest makes his strongest appeal for aid to the PC he deems to be the most righteous, whether that is a paladin, a fellow worshipper of Thaka or a divine spellcaster that reveres a likeminded deity. Quanata tells that PC that ever since the attack, he has experienced a recurring dream. In this vision, he saw his temple turned into an asylum, and his people go mad in the pale aura of Tunicamna's amulet. In light of the present circumstances, he could not dismiss the dream as a coincidence. He used a *divination* scroll to gain Thaka's insight about the matter. He

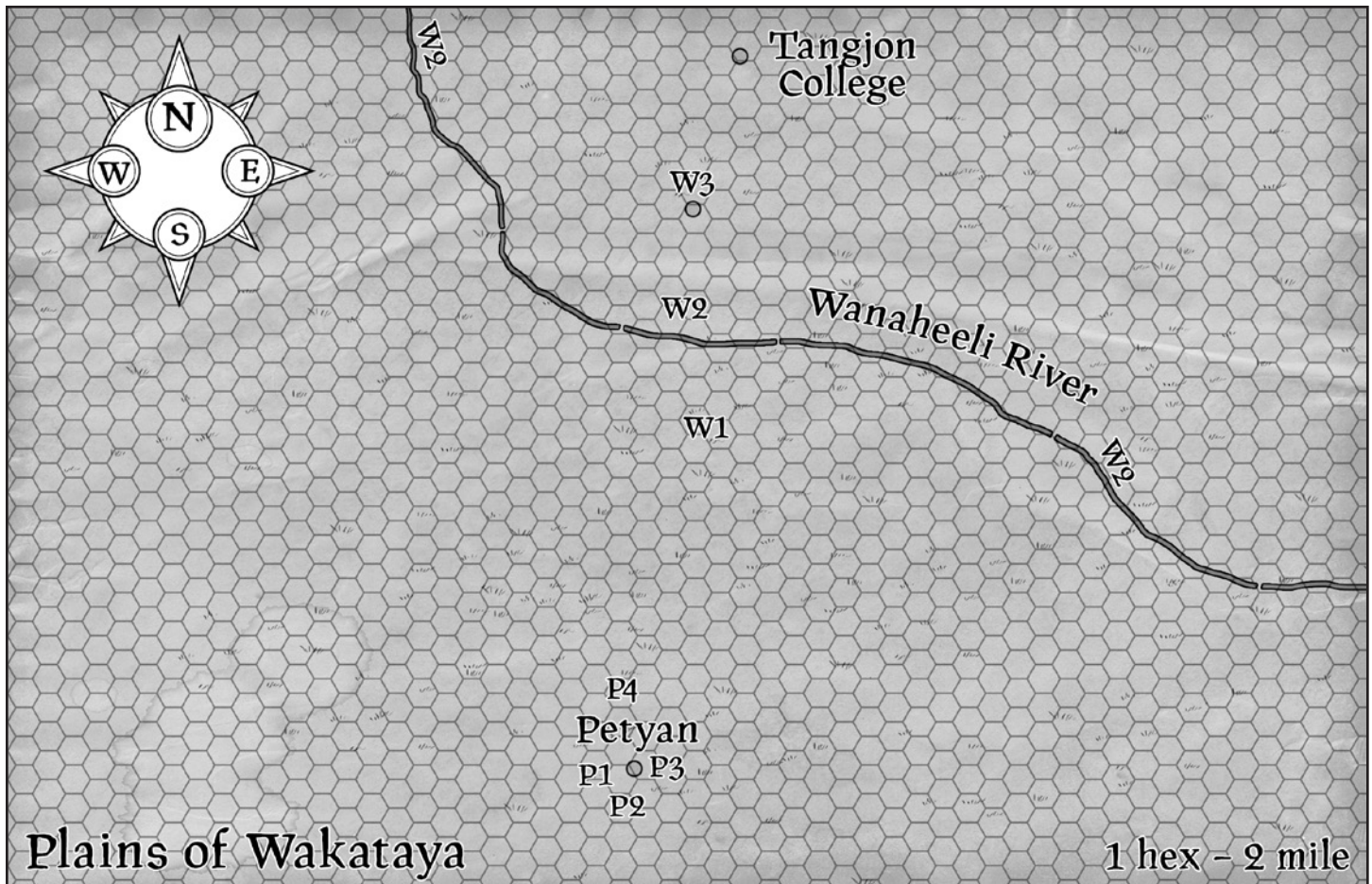
Quanata's Account

The centaurs seemingly appeared out of nowhere, running down anyone who stood in their way. Hintah, Petyan's greatest warrior, was the first to fall that day, but he was certainly not the last. The centaurs murdered 15 of the village's finest men and injured a roughly equal number that day. Those unable to fight fled to the safety of the temple. During the melee, I healed the wounded and comforted the frightened. The battle raged outside for a few minutes, before three centaurs burst through door. The bloodthirsty beasts momentarily sized up their opposition and then literally stopped in their tracks as they spotted the amulet hanging from the chain overhead. They used all of their might to tear it off the chain, and as soon as they accomplished that feat, they left, galloping out of the village and back onto the open plains.

received a reply stating that "insanity and greed go from hand to hand." He is more convinced than ever that the amulet plays an integral role in a much greater plan. He implores the PCs to prevent this diabolic scheme from coming to fruition.

If Quanata's request for aid goes unheeded, there is nothing left for him to do other than offer a reward for their assistance. Barter is the predominant economic system in Petyan, so conventional money is relatively scarce in the village. As a man devoted to goodness and righteousness, Quanata literally offers the shirt off his back to the PCs. In this case, it is a *cloak of resistance*. Though he is not eager to part with this item, he does so if he is left with no other choice.

The PCs may ask Quanata to accompany them on their journeys, but Petyan's resident cleric steadfastly refuses. He believes that his place is with his people, and he is their only line of defense in the unlikely event that the centaurs return. Quanata gladly heals the PCs' wounds without charge, though only if they agree to retrieve the stolen amulet from the centaurs.



Other Locales

In addition to the areas within Petyan proper, the PCs may wish to explore the surrounding farms and the mass grave located on the village outskirts. PCs attempting to locate the source of the intoxicating pumpkin seeds may head to **Area P2: Naykaw's Farm**, while those pursuing Shana's ultimate fate are likely to end up in the **Area P3: Field of Screams** two miles outside the village.

Area P1: Mass Grave (Difficulty Medium)

Fifteen of Petyan's defenders fell on that fateful day along with 12 innocent women and children. Most Campachan families inter their deceased on their land or at a location with particular significance to the deceased. In many cases, the remaining family members fled Petyan immediately after the attack, leaving the survivors to address their funerary rites. To compound matters, fire claimed some victims, making it impossible to positively identify the remains. As a matter of exigency, Quanata decided to bury Petyan's dead in a mass grave more than one-half mile west of the temple's entrance. In accordance with their customs, the surviving villagers covered the bodies beneath a mound of freshly dug earth. The villagers also interred the slain centaur beneath a much-smaller mound 50 feet away from the mass grave. When the PCs reach the site, the GM may read or paraphrase the following description:

The suffocating stench of rotting flesh and freshly excavated earth hangs over the area like a stifling blanket of diseased air. A roughly rectangular mound of earth towers 10 feet above its surroundings and occupies a 500-square-foot tract of land at the edge of a cornfield. Wreaths of fresh herbs and saplings lie atop the dirt. A significantly smaller mound lies 50 feet away from the central mound.

The grave was once protected by a powerful *hallow* spell that prevented undead from stirring in the area. Though this magic protected the corpses from assuming an unearthly existence, the power of the original blessing has ebbed, allowing an opportunistic predator to feast on the negative energy from the corpses. A **hungry fog** lingers in the adjacent cornfield after feasting on the energy of the dead buried beneath the mound. The vaporous green fog is virtually impossible to spot hiding amid the nearby plant stalks. Only a successful DC 20 Wis (Perception) check spots the roiling, emerald mist. The mist is slow to detect the presence of living opponents, so it takes 2d4 rounds to notice the PCs and attack. When it emerges or the PCs detect it, the GM may read or paraphrase the following description:

Horrific human apparitions wax and wane in the roiling clouds of a ghastly, green fog. Eerie, phosphorous lights intermittently pulsate, typically in conjunction with the sudden appearance of a skull-like countenance bubbling to the surface.

Opponents within 10 feet of the hungry fog are subjected to its bewitching brume aura. On subsequent rounds, the hungry fog engulfs as many PCs as possible using its enveloping mists ability. The unintelligent ooze attacks its foes until destroyed. It has no treasure.

Hungry Fog: AC 7; HP 147 (14d12+56); Spd Off, fly 15ft; **Melee** touch (+3, reach 20ft, 6d6 necrotic); **SA** enveloping mist (if enveloped, creature must make DC 12 Con save or be poisoned); **Immune** acid, lightning damage; **Resist** cold; **Vulnerable** radiant; **Str** +0, **Dex** -3, **Con** +4, **Int** +0, **Wis** -4, **Cha** -1; **Senses** passive Perception 6; **Traits** bewitching brume (creatures within 10ft must make DC 8 Wis save or be stunned), heal undead (heal 6d6 damage on any undead it has engulfed), gaseous (can pass through small or tiny spaces and cracks, cannot hold objects); **AL** N; **CR** 6;

XP 2,300. (Appendix)

With the hungry fog out of the way, the PCs may attempt to converse with the dead buried here or examine their wounds to gain additional insight about the attack. If the PCs pursue this course of action, Quanata and the villagers openly express their displeasure about disturbing their kin's final resting place in spite of the intended goal. PCs who begin their investigation at the mass grave particularly draw the people's ire, and the situation may escalate into a violent confrontation between the opposing parties. In this case, 2d4 villagers (**commoners**) arrive on the scene 1d6 minutes after the PCs begin excavating the graves. Angry words soon escalate into violence, but the villagers quickly disperse after the PCs strike the first blow against a fellow villager.

Development: Those who consult with Quanata first are discouraged from undertaking this course of action, but they are allowed to proceed after a verbal rebuke. In most cases, the spirits of the dead give the same basic accounts as the living. The centaurs emerged from the grasslands and descended upon the village with lightning speed, slaying everyone who stood in their path. Hintah is the only person who reveals any useful insight. He relates that the centaur that slew him had a small and unique tattoo of a contorted, eyeless serpent that he immediately recognized as a symbol associated with Zuxaca. He describes the entity as a powerful demigod commonly associated with the forces of entropy and more importantly, madness.

Examining the wounds reveals that, contrary to most accounts, many of the corpses suffered wicked lacerations in addition to piercing wounds inflicted by the centaurs' spears. In actuality, the centaurs began the assault by launching their spears and then began hacking down fleeing villagers with their swords. Most of the survivors ran for cover after the initial barrage, so few of them actually saw the centaur attack after the initial onslaught.

The villagers buried the lone centaur 50 feet away from the central mound. Naturally, the villagers dispensed with any pomp and ceremony over this creature's death and merely tossed the mangled body into a hole that they covered with loose stones and dirt. An examination of its body reveals that it died from multiple piercing wounds, though this centaur does not bear the same tattoo that Hintah saw on the centaur that slew him. The centaur's spirit resists any attempt to converse with it, unless the caster is also chaotic neutral. The creature was thoroughly insane in life, so it gives cryptic and often nonsensical answers whenever it communicates with the living. However, it confirms that the centaurs came from Tangian College and sought the amulet for their "dark mistress." The centaur knows nothing about the amulet's significance or her reason for acquiring it.

Area P2: Naykaw's Farm (Difficulty Hard)

From an early age, Naykaw had an affinity for plants. The bright yet scrawny young boy was a natural-born green thumb. Any seeds he planted sprouted into hardy greenery, and any ailing plant he touched quickly rebounded and thrived. Unfortunately for humanity, Naykaw's love of plants greatly exceeded his empathy for people — with one tragic exception. He adored his mother, but she died giving birth to his younger brother Iqaya a few weeks after his eleventh birthday. Her death devastated him and left him at the whims of his cold, tyrannical father, Patasah, who was far more interested in courting an attractive, young wife than in rearing his children. The uncaring man foisted the responsibilities of caring for Iqaya on the infant's older brother, a duty Naykaw greatly resented. He spent the next three years watching his lothario father woo numerous prospective brides, though none accepted his marriage proposals. Naturally, the bitter man blamed his lack of success on his children rather than his own shortcomings.

The fourteen-year-old Naykaw realized that his lot would never improve until he freed himself from his father's oppressive yoke. After striking out again with another beautiful young lady, Patasah returned home drunk and in an especially foul mood. This time, Naykaw was ready for him. He crushed the toxic leaves of several herbs into a virulent liquid that he poured into his father's drinking vessel. A few minutes later, Naykaw was free. The village attributed Patasah's death to alcohol poisoning, and the family farm now belonged to Naykaw and his brother Iqaya. Unfortunately for Iqaya, Naykaw had no love for his younger brother either. The callous herbalist

used his knowledge of plant toxins to transform his sibling into a dimwitted, subservient giant to do his bidding. Naykaw forced the boy to work the fields day and night while he crossbred various plant species to devise a lucrative new crop. His tireless efforts finally paid off six months ago when he successfully created a hybrid version of pumpkins.

These pumpkins looked, tasted and smelled like the normal variety, but with two notable differences. The first distinction was purely aesthetic. Green flecks are visible throughout the outer shell, giving the appearance that the vegetable is not fully ripened. The second distinction is much more subtle and infinitely more dangerous. Unlike the plant's outer shell, its seeds are identical in appearance to normal pumpkin seeds. When ingested, the pumpkin seeds release a chemical that causes humanoids to experience transcendental hallucinations and psychedelic visions. Inhaling smoke from burning seeds has the same effect, though the duration is reduced by half. Eating the pulp produces no ill effects. Naykaw accomplished this feat by combining an ordinary pumpkin with peyote, a cactus plant indigenous to desert regions. He calls the hybrid plant "green pumpkin," and he sells its pulp throughout the surrounding region via a clandestine network of traffickers. Naykaw is unaware that Iqaya gave some of the seeds to Atacheta and other people in the village.

Naykaw's farm lies 600 yards south of the Temple of Thaka's entrance in a remote area nearly a quarter-mile away from its nearest neighbor. The farm's isolated locale makes it easier for Naykaw to grow his crop far from the prying eyes of curiosity-seekers and competitors. The cunning entrepreneur used his initial profits to purchase two constructs that maintain a vigilant watch over his prized crop. The green pumpkins grow in a large patch closest to the family's modest farmhouse. The GM may read or paraphrase the following description of the farm:

A narrow band of cornstalks, bean sprouts and other edible vegetables surround a massive pumpkin patch encompassing at least four acres of land. A dozen scarecrows scattered throughout the farm keep a wary eye on the prized fields. A small earthen home dug into the face of a small ridge overlooks the entire property. The cozy residence has two windows and a front door.

During the day, Iqaya usually tends to the fields, but he is currently in the village surveying the damage with his friends. He returns home an hour before sunset and then retires for the remainder of the evening. During the day, Naykaw tends to correspondence and filling orders for his growing network of customers near an open window. There is a 25% chance that he is meeting with one of his traffickers at any given time. If not, one of them arrives at the residence 10d10 minutes later. His distributors drive a horse-drawn cart that is used to transport themselves and the goods to a distant market. After going over the particulars inside, Naykaw and the merchant leave the house and load the cart. These transactions continue throughout the day and often well into the wee hours of the morning. Even so, Naykaw locks the door at night.

Strong Wooden Door: 2 in. thick; AC 16; HP 18; Immunity cold, poison, psychic; Resistance fire, lightning, thunder, weapon damage; Break DC 22 Str; Unlock DC 15 Dex with thieves' tools proficiency.

Naykaw does not pay particularly close attention to the security of his fields. He leaves that task to 2 **scarecrows** that stand guard in the pumpkin patch. The two constructs appear identical to their ordinary counterparts until they animate. This occurs whenever anyone other than Naykaw and Iqaya is present in the fields or when Naykaw verbally commands them to attack. When they stir to life, their heads resemble a jack-o'-lantern as fiery light illuminates their eyes and mouths. The scarecrows use their fascinating gaze effect against one or more of the PCs before using their slam attacks against those PCs who resist their gaze. The constructs attack until destroyed or until Naykaw orders them to stop.

If Naykaw witnesses the PCs' intrusion firsthand, he bolsters his defenses by casting *barkskin* on himself. On the other hand, if the PCs attack him or confront him in his home, he calls for aid from the scarecrows. In either

MADNESS GROWS

event, he directs any trafficker(s) (CN human **thug**) meeting with him and Iqaya (CN male human **commoner**) to attack the PCs. The oafish brute lacks his brother's motivation to fight. He runs inside and hides at the first chance he gets. The fast-talking druid is a poor combatant, so he puts his trust in his magical abilities. He casts *entangle* on a wide swath of the pumpkin patch, followed by *call lightning*. Naykaw runs for his life in the face of a superior opponent, sacrificing his home and his farm for his personal safety. To facilitate his chances for escape, he casts *longstrider* and wild shapes into a speedy animal like a cheetah. In his mind, it takes much less effort to rebuild his business than it does to raise him from the dead.

PCs who capture Naykaw may question him, but he has little useful information about the centaurs' attack, Tunicamma's amulet or the College of Tangjan. He relays that his business partners told him that strange creatures stalk the campus, and even they stay far away from the locale. The trafficker corroborates the information. The desperate Naykaw gladly offers his worldly possessions in exchange for his freedom and, if necessary, his life.

Scarecrow (2): AC 1; HP 36 (8d8) Spd 30ft; Melee claw x2 (+3, 2d4+1 slashing; **SA** multiattack (2 claws), terrifying gaze (target 1 creature within 30ft, DC 13 Wis save or be paralyzed one turn); **Immune** poison damage; charmed, exhaustion, frightened, paralyzed, poisoned, unconscious; **Resist** bludgeoning, piercing and slashing from nonmagical weapons; **Vulnerable** fire; **Str** +0, **Dex** +1, **Con** +0, **Int** +0, **Wis** +0, **Cha** +1; **Senses** darkvision 60ft, passive Perception 10; **Traits** false appearance (when not moving, indistinguishable from a normal scarecrow); **AL** CE; **CR** 1; **XP** 200.

Naykaw, male human Drd6: AC 15; HP 33 (6d8+6) Spd 30ft; Melee club (+2, 1d6-1 bludgeoning); **Str** -1, **Dex** +2, **Con** +1, **Int** +1 (+4), **Wis** +3 (+6), **Cha** +1; **Skills** Insight +6, Medicine +6, Nature +4, Perception +6, Religion +4; **Senses** passive Perception 16; **Traits** druid circle (land), druidic, natural recovery, wild shape (CR 1/2, no flying speed); **AL** NE; **CR** 5; **XP** 1,800.

Spells (slots): 0 (at will)—*druidcraft, guidance, produce flame, shillelagh*; 1st (4)—*create or destroy water, cure wounds, faerie fire, longstrider, barkskin*, spider climb**; 2nd (3)—*enhance ability, heat metal, protection from poison*; 3rd (2)—*call lightning*, dispel magic, plant growth*, sleet storm*. **Spell DC:** 16; **Spell Attack Bonus:** +6

*Circle spell

Equipment: +1 *hide armor*, club, poisoner's kit, serpent venom (2 doses), 57gp

Treasure: Like most permanent structures in and around Petyan, Naykaw's humble dugout consists of a single open room. Iqaya and Naykaw have their own beds, and Naykaw uses an old wooden desk and cabinet to store his business records. His journal and ledgers detail various purchasers throughout the region. Any PC searching through these records for 1 hour determines that his business has already generated 1,550gp in profit in a matter of a few months with a successful DC 10 Int (Investigation) check. Naykaw keeps some of his proceeds in an unlocked iron coffer concealed underneath the floor. A PC locates the hidden cache of treasure with a successful DC 18 Wis (Perception) check. The coffer contains 1,098gp.

Area P3: Field of Screams (Difficulty Medium)

For nearly a century, villagers wondered what ultimately happened to the distraught bride who killed her cheating husband and his lover. No one ever saw the murderous woman after she committed the deed. Some speculate she flung herself into the village well, while others believe she left the village and lived out the remainder of her days in another village disguised as a man. The consensus holds that young Shana fled Petyan and went to this field to hang herself. This remote patch of wilderness is renowned for being haunted, and the few who dare venture there never return, thus earning the locale its popular moniker.

The field lies two miles east of the Temple of Thaka near a convergence of small streams. It appears similar to every other stretch of ground on the Campacha Plain except for one important difference: A massive tree towers over the surrounding grasses. When the PCs approach the area, the GM may read or paraphrase the following description:

Several small running streams converge in the area, surrounding a massive tree that dominates a field of tall grass surrounding it. The enormous, gnarled plant towers 30 feet above the ground. Numerous leafy vines dangle from its branches.

Trees are unusual in the grasslands, and trees of this size are particularly rare. A PC who succeeds on a DC 13 Int (Nature) check notices this anomaly, as well as the fact that no saplings or similar trees are anywhere in the vicinity. In addition, the undergrowth around the tree obscures at least 20 long bones lying on the ground. A successful DC 15 Wis (Perception) check notices the earthly remains of past victims as well as the glint of coins and other valuables hidden in the dirt.

On that fateful day a century ago, Shana came to this remote field to hang herself from the only tree she knew of in the area. The presumably inanimate tree had other plans. Much to Shana's horror, she soon discovered that the mighty plant was in fact a **hangman tree** — a carnivorous plant that devours any creature that wanders too close to it. The monstrous plant strangled Shana to death, a fate she intended to inflict upon herself. Unlike the hangman tree's other unwitting victims, Shana wanted to die that day, and her death caused her spirit to transform into an **allip** that still haunts the field to this very day. Shana has no memories of her past life and is merely an insane cloud of malevolence seeking to slay all living creatures she encounters.

In many ways, the allip and the hangman tree enjoy a symbiotic relationship and unwittingly work as a team. The allip carefully conceals itself in the tall grasses, requiring a Wis (Perception) check at DC 21 to detect. A PC within 60 feet of the allip hears a constant, inane babbling, though the sound's source may not be apparent if the PC failed to notice the incorporeal monster. Any sane creature that hears the allip's babble must succeed on a DC 12 Wis save or be charmed for 2d4 rounds. Naturally, the allip's babble attack has no effect on the hangman tree. When the allip detects living prey, the wicked apparition emerges from its hiding spot and uses its touch of insanity attack against the nearest enemy. At the same time, the hangman tree releases its hallucinatory spores, affecting every creature in a 50-foot-radius spread around the tree. Once again, the allip is immune to the hangman tree's mind-affecting attack. After the initial, seemingly coordinated onslaught, the pair begins attacking PCs separately. The allip uses its touch of insanity attack to disable its enemies, while the hangman tree uses its vines to bludgeon, grab and strangle its opponents. The huge tree can also swallow an opponent whole, though it can only devour one creature at a time. The allip and hangman tree attack until destroyed.

Hangman Tree: AC 17; HP 92 (8d12+40); Spd 10ft; Melee vine x4 (+8, reach 15ft, 1d8+5 bludgeoning plus grapple check), constriction (automatic hit on grappled creature, 1d8+5 bludgeoning plus hang), hallucinatory spores (creatures within 50 ft. must make DC 16 Wis save or be charmed 2d6 minutes and won't attack tree); **SA** multiattack (4 vines); **Immune** psychic damage; charmed, frightened, prone, stunned, unconscious; **Resist** bludgeoning and piercing; **Vulnerable** lightning; **Str** +5, **Dex** -2, **Con** +5, **Int** -2, **Wis** +1, **Cha** +0; **Senses** darkvision 60ft, passive Perception 11; **Traits** hang (on failed save vs constriction attack, tree hoists target off the ground. Target grappled, begins suffocating), paralyzed by cold (paralyzed 1 round by cold attack if it fails Con save), slowed by darkness (magical darkness slow tree 1d4 rounds); **AL** NE; **CR** 7; **XP** 2,900. (*5th Edition Foes*, 140)

Allip: AC 11; HP 45 (10d8); Spd 0ft, fly 30ft; Melee touch of insanity (+4, 1d4 psychic plus Wis save to avoid madness);

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Immune cold, necrotic, poison damage; charmed, exhaustion, frightened, grappled, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned, prone, restrained; **Resist** acid, fire, lightning, thunder; bludgeoning, piercing and slashing from nonmagical weapons; **Str** +0, **Dex** +1, **Con** +0, **Int** +0, **Wis** +0, **Cha** +3; **Senses** darkvision 60ft., passive Perception 10; **Traits** babble (sane creatures within 60ft must make DC 12 Wis save or be charmed for 2d4 rounds), madness (anyone targeting allip with telepathic effect or spell takes 1d4 points Wis damage); **AL** CE; **CR** 3; **XP** 700. (**Appendix**)

Treasure: Over the past century, the hangman tree's victims left behind several valuable objects that the semi-intelligent plant and its insane undead counterpart could not use. Scattered about the ground are 683gp, 1,903sp, a rotting leather pouch holding 9 turquoise stones worth 50gp each, a rusted and broken suit of masterwork chain mail, a rusted and broken masterwork long sword, a bone scroll case containing two arcane scrolls — *blink* and *lightning bolt* — and three potions — *cure wounds*, *greater restoration* and *water walk*. Shana's femur and partial jawbone are among the remains as well as one of her personal belongings — a gold and lapis lazuli ankle bracelet with the name "Shana" etched onto one of the clasps. The object is worth 50gp. Her husband gave her the jewelry as a wedding gift. Its presence solves Shana's mystery once and for all.

Area P4: Tunicamna's Crypt

It is entirely possible that the PCs may decide to speak directly with Tunicamna's departed spirit to gain more information about the amulet he bequeathed to the Temple of Thaka. His tomb lies two miles north of the temple about 100 yards from his former cottage. The great wizard's final resting place is more befitting a commoner than a renowned wizard. Tunicamna never married or had any children, and he was estranged from his extended family for most of his adult life. Though his nephews, nieces and distant cousins attempted to rekindle a relationship with him during his later years, he doubted the sincerity of their efforts and kept them at arm's length until shortly before he died. After his death, his relatives swooped down on his estate like hungry vultures, squabbling over every scrap of paper, loose gem and magical component they could find. In a few, short days his belongings disappeared and his property stood ready for sale. Fearful that the elderly man would return from beyond the grave, his relatives began construction of his mausoleum more than a week before his passing and interred him in the cold crypt within hours of his death. To ensure his passage to the next world, a traveling priest blessed his tomb and then cast a protective spell upon the door to prevent anyone or anything from opening it. His crypt has remained neglected and undisturbed for the past two decades, even though several families have worked the land since his death.

Loopiya (see the **Events** section) lives in the home now along with his wife Mina (LG female human **commoner**) and their two small children. As previously mentioned, Loopiia is reluctant to allow anyone to disturb the wizard's eternal rest. He greatly admired Tunicamna and does not want to desecrate his grave, but he also fears angering him and causing his vengeful spirit to take out his wrath on Loopiia and his family. A successful DC 12 Cha (Persuasion) check is enough to allay the young man's trepidation. Likewise, giving him a small magical or alchemical item worth 10gp or more proves equally effective. In either event, the GM may read or paraphrase the following description of Tunicamna's Crypt:

Thick patches of grass mixed with weeds overrun the ground on top of and surrounding an earthen burial vault dug into the side of a small rise. A heavy, stone door is the only visible entrance into the cramped tomb.

The crypt is roughly rectangular and measures 20 feet deep, 10 feet wide and 10 feet high. Tunicamna's greedy relatives shared Loopiia's concerns about disturbing the powerful wizard's eternal slumber, so one of them cast an *arcane lock* spell on the portal.

Stone Door: 4 in. thick; AC 17; HP 22; Immunity cold, fire, lightning, poison, psychic; Resistance thunder, weapon damage; Break DC 25 Str; Unlock knock spell, then DC 15 Dex with thieves' tools proficiency.

As an alternative to forcing the door open, the PCs can also dig through its earthen walls and roof. These surfaces are 2 feet thick on average.

Earthen Walls and Roof: 2 ft. thick; AC 15; hp 24; Immunity cold, fire, lightning, poison, psychic; Break DC 22 Str.

Once inside, the GM may read or paraphrase the following description of the crypt's interior:

Unsealing the crypt releases a sudden rush of foul, stagnant air accompanied by a frightful chill. A lonely wooden coffin sits in the middle of the crypt in an otherwise empty room.

Tunicamna's coffin is average in quality and design. It can be easily opened with a successful DC 12 Str check, and it can be destroyed by dealing physical damage to it (AC 15, hp 6). Tunicamna's skeletal remains lie inside of the coffin. Tunicamna's soul willingly speaks with good-aligned creatures, though he resists conversing with neutral and evil clerics.

Tunicamna's Responses

As in all cases, Tunicamna can only reveal what he knew in life. If the PCs ask him about the amulet, he is aware of the following facts.

- Tunicamna found the piece of glowing metal on Tiblu Ottika's desk at Tangian College.
- He placed the metallurgic amber in a pewter receptacle merely for convenience.
- He studied the object for 50 years and could never figure out why it glowed and its possible effects on Tiblu and his minions.
- Tiblu and his followers revered the demigod Zuxaca.

Tunicamna cannot provide any insight about the centaurs' recent attack, including their motives for the unprovoked assault or for stealing the amulet. He is also unaware of the metallurgic amber's harmful effects. Ultimately, the GM should use discretion when determining the exact extent of Tunicamna's knowledge, though it is usually preferable to err on the side of revealing too little rather than too much. Speaking with Tunicamna should act as more of a push in the right direction, instead of an easy solution.

Outlying Farms

Petyan's permanent residents predominately dwell on the outlying farms, though some also pitch camp closer to the buffalo trail during hunting season. Cultivated land stretches from one to three miles around the Temple of Thaka in every direction, but ample space exists between most farms to allow horses and other grazing animals to feed on the abundant grasses. These farms generally contain the same universal features — an earthen house where the residents live, a temporary or permanent structure for food storage, and a pen or corral for horses and other livestock. Members of an extended family typically share the same quarters, and as many as 20 people may dwell in the largest one-room homes.

If the PCs venture to the outlying farms, they soon learn that the people living here know far less about the centaur attack and Tunicamna's amulet than the transient residents taking up residence around the Temple of Thaka. On the other hand, they know much more about **Naykaw's Farm**, the

Field of Screams and **Tunicanna's Crypt** than the attack's survivors and are a much better source for rumors about these locales.

Road Ahead

After spending some time in Petyan gathering information and addressing local problems, the PCs should realize that the quest for the amulet takes them to distant Tangjan College 50 miles north of the village in the heart of the Campacha grasslands. In the event that the PCs appear directionless and uncertain of where to go next, the GM may use Quanata to provide them with important information they missed or overlooked. Alternatively, the GM may bring some of the encounters from **Part Two** of the adventure closer to home and give the PCs a greater sense of urgency to recover the amulet and prevent Mila and her followers from wreaking havoc in the region.

Part Two: The Plains of Campacha

No one is absolutely certain where the centaurs went after their barbarous raid against the village of Petyan, but one location keeps coming to the forefront throughout the PCs' investigation — Tangjan College. The college is 50 miles north of Petyan in the heart of the immense grasslands. The PCs may forge their path across the open plains, or they can follow in the centaurs' footsteps. In either event, the PCs must cross the treacherous Wanaheeli River en route to their distant destination. In addition to the natural hazards that they encounter along the way, savage monsters and vicious predators stalk the land searching for prey. As the PCs make their way toward Tangjan College, they learn more about Mila's ultimate plans as well as face off against the beasts responsible for the savage attack in Petyan. This part of the adventure culminates in the PCs' arrival on the campus of Tangjan College.

Events

The plains of Campacha are far from deserted. Man and beast alike inhabit this fertile land, foraging for food, traveling to distant places and hunting prey. These events are not intended to replace the subsequent encounters, and are instead intended to provide the PCs with vital information and insight about unfolding activities without necessarily putting them in harm's way. The GM may use some or all of these events to give the PCs a better lay of the land on their travels across the plains.

Four young hunters (N male half-elf **Rgr1**; Nature +5) are tracking a herd of buffalo that recently passed through the area. The men and their families pitched their camp near one of the bridges that cross the dangerous Wanaheeli River. If the PCs ask them about any strange recent activities, they claim that they saw four centaurs and a larger bisonlike creature cross the river from the north less than a week ago. They speculate that the group headed south, presumably toward Petyan, though they did not loiter long enough to confirm their hunch.

Zokala (CN female elf **noble**), her half-sister Ehala (N female half-elf **noble**) and her lover Nahkah (CG male human **Rgr1**; Survival +4) narrowly escaped an attack by wolves. Zokala is still distraught because her husband Chatlan was not so fortunate. He died fending off the savage beasts so that his wife and her family could escape. The trio all bear fresh claw and bite wounds. If asked for details, their descriptions are vague. A wolf pack of indeterminate size attacked them four hours earlier and killed Chatlan. They have been on the run ever since. Unbeknownst to them, the creatures that attacked them are not ordinary wolves. The curse of lycanthropy now afflicts Ehala and Nahkah, though they bear no hallmarks of the infection and are blissfully unaware of their predicament. They gladly accept any assistance the PCs offer, though they have no additional insight about Tangjan College or the werewolves. At the GM's discretion, Ehala and Nahkah may reappear to the PCs after their initial transformation into werewolves.

Halfings are reputed to be very lucky, but Bertram (CN male halfling **Rog2**; Stealth +5) and his cousin Marwinn (CN male halfling **Rog3**; Acrobatics +6) are on a bad streak. The clearly exhausted thieves are walking across the plains after the Wily Grifters, a gang of confidence men, deprived them of their ponies and all of their money in a dice game. (Of course, the Wily Grifters rigged the game, much to their surprise.) The duo is particularly upset about this turn of events, because they were already on the run after stealing 300gp from a disreputable traveling merchant last week. The penniless pair is desperate for cash, though they are not foolish enough to attempt to rob a heavily armed group. Instead, they offer information in exchange for payment. They tell the PCs that crazed men and wild beasts are gathering on the grounds of the abandoned college. Likewise, they also direct the PCs to the Galloping Ghost Inn, where the Wily Grifters deprived them of their hard-earned money. Naturally, Bertram and Marwinn gloss over the fact that they stole the ponies and the money. If caught in that lie, they confess to the crime, and insist that their victim, the unscrupulous Caleb Galeska, deserved everything he got. A successful DC 15 Int (Investigation) check identifies Caleb Galeska as a cutthroat criminal with a reputation for taking advantage of the less fortunate.

Wicanoose (LG male human **Rgr2**; Stealth +6) seeks help for an injured man he encountered a few hours earlier. He used his healing abilities to stabilize the man, but he is still in grave danger. Wicanoose found the unconscious man face down on the ground, suffering from tremendous blood loss from multiple stab wounds. Wicanoose gladly offers to lead the PCs to the injured man. When the PCs arrive on the scene, they find Tehunka (N male human, **Ftr2**; Athletics +5) near death. If the PCs revive him, the wounded guard tells the PCs that he was part of a contingent from Ironhill in Reme transporting tools, dyes and copper ore used to mint coins known as copper furrows in Reme. Three centaurs and a bull-like creature attacked him and the three other guards. He feigned death and watched as the centaurs took the equipment and left him and his associates for dead. Tehunka spent the last three days wandering the grasslands looking for help. He explains that the tools and dyes have no real value without the raw materials needed to actually mint the coins. In addition, their shipment included enough copper ore to make 10,000 copper furrows with a total value of only 100gp. Tehunka is hopelessly lost and has no idea where the attack occurred.

Rumors

The men and women who venture onto the plains to pursue buffalo and business opportunities know the land better than anyone else. During the course of their travels, the PCs may learn the following rumors from these travelers. These stories are generally well known and do not require successful Persuasion and Int (History) checks to acquire.

- A headless horseman rides across the grasslands, attacking anyone who stands in his way. Many believe he was an evil warlord during his mortal lifetime. An infernal being reputedly raised him from the dead and unleashed him upon the world.
- Three centaurs stride across the fields accompanied by their apparent leader — a centaurlike monster with the torso of a bull instead of a man.
- The Galloping Ghost Inn is a popular stopover for those venturing across the plains of Campacha. In addition to being an inn, it also has a tavern, restaurant and stage for performing acts. The ghost of a penitent miser reportedly haunts the building as well, pointing guests toward treasures he hid within the inn and the surrounding area during his lifetime.
- The campus of Tangjan College is once again abuzz with activity. Strange lights and alien monsters stalk its grounds. The same thing happened 70 years ago until a group of adventurers expelled the former headmaster and his minions.

Specific individuals and locations that appear in the **Events** and **Encounters** sections may also provide the PCs with additional information. This is especially true at **Area W1: Galloping Ghost Inn**.

Encounters

The PCs' journey across the open grasslands is not uneventful. On their trek to Tangjan College, they face three set encounters that take place at fixed locations on the accompanying Campacha Plains map and five random encounters that may occur anywhere in the grasslands. The set encounters are presented first, followed by the random encounters. The former are denoted on the map as **Areas W1, W2 and W3**. Besides the challenges presented here, the GM is free to create more encounters to harass the PCs on the plains of Campacha Wakatanga.

Area W1: Galloping Ghost Inn

Not coincidentally, this three-story inn, tavern and eatery sprang up from nothing just a few weeks after Tiblu Ottika broke ground at Tangjan College. Though students abandoned the college 70 years ago, the Galloping Ghost Inn's customers did not follow their lead. The business's clientele is an eclectic mix of traveling merchants, adventurers, hunters, barflies, groupies, playgoers, gamblers and impresarios looking for the next great act. The Galloping Ghost Inn is more of a destination than a stopover for most patrons. Guests travel here from far and wide to partake in a great meal, fascinating conversation, a rousing game of chance, a spectacular show and most importantly to find out firsthand if the popular spot is really haunted. The GM may read or paraphrase the following description of the building:

The sounds of mirth echo across the Campacha heartland, beckoning passers-by to the welcoming inn as if it were a lighthouse guiding sailors to port. The well-lit three-story building can be seen from a great distance regardless of the time of day. At least a dozen horses occupy the nearby corral.

As the PCs draw nearer to the inn, the GM may read or paraphrase this additional information:

There are two entrances to the building, a wooden door in the rear of the building presumably used by staff, and a main door facing the corral. Two young men move about the corral, bringing food to the horses and mucking out their stalls. The image of a majestic white horse appears on a wooden sign hanging above the door that also bears the words "Galloping Ghost Inn." Even the sturdy wooden door is not enough to contain the peals of laughter and torrents of obscenities from escaping into the open air.

Though the front door is typically closed at all times, it opens with minimal effort and is never locked. The two stable boys, Manhatan (N male human **commoner**) and Kanbleeska (N male human **Rog1**) genuinely care for the horses under their charge and show much less affection to the men and women who ride them. Other than one another, the two misanthropes show little concern for other people. They happily pamper the PCs' horses, though they do not shower the same attention on the PCs. They brush off the PCs' questions with vague shoulder shrugs and feigned ignorance. They only speak if the PCs force them to do so either magically or by intimidating them. Under these circumstances, they reluctantly reveal that folks have been saying that a group of centaurs stampede across the plains north of the Wanaheeli River and slay anyone they encounter. They also heard from a few travelers about recent werewolf attacks that may be headed this way in the near future. If the PCs ask them about Bertram and Marwinn's ponies, they acknowledge that the animals are here and now belong to the Wily Grifters. Any attempts to reclaim the ponies on the halflings' behalf elicit loud shouts for help from the two stable boys. Otherwise, they have no useful information and ignore the PCs.

The inn's bar and restaurant open sometime during the midmorning hours and remain open until the wee hours of the morning. One of the

staff members always occupies the front desk. When the PCs step inside the inn, the GM may read or paraphrase the following description. If the bar and restaurant are closed when the PCs arrive, the GM should adjust the scene accordingly.

Wondrous aromas of freshly prepared foods and baked goods waft through a loud dining room and tavern area. Patrons of nearly all races and walks of life occupy nearly every one of the dozen tables in the eating section and half the bar stools. Servers carrying food and drink push their way through a door presumably opening into the kitchen. They meander through the crowd to deliver wares to hungry and thirsty guests. The large open space also features a rudimentary stage large enough to accommodate up to six performers and a front desk that is presumably used to check in overnight guests. A set of stairs around the corner from the desk leads to the inn's upper levels.

The tavern and bar area is very large even by typical city standards. Each table accommodates four Medium creatures and can easily be pushed together to seat larger parties. The dining area accounts for 1,600 square feet and the attached bar is roughly half that size. The interior's remaining 1,600 square feet is dedicated to the kitchen, food storage areas, privies and the inn's front desk. Guest rooms are located on the second and third floors. The average guest room is 10 feet wide and 12 feet deep. Variations come in all shapes and sizes ranging from oversized rooms capable of hosting up to two Large creatures and smaller rooms designed for Small creatures, particularly gnomes and halflings. Guests typically stay in one of the second story's 25 rooms. Each room has a sturdy wooden door and a unique key designed to open it. Every room has a small 1-foot-by-1-foot window fitted with interlocking iron bars to prevent anything larger than a Tiny creature from entering the room through the open portal.

Good Wooden Door: 1-1/2 in. thick; AC 15; HP 16; Immunity cold, poison, psychic; Resistance thunder, weapon damage; Break DC 22 Str; Unlock DC 14 Dex with thieves' tools proficiency.

Iron Bars: 2 in. thick; AC 19; hp 12; Immunity cold, fire, lightning, poison, psychic; Resistance thunder, weapon damage; Break DC 30 Str.

The staff lives on the third floor. Two guards (N human **veteran**) sit on top of the landing to prevent guests from entering the area. They politely inform patrons that the third floor is a private area. If anyone refuses to heed their warning or tries to force their way into the third floor, the guards shout for assistance and attack. Within a matter of rounds, the staff arrives on the scene to deal with the unauthorized trespassers.

Dardennell Verglade and his family have owned and operated the Galloping Ghost Inn since its founding. The gregarious, good-natured gnome graciously approaches the later stages of his life with a sly smile, a quick turn of phrase and countless friends. For most patrons, he and the Galloping Ghost Inn are inseparable. Dardennell sits in the spacious tavern every night, holding court with his regulars while ales and rumors fly fast and furious across the crowded bar. Though his mind is keen and his wits intact, the same cannot be said for his increasingly frail body. His two sons, Grasspfeffer (NG male gnome **commoner**) and Zastgarten (CG male gnome **noble**) along with his daughter Zayla (CG female gnome **commoner**) pick up the slack for their ailing father, who is also a recent widower. Zayla manages the inn's day-to-day operations. Her brother, Grasspfeffer, is the chef, and Zastgarten acts as the concierge and maitre d. A staff of 12 rounds out the hotel's employees. They include Dwanda (N male human **commoner**) the tavern's notoriously cantankerous Mwandu bartender, and Choctay (LN female halfling **commoner**), the resident baker. Every night, the jovial Dardennell says or does something to get under his bartender's skin, much to the delight of his boisterous audience. Choctay dazzles her followers with wondrous chocolate treats that many consider life's greatest pleasure.

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Though they are not related by blood, Dardennell views all of his employees as family. While that seems idyllic on the surface, it also means that he holds longstanding and deep-seated grudges against those who betray his trust and take advantage of his generosity. This is especially true if hears the name Blake Acamu or any mention of a rogue warlock. Ten years ago, Dardennell hired Blake as an assistant cook. He worked hard and had a talent for creating wondrous flavors, but Blake refused to comply with Dardennell's rules. He often showed up late, left early, snuck in a quick meal or got into an argument with another employee. Dardennell overlooked these transgressions until one night when Blake was fortunate to escape the Galloping Ghost Inn with his life. One evening, Blake filled in for an ill Grasspfeffer as the head cook. Over the course of the dinner service, three diners suddenly developed extreme cases of nausea and fatigue. The panicked Dardennell investigated the situation and, sure enough, he found poison in the food. Sensing that Dardennell was onto him, Blake immediately fled the Galloping Ghost Inn and never looked back. To this day, the elderly gnome longs to confront his reckless former employee about the incident. He goes so far as to offer PCs 250gp to arrange such an opportunity. As this episode demonstrates, he is also not averse to getting even with those who cross him.

Dardennell, male forest gnome Wiz5: AC 13; HP 17 (5d6) Spd 25; **Melee** dagger (+3, 1d4 piercing); **SA** spells (DC 14, Int +6); **Str** +0 (+1), **Dex** +0 (+1), **Con** +0 (+1), **Int** +3 (+7), **Wis** +2 (+6), **Cha** +2 (+3); **Skills** Arcana +6, Insight +5; **Senses** darkvision 60ft.; **Traits** arcane recovery, arcane tradition (illusion), gnome cunning, illusion savant, speak with small beasts; **AL** CG; **CR** 4; **XP** 1,100.

Spells (slots): 0 (at will)—*friends, light, mage hand, prestidigitation, minor illusion, dancing lights*; 1st (4)—*disguise self, mage armor, magic missile, silent image*; 2nd (3)—*blur, ray of enfeeblement, shatter*; 3rd (2)—*major image*.

Equipment: *bracers of defense, dagger, cloak of protection, dust of disappearance, 38gp*

Dardennell also fiercely guards a closely held secret known only to his immediate family. After Tangjan College closed its doors 70 years ago, the Galloping Ghost Inn seemed all but certain to go out of business unless Dardennell did something drastic. Gnomes have a natural affinity for creating illusions, and the crafty businessman always excelled in this department. To drum up publicity and curiosity-seekers, he used his mystical abilities to create the illusion of a ghost haunting the inn. Under normal circumstances, this approach was akin to suicide, but the clever gnome had one more trick up his sleeve. This faux apparition was not a malevolent soul. Instead, he created a kindly, remorseful spirit that wanted the living to find his vast treasure hoard hidden somewhere within the inn and its immediate vicinity. Dardennell took great precautions to screen those who saw his false phantasm, ensuring that his unwitting dupes could not see through his charade. To make the story even more convincing, he planted valuable objects inside of the inn for his marks to find.

The ploy worked like a charm. The rumors of a vast fortune spread like wildfire through the plains of Campacha and business boomed. Over the years, Dardennell scaled back the spirit's appearances to the point that guests now see the "ghost" only once or twice a year. The infrequent appearances are still enough to draw numerous curiosity-seekers and fortune hunters to the Galloping Ghost's welcoming halls and rooms. On an average night, about half of the inn's overnight guests came here just for the chance to encounter the establishment's resident spirit.

Development: Besides its staff, colorful personalities from far and wide eat, drink and are merry at the Galloping Ghost Inn. The most celebrated are 3 rogues known as the Wily Grifters. Batsu, Changtai and Yetshan came here three years ago after their ambitions outgrew the small settlement village they called home. They come here every night to take advantage of the numerous rubes who walk through the doors. Five nights a week, the Wily Grifters host dice games, faro tables, gammon matches and basset games at one or more of the dining room's open tables. Dardennell and the regulars know the games are rigged. The inn's owner neither condones nor prohibits the Grifters from running their games as long as he believes that the participating players are intelligent enough to make

their own decisions and willingly partake in the activities. In a nutshell, Dardennell does not interfere unless the Grifters' victim offends his sense of fairness. When that occurs, he brings the person to his barstool and buys them a drink as he lectures the individual about the dangers of gambling. The Grifters grumble and complain on the rare instances when the preceding happens, but they realize that even they cannot bite the hand that feeds them.

Wily Grifter, human Rog5 (3): AC 15; HP 26 (5d8) Spd 30ft; **Melee** rapier (+6, 1d6+3 piercing); **Ranged** light crossbow (+6, 80ft/320ft, 1d8+3 piercing); **SA** sneak attack (+3d6); **Str** +0, **Dex** +3 (+6), **Con** +1, **Int** +1 (+4), **Wis** +0, **Cha** +2; **Skills** Athletics +3, Deception +8, Intimidation +5, Perception +3, Persuasion +5, Sleight of Hand +9, Stealth +6; **Senses** passive Perception 13; **Traits** cunning action, expertise (Deception, Sleight of Hand), fast hands, roguish archetype (thief), second-story work, thieves' cant, uncanny dodge; **AL** LE; **CR** 4; **XP** 1,800.

Equipment: *disguise kit, forgery kit, light crossbow (20 bolts), oil of taggit (3 doses), rapier, set of loaded dice, studded leather armor, thieves' tools, 5gp. One grifter carries 300gp that he won from the halfling thieves Bertram and Marwin.*

The Wily Grifters are better confidence men than combatants. They use their sharp tongues to get them out of a sticky situation rather than their poisoned blades. In their business, the right words and discretion are necessary for survival. The three rogues work as a team to cheat the game's participants. They use loaded dice to swindle their victims when playing dice games such as backgammon and hazard. Noticing the anomalous dice requires a successful DC 18 Wis (Perception) check. Likewise, the playing cards used for faro and basset are also marked and, to make matters worse, the Grifters use their Dex (Sleight of Hand) skill checks to manipulate the dealer's box for both games. Once again, spotting the marked cards also requires a successful DC 18 Wis (Perception) check.

Naturally, if someone catches them in the act of cheating, the Grifters feign ignorance. One of them then uses his Sleight of Hand abilities to slip oil of taggit into the PC's drink in an attempt to knock that person unconscious. Before the situation escalates into a full-scale confrontation, Dardennell tries to settle the matter without violence. He tells the Grifters to reimburse the PC for his losses and pay him any winning bets. He also tells the Grifters and their dupes to leave and not come back for 24 hours. If his attempts fail, he mumbles to himself and casts his *silent image* spell, creating the illusion of a frightful demonic creature that sends the entire inn into a panic.

The Grifters' line of work puts them in contact with many shady characters. Interacting with them for an hour grants the PCs a +5 bonus to any Cha (Persuasion) or Int (Investigation) checks made to gather information while in the Galloping Horse Inn.

Another colorful character at the inn is Zambossa Tetzatti (N male human, **Rog3**; Performance +5) an acerbic Mwandu musician, who frequently takes to the stage to perform a spontaneous musical and comedy show. His musicianship is first rate, but his comedic skills are utterly atrocious. He routinely insults audience members, which generates more heated words than laughs.

The clever Dowan (N female human **Rog4**; Persuasion +6, Sleight of Hand +5) combines the world's two oldest professions under one roof. The charismatic and intelligent young woman sells her body and mind. Her glib tongue and striking appearance serve her well as a prostitute and a barrister. Many of the patrons jokingly quip that the two professions are actually one and the same. She plays along with the humorous jest with the mindset that publicity never hurts.

If the PCs ask her questions about Tangjan College, they instantly get her attention. She is handling the legal matter of an estate searching for a missing heiress. The lucky beneficiary's relatives told her that the heiress, Tess Sanguinatta, mentioned meeting her distant cousin Mila at Tangjan College. Dowan admits that Tess is a shady character who frequently experiments with drugs and leads what she calls a "hedonistic lifestyle." Dowan offers the PCs a 50% share in her legal fees if they locate Tess and bring her to appear before her to receive her inheritance or get her to sign

a statement relinquishing her claims to the estate. Not surprisingly, Dowan pushes for the latter option, which generates Dowan a 500gp windfall as opposed to the former which yields a 100gp fee. The value of Tess' share is estimated to be 5,000gp, which remains in trust with the family's executor. Dowan refuses to mention the decedent's name.

In addition to the individuals presented here, the GM may also add the Moonlight Players from the subsequent random encounter **Wolves at the Stage Door** to the mix of the Galloping Ghost Inn's repertoire of characters. In that case, the Moonlight Players may be performing at the inn that particular night, or they may be on the hunt for their next victim.

Development: A fun-filled evening of food, wine and entertainment provides a needed respite from the dangers of adventuring and a lifeline of information that may aid the PCs in their quest. After spending several hours at the lively establishment, PCs may use Cha (Persuasion) and Int (Investigation) skills to gather information. A successful DC 15 check reveals the following information:

- Someone attacked a traveling merchant's caravan several days ago. The perpetrators took all of their goods and slew the shipment's defenders, leaving their corpses to rot in the open field. The site is approximately eight miles north of the inn on the other side of the Wanaheeli River.
- A brilliant but callous and unbalanced warlock named Blake Acuma told some of his associates that he is beginning work on his greatest discovery at Tangjan College. He is known as an expert in the field of metallurgy.
- Several months ago, Mila, a reputed practitioner of black magic, inquired about an obscure object that the renowned wizard Tunicamna took with him from Tangjan College 70 years earlier. She claimed that the seemingly worthless object was more valuable than its weight in diamonds and gold. Mila sounded like a total crackpot, and even the greediest and most battle-hardened mercenaries rejected her overtures.
- Werewolves stalk the land, killing the unwary and infecting others with their dreaded curse. Beware of the full moon!

If the check succeeds by 5 or more, the PCs also discover the following:

- Mila venerates Zuxaca, and the otherworldly being aids her in her cause. She believes that insanity is the only means of achieving true insight, and she spoke at length about bequeathing her gift of madness to others.

Area W2: Wanaheeli River (Difficulty Medium)

This shallow and turbulent waterway cuts a path across the Campacha Plains, effectively bisecting the region. The river is ill-suited for waterborne travel as its swift current and jagged rocks tear waterborne vessels to pieces. In these narrow, fast-moving rapids, the river is no more than a few feet deep on average. In most other locations, the average depth is approximately 10 feet. What it lacks in depth, however, it makes up for in breadth and ferocity. The river is 40+6d10 feet wide in nearly all locations. It takes a successful DC 12 Str (Athletics) check to negotiate the treacherous waters.

At various points in their history, the Campacha people built bridges to ford the river at its narrowest sections. They used wood and rope to construct these pontoon bridges, which are spaced a few miles apart along the river. In general, one of these bridges appears every 1d4 miles along the waterway. Without proper maintenance, these spans generally fail within a decade and must be replaced. Most inhabitants avoid these makeshift bridges whenever possible. These bridges can support a maximum weight of 10d10x10 pounds. Stresses in excess of these amounts cause the support structures to collapse, dumping the unfortunate traveler into the river unless he succeeds on a DC 12 Dexterity save, in which case he grabs hold of the remaining structure or lands atop a large piece of debris.

The stone bridges that appear on the Plains of Campacha map are the preferred means of travel for most residents. They are 4d6+20 feet in length, 2d6+5 feet wide and 2d6+10 feet above the water's surface. These permanent structures are safe and secure, capable of supporting weights well in excess of several thousand pounds. Because of this, these bridges are better traveled than the smaller and less-stable wooden bridges. The people in the preceding **Events** section are more likely to be encountered around the bridges, but so are the monsters from the **Random Encounters** section.



The PCs are not the only individuals to take notice of recent events. A sinister **mothman** bent on shaping fate and spreading entropy delights in the developments at Tangjan College. The malevolent, alien creature is intent on stopping all those who would dare interfere with Mila's plans, despite the fact that it knows nothing about her intentions. It senses that some greater force guides her actions, and that fate is ultimately destined to return to chaos and anarchy. As an agent of fate, it does everything it can to stop those seeking to undermine Mila's goal.

When the PCs approach the bridge, the mothman hides near the structure's base on the opposite bank. Because it had plenty of time to conceal its position, it takes a successful DC 23 Wis (Perception) check to see the mothman. All the while, it keeps a vigilant eye on the bridge, waiting to attack any creature it perceives as a threat. If the PCs notice the mothman and attack, the creature casts *greater invisibility* on itself and flies to a safer position. The mothman's fate is always the same: It is destined to destroy the bridge and stop the PCs from crossing the river. To accomplish this, it uses its agent of fate ability to cast *shatter* on the bedrock supporting its arch, causing it to collapse.

It is important to note that the mothman is solely focused on preventing the PCs from stopping Mila's plans and restoring entropy's supremacy over the world. In that vein, the mothman uses its spell-like abilities to influence the PCs' course of action rather than outright kill them. In order to weaken their resolve, the mothman uses *suggestion* to force them to turn back and *modify memory* to erase any recollections about why they are here. If its attempts to repel the PCs fail, it resorts to desperate measures using its *phantasmal killer* abilities to destroy one or more PCs. The attacks continue until all of the PCs safely make their way to the other side of the river. Once they complete this task, the mothman halts the assault. It now realizes that the PCs somehow altered their fate, leaving the mothman to ponder its new destiny.

Mothman: AC 14; HP 129 (18d8+48) Spd 30ft, fly 60ft; **Melee** claw x2 (+7, 2d6+1 slashing); **SA** mind warping gaze (30ft

MADNESS GROWS

gaze attack, DC 14 Wis save or target is frightened 1d6 rounds), multiattack (2 claws), spells (DC 27, Cha +7); **Str** +1, **Dex** +4, **Con** +3, **Int** +3, **Wis** +4, **Cha** +4; **Skills** Arcana +6, Deception +7, Insight +7, Perception +7, Stealth +7; **Senses** darkvision 60ft; passive Perception 17; **Traits** agent of fate (can duplicate effects of any spell 5th level or lower 1/day); **AL** CN; **CR** 6; **XP** 2,300. (**Appendix**)

Innate Spells: Constant: *blur*; At will: *dancing lights*, *detect thoughts*, *prestidigitation*; 3/day: *greater invisibility*, *major image*, *modify memory*, *phantasmal killer*, *suggestion*; 1/day: agent of fate, *feeblemind*, *mislead*, *project image*

Treasure: The mothman poorly conceals its treasure beneath a pile of grass and dirt beneath the bridge's base on the river's northern bank. Locating the cache requires a successful DC 14 Wis (Perception) check. The enigmatic creature leaves its riches behind without a second thought. The mothman's treasure includes a large coin purse holding 408gp, a smaller pouch containing five amethysts worth 50gp each, a +1 *dagger*, and a vial of *oil of sharpness*.

Hand Over Fist (Difficulty Medium)

The people of Campacha prefer bartering for goods and services over paying for these products with currency. Though they dream about eliminating coinage from their economic system, reality dictates that such an aspiration is impossible. The neighboring peoples mint money to conduct commercial transactions within their borders and abroad. Necessity demands that larger towns and cities mint coins to facilitate trade with their foreign partners.

During her travels, Mila learned that a Reman merchant was transporting minting equipment to a distant city west of Tangjan College. She ordered her bucentaur and centaur servants to intercept the shipment and bring the tools and raw materials to her. The horsemen traversed the grasslands for several days until they located the merchant and his three guards. Without warning, they charged headlong into the merchant's camp, slaying him, two guards and two of their horses. They took the coin-making equipment and copper ore, leaving the dead to rot in the open fields. A survivor, **Tehunka**, escaped (see the preceding **Events** section for details). By the time the PCs happen upon the scene, the reek of decay hangs heavy in the air, and the scavengers are sating their appetites. In fact, the stench is so strong that PCs can smell the horrid odor from as far away as 500 feet with a successful DC 20 Wis (Perception) check. When the PCs come within visual range of the massacre, the GM may read or paraphrase the following description:

The drone of flies feasting on the rancid, grotesquely bloated corpses of three men and two horses sounds like a singer attempting to create a vibrato. The frenetic buzz resounds throughout the area, and it is nearly loud enough to overtake the disgusting odor that hangs heavy in the air. Though the bodies are already half-eaten and nearly stripped of flesh in some places, four man-sized porcupines hungrily devour the rotting remains. An overturned cart and three of its broken wheels lie upon the ground.

The 4 giant porcupines ravenously inhale their meal to the exclusion of all other activities. In fact, they are so distracted that they suffer a -2 penalty on Wis (Perception) checks. The famished beasts are not looking for a fight, but they refuse to give up their spoils without offering some resistance. The brazen animals are bolder than most scavengers. They respond to efforts to frighten them away with growls, snarls, bared teeth and a deliberate arching of their quill-covered backbones to emphasize the point not to disturb them. If the PCs draw within 10 feet of the hungry creatures, the giant porcupines attack with unbridled ferocity, slapping the

PCs with their spiny tails. In the face of superior opposition, the porcupines' morale breaks rather quickly. Each animal retreats when reduced to half their original hit point total. If they escape the scrum, the porcupines loiter around the edges of the massacre site and wait for PCs to depart.

Patient PCs may instead wait for the porcupines' appetites to break. After 3d6 minutes of gorging on their surreptitious feast, the porcupines slink off to a safe location to digest their meals without a conflict. The voracious hunters lounge around in the grasses for the next 2d4 hours before returning to the site to once again fill their bellies.

Giant Porcupine (4): AC 11; **HP** 37 (5d8+15) **Spd** 40ft, **Melee** tail slap (+5, 3d6+3 piercing); **Str** +3, **Dex** +1, **Con** +3, **Int** -4, **Wis** +1, **Cha** -3; **Senses** passive Perception 11; **Traits** quills (creature attacking with light, 1-handed, natural weapons or unarmed takes 1d3 piercing damage, any creature grappling takes 2d4 piercing damage per round); **AL** Unaligned; **CR** 2; **XP** 450. (**Appendix**)

With the porcupines out of the way, the PCs are free to examine the carnage without any outside interference from any ravenous monsters. The prevailing environment is not conducive for preserving corpses, so little can be gleaned from looking at the bodies. Even in their terrible state of decomposition, the three humanoid bodies are clearly human, and the two animal carcasses are light horses. Scavengers had their way with the victims' flesh, making it impossible to determine when their wounds and injuries occurred. If the PCs attempt to speak with the victims' souls, the merchant's name was Targai, and he was lawful neutral. Likewise, his two guards, Hachawa and Uwata, were neutral. All three individuals confirm that three centaurs led by a centaur with a bull's torso attacked the group while they camped on the open plains during the overnight hours. They acknowledge that they were transporting coin-making tools to a distant city as well as a shipment of copper ore. The merchant estimates that they had enough copper ore to mint at least 10,000 coins. The guards' estimate of the shipment's value is less precise.

The centaurs took nearly all the raw materials and the minting equipment's primary components with them. In their haste, however, they left behind several spare parts and a few bars of copper ore strewn about in the tall grass. It takes a successful DC 12 Wis (Perception) check to notice these items. They include a coin die, a hammer and a three-pound chunk of copper bar sufficient to mint 250 copper pieces. Identifying the tools as those specifically used to mint coins requires a successful DC 15 Int (Investigation) check.

The centaurs crisscrossed the plains looking for the shipment, leaving numerous tracks in their wake. Locating one of their trails requires a successful DC 11 Wis (Perception) or Wis (Survival) check. There is a 50% chance that the PCs find the trail leading back to Tangjan College. Otherwise, the PCs discover the tracks that brought them here instead. If the Survival check succeeds by 10 or more, the PCs can differentiate the path the centaurs followed to get there from the one that returned them to Tangjan College.

Random Encounters

Presented below are five random encounters that take place on the Campacha Plains. The GM is free to omit any or all of these encounters as well as supplement them with random encounters from the table in the **Appendix**, or create new encounters of his own design — with the exception of the **No Bull** encounter.

Headless Horseman (Difficulty Medium)

On the plains many settlements are transitory. As the migratory patterns of various animals shift, the villagers that hunt these creatures uproot their camps and settle in a new location closer to their trail. The community of Kimitah was like many others in the area. Its hunter gatherers followed the roaming buffalo herds and foraged the surrounding area for wild fruits and vegetables. Its residents moved at least a dozen times during their lifetimes, often pitching their tents in a rolling valley near an ideal ambush site. The peaceful village of Kimitah prospered for many years until the ambitious Canotay rose to power and assumed control of his village. Un-

der his expansionistic policies, he waged war against his neighbors, greatly expanding Kimitah's exclusive hunting grounds and coffers. Avarice and cruelty found a home in Canotay's evil heart, and his brutality gained him many enemies. After three years of bloody savagery, Canotay's earthly reign of terror came to a gruesome end. A coalition of neighboring communities and Canotay's own people proved too much for the tyrant to resist. It took a dozen wounds to fell the fearsome warrior and free the village from his tyrannical reign, but Kimitah's liberation was short-lived.

The Lords of Hell saw fit to once again unleash Canotay upon this world in his new incarnation — as a headless horseman atop a black steed. He swooped through his former village with jubilant hatred, gleefully decapitating his wicked followers and all who betrayed him. In a manner of weeks, the village of Kimitah was no more. Its surviving residents scattered across the plains and fled to every remote corner of the world, leaving Canotay to roam the grasslands of Campacha searching for new victims. For the last 20 years, Canotay has reveled in his infernal task, harvesting more souls for his diabolical masters.

As he was in life, Canotay is fearless and supremely arrogant, brazenly riding across the open fields hunting mortal souls. He makes no effort to conceal his presence. The vengeful **dullahan** sits atop his ebon mount holding his razor-sharp blade aloft in preparation for a charge. When he notices the PCs, Canotay spurs his horse and charges toward their mightiest warrior, simultaneously activating his frightful presence aura. He singles out paladins and good-aligned divine spellcasters in preference to all others, particularly in light of the fact that he is immune to *magic missile* spells (see **Treasure** below for details). The dullahan is a skilled mounted combatant, and he makes the most of his tactical advantage. He uses the Ride-By Attack feat to attack and move past his opponent, allowing him to charge again in subsequent rounds.

Canotay does not use his death's calling ability unless he overhears a PC refer to his target by name. In addition to subjecting that individual to his special attack, he also taunts the PC and boasts that there is a place for him in Hell tonight. Canotay never flees from his enemy, though he may perform a tactical retreat. If reduced to less than one-quarter of his starting hit points, he rides away from battle and circles the PCs from a distance, giving his fast healing ability an opportunity to restore his lost hit points. When he regains full strength, he launches another assault.

Dullahan: AC 19; HP 136 (16d8+64) Spd 30ft, 60ft when mounted; **Melee** +1 longsword (+9, 1d8+6 slashing plus 1d6 cold); **SA** chilling blade (1d6 cold), death's calling (1/day may place on target within 60ft, target must make DC 16 Con save, on fail target is incapacitated 1 round and for 24hrs or until dullahan is dead all critical hits on target inflict maximum damage and target fails all death saves), summon mount (as action may summon warhorse which remains until slain or dismissed); **Immune** necrotic, poison damage; charmed, exhaustion, frightened, paralyzed, poisoned; **Resist** bludgeoning, piercing and slashing from nonmagical weapons; **Str** +5 (+8), **Dex** +2, **Con** +4 (+7), **Int** +2, **Wis** +3, **Cha** +4; **Skills** Athletics +8, Intimidation +7, Perception +6; **Senses** darkvision 60ft, passive Perception 16; **AL** LE; **CR** 7; **XP** 2,900. (**Appendix**)

Equipment: +1 longsword, +1 plate (AC 19), brooch of shielding, bead of force.

Magic Hunters (Difficulty Medium)

The unstable Mila always fears that someone is after her. In that frame of mind, she sent 6 **elusa hounds** onto the plains with one mission — hunt down and kill all magic-wielders they encounter. The fast-moving creatures use their arcane sight ability to locate and track their quarry. The creatures cover a lot of ground over the course of a single day, and the PCs are likely a prime target for these feral monsters.

The elusa hounds are most effective at night, when their scent and darkvision abilities give them an edge against most humanoid foes. The monsters dispense with stealth and instead rely on their keen senses and arcane sight to locate their targets in the darkness. Like most pack predators, the elusa hounds encircle their prey and then launch a coordinated attack against their enemies. The monsters fear Mila more than death, so they attack until they kill their victims, or until they are killed. If the PCs

attempt to track the elusa hounds, they follow a circuitous path that leads in no particular direction, as Mila instructed the creatures to locate magical auras rather than follow a specific creature.

Elusa Hound (6): AC 14; HP 26 (4d8+8) Spd 50ft; **Melee** bite (+4, 1d8+2 piercing plus DC 12 Str save or knock prone); **Str** +2, **Dex** +2, **Con** +2, **Int** -2, **Wis** +1, **Cha** -1; **Skills** Athletics +6, Perception +5, Survival +5; **Senses** darkvision 60ft, passive Perception 15; **Traits** arcane sight (permanent *detect magic*, 120ft), aura tracking (advantage on Wis (Perception) checks when tracking a spellcaster detected with arcane sight), stand guard (if target is prone, hound can grapple automatically, can only bite grappled creature); **AL** Unaligned; **CR** 1; **XP** 200. (**5th Edition Foes** 93)

Wolves at the Stage Door (Difficulty Medium)

Though none of them know it, the half-elves **Carrul**, **Satyras** and **Tammanna** share more than their love of the stage — they share the same elf father. Their philandering parent also bequeathed to them something other than their innate charisma and acting skills: He cursed them with lycanthropy. They are 3 **werewolves**. At first, their love of theater drew the three youngsters together, but as they grew older, each realized that he was different from the other children. Each member of the trio initially kept his lycanthropy a closely guarded secret. In time, they began to notice that their friends also shared the same unusual traits. Mysterious and unexplained wounds, spontaneous disappearances and frequent absences during and shortly after a full moon plagued them throughout their adolescence and early adulthood. They realized they were stronger together than they were apart. It was time to take their traveling show on the road.

Carrul, Satyras and Tammanna formed an acting troupe known as the Moonlight Players. They travel across the land performing plays and improvisation shows at theaters, taverns, inns and private residences. The men, Carrul and Satyras, are the consummate hams. They overact and emote to the point that it is practically comical, though the routine is part of their shtick rather attributable to incompetence. Tammanna is the lovely, classically trained actress who is still young and beautiful enough to play the vamp, and mature enough to dramatize older, more cerebral characters. The trio's repertoire of plays include comedies, tragedies and histories, though given the male leads' talents and Tammanna's looks, they are most renowned for their bawdy farces. An engagement usually lasts between three and five nights.

The nomadic lifestyle is also the ideal cover for their murderous ways. They always sate their bloodlust either a few days before or after each performance, thus allowing them to continue their killing spree undetected. As natural lycanthropes, they can control their transformation into hybrid and animal forms. They deliberately schedule shows on nights when the full moon is at its peak. When they leave the town and slay their victims, no one suspects that they are werewolves because the full moon had no effect on them during their performance.

Development: The GM has the option to either run this encounter at location **Area W1: The Galloping Ghost Inn**, or the PCs may encounter the company either before or after their scheduled performance at the local hotspot. In the former case, the werewolves are not actively looking for fresh victims. In the latter case, they are on the prowl and preferably have already slain Zokala's husband, Chatlan (see the preceding **Events** section for details). The werewolves recognized Zokala's party as easy pickings. They dispensed with any pretenses and attacked them in animal form, thus infecting her traveling companions with lycanthropy. Under questioning, the werewolves deny any knowledge of this attack as well as any information about the centaurs' attack and Tangian College. Seeing through these lies requires a successful DC 15 Wis (Insight) check. The PCs appear much more formidable than their last overmatched opponents, so the werewolves use different tactics.

On the open plains, the werewolves always travel in human form, allowing them to size up their opponents at close range. When they approach the PCs or vice versa, the acting troupe asks the PCs to volunteer as a test audience for their latest production, "*Dance with a Demon*." The short play is about a man who runs into his former girlfriend and her new

beau at a local tavern. Neither man realizes that the woman is actually a succubus that wants to be good. Naturally, Tammanna stars in the role of the reformed demon. The show is filled with double entendres, mistaken identity and slapstick comedy. The show lasts for 30 minutes, and in its raucous conclusion, the trio integrates their bardic performance abilities and spellcasting into the plot, allowing them to use magic against the PCs without them knowing it, if they succeed on a Cha (Deception) check. The PCs spot the deception with a successful DC 15 Wis (Insight) check.

In the ensuing melee, Currul uses his bardic inspiration to enhance his allies' performance while using his cutting words to penalize their opponents. Satyrus casts *hold person* against one of the party's fighters, and Tammanna casts *suggestion* against another fighter. The trio takes turns casting their debilitating spells against the PCs they deem most vulnerable. After subduing these PCs, the werewolves transform into their hybrid form and savagely attack the remaining PCs with their rapiers and bite attacks. If the combat turns against them, they cast *expeditious retreat* before transforming into their animal forms and fleeing at maximum speed. Whenever escape is not an option, they use their personal charm and acting skills to beg for peace. In this instance, they offer information in exchange for freedom. They explain that during the course of their travels, an ambitious and mentally unstable sorceress approached them a few months ago to join her and her minions at Tangian College to bring madness to the world. The sorceress did not seem to know their true nature. The woman had an air of the grave about her, and her bizarre philosophies about insanity and reality were too much for even them to bear. They declined her offer and never saw her again.

Werewolves (half-elven/hybrid form), Brd4 (3): AC 13 (14 in hybrid form); **HP** 22 (4d8+4) **Spd** 30ft; **Melee** rapier (+3/+5 in hybrid form, 1d6+1 piercing/1d6+2 piercing in hybrid form); **Ranged** light crossbow (+3, 80ft/320ft, 1d8+1 piercing); **Immune** bludgeoning, piercing and slashing damage from nonmagical weapons that are not silvered; **Str** -1 (+2 in hybrid form), **Dex** +1, **Con** +1, **Int** +2, **Wis** +1, **Cha** +3; **Skills** Acrobatics +3, Arcana +4, Deception +7, History +4, Insight +4, Intimidation +5, Medicine +3, Perception +3, Performance +7, Sleight of Hand +3; **Senses** cutting words, darkvision 60ft, jack of all trades (+1), passive Perception 13; **Traits** bard college (lore), bardic inspiration (d6, 3/day), expertise (Deception, Performance), fey ancestry, song of rest (d6); **AL** CE; **CR** 3; **XP** 700.

Spells (slots): 0 (at will)—*mage hand*, *message*, *vicious mockery*; 1st (4)—*bane*, *cure wounds*, *dissonant whispers*, *healing word*; 2nd (3)—*hold person*, *invisibility*, *suggestion*; **Spell DC:** 13; **Spell Attack Bonus:** +5

Equipment: bracers of armor, rapier, light crossbow (50 bolts), 90gp

In addition the three bards carry the following items — **Currul:** *potion of healing* (x3), *potion of resistance* (cold), *potion of resistance* (fire); **Satyrus:** *spell scroll* (haste), *spell scroll* (heroism), *potion of greater healing* (x2); **Tammanna:** *potion of heroism*, *potion of invulnerability*.

Werewolf, (wolf form) (3): AC 12; **HP** 58 (9d8+18) **Spd** 40ft; **Melee** bite (+4, 1d8+2 piercing, plus save vs lycanthropy), claw (+4, 2d4+2 slashing); **SA** multiattack (1 bite, 1 claw); **Immune** bludgeoning, piercing and slashing damage from nonmagical weapons that are not silvered; **Str** +2, **Dex** +1, **Con** +2, **Int** +0, **Wis** +0, **Cha** +0; **Skills** Perception +4, Stealth +3; **Senses** passive Perception 14; **Traits** keen hearing and smell (advantage on Wis (Perception) checks based on hearing or smell), shapechanger (action to polymorph into hybrid or wolf form); **AL** CE; **CR** 3; **XP** 700.

Charge of the Mad Buffalos (Difficulty Medium)

Buffalo herds are not an uncommon sight on the Plains of Campacha. During the course of their travels, the PCs likely run across at least one herd of buffalo, allowing them to marvel at these majestic beasts as they migrate across the open grasslands. During these encounters, the GM may add a lone predator stalking the herd from afar to add to the sense of normalcy. The large bovines usually stroll leisurely across the grasslands feasting on edible plants while keeping a vigilant eye out for predators. These animals are usually less susceptible to being spooked than their domesticated cousins, but this herd is different. As men are often prone to do, Mila captured 3 buffalos and placed a fragment of metallurgic amber into the beasts' ears to presumably intensify the material's madness-inducing properties. Sadly, her experiment worked to perfection. Though these buffalo appear identical to their kin, these specimens are extremely aggressive and confrontational toward creatures other than their fellow herd beasts. At the first sign of intruders, they lower their horns and stampede toward their newfound enemy, often sending the rest of the herd into a wild panic.

When the PCs first notice the herd, the GM may read or paraphrase the following description of this seemingly tranquil scene:

A herd of short-horned wild bison quietly grazes on the abundant grasses and edible plants, occasionally lifting their heads to scan their surroundings for potential danger. The animals cover several acres of land in their search for food.

For the moment, nearly all of the 30 animals focus on eating. On a successful DC 15 Int (Nature) or Wis (Perception) check, a PC notices that a few members of the herd seem very agitated without any apparent reason. The PCs may attribute the behavior to the presence of a nearby predator or a simmering rivalry within the herd. Most of the herd keeps a wary eye on their surroundings, but these three are completely preoccupied with scanning the horizon for potential foes. Besides relying upon their vision, the bison also use their keen sense of smell to notice their enemies. Depending upon whether the buffalos are upwind or downwind, they can detect the presence of humanoids at a distance anywhere between 15 feet and 60 feet.

Buffalo (3 or 30): AC 10; **HP** 37 (5d10+10) **Spd** 40ft; **Melee** gore (+7, 2d8+5 piercing plus trample); **Str** +5, **Dex** +0, **Con** +2, **Int** -4, **Wis** +1, **Cha** -2; **Senses** passive Perception 11; **Traits** trample (if gore attack hits, target must make DC 12 Dex check or take 2d8+5 bludgeoning damage from hooves); **AL** Unaligned; **CR** 2; **XP** 450. **(Appendix)**

Tactics: At the first sign of intruders, any one of the three buffalo charges at its intended target. The remaining buffaloes affected by the madness join in shortly afterward. Whenever possible, the buffalos remain close together and attempt to trample creatures that stand in their way. Once in close quarters, the buffalos use their horns to gore their opponents. Driven mad by the metallurgic amber in their heads, these three animals attack until slain. Though these three buffalos are the most immediate danger, their aggressive behavior may create an even bigger problem if the rest of the herd panics. All 27 wild buffalos bolt in a random direction if the herd fails a DC 10 Wisdom save. (The GM should attempt one roll for the entire herd or several large groups rather than attempting individual Wisdom saves.) If this occurs, the tightly packed group charges in one direction, stampeding anything that stands in its way. Unlike the mad buffalos, these animals are merely trying to get away from a perceived danger rather than engaging in combat. After trampling any potential foes that impede their path, the herd continues running in a random direction until fatigue and exhaustion overcome them.

Development: A successful DC 12 Int (Nature) check determines that the three animals' aggressive behavior is not the norm for plains wild buffalos; however there is no readily available explanation for the anomaly. The buffalos' thick coats hide the telltale radiation burns. Because of the minute size of the fragments and their virtually inaccessible location deep within

the creatures' ear canals, a DC 25 Wis (Perception) check is needed to spot the tiny pieces of metallurgic amber that wreaked havoc upon the animals' minds. Similarly, most detection spells fail. The only exception is one used to detect the presence of metal. Even this minute quantity of metallurgic amber has a detrimental effect on those exposed to it. (See the Metallurgic Amber sidebox in **Area G21** for details about metallurgic amber's effects.)

No Bull (Difficulty Hard)

After bringing Tunicamna's amulet to Mila, the marauding monsters that attacked Petyan now roam the open grasslands, leaving mayhem and havoc in their wake. Following their assault against the defenseless villagers, the bucentaur and his underlings stay north of the Wanaheeli River within a 10-mile-radius of Tangjan College. Though they are tasked with patrolling the area for trespassers, the chaotic beasts are more interested in harassing travelers and other monsters than actually securing the campus's outermost boundaries. They move freely throughout the region, traveling approximately 25 miles every day, and often crisscross the land south of the college at least twice per day.

Whenever the PCs enter a square within the 10-mile radius around Tangjan College, they have a 10% chance of crossing paths with the bucentaur and his two centaur allies. Similarly, they have a 20% chance of coming across the monsters' trail in their journey through that space. These chances double south of Tangjan College. These percentages are not cumulative. Encountering the monsters' tracks does not mean that the PCs automatically find them. It still takes a successful Wis (Survival) or Wis (Perception) check to locate and/or follow the tracks. Because the quartet of monsters travels tremendous distances, the difficulty class to find their trail is 13+1d8 (the number of days since they made the tracks). The mobile bucentaur and his centaur allies travel roughly 25 miles per day, so the PCs must make up that ground and then some if they hope to catch up to the savage monsters. Overtaking the monsters is nearly impossible unless the tracker moves at full speed and faster without penalty. However, the bucentaur and the centaurs tend to retrace their steps to some degree. While following the creatures' trail, the chances of encountering them doubles regardless of the trail's age. When they locate their quarries' tracks, the PCs have a 50% chance of finding the beasts' telltale calling card: one or more dead foes. Presented below are two victims of their carnage.

Kathlins

Two equine beasts lie on the ground in pools of dried blood. The animals' hides are slashed and gouged, exposing their bones and internal organs. The blackish-brown creatures look like warhorses, but have six legs instead of four. In addition, something tore off the unfortunate victims' tails and manes. These thick tufts of dark-colored hair are still attached to clumps of shredded flesh.

The centaurs' victims are two kathlins, noble and good-aligned magical beasts indigenous to the region. The PCs may identify the creatures as kathlins with a successful DC 12 Int (Nature) check. The kathlins put up a good fight, but the bucentaur was too strong. At least a dozen deep lacerations mar their muscular bodies. Though they presumably shared the same equine lineage as their killers, the victors scalped their fallen foes in a gesture intended to rob them of their shared equine heritage. The kathlins are not intelligent enough to convey any meaningful details about the attack, and any attempts to communicate with their departed souls provide no useful information.

Chankotah

Pieces of shredded hide armor, a broken scimitar and the obviously lifeless corpse of a bloody and bruised man rest atop the crimson-stained grass. His bare skin bears gruesome crescent-shaped impressions, and multiple fingers and toes are missing from his hands and feet.

A week earlier, Mila learned that a traveling merchant passing through the area would be carrying minting equipment. Before she set the bucentaurs and his cronies loose upon the grasslands, she gave them the task of retrieving the coin-making tools. The trapper Chankotah ran into the crazed beasts first. When they realized they had attacked the wrong man, the wild monsters tortured him for information, randomly cutting off his fingers and toes, as well as standing atop him for extended periods. After several hours of horrific agony, Chankotah's body finally gave out, and he mercifully died. Chankotah sustained only two slashing wounds other than the amputations of his fingers and toe. The centaurs' hooves caused the crescent-shaped injuries on his back.

If the PCs communicate with Chankotah's soul, the neutral good ranger willingly speaks with any good-aligned creature. He tells them that the bucentaur and the centaurs attacked and subdued him. They searched his possessions, but when they did not find what they were seeking, they demanded that he give them his "coin tools." They refused to believe that he was a trapper, so they tortured him until he died. He does not know why they wanted the "coin tools," but the bucentaur leader said that his mistress needed the objects.

If the PCs so far have eluded the **bucentaur** and the **2 centaurs**, they finally lock horns with them somewhere within the 2-mile radius surrounding Tangjan College. As demonstrated by their previous battle tactics, they are straightforward combatants that rely on brute strength and speed to outgun and outrun their enemies. The bucentaur, resembles a bison more than a bull with a thick mane of dark fur over his head and short, curved horns. Torventrix leads the initial attack, lowering his vicious horns and delivering his powerful charge against the nearest enemy. The centaurs follow close behind and launch a volley of arrows at a common target. The bucentaur prefers to charge his opponents in melee combat, though he rarely risks taking an attack of opportunity to do so. On subsequent rounds, the bucentaur wields his mighty greataxe with tremendous efficiency while incorporating his natural attacks into his routine. After the initial salvo, the centaurs unsheathe longswords and engage the PCs in melee combat.

As long as the bucentaur remains standing, the centaurs ignore their personal safety and fight to the death. If the bucentaur falls or escapes, they attempt to flee. The formidable bucentaur stands his ground until the last possible moment. He makes no effort to retreat until the PCs reduce his hit points into the single digits, and escape seems to be a realistic possibility. Otherwise, his devotion to Mila and her cause spurs him to fight to the bitter end. For Torventrix and the centaurs, escape is merely a temporary respite. They retreat to a safe location and regroup within a matter of minutes, preparing for the next assault against the PCs. They use any available magic to heal their wounds and then resume the fight. The centaurs willingly share their items among themselves and their bucentaur leader. Torventrix gives no aid or assistance to his centaur companions, however, despite the fact that they spearheaded many attacks, including the one against Petyan, while he stood back and watched the carnage unfold. In his mind, the centaurs are expendables Mila can easily replace.

Centaur (2): AC 12; **HP** 45 (6d10+12) **Spd** 50ft; **Melee** hooves x2 (+6, 2d6+4 bludgeoning), pike (+6, 1d10+4 piercing); **Ranged** longbow x2 (+4, x2, 150ft/600ft, 1d8+2 piercing); **SA** multiattack (1 hoof, 1 pike or 2 longbow); **Str** +4, **Dex** +2, **Con** +2, **Int** -1, **Wis** +1, **Cha** +0; **Skills** Athletics +6, Perception +3, Survival +3; **Senses** passive Perception 13; **Traits** charge (if centaur moves more than 30ft straight and hits with pike, target takes additional 3d6 piercing damage); **AL** CN; **CR** 2; **XP** 450.

Bucentaur: AC 11; **HP** 102 (12d10+36) **Spd** 40ft; **Melee** hoof x2 (+8, 2d6+5 bludgeoning), gore (+5, 2d6+5 piercing), greataxe (+5, 4d6+5 slashing); **SA** multiattack (2 hooves, 1 gore); **Str** +5, **Dex** +1, **Con** +3, **Int** -1, **Wis** +1, **Cha** +0; **Skills** Athletics +7, Perception +3, Survival +3; **Senses** passive Perception 13; **Traits** natural cunning (immune to maze, never lost, never at disadvantage in combat); **AL** CE; **CR** 6; **XP** 2,300. **(Appendix)**

Development: The bucentaur and the centaurs never surrender. The PCs must subdue them to extract information from the monstrous hu-

New Magic Items

Bottled Yeti Fur

Rare Wondrous Item

When this small flask is opened a stream of coarse white fur emerges, covering the user in a tangled pelt. While coated with this fur, the wearer gains advantage against cold damage, +1 bonus to AC and +2 bonus to Dex (Stealth) checks in areas of ice and snow. The fur lasts for 24 hours and can be removed early by soaking it in alcohol. This is a one-use item.

Armbands of the Brawler

Rare Wondrous Item (requires attunement)

These items outwardly resemble rough, worn armbands. When attuned to the user however they give a +1 bonus to all grapple checks and all attempts to break grapples.

Embalming Thread

Rare Wondrous Item

When a length of this stiff, acrid-smelling thread is sown onto the body of a zombie it provides resistance to piercing and slashing damage. When sown onto the body of a flesh golem it provides resistance to bludgeoning, piercing and slashing damage from adamantine weapons. It takes one hour per hit die and a successful DC 15 Int (Medicine) check to successfully sew the thread onto a creature. One length of stitches is required per hit die of the creature, and a single thimble full of *embalming thread* contains 20 lengths.

Harp of Shattering

Rare Wondrous Item (requires attunement)

This beautiful harp holds 10 magical charges. Each time it is played, the harp can be used to create one of the following effects: *thunderwave* (1 charge) or *shatter* (2 charges). When all the charges are expended, the harp cannot be used for these effects again, but can still function as a fine musical instrument.

Ring of Sacred Mistletoe

Rare Ring (requires attunement)

This ring of living mistletoe grants its wearer a +1 bonus to Wis (Animal Handling) and Int (Nature) checks, and the wearer may use the spell *shillelagh* once per day.

Bracers of the Glib Entertainer

Rare Wondrous Item (requires attunement)

Wearers of these vibrantly-colored, bell-covered bracers gain a +2 bonus to all Charisma (Performance) checks, and may cast the spell *glibness* once per day.

Chalice of Poison Weeping

Rare Wondrous Item

This silver chalice's handles are crafted in the shape of rearing unicorns. When drunk from the chalice removes all effects of poison affecting the drinker, and causes the poison itself to weep from the drinker's eyes. A single dose of the poison is then collected in the chalice, and can be stored and used again.

manoids. They refuse to answer questions unless the PCs magically force them to comply, or the PCs succeed on a Cha (Intimidation) check. The underling centaurs know that Mila ordered the bucentaur to retrieve the amulet from Petyan and acquire the minting equipment from a traveling merchant several days earlier. The centaurs devoutly revere Zuxaca, a belief they share with the bucentaur and Mila. They confirm that Mila occupies Tangjan College, but they have no information regarding Mila's plans and intentions with the metallurgic amber or the minting equipment. Torventrix has the same details as the centaurs and knows Mila employs a warlock to work on her alchemical substances, though he does not know why she recruited him for her demented scheme. Examining the centaurs' bodies reveals that two of them bear a tattoo of a contorted, eyeless serpent that is commonly associated with Zuxaca. Identifying its affiliation with this deranged entity requires a successful DC 15 Int (Arcana) or Int (Religion) check.

Treasure: Besides his normal gear, Torventrix also has *bottled yeti fur* (see New Magic Items sidebar) and a *potion of greater healing*, a *potion of resistance* (lightning) and a *potion of invisibility*. He also has a golden locket worth 150gp and four gems worth 50gp (x3) and 25gp. The centaurs have 4 potions in all — 2 *potions of greater healing*, a *potion of fire breath*, a *potion of invulnerability*, and a *potion of resistance* (poison). One of them also carries a *wand of magic missiles*. Their combined monetary treasure totals 109gp.

Part Three: Tangjan College, Ground Level

The trail of death and destruction across the plains of Campacha lead the PCs to Mila and her minions on the campus of Tangjan College. Just like 70 years earlier, the school is now the epicenter of an insane entity's mission to spread madness throughout the land. To stop Mila from unleashing the forces of entropy upon the world, the PCs must infiltrate her stronghold and foil her plans by preventing her from circulating her tainted coins among an unsuspecting populace. Chaos reigns supreme as creatures borne of sheer bedlam wander the halls and chambers of Tangjan College. While inside the complex, the PCs come face to face with the deranged sorcerer who set the adventure's chain of events into motion and her otherworldly minions. It is up to the PCs to restore sanity to a world gone mad.

Approaching Tangjan College

Akin to a lighthouse along the edge of a rocky harbor, the sprawling complex of Tangjan College towers above the surrounding flatlands where it once beckoned eager students to learn within its welcoming halls. The neglected building and its grounds are now shadows of their former selves — vestiges of a bygone era and the echoes of a scholar's ambitious dream. Over the years, the lush grasses and wildlife reclaimed the campus Tiblu founded. Still, the massive college is the largest and most-visible landmark in the region. During the day, the top of the three-story building and its lone tower are visible from approximately 8 miles away, though it is impossible to make out any of the structure's details from that distance.

Finding the Amulet

Resourceful PCs are likely to use magic to locate Tunicamna's amulet, the copper ore and the remaining quantities of metallurgic amber. Mila's warlock-chemist Blake Acamu discovered that lead effectively negates metallurgic amber's debilitating effects. Tiblu also used lead paint to shield his laboratory from unwelcome *scrying* spells. As a result, PCs cannot use magic to locate any of the previously mentioned objects if lead shielding prevents the spell from functioning, such as *locate object*.

Tangjan College's architectural features become visible when the PCs come within 6d6x40 feet of the building. At this distance or less, the GM may read or paraphrase the following description:

An immense stone structure soars into the heavens with its highest tower reaching a height of 80 feet. The oddly shaped building is constructed along a central axis that branches out into three separate wings, all of which include an outdoor courtyard. Two of the wings run parallel to one another, and the third wing runs perpendicular to them. The latter branch features a grand entrance consisting of an arched gate that opens into a walled courtyard surrounding the school's main entrance. The other two wings also feature outdoor areas, though these grounds are smaller and less majestic than the apparent central courtyard. Numerous windows line the walls of the second floor, and the tower has no visible roof. Eerie lights periodically flicker in some of the windows.

There are multiple ways to enter the college. The ground floor has four separate entrances. The most obvious is the main entrance on the building's south face that is accessible through the outer courtyard. When school was in session, the heavy bronze doors were always kept open. Since Mila's arrival, she keeps the doors closed. Likewise, Mila also secures the sturdy wooden gates and the strong wooden door that open onto the school's fairgrounds where Tangjan College hosted jousting tournaments and equestrian events during its heyday. The overgrown garden on the western side of the building also has a bronze door with beveled glass panels that adjoins the old temple. The last means of entering the building from the ground floor is the servants' entrance on the west side.

Alternatively, the PCs may opt to enter the college through one of its many windows or its rooftop entrance. The windows are 1-1/2 feet high, 2 feet wide and 6 inches deep. A man-sized creature can crawl through the window with difficulty, but larger creatures find it impossible to squeeze into the tight space. Interlocking bricks form the structure's exterior walls, including those surrounding the outer courtyard, the fairgrounds and the garden, making them relatively difficult to climb. Anyone attempting this route must succeed on a DC 18 Str (Athletics) check. As mentioned in the description, no windows exist on the first floor. The second-floor windows are 25 feet above the ground and the roof is 60 feet above the ground. A 10-foot-high wall surrounds the tower's base. Though not visible from ground level, a *wall of force* acts as the tower's roof (see **Area R1** for details regarding the tower).

Dive Bombers (Difficulty Medium)

Mila does not believe in or possibly understand the concept of guards. She did not charge any of her minions with the specific task of patrolling the area in search of intruders. In the absence of any designated guardians, **4 perytons** assumed the role of their own accord. The savage beasts are uninterested in defending Mila and her minions from harm. Instead, the opportunistic predators unintentionally serve as Tangjan College's outer

defenses despite the fact that they are solely interested in hunting humanoid prey. The clever monsters are adept flyers and prefer swooping down on their victims from a dizzying height. One peryton takes up a position atop the courtyard wall in **Area G1**, while the others stand on the roof overlooking the main entrance. The vicious hunters keep their eyes fixed on the outer courtyard and nearby fairgrounds, giving them advantage on their Wis (Perception) checks. From their vantage point, the perytons can only see PCs approaching the building's south side, which includes **Areas G2** and **G3**. They cannot spot PCs scaling the structure's eastern, western or northern walls unless the creatures ascend to the roof. The wicked beasts have had plenty of time to conceal their hiding spots, requiring a DC 25 Wis (Perception) check for the PCs to spot.

Once they spot potential prey, the perytons swoop down from their fixed positions using their dive attacks to gore enemies before gliding to a safe and elevated location. The perytons prefer their hit-and-run tactics over going toe-to-toe with the PCs in spite of the fact that they must forego their claw attacks to do so.

The perytons flee into the surrounding wilderness if faced with imminent destruction. They never surrender under any circumstances. They do not willingly converse with the PCs unless a PC successfully intimidates or magically compels them to do so. The perytons have no knowledge of Mila's plans and ambitions, but they did see the bucentaur and his centaur companions return to the college several days ago carrying tools and copper ore. They saw them ride back onto the open plains hours ago. Other than that, they provide no useful information.

Peryton (4): AC 13; HP 33 (6d8+6) Spd 20ft, fly 60ft; Melee gore (+5, 1d8+3 piercing), talons (+5, 2d4+3 piercing); **Resist** bludgeoning, piercing and slashing from nonmagical weapons; **Str +3, Dex +1, Con +1, Int -1, Wis +1, Cha +0; Skills** Perception +5; **Senses** passive Perception 15; **Traits** dive attack (if peryton is flying and moves more than 30ft, melee hit deals an extra 2d8 damage), flyby (no attack of opportunity when peryton flies out of reach); keen sight and smell (advantage on Wis (Perception) checks based on sight and smell); **AL** CE; **CR** 2; **XP** 450.

Portraying Insanity

The word insanity typically conjures an image of a violent, delusional psychopath, but mental illness is far more complex than this stereotype. Madness takes many insidious forms. Some are in plain sight, and others are far more subtle. As the PCs encounter Mila's followers in the rooms and corridors of Tangjan College, various psychological disorders affect each of these individuals and groups in different ways. For instance, one person may suffer from an extremely debilitating phobia, such as the fear of other people, while another frequently experiences auditory and visual hallucinations that make him more susceptible to illusions. These ailments are intended to breathe life into the NPCs rather than have a profound effect on their combat abilities. It is important to note that the game term "insanity" does not have the same meaning as the modern legal definition. The inclusion of these disorders is not intended to imply that people suffering from them are insane in a modern sense.

Optional Recovery Rule

Characters who suffer from short- and long-term madness can recover as described in the *5e Core Rules*. The DM may allow characters suffering from indefinite madness to use the following optional rule to recover as well. To recover, an insane character must make a DC 15 Wisdom save once a week. If the save succeeds, the insanity is still in effect, but the next save's DC is reduced by an amount equal to the character's Wisdom bonus. When the save DC is reduced to 0, the character is cured of the insanity and free of its effects.

MADNESS GROWS

Development: Naturally, any protracted combat with the perytons attracts the interest of one or more of Mila's minions in rooms near the windows. For every round of combat, one of more creatures inside has a cumulative 10% chance of noticing the combat. If the monsters can fly, they take to the skies and join the melee. If not, the deranged spectators watch the unfolding drama before retreating to a safe location. The chaotic and insane creatures are more amused than concerned about the PCs' presence. Similarly, the creatures in **Area G2** are unfazed by the perytons' actions. They presume that the vile beasts are busy hunting some hapless creature and are content to let them have their fun. Their attitude immediately changes the moment they see the PCs fly overhead or enter the fairgrounds. If that occurs, they join the fray with the perytons.

Treasure: The perytons keep their treasure in a small pile on the roof underneath the base of **Area R1**. Spotting the items requires a successful DC 15 Wis (Perception) check. Their stash includes a +1 *light crossbow*, and a sack containing 520gp and 16 pp.

Ground Level

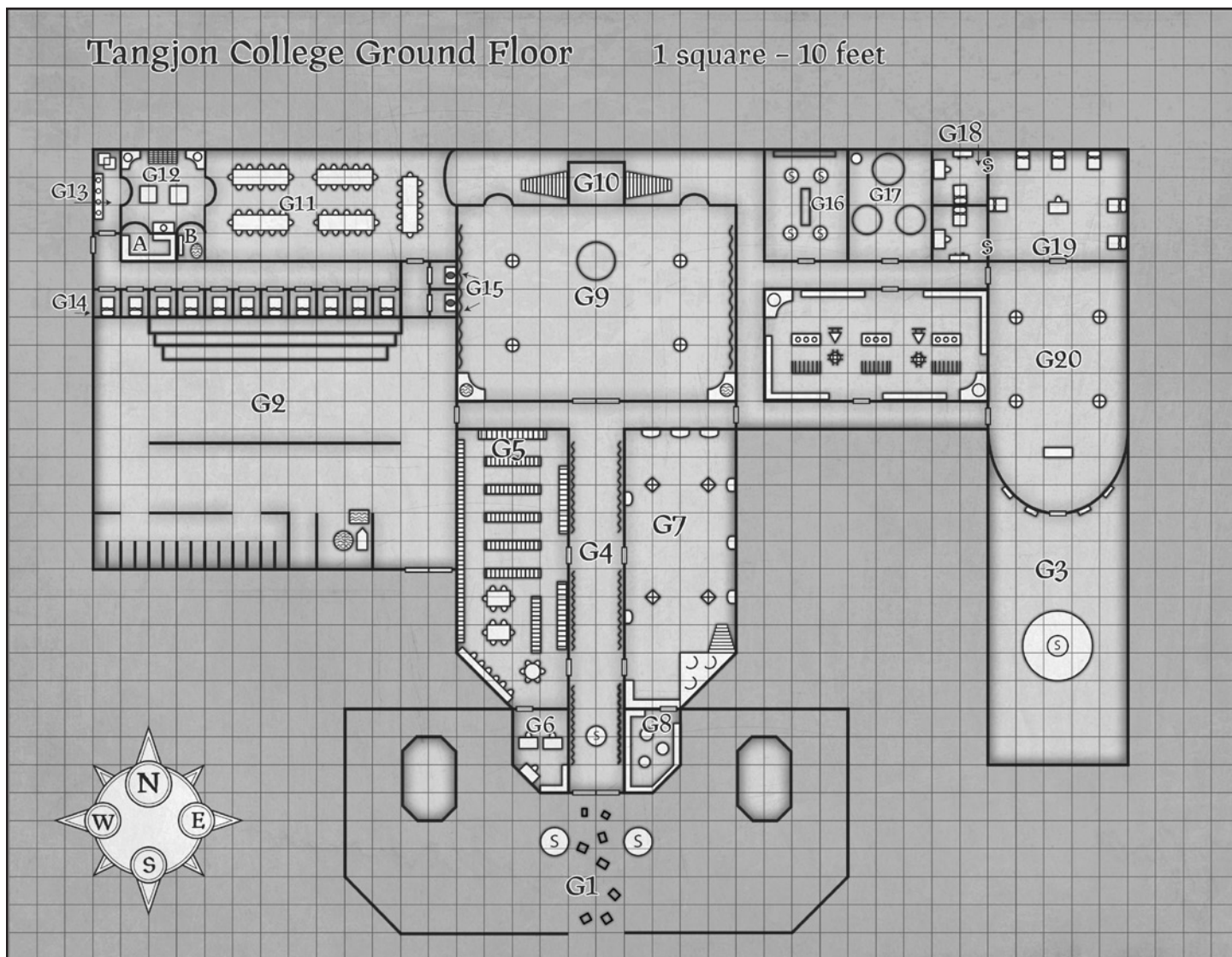
Tiblu built his college's walls from reinforced masonry and his doors from strong wood. Despite their age and neglect, the doors open with nominal effort unless otherwise noted. Tiblu cast *continual flame* spells upon glass jewels embedded into the corridors' ceilings, basking the passageways in ample light. The gems are spaced 40 feet apart, providing normal light to all areas within the corridor. Rooms are unlit unless otherwise specified. Unless noted, secret doors can be located with a DC 18 Wis (Perception) check. The ceiling height in the corridors is 15 feet, whereas the height in the rooms increases to 18 feet.

The ground floor's exterior areas are described first, followed by the southern wing, western wing, eastern wing and the common area linking all three building sections. The southern wing includes the campus's important meeting areas and library. The western wing contains the servants' quarters and dining facilities, and the eastern wing is the college's religious and spiritual section.

Area G1: Outer Courtyard

A 20-foot-high brick wall surrounds a spacious courtyard. Thick grass covers the entire courtyard's surface including almost all of the cobblestones that once formed a pathway between the designed breach in the outer wall and the closed bronze doors that open into the building itself. Bas-relief sculptures of scholars and intellectuals adorn these massive bronze doors that are large enough to accommodate a giant. A limestone statue of an aging man stands on each side of the covered pathway. Age and water took their toll on the artworks, as cracks, pockmarks and erosion mar their surfaces, particularly around the subjects' faces. Likewise, dirt, debris and algae grow on the surface of two marble reflecting pools.

During the college's heyday, students and faculty alike gathered in the outer courtyard for discussions and debate. Tangjan's servants kept the lush grasses in check and regularly cleaned its lovely reflecting pools. But those days are long gone. The lush grasses reclaimed the ground they lost, and the manmade structures fell into ruin. Murky, non-potable water cov-



QUESTS OF DOOM 3

ered with algae now fills the 3-foot-deep marble pools, making it impossible to see more than a few inches below the water's surface. The only way to search either pool is to wade in and feel one's way around the bottom and edges. PCs that do so in the western pool come up empty. Searching the eastern pool proves more profitable. After performing a careful tactile search, a PC that succeeds on a DC 15 Wis (Perception) check locates a sealed bone scroll case that inadvertently fell into the water during the previous conflict at Tangjan College.

The stone statues depict Tiblu shortly after he founded the institution. Identifying him as the subject requires a successful DC 15 Int (History) or Int (Investigation) check. The badly damaged sculptures are worthless. Mila keeps the main entrance closed at all times, but not locked. She and her minions enter and exit the building through the fairground gates and door in **Area G2**.

Bronze door: 2 in. thick; AC 18, hp 27; Immunity cold, fire, lightning, poison, psychic; Resistance thunder, weapon damage; Break DC 25 Str; Unlock DC 16 Dex with thieves' tools proficiency.

Treasure: The bone scroll case in the eastern pool is a *spell scroll* containing three spells (*daylight* (save DC 13), *bestow curse* (save DC 13), *greater restoration*).

Area G2: Fairgrounds (Difficulty Hard)

A 20-foot-high brick wall completely surrounds the college's fairgrounds. Raucous cheering, bawdy cries and the intermittent sounds of snapping wood echo throughout the outdoor playground. Two centaurs armed with flimsy lances charge toward one another on opposite sides of a long wooden rail that separates the competitors. The spectacle delights four armed men sitting in the terraced stone benches overlooking the site, as well as a dashing man with the furry legs of a goat and a set of ram horns protruding from his temples. They roar with approval and hoist a frothy tankard into the air at the slightest provocation. The audience faces a large, covered stable and a blacksmith's work area that includes a cold forge, an anvil and an iron trough.

Tangjan College routinely held jousting tournaments and other equestrian events during its brief existence. The stable has 14 stalls for housing horses and a dozen riding saddles hang from posts scattered around the freestanding corral. The adjacent blacksmith's workstation is in much poorer shape. The metalworking tools, anvil, trough and forge are all badly rusted and irreparable. The stone benches where the spectators sit fared much better. There are three levels of terraces, and each level is 3 feet higher than the next. Ten 5-foot-high brackets spaced at 10-foot intervals support the railing that separates the jousters.

The PCs' unforeseen intrusion startles and annoys the participants and spectators. Inebrides the **satyr** uses his panpipes' *charming melody*, *frightening strain* and *gentle lullaby* effects against his brawnier enemies. His companions — **6 drunkards** and **4 centaurs** — have already been listening to Inebrides' pipes and are immune to their effect. He orders them to attack the least-armored opponents as he continues to play, staying out of combat as much as possible.

Meanwhile, the centaurs drop their balsa wood lances and pick up a piece of the railing. Though the wooden pole appears to be one continuous piece, it is actually five 20-foot-long segments. Each centaur grabs one end of a 20-foot-long section and charges, attempting to knock the PCs to the ground. The object is treated as an improvised weapon that deals 1d6 points of damage and allows the wielder to trip an opponent on a successful hit as a free action. Each centaur resolves its attack separately. They then leave the men to deal with the prone PCs while they rush into the stables where they stored their bows and longswords. The entire process of moving into the stable and retrieving their weapons is a full-round action. Afterward, they storm out of the corral with their longswords in hand to continue the assault against the PCs.

The men and the centaurs are fanatical new arrivals determined to prove their loyalty and devotion to Mila even if it costs them their lives. Inebrides enjoys watching the world burn for his amusement as long as he is not one

of the conflagration's casualties. The charming fast-talker attempts to bluff the PCs into believing that he is an innocent bystander lured into the fairgrounds by the prospect of free alcohol and staged combat. The truth is that he never shared Mila's convoluted beliefs about the nature of reality and is more interested in watching the world devolve into madness and having his proverbial way with the alluring dhampir sorceress, though not necessarily in that particular order. If he cannot talk and charm his way out of this jam, he is willing to exchange information for his freedom. He knows that Mila's bucentaur and centaurs recently acquired minting equipment that they plan to use to create counterfeit coins. He does not know the specifics of her plan, but he believes she intends to somehow spread the disease of insanity using her faux money. Unfortunately for Inebrides, he is short on any other details. If the PCs press the issue and demand more information, he attempts a Cha (Deception) check to make up a story about the pied piper of madness, which is not too far off from the truth.

Inebrides, Satyr: AC 14; HP 31 (7d8) Spd 40ft; **Melee** ram (+3, 2d4+1 bludgeoning), shortsword (+5, 1d6+3 piercing); **Ranged** shortbow (+5, 80ft/320ft, 1d6+3 piercing); **Str** +1, **Dex** +3, **Con** +0, **Int** +1, **Wis** +0, **Cha** +2; **Skills** Perception +2, Performance +6, Stealth +5; **Senses** passive Perception 12; **Traits** magic resistance (advantage on saves against spells and magical effects); **AL** CN; **CR** 1/2; **XP** 100.

Centaur (4): AC 12; HP 45 (6d10+12) Spd 50ft; **Melee** hooves x2 (+6, 2d6+4 bludgeoning), pike (+6, 1d10+4 piercing); **Ranged** longbow x2 (+4, x2, 150ft/600ft, 1d8+2 piercing); **SA** multiattack (1 hoof, 1 pike or 2 longbow); **Str** +4, **Dex** +2, **Con** +2, **Int** -1, **Wis** +1, **Cha** +0; **Skills** Athletics +6, Perception +3, Survival +3; **Senses** passive Perception 13; **Traits** charge (if centaur moves more than 30ft straight and hits with pike, target takes additional 3d6 piercing damage); **AL** CN; **CR** 2; **XP** 450.

Drunkard, Commoner (6): AC 10; HP 4 (1d8) Spd 30ft; **Melee** club (+2, 1d4 bludgeoning); **Str** +0, **Dex** +0, **Con** +0, **Int** +0, **Wis** +0, **Cha** +0; **Senses** passive Perception 10; **Traits** poisoned condition; **AL** CN; **CR** 0; **XP** 10.

Treasure: The four men have an ivory snuffbox worth 35gp, six gems worth 5gp each, and a pouch holding 27gp. One of the centaurs wears a gold necklace with a small diamond inset worth 250gp, and the other wears a rare scrimshaw necklace worth 150gp. Inebrides has an *elixir of fire breath* and two potions (*cure wounds* and a *invisibility*).

Area G3: Garden (Difficulty Medium)

A 10-foot-high brick wall surrounds an overgrown garden infested by weeds. These virulent plants now occupy the numerous flowerbeds and pots scattered throughout the garden. Stagnant, brackish water fills a marble fountain with a cherubic childlike statue in the center.

Tangjan College's caretakers lovingly doted on their beloved garden during its existence, but neglect and the passage of time undid all of their hard work. Parasitic plants and weeds replaced the colorful flowers and aromatic herbs that grew in the flowerbeds and pots spread throughout the garden. While the school's green thumbs tended to the eradication of undesirable plant species, the gardeners left the task of ridding the garden's insect and animal pests to one of their natural predators.

The wild grasses and weeds perfectly conceal **4 garden oozes** that fester in the garden waiting for small rodents and insects to wander into their lair. Despite their small size, the non-sentient creatures voraciously attack anything that enters the garden. Blessed with blindsight, the garden oozes immediately sense the presence of any living creature within 60 feet. The unintelligent monsters attack en masse, joining in the fray as soon as one of their fellow garden oozes initiates combat against potential prey. The voracious hunters never retreat and never surrender.

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Garden Ooze (4): AC 13; HP 39 (6d8+12) Spd 20ft, climb 20ft; **Melee** slam (+5, 2d4 bludgeoning plus 2d8 acid); **SA** stink (1/day, 5ft radius spread, DC 11 Con save or targets poisoned for 1d3 rounds); **Immune** acid damage; blinded, charmed, deafened, exhaustion, frightened, prone; **Resist** cold, fire; **Str** +0, **Dex** +3, **Con** +2, **Int** -5, **Wis** -5, **Cha** -4; **Senses** blindsight 60ft, passive Perception 5; **Traits** camouflage (DC 12 Wis (Perception) check to spot, ooze succeeds on slam attack on creatures that haven't noticed it); **AL** Unaligned; **CR** 2; **XP** 450. (**Appendix**)

Area G4: Entrance Hall

A grand, well-lit corridor stretches for 150 feet before ending in another intersection. A bronze statue of a man dressed in scholarly robes stands in the middle of the hallway 20 feet from the main entrance. He holds an unfurled scroll in his left arm and a quill pen in his right. Six moldy, moth-eaten tapestries adorn the walls. Three of the artistic pieces depict scholarly debates, two bear images of the cosmos, and a chaotic horse race is the subject of the remaining tapestry.

The statue is an idealized version of the quintessential scholar. Though it bears some of Tiblu's features, it does not resemble any specific person and cannot be identified as such. Likewise, the tapestries do not depict any particular individuals, events and locations. The linen tapestries are in deplorable condition with gaping holes, discoloration and barely visible images that render them worthless.

Area G5: Library (Difficulty Medium)

Thousands of books, ledgers, tomes, journals and scrolls fill the overflowing shelves and racks, basking in the warm light of this congested library. Bookcases span nearly the entire length of the walls, and six freestanding bookshelves occupy roughly half of the room. The large chamber's remaining space is devoted to tables and desks used for reading as evidenced by the fact that numerous open books rest atop the furniture. Though most of these tomes are unattended, three men standing around a long, wooden table actively search through the dusty, dog-eared pages of three leather-bound manuscripts.

Unlike most rooms on the ground floor, gems infused with *continual flame* spells illuminate the library. They are also imbedded into the ceiling at the same intervals found in the hallways. Tangjan College amassed an impressive library during its brief existence. Age, neglect, moisture and the upheaval of the institution's final days wreaked havoc on the numerous books and tomes stored on its dusty and warped bookshelves. Of the collection's 3,503 books, only 682 remain intact. Many burned during Tunicamna's battle against Tiblu's minions. Others are torn and missing pages, or have devastating water stains and hungry bookworms boring through their bindings. Sorting through the library's extensive works is a herculean task that could take days and perhaps weeks for untrained eyes. It takes a PC 1d4 minutes to thumb through a single book's pages and a successful DC 12 Wis (Perception) check to accurately determine whether the manuscript is viable and intact.

The books' subject matters cover a spectrum of topics ranging from tawdry personal memoirs to esoteric branches of science and philosophy. Histories, mathematics and astronomy are the most prevalent fields of study and account for roughly half the library's collected works. PCs may search the racks looking for books about reality, madness and Tiblu's personal journals. In this case, a PC spending 10 minutes perusing through the books has a 20% chance of locating such a work with a successful DC 15 Wis (Perception) check. Their titles and content are clearly nonsensical. They include "Reality's Lies," "Howls of Madness," "I am Not

Crazy — You Are" and "Why Does it Hurt when I Poke Myself." After a few minutes of scanning these books, it should become obvious that they are thoroughly delusional and worthless. However, a PC has a 10% chance of locating one of Tiblu's personal writings. In this case, the PC may attempt a DC 15 Wis (Perception) check to spot important references within the book. If he succeeds, he notices that Tiblu's insanity steadily progressed after he discovered a substance he referred to as metallurgic amber. In fact, Tiblu surmises that the strange material is responsible for his transformation from rational scholar to deranged madman. He also began writing prayers to the demigod Zuxaca, a being he credits for enlightening him about reality's deceit and insanity's insight. Afterward, the books devolve into incoherent ramblings. Despite the fact that these books are technically intact, their inane subject matter renders them worthless.

It is possible to topple over one of the freestanding bookcases and crash it onto a creature standing on the other side. Doing so requires a successful DC 13 Str check. The falling books and the bookshelves' weight deal 2d6 points of bludgeoning damage or half that amount if the creature succeeds on a DC 12 Dex save. Creatures that fail this Reflex save are trapped beneath the bookshelf and gain the pinned condition. They must succeed on a DC 13 Str check to pry themselves out or make a successful DC 13 Dex check to wriggle out of their predicament. If necessary, treat the bookshelf as if it has a +6 CMB.

Open tomes cover the long desk spanning the corner wall. Poring through the tomes are 3 clerics of Zuxaca. The men's affinity for chaos and madness is reflected in their flaky personalities. They are extremely disorganized and easily distracted. Because of these personality traits, they have reread the same books multiple times. They also suffer from ecclesiophobia — the fear of churches and organized religion. On the surface, their insanity makes little sense in light of their chosen class, but they abhor formality and orthodoxy that they perceive as the hallmarks of all other faiths. Their divine patron revels in sheer chaos and spontaneity rather than elaborate rites and rituals. A PC equipped with a holy symbol may use the object to trigger their phobia.

The men act more like fighters than clerics—they never retreat and never surrender. Throughout the battle, they utter illogical phrases such as "insanity hurts more than reality," "pain brings one closer to madness," "the mind is an amorphous blob of goo," and "one more step beyond." The clerics arrived at Tangjan College a few hours earlier. They briefly met Mila, who directed them to search for the "sacred works of absurdity" scattered throughout the library. Other than that, they have no knowledge of the complex's inner workings.

Cleric of Zuxaca, Clr3 (3): AC 16; HP 16 (3d8+3) Spd 30ft; **Melee** dagger (+5, 1d4+3 piercing); **SA** spells (DC 12, Wis +4); **Str** +3, **Dex** +0, **Con** +1, **Int** -1, **Wis** +2 (+4), **Cha** +1 (+3); **Skills** Insight +4, Medicine +4, Persuasion +3, Religion +1; **Senses** passive Perception 12; **Traits** channel divinity (1/rest), divine domain (war), guided strike, war priest; **AL** CN; **CR** 2; **XP** 450.

Spells (slots): 0 (at will)—*guidance, light, resistance, sacred flame*; 1st (3)—*bane, bless, cure wounds, shield of faith*

Equipment: breastplate, dagger, shield, 28gp.

Treasure: Of the 682 intact works, only 398 have value. Sorting through the entire library is a massive undertaking. For every hour spent in the endeavor, the PCs locate 6d10 books with any value. Intact books are worth 1d4gp each.

Area G6: Scriptorium

Thick layers of dust and cobwebs cover the entire chamber, including its furnishings and shelves affixed to the far corner. Overturned vials of ink and cracked quill pens rest upon three desks spread throughout the room. An upholstered wooden stool tucks neatly beneath each desk's long drawer. Multiple scroll cases and hundreds of pieces of papyrus, parchment and vellum sit upon the wooden shelves bolted into the corner walls along with several jars of glue, bookbinding equipment, wooden panels and thin pieces of leather.

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Tangian College's scriptorium produced an average of three manuscripts per week during its existence. The school's scribes parted in a hurry, leaving their tools of the trade behind in their haste to escape Tiblu's madness. The three desk drawers open easily, and each contains 6d6 pieces of parchment, 1d4 quill pens and 1d3 sealed vials of ink. Likewise, 205 pieces of papyrus, 189 pieces of parchment and 53 pieces of vellum line the shelves. PCs also find 8 jars of ordinary glue, bookbinding equipment, 12 pieces of wood used for book covers and 19 pieces of leather used to create leather-bound tomes.

Area G7: Ballroom (Difficulty Medium)

Lit torches ensconced into four colorful, stone columns illuminate a spacious ballroom. Over time, the frescoes on the walls faded, but scenes depicting lavish masquerade balls and opulent parties are still visible on the colorful surfaces. Eight silver trophies fashioned into the likenesses of prancing horses, muscular men and swordsmen rest upon shelves built into the surrounding walls. A raised platform accessible by a cherry wood staircase acts as a stage. Three upholstered chairs fit for royalty sit atop the raised dais. An ornately decorated and stained wooden bar bearing intricate carvings of vines and grapes fills out the adjoining corner. Three empty bottles of fine wine and ale lie on the bar and two more are scattered on the floor. Two obviously intoxicated men and two equally drunken women blissfully cavort around a horrid mass of barbed tentacles, glaring eyes and gnashing teeth. The blob constantly morphs its amorphous body into new shapes and forms — an activity that the inebriated humans attempt to emulate in their bizarre and disorganized dance.

The 4 **cult fanatics** attempt to mimic the actions of a **chaos beast** that took up residence in the college's ballroom. The young men (Nakotah and Teecasa) and women (Wasyaya and Wichula) are hedonistic drifters drawn to a nomadic existence spent without a care in the world. They met Mila two months ago and never looked back on their old lives. They now waste their days in an alcohol- and drug-induced stupor that they see as an endless party. With that in mind, the self-absorbed youngsters view the PCs as fellow revelers and invite them to join the debauchery. The adjacent storeroom has enough wine, ale and liquor to keep the celebration going for days and even weeks on end. The severely intoxicated young adults flirt with their guests. They grope the PCs and whisper suggestive comments in their ears. They rebuff any efforts to discuss Mila and similar topics they consider boring. In their minds, nothing can interrupt their good time.

The chaos beast does not share the humans' bohemian viewpoint. It serves Mila and Zuxaca. It views the PCs as a potential threat to their plan to spread madness throughout the land. It is difficult for the PCs to determine the chaos beast's true nature. The monster's appearance changes by the moment. One instant it appears to have dozens of limbs, and a few brief moments later, it looks like flaccid protoplasm. In any event, the chaos beast cannot speak and instead briefly observes the PCs' actions. It does not attack PCs that indulge their wild sides and join in the frivolity. On the other hand, it immediately lashes out at PCs that attack it or the revelers. It also attacks PCs unwilling to partake in the festivities with the four cultists, who immediately join in the attack alongside the chaos beast. Unless escape appears reasonably feasible, the chaos beast fights to the bitter end.

The same cannot be said for the cultists who cower behind the bar and flee at the first sign of adversity. In their current state of inebriation, they are too incoherent to truthfully answer any questions. They give nonsensical answers and giggle at practically everything. Even after sobering up, they are of little use as their exposure to the metallurgic amber and chronic addiction took a severe toll on their memory and perception of reality. However, they provide one truthful insight: They tell the PCs that Mila hired a warlock-chemist to "grow" a "funky metal" that gives a tremendous buzz.

Chaos Beast: AC 15; HP 150 (20d8+60) Spd 20ft; **Melee** claw x4 (+6, 2d6+3 plus corporeal instability); **Immune** critical

and sneak attack damage; **Str** +3, **Dex** +2, **Con** +3, **Int** +0, **Wis** +1, **Cha** +0; **Senses** darkvision 60ft, passive Perception 11; **Traits** corporeal instability (if hit, target must make DC 13 Con save or be transformed into shapeless mass), multi-attack (4 claws), resistance to transformation (advantage on saves against *polymorph* or petrification, on failure, transforms back into original shape as bonus on following turn); **AL** CN; **CR** 7; **XP** 2,900. (**Appendix**)

Cult Fanatic (4): AC 13; HP 33 (6d8+6) Spd 30ft; **Melee** dagger x2 (+4, 1d4+2 piercing); **Ranged** dagger (+4, 20ft/60ft, 1d4+2 piercing); **SA** multiattack (2 dagger), spells (DC 11, Wis +3); **Str** +0, **Dex** +2, **Con** +1, **Int** +0, **Wis** +1, **Cha** +2; **Skills** Deception +4, Persuasion +4, Religion +2; **Senses** passive Perception 10; **Traits** dark devotion (advantage on saves against being charmed or frightened), poisoned condition; **AL** CN; **CR** 2; **XP** 450.

Spells (slots): 0 (at will)—*light, sacred flame, thaumaturgy*; 1st (4)—*command, inflict wounds, shield of faith*; 2nd (3)—*hold person, spiritual weapon*

Treasure: The chairs sitting atop the stage are handcrafted and intricately detailed. Each weighs 25 pounds and is worth 100gp. Tangian College proudly displays its silver trophies upon the shelves affixed to the outer walls. The three equestrian trophies fashioned into the likeness of a horse are worth 75gp each. Three trophies are shaped into the likeness of muscular men. Tangian College awarded these to students who won these awards for their wrestling prowess, and each is worth 50gp. Likewise, the two swordsmen trophies won in fencing competitions are also worth 50gp each. A portion of the bar lifts up to allow access to the door leading into the adjoining storeroom.

Area G8: Storeroom

Three open and empty wooden barrels sit in the middle of a dark and dry storeroom. Hundreds of wine, ale and spirit bottles line the racks on the walls. Even a quick glance reveals that many of them are open and likely empty.

The beer stored in the three kegs inside the door went bad decades ago, but that did not stop the revelers from drinking the foul-tasting, skunked brew. Of the 390 bottles stored in the racks, 36 bottles of rare wine, 28 bottles of ale and 14 bottles of fine whiskey survived intact. The wine bottles are worth 2d6gp each, the ale is worth 1d4gp each and 13 of the whiskey bottles are worth 6d6gp each. One particularly rare and highly valued whiskey known as The Hag's Still sits on a rack. It is reputedly distilled by a coven of the wicked crones. Despite its dubious origins, the spirit is worth 250gp.

Area G9: Great Hall

Two marble hearths and a cast-iron fire pit are unlit, providing no illumination and heat for an expansive antechamber. Two immense tapestries depicting the surrounding countryside span the length of two walls. The tapestries are in relatively poor condition, with obvious holes, scorch marks, fraying and discoloration. Four thick stone columns presumably support the ceiling and upper floor's enormous weight. Light from an adjoining corridor pours into the room through two open archways.

The tapestries are in terrible shape. Each is worth a mere 50gp and hardly seems worth the effort to lug the enormous bundles of moldy linen more than a few feet. Tiblu used this great hall to make announcements to the faculty and student body. During the cool, wet winters, residents basked in the warm glows of its flames rather than catch a chill in the outdoor courtyards.

Area G10: Linen Closet

Dozens of mops, brooms, pails, old rags and other cleaning implements lie scattered about this cluttered closet. The strong smell of ammonia hangs heavy in the air.

It hardly seems worth the effort to conceal the entrance to a broom closet, but Tiblu did this strictly to maximize functionality and maintain appearances. The closet sits beneath the grand staircase leading to the second level, and he hated to waste space.

Treasure: The cleaning implements are non-magical and worth a meager 10gp.

Area G11: Grand Dining Hall (Difficulty Easy)

Five 20-foot-long tables occupy a spacious dining hall capable of seating 100 hungry guests. Twenty or so dirty plates covered with food scraps, gnawed bones and fruit rinds are scattered among the tables. A like number of mugs and goblets are also strewn about in close proximity to the plates.

Mila's followers make sporadic use of the kitchen facilities on account of the **allips** that haunt the connected servants' quarters. In fact, there is a 10% chance that one of the spiteful creatures from **Area G14** finds its way into the dining hall to bestow its curse of insanity upon individuals already blighted by the disease. Mila originally considered using the undead monsters as an auxiliary force to spread insanity, but even the deranged sorceress realized that she could not control these hateful beings.

The food scraps and drinks covering the table are recent. Four cultists from **Area G7** began their festivities here before moving to their present location. Unbeknownst to them, they left four tankards of mead behind where **4 amber oozes** wait for their next victims. The cultists resisted the creatures' infuse ability and expelled the amorphous goo back into their drinking vessels. The killmoulises from **Area G13** are responsible for loosing these monsters on Mila and her minions. If the PCs linger in the dining hall for more than 1d4 minutes, one of the amber oozes crawls out of the goblet in search of a living organism to infect. The creature looks like a pool of spilt mead, but a successful DC 15 Wis (Perception) check reveals that the amber ooze puddle appears to be a solid object rather than a shapeless liquid.

Amber Ooze: AC 10; HP 30 (12d4) Spd 10ft; Immune blinded, charmed, deafened, exhaustion, frightened, prone; Resist acid, cold, fire; Str -3, Dex +0, Con +2, Int -5, Wis -5, Cha -5; Senses blindsight 60ft, Passive Perception 5; Traits ability drain (if ooze is not purged, after 1 week host loses 1 Point Int, Wis and Cha per day), infuse (if ingested, host must make DC 12 Con save or ooze merges and can only be removed by *heal* or *lesser restoration*), weaken will (host of infused ooze at disadvantage on saves to resist mind-influencing spells and effects); AL Unaligned; CR 1; XP 200. (Appendix)

Treasure: Though the goblets, cups and plates are dirty, they still have value. The 21 plates on the table are worth 2gp each. The 12 glass goblets are worth 1gp each, and the 9 tin tankards are worth 1sp each. Four of the tankards are home to amber oozes.

Area G12: Kitchen

Viscous globs of soot and grime cover a cast-iron stove and three stone hearths spread throughout the room. An unwashed iron kettle bearing obvious rust and food stains rests upon an iron grate inside of the hearth. Ash, wood and charcoals lie beneath the grate. Two freestanding hardwood work areas are a short trip to any of the kitchen's four cooking stations and the adjacent cupboard, dishwashing station and pantry. Cooking implements and steel knives rest upon the workstations' cutting surfaces.

Mila and her minions make little use of the kitchen, subsisting on the dried meats and fruits stored in **Area G13** and any rations they brought on their journey. The stove and all three hearths are operational. The kettle in the corner closer to the dining hall contains the cold remains of a hearty potato stew. The knives are designed for cutting and chopping food, not combat. They may be wielded as improvised weapons that deal damage as a dagger.

Area G12A: Cupboard

Several hundred porcelain plates, bowls and serving platters sit upon a row of shelves spanning the length of the room. Likewise, a roughly equal number of tin tankards, glass goblets and clay mugs rest on the shelves beneath the dinnerware. Hundreds of tin and steel eating utensils are interspersed among the crockery.

Tangian College's servants stored the crockery and utensils in this store room off the kitchen. The room has no other use.

Treasure: There are 205 plates, 196 bowls and 62 serving platters upon the shelves. The plates and bowls are worth 2gp each. The serving platters are worth 4gp each. There are 201 tin tankards worth 1sp each, 160 glass goblets worth 1gp each, and 155 clay mugs worth 1cp each. Like the knives in the kitchen, these implements are weighted for cutting food rather than living flesh. They are treated as improvised weapons dealing damage as a dagger of its size. There are 288 knives worth 2sp each, 205 forks also worth 2sp each, and 200 spoons worth 1sp each.

Area G12B: Dishwasher

Food scraps float atop stagnant water in an oak barrel that is three-fourths full. A crude dish rack hangs on the wall.

The kitchen staff washed dishes in this location before storing them in **Area G12A** or immediately reusing them to serve hungry diners.

Area G13: Pantry (Difficulty Easy)

Three crates stacked nearly to the ceiling rest atop one another in a crowded corner. Several nearby pieces of wood from the crates' side lie on the floor. Though the crates are still structurally sound, the gaping holes allow someone to reach inside and withdraw their contents. An aromatic smell comes from numerous small jars resting upon shelves spanning much of the pantry's wall.

The small jars on the shelves contain an assortment of herbs, seeds, dried spices, oils and flour for cooking. Despite the fact that no one has restocked the pantry for years, the seeds, dried spices and flour are stored in sealed containers and are still viable. The fruits and vegetables kept in

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the top crate wilted and disintegrated long ago, but the smoked and salted meat products in the bottom and middle crate are still edible, though not particularly tasty. In a pinch, Mila's minions brave the allips and retrieve a hunk of preserved meat from one of the crates.

Since its inception, a family of creatures has made its home in Tangjan College. The pantry is currently the residence of 4 **killmoulises** that are particularly annoyed by the current state of affairs. The pesky, mischievous fey enjoyed a cordial relationship with the kitchen staff, but after the servants transformed into allips, the killmoulises hid in and around the crates and within the walls behind the shelves. Mila's arrival made the meddlesome creatures even more cantankerous. Several nights ago, the miniscule fey took an amber ooze and dropped it into one of the kegs in **Area G8**.

The killmoulises keep a close eye on the PCs during their stay in the pantry and are careful not to be seen. They are treated as if they are taking 10, thus inquisitive PCs must succeed on a DC 22 Wis (Perception) check to spot one of them. If noticed, a killmoulis attempts to squeeze into a small space and escape. If a PC successfully grabs one of the creatures before it accomplishes that feat, it attempts to break the grapple and flee. The killmoulises are poor combatants who are no match for the PCs. This is their home, however, and they are perturbed about Mila's recent activities and by what happened to the previous kitchen staff after Zuxaca's last intrusion at Tangjan College. They tell the PCs that a warlock is attempting to grow strange metal in the college's laboratory, which is on the ground floor in the east wing. They are unaware of Mila's present whereabouts, though they are certain she rarely ventures to this floor except for anything other than a brief appearance.

Killmoulis (4): AC 13; HP 4 (1d6+1) Spd 40ft; Melee needle (+5, 1d4-3); **Str** -3, **Dex** +3 (+5), **Con** +1, **Int** +0, **Wis** +2, **Cha** -2; **Skills** Perception +4, **Stealth** +10; **Senses** darkvision 60ft., passive Perception 14; **Traits** stealthy (advantage on Dex (stealth) checks); **AL** CN; **CR** 1/8; **XP** 25. (**Appendix**)

Area G14: Servants' Quarters (Difficulty Hard)

Cobwebs and dust cover the simple furnishings in this cramped bedchamber. An unmade bed fitted with linen sheets abuts the far wall. An open wooden chest partially filled with moldy clothes is neatly tucked beneath the bed.

Tangjan College's kitchen staff and servants dwelt in these congested quarters while school was in session. After Tiblu slipped into insanity, the faculty and students left the college of their own accord, but the delusional headmaster forbade the staff from leaving. Roughly half disobeyed his order and fled the madness. The remainder stayed behind and paid the consequences. In his deranged state, Tiblu never accepted the servants as his equals. He confined them to their quarters and, in time, each took his or her own life as they sank into despair and eventual insanity. These unfortunate souls now haunt their former homes as undead spirits.

One of the 4 **allips** haunting this area has a 25% chance of occupying any bedchamber. Though it is impossible to pinpoint the creatures' exact locations, their constant babbling reveals their presence. Any PC who hears the incessant muttering must succeed on a DC 12 Wisdom save to avoid being fascinated by the monsters. These vengeful monstrosities attack on sight, attempting to touch their foes and inflict their madness upon the hapless victim. Any encounter with one of these monsters is almost certain to attract the attention of the other allips. As incorporeal creatures, the remaining allips pass through solid objects and join the fray. The cunning creatures surround their foes to maximize their attacks. They continue attacking until destroyed and pursue fleeing PCs throughout the campus.

Allip (4): AC 11; HP 45 (10d8); Spd 0ft, fly 30ft; Melee touch of insanity (+4, 1d4 psychic plus Wis save to avoid madness); **Immune** cold, necrotic, poison damage; charmed, exhaustion, frightened, grappled, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned, prone, restrained; **Resist** acid, fire, lightning, thunder; bludgeoning, piercing and slashing from nonmagical

weapons; **Str** +0, **Dex** +1, **Con** +0, **Int** +0, **Wis** +0, **Cha** +3; **Senses** darkvision 60ft., passive Perception 10; **Traits** babble (sane creatures within 60ft must make DC 12 Wis save or be charmed for 2d4 rounds), madness (anyone targeting allip with telepathic effect or spell takes 1d4 points Wis damage); **AL** CE; **CR** 3; **XP** 700. (**Appendix**)

Treasure: The clothing in the chests beneath the bed is worthless, as are the linen sheets. A successful DC 10 Wis (Perception) check reveals 2d6gp and miscellaneous sundry items worth 1d6gp hidden within each of the chests.

Area G15: Privy

The foul smell and the presence of a hole carved into a crude seat confirm that the small room is a privy.

Tangjan College's current residents generally avoid these privies whenever possible. Nothing of interest is in either one.

Area G16: Fencing Training Room

By rough estimate, at least 100 swords and rapiers stand upright in an intricately carved teakwood display case against the far wall. Deep gouges, cracks and splinters mar the surface of four wooden statues that surround a 10-foot-long raised wooden platform in the center of the room. The numerous frescoes adorning the walls deteriorated over the years, though the faded images of swordsmen and their blades are still visible in these lifelike artworks.

Tangjan College's fencers practiced in this training room, and held competitions outdoors in **Area G2**. Steel brackets keep the platform in place, but it is easy to disassemble the supports and move the entire apparatus. The fencers practiced their thrusts, lunges and slashing techniques on wooden statues that served as targets. The statues are badly damaged and were scheduled to be replaced until Tiblu lost his mind and closed the college. They are worthless.

Treasure: The display rack holds 64 rapiers, 20 short swords and 15 longswords. Three masterwork rapiers, one masterwork longsword and a +2 *rapier* are mixed among these otherwise ordinary weapons.

Area G17: Wrestling Rings

Hardened clay forms the boundaries of three 10-foot-diameter dirt-and-earth-filled circles on the floor. Wooden panels cover the walls and bear intricate diagrams of various wrestling maneuvers from several different disciplines. Several pieces of worn leather headgear and armbands, along with numerous loincloths, hang from pegs stuck into the paneling. A large barrel filled with salt sits in a far corner.

The institution's wrestlers specialized in a form of freestyle wrestling known as the "bending reed" style. This variety of wrestling emphasized flexibility and agility in preference to brute strength and fixed techniques. In addition, the much-different discipline of sumo wrestling was imported into the region by Chi'en students and became extremely popular. The college's wrestling trainers used the two rings nearest the entrance for the former style, and the ring nearest the far wall for sumo wrestling. Sumo wrestlers used the salt to purify the ring before matches in accordance with ancient tradition, but many competitors also felt that the salt soaked up any excess moisture and provided better footing for the athletes.

Treasure: The headgear, loincloths and four of the five armbands hanging from the peg on the wall are worthless. The remaining armband is an *armband of the brawler* (see New Magic Items sidebar, p. 132).

Area Gr8: Priests' Quarters

Thick clouds of dust and dense layers of cobwebs coat every surface of a spacious bedchamber. The room's furnishings include a simple bed, a small desk with a chair and a freestanding wooden armoire with two open drawers.

The temple's priests dwelt in these basic yet comfortable quarters during their stay at the college. When they departed, they took their valuables with them, leaving nothing behind in their wake. The bed consists of a straw mattress and a linen pillow. The armoire is empty, as is the desk's drawer, which is closed and unlocked.

Area Gr9: Hospital Wing (Difficulty Medium)

Overtured beds and sundered furniture are strewn about the floor, and deep gouges mar the stone walls. Froth dribbles down the lower lips and chins of four half-orcs that appear far more bestial than human. They wear tattered leather armor and wield no weapons, yet seem prepared to sink their bared fangs and tusks into anything that stands in their way. The monstrous beasts let loose a fearsome cry as they surge forward in a mad dash to escape and wreak havoc upon a waiting world.

The college's former hospital wing is in miserable shape. Its maniacal residents destroyed every piece of furniture and futilely tried to escape by pounding holes through the walls. They overturned the beds and shredded their linen coverings to pieces. Likewise, they ripped the admissions desk apart, smashing its drawers and splintering its legs and base.

Though subtle, there is a difference between insane and crazy. The 4 **crazed half-orc berserkers** confined to the hospital wing were recruited by Mila to her cause several weeks ago. Unbeknownst to her, the quartet contracted cackle fever shortly before meeting her. Like the buffalo wandering the open plains (see the encounter **Charge of the Mad Buffalos in Part Two**), Mila could not resist the opportunity to experiment on these unfortunate creatures. She used her enchantment spells to convince each of the barbarians to implant a tiny fragment of metallurgic amber into his ear canal. Much to her horror, the disease and the radioactive metal somehow interacted, transforming them into bestial monsters that she and her servants barricaded inside of the hospital wing. The hungry creatures long to taste living flesh. As soon as the door opens, the unarmed beasts fly into a rage and attack the nearest creature, using their bite attacks to rend their victims to shreds. They are not unintelligent, and can learn and retain knowledge. The difference is that they cannot apply this knowledge in a tactical sense. They can speak and understand speech, but they see no reason to converse. They are consumed with one idea — to devour any living creature they encounter. They do not know fear and fight to the bitter end regardless of the circumstances.

Crazed Half-orc Berserker (4): AC 13; HP 67 (9d8+27) Spd 30ft; Melee bite (+5, 1d4+3 piercing plus DC 13 Con save to avoid cackle fever); **Str** +3, **Dex** +1, **Con** +3, **Int** -1, **Wis** +0, **Cha** -1; **Senses** passive Perception 10; **Traits** reckless (1/turn can gain advantage on melee attacks, but all attacks on berserker have advantage); **AL** CN; **CR** 2; **XP** 450.

Treasure: Before the disease and metallurgic amber ravaged these half-orcs' minds and bodies, they retained several items on their person of monetary value. These objects include a bone and ivory necklace worth 100gp, a pouch holding six 10gp gems and a copper bracelet worth 2gp.



Area G2o: Temple (Difficulty Medium)

Light pours in through the windows and illuminates the apse of a former temple. Faded tapestries depicting harvest scenes and anthropomorphic feline and canine beings adorn the walls. Four stone columns support the vaulted ceiling 40 feet above the floor. An altar fashioned from contorted saplings and twisted vines overlooks the immense gallery where a 12-foot-tall giant snake slithers between the large support beams. Primordial screams intermittently emerge from the other side of a wooden door on the north wall that shudders and buckles with frightening regularity.

Tangian College never officially condoned the worship of any specific deity and instead paid homage to nature and the divine entities that oversaw its many wonders. The large tapestries hanging from the walls are not specific to any deity, a fact that can be determined with a successful DC 12 Int (Religion) check. The anthropomorphic figures depicted in the artworks are amalgamations of various creatures and gods popular among the Campachan people. Likewise, a PC can verify the preceding fact with a successful DC 12 Int (Religion) check. The altar is also a composite of those found in many neighboring cultures. Even during the temple's heyday, the resident priests exclusively used it in a ceremonial capacity rather than as the focus for their divine magic.

Unlike most rooms on the ground floor, the temple's impressive, vaulted ceiling rises to a height of 40 feet, and its windows are 30 feet above the floor. The door on the north wall confines 4 crazed half-orc barbarians inside the adjoining hospital wing (Area G19). The monstrous brutes repeatedly bash against the portal, trying to force it open. Mila bolstered the door's strength by casting an *arcane lock* upon it. So far, they remain trapped within the adjacent room.

Mila left a solitary **naunet protean** within the confines of the temple to guard Blake in the adjacent laboratory and to ensure that intruders could not establish a divine stronghold within the former shrine. The naunet normally shape changes into a large snake to conceal its true identity from creatures other than Mila. The naunet is much more effective at combating the forces of order and structure than it is at battling chaos and entropy. In this vein, the naunet begins combat by unleashing *shatter* against intruders, then wading into melee combat. Even in its snake form, the bestial protean takes to the air using its supernatural flight ability and hovers above the ground where it uses its 10-foot reach to attack its foes and remain outside their threat range. The creature's spell resistance protects it from magical attacks, so it focuses its bite attack and tail slap against lightly armored foes who cannot cast spells.

The naunet can travel via *dimension door* but it cannot *teleport*, so escape is unlikely if it is badly injured and surrounded. In this case, the naunet shapechanges into its true form, gaining the effects of a *heal* spell as it does so. In its true form, it makes use of its tentacle attacks, singling out creatures it deems least likely to resist being confused. Unless escape appears plausible, the protean attacks until destroyed.

Protean, Naunet: AC 15; HP 168 (16d10+80) Spd 30ft, fly 30ft; **Melee** bite (+7, reach 10ft, 1d8+4 piercing plus confusion), tentacle x2 (+7, reach 10ft, 1d6+4 bludgeoning plus confusion), tail (+7, reach 20ft, 1d4+4 plus grapple check); **SA** coalesce chaos (1/day 3 or more naunets can create a wall of force that lasts 2d6 rounds. Six or more can create a forcecage), grapple (may attempt to grapple creature struck by tail attack. On success opponent is grappled and restrained), multiattack (1 bite, 2 tentacles, 1 tail), spells (DC 13, Cha +5); **Immune** acid, *polymorph*; **Resist** critical hits, lightning, sneak attack damage, thunder; **Str** +4, **Dex** +3, **Con** +5, **Int** +0, **Wis** +3, **Cha** +2; **Skills** Acrobatics +6, Athletics +7, Intimidation +5, Perception +6, Stealth +6; **Senses** blindsight 30ft, darkvision 60ft; passive Perception 16; **Traits** adaptive strike (natural weapons count as magical), amorphous anatomy (resistance to critical hits and sneak attack damage, immunity to *polymorph*, recovers

from physical blindness or deafness after one round), constrict (automatically inflict 1d6+4 bludgeoning damage on any creature restrained by tail), resistance to magic (advantage on saves against spells and magical effects), shapechange (1/day into any small, medium or large beast, elemental, giant, humanoid, ooze or plant, may change back as bonus, gains *heal* when it does); **AL** CN; **CR** 7; **XP** 2,900. (**Appendix**)

Innate Spells: constant: *freedom of movement*, *tongues*; at will: *acid splash* (3d6), *fog cloud*, *dimension door*, *shatter*; 1/day: *prismatic spray*

Treasure: The two tapestries are the only items of value in the temple despite their fair condition. Each is worth 100gp.

Area G2r: Laboratory (Difficulty Deadly)

Wispy smoke, the foul stench of burning sulfur, an eerie brownish glow and the whizzing and whirring of metal gears create an air of excitement and confusion in a busy, disorganized laboratory. A fiery crucible belches out the smoke and a rotten odor, while the phosphorescent glow emanates from a piece of amber-colored metal inside a grayish receptacle. A pair of three-legged metallic creatures with four arms account for the sounds of turning gears and interlocking cogs that echo against the walls. The four man-sized constructs perform the delicate tasks of mixing and stirring colorful chemicals in a glass beaker. A harried man dressed in an elaborate cloak oversees the activity. Numerous tools applicable to a variety of trades dangle from his crowded belt. He maniacally pours through the pages of several open books on a cluttered table covered with beakers, vials and jars while the metallic automatons undertake their presumably dangerous endeavor a few feet away from him. The man and his four servants fight for space on this congested table even though there is a completely empty table on each side. Besides the objects on the table, three rows of shelves filled with jars, flasks, vials and containers span the length of the walls. Likewise three bookcases are filled with dusty tomes, journals and ledgers.

Mila's warlock cohort, **Blake Acamu**, orchestrates the chaotic process of crystalizing metallurgic amber to produce more of the bizarre, radioactive metal. His 2 **clockwork servants** aid in this endeavor. Unfortunately for him, the table contains an assortment of dangerous, volatile chemicals. Seven flasks of acid are on the table as well as six flasks of flammable liquids that duplicate the effects of alchemist's fire, but cause 1d6 points of fire damage per round. Directly hitting any of these flasks causes them to splash their contents onto nearby creatures and objects, causing acid and fire damage. Blake is fully aware of this dangerous predicament and makes sure that he evacuates the area as soon as possible if combat begins.

Blake suffers from indefinite madness, though unsurprisingly he believes he has complete control of his mental faculties. He wears a lead pendant around his neck to protect himself against metallurgic amber's radiation. The evil warlock-chemist has little interest in Mila's deranged philosophies about insanity and reality. He simply revels in watching the world come undone regardless of how the deed is done. Blake is mentally brilliant, yet he is an aloof sociopath who delights in the suffering of others. He is a physically unremarkable man with an equally forgettable, dour personality and hopeless outlook on life.

In combat, Blake directs one clockwork servant to hurl its net at the PCs and bottle them up in the doorway. He then orders the second clockwork servant to exit through the other door and attack the PCs in the adjoining corridor.

Meanwhile, Blake takes cover behind one of the tables and uses his defensive extracts to bolster his defenses. He starts by casting *shield* and *haste* and downing as many of his potions as he has time for. If the PCs swarm the room, he attempts to position them near the table with the volatile chemicals and attempts to cause as much damage to them as possible. Blake has no regard for his clockwork servants, and he willingly sacrifices

them to deal damage to his enemies. As a measure of last resort, Blake utilizes his *potion of invisibility* and attempts to escape.

Self-preservation is his main goal. He flees the campus and never looks back. Blake surrenders only when faced with no other choice. The weak-willed researcher folds under pressure and reveals as much as it takes for him to barter for his freedom or at a minimum his ensured survival. He explains that Mila charged him with the task of growing more metallurgic amber so that she can mint contaminated coins to circulate throughout the population. Mila is generally found on the upper levels, though he does not know her exact whereabouts. He is the foremost expert on metallurgic amber and can explain everything about its properties. Blake spoon feeds the PCs information and stalls for time.

If the PCs confront him about Dardennell's damning accusation, he grudgingly admits that he attempted to test his poisons on the patrons. Naturally, he sugarcoats the entire episode by claiming that he merely intended to sicken the diners and would immediately give ill patrons the antidote as soon as they showed symptoms. A successful DC 14 Wis (Insight) check sees through this lie. At this point in his career, Blake no longer fears Dardennell. He correctly deduces that he would fare better against the wizened gnome and his family than against the PCs. He even suggests that the PCs place him in Dardennell's custody so that his former boss can enact some form of frontier justice. In any event, Blake is always looking for an opportunity to escape and wreak havoc somewhere else.

Blake Acamu, male human Wrk8: AC 13; HP 52 (7d8+14)

Spd 30ft; **Melee** +1 dagger (+6, 1d4+3 piercing); **Ranged** improved alchemist's fire (+5, 20ft/60ft, 1d6 fire for 2d4 rounds unless extinguished); **SA** spells (DC 15, Cha +7); **Str** +0 (+1), **Dex** +2 (+3), **Con** +2 (+3), **Int** +0, **Wis** -1 (+3), **Cha** +4 (+8); **Skills** Arcana +3, Int +3, Perception +2, **Senses** passive Perception 12; **Traits** dark one's blessing, dark one's own luck, eldritch invocation (5), otherworldly patron (the fiend), pact boon (tome), pact magic; **AL** CE; **CR** 6; **XP** 2,300.

Spell slots: 2 (Level 4); **Spells Known:** 0 (at will)—*chill touch*, *eldritch blast*, *minor illusion*, *sacred flame*, *thorn whip*, *vicious mockery*; 1st—*burning hands*, *command*, *thunderwave*; 2nd—*blindness/deafness*, *scorching ray*; 3rd—*fireball*, *haste*; 4th—*wall of fire*; **Spell DC:** 15; **Spell Attack Bonus:** +7

Equipment: +1 dagger, cloak of protection, *potion of clairvoyance*, *potion of fire breath*, *potion of flying*, *potion of giant strength (frost/stone)*, *potion of healing x3*, *potion of greater healing x2*, *potion of heroism*, *potion of invisibility*, *potion of invulnerability*, *potion of resistance (acid)*, *potion of resistance (cold)*, *potion of resistance (fire)*, *potion of resistance (lightning)*, *potion of resistance (necrotic)*, *potion of resistance (thunder)*

Clockwork Servant (2): AC 12; HP 84 (8d10 + 40) **Spd** 30ft; **Melee** slam (+6, 2d4+4 bludgeoning); **Ranged** net (+4, 10ft, entangle); **SA** repair clockwork (as action, can heal self or adjacent clockwork of 1d10 damage); **Str** +4, **Dex** +2, **Con** +3, **Int** -5, **Wis** +0, **Cha** -5; **Senses** darkvision 60ft, passive Perception 10; **AL** N; **CR** 2; **XP** 450. (**Appendix**)

Treasure: Tunicamna's lost amulet lies on the congested table, where it seems to be a distant afterthought in the din of frenzied activity. As first glance, the amulet and its contents appear intact, yet in this case appearances are deceiving. The lead receptacle is unaltered, but Blake Acamu literally grew the metallurgic amber in the lead receptacle from a seed crystal one-tenth its current size. In addition, he and the two clockwork servants are busy concocting the liquid needed to grow another piece of metallurgic amber from a small chunk of the material sitting in the bottom of a nearby leaded glass container. Identifying the substance as metallurgic amber requires a successful DC 10 Int (Investigation) check and discerning its special properties necessitates a successful DC 15 Int (Investigation) check. As a glowing piece of metal and a natural oddity, metallurgic amber is worth 50gp per pound. In the wrong hands, it is much more valuable as an instrument of destruction rather than a monetary treasure.

Metallurgic Amber

In modern scientific terms, metallurgic amber is a crystalline, radioactive heavy metal. Though the unusual ore shares many characteristics with more common radioactive materials such as uranium and radium, it differs in several important respects. Unlike other isotopes, metallurgic amber's atomic structure allows the metal to be grown from a seed crystal. It takes an entire week and a successful DC 17 Int (Arcana) check to crystallize metallurgic amber and yield 1d4x10% more metallurgic amber in the process.

Prolonged exposure to metallurgic amber causes telltale radiation burns like most other radioactive substances, but that is the general extent of its similarities to other unstable ores. Outside of superficial burns, metallurgic amber causes no other damage to humanoid tissue and structures except for one critical organ — the brain. Metallurgic amber would be generally safe if not for its debilitating effects on the humanoid brain and to a lesser extent, the animal mind. Every time a humanoid comes within 20 feet of metallurgic amber for 2d4 hours over the course of a 24-hour period, he must succeed on a DC 12 Con save to avoid suffering radiation burns that deal 1d3 points of damage. These hours need not be consecutive, and the PC may be required to make multiple saves over the course of a 24-hour period. If the individual fails this save, he must then succeed on a DC 10 Wis save to avoid developing indefinite madness. (See *5e Core Rules* on Madness for additional information, as well as the sidebox **Portraying Insanity** at the beginning of **Part Three**.) The DC for both saves increases by +1 for every previous save. If his insanity is later cured and he is exposed to metallurgic amber again, he must resume attempting Will saves to avoid going mad once more. Strangely, non-humanoid creatures suffer no ill effects whatsoever from long-term exposure to the odd substance with the exception of animals; metallurgic amber makes them highly aggressive.

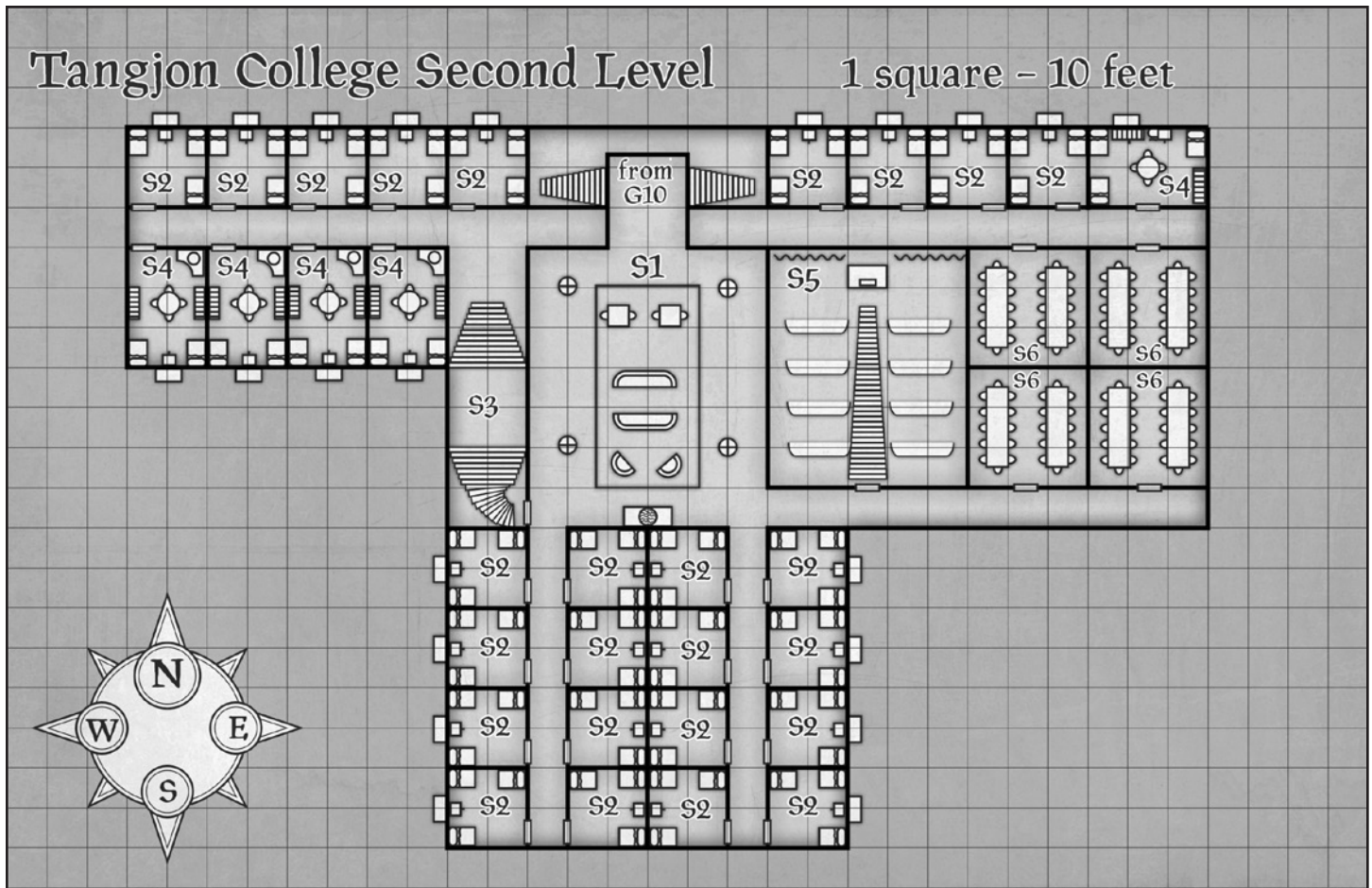
Lead absorbs metallurgic amber's radioactive emissions, a fact a PC can determine with a successful DC 16 Int (Investigation) check. The lead contained in a pewter ring or tiny pendant is sufficient to nullify metallurgic amber's debilitating effects within a 5-foot radius of the lead object. Larger quantities of lead provide no additional beneficial effects and do not extend the metal's shielding properties beyond 5 feet. Positioning a lead object within 5 feet of the metallurgic amber completely absorbs all of the radiation emitted by the object, thus completely nullifying its effects. Metallurgic amber melts at a temperature of 1,050° F, roughly one-third that of iron, and half that of copper.

Tangjan College's laboratory is an alchemist's dream. It contains the equivalent of three complete alchemist's labs, as well as a library of books and tomes on the subject of alchemy. There are 177 books on the bookcase shelves with an average value of 5gp each. The open books on the table describe the process of crystallizing various minerals and alloys.

The majority of the ingredients on the shelves have long since rotted or evaporated. Of the 395 jars, vials, flasks and containers stored here, only 53 are still usable. Most are negligibly valuable material components, but there are six vials of acid, three flasks of alchemist's fire, two vials of antitoxin, three bottles of ink and six flasks of oil.

Tangjan College Second Level

Tangjan College's students and faculty lived in the second-floor dormitories while the school was in operation. Now Mila's deranged followers reside in these tight quarters and wander these corridors. Like the first floor, the walls are built from reinforced masonry and the doors from strong wood. The doors to the living quarters, **Areas S2** and **S4**, have built-in locking mechanisms. There is a 20% chance that any of these doors are locked. The keys went missing decades ago. The corridors are lit in the same manner as those on the first floor, and natural light shines



through the windows in many of the personal quarters. Secret doors (unless otherwise noted) can be located with a DC 18 Wis (Perception) check. The ceiling height in the corridors is 15 feet, and the height in the living quarters is 10 feet. The ceiling in all other areas is 18 feet.

Clerics and cultists occupy some of the living quarters scattered around the second floor. The GM must pay particularly close attention to any combats that spill into the corridors and adjoining rooms. Under these circumstances, clerics and cultists in neighboring rooms and adjoining halls may join the fray. No organized alarms or alert systems exist, and no one runs up or down the stairs to alert other sections of the complex to intruders. Like most things at Tangjon College, chaos is the order of the day, making it easy for a small encounter in one room to morph into a giant free-for-all in the adjoining halls and corridors without anyone on the first and third levels knowing about it. In this case, a maximum of **4 clerics** and **14 cultists** are on the second floor. The clerics in **Area G5** just arrived and 4 cultists are in **Area G7**, 2 cultists are in **Area T9**, and **4 more cultists** are in **Area T10**.

Random Encounters (Difficulty varies)

Mila's ragtag, insane followers are most commonly found on the second floor, whether they are wandering the corridors or sleeping off their stupors in the living quarters. For every 10 minutes spent on the second floor, the PCs have a 25% chance of encountering **1d3 cult fanatics** plus **1 cleric**.

Cult Fanatic (4): AC 13; HP 33 (6d8+6) Spd 30ft; Melee dagger x2 (+4, 1d4+2 piercing); **Ranged** dagger (+4, 20ft/60ft, 1d4+2 piercing); **SA** multiattack (2 dagger), spells (DC 11, Wis +3); **Str** +0, **Dex** +2, **Con** +1, **Int** +0, **Wis** +1, **Cha** +2; **Skills** Deception +4, Persuasion +4, Religion +2; **Senses** passive Perception 10; **Traits** dark devotion (advantage on saves against being charmed or frightened), poisoned condi-

tion; **AL** CN; **CR** 2; **XP** 450.

Spells (slots): 0 (at will)—*light, sacred flame, thaumaturgy*; 1st (4)—*command, inflict wounds, shield of faith*; 2nd (3)—*hold person, spiritual weapon*

Cleric of Zuxaca, Clr3 (3): AC 16; HP 16 (3d8+3) Spd 30ft; Melee dagger (+5, 1d4+3 piercing); **SA** spells (DC 12, Wis +4); **Str** +3, **Dex** +0, **Con** +1, **Int** -1, **Wis** +2 (+4), **Cha** +1 (+3); **Skills** Insight +4, Medicine +4, Persuasion +3, Religion +1; **Senses** passive Perception 12; **Traits** channel divinity (1/rest), divine domain (war), guided strike, war priest; **AL** CN; **CR** 2; **XP** 450.

Spells (slots): 0 (at will)—*guidance, light, resistance, sacred flame*; 1st (3)—*bane, bless, cure wounds, shield of faith*

Equipment: breastplate, dagger, shield, 28gp.

Area Sr: Common Room (Difficulty Hard)

The warm glow of a roaring hearth heats and illuminates the welcoming confines of a spacious common room. Four beautiful women with flowing locks of crimson hair and sparkling emerald eyes lounge on the chairs and sofas, giggling, laughing and sipping wine from a silver goblet. Each wears a white robe adorned with runes and mystical symbols. A full pitcher of wine rests near one of the women's feet, while two other silver pitchers sit atop two chess tables. A large wool carpet covers much of the floor between four stone columns.

The room's furnishings include two upholstered sofas, a pair of upholstered chairs and two chess tables. All of the furniture sits atop the colorful wool carpet. The roaring hearth illuminates roughly half of the room in normal light and the remaining half in dim light.

As if they did not have a care in the world, **3 baccae** indulge their passion for wine and their love of revelry. The alluring fey abandoned their secluded forest and followed the deranged Mila, whom they believe is a divine emissary. The seductive creatures now spend their days drinking to wanton excess and tantalizing any humanoids that care to take a seat with them and have a drink or two.

By the time the PCs arrive, the baccae have already imbibed 1d4 glasses of wine. The flirtatious fey are instantly drawn to any male humanoids, particularly those with high Charisma scores. They graciously offer the PCs a glass of their special wine and invite them to join them in the festivities. The wine has the effect of a *calm emotions* spell and requires the drinker to succeed on a DC 12 Constitution save that increases by +1 for every cup of wine consumed. The inquisitive creatures make small talk with the PCs, asking them mundane questions about their homeland, families and aspirations while gazing deeply into the PCs' eyes. The baccae do not use their gaze attacks to charm the PCs during this initial conversation, and instead rely upon their stunning looks to disarm the PCs. They shower the male PCs with compliments about their features and fawn over their physiques. Not to be left out, they praise the female PCs' virtue and bravery, while conspicuously mentioning nothing about their appearance. They encourage the PCs to join the frivolity by singing songs and dancing with them. Meanwhile the wine flows freely for whoever wants to imbibe their sacred drink.

The gregarious baccae are happy to answer the PCs' questions, including any about Mila. They describe her philosophy about life as "seeing through the great lies" and recognizing the world for what it truly is. Mila tells them that truth is more likely to be found on the bottom of an empty wine goblet than it is in the churches and temples of other religions. They are unaware of Mila's grand designs and intentions and are happy to lead their hedonistic lifestyle in their blissful state of ignorance. They are not looking for a fight or even an argument, but if the PCs' questions cross the line between curiosity and intrusion, the baccae activate their charming gaze effect to take control of the situation. Any PC that attacks, threatens, or angers a baccae witnesses the creature's wrath as its lovely face contorts into a bestial visage with fangs. The mad fey then flies into a rage and attacks the PC.

It is also important to note that the baccae themselves have a 5% chance per cup of wine imbibed of unleashing their bestial form and flying into a rage. (The baccae already had 1d4 cups of wine before the PCs even arrived.) In this state, they savagely lash out at any male PCs in their presence before turning to the remaining females. They never attack another of their kin.

Baccae (3): AC 13; HP 55 (10d8+10) Spd 30ft; Melee club (+4, 2d6+2 bludgeoning), claw x2 (+4, 1d4+2 slashing, beast form only), bite (+4, 2d6+2 piercing, beast form only); **SA** charming gaze (human form only, any creature meeting gaze within 30ft must make DC 12 Wis save or be charmed), multiattack (2 claws, 1 bite, beast form only); **Str** +2, **Dex** +3, **Con** +1, **Int** +0, **Wis** -1, **Cha** +3; **Skills** Religion +3, Perception +2, Stealth +5; **Senses** darkvision 60ft, passive Perception 12; **Traits** beast form (when angered becomes beast for up to 1 hour), rage (1/day in beast form, gains +4 Str, +4 Con, +2 bonus on Wis saves, -2 penalty to AC); **AL** CN; **CR** 3; **XP** 700. **(Appendix)**

Treasure: The baccae did not amass any treasure other than the silver pitchers and the goblets they use to drink their special vintage. The three pitchers are worth 100gp each, and the four goblets are worth 25gp each. The carpet weighs 200 pounds and is worth 250gp. The chess tables are made from wood with marble playing surfaces. The sets' intricately carved quartz and onyx pieces are stored inside of a drawer on each side of the table. The table itself is worth 50gp. The quartz pieces are worth 10gp per set, and the onyx pieces are worth 25gp per set.

Area S2: Students' Quarters (Difficulty varies)

Three beds stripped clean of any linens and an unlocked wooden chest are the only furnishings in a cramped bedroom.

The students' quarters in the south wing were occupied by the predominantly male student body during the college's brief existence. Female students lived in the quarters in the west wing across the hall from the faculty living quarters. The student quarters in the east wing were used for any spillover from either section. The former residents took their belongings with them when they evacuated Tangjan College after Tiblu's mental breakdown. If no one currently resides in these living quarters, nothing is on the bed and the wooden chest is completely empty. The windows in the rooms along the exterior walls provide enough natural light to illuminate the living quarters during the day and bathe the room in dim light at night.

Mila's followers took up residence in six of these rooms. There is a 33% chance that the students' living quarters are currently being used by **2d4 cultists**. Whenever that is the case, roll 1d8 to find out what they are doing: 1-2, sleeping; 3-4, awake in the room; 5-8, somewhere else at the time. (The GM is free to designate the occupied rooms ahead of time or randomly determine which rooms are occupied as the PCs make their way through the second floor.) The doors are always locked whenever someone occupies the room. The cultists attack anyone breaking into their room on sight, no questions asked. Any combats that spill out into the adjoining corridor may attract attention from other cultists occupying nearby rooms.

Cultist: **AC** 12; **HP** 9 (2d8) **Spd** 30ft; **Melee** scimitar (+3, 1d6+1 slashing); **Str** +0, **Dex** +1, **Con** +0, **Int** +0, **Wis** +0, **Cha** +0; **Skills** Deception +2, Religion +2; **Senses** passive Perception 10; **Traits** dark devotion (advantage on saves against being charmed or frightened); **AL** CN; **CR** 1/8; **XP** 25.

Treasure: In addition to their listed gear, the cultists store clothing and personal effects worth 1d6x10gp in their room at any time.

Area S3: Staircase

A wooden staircase ascends upward onto a landing.

The staircase connects the second and third floors and culminates in a landing on the third floor.

Area S4: Faculty Quarters (Difficulty varies)

Two unmade beds are positioned against the far wall. An unlocked wooden chest lies on the floor between the two beds. Two empty bookshelves also line part of the outer walls and a cold, stone hearth occupies the near corner. A small, circular wooden table surrounded by four chairs sits in the center of the room.

The faculty enjoyed more spacious quarters than the students, though the accommodations were hardly luxurious by any standards. The college's permanent faculty lived in the rooms in the west wing across the hall from the girls' dormitory, and visiting scholars stayed in the lone room in the east wing. Like the students, the faculty also took their personal items with them when they left the college in the hands of Tiblu and his insane minions. If there is no one currently residing in these living quarters, nothing is on the bed and the wooden chest is empty. The windows in the rooms along the exterior walls provide enough natural light

to illuminate the living quarters during the day and bathe the room in dim light at night.

Mila's priests currently reside in two of these rooms. There is a 40% chance that the faculty's living quarters are currently being used by **1d2 clerics**. Whenever that is the case, roll 1d6 to see what the occupants are doing: 1–2, sleeping; 3–4, awake in the room; 5–6, somewhere else. (The GM is free to designate the occupied rooms ahead of time or randomly determine which rooms are occupied as the PCs make their way through the second floor.) The doors are always locked whenever someone is in the room. The clerics attack anyone breaking into their room on sight with no questions asked. Any combat that spills out into the adjoining corridor may attract attention from anyone occupying one of the nearby rooms.

Treasure: Besides their listed gear, the clerics also store 2d6x10gp worth of personal items and belongings.

Area S5: Lecture Hall

The slightest sound echoes through an oddly shaped chamber. The entrance opens into a steep incline that ascends 4 feet. A central aisle separates four rows of benches that gradually decline, creating an amphitheater effect within the room. A slightly raised platform with a lectern occupies the room's lowest point. Charts and diagrams affixed to the back wall display a chain of complex mathematical equations.

Tangjan College conducted its largest classes in this spacious lecture hall. Wooden stairs span the entire breadth of the first 5-foot section, which creates the elevation needed to create the amphitheater's gradual decline. A successful DC 10 Wis (Perception) check spots the graffiti that covers many of the benches. None of the names has any particular significance, though a successful DC 15 Wis (Perception) check notices a brief phrase stating "Zardrel, extremely bored and still here." If the PCs encountered him during the **Events** section in **Part One**, they recognize the name. The diagrams and charts on the wall are calculations intended to determine the load-bearing capacity of various architectural structures. A successful DC 10 Int (Investigation) check identifies the purpose of these equations. The clerics and cultists have no reason to enter the lecture hall and are never encountered here.

Area S6: Meeting Rooms

Two long wooden tables surrounded by ten chairs each occupy most of an otherwise empty room.

Students and faculty used these meeting rooms as study halls and to conduct administrative meetings. Nothing of interest is here, and the clerics and cultists do not venture into the chamber either.

Tangjan College Third Level

Zuxaca's servants, the maddening phambentes, aimlessly wander the corridors. These demented proteans revel in their lunacy and delight in tormenting any living creature that gets in their way, filling their feeble minds with false images. The phambentes disguise themselves as hooded men with reptilian eyes and tongues, as well as clawed hands. Like the first and second floors, the walls are built from reinforced masonry and the doors from strong wood. The corridors are lit in the same manner as those on the lower floors. Secret doors (unless otherwise noted) can be located with a DC 17 Wis (Perception) check. The ceiling height in the corridors is 15 feet and 10 feet in the living quarters. The height in all other areas is 18 feet.

Random Encounters

It is near impossible to keep the phambentes still for more than a fleeting instant. The maniacal proteans roam the third floor rooms and corridors in search of other creatures willing to embrace their delusion. For every 10 minutes spent on the third floor, the PCs have a 50% chance of encountering **1d2 phambentes**. These shapeshifters assume a humanoid appearance with reptilian features while roaming the halls. When severely injured, they revert to their natural state, thus gaining the effects of a *heal* spell. The insane outsiders are solely concerned with spreading their madness to others and attack all lawful creatures on sight. Three of these deranged monsters stalk the third floor in addition to those found in **Areas T12** and **T15**.

Phambente Protean (1d2): HP 120 (16d8+48) Spd 30ft, fly 30ft; **Melee** claw x2 (+6, 2d4+3 slashing), bite (+6, 2d6+3 plus delusion); **SA** multiattack (2 claws, 1 bite), spells (DC 12, Cha +4; claws, bite), spells (DC 12, Cha +4); **Immune** acid, *polymorph*; **Resist** critical hits, lightning, sneak attack damage, thunder; **Str** +3, **Dex** +1, **Con** +3, **Int** +0, **Wis** –2, **Cha** +1; **Skills** Acrobatics +4, Athletics +6, Intimidation +4, Perception +1, Stealth +4; **Senses** blindsight 30ft, darkvision 60ft, passive Perception 11; **Traits** amorphous anatomy (resistance to critical hits and sneak attack damage, immunity to *polymorph*, recovers from physical blindness or deafness after one round), delusion (creature struck by bite attack must make DC 13 Wis save or be delusional, with disadvantage on attacks, saves, ability checks, 20% chance of spell failure, automatically fails all saves against illusion magic), resistance to magic (advantage on saves against spells and magical effects), shapechange (1/day into any small, medium or large beast, elemental, giant, humanoid, ooze or plant, may change back as bonus, gains *heal* when it does); **AL** CN; **CR** 5; **XP** 1,800. (**Appendix**)

Innate Spells: Constant: *freedom of movement*, *tongues*; At will: see *invisibility*, *sleep*; 3/day: *confusion*, *spiritual weapon*; 1/day: *polymorph*

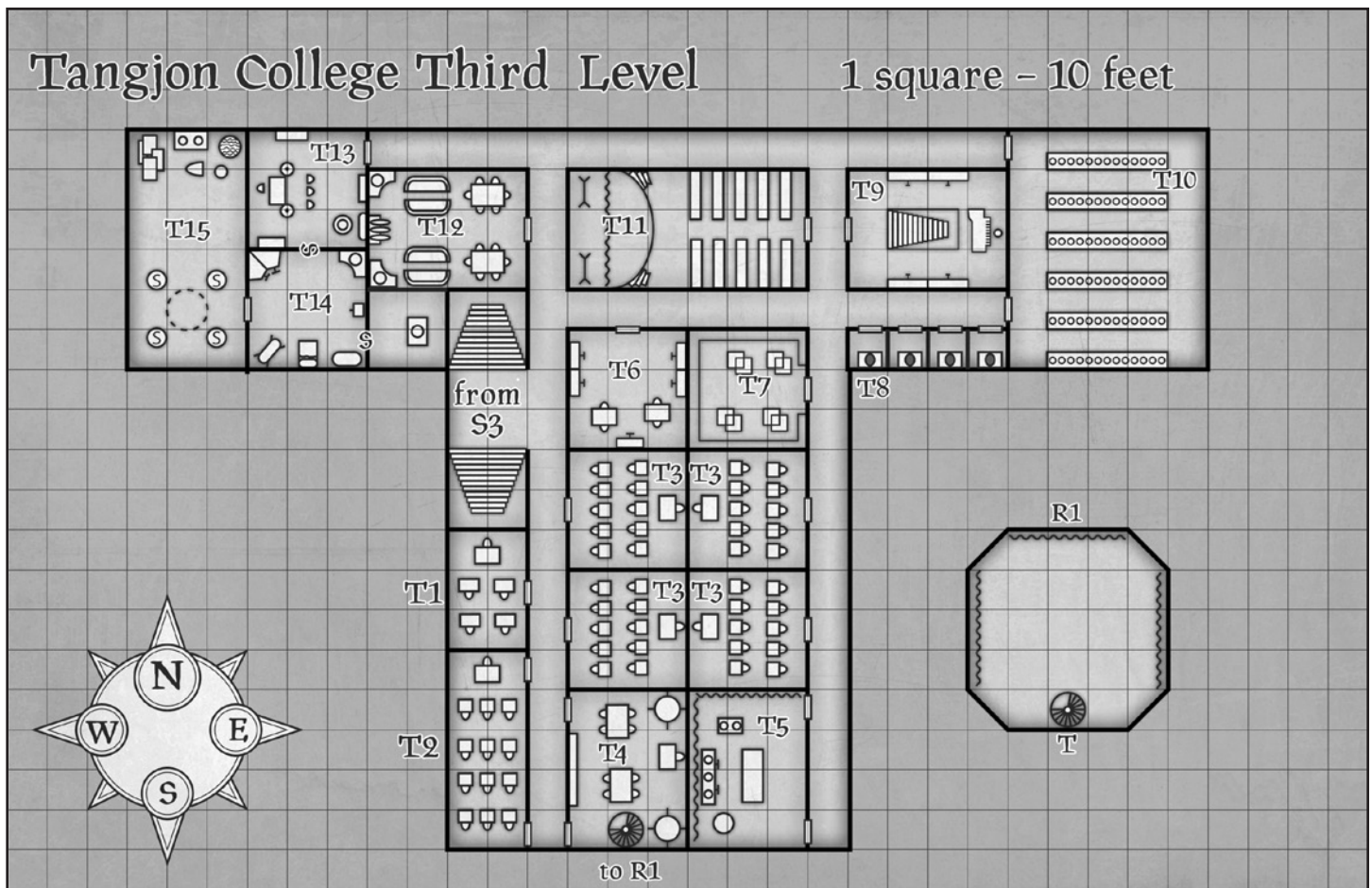
Area T1: Small Classroom

A large oak desk overlooks four smaller desks that face it. Each desk has a single drawer and a chair tucked neatly beneath it.

The faculty used this small classroom for advanced-level courses and esoteric subject matter with limited appeal. The desk drawers, including the one on the larger faculty desk, are empty. The desks are old and in poor condition, rendering them worthless.

Area T2: Art Classroom (Difficulty Easy)

Streaks of paint, chunks of hardened clay and blotches of ink cover the desks crammed into this long, narrow classroom. Dusty and solidified palettes are strewn about the room, along with numerous withered brushes and warped pieces of wood, six wooden easels, four sets of artisans' tools, three pottery wheels and enough scraps of canvas to construct a small tent. Numerous sketches and paintings depicting grotesque images of amorphous, protoplasmic beings and bizarre depictions of seemingly alien humanoids are tacked to the walls. Amid the upheaval, a female half-elf practically barricaded into the corner feverishly paints a horrific scene of hideous and crazed monsters emerging from seeming nothingness. She is completely engrossed in her work, focusing all of her maniacal attention on finishing her dire creation. A copper coin on a nearby desk illuminates most of the room.



The college's resident art instructor and guest artists conducted classes here. The school specialized in painting techniques with a lesser emphasis on sculpture, etchings and ink drawings. Tangjan College's reputation in the field steadily increased during its 10-year existence. Unfortunately, the artwork currently displayed on the walls is not the handiwork of the college's greatest artists. Instead, it is the product of the warped and twisted mind in the corner of the room. She is also responsible for casting a *light* spell on the nearby copper coin.

Consumed by her mania, **Tess Sanguinatta**, a half-elf diviner and Mila's second cousin once-removed, is single-mindedly focused on turning her prophetic visions into artistic reality. Tess never knew of Mila's existence until she researched her family history and found her long-lost and distant kin. The lonely and impressionable Tess quickly fell under Mila's spell and became one of her most devoted followers. She embraced her philosophies and used her magical abilities to solidify her beliefs. Over the coming months, Mila's influence and her own fanaticism drove her mad. Her need to depict her violent fantasies in artwork became her singular obsession.

Despite her madness, Tess is not violent by nature. She loathes bloodshed and, in her delusional mind, she believes that her images serve as a warning against the terrors borne of Zuxaca, her semi-divine patron. Tess repeatedly speaks of the "mind in the darkness," the "shapeshifters," the "serpents of chaos," "the ghosts in her ears" and the "festering diseases of the brain" during any conversations with her. She is incapable of speaking in a coherent and rational manner. Her only comments about Mila refer to her as "the dark and beautiful prophetess," and she knows nothing about the metallurgic amber and Mila's plans. If the PCs advise her of her potential inheritance in accordance with Dowan's instructions (see **Area W1: Galloping Ghost Inn**), Tess exhibits no interest in coming forward as an heir to the estate. She eagerly agrees to relinquish her claim in writing as long as the PCs agree to leave her in peace and let her finish her work.

Tess' mania prevents her from doing anything other than painting and drawing her weird images. She responds to incessant questioning and distractions with a bloodcurdling outburst that is so loud and animated that it triples the chance of encountering roaming phantoms. If the PCs persist on

pestering her, Tess finally explodes and retrieves her *wand of fireballs*. She then points it at the offender and mutters more inane babble and idle threats as a final warning. Tess is a poor combatant who puts up little struggle in a real fight. Instead of focusing on her survival, she laments her impending death as the art world's greatest loss and vehemently complains that more wondrous images "dance in her head like angels on the head of a pin."

Tess Sanguinatta, female half-elf Wiz5: AC 12; HP 22 (5d6+5) Spd 30ft; **Melee** +1 *quarterstaff* (+3, 1d6 bludgeoning; **SA** spells (DC 14, Int +6); **Str** -1, **Dex** +0, **Con** +1, **Int** +3 (+6), **Wis** +2 (+5), **Cha** +2; **Skills** Arcana +6, History +6, Insight +5, Int +6, Medicine +5, Religion +6; **Senses** darkvision 60ft, passive Perception 12; **Traits** arcane recovery, arcane tradition (Divination), divination savant, fey ancestry, minor conjuration; **AL** CN; **CR** 4; **XP** 1,100.

Spells (slots): 0 (at will)—*blade ward, light, minor illusion, prestidigitation*; 1st (4)—*alarm, color spray, magic missile, protection from evil and good*; 2nd (3)—*blur, shatter*; 3rd (2)—*fly, lightning bolt*

Equipment: +1 *quarterstaff, bracers of defense, potion of greater healing, potion of invulnerability, wand of fireballs*

Treasure: In addition to Tess' listed gear, the four sets of artisan's tools are the only other items of value. They are worth 55gp each.

Area T3: General Classroom

One large desk with a chair tucked neatly beneath it faces two rows of five smaller desks with an affixed chair.

Instructors taught generalized classes such as mathematics, history, literature and philosophy in these generic classrooms. A successful DC 13

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Wis (Perception) check reveals the presence of graffiti on the undersides of the students' desks. The drawers are empty except for broken quills, empty vials of ink, torn pieces of papyrus and other useless junk.

Area T4: Science Lab

A small crucible, several empty beakers, forceps and an abacus rest upon two tables surrounded by four chairs. The tables face a larger desk with a chair against the far wall. Crude diagrams and mathematical equations written in chalk cover a piece of black slate affixed to the near wall. Iron cauldrons rest in each of the far corners, and a spiral staircase ascends through the ceiling and into a dark vertical shaft.

This science laboratory did not perform the dangerous and sometimes catastrophic experiments conducted in the alchemy lab on the first floor. The instructors knew beforehand whether the chemical concoctions brewed here posed any danger to the students and the school. The crucibles and forceps on the tables have long since rusted and are worthless. The diagrams on the chalkboard depict various geometric shapes, and the adjacent mathematical computations are linked to the diagrams. A successful DC 13 Int (Investigation) or Int (Arcana) check reveals that the calculations describe the methodology needed to determine the distance between various celestial bodies.

The spiral staircase ascends an additional 6 feet beyond the ceiling and ends in a trapdoor. The trapdoor is normally open, but it is currently closed and fastened from the opposite side. The spiral staircase opens into **Area R1**.

Good Wooden Trapdoor: AC 12, hp 15; **Immunity** cold, poison, psychic; **Resistance** thunder, weapon damage; **Break** DC 18 Str; **Unlock** DC 13 Dex with thieves' tools proficiency.

Treasure: The only objects of value in the room are the two abacuses. Each is worth 2gp.

Area T5: Biology Lab (Difficulty Easy)

The pungent odor of embalming fluid hangs heavy in the air, as numerous bodily organs and humanoid heads encased in glass jars filled with the preservative liquid rest upon two nearby cabinets with drawers beneath them. An entire cadaver sewn together from mismatched body parts lies upon a metallic slab in the center of the room. Salt and a mixture of other spices fill a wooden barrel next to the cadaver. Crude sketches drawn onto long sheets of papyrus hang from all four walls. The rudimentary diagrams depict human bodies using a mixture of colors and images.

Over the course of the college's existence, indigents and intellectuals alike sold or donated their bodies to the institution after their death for further scientific study. The jars on the cabinets contain three preserved human heads of an old man, a young woman and a teenage boy. The remaining jars hold various organs, including a human heart, kidney, lungs, liver and stomach along with three brains. A PC can identify each of these body parts with a successful DC 10 Wis (Medicine) or Int (Nature) check. The drawers beneath the cabinets hold additional biological specimens. These organs belong to other humanoid types such as elves, dwarves and halflings, a fact that may be determined with a successful DC 12 Wis (Medicine) or Int (Nature) check.

In the last chaotic days of Tiblu's descent into madness, the insane headmaster put the finishing touches on his final creation — the **flesh golem** that lies on the metallic slab. To make the fearsome monstrosity even more terrifying, he used strands of *embalming thread* (see New Magic Items sidebar, p. 132) to toughen the construct's fleshy hide. Tiblu never got the chance to unleash his pride and joy on Tunicamna and his allies, so Mila picked up where he left off.

The monster immediately reacts whenever a non-chaotic creature comes within 20 feet. The mindless brute rises to its feet and relentlessly attacks the intruder and any other non-chaotic creatures. If the flesh golem goes berserk, it attacks the closest creature regardless of its alignment. The creature fights until destroyed.

Flesh Golem: AC 9; HP 93 (11d8+44); Spd 30ft; **Melee** slam x2 (+7, 2d8+4 bludgeoning); **Immune** lightning, poison; bludgeoning, piercing and slashing from nonmagical, non-adamantine weapons; charmed, exhaustion, frightened, paralyzed, poisoned; **Resist** bludgeoning, piercing and slashing from adamantine weapons*, **SA** multiattack (2 slams); **Str** +4, **Dex** -1, **Con** +4, **Int** -2, **Wis** +0, **Cha** -3; **Senses** darkvision 60ft, passive Perception 10; **Traits** berserk (1 in 6 chance per turn if below 40hp, attacks nearest creature), aversion of fire (attacks at disadvantage on turn golem takes fire damage), immutable form (immune to spells that would alter its form), lightning absorption (takes no damage from lightning, but regains hp equal to lightning damage), magic resistance (advantage on saves against spells and magic effects), magic weapons (weapon attacks are magical); **AL** N; **CR** 5; **XP** 1,800.

*The use of *embalming thread* grants the flesh golem resistance to adamantine weapons.

Treasure: The diagrams on the wall depict the various human bodily systems including the nervous system, circulatory system, respiratory system, skeletal system and muscular system. The charts can be removed from the wall and stored in oversized scroll cases. Tiblu himself drew these diagrams, and they bear his name as Tiblu's Anatomy. In addition, 11 strands of *embalming thread* remain after Tiblu's handiwork. The thread can be found in the drawer beneath the larger cabinet against the far wall.

Area T6: Admissions Office

Dog-eared and trampled pieces of parchment cover the entire floor along with the overturned drawers pulled out of two cabinets that remain in an upright position. Similarly, two desks against the far wall are still standing, but their drawers and presumably their contents also lie on the floor. The battered lid of an empty iron chest behind the desks also lies on the floor among the strewn debris.

Upon arriving at Tangjan College, Mila and her followers scoured the college's records looking for any clues pointing to the lost amulet's whereabouts. Instead, all they found were endless records of student grades, faculty evaluations and copies of the degrees the college conferred to its graduates. The morass of crumpled and soiled parchments provides no useful or relevant information. Tunicamna's associates are responsible for destroying the iron chest that stored some of the college's tuition fees and petty cash accounts.

Area T7: Storeroom

Parchment, quills, vials of ink and cleaning supplies line the shelves of a spacious storeroom. Eight crates are spread throughout the room, with some resting atop other crates. The containers are torn open, revealing more parchment, quills and ink.

After 70 years, all of these items are worthless. Mila and her followers tore through the crates looking for valuables. They abandoned their search after a few minutes of futility.

Area T8: Privy

A foul smell and a hole carved into a crude seat confirm that the small room is a privy.

The college used the excrement collected in these privies to fertilize the soil in the neighboring greenhouse. They are occasionally used now, though no one is ambitious enough to recycle the waste for the plants.

Area T9: Music Room (Difficulty Deadly)

The deep bellows of a pipe organ resonate throughout the chamber as a haggard man clunks on its keys, belching out a tune more akin to a cat walking across the organ than an actual melody. A gaudy lit candelabrum rests atop the organ, illuminating part of the room. Meanwhile, a grotesquely obese woman wearing a ridiculously tight corset and a horned helmet belts out equally terrible tunes while standing within the raised choir box before the organ. Another man next to her seems prepared to take over for either party at a moment's notice. Tarnished musical instruments rest on the shelves of several cabinets fastened to the wall.

Music was an important facet of campus life for the students. The school's band and singers routinely performed concerts for their fellow scholars and faculty and showcased their talents during sporting events and other festivities. The music room's acoustics are perfect for clarifying and amplifying sound. This feature increases the DC to resist sonic-based and language-dependent spells and effects by +1 as long as the spell's target is within the room.

Mila's **2 cult fanatics** and the faux operatic diva inanelly argue about the proper pitch, beat and rhythm of their badly played tune. The men are exactly what they appear to be. The woman is actually an **imentesh protean** changed into this form. The men are unaware of the powerful outsider's true nature and simply believe that the PCs' intrusion gives them the perfect opportunity to rid themselves of their egotistical singer. The men take cover behind the organ, leaving their companion to go it alone against the trespassers.

In its present shape, the imentesh protean maintains its disguise and does not use its entire repertoire of natural attacks to hide its true nature. Furthermore, the imentesh also gains the penalties and benefits attributable to its smaller size. If the imentesh detects the presence of any lawful creatures, it takes to the air for added protection and opens the battle by casting *spiritual weapon* against any lawful creature(s). Otherwise, the imentesh casts *slow* against a martial PC. The imentesh is not averse to use either tactic again in the subsequent round or two if it was previously effective. If not, it attempts to warpwave one of the PCs, particularly a lawful one. It is important to note that the imentesh shows no concern for Mila's followers in regard to affecting them with its attack forms.

After being reduced to half its hit points, the imentesh assumes its true form, granting it the benefits of a *heal* spell cast at 13th level (140 hit points total). The protean then uses its formidable melee attacks against the PCs, once again targeting lawful creatures above all others. The imentesh also attempts to cast *haste* at some point during the combat. The chaotic creature's foremost interests are sowing entropy and madness throughout the world rather than self-preservation. The monster fights until destroyed and never surrenders. The imentesh also slays the two men before they have a chance to talk to the PCs.

Cult Fanatic (2): AC 13; HP 33 (6d8+6) Spd 30ft; Melee dagger x2 (+4, 1d4+2 piercing); **Ranged** dagger (+4, 20ft/60ft, 1d4+2 piercing); **SA** multiattack (2 dagger), spells (DC 11, Wis +3); **Str** +0, **Dex** +2, **Con** +1, **Int** +0, **Wis** +1, **Cha** +2; **Skills** Deception +4, Persuasion +4, Religion +2; **Senses** passive Perception 10; **Traits** dark devotion (advantage on saves against being charmed or frightened), poisoned condi-

tion; **AL** CN; **CR** 2; **XP** 450.

Spells (slots): 0 (at will)—*light, sacred flame, thaumaturgy*; 1st (4)—*command, inflict wounds, shield of faith*; 2nd (3)—*hold person, spiritual weapon*

Protean, Imentesh: AC 17; HP 228 (24d10+96) Spd 30ft, fly 30ft, swim 30ft; Melee bite (+11, reach 10ft, 2d6+7 piercing), claw x2 (+11, reach 10ft, 1d8+7 slashing), tail (+11, reach 20ft, 1d6+7 bludgeoning plus grapple check); **SA** grapple (may attempt to grapple creature struck by tail attack. On success opponent is grappled and restrained), inflict warpweave (on any corporeal creature within 100ft), multiattack (bite, 2 claws, tail), spells (DC 16, Cha +9); **Immune** acid; **Resist** lightning, thunder; **Str** +7 **Dex** +3, **Con** +4, **Int** +5, **Wis** +4, **Cha** +5; **Skills** Acrobatics +7, Athletics +11, Deception +9, History +9, Insight +8, Intimidation +9, Nature +9, Perception +8, Persuasion +9, Stealth +7; **Senses** blindsight 30ft, darkvision 60ft; passive Perception 18; **Traits** amorphous anatomy (resistance to critical hits and sneak attack damage, immunity to *polymorph*, recovers from physical blindness or deafness after one round), constrict (automatically inflict 1d8+7 bludgeoning damage on any creature restrained by tail), resistance to magic (advantage on saves against spells and magical effects), shapechange (1/day into any small, medium or large beast, elemental, giant, humanoid, ooze or plant, may change back as bonus, gains *heal* when it does); **AL** CN; **CR** 10; **XP** 5,900. **(Appendix)**

Innate Spells: Constant: *freedom of movement, tongues*; At will: *creation, dimension door, enlarge/reduce, fabricate, major image, shatter*; 3/day: *dispel magic, haste, slow*; 1/day: *hallucinatory terrain, polymorph*

Treasure: The musical instruments in the cabinets are badly tarnished and inoperable, but they are still valuable. There are three masterwork drums, three masterwork violins, two masterwork tambourines and two masterwork flutes, all with the broken condition. In addition to the college's inventory of musical instruments, the imentesh also has a *harp of shattering* (see New Magic Items sidebar, p. <<XX>>). The monster has a pouch containing five emeralds worth 250gp each and a golden music box worth 200gp.

Area T10: Greenhouse (Difficulty Hard)

The gems that illuminate the college's hallways also cast light in a warm, humid greenhouse. The foul stench of rotting vegetation and freshly tilled earth fill the chamber. Six rows of potted plants nearly span the room's entire length. Droopy, rotting stems and wilted, brown leaves are the only remnants of nearly all the plants except for a few hardy cacti.

The students and faculty grew orchids, flowers, herbs and some food crops in the greenhouse, but none survived for 60 years without water except the cacti. Hybrid species were also commonly nurtured and grown here, but the greenhouse's latest residents did not result from a failed experiment. Instead, the alien plants arrived here shortly before Mila's arrival. Like the half-orc barbarians in **Area G19**, she confines the strange plants to the greenhouse until she figures out what to do with them. Unlike the other doors on the third floor, the greenhouse's moisture caused the portals to swell, making it even more difficult to open them in light of the *arcane lock* spell Mila cast upon the door. They now await the opportunity to escape and explore this strange, new world.

Strong Wooden Door: 2 in. thick; AC 16; HP 18; Immunity cold, poison, psychic; Resistance fire, lightning, thunder, weapon damage; Break DC 22 Str; Unlock DC 15 Dex with thieves' tools proficiency (if *arcane lock* is dispelled; other-

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wise cannot be unlocked, can only be broken.)

Though they try their best, the **3 cerebriic fungi** hiding throughout the room do a marginal job of concealing themselves. The carnivorous plants are normally very inquisitive, but hunger gnaws at their bellies. The monsters are singularly focused on devouring fresh meat rather than asking probative questions. A PC spots the squatting, alien creatures with a successful DC 14 Wis (Perception) check. Once discovered, the intelligent plants scan the minds of those around them. This ability functions as an aura. The cerebriic fungi telepathically communicate with one another, allowing them to silently coordinate their actions. Each takes a turn unleashing its star shriek ability, subjecting the PCs to the horrific shrill once per round for up to 5 rounds. A cerebriic fungus that is not using this ability uses its *touch of madness* attack against spellcasting PCs. Unless there is a realistic chance of escape, the ravenous plants fight to the bitter end.

Cerebriic Fungus (3): AC 10; HP 75 (10d8+30) Spd 30ft; Melee bite (+4, 2d6+2 piercing), tendril x2 (+4, reach 15ft, 2d4+2 plus touch of madness); **SA** star-shriek (1/day, all creatures within 30ft must make DC 13 Wis save or be poisoned for 1d4 rounds), multiattack (1 bite, 2 tendrils), touch of madness (creature hit by tendril attack must make DC 14 Wis save or be incapacitated for 1d4 rounds); **Str** +2, **Dex** +0, **Con** +3, **Int** +2, **Wis** +5, **Cha** +2; **Skills** Persuasion +4, Perception +7, Stealth +2; **Senses** darkvision 60ft, passive Perception 17; **Traits** otherworldly mind (creatures attempting to read fungus' mind through divination or similar must make DC 13 Wis save or take 1d6 psychic damage and be affected as *confusion* spell for 1d6 rounds), unsettling appearance (creatures within 60ft must make DC 12 Wis save each round or take -1 penalty on attack rolls); **AL** N; **CR** 3; **XP** 700. (Appendix)

Treasure: During their travels, the five strange plants amassed a small treasure that they keep buried in one of the flowerpots. Noticing the disturbance in the soil requires a successful DC 18 Wis (Perception) check. There are three diamonds worth 500gp each buried beneath the dirt as well as a *ring of sacred mistletoe* (see New Magic Items sidebar, p. 132)

Area TII: Theater (Difficulty Hard)

A lone figure dressed in brightly colored clothes, clown shoes and a bright red jester's cap with ringing bells stands upon an elevated and well-lit stage entertaining an audience of two men and two women. The audience howls and guffaws at the performer's bawdy jokes and ridiculous pantomimes. Despite the solitary actor's cheery demeanor and comedic prowess, his leathery, withered skin belies his undead nature and contorts his lips and cheeks into a broad, horrific grin.

A thick, black curtain separates the forestage from the backstage area. Unlike the hallways and corridors, a gem with a *continual flame* spell occupies a depressed recess on the stage floor. A small panel allows the performers to cover the light with minimal effort. Two clothes racks located behind the curtain contain a vast assortment of costumes suitable for nearly any period piece and setting. The stage stands 3 feet above the auditorium and is accessible via two staircases located stage left and stage right. The seating area consists of crude wooden benches more akin to church pews than theater seats. The college's troupe of actors and musicians frequently held concerts, and performed plays and musicals in the theater.

The entertainer on stage is a **red jester**, a bizarre, undead creature with a penchant for humor and chaos. Upon noticing the PCs, the strange monster does not miss a beat and attempts to incorporate them into the act by loudly proclaiming that "you can never turn down a paying customer or a petulant gatecrasher."

He then invites the PCs to take a seat and enjoy the show along with the **8 cultists**. He offhandedly comments that "he is going to be here all night and given that he is already dead, probably forever," before moving on to

say that "the PCs cannot help but laugh at his act." He then contorts his face even wider and declares, "Look at me! I never stop smiling!"

Behind the merriment, the red jester is a devout follower of Mila and Zuxaca. Even though the PCs are likely heavily armed compared with the cultists, he recognizes them as a potential threat. During his interaction with the PCs, he wants to draw them close enough to get them within the 60-foot range of his fear cackle, and ideally lure them within 20 feet so he can hurl playing cards from his jester's deck at them.

The GM must remember that the red jester is not certain where the PCs' loyalties lie. He does not attack unless they make an overt act that threatens him or the audience. In order to gauge the PCs' intentions, he turns his one-man act into an interactive show. He asks the PCs questions about what brought them to Tangjan College and why they came to see him, all the while sprinkling in several jokes during the repartee. The red jester is adept at seeing through deception, providing a +5 to his Wis (Insight) check. If a PC gives him an evasive answer or lies, he becomes extremely suspicious. If a second PC does the same, he boldly proclaims that "on this monumental occasion, it is his honor to bring down the curtain." With those words, he attacks the PCs. It is possible that the PCs could bluff him into believing they are Mila's new followers or mercenaries hired to undertake her plans. In that case, the red jester does not attack, but he is also extremely wary of revealing details about Mila's activities. He instead claims that he is merely a humble entertainer devoted to sowing mirth and goodwill wherever he goes.

If the PCs fight him, the red jester commences combat by unleashing his fear cackle. The terrifying scream is almost certain to send the cultists bolting for the door, which may alert the floor's other minions to combat taking place in the theater. The red jester then hurls his playing cards and swings his *mace of merriment* at any enemies within range of these attacks. Throughout the combat, the red jester makes terrible puns and jokes. His colorful phrases include "always die with a smile on your face," "I think you hit my funny bone," "the joke's on you, I'm dead already," "you tickled my rib," "lucky at love, unlucky with cards," and "laughter is the best medicine." The red jester fights to the death, as do the cultists if they do not flee.

Cultist (8): AC 12; HP 9 (2d8) Spd 30ft; Melee scimitar (+3, 1d6+1 slashing); **Str** +0, **Dex** +1, **Con** +0, **Int** +0, **Wis** +0, **Cha** +0; **Skills** Deception +2, Religion +2; **Senses** passive Perception 10; **Traits** dark devotion (advantage on saves against being charmed or frightened); **AL** CN; **CR** 1/8; **XP** 25.

Red Jester: AC 14; HP 67 (15d8) Spd 30ft; Melee fist (+6, 1d12+3 bludgeoning), +2 *mace of merriment* (+7, 2d8+4 bludgeoning plus DC 14 Wis save or be paralyzed for 1d3 rounds); **Ranged** jester's deck (+6, 20ft, one creature, target affected as if it drew a card from *deck of many things*); **SA** fear cackle (1/day, all creatures within 60ft must make a successful DC 14 Wis save or be frightened for 2d4 rounds, 50% chance of dropping items); **Immune** necrotic, poison damage; exhaustion, fright, poison, unconsciousness; **Resist** bludgeoning, piercing and slashing from nonmagical weapons; **Str** +2, **Dex** +3, **Con** +0, **Int** +2, **Wis** +2, **Cha** +3; **Skills** Acrobatics +6, Deception +6, Insight +5, Sleight of Hand +6; **Senses** darkvision 60ft, passive Perception 12; **Traits** unassailable mind (If creature makes psychic attack or uses telepathy, creature must make DC 13 Int save or be cursed with permanent *confusion* spell); **AL** CN; **CR** 5; **XP** 1,800. (5th Edition Foes 192)

Treasure: The candelabrum on the organ is worth 50gp. In addition to the combatants' listed gear, the red jester keeps a satchel backstage that stores 204gp. It also wears *bracers of the glib entertainer* (see New Magic Items sidebar, p. 132).

Area T12: Common Room

The hearths in the far corners are cold and unlit. More than a dozen bottles of wine lie in a wooden rack against the wall between the two fireplaces. Two pairs of couches face one another near each of the hearths. Two tables surrounded by six chairs sit near the entrance.

After class, the students and faculty unwound in this common room. The upholstered couches are comfortable and in relatively good condition, as are the tables and chairs. Mila's followers rarely spend any time here. Their mania typically prevents them from relaxing.

Treasure: Fourteen bottles of wine are on the rack, though six spoiled ages ago. Though relatively unremarkable when first bottled, six decades dramatically increased their rarity. The remaining 8 wine bottles are worth 25gp each.

Area T13: Headmaster's Office (Difficulty Hard)

Three portraits of the same, middle-aged scholarly gentleman dressed in academic robes hang from the office walls. An ornate, mahogany desk has a velvet-upholstered chair sitting behind it. Two golden candleholders flank the desk and three ordinary chairs rest in front of it. A marble basin filled with water occupies a corner of the room. A silver mirror is affixed to the wall directly above the water receptacle. Two men dressed in acolyte's robes take turns playing with a tiny spider crawling across the desk.

The normally frugal Tiblu spared no expenses decorating his office. In his day, the metallurgic amber rested atop this very same mahogany desk. Like Tiblu, Mila now uses the marble basin and the silver mirror hanging on the wall near it to spy on her enemies with a *scrying* spell.

The men are really 2 **phambente proteans** shapechanged to appear as ordinary people. As Mila's personal bodyguards, the two creatures refuse anyone entry to Mila's quarters and workshop unless she accompanies the visitors. They direct the PCs to leave the room at once, first verbally (in Abyssal and Protean) and then non-verbally using exaggerated gestures and shooing motions. They immediately attack any creatures that do not comply with their orders. If they detect that any PC is lawful, they dispense with the inquiries and immediately unleash a *spiritual weapon* upon their orderly enemies. After sustaining damage, they revert to their true form and attack the PCs with their tentacles, gaining the benefits of a *heal* spell. The phambentes fight to the death, though they try to lure the PCs away from the office by using their *dimension door* ability to travel down the adjoining corridor and call for aid from any of the wandering phambentes.

Phambente Protean (2): HP 120 (16d8+48) Spd 30ft, fly 30ft; **Melee** claw x2 (+6, 2d4+3 slashing), bite (+6, 2d6+3 plus delusion); **SA** multiattack (2 claws, 1 bite), spells (DC 12, Cha +42 claws, bite), spells (DC 12, Cha +4); **Immune** acid, *polymorph*; **Resist** critical hits, lightning, sneak attack damage, thunder; **Str** +3, **Dex** +1, **Con** +3, **Int** +0, **Wis** -2, **Cha** +1; **Skills** Acrobatics +4, Athletics +6, Intimidation +4, Perception +1, Stealth +4; **Senses** blindsight 30ft, darkvision 60ft, passive Perception 11; **Traits** amorphous anatomy (resistance to critical hits and sneak attack damage, immunity to *polymorph*, recovers from physical blindness or deafness after one round), delusion (creature struck by bite attack must make DC 13 Wis save or be delusional, with disadvantage on attacks, saves, ability checks, 20% chance of spell failure, automatically fails all saves against illusion magic), resistance to magic (advantage on saves against spells

and magical effects), shapechange (1/day into any small, medium or large beast, elemental, giant, humanoid, ooze or plant; may change back as bonus, gains *heal* when it does); **AL** CN; **CR** 5; **XP** 1,800. (**Appendix**)

Innate Spells: Constant: *freedom of movement*, *tongues*; At will: see *invisibility*, *sleep*; 3/day: *confusion*, *spiritual weapon*; 1/day: *polymorph*

Treasure: The silver mirror Mila uses as a focus for her *scrying* spell is worth 1,000gp. The mahogany desk is worth 500gp though it is extremely heavy and cumbersome to move. Likewise for Tiblu's chair, which is worth 200gp. The golden candleholders flanking the desk are worth 150gp each. A successful DC 13 Int (Investigation) or Int (History) check verifies that Tiblu is the subject in the three portraits. The paintings are cracked and chipped, reducing their worth to 50gp apiece.

Area T14: Headmaster's Quarters (Difficulty Hard)

The dying, crackling embers in a nearby hearth provide dim illumination and residual warmth in a spacious, luxurious bedchamber. Water fills half of an alabaster bathing vessel adjacent to a four-poster canopy bed covered with silk sheets and an exotic fur. An iron chest with an intricate locking mechanism occupies the floor near a full-length polished silver mirror. A mahogany armoire with two closed drawers rounds out the room's ornate furnishings.

Like his office, Tiblu outfitted his bedchamber in a manner befitting royalty. The deranged Mila now lives here, though the room's charm and ambience are lost on the maniac sorceress. Though Tunicamna and his adventuring party looted Tiblu's personal fortune, his greatest treasures eluded them. The eccentric headmaster cast a permanent *nondetection* spell on the secret door located on the room's east wall to prevent the great wizard from locating the concealed portal with magic alone. PCs attempting detection spells must succeed on a DC 16 Int (Arcana) check; otherwise, the spell fails. In addition to protecting his hidden cache from divination spells, Tiblu also guarded it against thieves with potent magic. In an ironic and apropos gesture, Tiblu created a madness-causing magical trap. It is triggered whenever a creature opens the hidden portal.

SYMBOL OF INSANITY TRAP

Perception DC 21; **Disarm** DC 21 Int (Arcana) check

Effect All targets within 60ft must make DC 16 Wisdom save or be affected by long-term madness (see *5e Core Rules*).

All of the furniture in the bedchamber is original except for the custom-made iron chest. Mila brought it with her to store the contaminated coins for future circulation. It is infused with flecks of lead to absorb radiation and to prevent others from locating the metallurgic amber with divination spells. The demented and increasingly paranoid sorceress trusts no one, so she cast an *alarm* spell on the chest despite the fact that the coins within have nominal value. The trap silently alerts Mila if someone opens the chest.

ALARM TRAP

Perception DC 18; **Disarm** DC 18 Int (Arcana) check

Effect An *alarm* spell alerts Mila to the presence of intruders.

Treasure: Despite the furnishing's high quality, their sheer size and bulk make them difficult to remove. The two heaviest items, the bed and the alabaster bathtub, are worth 500gp and 300gp. The full-length silver mirror is worth 250gp. The armoire contains women's clothing that is the equivalent of four **noble's** outfits.

In the chest are 2,072cp, but they are all tainted with flecks of metallurgic amber. Many of the coins are still soft, indicating that they are newly

minted. A PC notices this feature with a successful DC 10 Wis (Perception) check. In addition, a PC can spot that the coins are a copper alloy with a successful DC 10 Int (Investigation) check. Though the coins contain a lesser concentration of metallurgic amber, they are still dangerous once removed from the chest. After 2d4 hours of exposure to the coins, the PC must succeed on a DC 13 Con save to avoid taking damage from the metallurgic amber. See the **Metallurgic Amber** sidebox in **Area G21** regarding the effects of the radioactive metal.

Area T15: Mila's Workshop (Difficulty Deadly)

The unnerving ringing sound caused by metal striking metal echoes through the spacious chamber, followed closely thereafter by a wave of stifling warmth. The noise and heat emanate from a hastily assembled workshop crammed into one side of the room. Sweat drips down the faces of two men. One feverishly pounds coins from a precast mold while the other moves metallic ore from the corner into a small forge and several crucibles on a nearby workbench. Numerous tools and dies sit on the workbench, along with an anvil and stone basin filled with liquid. A thin coat of metallic, gray paint covers every inch of the walls, floor and ceiling. An attractive, graceful woman with pale skin and flowing white hair oversees their activities, frantically urging the clearly exhausted men to work even faster. Though she appears human, her lithe figure and unearthly presence belie some other tainted heritage. A decrepit, withered old man accompanies her. The man and woman stand in the middle of a circle etched onto the floor with burnt incense, sulfur and brownish powder. Four limestone statues of a twisted and contorted eyeless snake surround the circle.

During his descent into madness, Tiblu first contacted Zuxaca in this laboratory more than 70 years ago. In a wild stroke of luck for Mila, the paranoid Tiblu covered the laboratory's walls, floor and ceiling in a thin coat of lead paint to prevent imaginary rivals and enemies from spying on him. The paint works to this very day, preventing enemies from viewing Mila while she remains here. It also prevents anyone from detecting the metallurgic amber. Nothing remains of Tiblu's original laboratory except the paint and the four creepy statues Tunicamna chose not to take with him. A successful DC 17 Int (Arcana) check identifies the statues' subject as Zuxaca. Mila herself is the conduit between her otherworldly deity and Tangjan College. The perpetually confused and mad Zuxaca is unable to act unless another creature directs the deranged serpent to do so. Without Mila, Zuxaca can do nothing, so destroying Mila essentially severs the link between Limbo and the Material Plane.

The workers currently have enough metal alloy to produce 1,000 copper coins infused with a minute quantity of metallurgic amber. In fact, each tainted coin consists of 99.4% copper and 0.6% metallurgic amber. Like the coins in **Area T14**, this minute quantity is sufficient to alter the coins' appearance and malleability. Before the PCs' intrusion, the men minted 105 Reman copper furrows with the remaining alloy left in the crucibles. The minting equipment consists of the hammers and dies needed to imprint the coins. The stone basin contains the acid bath, crucibles, forceps and anvil as well as the small forge. Enough pure copper ore is here to produce an additional 7,000 coins.

The enchanting woman overseeing the minting operation is Mila Sanguinata, a dhampir sorceress. The old man is a disguised **phambente**, and the **2 men** are minters she hired a week ago to produce her tainted coins. Fortunately for them, the lead paint absorbed the radiation from the metallurgic amber, leaving their minds mostly intact. The manic Mila works them to the brink of exhaustion, however. They have no loyalty to her and immediately hide at the first signs of combat.

Before coming in contact with metallurgic amber and Zuxaca, Mila suffered from mild mania. Since her exposure to these external influences, her mania has grown increasingly worse. She sleeps less than an hour a day, and her mood changes at a moment's notice. At the height of her ma-

nia, she has boundless energy and claims that Zuxaca telepathically shares its disturbing thoughts and visions with her. In her warped mind, she is convinced that all of humanity aspires to do the same.

Mila has a *mage armor* spell in effect at all times, increasing her AC to 19 and reducing her available 1st-level spells depending upon the time of day. In battle, her first inclination is to protect herself. In that vein, she casts *mirror image* on herself and dispatches the phambente to fight the PCs. Like the other proteans, the phambente reverts to its true form if seriously injured, gaining the benefits of a *heal* spell. Mila wants to spread her gift of madness to others rather than kill them outright, so she refrains from casting damaging spells and instead attempts to frighten and befuddle her foes with *fear*, *confusion* and *suggestion*, preferably in that sequence. Besides attacking the PCs, she also calls for assistance from her protean allies in the hallways if they are still alive. The phambente(s) arrive 2d4 rounds later. In a difficult spot, Mila quaffs her *potion of invisibility* and attempts to escape until she can regroup. If the PCs block her path, she resorts to extreme measures and hurls a *lightning bolt* at everyone in her way. In the grip of her mania, Mila never surrenders or bargains with the PCs. In Mila's delusional mind, death is a lie, and the only way to uncover the truth is to experience it firsthand. Mila is willing to pierce the veil of this illusion as well.

MILA SANGUINATA
Female dhampir Sor10
XP 5,000 (CR 9)
CN Medium humanoid
Init +3

DEFENSE
AC 16
HP 23 (9d6)
Save Con +3, Cha +8
Resist necrotic

OFFENSE
Speed 30ft
Melee +1 dagger (+7, 1d4+4 piercing)
Spells (slots): 0 (at will)—*blade ward, mage hand, message, prestidigitation, ray of frost*; 1st (4)—*charm person, mage armor, magic missile*; 2nd (3)—*mirror image, suggestion*; 3rd (3)—*lightning bolt, tongues*; 4th (3)—*confusion, fear*; 5th (1)—*dominate person*
Sorcery Points 9
Spell DC 16
Spell Attack Bonus +8

STATISTICS
Str 11 (+0), **Dex** 16 (+3), **Con** 11 (+0),
Int 16 (+3), **Wis** 10 (+0), **Cha** 20 (+5)
Languages Abyssal, Common, Draconic, Elvish, Protean
Skills Arcana +6, Deception +10, History +6, Int +6, Perception +5, Religion +6
Senses darkvision 60ft; passive Perception 15

TRAITS
Bend Luck: When a creature she can see makes an attack roll, ability check or saving throw, Mila can spend 2 sorcery points to roll 1d4 and either add or subtract the result from the creature's roll.
Metamagic: Mila has the Empowered Spell and Quicken Spell metamagic options.
Sorcerous Origin: As a worshipper of chaos, Mila's sorcerous origin is Wild Magic.
Tides of Chaos: Mila can gain advantage on one attack roll, ability check or saving throw, and recover this ability after a long rest. After recovery the DM can roll on the Wild Magic Surge Table when Mila casts a spell of 1st level or higher.
Innate Spellcasting: 3/day: *detect evil and good*
Light Sensitivity: Dhampir have disadvantage on all attack

rolls, saving throws and ability checks while in bright sunlight or its equivalent.

Manipulative: Dhampir receive a +2 bonus to Deception and Perception.

Necrotic Affinity: Though they are not undead, dhampir cannot gain hit points from clerical healing, but gains resistance to necrotic damage.

Resist Vampiric Attack: While a dhampir takes damage from a vampire's bite attack, its necrotic resistance reduces damage inflicted, and the vampire that bites the dhampir does not gain hit points as a result. A dhampir slain by a vampire does not rise as vampire spawn.

Wild Magic Surge: When Mila casts a spell, she must roll a d20 and on a result of 1 must roll on the Wild Magic Surge Table.

Equipment: +1 dagger, bracers of defense, cloak of protection, potion of invisibility, potion of healing (x3), ring of regeneration, ring of resistance (fire), scrimshaw pendant worth 150gp, pouch containing five pearls worth 100gp each, 174gp.

Phambente Protean: HP 120 (16d8+48) Spd 30ft, fly 30ft; **Melee** claw x2 (+6, 2d4+3 slashing), bite (+6, 2d6+3 plus delusion); **SA** multiattack (2 claws, 1 bite), spells (DC 12, Cha +42 claws, bite), spells (DC 12, Cha +4); **Immune** acid, polymorph; **Resist** critical hits, lightning, sneak attack damage, thunder; **Str** +3, **Dex** +1, **Con** +3, **Int** +0, **Wis** -2, **Cha** +1; **Skills** Acrobatics +4, Athletics +6, Intimidation +4, Perception +1, Stealth +4; **Senses** blindsight 30ft, darkvision 60ft, passive Perception 11; **Traits** amorphous anatomy (resistance to critical hits and sneak attack damage, immunity to polymorph, recovers from physical blindness or deafness after one round), delusion (creature struck by bite attack must make DC 13 Wis save or be delusional, with disadvantage on attacks, saves, ability checks, 20% chance of spell failure, automatically fails all saves against illusion magic), resistance to magic (advantage on saves against spells and magical effects), shapechange (1/day into any small, medium or large beast, elemental, giant, humanoid, ooze or plant, may change back as bonus, gains heal when it does); **AL** CN; **CR** 5; **XP** 1,800. **(Appendix)**

Innate Spells: Constant: *freedom of movement, tongues*; At will: *see invisibility, sleep*; 3/day: *confusion, spiritual weapon*; 1/day: *polymorph*

Innate Spells: Constant: *freedom of movement, tongues*; At will: *see invisibility, sleep*; 3/day: *confusion, spiritual weapon*; 1/day: *polymorph*; **Spell DC:** 12; **Spell Attack Bonus:** +4

Treasure: In addition to Mila's listed gear, the minting equipment is worth 50gp. The statues are well made, but their bizarre subject matter reduces their value to 50gp each.

Area T16: Tiblu's Vault

The room's only feature is a marble pedestal bearing a silver chalice, a golden scepter imbedded with shimmering diamonds, a silver orb and an ornate red, fur robe.

Tiblu kept the school's ceremonial vestments in his secure vault. He used these items once per year during the college's graduation ceremony.

Treasure: The silver chalice is a *chalice of poison weeping* (see New Magic Items sidebar, p. 132). The golden scepter is worth 1,250gp, the silver orb is worth 500gp, and the robe is worth 200gp.

Area R1: Observatory (Difficulty Deadly)

Two 10-foot-long snake women with pale faces and stark white hair peer up into the sky from a solitary tower atop the building's roof. Numerous star charts cover its 10-foot-high walls. A trap door against the south wall presumably grants access to the campus building itself.

The observatory is connected to the school via a trapdoor leading into **Area T4**. The trapdoor is fastened from this side, so unfastening it provides easy access to the spiral staircase leading down to the third level. The observatory lacks a ceiling, so creatures can easily climb over the wall or fly into the room, although a *wall of force* covers the opening. Intruders must deal with it first to get inside.

The astronomical outpost is now the home of **2 lunar nagas** that observe the celestial bodies in search of hidden signs and omens. The monsters arrived here a few months before Mila and her minions and made an uneasy truce with her. They agreed to guard the tower and convey their observations and prophecies to Mila in exchange for a monthly tribute. Though the lunar nagas share the dhampir sorceress's outlook on chaos, they think she is utterly mad and avoid her as much as possible. As an added protective measure, Mila cast the *wall of force* across the top of the observatory. The wall allows the nagas to see the open sky, but prevents intruders from entering and keeps the nagas from escaping.

If the PCs somehow circumvent the *wall of force*, the lunar nagas do not shy from a fight. But they are happy to avoid one, especially against formidable opponents. As with their relationship with Mila, they can be bribed, though nothing short of 1,000gp worth of magical items is enough to garner their interest. They naturally attack any creatures that attack them first or who attempt to sneak up on them. At the first sign of trouble, the lunar nagas cast *invisibility* and *expeditious retreat* upon themselves. In subsequent rounds, the lunar nagas position themselves to flank their enemies. If they cannot, they resort to targeting the PCs with *magic missile* and *scorching ray*. A lunar naga reduced to fewer than 10 hit points pleads for its life, offering information in return for mercy. They tell the PCs that Mila is crazy, and that she plans to spread her sickness throughout the land. They do not know the specifics of her plan, but recall Mila mentioning a warlock-alchemist aiding her in her plot. They have not left the observatory since Mila's arrival.

Lunar Naga (2): AC 15; HP 137 (14d8+56) Spd 40ft; **Melee** bite (+5, 3d6+2 plus poison; **SA** hypnosis (creatures within 30 feet must make a DC 14 Wis save or be charmed, naga can maintain effect as long as it concentrates), poison (6d6 poison, DC 14 Con save for half), spells (DC 13, Cha +6); **Immune** poison damage; charmed, poisoned; **Str** +2, **Dex** +4, **Con** +4, **Int** +1, **Wis** +3, **Cha** +3; **Skills** Arcana +4, Int +4, Nature +4, Perception +5, Stealth +6; **Senses** darkvision 60ft, passive Perception 15; **AL** CN; **CR** 6; **XP** 2,300. **(Appendix)**

Spells (slots): 0 (at will)—*acid splash, chill touch, mage hand, minor illusion, prestidigitation*; 1st (4)—*color spray, expeditious retreat, mage armor, magic missile*; 2nd (3)—*blindness/deafness, invisibility, scorching ray*; 3rd (2)—*dispel magic, lightning bolt*

Treasure: The nagas' star charts are extremely detailed and precisely accurate. Four charts depict each quadrant of the sky, and each is worth 250gp. Each lunar naga also uses an astrolabe to aid its calculations. Each astrolabe is worth 1,000gp. One of the nagas also carries a *wand of magic missiles*.

Concluding the Adventure

Though the PCs may stop Mila from circulating her tainted coins among an unsuspecting populace, the question remains as to what to do with the metallurgic amber recovered from the college's alchemy laboratory and Mila's personal laboratory. The metal cannot be physically destroyed other than by *disintegrating* it. Likewise, returning it to Petyan is problematic as someone else could take it and use it for some nefarious purpose. In the end, the most likely means of disposal is to encapsulate the material in a lead casing and hide it in a secure location. That might be at the bottom of a chasm or even in a secret chest somewhere on the Ethereal Plane. The GM must ultimately decide whether the PCs' efforts at safekeeping prove effective.

After defeating Mila and Blake, the PCs must also wrap up any loose ends from side quests they performed during the adventure. These may include tracking down the traveling werewolf troupe, locating the lost heiress Tess Sanguinatta, bringing Blake Acamu back to Dardennell to face justice or disrupting Naykaw's narcotics trade. Besides granting the PCs payment for their services, these individuals could also serve as springboards to the party's next adventure. Possibilities include:

- Learning that a small "test batch" of Mila's tainted coins made its way to a nearby settlement and wreaked havoc on the local populace.
- Recapturing Blake after he escaped from Dardennell's clutches.
- Dealing with the repercussions of disrupting Naykaw's criminal enterprise.

The people of Petyan are also grateful to the PCs for their services for seeing that Tunicamna's amulet caused no further damage and for bringing the bucentaurs and his centaur allies to justice for their attack on their village. The residents have little to offer in terms of monetary payment beyond what Quanata pays them, but the PCs are guaranteed seats in front of a warm fire and a plate full of the village's finest culinary offerings. The people herald them in celebratory songs and dances performed throughout Campacha.

Child's Play

By Tom Knauss

Take heed what you wish for dear child, for misery is only sleeping while joy is awake. The turn of a phrase can transform the most delightful dream into the most terrifying nightmare. Choose your words wisely lest you rue them forever.

The fate of a young girl hangs in the balance as an evil creature bent on exacting revenge and the forces set loose by a cruel genie centuries earlier threaten to consign her and her would-be rescuers to eternal imprisonment in an accursed house of horrors.

Adventure Background

No being is as capricious as a bored genie. Ennui gnaws on the souls of mortals yet utterly devours those that live forever. During the waning days of the efreet city of Iljanna, tedium conspired with cruelty to give birth to a frightful creation. Infernalvist, an efreeti malik, loathed his dull existence in his race's rapidly decaying city. Forever banished from his elemental home by his immortal kin for an unforgiveable transgression, he despised spending his days in exile surrounded by worthless mortals and the very creatures that condemned him to his wretched fate. Even the wanton excesses and cruel indulgences that amused him in the past grew stale and trite over the passing decades. Monotony tormented Infernalvist for as long as he could remember until he overheard a passing comment from a stranger.

"Nothing makes me happier than to see someone's wish come true," the man mumbled to himself as he watched a child play with a newfound toy.

The noble sentiment struck a chord with the despondent genie, though not for the obvious reasons. His demeanor did not change from any desire to transform someone else's life for the better. Instead, he wanted to turn the man's statement on its ear and use others as his playthings. Infernalvist never granted anyone's wishes before, but that was about to change as he contrived a wicked plan to twist joy into horror. The efreeti commissioned his slaves to build a furnished, miniaturized replica of his palatial estate from wood and stone. When they completed the construction, he forced his servants to make wishes that allowed him to animate selected objects and to shape monsters to stalk the facsimile. Using a portion of his own blood, he created a **homunculus** named Ezreki to act as the device's caretaker and a **fire elemental** to serve as its guardian. Infernalvist called his finished creation The House of a Thousand Delights, though its victims experienced nothing but horror and terror.

To set his devious scheme into motion, the crafty genie cajoled indigents, prostitutes and addicts from Iljanna's streets to come to his palace to see a wondrous sight that would forever change their lives. Though they were desperate, no one trusted the efreeti, so Infernalvist overcame their inherent suspicion by showering them with expensive gifts and feigned interest in improving their lot in life. The allure of instant wealth combined with his relentless coercion proved too much for nearly all to resist. They fell for his elaborate charade and followed him to his residence. For the rest of the day, the unwitting victim basked in the trappings of luxury and the syrupy flattery of an immortal being. When the sun rose the following morning, Infernalvist offered his guest a proposition. They could return to the streets and resume their former life, or he could grant them their wish to spend the rest of their life in a stately mansion like his. Too few realized the danger of trifling with a conniving genie. They succumbed to temptation and wished to remain in a grand palace. He eagerly granted their wish which teleported them into an extradimensional space that simultaneously coexisted with his miniaturized house of horrors. Once inside, Infernalvist watched with salacious delight, as the monsters and constructs within

claimed another hapless victim. To further enhance his pleasure, he crafted The House of a Thousand Delights' extradimensional space to allow only genies to see what is happening within that space. Infernalvist's human slaves saw nothing when they looked inside the facsimile prompting them to believe — if they had not already done so — that their master was insane when he would howl in ecstasy while observing what they thought was an empty replica. The efreeti's quest for amusement cost hundreds of lives, and in the end his callous disregard led to his undoing.

While an enemy army routed the genies and their mercenary force outside the city walls, Iljanna's citizens and slaves took matters into their own hands inside its walls. Aided by a network of spies and traitors among the ranks of Iljanna's mercenaries, the people rebelled against their hated efreet masters. Centuries of oppression and injustice fueled their wrath, and none felt their sting more than the sadistic Infernalvist. Unable to return to his homeland, the haughty exile chose to stand his ground and not bend in the face of an angry throng. Though he inflicted many casualties, the enraged mob overwhelmed and destroyed him. With Infernalvist now dead, chaos reigned in his opulent palace. The jubilant victors sacked the residence with reckless abandon. Every valuable object vanished in the blink of an eye, and The House of a Thousand Delights was no exception much to the dismay of Infernalvist's former slaves who feared that the strange replica that amused their master so greatly held some dark secret.

In the centuries since Iljanna's downfall, Infernalvist's miniature palace passed through many hands, though no one knew what it truly was. In fact, the wealthy families that owned it mistakenly believed that it was a large dollhouse. They painted the rooms in pastoral colors and decorated the interior with curtains, silk and lace. Many generations of young girls played with what they believed to be a toy without having even the slightest inkling of its sinister past.

Lakta Jamar

It remained that way until it became the plaything of Lakta Jamar, a ten-year-old girl unlike any other that played with The House of a Thousand Delights. In addition to being precocious and blessed with a vivid imagination, genie blood courses through her veins, though she knows nothing of her outsider heritage. Because of her unusual lineage, Lakta was the first child to sense that there was something strange about her dollhouse. She told her mother, Dima, that she sometimes heard terrible screams and saw objects and creatures move within the rooms. Her mother dismissed the young girl's claims as the product of an overactive imagination. Despite these odd occurrences and her growing trepidation, Lakta spends most of her free time playing with her beloved dollhouse.

Jumia Rassad

Lakta's claims about the dollhouse did not escape the notice of her intrusive and alluring tutor, Jumia Rassad. She believed her pupil, prompting her to research the matter further. She soon happened upon a description of The House of a Thousand Delights at Hamsha University, causing her to believe that Lakta's dollhouse was in actuality Infernalvist's prized creation. The unexpected discovery suited her plans perfectly. Unbeknownst to Lakta's family, Jumia is a young **kharam** (see Appendix) that has an old score to settle with her current employer. Lakta's father, Hassan, a personal bodyguard of the regional abaya thwarted an assassination attempt by Jumia's mother ten years earlier when Jumia was just a small child. Hassan and his fellow bodyguards uncovered her plot and slew the mur-

derous kharam in process. On that fateful day, Jumia began planning her revenge against Hassan and his entire family. Ten years later, thanks to her surreptitious find her plan appears poised to come to fruition. By giving the little girl a ring that grants a single wish, she could make Lakta vanish without a trace, depriving Hassan of his only child and paving the way for her to take the rest of his family and fortune away from him.

Family Affair

Jumia is not the only one keeping a secret. Dima Jamar, Latka's mother, also hides one of her own. A few weeks before she married Hassan, Dima began having second thoughts about her upcoming wedding. She walked the streets for hours, internally debating what to do when she came upon a handsome and charming man with an otherworldly quality that she found irresistible. They met several times afterward until Dima's conscience got the better of her. She ended the affair and never saw the mysterious man again. A few days after her wedding, she realized that she was pregnant with Lakta. Convinced that the mysterious stranger fathered her child, Dima did not announce her pregnancy for several months to avoid arousing any suspicions that Hassan was not the father. When she gave birth to Lakta the newborn seemed radiant, though Hassan begrudgingly acknowledged that the infant looked nothing like him or anyone in his family. Still the child's bubbly personality and incredible beauty captured his heart despite his doubts about Lakta's true parentage. His suspicions put a heavy strain on their marriage. They are still together solely for Lakta's sake.

Jumia's Revenge

At an early age, Jumia realized that the loss of a loved one can be a fate worth than death. The young kharam learned this lesson well when Hassan killed her mother, so she planned to return the favor by taking Hassan's young daughter from him. However, that was before she discovered the dollhouse's long-lost mystery. She knew that The House of a Thousand Delights added a new element to her plot — uncertainty. Jumia decided that not knowing what happened to a beloved family member was indeed worse than losing them.

Jumia's plan seemed flawless. Using a magic ring she stole from a family acquaintance, she cajoled Lakta into using the ring's last *wish* spell to allow her to live in her dollhouse in perpetuity, just as Infernal fist convinced so many others to do centuries earlier. At that moment, the kharam's perfect scheme unexpectedly unraveled. Lakta's secret genie heritage prevented her body from entering The House of a Thousand Delights. Instead, it transplanted her brain into a doll while channeling her heart, lungs and liver into other inanimate objects randomly placed throughout the house. Meanwhile her soul remained with her physical body in a virtually lifeless state. The unexpected outcome startled Jumia. Nevertheless, Lakta showed no outward signs of life so Jumia thought she succeeded in killing Lakta even though she was not transported into The House of a Thousand Delights as she expected.

When Lakta's parents found her, they immediately called for assistance. Despite the best efforts of local healers and magical potions, she remained motionless and unresponsive appearing as if she were dead. She had no pulse, no breath and no signs of brain activity, but she remained warm to the touch and retained her color. Lakta's mysterious dilemma baffled everyone, especially Jumia who realized that something was terribly amiss. The only thing that the experts agreed upon was that every moment spent in this condition lessened the chances of her ever emerging and resuming her previous life. Lakta's desperate parents summoned adventurers from around the city in the hopes of finding answers or a miracle.

Adventure Synopsis

Lakta's father Hassan Jamar or one of the abaya's (the equivalent of a local governor) inner circle approaches the PCs and offers them a reward if they can rouse the young girl from her coma. The problem is that her physicians and clerics have tried just about everything — they treated her for disease and poison as well as giving her a potion

that would undo a curse without any benefit. Lakta's affliction does not appear to be natural and is beyond the ability of her caregivers. Hassan and Dima are convinced that some foul magic is afoot in their humble abode.

Lakta's body and soul are helpless, but the resourceful child's brain is wide awake and terrified. If not for her genie heritage, Lakta's body and soul would have also been dragged into the dollhouse, and she would have vanished without a trace. Instead, the *wish* transplanted her brain into a doll and three of her physical body's other organs into inanimate objects scattered throughout the dollhouse. Her soul remains in her physical body on the Material Plane. Clues found in the home lead the PCs to her dollhouse where they can faintly hear Lakta's voice crying out for help. She directs them to a closet in her bedroom which leads to a newly created secret door that acts as a gateway into The House of a Thousand Delights. The magic portal transports them into an attic room in the dollhouse's attic where they meet Lakta. Though the rescue plan appears successful, the precocious young girl tells them that escape is not that easy. Her physical body remained intact, but her four major organs are contained in canopic jars placed throughout the house. Lakta attempted to retrieve the scattered parts herself, but the dollhouse's fearsome occupants forced her to retreat and wait for assistance. To make matters worse, the PCs soon discover that they are trapped in the dollhouse and must find another way out of the accursed structure.

Under her guidance or on their own, the PCs must search The House of a Thousand Delights in pursuit of her missing vital organs. Along the way, they encounter terrifying variations of childhood tales and folklore including a mean ogre hiding in a closet, a hag cooking her liver in a kitchen, two lycanthropes posing as overnight guests, and swarms of spiders hiding behind a faux castle door. During their investigation and interaction with Lakta, they learn about Jumia's role in the child's abduction and may gain some insight into Lakta's true origins. As they explore the house in greater detail, they ultimately come to the realization that The House of a Thousand Delights is more than an inanimate object. It is a magical construct powered by some unknown intelligence that must be destroyed from within for them and Lakta to escape from its sinister clutches.

The revelation leads the PCs and Lakta to a secret door leading into a warm basement where they encounter a fire elemental entrusted with defending The House of a Thousand Delights' true master and intelligent component, Ezreki, Infernal fist's homunculus servant. After its efreeti creator's destruction, Ezreki did not go insane as most others of its kin, but instead became one with the house giving shape and direction to its terrors. When the PCs destroy Ezreki, the dollhouse's magic ebbs away, reverting it back to its original state as an ordinary replica of Infernal fist's mansion. Lakta's organs return to her body, and she awakens from her coma. The PCs reappear just outside of the dollhouse. The PCs must now decide how to deal with Jumia, if they did not already, and how to handle the delicate matter of Lakta's birth, if they learned of the girl's genie heritage.

Starting the Adventure

The adventure is set in the small city of Qamara, though its events may also take place in any other desert setting of the GM's choice with a few minor modifications. Hassan Jamar's beloved only child, his daughter Lakta, inexplicably appears dead and has remained in that state for two full days. She cannot be roused from her state and every attempt to discover the root cause of her malady failed. Skilled healers attempted to cure any disease or poison that might be afflicting her, but none were found. In his desperation, Hassan tried numerous spells and potions without apparent effect. During the course of his service for the abaya, he has never encountered any poison, disease or magic that could account for his daughter's condition. Lakta's predicament even baffled the medicinal students and instructors from nearby Hamsha University. Hassan is running out of options to save his only child even with the assistance of his long-time friend and superior, the region's abaya Salamun ibn Saddesh. The grateful abaya urged him to seek out adventurers who may have seen Lakta's strange malady somewhere else in their travels. In order to do so, Salamun is offering a 2,000gp reward to anyone who can aid the daughter of the man who saved his life ten years earlier.

Adventure Hooks

Several parties may engage the PCs' services to resolve this difficult matter. If the PCs are new to Qamara, it is more likely that Hassan or Salamun approaches the PCs directly. PCs familiar with the city can be drawn into its events by several different sources including any affiliations with the local Church of Fatimashan or through contacts with Hamsha University. Presented below are three methods of getting the PCs involved in the adventure.

Hook 1 — Urgent Summons

Because of the situation's urgent nature, Hassan or Salamun foregoes dispatching a messenger and instead contacts the PCs himself. Though both men cannot explain Lakta's current predicament, they are certain that time is of the essence, if they want to help the child. In that vein, they waste no time negotiating a suitable reward — it is 2,000gp — take it or leave it. If the PCs momentarily waver, either man briefly tugs at that person's heartstrings, but the reward amount remains firm. Alternatively, PCs in Salamun's employ or working for any other authority figure may simply be ordered to provide Hassan with assistance.

Hook 2 — Act of Charity

Hassan and Salamun also sought the assistance of the local Church of Fatimashan. The case stumped the local priestesses, but the church still wants to get to solve the mystery and aid fellow believers during their greatest time of need. Fatimashan's priestesses not so subtly twist the proverbial arms of any worshippers or adventurers that they believe could help the Jamar family. Though the church cannot offer any financial recompense and actually takes great offense at any suggestion of receiving a monetary reward, the priestesses make the PCs aware of Salamun's offer, much to their personal disgust.

Hook 3 — Strictly Academic

In addition to beseeching aid from the Church of Fatimashan, the two men also called upon experts from Hamsha University to unravel the mystery. The faculty and pupils are extremely disappointed that they could not resolve Lakta's dilemma; however they are not ready to capitulate. They are convinced that they can get to the bottom of the mystery with a little help from their newfound outside consultants — the PCs. With the proper guidance, the PCs may provide the missing piece to this most confounding puzzle. Alternatively, a professor or student may barter information on another matter in exchange for the PCs' assistance with Lakta's enigma.

Rumors

Hassan Jamar is a well-known and influential person in Qamara, so any news about his daughter spreads quickly throughout the city. The PCs may learn the following information by succeeding on an Int (Investigation) check. For each successful check at that level, provide one new rumor at that DC or from a lower one if the ones at that level have already been heard.

DC 15

- Hassan Jamar and the abaya, Salamun ibn Saddesh are close friends. Hassan has served as the head of his personal bodyguards for the last ten years.
- Ten years ago, Hassan foiled a plot to assassinate Salamun. Salamun has been in Hassan's debt ever since.
- Hassan and his wife Dima adore their only child. They would never do anything to harm her.

DC 18

- Hassan and Dima's relationship is strained at best. Public consensus is that they are still married strictly for Lakta's sake.

- Hassan has had his share of pursuers over the years, but he continually rebuffs their advances and remains faithful to Dima.

- Hassan is not Lakta's father. The girl looks and behaves nothing like Hassan.

Further Inquiries

Before making their way to Lakta's home, the PCs may conduct a preliminary investigation by interviewing several witnesses or asking questions of particular persons. Unlike the information obtained from the gossip mill, the PCs can learn the following details from specific sources.

Nur Paddah (LG female human **Clr4** (Fatimashan); Religion +6) is the priestess Hassan called upon to treat Lakta for poison and disease. Now in her mid-40s, Nur befriended Hassan's family for as long as she can remember. She saw none of the telltale signs of physical trauma, poisoning or illness. Lakta was not feverish, sweating or laboring to breathe. She bore no wounds, bruising, rashes or unusual skin coloring. In fact, her skin color was normal, and she remained warm despite the fact that she was not breathing and had no pulse.

Salaam Ka (N male human **Wiz3**; Arcana +5) is the star pupil in Hamsha University's medicinal program and fledgling practitioner of arcane magic. He examined Lakta shortly after her parents found her in a coma. As a trained physician, he also noticed that Lakta appeared alive even though she was not breathing and her heart was not beating. He observed no symptoms that would point to a natural cause for her condition. Salaam then turned his attention to a magical cause, using his spells and mystical knowledge to detect any magical auras on the young girl and her possessions. The search revealed nothing. He then turned to magical potions and nostrums in an attempt to rid Lakta of any curses or other magic that could account for her strange condition. Again, the effort failed. Salaam is very anxious to solve the mystery plaguing the young girl.

If the PCs ask either or both of them to lend their further assistance in the matter, they gladly accompany the PCs back to Lakta's house.

Part One: The Wishing Unwell

After conducting their preliminary inquiries and gathering a few important tidbits about Lakta and her family, a visit to the Jamar residence becomes the most obvious course of action. The lovely home stands just a few paces away from the abaya's palace in the city's most affluent neighborhood. Though it pales in comparison to the surrounding mansions and estates, the single-family house is meticulously maintained with a well-manicured outer courtyard outside the ornately carved front door. An eerie calm seems to surround the building and the adjoining street, as residents go about their normal routines oblivious to the turmoil unfolding behind closed doors.

House of Dearth

In contrast to the placid exterior, the Jamar residence's interior is abuzz with chaotic activity and pent-up anxiety. When the PCs arrive at the door, a servant timidly opens it and briefly interrogates them about the reason for the visit and who sent them. The servant is initially suspicious, though her trepidation is easily allayed by mentioning that someone within the household sent for them, or they were asked to go to the Jamar residence by another reputable person. Naturally, if Jamar accompanies the PCs, he allows them into his home without asking any questions.

When the PCs enter the residence, the GM may read or paraphrase the following description.

The spacious residence is spotless and adorned with tile mosaic floors, freestanding sculptures and other valuable artworks. Yet, the luxurious trappings and beautiful objects

do nothing to alter the somber and tense mood inside the home. Concerned family members and staff nervously mill about the rooms and hallways vainly searching for a spontaneous flash of insight that would cure the young girl of her mysterious ailment. Three middle-aged female servants are deep in thought, trying to figure out what to do or say next without offending anyone or provoking an emotional outburst. Meanwhile, a young man of apparent noble birth gently comforts an attractive, yet demure lady who bears the weight of the world on her fragile shoulders. A duty bound man maintains a brave face, yet the deep lines in his cheeks and sagging skin beneath his eyes betray his inner sadness. They always focus at least some of their attention on a pretty, young girl lying on a canopied bed that feels more like a funeral pyre than a resting place. An alluring teenage girl wearing a veil and a silk dress dotes on the reclining child, gingerly stroking her hair and brushing her fingers against her skin. The sensations do nothing to rouse the girl from her seemingly lifeless condition.

A PC that interacts with Dima can convince her to reveal her secret by succeeding on a DC 16 Wis (Persuasion) check. In addition, she also admits that Lakta's presumed father had an otherworldly nature about him. She is certain that he carried some outsider lineage. Similarly, anyone directly confronting her about Lakta's parentage can see through her lie by winning an opposed Wis (Insight) check. A second successful opposed Wis (Insight) check also senses her intense dislike of Jumia. Though her relationship with Hassan is cold at best, she is still very jealous of the attractive teenager.

Dima knows little about the actual events leading up to Lakta's imprisonment within The House of a Thousand Delights. She and Hassan discovered Lakta unconscious in her bedroom and could not awaken her. She does not recollect her daughter telling her anything about feeling ill. The only strange occurrence she recalls is that Lakta told her that she heard screams and voices emanating from her dollhouse, but she dismissed her claims as a child's imagination run amok. If the PCs inquire further about the dollhouse, she tells them that she and Hassan inherited it from Hassan's parents one month earlier. His parents owned it for two decades and never reported any unusual incidents about the toy.

Hassan Jamar

Lakta's father is a military man through and through. He is a rigid disciplinarian who always maintains a tight leash on his feelings in all personal and business matters except for one — Lakta's welfare. He is holding himself together for now, but he is in a vulnerable state. Any setback or breakthrough releases a flood of emotions. Hassan has long suspected that Lakta is not his daughter, but he fears to uncover the truth. Yet deep down inside, the stern soldier knows that he loves Lakta too much to abandon her and separate a child from her mother.

Hassan's account of Lakta's discovery is identical to Dima's. Lakta is usually eager for dinner, especially since Dima made her favorite food — roasted lamb. When he and Dima went to check on her, they found her not breathing. Every effort to resuscitate her failed. The local priestess of Fatimashan checked to see if she was under the influence of dark magic, but there were no signs of an evil spell on the girl. A skilled physician also examined her and could find no evidence of disease or poison in her body. He also utilized various magical and restorative potions to rid her of any curse that may be afflicting her, once more without success.

If the PCs ask him about his relationship with Dima, he nonchalantly claims that it is fine. He becomes indignant at any suggestions that he is having an affair or harbors any amorous feelings towards Jumia. He steadfastly claims that the teenage girl is an excellent tutor and Lakta's close friend, even though she has only been her tutor for about a month. He remarks that he inherited a large dollhouse from his deceased mother right around the same time as Jumia's arrival. Lakta spends much of her free time playing with her newfound toy, though he recollects that she commented about how she thinks that it comes to life from time to time. Like her mother, he dismissed her claims as the byproduct of a precocious child's overactive imagination. Hassan also downplays his role in thwarting the assassination attempt against the abaya 10 years ago. If pressed on the matter, he blurts out that he slew an insane woman with an inane plan to kill Salaman.

Hassan displays starkly contrasting emotions when Dima's and Jumia's secret are revealed. The frequently judgmental husband sees the error of his ways and forgives his wife for her transgression, while accepting Lakta as his daughter. On the other hand, he shows no mercy towards Jumia once he learns she is responsible for Lakta's current predicament, or he discovers her relationship to the kharam he killed 10 years earlier. He attacks her alone or fights her alongside the PCs.

Hasan Jamar, Male Human Firé (battle master): AC 15; HP 49 (6d10+6); Spd 30ft; Melee +1 longsword (+11/+11, 1d8+4 slashing); Str +4 (+7), Dex +2, Con +1 (+4), Int +1, Wis -1, Cha +0; Skills Animal Handling +2, Athletics +5, History +3, Intimidation +3; Traits Maneuvers (Commander's Strike, Evasive Footwork, Parry); AL LN; CR 5; XP 1800.

Equipment: +1 studded leather armor, +1 longsword, antifoxin, 50gp.

The 3 middle-aged female servants (N human **commoner**) are A'liyah, Feray and Turna. They have worked for the Jamar family ever since the couple's wedding 10 years ago. The women are extremely reluctant to speak ill of their employer, so they give the PCs a wide berth and refuse to voluntarily answer any questions concerning the family's personal affairs. If they are forced to do so, they begrudgingly admit that the marriage exists in name only; however they steadfastly affirm that both parents dote on their only child, Lakta. Neither harbors any ill will towards the child despite their feelings about their partner.

Dima's younger brother Parava Hameer (CG male human **noble**) is the man of noble birth. He loves his sister and resents Hassan's accusations about the circumstances surrounding Lakta's birth and the callous disregard he displays towards her. Parava and Hassan can barely tolerate one another, and it takes only a misspoken word or misinterpreted gesture for either of them to openly express how much they dislike each other.

House Divided

The central players in the drama surrounding the Jamar family are Lakta's mother Dima Jamar (LN female human **noble**), Hassan Jamar, Jumia Rassad and Lakta. Hassan's suspicions concerning Dima's fidelity and the circumstances surrounding Lakta's birth put a tremendous strain on their relationship. PCs that succeed on a DC 15 Wis (Insight) check pick up a hunch about the couple's ambivalent attitude towards each other. They respect each other as parents and both share a mutual love of Lakta, but theirs is a marriage in name only. They treat each other like roommates instead of spouses. Though Hassan displays no romantic interest in the seductive Jumia, she considers herself to be the proverbial "other woman" in this imaginary love triangle. Dima tolerates the flirtatious nubile only because of Lakta's fondness for her private tutor, though that does not prevent her from gesturing behind her back or making a snide comment about her outside of her earshot. However, Lakta's current condition ensures that everyone remains on their best behavior including the murderous kharam who set this chain of events into motion.

Dima Jamar

Lakta's mother is a complex woman tormented by guilt and bound by love and a sense of honor. Her affair is the explosive secret that simultaneously keeps the family together and apart. If she reveals it, she clears her conscience but risks losing her husband and daughter in the process. By denying it, nagging suspicions dog her relationship with Hassan, but he remains with her and the girl he desperately wants to believe is his only daughter. To make matters worse, Dima is certain that her clandestine tryst somehow plays a part in current events. For the first time in 10 years, she teeters close to the breaking point of divulging the sin that gnaws on her soul.

Jumia Rassad

The voluptuous teenager's outer beauty belies her wicked heart and evil motives. The attractive kharam always wears a sheer veil and a wig to conceal her true monstrous identity. After her mother's death, Jumia aimlessly wandered the streets until Rateef Rassad, a sage specializing in Khartous history, took pity on the youngster scavenging through refuse and animal stalls looking for food. Rateef and his wife Tarwa adopted the young girl and reared her as their own. The manipulative Jumia basked in the attention the older couple showered on their only child. She proved to be a quick student and even attended classes at Hamsha University despite her youth. By all outward appearances, the charismatic Jumia seemed to be thriving in her new environment, yet her innate curiosity and gracious exterior was nothing more than a ruse to conceal her true malevolent nature. All the while, the murderous kharam plotted her revenge against the man responsible for her mother's death.

As soon as she acquired all of her innate special abilities, Jumia used her parents' contacts to land her a position in Hassan's household. The charming and outwardly friendly teenager made an immediate and lasting impression on the innocent young girl. For the next three weeks, the cunning kharam carefully observed her surroundings and considered her options. She was prepared to kill Hassan and his entire family in their sleep, yet the surreptitious discovery of The House of a Thousand Delights altered her plans. She returned to Hamsha University to research the item's history and abilities. She soon realized that the seemingly harmless dollhouse was a sinister house of horrors that would destroy any creature transported into it without leaving the slightest trace; however she needed a *wish* spell to unlock its full powers. She then remembered that one of her adoptive father's friends, a rare jewelry collector named Jamaal Ta'alika, claimed to have a ring that made anyone's dream come true. The clever temptress paid the older gentleman a visit and claimed him as her first victim. She took the ring and gave it to Lakta as a gift. She tricked the young girl into wishing herself into The House of a Thousand Delights.

Jumia relies upon her youth and charm to deflect any accusations leveled against her. She denies any involvement in Lakta's current predicament, Jamaal's murder or the ring's theft. Her reactions are more fully described in the following section.

Jumia Rassad, Kharam: AC 17; HP 90 (12d8+36); Spd 30ft; **Melee** +1 dagger x2 (+7, 1d4+4 piercing plus poison); **Ranged** +1 dagger (+7, 20ft/60ft, 1d4+4 piercing plus poison); **SA** enfeebling gaze (+6, 30ft, 1d4 Str drain, DC 14 Con save negates), disarming kiss (grappled target must make DC 14 Wis save or drop all items and take no actions, staring at kharam who can make gaze attack, ends if the kharam attacks target), multiattack (2 dagger, 1 enfeebling gaze), poison (4d8 poison, target poisoned 1hr, DC 14 Con save for half damage and no poisoned condition); **Immune** charmed; **Str** +1, **Dex** +3, **Con** +3, **Int** +1, **Wis** +1, **Cha** +2; **Skills** Acrobatics +6, Deception +5, Insight +4, Perception +8; **Senses** all-around vision, darkvision 60ft, passive Perception 18; **Traits** all-around vision (+4 to Wis (Perception) checks, opponents can never have combat advantage unless kharam's vision is impaired); **AL** LE; **CR** 8; **XP** 3,900. (**Appendix**)

Equipment: +1 dagger, *potion of invisibility*, 10gp.

First Impression

Two full days have passed since Lakta last opened her eyes. Her parents, Jumia, clerics and others made numerous attempts to rouse her from her catatonia, but all to no avail. Lakta's parents first discovered her in her bedroom, after she did not appear for dinner. The young girl normally receives a poetry lesson from Jumia before dinner, but the wily Jumia claims that Lakta told her she did not feel well that afternoon and skipped the lesson. PCs can see through her bluff by winning a Wis (Insight) skill contest. Otherwise, no one can provide any useful information about Lakta's activities that day. When the PCs approach the young girl, the GM may read or paraphrase the following description.

A comely, young girl that strikingly resembles her mother lies motionless on an upholstered recamier in the family's living room. On the surface, she appears to be perfectly healthy. Her skin coloring is normal, and she shows no visible signs of illness or injury. She wears a loose-fitting dress and a ring on her left hand.

Lakta's body shows no signs of injury, illness or disease. A PC that succeeds on a DC 12 Int (Nature) or Wis (Medicine) check notices that she has no pulse and is not breathing, yet she remains warm to the touch and shows no signs of decomposition. If the check succeeds by 5 or more, the PC also notices that she has no brain activity and is slightly jaundiced. In addition, the PC also notices that the girl's left ring finger is swollen, indicating that the ring adorning her left hand is new. The golden ring appears to have been inset with three stones at one time, but all of the stones are missing, though they show no signs of being forcibly removed.

Lakta's family members and servants do not recognize the ring and do not believe that it belonged to her. Jumia realizes that she made a mistake by not removing the spent *ring of three wishes* from Lakta's hand so she too denies any knowledge of the item. Once again, PCs can detect that she is being untruthful with a successful opposed Wis (Insight) check or via magical means. If the PCs confront her about these issues, Jumia relays a half-truth claiming that she gave Lakta the ring as a gift to help her feel better. If Jumia senses that she is in any danger, she conveniently excuses herself or discreetly slips away and coats each of her weapons with poison before returning to the room. She also claims that she initially lied about the ring, because she believes it may be stolen. Furthermore, a PC that succeeds on a DC 18 Int (Investigation) check remembers hearing about a reward for a stolen ring roughly matching the description of this one, though it is currently missing an inset ruby. A successful check also reveals that an unknown assailant murdered the ring's former owner, Jamaal Ta'alika, a rare jewelry collector.

She denies any involvement in the actual theft or the killing. When confronted by this accusation, Jumia insists that Dima framed her in a thinly disguised effort to separate her and Hassan. She claims that she and Hassan have been secret lovers ever since she arrived. Jumia continues this charade for as long as possible and even attempts to grab Hassan and kiss him in front of everyone to prove her point. Naturally, she uses her disarming kiss ability. If Hassan is unable to resist, his smitten reaction lends credibility to her story, and it also makes him vulnerable to her enfeebling gaze ability which she directs against him. Otherwise, she attempts to flee, preferably by quaffing her *potion of invisibility*. She fights only if she is left with no other alternative. Jumia begins combat by removing her veil and subjecting all onlookers to her enfeebling gaze before attacking with her poisoned daggers. She then singles out flat-footed opponents who are susceptible to her sneak attacks. Whenever she is reduced to less than a quarter of her original hit points, she begs for mercy and reveals her true identity and motives for her actions in a blatant attempt to garner sympathy to spare her life.

The ring is no longer magical, and does not respond to *detect magic*; however certain divination spells or a successful DC 22 Int (Arcana) check may reveal the item's former properties. Spells cast directly on Lakta do not reveal any useful information, including divination spells, such as *detect evil* or *detect magic*. Divination spells of a more general nature, such as *augury* and *divination* or Int (Arcana) checks (at DC 18 or higher) might yield some helpful, though cryptic information to investigate Lakta's room or retrace her steps. It might also reveal that appearances are not what they seem in regards to Lakta's outsider heritage or Jumia's monstrous secret identity.

Lakta's Bedroom

Lakta's strange claims about her new dollhouse and the mysterious circumstances surrounding her current condition should prompt the PCs to search her bedroom. If Jumia's disguise is still intact, she insists on accompanying the PCs while they investigate the area. When the PCs enter the room, the GM may read or paraphrase the following description.

The young girl's bedroom would be the envy of almost any child. An exquisite collection of masterfully crafted toy animals rests peacefully in her luxurious bed. At least 100 dolls sit on shelves spanning the bedroom walls, along with an assortment of other toys and playthings. The *piece de resistance* is an incredibly detailed, fully furnished dollhouse 5 feet high and 4 feet square. A few articles of girl's clothing are visible behind a slightly ajar closet door.

All of the dolls and toys are valuable in their own right for their exceptional quality, but they all pale in comparison to The House of a Thousand Delights that now masquerades as Lakta's dollhouse. Its sheer size and meticulous focus on details especially in regards to its miniature furniture pieces distinguish it from any ordinary toy. The dollhouse has two floors as well as an attic. On the surface, there is nothing unusual about the dollhouse, but closer examination and skill checks unravel its sinister history and the secret it currently conceals.

Lakta's Dollhouse

Infernalist's creation does not reveal its mysteries without a fight. PCs can gather information about the item using several avenues of inquiry.

Magic

PCs may resort to casting spells, particularly those of the divination school, to gather information about the dollhouse. *Detect magic* reveals that the dollhouse radiates strong universal magic attributable to the *wish* spells used to create it. A PC that uses *detect magic* in conjunction with Int (Arcana) identifies The House of a Thousand Delights by succeeding on a DC 19 Int (Arcana) check. (As a malik, Infernalist's caster level is effectively 13th.) Other divination spells such as *legend lore* or *commune* may also reveal useful information about The House of a Thousand Delights. The GM must exercise his discretion in adjudicating the effects of these spells. Powerful spells like *legend lore* reveal The House of a Thousand Delights for what it is, while lesser spells including *augury* and *divination* reveal cryptic clues about the dollhouse's true nature. These spells may also direct the PCs to the newly created secret door in Lakta's closet that acts as a one-way portal into The House of a Thousand Delights.

Lost Knowledge

PCs that succeed on a DC 15 Int (Investigation) check remember hearing rumors and details about a magnificent dollhouse that has changed hands many times since its discovery in Iljana shortly after the genies' defeat. A PC that succeeds on the check by 5 or more also uncovers rumors claiming that an efreeti may have constructed the dollhouse for an unknown purpose. Though this discovery may arouse suspicion, there are no stories alleging that its owners derived anything but enjoyment from the miniaturized replica.

PCs may also attempt a DC 20 Int (History) check to link the dollhouse back to its genie origin. A successful check leads the PC to believe that Lakta's dollhouse is in fact The House of a Thousand Delights. A PC that already succeeded on the initial DC 15 Int (Investigation) can discover the link between the dollhouse and Infernalist by succeeding on a second DC 18 Int (History) check. A PC that succeeds on the second Int (History) check by 5 or more also learns that victims are trapped inside the house by being deceived into wishing themselves into the dollhouse. Furthermore, genies are the only creatures that can peer into The House of a Thousand Delights, and they cannot be trapped inside of the house. This may lead the PCs to surmise that Lakta has some genie heritage that accounts for her current state.

Powers of Observation

Tactile examination and close observation cannot reveal any information about The House of a Thousand Delights' forgotten past; however they are particularly useful in discovering its sinister purpose. Under nor-

mal circumstances, a victim tricked into the dollhouse leaves no trace of what happened to them, but Lakta's genie heritage created an unforeseen dilemma for Ezreki, the dollhouse's hidden caretaker. In its confusion, the dollhouse created Lakta's current predicament, transporting her vital organs into the house while keeping her soul and the remainder of her physical body temporarily alive in her parent's residence. The transformation created links to the real world that would normally be invisible and inaudible. A PC that carefully examines the dollhouse notices a faint light behind a door in the dollhouse's attic with a successful DC 15 Wis (Perception) check. If the PC succeeds on this check by 5 or more, the PC hears a child's voice repeating the words "attic" and "closet". If the PC opens the door in the dollhouse's attic, he can hear Lakta's voice without succeeding on a Wis (Perception) check. Similarly, PCs standing near Lakta's closet also notice a faint light emanating from beneath a wall in the back of the closet with a successful DC 18 Wis (Perception) check. The successful Wis (Perception) check also leads them to the secret door in the back of the closet. The secret door only grants access to the 5-foot diameter opening leading into Lakta's hideout in The House of a Thousand Delights' attic compartment.

Secret Door: AC 13; HP 10; **Perception** DC 18; **Immunity** cold, lightning, poison, psychic; **Resistance** thunder, weapon damage; **Break** DC 15 Str

Development

Lakta cannot hear the PCs from inside the dollhouse so she cannot converse with them. Instead she repeatedly says the words "closet" and "attic", hoping to direct the PCs to the closet in her bedroom or the attic in the dollhouse. Lakta's ability to communicate with the outside world poses a serious problem for Jumia. She must prevent the PCs from possibly rescuing Lakta and discovering the truth, but she is also reluctant to risk her own wellbeing in the process. She tries to convince the PCs that Lakta's voice is an illusion or a trap meant to entice others to their doom. If this attempt fails, she ultimately decides to accompany the PCs into the dollhouse, but not before she coats her blades with poison for her sneak attacks. On the other hand, Hassan and Dima decide to stay behind with their daughter, entrusting the PCs to rescue her from her terrible fate.

Part Two: The House of a Thousand Delights

The PCs' efforts to rescue Lakta not only take them inside of a unique magical construct, but also give them a horrific glimpse into the mind of its caretaker, the demented homunculus Ezreki. Over time, Infernalist's ancient servant developed a sense of irony lacking in its genie creator. It devised ingenious ways to turn a child's toy into a deadly house of horrors based upon fairy tales and stories. The clever monster prides itself on its ability to transform the seemingly harmless and mundane into the utterly terrifying.

The House of a Thousand Delights is the culmination of multiple *wish* spells making it impossible to destroy it or to even harm it by conventional means. It is a marvel of magic and physics as it simultaneously occupies space on the Material Plane and extradimensional space. The extradimensional space fabricates exact duplicates of all inorganic matter within the dollhouse. Unlike typical spells, Infernalist designed The House of a Thousand Delights to allow only genies to see creatures within the extradimensional space. Creatures trapped within the house of horrors are not visible because they occupy the extradimensional space, even after they die. Instead, time passes much slower in the dollhouse than on the Material Plane. Ten minutes spent in the dollhouse is actually 1 hour outside of the dollhouse. Though its rooms and furniture appear miniaturized from the outside, they are much larger on the inside. Similarly, creatures trapped within the dollhouse retain their normal size as well. When someone is trapped within the dollhouse, objects moved or removed by someone outside of the dollhouse do not affect the duplicates created in the extradimensional space without the use of a *wish* or similar spell.

Lakta's genie blood created a problem for the dollhouse's caretaker. Unsure of what to do, Ezreki forged a link between the Material Plane and the extradimensional space within the dollhouse. This allowed Lakta to see and speak through the portal linking the Material Plane and the extradimensional space; however it does not allow her to escape through it though she is currently not aware of that. Other creatures cannot see or speak through the portal. They must pass through it to contact Lakta. Once again, the portal simultaneously exists in the miniaturized version of the dollhouse allowing the PCs to hear Lakta's voice from her secure spot in the dollhouse's attic and through the portal at the back of her closet. Because of its minute size, the PCs can gain entry into the dollhouse through the closet portal only.

Small Problem

After the PCs open the secret door that conceals the portal leading into Lakta's fortified hiding spot in the dollhouse's attic, the GM may read or paraphrase the following description.

The concealed door yields to a shadowy, 5-foot diameter space that radiates faint, dim light and obscures all vision. The words "closet" and "attic" echo from the other side of the portal.

Spells cannot be cast through the portal, nor can area effects cross through it. Only spells that work across planes can reveal Lakta's presence on the other side of the portal. When a PC passes through the portal, they emerge in **Area 1** where they first encounter Lakta's brain within a doll.

If Jumia accompanies the PCs and Lakta sees her, Lakta immediately reacts to her presence.

She pleads through the portal. "Jumia tricked me. She gave me a ring and told me to wish to live in the dollhouse. Liar! She did this to me. Help me!"

Jumia tries to dismiss Lakta's cries as another trick or illusion intended to deceive the PCs. If that fails, she unsheathes her daggers and tries to disable as many PCs as she can before fleeing as described in earlier sections. Alternatively, Jumia may jump through the portal if she is in an opportune position and try to attack Lakta. Lakta's brain occupies a doll she hid in a storage compartment in the attic, so Lakta pretends to be an inanimate doll as soon as she sees Jumia pass through the portal. This causes the kharam to hesitate for 1 round, as she tries to figure out what to attack. If Jumia destroys the doll, Lakta dies. Her physical body on the Material Plane immediately begins to decay and grows cold.

1. Storage Room

The portal emerges into a cramped chamber with a severely sloped roof. Cut pieces of wood, tattered lace curtains and weathered linens cover parts of the floor. A sturdy wooden plank bars a barely visible door in the far corner.

Past generations of owners stored the dollhouse's spare parts and decorations in this barred attic chamber. When the *wish* spell drew Lakta into the dollhouse, it pulled her mind into this room where she kept her favorite doll — one she believed looked very similar to her. The long-forgotten doll was actually created by Infernalist as a failsafe in the event that a genie was somehow pulled into his malevolent creation. It is not a coincidence that the toy bears a striking resemblance to the young girl. It is crafted in the likeness of a youthful jann, much like her true father. The door in the room is barred from this side by a heavy wooden plank. During Infernalist's heyday, he barred the door to this room to add to the terror of creatures trying to escape from pursuing creatures.

Strong Wooden Door: AC 15; HP 18; **Immunity** cold, lightning, poison, psychic; **Resistance** thunder, weapon damage; **Break** DC 20 Str.

The strong wooden door can be easily unbarred and opened from inside the room.

The dollhouse magically transplanted Lakta's brain into her favorite doll that she kept concealed in this secret compartment. The frightened young girl welcomes the PCs as her rescuers, though she warns them that her escape is not as easy as it seems. If she did not do so already, she tells the PCs that Jumia tricked her into making a *wish* that transported her into her dollhouse. She also relays that though her soul remains with her physical body back in her home, her body is not intact. For an unknown reason, she had a vision that her heart, liver and lungs were teleported from her physical body and placed in objects scattered throughout the dollhouse. She attempted to leave the secret compartment to search for them, but retreated back to the safety of this room after large rats attacked her. Though she is still alive, Lakta is currently part-construct — a doll body with a magically-implanted human brain. In addition, the transformation also unlocked the mystical powers she inherited from her elemental ancestry. Lakta is currently adjusting to her new doll body, so her gait is awkward, and she is somewhat clumsy. The PCs face a dilemma. Lakta knows the dollhouse inside and out making her an excellent guide; however if she dies in this state, her brain is forever lost. Without her mind, Lakta's body and soul on the Material Plane die within minutes.

Lakta Jamar, Part-Construct: AC 9; HP 9 (1d6+3); Spd 30ft; slam (+1 bludgeoning); Str -1 (+1), Dex -1 (+1), Con +0, Int +0, Wis +1, Cha +2; SA spells (DC 13, Cha +4); Skills Arcana +2, Insight +3, Perception +3; Senses passive Perception 13; AL NG; CR 2; XP 450.

Innate Spells: at will—*fire bolt*

Spells (slots): 0 (at will)—*chill touch, dancing lights, friends, minor illusion*; 1st (2)—*burning hands, witch bolt*

Development: The PCs and Lakta can see and speak through the portal, but they cannot hear creatures on the other side. Likewise, creatures back on the Material Plane can hear them, though they cannot see or speak through the portal. Any attempts to pass through the portal and return to the closet always fail which may distress the PCs. Lakta currently believes that they can escape only if she is reunited with her remaining bodily organs. Lakta knows the dollhouse's layout, yet she cannot say the same for the creatures or objects inhabiting it other than the large rats on the other side of the secret door.

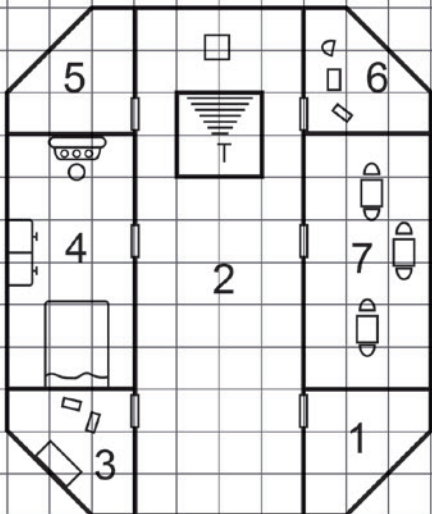
Lakta as a Guide

Lakta is a valuable resource while exploring the dollhouse and also a potential liability. Lakta knows the layout of the entire dollhouse with the exception of the secret door leading into the basement. She can provide a general description of each room's intended purpose, i.e. bedroom, kitchen, storage etc. as well as some specific details about any exceptional inanimate objects in the room. She has no knowledge about what creatures dwell within each chamber. The drawback is that venturing through the dollhouse with the PCs exposes Lakta to dangers that she is ill-equipped to handle. If Lakta is subjected to any fear attacks during the course of the adventure, she may opt to lag far behind the PCs or demand to be returned to her secure location in the attic. Ultimately, the PCs must decide whether the benefits outweigh the risks.

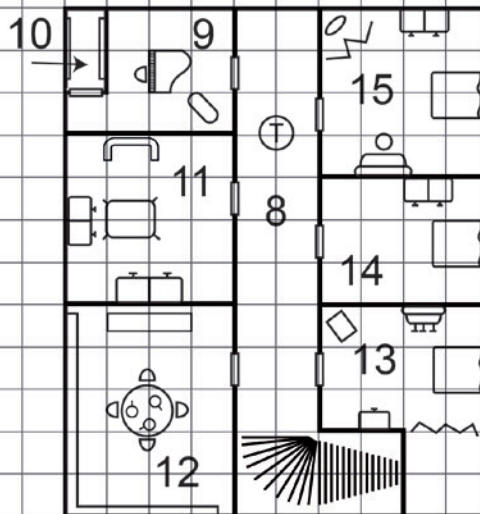
2. Attic (Difficulty Medium)

A surge of surprisingly warm and foul air greets the nostrils. Twelve large rats, the size of small dogs, scurry about the floor dragging scraps of torn linen, moldy lace and gnawed bones with them. The floor features a trap door with

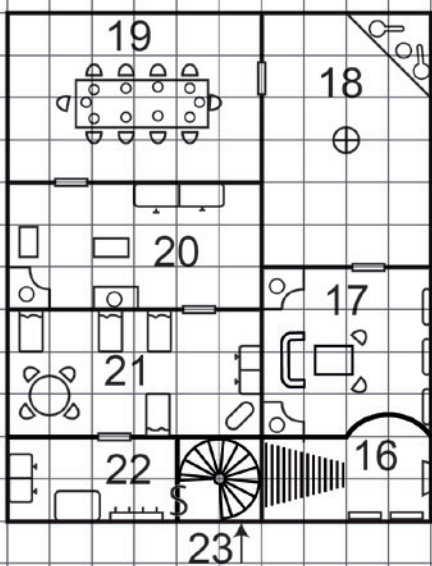
Attic



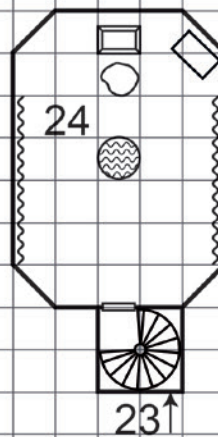
Second Floor



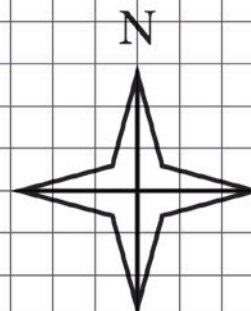
First Floor



Basement Level



1 square - 5 feet



a set of rickety, folding stairs that apparently lead to a lower level. A lone wooden box with a crank lever on its side sits on the floor just beyond the trap door. There are five additional strong wooden doors uniformly placed throughout the room.

The trap door at the far end of the room grants access to the dollhouse's second level. Its hinges are well-lubricated, so a gentle push is all that is needed for the door to open and the stairs to unfold. The stairs were not designed to support any significant amount of weight. Any Medium creature or larger that attempts to walk down the stairs causes them to collapse and break. The fall is less than 10 feet, so the creature does not take any damage from the fall. The creature lands in **Area 8**.

The wooden box on the floor is a child's jack-in-the-box. Originally placed into the dollhouse by a young girl shortly after Infernalist's demise, Ezreki cast *magic mouth* on the toy. Turning the crank handle for one full rotation in a clockwise direction opens the jack-in-the-box. An efreeti torso attached to a spring emerges from the box and speaks in a baritone pitch saying the following.

"Are you frightened yet, children? Fear is so much fun. Enjoy yourselves while you still live."

The jack-in-the-box can be reset by pushing the efreeti back into the box and closing the lid.

Strong Wooden Door: AC 15; HP 18; **Immunity** cold, lightning, poison, psychic; **Resistance** thunder, weapon damage; **Break** DC 20 Str.

None of the remaining doors are barred or locked. They open with minimal effort.

In the absence of fresh meat, the dire rats that frightened Lakta back into her hiding space underwent the transition from life to undeath becoming **12 dire rat zombies**. The ravenous creatures viciously attack anything that enters the room and do not retreat under any circumstances. The zombies have no treasure.

Dire Rat Zombie (12): AC 12; HP 12 (2d8+3); Spd 40ft, climb 20ft, swim 20ft; **Melee** bite (+3, 1d4+2 piercing); **Immune** poisoned; **Str** +2, **Dex** +2, **Con** +3, **Int** -4, **Wis** -2, **Cha** -3; **Senses** darkvision 60ft, passive Perception 8; **Traits** undead fortitude (if reduced to 0 HP, must make Con save at DC 5+damage taken unless damage is radiant or critical, on success, swarm drops to 1 hp instead); **AL** NE; **CR** 1/4; **XP** 50. (**Appendix**)

3. Storage Room

Several sundered planks of wood lie scattered about the floor along with the skeletal remains of at least a dozen people. There is a closed wooden chest abutting the far wall. There is a severe slope in the ceiling.

The broken pieces of wood appear sturdy from a distance, but closer examination reveals that they are merely balsa wood — all part of a cruel trick played by a mischievous efreeti. Though none of the skeletons are complete, there are fourteen skulls. A successful DC 10 Int (Nature) check identifies all of the skulls and skeletons as being human. The bones are thoroughly devoid of flesh, yet anyone who succeeds on a DC 16 Wis (Perception) check notices a platinum ring worth 100gp still wrapped around a tiny finger bone.

The wooden chest against the far wall is closed and unlocked. It contains an assortment of cheap, dusty bed linens with no monetary value.

4. Guests' Bedroom (Difficulty Medium)

The open doors of an exquisitely crafted armoire opposite the door reveal an assortment of fine clothes and accessories. The outlines of two figures lying beneath satin sheets in a luxurious bed momentarily stir and then seemingly fall asleep again. Several open jars sit atop a vanity table with a small seat tucked underneath it and a large mirror atop the table. An aromatic scent of fresh flowers wafts from that area of the room.

The two sleeping figures are actually **2 werewolves** in human form. Each keeps a longsword underneath the sheets. The sly werewolves rise from their slumber pretending to be startled. They insist that they too are prisoners within the house, though they offer only vague details about how they arrived in The House of a Thousand Delights. They identify themselves as Amari Jankhar and his wife Saana Jankhar and go on to say that they have been here for 200 years. To gain the PCs trust, they tell the PCs that they can help them escape, though it quickly becomes obvious that neither has any knowledge of the house beyond their room. If the PCs fall for their ruse, they attack them at the most opportune time. Likewise, the werewolves immediately attack as soon as they feel threatened. They change into their hybrid form before attacking if possible.

Werewolf (2): AC 11 (human form), 12 (wolf or hybrid form); HP 58 (9d8+18) Spd 30ft (human form), 40ft (wolf or hybrid form); **Melee** bite (wolf or hybrid form, +4, 1d8+2 piercing, plus save vs lycanthropy), claw (hybrid form, +4, 2d4+2 slashing), longsword (human form, +4, 1d8+2 slashing); **SA** multiattack (humanoid or hybrid form, 1 bite, 1 claw); **Immune** bludgeoning, piercing and slashing damage from nonmagical weapons that are not silvered; **Str** +2, **Dex** +1, **Con** +2, **Int** +0, **Wis** +0, **Cha** +0; **Skills** Perception +4, Stealth +3; **Senses** passive Perception 14; **Traits** keen hearing and smell (advantage on Wis (Perception) checks based on hearing or smell), shapechanger (action to polymorph into hybrid or wolf form); **AL** CE; **CR** 3; **XP** 700.

Treasure: The clothes in the armoire are of exceptional quality. The gentleman's clothing is worth 175gp, while the lady's wear is worth 150gp. The satin sheets on the bed are worth 100gp. A *detect magic* cast in the vicinity of the vanity table reveals a magical aura from two vials. One vial is a *potion of greater healing* and the other contains a *potion of invulnerability*. The remaining jars of perfume and ointments are worth 75gp.

5. Storage Room (Difficulty Medium)

An eclectic assortment of raggedy dolls lies in a pile near the far corner of the room. There are at least a dozen dolls lying atop one another. A sturdy piece of wood is propped against the wall near the entrance.

Most of the dolls depict young girls of various ethnicities and races, though three of them are sewn into the image of circus clowns. At least half of the dolls are missing their eyes or stuffing. The sturdy wooden plank is normally used to bar the door.

Though the dolls appear ordinary, there are **3 soulbound dolls** mixed among them. The malevolent toys spring to life at the most opportune moment, attacking the creatures nearest to them. They are the restless spirits of three spoiled, ill-mannered children that met their end within the house.

QUESTS OF DOOM 3

Because the dolls reflect their personalities, these creatures pout, sulk and whine whenever they miss an attack. Likewise, they gloat and cackle anytime they hit an enemy in combat. In life, they were three ruffians named Ahmad, Raheem and Xarxes. Infernalist culled the trio from Ilijanna's mean streets. They refuse to cooperate with the PCs and do not divulge any useful information under any circumstances. They are chaotic neutral.

Soulbound Doll (3): AC 14; HP 32 (10d4+10); Spd 20ft; Melee dagger (+3, 1d4-2 piercing); Str -2, Dex +2, Con +1, Int +0, Wis +0, Cha -1; Senses darkvision 120ft, passive Perception 10; Traits alignment variation (*blindness/deafness* 1/day, DC 11), soul focus (AC 14, 8 hp), susceptible to enchantment (disadvantage on saves against Enchantment); AL CN; CR 2; XP 450. (Appendix)

6. Storage Room

Two broken tables along with three chairs, a bed and two dressers in similar disrepair are scattered about the room.

The broken furniture bears the telltale signs of a struggle. The tabletops and bed are smashed as if a heavy object fell on top of them. Likewise the chairs and dressers are sundered in a manner akin to something crashing into them or if they were used to strike a solid object. In addition to whatever damage was dealt to them, the objects also appear to have been scavenged for spare parts.

7. Game Room (Difficulty Easy)

A pair of child-size chairs sits on opposite sides of three tables each covered by a game board and game pieces. Even from a distance, it is obvious that there are three different games.

Lakta describes the three games as *mancala*, *pachisi*, (a forerunner to modern-day *Parcheesi*) and *seega*; otherwise the PCs can correctly identify each game by succeeding on a DC 12 Int (History) check. Even without making a successful skill check, the PCs determine that all three games are set up and ready to play. The game boards and pieces are poorly crafted and rudimentary, yet they serve their intended purpose.

Development: If a PC or Lakta touches a game piece for any of the board games, the game begins. Ezreki acts as the player's opponent, moving the pieces via *telekinesis*. In many respects, Ezreki and The House of a Thousand Delights are one entity, so some of Infernalist's power lingers in his master creation. The game continues until either side wins or a PC prematurely ends the game. If that occurs, Ezreki abruptly ends the other games and refuses to play again. Ezreki plays each game only once.

Play the Game

A PC or Lakta wins the game by making a successful DC 10 Int check, with the following modifiers:

- If the PC or Lakta is familiar with the game, the player gets a +2 bonus.
- The player and Ezreki each then attempt a Cha (Deception) check against the opponent's Wis (Insight). (Ezreki has +1 Deception and +4 Insight.) The player gains a +2 for each check won, and a -2 for each check lost.
- Lastly, the opponents attempt a Cha (Intimidation) skill contest (Ezreki has a +0 modifier). The player gains a +2 bonus for winning this checks, and a -2 penalty for losing.
- If either party wins a check by 5 or more, the bonus or penalty is +4 or -4, as appropriate.

Whenever the player emerges victorious, Ezreki telepathically communicates useful information to his opponent based upon the game he played. Winning players receive the following messages. The GM may reward the PCs with 400 XP for each game won.

Mancala: Precise to a tee and short by a hare, you may find a heart there if you dare.

Pachisi: Turn to the right and off by a beat, you may catch her breath with two left feet.

Seega: Burn to a cinder and scratch by a shrew, you may find a liver in a boiling stew.

Several of the homophones in the messages are likely to result in misinterpretation which is naturally by design. Though it seems counterintuitive for the homunculus caretaker to divulge information in the context of a game, Ezreki, like his *efreeti* master, derives pleasure from toying with other creatures. He, like his creator, is supremely confident that the PCs and Lakta are ultimately doomed to fail. Letting his opponents think they have a chance makes the spectacle even more enjoyable for Ezreki.

Second Floor

The trap door in the attic spills out into the second floor's main corridor. A gentle push is sufficient to retract the trap door and its folding stairs back into their normal position.

The creatures confined to the attic never wander outside of their designated areas; however the restless spirits of those that died in the dollhouse are more prevalent on the first and second floors, though they are most commonly found wandering the main corridors on both floors and the few open areas. They never open any doors on either floor or interact with its other denizens. For every 5 minutes spent on the second floor, the PCs have a 25% chance of encountering **1d3 soulbound dolls**. Their alignments and specific powers will vary (see Appendix).

Soulbound Doll (1d3): AC 14; HP 32 (10d4+10); Spd 20ft; Melee dagger (+3, 1d4-2 piercing); Str -2, Dex +2, Con +1, Int +0, Wis +0, Cha -1; Senses darkvision 120ft, passive Perception 10; Traits alignment variation (1/day, DC 11, see Appendix), soul focus (AC 14, 8 hp), susceptible to enchantment (disadvantage on saves against Enchantment); AL any N; CR 2; XP 450. (Appendix)

8. Main Corridor

Six wooden doors line the walls of a lengthy corridor that ends in a staircase leading down. The surrounding walls and doors are painted in bright pink and green colors. Images of dancing unicorns, rainbows, colorful flowers and radiant yellow stars adorn the walls. In fact, the colors are so bright that they bathe the hallway in dim light. A 3-foot-long strand of rope dangles from the trap door leading into the attic.

The doors lining the corridor are unlocked and open with minimal effort. The staircase at the opposite end of the corridor descends to the first floor and into **Area 16**.

Good Wooden Door: AC 15; HP 15; Immunity cold, lightning, poison, psychic; Resistance thunder, weapon damage; Break DC 18 Str.

If a character fell on the stairs and landed in this area, there is a 50% chance that the noise attracts the interest of **1d3 soulbound dolls** of varying alignments.

Soulbound Doll (1d3): AC 14; HP 32 (10d4+10); Spd 20ft; Melee dagger (+3, 1d4-2 piercing); Str -2, Dex +2, Con +1, Int +0, Wis +0, Cha -1; Senses darkvision 120ft, passive Perception 10; Traits alignment variation (1/day, DC 11,

see Appendix), soul focus (AC 14, 8 hp), susceptible to enchantment (disadvantage on saves against Enchantment); **AL** any N; **CR** 2; **XP** 450. (**Appendix**)

9. Music Room

The haunting sounds of a melodic tune emanate from an exquisitely crafted piano in the center of the room accompanied by the strings of a brass harp in the near corner. There is another wooden door identical to the entrance.

Though the music appears to come from the piano and the harp, the effect actually results from a *minor illusion* spell cast by Infernalist centuries earlier. No one sits at the piano or the harp, and it is quite obvious that the keys and strings do not move. The tune plays for 1 full minute before repeating itself again. A successful DC 15 Int (History) check identifies the song as an archaic wedding march that fell out of favor around the time of Iljanna's collapse. The PCs can disbelieve the *minor illusion* by succeeding on a DC 15 Int (Investigation) check. The piano is too large to move from its current location, though the harp fits through the door. If the PCs insist on taking either musical instrument with them, they discover that items do not return to the Material Plane with them.

10. Maestro's Quarters (Difficulty Easy)

Two rows of shelves hold numerous strings, piano parts and tuning equipment. A ghostly figure clad in a formal robe frenetically plays a shadowy zither. The instrument shrieks and hisses as fingers grind and scratch across the zither's strings. A wild-eyed look and angry sneer accompany the unwanted intrusion.

The strings and equipment on the shelves are poorly made and have no monetary value. They are stored here for spare parts or to tune the instruments. Surprisingly, Infernalist had an ear for music, so he is responsible for incorporating the piano and the harp in The House of a Thousand Delights. Subsequent generations of children kept the music room intact.

The zither player is named Ceruth, a beggar that solicited donations by playing his zither during Iljanna's decline. After death, the bitter musician refused to depart and became a ghost cursed to forever haunt the dollhouse. During combat, Ceruth screams and shouts at his opponents, asking them if they recognize his original compositions. Of course, the PCs are unfamiliar with his music, though they can attempt a Cha (Deception) check to convince Ceruth that they have heard it. However, the PC suffers a -8 penalty to the check, because the outraged ghost firmly believes that his music fell into obscurity. If the check is successful and the PCs defeat Ceruth, his ghost is forever destroyed. Otherwise his spirit emerges from the dollhouse after its destruction and ventures back to Khartous to haunt the back alleys that Ceruth traveled during his mortal existence.

Ceruth, Ghost: **AC** 11; **HP** 45 (10d8); **Spd** 0ft, fly 40ft; **Melee** withering touch (+5, 4d6+3 necrotic); **SA** etherealness (enters or exits ethereal plane, cannot affect or be affected by anything on other plane), horrifying visage (living creatures within 60ft must make DC 13 Wis saves or be frightened for 1 minute, if save fails by 5 or more, target aged 1d4x10 yrs), possession (1 humanoid within 5ft must make DC 13 Cha save or be possessed by ghost, recharge 6); **Immune** cold, necrotic, poison damage; charmed, exhaustion, frightened, grappled, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned, prone, restrained; **Resist** acid, fire, lightning, thunder; bludgeoning, piercing and slashing from nonmagical weapons); **Str** -2, **Dex** +1, **Con** +0, **Int** +0, **Wis** +1, **Cha** +3;

Senses darkvision 60ft, passive Perception 11; **Traits** ethereal sight (can see 60ft into Ethereal Plane from Material Plane and vice versa), incorporeal movement (can move through objects and creatures as if they were difficult terrain, takes 1d10 damage if it ends turn inside object); **AL** N; **CR** 4; **XP** 1,100.

11. Nursery (Difficulty Medium)

Painted images of playful cats and dogs adorn the festive, pink and light blue walls. An expertly crafted bassinet trimmed with white lace stands in the center of the nursery. A porcelain doll of an infant girl lies peacefully in the crib. It is surrounded by an upholstered sofa, a wooden dresser with a cushioned top and a massive armoire fashioned into the likeness of a castle entrance with two heavy doors affixed to imposing towers. An illustrated, open book rests on the sofa's arm.

The book resting on the arm of the sofa is a collection of nursery rhymes and children's songs. It is written in Common and is open to the pages telling a story about a brave baby that frightened a hungry spider with a loud sneeze. The dresser against the far wall has two drawers and contains cloth diapers, infants' clothing and an array of other baby accessories. The cushioned top is used as a changing table. The massive armoire can be opened by pulling its large doors apart. Despite their size, the doors open with relative ease.

The porcelain doll in the bassinet is a **soulbound doll** containing the spiteful spirit of a selfish, spoiled girl named Naima. She is neutral evil. The doll pretends to be an ordinary toy until someone picks up the open book. When she spots that, Naima sits up and starts wailing uncontrollably. She demands that a PC sing her a lullaby; otherwise she intends to make the story in the book come true. She grants the PCs just one attempt. If the performer succeeds on a DC 15 Cha (Performance) check, Naima falls back asleep, but not before she tells the PCs not to open the castle doors, if they do not want to meet her pets. In the event that the PC fails the Performance check, or the PCs open the armoire doors, **4 spider swarms** pour out of it and attack the PCs. Naima uses her levitate ability to stay out of range from the swarm.

Soulbound Doll: **AC** 14; **HP** 32 (10d4+10); **Spd** 20ft; **Melee** dagger (+3, 1d4-2 piercing); **Str** -2, **Dex** +2, **Con** +1, **Int** +0, **Wis** +0, **Cha** -1; **Senses** darkvision 120ft, passive Perception 10; **Traits** alignment variation (*inflict wounds*, 1/day, DC 11), soul focus (AC 14, 8 hp), susceptible to enchantment (disadvantage on saves against Enchantment); **AL** NE; **CR** 2; **XP** 450. (**Appendix**)

Spider Swarm (4): **AC** 12; **HP** 22 (5d8); **Spd** 20ft, climb 20ft; **Melee** bite (+3, 4d4 piercing or 2d4 piercing if swarm is a half hp or below); **Immune** charmed, frightened, paralyzed, petrified, prone, restrained, stunned; **Str** -4, **Dex** +1, **Con** +0, **Int** -5, **Wis** -2, **Cha** -5; **Senses** blindsight 10ft, passive Perception 8; **Traits** spider climb (can climb difficult surfaces without an ability check), swarm (can occupy another creature's space, move through any opening large enough for Tiny insect, can't regain hp or gain temporary hp), web sense (when in contact with web, swarm knows where other creatures in contact with web are), web walker (ignores movement restrictions caused by webbing); **AL** Unaligned; **CR** 1/2; **XP** 100.

12. Play Room (Difficulty Medium)

Dolls, toys and children's books sit atop a long shelf spanning the entire length of the far wall. Miniature figures of children and monsters fill the rooms of a large dollhouse. Meanwhile, four strange figures gather around a circular table for what appears to be a tea party. The apparent leader is a small rabbitlike creature with pink fur and a golden horn. Three animated humanoid corpses with long, sharp teeth and pallid flesh accompany the hyperactive rabbit. A full tea cup and saucer sits in front of each guest.

Though most of the dolls, toys and children's books on the shelves are worthless, a few of them are rare and valuable. These include a porcelain clown doll worth 100gp, an illustrated book entitled *Jaina and the Tiger* worth 50gp and six small chess sets worth 10gp each. The dollhouse does not resemble The House of a Thousand Delights in any way, but all of the rooms feature young children being frightened by horrific monsters hiding under their beds, in the closet or standing in a dark corner.

The tea party "guests" are a strange mix of creatures. The leader is an **al-mir'aj**, the rabbitlike creature heading the ceremony. Despite its pink coloring and golden horn, it is extremely aggressive and attacks on sight. Though it is not particularly intelligent, the creature uses its *dimension door* ability to single out Lakta, if she is present. Otherwise it uses the ability to avoid the best melee combatant. It is incapable of speaking as are the **3 ghouls** accompanying it. The ghouls on the other hand attack living creatures in preference to the half-construct little girl that may be accompanying them. These creatures have no treasure.

Al-Mi'raj: AC 13; HP 20 (3d10+3); Spd 40ft; **Melee** gore (+5, 1d4+3 piercing); **SA** spells; **Immune** poison; **Str** -2, **Dex** +3, **Con** +1, **Int** -2, **Wis** +1, **Cha** -2; **Senses** darkvision 60ft, passive Perception 11; **Traits** magic resistance (advantage on saves against spells and other magic effects); **AL** N; **CR** 1/2; **XP** 100.
Innate Spells: at will—*blink*; 1/round—*dimension door*.

Ghoul (3): AC 12; HP 22 (5d8); Spd 30ft; **Melee** bite (+2, 2d6+2 piercing), claws (+4, 2d4+2 slashing, plus DC 10 Con save or target is paralyzed for 1 minute, can make saves at the end of each of its turns to recover); **Immune** poison damage; charmed, exhaustion, poisoned; **Str** +1, **Dex** +2, **Con** +0, **Int** -2, **Wis** +0, **Cha** -2; **Senses** darkvision 60ft, passive Perception 10; **AL** CE; **CR** 1; **XP** 200.

Development: A PC that won the mancala game back in **Area 7** may recognize that the tea and the hare reference points to the rabbitlike creature and the tea party. In fact, a PC that succeeds on a DC 12 Wis (Perception) check notices that the "tea" appears to be blood. Similarly, anyone that tastes the tea comes to the same conclusion with a successful DC 10 Wis (Perception) check. The red, porcelain tea kettle (AC 13, hp 3) contains Lakta's heart, though there is no liquid in the kettle. Correctly identifying the organ requires a successful DC 10 Wis (Medicine) or Int (Nature) check. The kettle's opening is too small for the heart to be removed without damaging it. The heart is fragile and susceptible to injury. If Lakta accompanies the PCs, she insists on being allowed to touch her heart. When she does, the organ disappears and teleports inside of her current body just like her brain. Otherwise, the PCs may carry the organ with them until Lakta can return it to her present body.

13. Child's Bedroom (Difficulty Easy)

A dozen cloth dolls resembling wild animals lie atop a child-size bed covered in frilly lace and pink silk sheets. There is a nearby dresser with three drawers and an attached mirror. A closed chest rests against the near wall, and a stuffed clown sits on a chair tucked into the near corner. There is a closed folding door on the wall adjacent to the bed.

The dresser's three drawers and the chest are closed. The drawers are unlocked and contain an assortment of young girl's clothing and a diary that is locked with a tiny key attached to a strand of pink thread. The diary is written in Common and contains numerous hand-drawn pictures of an attractive young girl named Kayla with numerous references to her handsome prince. The story then claims that a horrible monster took her heart in her sleep, but her champion came to her rescue and they lived happily ever after.

The closed toy chest contains an assortment of girl's dolls and majestic cloth elephants and horses. There are nine of these stuffed items in all with an average value of 5gp each.

The dolls on the child's bed and the clown seated in the chair are ordinary dolls of average quality. There are twelve small wild animal dolls, including a bear, camel, horse, hyena, lion and tiger. These dolls and the clown are worth an average of 2gp each. Despite the odd color, the satin sheets and frilly lace are worth 20gp total.

Hidden behind the folding closet door is the stuff of Kayla's nightmares, an **ogre**. The hideous monster bursts through the door and attacks the PCs if they spend more than 1 minute in the room, or anyone attempts to open the folding door. Though the diary suggests that the ogre took Kayla's heart, a thorough search of the attached closet turns up nothing.

Ogre: AC 11; HP 59 (7d10+21); Spd 40ft; **Melee** greatclub (+6, 2d8+4 bludgeoning); **Ranged** javelin (+6, 30/120ft, 2d6+4 piercing); **Str** +4, **Dex** -1, **Con** +3, **Int** -3, **Wis** -2, **Cha** -2; **Senses** darkvision 60ft, passive Perception 8; **AL** CE; **CR** 2; **XP** 450.

14. Child's Bedroom (Difficulty Easy)

Painted images of marching soldiers and charging cavalry superimposed over a light blue background adorn the walls. A battered collection of mangled wooden toy soldiers, marionettes and blunt wooden swords lie scattered about the floor in front of a dilapidated, uneven wooden bed. The nearby dresser is in similar shape as its two open drawers tenuously hang from the edge of the furniture piece, their contents of tattered clothing and worthless junk strewn about the area.

All of the objects littering the floor are worthless and beyond repair. Even the dresser and the bed reveal nothing of any value. The young girls that played with the dollhouse over the centuries used this bedroom to simulate their brothers' destructive nature and martial expectations.

Though it is not apparent, the heap of shattered toy soldiers, weapons and marionettes form the components of a lonely **attic whisperer**. The neglected undead creature becomes especially excited if Lakta accompanies the PCs into the room. The attic whisperer calls out to Lakta and the PCs secondarily using the stolen voices of its victims. When the PCs or Lakta come within 10 feet of it, it activates its aura of sobs and then rises to attack them. It appears as a misshapen amalgamation of arms, legs and swords topped by a marionette's head. The attic whisperer displays a mod-

icum of intelligence. It uses its bite against melee combatants to weaken them, and uses its touch attack against spellcasters to rob them of their voices. The attic whisperer's material components, like the other refuse strewn about the room, have no value.

Attic Whisperer: AC 15; HP 45 (6d8+18); Spd 20ft; **Melee** bite (+6, 1d4-1 piercing plus steal breath); **SA** steal breath (on bite, target makes DC 13 Wis save or suffers 1 level of exhaustion), steal voice (on touch target must make DC 13 Wis save or lose speech for 1 hour, attic whisperer can mimic victim); **Immune** poison; **Str** -1, **Dex** +4, **Con** +0, **Int** +2, **Wis** +3, **Cha** +3; **Skills** Perception +5, Stealth +6; **Senses** darkvision 60ft, passive Perception 15; **Traits** aura of sobs (creatures within 10ft lose benefit of bardic inspiration and suffer -1 penalty to attack, damage and ability checks); **AL** NE; **CR** 3; **XP** 700. (Appendix)

15. Parents' Bedroom (Difficulty Medium)

An expertly carved mahogany bed rests against the far wall, covered by silk sheets and an exotic fur. There is a nearby vanity table with a mirror and chair tucked beneath it and several jars sitting atop it. On the opposite wall stands a closed armoire with two drawers, adjacent to a black lacquered dressing panel and a full-length mirror in the near corner.

When the door initially opens, the PCs cannot see behind the dressing panel in the near corner where the room's lone occupant currently hides. The silk sheets on the bed are worth 50gp, and the exotic fur is worth 50gp as well. A successful DC 10 Int (Nature) check identifies the fur as belonging to an oryx. The vanity table has a small drawer that pulls out, but is empty. There are six jars on top of the vanity table. Three of them contain perfume with a total value of 100gp. The remaining three jars include a *potion of flying*, *invulnerability* and *resistance*. The armoire contains a marvelous collection of women's clothing including formal gowns, dresses and silk wraps worth a total of 450gp. The black lacquered dressing panel stands 7 feet high and partially obscures a full-length silver mirror behind it. Though the mirror is valuable, it is also extremely heavy and rather large.

If Lakta accompanies the PCs, she explains that she roughly furnished the bedroom as a duplicate to her parents' bedroom, though she did not put any clothing in the armoire or the jars on the vanity table. She is also somewhat disturbed that none of her father's items appear in the room. Lakta insists that her father's clothing and belongings should appear in the room as well, but when pressed she admits that she has never seen his items in what she believes is her parents' bedroom.

Lakta's heritage created a logistical headache for the dollhouse's caretaker. In an act of spite and what he deems to be "enlightenment," Ezreki populated the room with an undead abomination of Lakta's distant ancestor. A lone **ghul** hides behind the dressing panel. The creature took great care to position itself out of sight, so PCs do not notice it unless they succeed on a DC 21 Wis (Perception) check. The ghul waits behind the panel, peeking through the cracks until the opportune moment when it lashes out to attack. Throughout the combat, the bitter creature harps on Lakta's heritage, especially if she is present. It hurls horrific insults at her, calling her a bastard daughter, polluted child, half-breed girl and any other jibe the GM can devise. If Lakta is still unaware of her genie heritage and her true parentage, the ghul's disparaging remarks are likely to cause her to question the PCs about the volley of derogatory comments hurled at her. The ghul wears a gold bracelet worth 250gp, a gold ring inset with a small sapphire worth 200gp and a bronze necklace worth 100gp.

Ghul: AC 14; HP 75 (12d8+24); Spd 40ft, climb 20ft; **Melee** bite (+9, 1d6+6 piercing, automatically hits grappled target), claw x2 (+9, 1d4+6 slashing plus bleed); **SA** bleed (if damaged by bite attack, target loses 1d4 hp/round until

DC 13 Con save), grapple (medium or smaller target automatically grappled if 2 claws hit), multiattack (2 claws, 1 bite); **Immune** poison; **Resist** fire; piercing and slashing damage from non-magic weapons; **Str** +6, **Dex** +2, **Con** +2, **Int** +2, **Wis** +2, **Cha** +4; **Skills** Deception +7, Intimidation +7, Perception +5, Stealth +5; **Senses** darkvision 60ft, passive Perception 15; **Traits** shapechanger (ghul can freely change into hyena or back to ghul form as bonus action, cannot be detected as undead or evil while in hyena form); **AL** CE; **CR** 5; **XP** 1,800. (Appendix)

First Floor

The staircase in **Area 8** leads down to the dollhouse's first floor. Unlike the dollhouse's second floor, there are no wandering monsters on this level. Here, the PCs discover Lakta's two missing organs as well as the secret entrance to The House of a Thousand Delights' basement and its caretaker Ezreki.

16. First Floor Landing

The staircase descends into a small antechamber connected to an adjoining room by an archway. A large portrait of a crimson-skinned giant with smoldering eyes and black horns greets visitors as they descend down the stairs. A pair of stately wooden doors lies opposite the archway.

The doors are strong wooden doors that when opened lead to a solid masonry wall. They are the dollhouse's faux entrance. The portrait is an artist's rendering of Infernal fist during his life in Iljanna. A PC that succeeds on a DC 14 Int (Nature) or Int (History) check identifies the creature in the picture as an efreeti. If the PCs are aware of Infernal fist, they recognize him as the subject of the portrait with a successful DC 16 Int (History) check. The archway adjoins this entryway with the parlor.

17. Parlor (Difficulty Medium)

Two upholstered high-backed gentleman's chairs and a chaise lounge are strategically positioned in the center of the room around an ornately carved wooden table. Crochet, knitting and sewing needles, thread, yarn and needlepoint canvases rest upon the table. There is a magnificent fireplace in one corner and a hutch in the other corner. Three completed needlepoint canvases hang on the near wall.

The three needlepoint canvases hanging from the walls are colorful and syrupy sweet. The closest one features flower petals and an idyllic cottage above the expression "Home Sweet Home." The second is a depiction of the parlor's corner fireplace above the words "Home is Where the Hearth Is." The furthest one is an image of a country farmhouse surrounded by wild fields and populated by domesticated animals. The three chairs surrounding the table are akin to those found in an estate home or a mansion. Almost fifty needles of varying shapes and sizes rest atop the table along with six large balls of pink, yellow and bright green yarn. The fireplace is fully functional and exquisitely carved with bas reliefs of flower petals and dots. The hutch has two drawers that contain an assortment of ceramic and glass drinking vessels. The door on the far wall opens easily with minimal effort.

Good Wooden Door: AC 15; HP 15; **Immunity** cold, lightning, poison, psychic; **Resistance** thunder, weapon damage; **Break** DC 18 Str.

Shortly after the PCs enter the room, its 2 **quicklings** start to play with their newfound toys. In their motionless state, the creatures are naturally invisible, so they cannot be spotted with a *see invisibility* spell or similar magic. They begin their festivities by using their abilities in tandem with each other. One uses its *dancing lights* ability to create a vaguely humanoid shape while the other uses its *minor illusion* ability to project its voice from the image in an effort to make the illusion appear to be an incorporeal undead creature. Anyone that hears the voice may disbelieve that the voice is actually coming from someplace other than the image with a successful DC 12 Wis save. In addition, the voice speaks so fast that it is difficult to understand anything it says. This tactic makes them visible for 1 round. The quicklings resemble small, pale blue elves with silver hair and large ears. The mischievous and malevolent creatures giggle and snicker the entire time. If possible, the quicklings try to grab a handful of needles that they poison and use to stab the PCs. The needles are relatively small, so they deal only 1 point of damage instead of the dagger's normal damage. If necessary, the quicklings use their superior speed and agility to dart past the PCs and back up the stairs to the second floor where they find an ideal location to hide and coat their needles with poison.

Quickling (2): AC 17; HP 14 (4d6); Spd 120ft; Melee dagger (+9, 1d3-1 piercing plus poison); SA spells (DC 12); Str -1, Dex +7, Con +0, Int +2, Wis +2, Cha +2; Skills Acrobatics +9, Nature +4, Stealth +9; Senses darkvision 60ft, passive Perception 12; Traits natural invisibility (invisible when motionless), poison (4 doses, equivalent to drow poison), supernatural speed (attacks on visible quickling have disadvantage), slow susceptibility (slow spell imposes level of exhaustion, loses supernatural speed ability); AL CE; CR 3; XP 700. (Appendix)
Innate Spells: 1/day—*blur, dancing lights, levitate, minor illusion, shatter.*



18. Ball Room (Difficulty Medium)

Painted images of festive dancing and frivolity adorn the chamber's walls. The colors of the rainbow are painted as lines on a smooth, stone column that stands in the room's center. There is a raised dais in the far corner. Two zithers lie on the dais surrounding a small drum. No one is playing these instruments, yet the sound of soothing music fills the hall. Two shapely female humanoids with pale bluish green scales elegantly sway to the intoxicating rhythm around the central column.

Another *minor illusion* spell provides the music emanating from the dais. After spending 1 minute in the room, the melody repeats itself. The two zithers sitting on the dais are masterwork instruments worth 100gp each. The large bongo style drum has no monetary value, though it has greater significance. Though the drum is sealed, it is heavier than it should be and does not produce a proper sound when struck. The reason is that Lakta's lungs are tucked inside of it. Anyone who succeeds on a DC 10 Wis (Medicine) or Int (Nature) check can properly identify the organ. Her lungs can be easily removed by cutting through the drum skin with a sharp object. As was the case in **Area 12**, her lungs are teleported into her current body as soon as she comes in physical contact with them. The door into the adjoining chamber opens with no effort. Anyone who won the *pachisi* game in **Area 7** may also realize the connection to Ezreki's cryptic clue.

Good Wooden Door: AC 15; HP 15; Immunity cold, lightning, poison, psychic; Resistance thunder, weapon damage; Break DC 18 Str.

The seductive creatures dancing to the music are 2 **inphidian dancers**. They take great care to keep their hands concealed behind their backs as

they attempt to fascinate onlookers using their entrancing dance special ability. The creatures' hands are actually viper heads that a PC can spot by succeeding on a DC 15 Wis (Perception) check. During their performance, they move closer to the PCs and then attack them with their viper hands. Under normal circumstances, the inphidian dancers would attempt to flee, but there is nowhere for them to go in the dollhouse. They have no treasure.

Inphidian Dancer (2): AC 13; HP 45 (6d10+12); Spd 30ft; Melee snake-hand bite x2 (1d4+1 piercing plus poison); SA entrancing dance (dancer makes Cha (Performance check), all within 30ft of dancing inphidian must make Wis save, DC equal to dancer's Cha (Performance) check, on failure, target is charmed for 1d4+2 rounds), multiattack (2 snake hands), poison (bite, 3d6 poison, DC 11 Con save for half); Str +1, Dex +3, Con +2, Int +1, Wis +1, Cha +3; Skills Performance +5, Stealth +5; Senses darkvision 60ft, passive Perception 11; Traits master dancer (advantage on all Cha (Performance) checks when dancing); AL NE; CR 3; XP 700. (Appendix)

19. Dining Room

Ten stuffed animal dolls each occupy a small, white chair surrounding a long dining table. Cakes, cookies and other sweet treats cover the table.

The stuffed animals sitting around the table include a lion, hyena, giraffe, horse, camel, rabbit, donkey, cat, dog and mouse. A tray of desserts sits in front of each dinner guest. The door leading into Area 20 is somewhat swollen and requires effort to open.

CHILD'S PLAY

Good Wooden Door: AC 15; HP 15; **Immunity** cold, lightning, poison, psychic; **Resistance** thunder, weapon damage; **Break** DC 18 Str.

Development: When anyone enters the room, a *programmed illusion* spell begins. The ten stuffed animals instantly come to life and begin devouring the treats placed in front of them. Between bites, the creatures converse among themselves in Common praising the genies and their clever servant (Ezreki) that made this feast possible. Each guest acts in accordance with its animal counterpart, so the hyena laughs, while the donkey is grim and stubborn. The stuffed animals do not respond to cues from the PCs or answer their questions. Anyone interacting with the illusion can disbelieve it by rolling a successful DC 15 Wis save. By now the PCs are likely on edge that this menagerie is poised to attack them; however after 13 rounds, the stuffed animals and the dessert trays suddenly disappear leaving only empty chairs and an empty table in their wake.

20. Kitchen (Difficulty Easy)

Warm air surges from a large kitchen manned by a lone chef. The matronly older woman with light gray hair lovingly stirs a stew slowly simmering in a corner hearth. She wears an apron and holds a knife in her spare hand that she apparently just used to dice several onions atop a nearby table. She briefly looks towards the door and flashes a welcoming smile. The aroma of baked honey and roasted pistachios wafts from a cooling tray sitting on a table close to a warm oven. There is a large pantry on the near wall.

Like the dining room, the kitchen is also subject to an illusion, though this time it is permanent rather than programmed. In this case, only certain elements are illusory. The fire in the hearth and oven, the onions on the table and the fresh tray of *baklava* comprise parts of the illusion. Anyone that interacts with the illusion is entitled to a DC 18 Wis save to disbelieve it. The remaining elements are real with the exception of the chef, most important among them being the stew. In this case, Lakta's liver is inside the stew pot, though thankfully it is cool to the touch. Anyone who succeeds on a DC 10 Wis (Medicine) or Int (Nature) check can correctly identify it. As in **Areas 12** and **18**, Lakta's liver is teleported in her new body as soon as she touches it. Likewise, if anyone won the seega game in **Area 7**, the clue should lead them to the stew pot. The door to the adjoining servants' quarters is less sturdy than the others found on this floor.

Simple Wooden Door: AC 12; HP 10; **Immunity** cold, lightning, poison, psychic; **Resistance** thunder, weapon damage; **Break** DC 12 Str.

Like some of the features already encountered in the kitchen, everything is not as it appears to be. The grandmotherly figure is really a **green hag** masquerading as such using her *illusory appearance* ability. She claims that her name is Jenna, and she was imprisoned in the House of a Thousand Delights seven centuries ago. She claims that she entreated Infernalist to spare her life by indulging the genie's sweet tooth with her famous *baklava*. Of course, she realizes that the *baklava* in the tray is an illusion, so she tells curious PCs that it is far too hot to eat. The cunning predator plays along with the ruse and even feigns ignorance about Lakta's liver in the stew. When she is confronted with her inconsistencies or an opportune moment presents itself, she turns invisible and attacks the nearest PC with surprise. She even uses her mimicry ability to imitate the sounds of the stuffed animals in **Area 19** in an effort to make it seem that they are real after all and serve as a distraction. The green hag fights to the bitter end.

Green Hag: AC 17; HP 82 (11 d8+33); Spd 30ft; **Melee** claws (+6, 2d8+4 slashing); **SA** illusory appearance (can take appearance of another creature of same size and shape, DC 20 Intelligence (Investigation) check to detect), invisible passage (remains invisible until she attacks or casts spell),

spells (DC 12); **Str** +4, **Dex** +1, **Con** +3, **Int** +1, **Wis** +2, **Cha** +2; **Skills** Arcana +3, Deception +4, Perception +4, Stealth +3; **Senses** darkvision 60ft, passive Perception 14; **Traits** amphibious (can breathe air and water), mimicry (can mimic animal sounds and humanoid voices, DC 14 Wis (Insight) check to detect); **AL** NE; **CR** 3; **XP** 700.

Innate Spells: at will—*dancing lights*, *minor illusion*, *vicious mockery*.

Development: Unless the PCs or Lakta did not find one of her organs along the way, Lakta or the PCs should have all of her missing organs apparently paving the way for them to escape The House of a Thousand Delights. Unfortunately for the PCs that is not the case. Lakta's organs remain with her half-construct body and the portal in Lakta's hiding space in the attic also bars their exit from the dollhouse. Lakta has only one possible explanation. She asserts that the closed cupboard beneath the stairs leading from the second floor to the first floor is the only area inaccessible in her dollhouse back home. She believes that if there is a way to get into the cupboard it must be hidden somewhere in either the servant's quarters or supply room.

21. Servants' Quarters (Difficulty Medium)

Space is tight in a crowded room with four beds, a circular table surrounded by four chairs, a large dresser and a full-length mirror. Small, mundane items lie scattered about the floor as well as on top of the table and dresser.

The objects strewn about the room include weathered books, crockery, clothes and other sundries. They have no monetary value, but they are useful for the servants' quarters four unseen occupants.

Simple Wooden Door: AC 12; HP 10; **Immunity** cold, lightning, poison, psychic; **Resistance** thunder, weapon damage; **Break** DC 12 Str.

The room's cluster is not an accident. It is haunted by **4 poltergeists** that are the undead spirits of those rare individuals that nearly discovered the house's concealed basement and inner workings. These ghostly abominations use the objects scattered around the room as projectiles, hurling them at the PCs with reckless abandon while remaining invisible. Like the other restless apparitions stalking The House of a Thousand Delights, these beings can only be granted permanent rest by accomplishing what they failed to do — destroy Infernalist's miserable creation.

Poltergeist (4): AC 11; HP 21 (4d8+3); Spd fly 20ft; **Ranged** telekinesis (+3, 20/60ft, 1d4 bludgeoning); **SA** frightener (1/minute, poltergeist can become visible, all creatures within 30ft must make DC 12 Wis save or be frightened for 1d4 rounds), telekinesis (can hurl objects up to 75lbs); **Immune** cold, necrotic, poison damage; charmed, exhaustion, frightened, grappled, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned, prone, restrained; **Resist** bludgeoning, piercing and slashing from nonmagical weapons; **Str** +0, **Dex** +1, **Con** +0, **Int** -3, **Wis** +1, **Cha** +1; **Senses** darkvision 60ft, passive Perception 11; **Traits** natural invisibility (invisible except when using frightener action), rejuvenation (if destroyed, returns in 2d4 days), site bound (cannot travel more than 120ft from where it was created); **AL** CN; **CR** 2; **XP** 450. (**Appendix**)

22. Supply Room

Eight cleaning implements including brooms, mops and feather dusters are affixed to a support bracket bolted into the wall. The strong odor of ammonia emanates from a half-filled stone basin that sits beneath a washboard and stone. White linens fill the shelves of an open storage cabinet abutting the far wall.

There are two straw brooms, a wire broom, three mops and two feather dusters hanging from the wall bracket. All of these objects can be easily removed from the bracket which opens and closes the secret door leading into the basement. Sliding the bracket to the right opens the door and pushing it back to the left closes the secret door.

Secret Door: AC 15; HP 16; Perception DC 15; Immunity cold, lightning, poison, psychic; Resistance thunder, weapon damage; Break DC 12 Str.

The laundry apparatus is fully functional and actually works well to bleach stains. The linens in the open cabinets consist predominately of bed sheets and towels. None of them have any value.

23. Spiral Staircase

A dank, narrow iron spiral staircase descends ten feet into a small, warm room with concrete floors, walls and ceiling.

Anyone who succeeds on a DC 10 Wis (Perception) check notices that the warmth emanates from behind a swollen wooden door tightly fitted into the wall.

Strong Wooden Door: AC 15; HP 18; Immunity cold, lightning, poison, psychic; Resistance thunder, weapon damage; Break DC 20 Str.

Basement Level

Nothing has entered the basement since Infernal fist constructed The House of a Thousand Delights centuries ago. Ezreki and his fire elemental servant have remained undisturbed since then, waiting for an opportunity to unleash the house's horrors on another terrified and unsuspecting victim. Ezreki monitors the PCs and Lakta's activities using a miniaturized replica of the dollhouse as a *scrying* device, so he is aware that they wait outside of the door searching for an opportunity to escape.

24. Basement (Difficulty Deadly)

Warm air surges from a swaying pillar of flame smoldering in a 5-foot-wide fire pit in the center of the room. Two tapestries depicting a crimson-skinned giant leading an army of men into battle span the length of opposite walls. A vaguely humanoid creature about the size of a small child with leathery wings, a pronounced underbite, long pointed ears and jagged teeth sits atop a round piece of quartz roughly shaped into a seat. The monster intently gazes at a miniaturized version of Lakta's dollhouse. There is a closed iron chest in the far corner.

The roaring pillar of flame in the center of the room is a **fire elemental**. It obeys its new master's commands and immediately steps out of the fire

pit to combat the PCs. The creature overlooking the replica dollhouse is **Ezreki**, the advanced homunculus. Upon his master's death, the homunculus and The House of a Thousand Delights became a single consciousness that infused Ezreki with some of its power allowing the intelligent construct to direct its denizens as it so chooses. He does so using a telepathic link that connects him with Infernal fist's diabolic creation. Ezreki is incapable of speaking, so he expresses his emotions with childish gestures like stamping his feet in anger. The homunculus leaves the bulk of the melee combat to its fire elemental servant, instead relying upon its speed and maneuverability to bite enemies and leave the vicinity.

Ezreki, Advanced Homunculus: AC 14; HP 48 (7d10+10); Spd 20ft, fly 50ft; **Melee** bite (+4, 1d4+1 piercing plus poison); **SA** poison (Con DC 12, poisoned for 1 minute; if save fails by 5 or more the target is poisoned for 1d10 minutes and is unconscious); **Immune** charm, poison; **Str** +1, **Dex** +1, **Con** +1, **Int** +0, **Wis** +1, **Cha** -2; **Skills** Deception +1, Insight +4; **Senses** darkvision 60ft, passive Perception 11; **Traits** telepathic bond (communicate telepathically with master if both are on same plane); **AL** LE; **CR** 5; **XP** 1,800.

Fire Elemental: AC 13; HP 102 (12d10+36); Spd 50ft; **Melee** touch (+6, 2d6+3 fire); **SA** multiattack (2 touch); **Immune** fire, poison damage; exhaustion, grappled, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned, prone, restrained, unconscious; **Resist** bludgeoning, piercing and slashing from nonmagic weapons; **Str** +0, **Dex** +3, **Con** +3, **Int** -2, **Wis** +0, **Cha** -2; **Senses** darkvision 60ft, passive Perception 10; **Traits** fire form (move through space as narrow as 1 inch, creature that touches or hits elemental with melee attack takes 1d10 fire damage, elemental can enter hostile creature's space and inflict 1d10 fire damage, target is on fire and takes 1d10 fire damage per turn until extinguished); illumination (sheds bright light in 30ft radius, dim light for another 30ft), water susceptibility (takes 1 pt cold damage for every 5ft elemental moves through water or for every gallon of cold water splashed on it); **AL** N; **CR** 5; **XP** 1,800.

Development: Ezreki is the last physical link to The House of a Thousand Delights' extradimensional space. When it is destroyed, the extradimensional space slowly fades away, and The House of a Thousand Delights loses all of its magical properties. The process takes 1 minute, giving the PCs a chance to grab anything they can before they reappear in Lakta's room around her dollhouse. If Lakta failed to recover all of her missing organs, she dies 1d3+1 minutes after Ezreki's destruction. Otherwise, the PCs and the objects they take from the dollhouse return to their normal size when they reappear on the Material Plane, while Lakta awakens from her catatonic state with her organs and mind intact.

After their ordeal, the PCs are aware of Jumia's role in the plot. If the PCs did not learn of her involvement prior to their adventure in the dollhouse, they must now confront the vengeful kharam. Jumia is not a seasoned killer. After the PCs initial foray into the secret portal, Jumia concocts an excuse and discreetly leaves the Jamar residence for 30 minutes, as she wanders the streets and internally debates the PCs' chance of success. She then periodically returns to the Jamar residence every 30 minutes thereafter to check on any new developments. After repeating this process for two hours, Jumia is satisfied that the PCs are hopelessly trapped within Lakta's dollhouse.

Though Jumia longs to avenge her mother's death, self-preservation remains her foremost concern. She flees whenever she is reduced to less than a quarter of her original hit points. If she escapes, the spiteful monster broods over the failed plot for several weeks before making another assassination attempt against Hassan, Dima or Lakta.

Treasure: The quartz shaped seat is intended to serve as a throne; however it is so misshapen that appears to be a rudimentary seat. The closed iron chest is unlocked and contains the spoils culled from countless victims over the years. Ezreki has no need for these treasures, so he threw them inside the chest for safekeeping. Inside the chest are a *+1 longsword*, a *ring of protection*, a *brooch of shielding*, a *javelin of lightning*, a *+1 chain shirt*, an *elixir of health*, a *wand of lightning bolts*, a spell

scroll (*blur, mirror image, darkness*), 10 +1 arrows, 3,685gp and five gems worth 500gp, 250 (x2), 100gp and 50gp. The tapestries are images of Infernalists during his life in Iljana. Though they have some value (200gp), they are extremely large and heavy measuring 20 feet in length and weighing 300 pounds each. Transporting them is not feasible without magical intervention.

Concluding the Adventure

Several loose ends await the PCs when they return to Lakta's bedroom after their nightmarish experience in The House of a Thousand Delights. Lakta's wellbeing is foremost among them. If they saved the young girl's life, Hassan, Dima, their servants and the abaya shower adulation on the PCs and give them their reward, if they were promised one. Hassan and Salamun treat the PCs as heroes and grant them assistance in Qamara whenever they request it. Lakta also becomes their friend for life, offering to accompany the PCs on their perilous adventures when she gets older. Instead of spending her time playing with her dollhouse, Lakta attunes herself to her magical abilities. On the other hand, PCs that fail to save Lakta's life do not get a reward and manage only lukewarm thanks for their effort. PCs that fail to save Lakta or bring Jumia to justice feel the full brunt of the family's discontent. A few household members may even go so far as to publicly question the PCs' competence and abilities.

In addition to the obvious concerns, there is also the delicate matter of Lakta's parentage. Despite Hassan's previous position on the subject, the prospect of losing Lakta, and his family proved too much to bear. He forgives Dima for her past transgression and asks her to forgive him for his boorish behavior on the matter. Likewise, Dima admits to the affair and apologizes to her husband while accepting his. Lakta is also eternally grateful for restoring unity to her family to her.

The PCs' stature within Qamara and the surrounding area rises if they successfully rescued Lakta or at least brought Jumia to justice. Salamun may call upon them again in the future to thwart Jumia's further machinations if she escaped justice, or he could request their assistance in the next adventure "King of Beasts."

Red Wedding

By Tom Khauss

*From this day forward I promise you
Love eternal and forever true
For none shall sunder the vow you gave
Neither god nor man nor even grave*
— A traditional Moglai wedding vow

Red Wedding is a 4th-level adventure of forbidden passion and its unintended consequences. Though love creates life and beauty, its denial sows anger and hate. When young lovers are forever separated, one turns to a dark power for vengeance, and the other rises from the netherworld as a frightful monstrosity.

Adventure Background

From an early age, Crystal Biltumur exhibited a caring heart and a tolerant nature. Her mother Odval always encouraged her only child to look beyond appearances and to see the good in others. Her father Sukh outwardly and passively agreed with his beloved wife, but he never really shared her opinion. His experience as the mayor of the small town of Ubuka jaded his outlook toward those different from him. This held especially true when dealing with the more aggressive humanoid races such as goblins and their kin and his primary nemesis, the orcs that dwelt in the nearby village of Caaddan. In his mind, history proved him right time and again. Though a long-lasting, yet uneasy peace existed between the two peoples, mistrust spurred by the unsanctioned actions of rogue elements on both sides of the equation occasionally brought the two parties to the precipice of all-out war.

In an effort to alleviate tensions between the two sides and prevent future misunderstandings, the Seven Horsemen, a council of seven influential citizens, proposed a bold solution based upon a long-standing practice within their culture: One of the leader's children would live with the other side's leader and his family for six months and then vice versa. Sukh detested the idea of sending his daughter Crystal to live among a race he deemed to be savages, yet in the end the majority won out. Sukh reluctantly acquiesced to the Seven Horsemen's demands, so the accepting teenager went to live with the family of Splayed Tongue, the orcs' tribal chieftain.

Crystal's enthusiasm for adventure quickly waned in the light of the orcs' uncouthness and inherent barbarism. She found Splayed Tongue to be a hotheaded, gluttonous bully who showed little ability or concern for the welfare of his people. His orcish kin were much the same to varying degrees — yet one orc differed from all the rest. Stolen Tongue, the chieftain's eldest son, stood out from his race in most every way. Though he was a masterful warrior, he looked the most "human" and had a sharp mind, with a discerning ear for music and a love of history. Crystal immediately took an interest in her orcish counterpart, and the two became inseparable during her stay in Caaddan. Likewise, when the time came for Stolen Tongue to join Crystal and her family in Ubuka, their bond deepened. Sukh and Odval openly approved their daughter's burgeoning relationship with the orcs' likely future leader. Odval's feelings toward their orc guest were sincere, but Sukh secretly feared Crystal had become too close to someone belonging to a race he considered oafish brutes. After Stolen Tongue returned to Caaddan, Sukh forbade Crystal to ever see him again, even though the arrangement eased tensions and ushered in a new age of understanding between the two former enemies.

A Secret Affair

Love runs deep, and defiance courses through the veins of nearly every teenager. Crystal was no exception. She repeatedly assured her father that she would obey his wishes, yet she frequently slipped out of town and met Stolen Tongue at prearranged meeting sites. The clandestine rendezvous continued for the next four years, and their relationship rapidly progressed from friendship into a torrid romance. Sukh took notice of his daughter's disinterest in local suitors and frequent disappearances, leading him to suspect that something was amiss. Last night, Sukh followed Crystal to The Crossroads Inn just outside of town. He watched in horror as Crystal leapt into the arms of her orc lover and disappeared with him behind closed doors. When she emerged an hour later, Sukh waited for Stolen Tongue to leave before he stepped out of hiding and glared at his defiant child. His soul burned in a conflagration of pure anger toward Crystal and hatred for the savage who defiled her.

Sukh stammered for the right words, but Crystal spoke first. He heard nothing of what she said except for one word — pregnant. The thought of his unmarried daughter giving birth to an illegitimate child was bad enough, let alone a half-orc monstrosity. Sukh lost his mind. In an irrational fit of rage, he drew his blade and plunged it into his daughter's abdomen in a subconscious effort to remove what he perceived to be the scandalous byproduct of an unholy union.

Rivers of blood poured from Crystal's body as she collapsed, whispered "I love him," and died. The sight of his daughter's dead body jolted Sukh back to his senses. He looked up and saw Stolen Tongue in the distance rushing back to investigate the commotion. Their eyes met for a brief instant before Sukh dashed back to Ubuka. Stolen Tongue rushed to his beloved's side and held Crystal's lifeless body as he wept uncontrollably. Unfortunately, the ado attracted attention from a crowd of onlookers who saw the orc cradling the young woman's body. Stolen Tongue knew he had overstayed his welcome. He fled, knowing Sukh and the townsfolk would blame him for the killing, and seek revenge against him and his people. As his tribe's new chieftain, the clever tactician feared that the humans' numerical superiority, horses and cohesiveness would be too great for his people to overcome. Stolen Tongue was running through a list of his potential allies when he recalled a story from his youth about a malevolent spirit that dwelt within the haunted ruins of Zabladaï, an abandoned orcish settlement near his homeland. Stolen Tongue and his people feared the place, but the heartbroken orc was ready to exact revenge and save his people regardless of the price.

Price of Vengeance

In the bowels of Zabladaï, the brave warrior came face to face with its wicked resident, Cama Obuto. A century earlier, Cama Obuto, a mighty half-orc general, ruled over the entire region. Renowned as a great warrior and a masterful politician, the tyrant kept a closely guarded dark secret. During his murderous 12-year reign, numerous human and orc children mysteriously disappeared. Rumors spread throughout the land that Cama kidnapped the youngsters himself and disposed of them in a concealed dungeon deep within his stronghold. In time, the public outcry became too great, and even his most loyal and handsomely paid lieutenants could no longer turn a blind eye to Cama's sadistic diversion. They found the hidden entrance to his house of horrors and caught Cama with a young orc girl in a dank chamber where dozens or perhaps even hundreds of tiny skeletons lay strewn about the floor. The blubbing child serial killer

groveled and begged for mercy, but the six mortified soldiers slew their perverted ruler with unbridled ferocity. To rid the earth of Cama's legacy, the citizens razed his stronghold and abandoned the settlement in its entirety. But Cama's malevolent spirit lingered and waited.

As the fly walks into the spider's parlor, Stolen Tongue fell into Cama's web of lies and deceit, and reluctantly struck a ghastly bargain with the wicked apparition. In exchange for bringing him young children, Cama agreed to give Stolen Tongue "murderous warriors" to perform his bidding. That night, Stolen Tongue's warriors abducted Bodi, a troubled adolescent and petty criminal who often loitered around the Crossroads Inn. They brought their first victim to Cama and received their promised gift — a hideous vulnademon — to serve them as they pleased.

Meanwhile, Sukh waited for news of Crystal's murder to reach Ubuka. When it did and the eyewitnesses reported Stolen Tongue at the murder scene and made no mention of him, Sukh immediately blamed the orcs for Crystal's murder and demanded Ubuka retaliate. He hastily buried his daughter's body to conceal any evidence that might implicate him, but the dead girl refused to rest in peace. That night, hatred stirred her and her unborn child from eternal slumber, and she rose from the grave as a revenant.

When the townsfolk arrived at the cemetery the following morning, they found the caretaker dead and Crystal's body missing. Sukh accused the orcs of the heinous deeds and renewed his cries for vengeance. Though appalled by recent events, the Seven Horsemen resisted the mayor's cries for all-out war against the orcs and counseled patience, especially since many of them remembered Stolen Tongue from his youth.

Ubuka's citizens do not yet realize that they face imminent danger from the newly undead Crystal and Stolen Tongue's vulnademon servants. In addition, the crafty orc commander soon rues the proverbial deal with the devil that even he cannot undo. It takes a group of brave adventurers to unravel the mystery surrounding Crystal's murder and eradicate an ancient evil once and for all before it claims Ubuka and Caaddan.

Adventure Synopsis

The PCs arrive in the town of Ubuka in the midst of a great crisis. A long-standing peace between its residents and the orc inhabitants of nearby Caaddan hangs in the balance, as the tribe's chieftain, Stolen Tongue, stands accused of murdering Crystal Biltumur, the daughter of Mayor Sukh Biltumur. However, Stolen Tongue knows that Sukh actually murdered Crystal, though he does not know why. Realizing the humans would blame him for her death and attack his village, Stolen Tongue made a bargain with Cama Obuto, a vile malingering spirit that dwells in the haunted ruins of Zabladaï. In exchange for bringing him young children, Cama summoned vulnademons to serve as Stolen Tongue's auxiliary army. Meanwhile, Crystal rose from the grave as a revenant and slew the cemetery's caretaker, an act that Sukh wrongly believes the orcs committed. The PCs arrive in Ubuka several hours before Sukh makes an impassioned plea to his fellow citizens demanding that they bring Stolen Tongue and the orcs to justice.

Shortly after the mayor's rousing call to arms, the first vulnademon strikes in Ubuka, spreading fear and mayhem in its wake. Meanwhile, Crystal reappears to the townsfolk as an undead monster stalking the streets in search of Sukh. To make matters worse, Stolen Tongue dispatches a band of orcs to the outskirts of Ubuka and the surrounding environs to abduct a child and bring it to Cama in order to obtain the services of another vulnademon. The PCs are thrust into the fray of a three-way tug-of-war between the vengeful Crystal, the vulnademon and the marauding orcs. Through their interaction with the townspeople, the orcs and Crystal, the PCs gather important clues pointing to the fact that all three events are related. Depending upon their course of action, the PCs may learn that Sukh actually killed Crystal and that Stolen Tongue sought aid from a vile entity dwelling in the depths of the haunted ruins of Zabladaï. After thwarting the orcs' attempts to kidnap more human victims, vanquishing the vulnademon and fending off Crystal as well as solving her murder, the PCs face the realization that they must destroy the horrible being responsible for bringing the evil outsiders into the conflict.

The scene then shifts from Ubuka and its environs to the haunted ruins of Zabladaï where Cama and his minions await. Outside the fallen building, the PCs face his orc bodyguards and two lesser demons. Within the

foul halls and chambers of Zabladaï, the PCs must vanquish the twisted souls of Cama's past victims as well as the other monstrosities that skulk in his dark domain before coming face to face with the regretful Stolen Tongue. The troubled orc chieftain may take up arms against the PCs, or he may join them to do battle against Cama Obuto. With or without Stolen Tongue's aid, the PCs must destroy the evil entity bent on sowing evil throughout the land and resuming his dastardly ways. In the fetid depths of his former stronghold, the PCs must confront and destroy the malevolent being forever or take their place among his countless victims.

The returning PCs expect to be greeted as conquering heroes, but they may be dismayed to learn that Crystal's lifeless body once again stalks the streets of Ubuka. They must correctly deduce that with her killer brought to justice, the revenant now seeks her true love, Stolen Tongue. Reuniting the lovers in life or in death is the only way to save Crystal from eternal damnation as an undead monster and spare Ubuka from her ceaseless wrath.

Beginning the Adventure

The adventure begins in Ubuka on a bright, sunny morning. Last evening, the town's mayor, Sukh Biltumur, murdered his daughter, Crystal, and blamed the crime on his daughter's clandestine lover, Stolen Tongue, the chieftain of a neighboring tribe of orcs. To conceal any evidence of the crime, Sukh hastily buried her body a few hours later in the outlying cemetery. When the residents awoke this morning, they found the grave empty and the caretaker dead. Rumors fly fast and furious through the main square, as gossip-mongering citizens share their opinions on every facet of these strange events. Everyone's version of events differs dramatically from one person to the next, but they all agree on one thing. The town's mayor, Sukh Biltumur, is scheduled to publicly address the citizens later this morning and sound the call for adventurers and men of stout hearts and arms to thwart the orc menace. This gives the PCs an opportunity to explore Ubuka and gather more information about the settlement, its history and its important residents. Depending upon the depth of their inquiries, the PCs may accept Sukh's version of events at face value and do as he asks without question, or they may dig a little deeper and find that everything is not as it appears to be. The PCs must decide which road to take.

Part One: A Town on Edge

The adventure's opening chapter introduces the PCs to the town of Ubuka in central Libynos and its nearby locales. The PCs are free to explore the central square and its shops, along with several outlying areas. Along the way, they are likely to gather important information and evidence that serves them well after their encounters with the vulnademon and Crystal's risen corpse. Besides advancing the main plot, the PCs may also engage in several secondary encounters and minor events unrelated to the central story arc. The GM is free to lengthen or shorten the PCs' endeavors in Ubuka and its surrounding environs however he sees fit. In addition, the PCs may opt to forego these areas for the time being and visit them after the events described in **Part Two** of the adventure.

Ubuka

Like most grassland communities, the town of Ubuka encompasses roughly 15 square miles consisting predominately of outlying farms and pastures where the vast majority of its residents live. However, Ubuka's residents often venture far from home with their herds in pursuit of fresh grass and drinking water for their animals. With the exception of their actual living quarters and their tracts of self-sufficient farmland, the people here do not ascribe to the traditional definition of property. There are no delineated boundaries or competing claims for land. The grasslands stretch for miles in every direction, so Ubuka's residents see no need to squabble over petty matters when plenty of land exists to meet everyone's needs, even if one has to travel a little farther to do so.

Events

Citizens conduct business in the centrally located town square. Ubuka's town square differs in the regard that its entrepreneurs are largely transient. Passing merchants and travelers simply pitch a tent in the ground and offer their wares for sale until they run out of merchandise or decide it is time to move somewhere else. In fact, the square's only permanent structures are the mayor's office, the Tired Horse Inn and the Flaming Coal Tavern. Though most homes lie several miles away from the center of commerce, the town's citizens were practically born in the saddle. Most travel by horseback and can make the round trip to and from the square in under an hour. Every landowner has at least one horse in his stable, but most boast a riding horse for every adult family member as well as work horses and the occasional racing stallion for the wealthiest residents. The settlement's horse culture also gives Ubuka a significant military advantage because the town can field a sizable cavalry unit. Few citizens have formal combat training or experience, but their numbers, equestrian skills and basic proficiency with a lance offset any martial deficiencies. Ubuka can field a cavalry force of roughly 100 riders, giving the human community a numerical and mobility advantage over Stolen Tongue's force of 80 foot soldiers. In time of need, the town can muster another 60 poorly trained and ill-equipped infantrymen, giving Ubuka double the number of available troops as Caaddan.

Ubukan Warrior (Tribal Warrior x 160): AC 12; HP 11 (2d8+2); Spd 30ft; Melee spear (+3, 1d8+1 piercing); **Ranged** spear (+3, 20ft/60ft, 1d6+1 piercing); **Str** +1; **Dex** +0; **Con** +1; **Int** -1; **Wis** +0; **Cha** -1; **Traits** pack tactics (has tactical advantage on attacks if an ally is within 5ft of the target), skilled rider (has advantage on Dex checks to remain mounted); **AL** any; **CR** 1/8; **XP** 25.

Ubukan War Pony (Riding Horse x 100): AC 10; HP 13 (2d10+2); Spd 60ft.; Melee hooves (+2, 2d4+3 bludgeoning); **Str** +3, **Dex** +0, **Con** +1, **Int** -4, **Wis** +0, **Cha** -2; **Traits** aggressive (if not controlled by its rider, an Ubukan war pony attacks the nearest enemy); **AL** Un; **CR** 1/4; **XP** 50.
Mayor Sukh Biltumur governs the town by decree. He made his repu-

Ubuka

Ubuka is a small town with a population of 475: 408 humans, 28 half-elves, 16 halflings, 14 elves, 9 others. Most of those inhabitants are hard working, reasonably prosperous, honest, and law abiding; Lawful Neutral is the most common alignment. Their biggest "fault" is that they enjoy gossiping and spreading rumors. The town is run through decrees issued by its mayor, Sukh Biltumur (human). Tamir Tugluu (human) is the town's richest merchant.

All residents of Ubuka use the Commoner stat block unless noted otherwise.

tation as a fine cavalryman and the scion of a wealthy landowner before assuming political office eleven years ago. Elections are held every year and he has run unopposed for the last six years. In theory, the mayor is empowered to exercise complete autonomy over political, military, and economic matters affecting the community. But reality is much different. Sukh rarely acts without consulting the town's de facto powerbrokers, a group known as the Seven Horsemen. Much like nobles advising a king, these influential men and women enjoy unfettered access to the mayor and wield tremendous authority within the town. Their primary goal is to maintain the *status quo* at any cost, an outlook that sometimes puts them at odds with their mayor, especially in light of current events. Sukh wants to declare all-out war on the orcs as a punitive measure for Crystal's death. The Seven Horsemen are far less eager to upset the applecart and risk widespread devastation to their business interests, even if victory seems likely.

The town is on edge waiting to hear Sukh's public address and find out what is going to happen next. The downtime gives the PCs an opportunity to explore Ubuka and its amenities for several hours. The following sections describe the town's current activities, as well as its major locations and inhabitants.

Ubuka is abuzz with speculation pending Mayor Sukh's major announcement and the repercussions of Crystal's death last evening. The GM may insert some or all of the following related and unrelated vignettes to add to the tension and anticipation:

Ragisan (use bandit captain stats; has tactical advantage on Dex checks to remain mounted) walks through the town square openly challenging competitors to beat him in a horse race. The cocky, young Ubukan noble claims that his gray steed, Roan Lightning, is the fastest horse in Ubuka, and he is willing to bet 25 gp to prove it. If someone accepts his wager, he faces off against his opponent in a quarter-mile race just outside the town square. Naturally, a crowd of curiosity seekers partakes in the exciting spectacle, though most root against the haughty aristocrat.

Kushi (has tactical advantage on History checks regarding local lore) holds a bouquet of freshly cut flowers for sale. The half-elf is not her usual bubbly self today, owing to her grief over Crystal's death. She admits that they were merely acquaintances, but she always admired Crystal's taste in flowers as the mayor's daughter frequently received them and sometimes bought them from her. Kushi does not know who gave flowers to Crystal or the recipient of her flowers.

Four young boys roughhouse over a blunt, wooden shortsword with a green gem embedded into its hilt. Whenever one of the youngsters gains possession of the weapon, he raises it into the air and proclaims himself the "new mayor of Ubuka," after which follows a renewed wrestling match for control. A successful DC 10 Wis (Perception) check verifies that the faux emerald is really a piece of glass. If questioned about the significance of the shortsword, the boys explain that the weapon is a replica of the Mayoral Shortsword, an heirloom that symbolizes the mayor's authority. (It is important to note that Sukh no longer has the blade because he disposed of the weapon after slaying Crystal with it.)

A rambunctious, adolescent boy named **Khaymur** dropkicks a ragged doll of an orc warrior high into the air to the cheers of a few girls watching him. He and his teenage audience refer to the toy as Stolen Tongue, whom they believe killed Crystal. He loudly proclaims that Mayor Sukh wants to kill every filthy orc for what they did to his daughter.

A wide-eyed, hyperactive man named **Tugh** accosts passers-by for spare coins to buy food. Whenever they refuse his overtures, the bedraggled senior citizen mutters an obscenity and gestures as if he were about to strike. A successful DC 10 Wis (Insight) check determines that he is lying about the real purpose for the money. If confronted about his dishonesty, he quietly admits that he needs the coins to buy more opium. He refuses to divulge his supplier, but he subtly glances in the direction of the spice trader's tent when questioned about the source of his illicit goods.

An older teenage girl, **Tuun**, sits on the ground outside of the Flaming Coal Tavern and sobs as she clutches a bracelet crafted from small, colorful stones. Tears gently roll down the young woman's reddened cheeks. A successful DC 10 Wis (Insight) check is sufficient to temporarily stop her from crying. She then reveals that Crystal gave her the bracelet a few months back as a gift. The bracelet's style and components are consistent with orkish jewelry. If questioned about the item's origins, Tuun tells the PCs that several years ago, Crystal lived with the orc tribe in Caaddan for six months and that the current orc chieftain, Stolen Tongue, lived with Crystal and her family for six months. She says that they were close friends, but Crystal had not seen him since he returned to his native land several years ago.

Rumors

While mingling among the townsfolk before Sukh's proclamation, the PCs may learn the following rumors simply by overhearing others or striking up a conversation with a local resident. Skill checks are not necessary, as these stories are commonly heard throughout the town at any given time:

Crystal died in front of the Crossroads Inn outside of town. Several witnesses who heard the commotion ventured outside and saw Stolen Tongue holding Crystal's lifeless body in his arms. He was covered in blood. The orc noticed the onlookers and fled toward Caaddan, the orc settlement. The witnesses are likely still at the Crossroads Inn.

The grief-stricken Sukh and Odval buried their daughter that night. Sukh was angry and did not want a protracted funeral to prolong retribu-

tion against the orcs. When Sukh and Odval ventured to the cemetery this morning, they found that someone had killed the caretaker, dug up Crystal's grave and stolen her body. Sukh believes that the orcs perpetrated these deeds for some nefarious purpose. They buried the caretaker's body in another vacant grave.

Four years ago, Crystal spent six months living in the orc village of Caaddan to improve relations with them. Likewise, Stolen Tongue, the son of the orc's chieftain at the time, lived with Crystal and her family for six months. By all accounts, Crystal and Stolen Tongue became close friends and were almost inseparable during his stay in Ubuka. No one has seen Stolen Tongue since he returned to his homeland several years ago.

Crystal and Stolen Tongue's mission was a great success. Many town-folk came to like the impressive orc, though he begrudgingly admitted that most of his kin were nowhere near as sophisticated or well-learned as he was. In fact, some citizens express doubt about Stolen Tongue's guilt and believe he is being made into a scapegoat to cover up someone else's actions. Stolen Tongue was the son of the tribal chieftain when he lived here. A few years after returning to Caaddan, Stolen Tongue took control after his father died of acute alcohol intoxication during a wild night of debauchery.

Further Information

Besides the rumors that are readily available, the PCs may need to gather more esoteric information to solve the mystery plaguing Ubuka. Alternatively, the PCs may draw upon their knowledge to ascertain critical facts pertaining to the strange events troubling the town. In general, the PCs should not attempt History or Investigation checks without gathering a lead pointing them in a particular direction and the right source. For instance, it is appropriate to allow the PCs to make History checks about Zabladaï after learning about the locale from Khuluk, the local scholar. Likewise, asking farmhands about Cama Obuto is certain to yield nothing but shoulder shrugs and blank expressions because no one there has ever heard of him. In other words, the GM must exercise caution and force the PCs to find the valuable clues on their own rather than relying on blind skill checks and magic to do the tough work for them.

Caaddan

The PCs may learn the following information with successful DC 10 Cha (Persuasion) checks made to gather information while in Ubuka. The PC may also know the same information with a successful DC 10 Int (History) check, within the restrictions mentioned above.

The orc settlement of Caaddan stands six miles west of Ubuka. The orcs have dwelt there for more than a generation with some occasional skirmishes during that time.

If the check succeeds by 5 or more, the PC also learns the following.

Caaddan consists of huts, lean-tos and tents encircled by an earthwork wall. About 150 orcs live there with roughly half being of fighting age. They do not have cavalry, but they may have a handful of dire boar riders at their disposal.

Cama Obuto and Zabladaï

The PCs may learn the following information with a successful DC 15 Cha (Persuasion) checks made to gather information while in Ubuka. The PC may also know the same information with a successful DC 15 Int (History) check.

Cama Obuto was a half-orc general who ruled Zabladaï and the surrounding area, including present-day Ubuka, about a century ago. The orcs revered him as a brilliant tactician and a masterful politician.

If the check succeeds by 5 or more, the PC learns the following.

Zabladaï was an orcish settlement with a sizable human population. The city-state ruled over the entire area for 50 years before its citizens razed the settlement and abandoned it after soldiers killed Cama Obuto, the last ruler.

If the check succeeds by 10 or more, the PC also learns the following.

Stories claim that Cama Obuto murdered children for his own sadistic amusement. His crimes were so heinous that his own soldiers killed him to punish him for his brutal acts, and the citizens abandoned the community shortly thereafter.

Points of Interest

Three permanent buildings and five tents are scattered throughout Ubuka's town square. Presented below are the descriptions of each building and the people who typically inhabit them.

A: Mayor's Office

Ubuka's mayor occupies a spacious office and receives a weekly stipend derived from fees assessed on merchants and peddlers setting up shop in the town's central square. The two-story brick building features a small courtroom, two holding cells and a business office on the first floor, and second-story living quarters that **Sukh Biltumur** (N male human) uses on a regular basis. Ubuka lacks the resources and the patience to house prisoners on a long-term basis. Most criminal offenses result in a stiff fine and a permanent exile from the town. The most serious crimes, such as murder and treason, warrant an unusual punishment. Rather than detain convicts for the rest of their natural lives and incur considerable expenses, the town sells them into slavery to the orcs of Caaddan for a tidy profit. To ensure that the mayor does not turn this process into a lucrative side business, there is an unwritten agreement that the Seven Horsemen must unanimously agree on the offender's guilt and concur with his sentence. Of course, Sukh realizes that he cannot capture, try, and sell Stolen Tongue to his own people.

The mayor's office is operational and open to the public whenever Sukh is present, which is typically during the late morning and early afternoon. He otherwise locks the door with his key.

In addition to its furnishings, Sukh keeps the assessment fees in a locked drawer in his desk. The proceeds are rather meager (22 gp), so the drawer can be forced open with a successful DC 10 Strength check. After Crystal's slaying, Sukh thoroughly cleaned the office floor and got rid of the murder weapon and his bloody clothing. A successful DC 15 Wis (Perception) check notices a tiny, stray streak and blotches of blood near the entrance and the stairs leading to the second floor.

Sukh can be found here before delivering his speech. For more details regarding Sukh's actions and his complete stats, see the section on Sukh Biltumur in **Part Two** of the adventure.

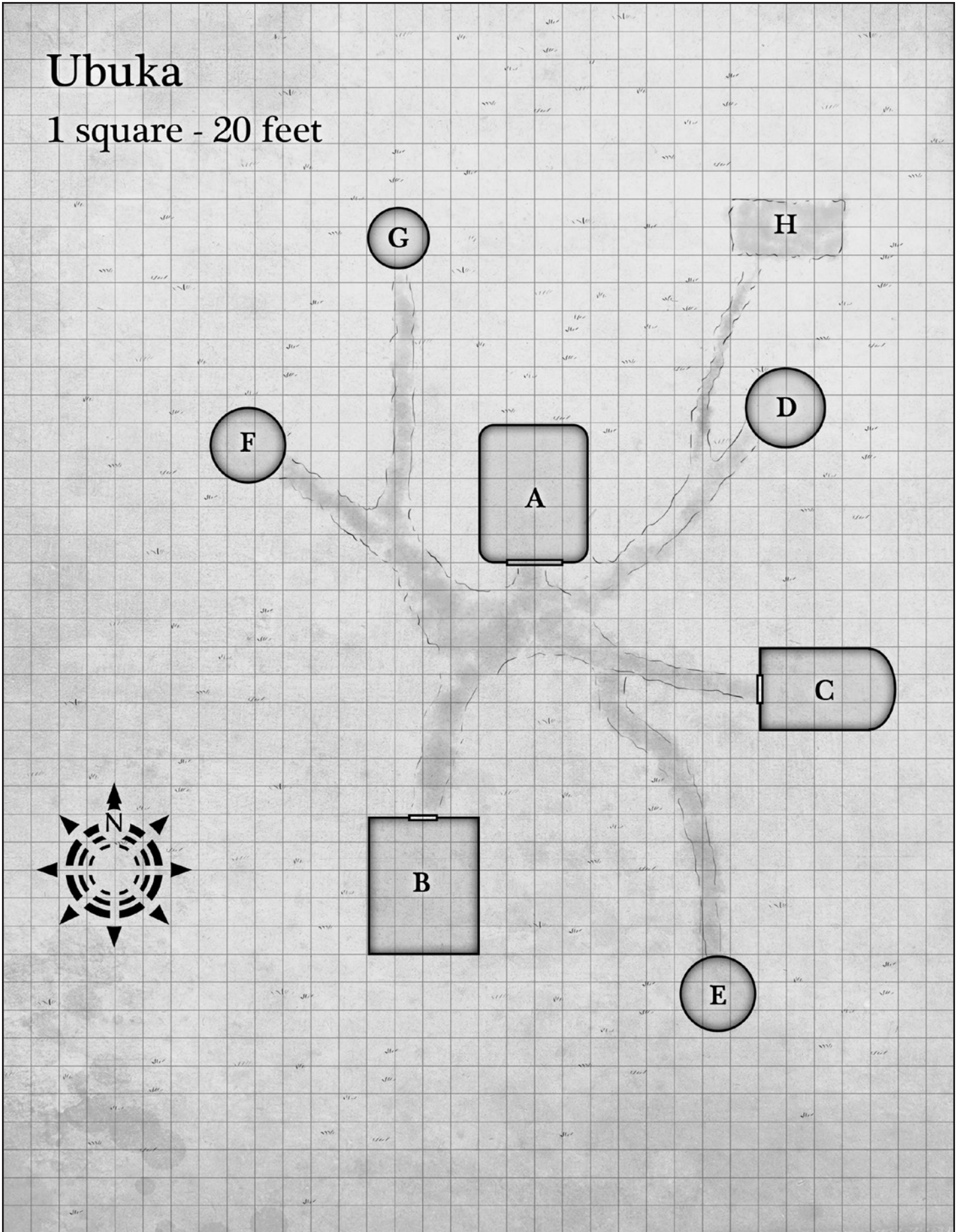
B: Tired Horse Inn

As the establishment's name suggests, several horses are always tethered to a wooden post outside of the main entrance. There, the hungry animals consume oats from a nearby trough and drink fresh water pumped into a large container from a nearby well. Stable boys **Teghun** and **Keliqu** (male humans; both have proficiency in animal handling) tend to the guests' horses while their owners rest in the comparative luxury inside. **Baitu Beg** (male human; use commoner stats) and his family run the three-story, sixteen room inn with military precision. The accommodations rival those found in most homes and include private baths, fine sheets and breakfast consisting of freshly baked bread and yogurt prepared in the structure's small kitchen. In fact, the majority of the inn's customers are local residents who would rather spend the extra coin to stay overnight rather than make the ride back home.

The take-charge Baitu is a friendly, gregarious fellow who can sometimes be a little much, especially for newcomers. He never forgets a name or a face, and he knows everything there is to know about Ubuka and its residents, though his information is true only half of the time, thus earning him the nickname "the wellspring of all rumors." In addition to providing gossip, Baitu can also steer customers in the direction of a trade partner for virtually any product, regardless of its legality or social acceptance. Likewise, merchants and purveyors refer to Baitu as the "Sign Man" for his ability to direct traffic to their storefront. Naturally, the enterprising innkeeper ensures that he gets a small percentage of the profit from any business transaction resulting from his involvement.

Ubuka

1 square - 20 feet



C: Flaming Coal Tavern

It is impossible to escape the smell of burning charcoal that permeates every nook and cranny of Ubuka's long-running eatery and tavern. Its owner **Atabeg** (male human) tends to the roaring, open flame grill, roasting a diverse variety of meats accompanied by yogurts, kefir and feta cheese. The tavern serves most of the standard alcoholic fare with the exception of wine and the addition of arkhi, a light drink made from kefir. Atabeg's wife, **Kurta** (female human), and his much younger mistress, **Umamtu** (female human), tend to their guests' needs. As long as Atabeg satisfies his wife's financial needs and helps rear their three teenage children, Kurta looks the other way at what is arguably the worst-kept secret in town. In addition, the crafty Kurta holds the affair over Umamtu's head, forcing her to perform the lion's share of the work in the tavern. Atabeg's unusual arrangement provides a constant source of amusement for its patrons who frequently make ribald jokes about the relationship. Atabeg and his lovers meekly smile and shrug off the jests on most occasions, though a few guests who cross the line feel a cold, steel blade against their throats or the heat of a red-hot skewer positioned within a whisker of their skin.

The Flaming Coal Tavern is open from mid-morning through the late evening. Naturally, it is most crowded during the early afternoon and late evening hours. Patrons are typically loud and somewhat rowdy. The regulars have no tolerance for public intoxication, however. As a sign inside the door states, "Cannot hold your liquor, we cannot hold you." Conversely, patrons have a boundless patience for gossip and rumor-mongering. A new story flies across the tavern every couple of minutes, though the tales' accuracy are often suspect.

Most news of the world comes from the tavern's resident minstrel, Janis Biltumur (female human; has proficiency in performance), the mayor's estranged cousin. The overly romantic and bohemian middle-aged woman and the town's pragmatic mayor had a nasty falling out over Sukh's demands that Crystal sever all ties with Stolen Tongue after he returned to Caaddan. They acknowledge each other's existence with a casual head nod, but have not spoken in four years. That may change as Janis is insistent about one thing sure to attract her kin's attention — Stolen Tongue did not kill Crystal. In fact, she goes on to say that they were madly in love with one another in spite of the fact that she has not seen the pair together since he left Ubuka four years earlier and has no evidence whatsoever to support her contention. Nonetheless, she asserts his innocence to anyone willing to listen to flowery, impassioned speech.

Janis is typically here during the evening hours when she regales her audiences with spellbinding stories of tragic loves, heroic deeds and great battles that changed history. Janis has a remarkable repertory of wondrous tales, but she lacks interpretative ability. She can convey every exacting detail of a protracted siege, but she does not understand the details' significance in determining the outcome of the battle. The same can certainly be said of recent events. She believes that Stolen Tongue is innocent, but she cannot explain what really happened or refute the evidence against him. She just knows that he did not do it. Though she is a viable source of information relating to what transpired at Zabladaï or Cama Obuto's actions, she fails to see how current events may be tied into these past events. Therefore, she mentions nothing about the abandoned ruins or their former strongman unless the PCs directly ask her about them, likely having heard about them from another source.

D: Saddler

Ayurbada (male human) manufactures some of the finest saddles found anywhere in the region. He pitched his tent here just a few days ago and intends to leave sometime later this evening or the following morning. He carries a full line of riding gear including saddles, bits, bridles, riding crops and any other leather-based equestrian implement available. Ayurbada is a strict, no-nonsense craftsman who offers reasonable prices for his products and minds his own business. He feels so strongly about the matter that he calls gossip "the tongue of the devils" and refuses to discuss any rumors about himself or others.

E: Bowyer and Weapons Maker

This tent is a two-man operation consisting of its resident bowyer **Delbadai** (male human) and melee weapons craftsman **Tarbajin** (male human). The pair makes their weaponry exclusively from wood with the exception of any arrow, bolt and spear tips which are still made from iron or steel. Delbadai manufactures shortbows primarily (in Ubuka, most bows are used from horseback) and arrows, though he can make or repair longbows when necessary and he does carry a light crossbow and a heavy crossbow that he acquired through a trade several months back. At the GM's discretion, he may have a few magical arrows and possibly even an uncommon (+1) magical bow for sale. His partner Tarbajin produces quarterstaves and spears. Their tent has been a mainstay in town for the past several weeks and with a potential war on the horizon, they work around the clock to meet the perceived weaponry needs of Ubuka's citizenry. Because of their longevity in town, the pair knows most of the rumors circulating through town; however they have one piece of information found only here. Earlier this morning, Sukh asked Tarbajin if he could make him a shortsword according to a very specific design. Since Tarbajin has no forge, he declined the request. Not one to idly gossip about the mayor, Tarbajin provides this information only if specifically asked about any sudden or unusual requests for weaponry.

F: Spice Trader

This small, crowded tent sells tobacco as well as common and exotic spices. **Shalad** (male human), the proprietor, arrived in Ubuka just a few days ago. In addition to his legitimate business, Shalad also deals opium and other plant-based narcotics. Shalad's prices are steep, but the quality of his merchandise is exceptional. He charges twice as much as normal; however the intoxicating effects last 2d3 x 10% longer than usual. Naturally, there is some crossover between narcotics and poisons. Shalad carries most types of plant-based toxins at market prices, yet unlike his intoxicants, his poisons function as the standard variety. Likewise he is very discriminating when it comes to selling poisons to any client. Furthermore, he does not look kindly towards anyone asking questions about his business or his clients. If the person persists, he asks them to leave and never come back to his tent. Should that fail, he draws his envenomed dagger and holds it to the person's throat. If the confrontation escalates into a full-scale combat, Shalad attacks with his poisoned blade and then calls for help. Other merchants and bystanders arrive on the scene 1d3 rounds later to intervene.

Shalad (Commoner): AC 10; HP 9 (2d8); Spd 30ft; Melee dagger (+2, 1d4 piercing plus 1d6 poison and target must make a successful DC 10 Con saving throw or be poisoned until the start of Shalad's next turn); Str +0, Dex +0, Con +0, Int +0, Wis +0, Cha +0; AL LN; CR 1/8; XP 25.

G: General Goods

While Ubuka's other transient shopkeepers specialize in one or two types of merchandise, **Jalpa** (male human) sells virtually everything including clothing, crockery, cosmetics, sundry items, and adventuring gear. Jalpa has visited Ubuka several times a year for the past decade and typically stays in town for at least a month at a time. Every adult resident is at least acquainted with the outgoing salesman, and many citizens treat him as a friend rather than a business associate. Because of his close relationships with many of his customers, Jalpa is extremely reluctant to speak ill of anyone for fear of destroying his reputation as a trusted confidante. If the PCs ask any questions about Crystal, it is blatantly obvious that her untimely demise greatly saddened him. He is reluctant to say anything about her; however if a PC succeeds on a DC 10 Wis (Persuasion) check, he begrudgingly reveals some important information about the young girl. He admits that he sold her "eveningwear" on several occasions over the last year. Just a few days ago, she also purchased several articles of women's clothing that were too big for her. When he asked her who they were for, Crystal smiled and replied that they were for a close friend. Since he never told anyone else about these purchases, he asks the PCs to keep these details a secret.

H: Stables

Horseback riding is a way of life in Ubuka, and horse racing is a time-honored tradition among all Moglai people. **Dawber** (male human), a former cavalry officer, sells some of the finest horses in all the land. His current stock includes four riding horses, three combat-trained riding horses, and five warhorses. He also has five lances and a +1 lance in his inventory along with a full assortment of barding and horseshoes made and shod by his assistant **Aziz** (male human). Dawber is also an expert horse trainer who specializes in breaking wild horses and conditioning them for racing. Dawber remains in Ubuka from early spring to late autumn. During the off-season, he and Aziz roam the savanah looking for new horses to replenish their stock. Though Dawber is an experienced soldier, he refuses to fight under any circumstances other than self-preservation. During his time in the cavalry, the weary warrior saw too much killing and death for his liking, so he vowed never to do so again unless faced with no other choice.

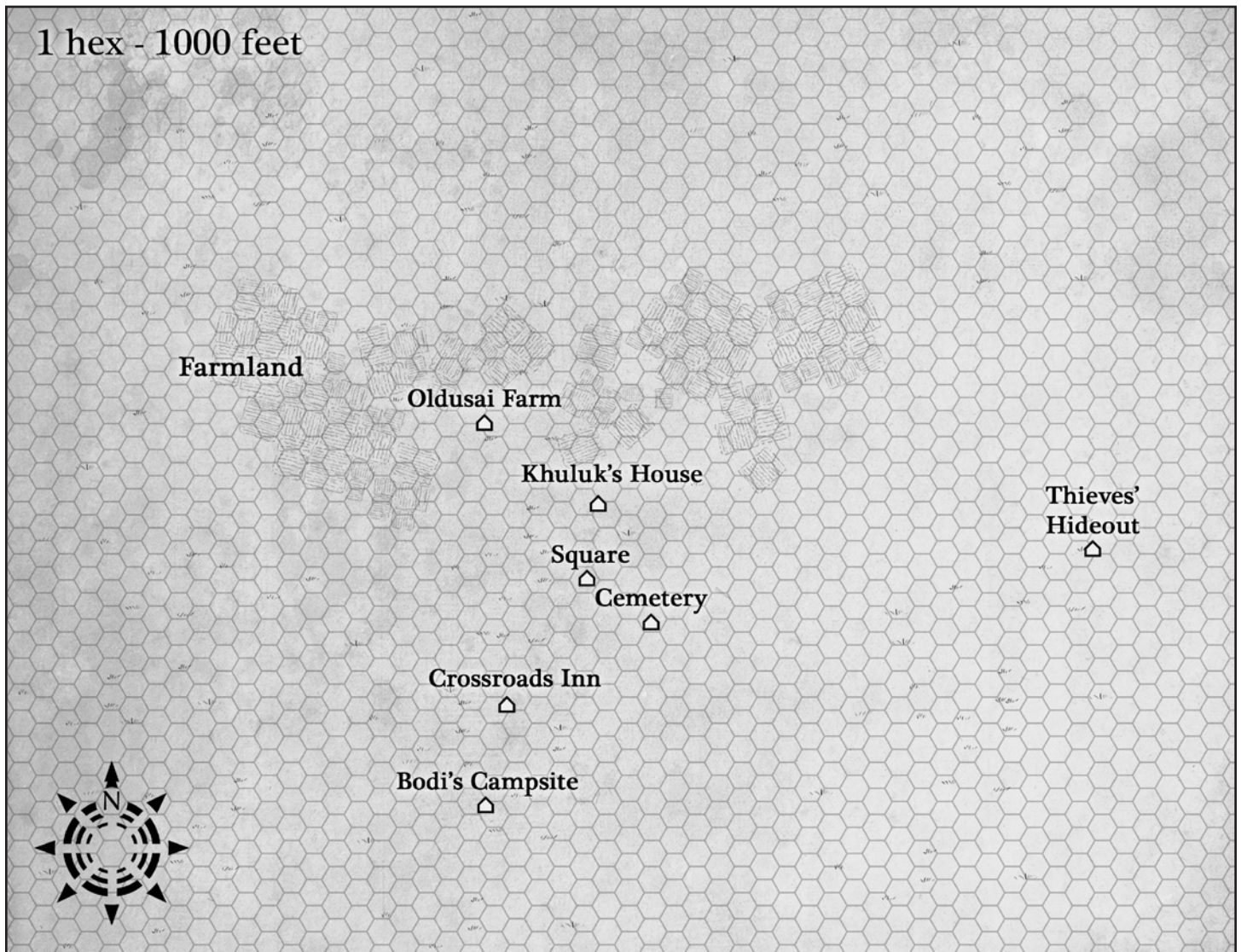
Other Locales

In addition to getting a lay of the land and snooping around Ubuka proper, the PCs may decide to investigate two other important areas just outside of town, the cemetery and the Crossroads Inn, or they may explore the outlying farms north, east and west of the town square. Presented below are descriptions and details about all three locales.

Ubuka Cemetery

The town's cemetery lies a half mile southeast of the town square. A clearly worn path leads to and from the final resting place of its deceased citizens. A dilapidated, warped wooden fence surrounds the cemetery's perimeter which is about 300 feet square, and its only other permanent structure is a small, well-maintained cottage where the caretaker presumably lived. The one-story building's dimensions are roughly 20 feet by 20 feet. It has no windows and its battered and splintered front door hangs precariously from its twisted and bent hinges. The structure's interior features an open living space with a bed, small kitchen and bathing area as well as a work area stocked with tools and digging equipment including several picks, spades and a primitive contraption resembling a modern day hoist fitted with ropes and pulleys. The signs of an intense struggle are everywhere. Loose objects, debris and overturned furniture litter the floor. Streaks of relatively fresh blood stain the floors, walls, objects and even the ceiling. Virtually nothing is intact. The attack against the sleeping caretaker took place during the overnight hours. Crystal battered down the door and slew the helpless caretaker. She then headed towards the Crossroads Inn in search of her missing love before heading to Ubuka. Because of the proliferation of tracks in the area, it is impossible to retrace her steps after she left the caretaker's cottage.

The cemetery is unremarkable with the exception of the two most recently dug graves. One is now the permanent resting place of the cemetery's former caretaker. Fresh earth has been heaped atop the coffin forming a bulge above the surface. If the PCs decide to unearth the caretaker's body, they find the shattered corpse of a middle-aged man covered in deep gouge marks and mottled bruises. Crystal's former resting place does not



appear to have been unearthed. Instead, it looks like something crawled and scratched its way through the soil and onto the surface. In fact, most of the dirt covering her coffin appears undisturbed. Broken planks of wood and thick splinters are all that remains from much of the wooden box that once housed her body. Once again, the lower portion appears largely intact as if something smashed through a large hole in the coffin and then escaped. A flat stone bearing her name is the only indication that she was once buried here.

In a wild stroke of luck for Sukh, **7 orcs** hide in the surrounding grassland, waiting to pounce on any child that wanders into the cemetery. The orcs' presence here apparently bolsters his contention that they stole Crystal's body and murdered the caretaker for some ghastly ritual or offering to their dark gods. Though it seems odd that the orcs would stake out a cemetery, Stolen Tongue knows from experience that some adolescents and teenagers sneak out of Ubuka to get drunk, ingest narcotics and engage in sexual activity in and around the cemetery. The orcs are stationed around the southern perimeter of the cemetery roughly 30 feet beyond the fence. They have been here since the early morning hours and went through great pains to conceal their positions. PCs can locate the hidden orcs with a successful Perception check; set the DC for the check by making a single Dex (Stealth) check for the orcs, with tactical advantage.

The orcs are here to kidnap and abduct children for Cama Obuto; therefore they are not overtly looking for a fight with the PCs. However, it is near impossible for them to suppress their brutish inclinations indefinitely. As soon as the PCs aggressively move towards their location or otherwise indicate that they are aware of their presence, the orcs spring up from the tall grass and ferociously attack the PCs under the urging of their two unit leaders. They hurl their javelins before wading into melee with the PCs, swinging their greataxes with both hands. If two of the orcs fall in battle, the remaining two flee for their lives and race towards Zabladaï or surrender when faced with no other choice.

The PCs can extract limited but crucial information from captured orcs with a successful DC 10 Cha (Intimidate) check, or the PC can attempt a DC 15 Cha (Persuasion) check instead. Naturally, the orcs try to be as evasive as possible, yet they are certain of a few things. They claim that Crystal's father murdered her and blamed it on Stolen Tongue, though they do not know why he did it. They were given the task of capturing one human child to return to Zabladaï. They know nothing about the ruins' history and greatly fear going there. They also do not know why Stolen Tongue wants them to kidnap a child and bring the youngster to Zabladaï.

Orc (7): AC 13; **HP** 15 (2d8+6); **Spd** 30ft; **Melee** greataxe (+5, 1d12+3 slashing), javelin (+5, 30ft/120ft, 1d6+3 piercing); **Str** +3, **Dex** +1, **Con** +3, **Int** -2, **Wis** +0, **Cha** +0; **Skills** Intimidation +2; **Senses** darkvision 60ft; **Traits** aggressive (can move its speed toward a hostile creature in sight, as a bonus action); **AL** CE; **CR** 1/2; **XP** 100.

Treasure: In addition to 76 gp between them, one of the orcs carries a tiny jade votive figure worth 100 gp along with a pouch holding four gems worth 25 gp each.

Crossroads Inn

Unlike the inn and tavern in Ubuka's town square, the Crossroads Inn is generally someplace where guests do not want to be seen or noticed. The three-story building boasts twelve rooms on the second and third floors with a spacious bar and restaurant occupying the entire first floor. **Seran Zul** (female half-elf) owns and operates the establishment along with her teenage daughter **Narang** (female half-elf) and adolescent son **Shidsan** (male half-elf). Seran runs her business with one rule in mind — for her and her family to mind their own business.

Three of the inn's regulars are **Yemur** (male human), **Ragbal** (male human) and **Tughtu** (male human): a trio of layabouts and thieves, although Tughtu presents himself as a minor aristocrat. They witnessed the events the night of Crystal's murder. The trio is initially reluctant to speak to outsiders about what they saw; however with a little financial coaxing they tell the PCs that they heard an argument outside that went on for what seemed like a few minutes, but it was probably much shorter. They then heard a loud scream similar to a war cry and when they went outside to see

what was happening they saw an orc warrior covered in blood holding a young girl's body. As they rushed forward to confront him, the orc got up and fled. They tried to help the girl, but it was too late. She was dead, and the orc that killed her got away. The story is truthful as they understand it; however when pressed they admit that they did not see the orc actually stab her, and they begrudgingly admit that the voice they previously heard did not sound like an orc's.

As an aside the ruffians also mention that a young associate of theirs named Bodi recently went missing. They describe him as a tall, wiry 12-year-old boy with long black hair tied into a braid. They last saw him at the Crossroads Inn on the same night that Crystal died. They ask the PCs why no one is bothering to look for him, and openly question whether anyone cares since he was not some "rich man's spoiled brat." (Stolen Tongue and his warriors abducted Bodi near his makeshift campsite about one mile southwest of the Crossroads Inn.) If the PCs decide to go in search of Bodi, they can locate his tracks with a successful DC 12 Int (Investigation) or Wis (Survival) check. The trail leads to a desolate patch of grassland where the young man lived in a solitary encampment. The orcs happened upon the young man and captured him, though he managed to slay two orcs in the process. They then gave him to Cama Obuto as an offering. (See the subsequent encounter **Bodi's Campsite** for more details.) If the PCs ask the inn's other patrons and employees about him, they relay that the young man was a known thief with a knack for finding trouble. Many convey the sense that the petty criminal likely found himself among the wrong crowd of people or got what was coming to him anyway. They express virtually no sympathy for Bodi in spite of his youth and troubled upbringing.

Seran and Narang cannot idly watch and listen as three shady crooks condemn Stolen Tongue, so they disregard the family policy about looking the other way. They discreetly get the PCs' attention and take them into Seran's private office. Seran explains that she and Narang took a special interest in the bubbling and effervescent Crystal. In their eyes, Crystal, and to a lesser extent, Stolen Tongue, were family. Seran admits that she and Narang passed messages back and forth between the secret, star-crossed lovers so that they could arrange their trysts. Regardless of the evidence or the eyewitness accounts, Seran and Narang are insistent that Stolen Tongue did not kill Crystal. They swear that Crystal and Stolen Tongue were deeply in love and would never hurt each other. Though they cannot point to a suspect, they offhandedly mention that Crystal greatly feared that her father would discover their affair and put a stop to it.

Development: The murder scene outside of the Crossroads Inn is a trampled down patch of grass 50 feet away from the establishment's front entrance. Dried blood stains the firm soil and a scrap of blood-soaked fabric from a woman's dress lies on the ground. The piece of material came from Crystal's dress when Sukh stabbed her. There is a convergence of human tracks throughout the area; however all but one set of tracks follows the familiar path to and from the Crossroads Inn. A PC notices this divergent trail with a successful DC 17 Wis (Survival) check. The trail leads about 1,000 feet into the untamed grasslands to the edge of a large, murky pond measuring 20 feet in diameter and 4 feet deep. It is impossible to see into the muddy water; however a PC that feels around the bottom of the pool for 1d10 minutes finds the mayoral shortsword and a torn, blood-stained noble's outfit. A successful DC 12 Int check correctly identifies the weapon as the mayoral shortsword.

Bodi's Campsite

The wannabe young rogue dwelt alone in a remote campsite one mile southwest of the Crossroads Inn. After a night of drinking and picking a few pockets at his favorite haunt, Bodi returned to his solitary abode on the open plains hoping to count his spoils and settle in for the night. Eight orcs looking for victims had other plans. They spotted his campfire and surrounded him with the expectation of making an easy capture. Instead, the always alert Bodi heard the clumsy orcs rustling through the grass and made his move. He leapt to his feet and hurled a dagger at an orc warrior, slaying him where he stood. He took down another orc before they overwhelmed him and dragged him off to Zabladaï. In their haste to escape, the orc contingent left their dead where they fell and never searched Bodi's abode for his ill-gotten proceeds.

QUESTS OF DOOM 3

Bodi's campsite consists of a crude lean-to, a nearby fire pit and a hole for disposing of refuse. When the PCs discover the young man's solitary abode, the GM may read or paraphrase the following description.

Tucked into the nadir of a small depression is a crude campsite consisting of an overturned wooden lean-to, a small fire pit and a hole dug several feet into the ground that emits a horrific stench.

The fire pit's stones are displaced and the lean-to is severely damaged indicating that some type of struggle took place here. A search of the campsite detects splotches and pools of dried blood on the surrounding soil, stones and stationary objects. A successful DC 10 Wis (Survival) check detects the presence of numerous fresh tracks in the area. The trail leads south to Zablada.

The stains of evil are difficult to remove, especially in the case of Cama Obuto. Having been in his presence, one of the fallen orcs rose from the dead as a **wight**. The undead horror moves through the surrounding grasslands in search of living victims. Though it moves at full speed, the wight is adept at remaining undetected, requiring a successful DC 16 Perception check to notice its presence. As soon as it gets within 60 feet of the closest PC, the monster charges its hapless prey. The wight fights until destroyed and never strays more than 200 feet from the campsite of its own volition unless it's pursuing fleeing victims.

Wight: AC 14; HP 45 (6d8+18); Spd 30ft; **Melee** life drain (+4, 1d6+2 necrotic and the target must make a successful DC 13 Con saving throw or its HP maximum is reduced by the same amount), longsword (+4, 1d8+2 slashing or 1d10+2 slashing if used two-handed); **Ranged** longbow (+4, 150ft/600ft, 1d8+2 piercing); **SA** multiattack (2 attacks; only 1 can be life drain); **Resist** necrotic, nonmagical weapons that aren't silvered; **Immune** poison, exhaustion; **Str** +2, **Dex** +2, **Con** +3, **Int** +0, **Wis** +1, **Cha** +2; **Skills** Perception +2, Stealth +4; **Senses** darkvision 60ft; **Traits** sunlight sensitivity (while in sunlight, has tactical disadvantage on attack rolls and Perception checks that rely on sight); **AL** NE; **CR** 3; **XP** 700.

Treasure: Though Bodi led a harsh, solitary existence he managed to hoard a treasure trove of valuables that he hid beneath the stone in his fire pit. A successful DC 20 Int (Investigation) check spots what appears to be a recess beneath one such stone in the fire pit. There is a locked iron coffer buried beneath a few inches of loose dirt underneath the stone. Naturally, Bodi has the coffer's only key. The lock can be picked with thief's tools and a successful DC 15 Dex check, or it can be broken open with a successful DC 22 Str check. The coffer contains two emeralds worth 250 gp each, a vial of *silversheen*, two *sleep arrows*, a *potion of mind reading*, and 198 gp.

Silversheen Potion, rare

This silvery paste, when smeared onto a weapon or a piece of ammunition, gives the weapon the property of silver for 1 hour, so that the weapon or ammo overcomes resistance or immunity to nonsilvered weapons. One vial coats a single melee weapon or 20 units of ammunition.

Outlying Farms

Twenty large farms are spread out over roughly half of Ubuka's 15-square-mile area, while 63 smaller residences occupy the remaining land. As mentioned, there are no established property lines, and many shepherds take their flocks beyond the town's perceived boundaries to graze in less-traveled verdant leas. If the PCs want to venture to Ubuka's hinterlands, the residents are rather difficult to track down most of the time as they typically accompany their herds or tend to their crops during the daylight hours. These individuals are generally less informed about

current events than the town square's frequent visitors. After two or three encounters with the local residents, the PCs should get the sense that the answers they are looking for are not going to be found in the far-flung pastures and fields. If the PCs venture to the **Biltumur Farm** where Crystal lived, however, see **Part Two** of the adventure.

Ubuka's farmers may ask the PCs to aid them in ridding their fields of troublesome monsters such as a pack of worgs devouring their animals. Or they may ask for help stopping a band of rustlers stealing their cattle and horses. Or PCs may need to detect a family of brownies living beneath the home of an unwitting resident. The GM may use the following encounters or supplement them with additional encounters from the Appendix or create several of his own.

Wolves in the Fold

Over the course of the past month, newlyweds **Gaan Oldubai** (human male) and his young wife **Saranval** (human female) have lost three sheep and two goats to some unknown predator. The couple are at their wits' end and desperately seek aid to save their remaining livestock from the beast lurking somewhere in the grasslands. They have nothing to offer their would-be saviors except their gratitude. They are at a loss to explain why the creature never targets their neighbors' larger herds and believe they are cursed by an evil spirit trying to ruin them and destroy their marriage.

If the PCs investigate their claims, they notice that the Oldubai's neighbors' herds include several larger, more-aggressive animals such as bulls and buffaloes that likely keep opportunistic predators at bay. A search of the family's livestock pen reveals that the outer gate has been forced open. More importantly, a successful DC 10 Wis (Survival) check spots a pair of tracks within and around the livestock pen from the last attack three days earlier. The trail leads about 1,000 yards to an abandoned mine shaft where **4 worgs** currently reside. The tunnel bores into the earth at a roughly 45-degree angle and descends 20 feet before opening into a 30-foot-by-30-foot chamber. The bones from their previous kills litter the floor. The monsters are typically here during the day and prowl the surrounding grasslands at night. The worgs are vicious fighters but they attempt to escape if badly injured and near death. The male worg willingly sacrifices itself to save its pregnant mate. They have no treasure.

Worg (4): AC 13; HP 26 (4d10+4); Spd 50ft; **Melee** bite (+5, 2d6+3 piercing and a target creature must make a successful DC 13 Str save or be knocked prone; **Str** +3, **Dex** +1, **Con** +1, **Int** -2, **Wis** +0, **Cha** -1; **Skills** Perception +4; **Senses** darkvision 60ft; **Traits** keen hearing and smell; **AL** NE; **CR** 1/2; **XP** 100.

Rustlin' in the Wind

Ubuka's landowners rarely argue over property lines or claims to specific tracts, but they are very protective of their livestock. They are on edge after two head of cattle disappeared over the last three nights from their pastures. Nothing indicates that anyone or anything attacked or harmed the animals, so the aggrieved parties are convinced rustlers stole their livestock in the middle of the night. The two affected landowners, **Aghul** (male human) and **Toredei** (male human), each own more than 100 head of buffalo and cattle. The lifelong friends tracked the thieves to an abandoned stable on the eastern outskirts of town, but they have neither the muscle nor the stomach to forcibly take back their property. They offer a reward of 250 gp for the safe retrieval of each animal. Surprisingly, they also request that the PCs take the thieves alive so that they can face Ubuka justice instead of frontier justice.

The abandoned stable lies four miles due east of town beyond Ubuka's universally recognized border. The **5 bandits** hail from a distant village that recently expelled them for their criminal activities, forcing the young men to move their operation to Ubuka. Though they succeeded at stealing the animals, the nitwits neglected to figure out what they would do with the animals once they stole them. They now sit and debate the dilemma in the dilapidated stable where they have taken refuge. The two-story structure is relatively small, measuring 20 feet in length and 40 feet in width. The only two entrances are the front door that the thieves keep locked and two small second-story openings. The lock can be picked with thief's tools and a successful DC 10 Dex check, or the door can be broken open

with a successful DC 12 Str (Athletics) check.

The openings on the second floor are barely large enough to accommodate a Small creature; Medium and larger creatures cannot squeeze through an opening without enlarging it somehow. The second obstacle is that one of the thieves always keeps lookout through each window. These sentries have passive Perception 10. If the bandits spot the PCs, they fire heavy crossbows through the openings, which grant them three-quarters cover (+5 to AC). The thieves continue raining crossbow bolts down upon their enemies as long as possible. During the commotion, they neglect to keep an eye on the front door, so the PCs' distraction may give them an opportunity to burst open the front door without meeting any immediate resistance.

Bandit (5): AC 12; HP 11 (2d8+2); Spd 30ft; Melee shortsword (+3, 1d6+1 piercing); Ranged light crossbow (+3, 80ft/320ft, 1d8+1 piercing); Str +0, Dex +1, Con +1, Int +0, Wis +0, Cha +0; AL CN; CR 1/8; XP 25.

Development: If faced with imminent death, the bandits stand down. Faced with overwhelming evidence against them, they admit what they did and brazenly ask about the fine. Besides their listed gear, the bandits carry a sack containing 389 gp, 10 gems worth 50 gp each and a bronze belt buckle worth 25 gp. They believe that they have more than enough valuables to comfortably pay the fine and continue their criminal activities someplace else. If anyone mentions the possibility of instead being sold to the orcs as slaves, a worried expression comes over the thieves' faces as each internally debates his chance to escape from this mess alive. Armed thieves make a break for it, while those who have been disarmed resign themselves to their fate and hope for the best.

Tenants from Heaven

Though the previous encounters are unrelated to the main story, Sukh or the Seven Horsemen may send the PCs to speak with an eccentric sage about the vulnademond's possible origins. In that case, they get more than they bargained for from the intelligent, absentminded scholar who is initially more concerned with solving his own dilemma than saving the town from ruin. His name is **Khuluk** (male human), and calling him disorganized would be a giant understatement. The intellectually brilliant but scatterbrained aging scholar is a compulsive hoarder whose home is as neat as a pin despite his constant efforts to fill it with clutter and junk. Despite his academic prowess, he cannot figure out why his treasured objects and food items constantly vanish without a trace or are organized on newly constructed shelves or tucked away in wooden chests. He finds it even more baffling that tasty pies, baskets of fresh fruit, delicious cooked meals, and handcrafted ales and wines inexplicably appear in his home. Unbeknownst to him, a gang of 6 pixies has lived under his porch for the last 15 years. The fey sift through Khuluk's belongings while he sleeps and take what they need. In return, they help him in minor ways. The befuddled old man is at a loss to explain his strange circumstances, so he attributes the unusual phenomenon to senility.

Pixie (6): AC 15; HP 1 (1d4-1); Spd 10ft, fly 30ft; SA innate spellcasting (save DC 12); Str -4, Dex +5, Con -1, Int +0, Wis +2, Cha +2; Skills Perception +4, Stealth +7; Traits magic resistance (has tactical advantage on saving throws against spells and other magic); AL NG; CR 1/4; XP 50.

Innate Spells: 1/day—*confusion, dancing lights, detect evil and good, detect thoughts, dispel magic, entangle, fly, phantasmal force, polymorph, sleep.*

At first, Khuluk is reluctant to discuss his situation, but with a little persistence from the PCs, the sage opens up about what has been going on for the last 15 years. He complains about his missing items and laments that his precious possessions are too "well arranged" for his liking. Naturally, the PCs may be inclined to search his residence and the surrounding grounds for his lost objects. Anyone looking underneath the porch notices Khuluk's lost objects with a successful DC 10 Wis (Perception) check, though that does not necessarily identify the culprits. The pixies typically wander the surrounding grasslands during the day and return to their cubbyholes beneath the porch at night, or enter Khuluk's house looking for food and valuables. When moving about, the cunning pixies can be spotted only by

characters with passive Perception scores of 17 or higher. If the PCs spot a pixie, the creature uses its magic to *confuse* the observer or put him or her to *sleep* before escaping into the grassland. In the event that the PCs capture or confront a pixie that cannot flee the scene, the pixie confesses and tells the PCs and Khuluk that he and his family are only trying to help the lonely, old man. These pixies sprinkle bizarre, nonsensical phrases into their conversation. They describe Khuluk as a "man missing a compartmentalized mind," "daffier than a bowl of screeching magpies," "more confused than a broken weathervane" and "more colorful than a maypole."

A rational explanation greatly relieves Khuluk. He suddenly regains his focus and thanks the PCs for intervening. Though he is unwilling to part with his treasures, he conveys some information useful to the PCs. He rambles about an abandoned settlement called Zabladaï that he says collapsed under the weight of depravity and evil. He believes the spirit of its former leader, Cama Ubuto, haunts its ruins and greatly desires to return to the world of men to continue his evil ways. He cannot recall the precise source of his information and instead attributes it to an adventurer he met in his youth. If asked about a correlation between Crystal's murder and Zabladaï, he cannot fathom one.

Part Two: A Call to Action

The second part of the adventure deals with the events that take place in Ubuka during and shortly after Sukh's rousing speech demanding retribution against the orcs. In the aftermath of his inspiring call to arms, Stolen Tongue's vulnademond and the risen Crystal make their first appearances in town. The timeline for this portion of the adventure is fluid, but the vulnademond's attack and Crystal's first appearance should occur fairly close to one another. Both entities are trying to sow chaos and mayhem, so spacing these events in rapid succession adds to the feeling that Ubuka is under siege from all directions and prompts Mayor Sukh and/or the Seven Horsemen to intervene. At this point, the PCs must decide where they stand in these matters. They must choose between following orders and finding the truth.

If the PCs chose the first option and accept Sukh's version of events without question, they may attack the orc settlement of Caaddan or hunt down and kill Stolen Tongue per Mayor Sukh's instructions. In this case, the PCs learn from his kin that they can find the orc chieftain in the ruins of Zabladaï, as he fulfills the bargain he made with Cama Obuto. Likewise, PCs venturing outside of Ubuka also have a chance of running into a band of orc warriors looking to kidnap a wayward child as a sacrifice to Cama Obuto.

PCs who pursue the truth steadily realize that the strange events plaguing Ubuka point to the inevitable fact that someone else killed Crystal and the horror befalling Ubuka is rooted in the ancient evil in the ruins of Zabladaï. In an effort to solve the killing, the PCs may venture to the Biltum home to speak with Crystal's mother and examine the young girl's belongings. They may also examine Crystal's lifeless corpse and discover the explosive secret that set the current chain of events into motion. All roads eventually lead to Zabladaï, regardless of whether they uncover the truth surrounding Crystal's murder.

A Rousing Speech

Sukh emerges from his mayoral office in the late morning or early afternoon to address a small crowd gathered outside the building's main entrance. The GM may read or paraphrase the following description.

Upward of fifty people coalesce around the front of the square's central administration building. Mumbling, grumbling and angry whispers fill the air as the crowd anticipates their civic leader's response to recent events. As the doors swing open, a hushed silence falls over the gathering.



A middle-aged man with short, graying hair and a thin black moustache steps forward wearing a glum expression on his weary countenance. His piercing brown eyes are bloodshot and swollen, and his lips tremble. After a moment's hesitation, he clears his throat and speaks with renewed authority.

"I come before you on the darkest of days. There is no agony, no pain, no suffering greater than to bury your only child. As many of you are now certainly aware, this fate befell me last night. My beloved daughter, the light of my life, was forever extinguished in a callous act of brutality and betrayal that defies rational explanation."

The man pauses for a few moments and looks over the crowd. The mothers in the crowd fall to their knees and weep, while the fathers stand in stoic contemplation, fighting back the urge to cry with all their might.

"Last night, Crystal died. No words or deeds can bring her back. Nothing we can say nor do can restore her to life. But this injustice cannot go unpunished. When those we thought were friends take the life of an innocent and beautiful girl, there is no stopping them from killing any one of us for one simple reason — it is in their nature to do so. Many of you knew Stolen Tongue, the orc responsible for this heinous act. You may have even liked him. I know I did."

Once again, the man hesitates and gathers his thoughts.

"Some might call them people. Time and again their actions prove that no matter how hard they try, they are not like us. The plain truth is that they are monsters and should be treated as such. There are those among you that would counsel me to think about the repercussions that would affect this town and its people and let cooler heads prevail. How can one reason with butchers? How can one negotiate with beasts? There is only one thing that brutes understand — the sensation of cold steel tearing into naked flesh or sturdy wood smashing into raw skin."

Many in attendance nod their heads in agreement, and some fists rise toward the sky in a symbolic gesture of solidarity. Shouts of approval resonate from many in the crowd.

"There is only one possible response — action! The time is nigh for brave sons and souls of Ubuka to step forward and bring this criminal — this monster — to justice! Crystal's memory shall not fade into that good night as long as her killer walks free! This deed cannot stand, but only you and I can make that possible. Only by the courage of our convictions and the stoutness of our hearts can we uphold what we believe is true and sacred in this world. Who here is willing to walk beside me to right this wrong and restore order and goodness to our town, to ourselves and most importantly, to my daughter Crystal? The journey begins with a single step. Thank you and may the gods bless you."

The crowd erupts in approval at the rousing speech. After the tumult dies down a few moments later, the men in the group exchange wary and uneasy glances toward one another as each person hopes that the one standing next to him steps forward in his stead. The speaker surveys the crowd with intermittent expressions of pleasure and disappointment in response to their reaction. Though he succeeded in riling up their anger, none of them displays any intentions to accept his bold challenge.

Sukh retreats into the mayoral office at the conclusion of the speech as several townsfolk mill about outside debating who is best suited to undertake such a mission. Naturally, many eyes glance at the likely well-armed and seemingly experienced strangers in their midst. In fact, several brazenly ask the PCs about their adventuring background and gauge their interest in the dangerous assignment.

Alternatively, the PCs may step forward at any portion of Sukh's speech and accept his challenge. Though he accomplished his goal, Sukh sees his oratory through to its conclusion and then gestures to the PCs to accom-

pany him into his office to discuss the specific details of the mission and obtain more information about their intended target.

Sukh Biltumur

At some point in time, the PCs are likely to meet with Ubuka's mayor to discuss current events and his plans for dealing with the orcs. Sukh is an experienced and savvy politician who is skilled in the arts of diplomacy and deception. He plays his cards close to the chest and is very careful not to give the PCs too many details about Crystal's murder. He thoroughly emphasizes Stolen Tongue's involvement based upon the eyewitness accounts placing the orc at the scene of the crime.

Magical Monkey Wrenches

On the surface, spells such as *detect thoughts* and *zone of truth* might look like game-breakers whenever PCs attempt to solve a mystery. Clever villains are often aware that investigators have such tools, so they exercise extreme caution when interacting with those capable of wielding such magic. Sukh is no exception. Knowingly telling a falsehood and omitting details are two different things. His recollection of events is deliberately vague and full of missing parts. For instance, Sukh never says that Stolen Tongue killed Crystal. He instead uses the truth to imply it by stating that the witnesses saw Stolen Tongue covered in blood at the crime scene. He then allows the listener to reach that conclusion on his own. Sukh's statement of events is truthful in its entirety; it just skips over or deletes facts that would incriminate Sukh. In this way, the villain can use the PCs' magic against them to lull them into the false belief that Sukh has nothing to hide when their spells show no evidence of dishonesty. It is the PCs' job to probe deeper and force Sukh to answer questions or address concerns that he would rather not, instead of sorting out the truth with spells only. Sukh attempts to counter that tactic by refocusing the PCs' attention on exacting revenge against the orcs. Magic is sometimes trickier and less reliable than its practitioners like to believe.

Sukh's version of recent events is simple and straightforward. Last evening, Crystal went to the Crossroads Inn just outside of town to meet someone. At some point, Crystal ran into Stolen Tongue. The witnesses said they heard a loud argument and a commotion outside of the building. When they investigated several minutes later, they saw Crystal on the ground in a pool of blood with Stolen Tongue cradling her dead body. Realizing that they caught him red-handed, he fled toward the orc village. The witnesses brought Crystal to Ubuka, but it was too late. No one could save her.

At this point, Sukh breaks down and sobs uncontrollably. His current state is part genuine and part ruse. He happily answers any questions about where to find Stolen Tongue or inquiries about a potential reward for bringing him to justice. But he claims he is too emotional to discuss any other matters pertaining to Crystal's murder. In the former vein, Sukh offers 200 gp to each PC for bringing Stolen Tongue to justice. In that regard, he explains the town's unique penal system, i.e. selling dangerous criminals to the orcs to serve as slaves. Because that is not a possibility in this case and a fine is too lenient, Sukh feigns reluctance in asking the PCs to kill Stolen Tongue as a means of "frontier justice." He also tells the PCs that Stolen Tongue can likely be found in or around the orc village of Caaddan roughly six miles west of Ubuka. He knows few details about the settlement other than it is surrounded by a sturdy wooden fence. He estimates the orc population at around 150 individuals, half of whom are capable of fighting. Sukh knows that the Seven Horsemen would not allow him to launch an all-out assault against the orc settlement, but that does not stop him from subtly suggesting that the PCs decimate Caaddan even though he refuses to pay the PCs more to do so.

Sukh is anxious to silence Stolen Tongue and rid himself of the orc menace once and for all. PCs can use his desperation as leverage to extract additional information.

Questioning Sukh

Sukh provides the following responses to the PCs' most likely lines of inquiry, though it cannot possibly cover any contingency. Sukh honestly knows nothing about the haunted ruins of Zabladaí or Cama Obuto. A successful DC 15 Wis (Insight) check determines when Sukh is lying:

"Where were you at the time of the killing?"

Sukh claims he was walking to his office after checking on a few things at his farm about a half mile north of the town square. (This is a lie. Sukh committed the crime; he was obviously at the murder scene at the time of the killing.)

"Why did Stolen Tongue murder Crystal?"

Sukh has no explanation and merely says that murder and mayhem run in the orcs' blood.

"What is your opinion of Stolen Tongue?"

Sukh replies that he is an orc just like the rest of his barbarous, murdering kin. He laments that Stolen Tongue fooled some of his fellow townsfolk with his fake charm.

"Why did you ask Tarbagin to forge you a new shortsword?"

(See Area E: Bowyer and Weapons Maker)

Sukh considered taking matters into his own hands and exacting revenge against Stolen Tongue, but he later thought better of it. (This is a lie. Sukh threw his ceremonial mayoral shortsword in a murky pond near the Crossroads Inn after he stabbed Crystal with it.)

"Where is your mayoral shortsword?"

Sukh tells the PCs he rarely carries it with him and must have left it at home or misplaced it somewhere. (This is a lie as per the previous question. If the PCs make inquiries throughout town, residents universally claim that Sukh always carries the weapon on his person.)

"Who gave Crystal flowers?"

Sukh knows nothing about the flowers and says that he would only be guessing.

"Why did Crystal inquire about buying clothes too large for her and purchase 'eveningwear'?"

Sukh seems dumbfounded and provides no answer.

"What was the big announcement Crystal wanted to tell her mother?"

Sukh knows nothing about the announcement.

"Why did you bury Crystal last night?"

Sukh claims he is not a religious man and saw no need for a protracted and pointless ceremony. (This is true, but it omits a key detail that he interred her body so hastily because he did not want any potentially incriminating evidence coming to light, particularly the fact that she was pregnant.)

"Who took Crystal's body from the cemetery last night and why?"

Sukh blames the orcs for grave robbing and killing the caretaker. He cannot explain their actions other than being the sort of things that savages do.

Sukh, the politician, is extremely adept at spinning facts in his favor. But Sukh, the man, is not as resolute. As long as the PCs do as he says, he remains steady and determined. Once they deviate from his plan of action and amass evidence against him, Sukh withers under the pressure. He still dismisses bits and pieces of circumstantial evidence as "orc propaganda," though their cumulative effects take a toll on him. He cannot explain away some of the facts without painting himself into a corner. When confronted with overwhelming evidence of his guilt, such as the murder weapon or substantial quantities of circumstantial evidence, the grieving father admits he killed his daughter in a fit of rage over her clandestine relationship with Stolen Tongue and the resulting pregnancy. He explains the circumstances of the crime in great detail and begs forgiveness from everyone hurt by his actions, especially Crystal. Likewise, Sukh cannot bear to look upon the undead abomination that his daughter became. He immediately flees, fearing that she could somehow coerce him to divulge his loathsome

secret. Sukh has no explanation for the revenant's enraged reaction toward him, a fact that likely fuels further speculation about his involvement in her death. If pressed, he blurts out a nonsensical statement that all dead people resent their parents.

Sukh Biltumur (Noble): AC 15; HP 9 (2d8); Spd 30ft; Melee rapier (+3, 1d8+1 piercing); Str +0, Dex +1, Con +0, Int +1, Wis +2, Cha +3; Skills Deception +5, Insight +4, Persuasion +5; AL any; CR 1/8; XP 25.

Though unmasking Sukh as the real killer exonerates Stolen Tongue, it does not undo the chain of events already put into motion. The vulnadamon, Crystal and, most importantly, Cama Obuto, still terrorize Ubuka and its residents. Sukh is at a loss to explain how to halt any of these threats. His only suggestion is to consult the eccentric scholar Khuluk. After coming to grips with what he did, Sukh becomes catatonic and is of little use to the PCs and Ubuka. The PCs must press on without him if they endeavor to save the town and its people from grave peril.

Biltumur Farm

The Biltumur residence is a well-maintained farmhouse a half mile north of the town square. Crystal lived here with her parents, though her father spent most of his time in the mayor's office, leaving Crystal alone with her mother, **Odval** (female human). Over the years, Odval and Crystal developed an extremely strong and close bond. Crystal's murder devastated her doting mother, throwing her beliefs into doubt. She genuinely loved Stolen Tongue as a son, and she cannot fathom why he would kill a young girl whom he considered a close friend or, dare say, a sibling. To make matters even worse, the disinterment of her child's corpse has left her too traumatized to venture out of her home. She sits on Crystal's bed and catatonically stares at a childhood portrait of her daughter in the vain hope that she can relive that past moment indefinitely.

PCs who venture to the Biltumur home find Odval in this sad condition. She refuses to engage in conversation unless the PC succeeds on a DC 15 Cha (Persuasion) check. Even then, she gives halting answers and responds only when someone speaks directly to her. In response to general questioning, Odval describes Crystal as a loving, happy child with a good heart. She and Stolen Tongue were very close when they lived together, but she has not seen him since he returned to Caaddan four years ago. She does not believe her daughter kept any secrets from her, yet there were times when Crystal brought flowers home or would burst into spontaneous song and dance for no apparent reason. Last week, Crystal told Odval that she had an important announcement that would bring tremendous joy to her mother, but she wanted to wait for the appropriate time to tell her. As a jewelry maker, Odval can easily identify Tuun's stone bracelet as being of orcish design.

In response to specific inquiries about the events over the past 24 hours, Odval tells the PCs that Crystal left their house sometime in the mid afternoon. Sukh told her about Crystal's murder later that evening. Her husband insisted that they bury her body immediately, but when they arrived at the cemetery this morning, they found the caretaker dead and her daughter's body missing. If the PCs ask Odval about Sukh's activities yesterday afternoon, she tells them that he arrived home in the afternoon to check on some crops and the livestock before returning to his office a few minutes after Crystal left. She did not see him again until he told her about her murder.

Crystal's room is typical of an affluent teenage girl's personal quarters. A collection of handcrafted dolls line the shelves, while frilly lace serves as her bed sheets and window dressings. Crystal's armoire is filled with stylish dresses, shoes, blouses and a formal gown. A successful DC 15 Int (Investigation) check detects a sliding panel in the back of the armoire. Two racy pieces of lingerie are tucked carefully into the concealed recess. Odval is shocked at the startling discovery, especially since Crystal had no current or even past suitors to the best of her mother's knowledge.

The reserved Odval is normally patient and mild-mannered, but her demeanor abruptly changes whenever anyone insinuates or implies that Sukh played any role in Crystal's death. Her face turns bright red, and she demands that the offending party leave her home at once and never return. No amount of cajoling convinces her to change her mind. If the PC insists on speaking with her, she calls some of her farmhands (commoners) to escort the trespasser off her property.

Childish Demon

Stolen Tongue's bargain gives him control over one of Cama Obuto's infernal minions — a vulnademon summoned from the Lower Planes. The kneejerk reaction would be to send the infernal assassin to kill Sukh in retaliation for Crystal's murder, but the shrewd orc chieftain realizes doing so is more likely to galvanize the town's citizens against his people than break their spirit. He instead dispatches the vulnademon into Ubuka to wreak havoc within the town to force Sukh to take actions against the monstrous fiend rather than the orcs. Naturally, the wicked vulnademon delights in its role as the harbinger of death and spreader of fear. Its short stature and slight build allow it to easily appear as a child. To further enhance the illusion's effectiveness, the creature wears a dark cloak with a hood drawn over its head and around its face to conceal its true identity.

The **vulnademon** begins its rampage minutes after Sukh concludes his speech. The creature realizes quickly that adventurers present an unexpected threat to its murderous schemes. The malevolent fiend takes a particular interest in creatures bearing obvious trappings of Good, such as a Good-aligned cleric or paladin displaying a holy symbol. The vulnademon initiates a guerilla attack against the PCs to gauge their relative strength and abilities before deciding upon its course of action. It also casts *mirror image* to create copies of itself. Spotting the creature in the crowd requires a successful DC 15 Wis (Perception) check. (If the PCs are not actively scanning the area, only someone with passive Perception 15 or higher picks out the vulnademon.) As the PCs debate how to respond to Sukh's call to action, terrified screams and shouts ring out from the surrounding area. The GM should determine the exact location, but it must be somewhere within the square and somewhat near the PCs' current location. The GM may read or paraphrase the following description.

Horrific shrieks fill the town's square as frightened citizens scramble to get away from four identical-appearing hooded and cloaked figures. The creatures' mere presence causes the people around them to cower and tremble in fear. They look like small children except for their bloody, tooth-filled mouths. Each partially conceals a bloody, steel shortsword in the folds of its garments, as their unfortunate victim, a young girl, bleeds out on the ground behind them.

Tactics: The vulnademon treats this encounter as a dress rehearsal for the mayhem yet to come when its anticipated reinforcements arrive. Though it is badly outnumbered, the malevolent fiend is supremely confident that it's relatively safe in this situation. It is important to note that the vulnademon's intended goal is to measure the PCs' strengths and weaknesses, not to engage them in a fight to the death. Naturally, if it is winning handily, it presses the attack. Once the fight turns against the vulnademon, it casts *invisibility* and attempts to escape. It prefers turning invisible in a spot where it can't be seen, even if that means risking an opportunity attack to get out of sight. Once invisible, the monster flees the town square and heads for the surrounding grasslands to plan its next attack.

Of course, if the PCs have some means of following the creature such as *see invisibility*, they are free to do so and continue their assault against the vulnademon. Under any circumstance, the vulnademon fights only if it has no other option. Escape is always its first inclination.

Vulnademon: AC 13; HP 67 (15d6+15); Spd 30ft; Melee shortsword (+5, 1d6+3 piercing plus 2d8 necrotic), bite (+5, 1d4+3 piercing); SA multiattack (shortsword + bite); Immune acid, poison; Resist cold, fire, lightning, nonmagical weapons that aren't silvered; Str +2, Dex +3, Con +1, Int +1, Wis +1, Cha +3; Skills Deception +5, Stealth +5; Senses darkvision 60ft, telepathy 100ft; Traits aura of doom (any enemy that starts its turn within 20ft must make a successful DC 13 Wis saving throw or have tactical disadvantage on attack rolls and ability checks while in the aura; effect wears off after 1 hour), spell-like abilities; AL CE; CR 4; XP 1,100.

Innate Spells: at will—*detect evil and good*, *detect magic*, *disguise self*, *silent image*; 3/day each—*inflict wounds*, *mirror image*, *phantasmal force*; 1/day—*invisibility*

Treasure: In addition to its shortsword, the vulnademon also carries a container of *abjurant salt*.

Abjurant Salt

Wondrous item, uncommon

This powder, which resembles salt, is an effective defense against evil conjurations. The salt can be poured out to form a 5-foot-diameter circle or a 15-foot line. Summoned or conjured creatures of Evil alignment can't physically cross the line or interfere with it. They can make ranged or magical attacks that cross the line. The line's effect ends if it is broken or scuffed; otherwise, the effect lasts indefinitely. Once poured out, the salt can't be reused.

Development: In the aftermath of the vulnademon's attack, the crowd's attention focuses on the injured girl **Bayorma** (female human), whose life hangs in the balance. The stab wound reduced her to 0 hit points, but a local acolyte named **Elrug** (male human) rushes to aid the wounded child. She survives if no one interferes with Elrug or if a PC heals the child's wounds within one round. Afterward, Bayorma remembers nothing about the attack other than being filled with tremendous dread.

The brazen attack forces Sukh and to a lesser extent the Seven Horsemen to shift their focus from exacting revenge against the orcs to dealing with this new menace, especially if the vulnademon escapes. In light of the PCs' heroic fight against the wicked fiend, **Marduul** (male human), the Seven Horsemen's unofficial spokesman, steps forward and addresses the PCs directly. He doubles Sukh's offer, increasing the reward to 400 gp per PC if they agree to resolve all of the strange events plaguing Ubuka, including the latest attack, the recent murders (Crystal and the cemetery caretaker), and the desecration of Crystal's corpse. Sukh reluctantly goes along with their offer, though he repeatedly emphasizes pursuing the orcs and slaying Stolen Tongue in spite of the Seven's protestations to the contrary. They are perplexed about the demon's origin, but they direct the PCs to **Khuluk**, a brilliant but scatterbrained scholar whom the PCs may already have spoken with during the **Tenants from Heaven** encounter in **Part One**. He lives in a farmhouse outside of town. Because of Sukh's contentious relationship with his cousin Janis, Marduul discreetly takes the PCs aside and suggests speaking with her as well. She can be found at the Flaming Coal Tavern, which is also described in **Part One**.

In the face of stiff opposition from the PCs, the surviving vulnademon adjusts accordingly. It uses *invisibility* to slip in and out of town unnoticed while sizing up its next target and casting a wary eye in the PCs' direction. The vulnademon has nothing to fear from the average townsfolk, so the creature selects either isolated locales such as one of the outlying tents or a crowded area with multiple escape routes, as its next hunting grounds. Like its previous attack, the monstrous fiend's attack lasts only a few rounds at most before it slips away and escapes. Another vulnademon arrives in Ubuka every night about 1d4 hours after midnight. As in the previous attack, the creatures use *mirror image* to swell their illusory ranks. When the vulnademons' numbers equal or exceed half of the PCs, they attack the PCs.

A lone vulnademon avoids attacking the PCs until reinforcements arrive, but it closely follows them if they leave town and head toward Zabladai. In that case, the creature rushes ahead of the PCs and ambushes them before they reach their destination. If that fails to stop or deter the PCs, the fiend retreats again and coordinates its efforts with the ruins' orcish defenders stationed throughout the area. (See **All Roads Lead to Zabladai** in **Part Three** of the adventure for details regarding the ruins' guardians.)

Love Interrupted

Love is a powerful emotion. The desire to spend an entire lifetime with one person can sometimes be so great that it transcends death. Crystal defied her father's wishes to spend every available moment with her beloved Stolen Tongue. Even the grave's cold embrace could not douse the fire of true passion. Yet, love wrongly denied has a will all its own. After her

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hasty burial, Crystal's unrequited soul defied the power of death and assumed a new existence as an undead horror bent on fulfilling her lifelong desire to be with the only love of her life — Stolen Tongue — regardless of the price.

In her unearthly state, every living creature represents an obstacle keeping her from reuniting with the object of her undivided attention. In her twisted mind, the town's beggar is just as responsible for her melancholy as the enraged father who thrust his blade into his daughter's chest. Crystal does not actively hunt Sukh exclusive of all others, but she cannot restrain her unbridled ire whenever their paths cross. Every dashed hope and every dream of what might have been roils to the surface like an angry conflagration whenever he is in her presence.

Unlike the very deliberate and tactical vulnademon, the **revenant** attacks Ubuka's citizens without a plan or forethought. The hateful, undead creature lashes out at anyone or anything blocking its way. By sheer coincidence, the vengeful monstrosity makes its debut shortly after the vulnademon's assault. The GM is free to determine the exact timing of this event. The GM may also read or paraphrase the following description of the gruesome scene.

Once again, terrifying screams ring through Ubuka's town square as horrified citizens scramble to get away from an oncoming monstrosity. The name "Crystal" echoes through the air as the residents simultaneously gawk and flee at the abomination in their midst. The partially clad corpse of an attractive, young woman with long brown hair and lifeless black eyes shambles past the tents and buildings, mindlessly lashing out at anyone or anything in its way. She moves with a simian gait and skulks about like a feral animal. An angry scowl contorts her formerly cherubic face into a contorted visage of pure hate, her distended abdomen protruding forward with skin stretched taut.

Crystal thirsts for special vengeance against Sukh, but she also feels betrayed by the entire town of Ubuka. If Sukh is in her line-of-sight, she has a 90% chance of seeing him and barreling toward him with a maniacal look in her cold, dead eyes. The terrified Sukh runs into the nearest building and closes the door with the revenant in close pursuit. Fortunately for Sukh, the hateful monster loses interest in him once he ducks out of sight and attacks anyone unlucky enough to cross paths with her. Most try to escape, while some cower and others vainly try to reason with her to no avail.

Crystal is incapable and unwilling to converse in the conventional sense, but she repeatedly calls for Stolen Tongue in halting Common. Nothing short of actually seeing Stolen Tongue halts her attacks. Crystal can be fooled by the Disguise skill or illusory magic such as *disguise self*. If Crystal falls for such a deception, she ignores all other creatures and charges at Stolen Tongue's image in a murderous rage. A successful DC 15 Wis (Insight) check reveals that Crystal's pleas for Stolen Tongue seem genuine and heartfelt in sharp contrast to the violent reaction evoked at seeing Sukh. This may lead some witnesses to question Sukh's version of events and cast further doubt on Stolen Tongue's guilt. In any case, the revenant attacks until no living opponents remain or she is destroyed, albeit temporarily.

Crystal Biltumur (Revenant): AC 13; HP 136 (16d8+64); Spd 30ft; **Melee** fist (+7, 2d6+4 bludgeoning plus 4d6 bludgeoning if the target is a creature the revenant has sworn vengeance against; the revenant can grapple [escape DC 14] instead of causing damage); **SA** vengeful glare (30ft; target must make a successful DC 15 Wis save or be paralyzed until it takes damage from the revenant or until the end of the revenant's next turn; when paralysis ends, target becomes frightened for 1 minute; frightened target repeats the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, with tactical disadvantage if it can see the revenant, and ends the effect on a success); **Immune** poison, charm, exhaustion, fright, paralysis, stun; **Resist** necrotic, psychic; **Str** +4, **Dex** +2, **Con** +4, **Int** +1, **Wis** +3, **Cha** +4; **Senses** dark-

vision 60ft; **Traits** regeneration (10 HP at start of its turn, unless it took fire or radiant damage in preceding round), rejuvenation (soul inhabits another corpse within 24 hours if body destroyed), turn immunity (immune to turn undead), vengeful tracker (knows direction and distance to creature it seeks revenge against); **AL** N; **CR** 5; **XP** 1,800.

Development: Crystal's transformation into a revenant raises more questions than it answers. Though it definitively solves the mystery of the cemetery caretaker's murder and clears the orcs of any involvement in disinterring and stealing her body, her strange appearance and actions raise suspicions about the official version of events. Theories surrounding these bizarre occurrences race through Ubuka faster than a champion stallion and range from the plausible to the outright ridiculous. However, the only known facts are Crystal's reaction toward Sukh, her calls for Stolen Tongue and the gruesome image of a pregnant womb. As grisly as it is, Crystal's corpse holds the only piece of tangible evidence to prove her pregnancy, yet the PCs must act quickly. If Sukh is present, he does everything in his power to destroy her corpse. In light of her undead status, many townspeople agree with him. The PCs and Sukh may attempt Persuasion checks to influence the citizens and convince them that their course of action is the right thing to do. Even if the PCs ultimately win out, Sukh does not relent and attempts to burn her body unless he is forcibly prevented from achieving his desired end.

Crystal's pregnancy can be confirmed with a successful DC 10 Wis (Medicine) check on her body. This bombshell leads to the possible conclusion that Stolen Tongue fathered Crystal's child. Though this piece of evidence does not outright solve her murder, it provides a probable motive for her killer. In addition, a PC aware of the revenant's special abilities may realize that there are only three possible ways to permanently destroy Crystal.

1. The first is with a *wish* spell while she is bodiless, but that level is almost certainly beyond the ability of the PCs. Certainly no one else in Ubuka has access to that sort of magic.

2. The second is to let her achieve her revenge by slaughtering whoever murdered her and her child—or simply to fail to prevent it from happening.

3. The third is to reunite her with her true love, Stolen Tongue. This option won't be obvious to PCs, but one of them can arrive at this realization with a successful DC 15 Int (Arcana or Religion) check. Otherwise, Khuluk or Tuun could suggest it.

Until one of these options puts Crystal to rest, destroying her body won't stop her rampage; she always reappears 24 hours later, most likely haunting the Crossroads Inn where she frequently rendezvoused with her orc lover.

After conducting Crystal's postmortem, the PCs are free to do what they wish with the revenant's body. Unless they destroy it, Crystal re-inhabits it 24 hours later. If her body is destroyed, she inhabits another corpse from the cemetery and returns anyway. Crystal's pregnancy and Sukh's histrionics cast tremendous suspicion on Sukh. In light of his likely involvement in her death, the townspeople grudgingly ask the PCs to return Crystal to her original grave. Eventually, they'll ask to have the remains cremated in a dignified manner.

Orc Raiders

Cama Obuto's hunger for more victims never abates, forcing the orcs to search harder and longer for more unfortunates to sate the beast's relentless appetite. Their first target, Bodi, was relatively easy to snatch and sadly unnoticed by anyone other than his nefarious associates. Recent events put a serious scare into Ubuka's unnerved citizens. People venture from their homes far less frequently and never do so alone. Children always travel in the company of adult relatives. The orcs find it much more difficult to add to the ranks of the dead and the missing in light of the recently implemented precautions. Still, some teenagers and adolescents are determined to defy their parents' wishes and ignore their advice. The orcs hope that they surreptitiously run into a few of them.

One group of orcs stakes out the cemetery in the hopes of finding fresh victims, while another group fans out across the grasslands on the edge of several farms looking to snatch a wayward youngster without being de-

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ted. A third group remains hidden near the Crossroads Inn. This group captured Bodi last night and lies in wait for their next prey. The orcs in the cemetery remain concealed and stationary, but the two units spread across the outskirts of Ubuka are constantly on the move. These orcs are taking great pains to remain undiscovered, so they have tactical advantage on Stealth checks. Similar to their counterparts at the cemetery, these orcs are not looking to pick a fight with well-armed adventurers. They are hunting for easy, unsuspecting victims, so they avoid combat whenever possible. If captured, cornered or subdued, the orcs reveal the same information as those stationed at the cemetery. Each group consists of four orcs led by an orog.

Orog: AC 18; HP 42 (5d8+20); Spd 30ft; **Melee** greataxe (+6, 1d12+4 slashing); **Ranged** javelin (+6, 30ft/120ft, 1d6+4 piercing); **SA** multiattack (greataxe x2); **Str** +4, **Dex** +1, **Con** +4, **Int** +1, **Wis** +0, **Cha** +1; **Skills** Intimidation +5, Survival +2; **Senses** darkvision 60ft; **Traits** aggressive (can move up to its speed toward an enemy it can see, as a bonus action); **AL** CE; **CR** 2; **XP** 450.

Orc (4): AC 13; HP 15 (2d8+6); Spd 30ft; **Melee** greataxe (+5, 1d12+3 slashing), javelin (+5, 30ft/120ft, 1d6+3 piercing); **Str** +3, **Dex** +1, **Con** +3, **Int** -2, **Wis** +0, **Cha** +0; **Skills** Intimidation +2; **Senses** darkvision 60ft; **Traits** aggressive (can move its speed toward a hostile creature in sight, as a bonus action); **AL** CE; **CR** 1/2; **XP** 100.

Treasure: One of the orogs (GM's choice) carries a curious statue of a withered, old man carved from bone. Though it is worth only 10 gp, a successful DC 15 Int (History) check identifies it as a relic from nearby Zabladai. The others carry a *potion of lesser restoration*, a pouch containing eight gems worth 25 gp each, and a grand total of 108 gp.

Caaddan

PCs under Sukh's influence may decide to launch a pre-emptive strike against the orc stronghold of Caaddan to search for Stolen Tongue and to punish the orcs for the heinous deed attributed to their leader. Obviously, Sukh is pleased at this chain of events as it simultaneously casts suspicion solely upon Stolen Tongue while eliminating his hated orc rivals in the process. The Seven Horsemen strongly lobby against this course of action, but if the PCs insist on attacking Caaddan, they threaten to decrease their payment to the PCs before ultimately acquiescing to their demands and upholding their previously agreed bargain.

Located six miles west of Ubuka, the orc settlement of Caaddan is more akin to a gathering place than a permanent community. Its exterior defense consists of a circular earthwork wall that surrounds its perimeter. The residents within the boundaries of this circuit wall live in primitive huts and lean-tos with one exception — the chieftain's quarters. At most times, the orcs' outer defenses are rather lax. Hunting parties scouring the surrounding grasslands in search of prey are also tasked with defending the settlement against monstrous or humanoid incursions. Because of recent events, Stolen Tongue significantly beefed up the tribe's patrols and stepped up its military readiness. Every man, woman and child with eyes and ears now keeps an around-the-clock vigil scanning the horizon for Sukh's retaliatory force.

Orc Patrol

With roughly one-third of their number searching the grasslands for fresh sacrifices to Cama Obuto, the orcs concentrate their forces and keep their patrols close to home. At any given time, two groups of orcs, each consisting of **6 orcs**, encircle Caaddan, never straying more than a quarter-mile from the settlement's outer wall. The troops move through the grasslands at a steady pace, allowing them to maintain an attentive watch on the surrounding landscape. They're trying to spot approaching enemies, not to remain hidden themselves. PCs have a 40% chance of noticing one of these groups for every minute spent within a quarter mile of Caaddan. If the PCs eliminate one of the orc patrols without being detected, the chance of running into the remaining patrol drops to 20%. Whenever they

spot intruders, the orcs hurl a javelin at their foes and charge into battle. In addition, the orc warriors scream and shout as loudly as possible in a deliberate effort to summon reinforcements from the remaining patrol group, if any. There is a 40% chance that the other group is within earshot and hears the cries for help. In that case, the second group arrives 2d10 rounds after hearing their allies' cries.

Orc (6): AC 13; HP 15 (2d8+6); Spd 30ft; **Melee** greataxe (+5, 1d12+3 slashing), javelin (+5, 30ft/120ft, 1d6+3 piercing); **Str** +3, **Dex** +1, **Con** +3, **Int** -2, **Wis** +0, **Cha** +0; **Skills** Intimidation +2; **Senses** darkvision 60ft; **Traits** aggressive (can move its speed toward a hostile creature in sight, as a bonus action); **AL** CE; **CR** 1/2; **XP** 100.

Development: Once three orcs fall in combat, the surviving orcs retreat toward Caaddan, screaming wildly and shouting the entire way. If they are subdued, captured or completely surrounded, the PCs can gather information from them with a successful DC 10 Cha (Intimidate) check or a DC 15 Cha (Persuasion) check. These orcs know that Stolen Tongue is at the ruins of Zabladai summoning "demonic" reinforcements, while three smaller patrol groups search the area around Ubuka looking for children to abduct and sacrifice to what they call the dark lord of Zabladai. When asked about their overall numbers and logistical deployment, they try to conceal Caaddan's true strength by telling the PCs that 100 orcs stand at the ready in and around their walls. Of course, these numbers include all of the female and juvenile orcs scanning the horizon looking for intruders. If pressed, the actual number of combatants is closer to 30 with an orc priest. Fiery Tongue, Stolen Tongue's younger brother, commands this force.

Inner Defenses

Caaddan's orcs rely more on ferocity and sheer numbers than battlements and sophisticated tactics to defend their homes. In the case of the former, the orcs line their female and juvenile noncombatants up to 60 feet beyond the earthwork wall surrounding Caaddan. Because there are so many of them (roughly 40 individuals), the group has tactical advantage on Perception checks. On the other hand, their show of force makes it impossible for intruders not to see the mass gathering of orcs around the crude settlement. At the first sign of trouble, they alert the tribe's warriors (half of whom are asleep at any time) and scramble back over the earthwork wall to perceived safety. When the PCs come within range of this sight, the GM may read or paraphrase the following description.

At least 100 orcs of all ages and both genders stand behind a low, earthwork wall that surrounds a haphazard cluster of huts, lean-tos and one permanent building near the center. Of those gathered within this outer perimeter, roughly one-third appear to be battle ready. Loud wails, hoots and hollers resound from the cluster of orcs as their warriors whip themselves into a frenzy to defend their homeland. Several open campfires burn within the confines of the small, crowded settlement.

The orc forces consist of **8 orogs**, **24 orcs**, **Aglorakk the Eye of Gruumsh**, and **Fiery Tongue**, the orc's commander (war chief) in Stolen Tongue's absence. A pack of **5 giant boars** also fights in conjunction with their orc masters. Without Stolen Tongue to lead them, the orcs dispense with any semblance of military strategy and charge at their enemies en masse. They hurl their javelins as soon as they are within range and then draw their greataxes to engage their foes in melee combat. Aglorakk supports them with spells to the fullest extent possible before wading into battle himself. Fiery Tongue rages and duels whomever he perceives to be the mightiest warrior among the PCs. Unwilling to leave their wives, mothers, sisters and children at the mercy of other humanoids, the orcs do not voluntarily retreat or surrender. They fight to the last man in defense of their families and their homes.

It should be obvious to even the most obtuse players that a frontal assault on the orc's stronghold is foolhardy, but players and characters are resourceful. If they insist on plowing ahead with this idea, the GM is ad-

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vised to see where it takes them.

Interspersed among the orcs are **5 male human slaves** (commoners). Mayor Sukh sold them into bondage at various points over the last five years as punishment for their crimes. Like many long-term captives, the five men sympathize with their orc masters and display much greater anger toward their fellow men that consigned them to this terrible fate. They are not much help to either side in their current condition and watch the drama play out from afar. Though the women and juveniles do not actively participate in the fight, at the GM's discretion, they may throw stones, dirt and other loose objects at PCs within range. In addition, they alert their warriors to the presence of any previously unseen foes.

Fiery Tongue (Orc War Chief): AC 16; HP 93 (11d8+44); Spd 30ft; Melee greataxe (+6, 1d12+4 plus 1d8 slashing), spear (+6, 1d6+4 plus 1d8 piercing, or 2d8+4 piercing if used 2-handed); **Ranged** spear (+6, 20ft/60ft, 1d6+4 plus 1d8); **SA** multiattack (greataxe x2 or spear x2), battle cry (1/day; 30ft; each ally gains tactical advantage on attack rolls for 1 round; the war chief makes one attack as a bonus action); **Str** +4, **Dex** +1, **Con** +4, **Int** +0, **Wis** +0, **Cha** +3; **Saves** Str +6, Con +6, Wis +2; **Skills** Intimidation +5; **Senses** darkvision 60ft; **Traits** aggressive (can move its speed toward a hostile creature in sight, as a bonus action); **AL** CE; **CR** 4; **XP** 1,100.

Aglorakk (Eye of Groomsh): AC 16; HP 45 (6d8+8); Spd 30ft; Melee spear (+5, 1d6+3 plus 1d8 piercing, or 2d8+3 piercing if used 2-handed); **Ranged** spear (+5, 20ft/60ft, 1d6+3 plus 1d8 piercing); **Str** +3, **Dex** +1, **Con** +3, **Int** -1, **Wis** +1, **Cha** +1; **Skills** Intimidation +3, Religion +1; **Senses** darkvision 60ft; **Traits** spellcasting; **AL** CE; **CR** 2; **XP** 450.
Spells (slots): 0 (at will)—*guidance, resistance, thaumaturgy*; 1st (4)—*bless, command*; 2nd (2)—*augury, spiritual weapon* (spear).

Orog (8): AC 18; HP 42 (5d8+20); Spd 30ft; Melee greataxe (+6, 1d12+4 slashing); **Ranged** javelin (+6, 30ft/120ft, 1d6+4 piercing); **SA** multiattack (greataxe x2); **Str** +4, **Dex** +1, **Con** +4, **Int** +1, **Wis** +0, **Cha** +1; **Skills** Intimidation +5, Survival +2; **Senses** darkvision 60ft; **Traits** aggressive (can move up to its speed toward an enemy it can see, as a bonus action); **AL** CE; **CR** 2; **XP** 450.

Orc (24): AC 13; HP 15 (2d8+6); Spd 30ft; Melee greataxe (+5, 1d12+3 slashing), javelin (+5, 30ft/120ft, 1d6+3 piercing); **Str** +3, **Dex** +1, **Con** +3, **Int** -2, **Wis** +0, **Cha** +0; **Skills** Intimidation +2; **Senses** darkvision 60ft; **Traits** aggressive (can move its speed toward a hostile creature in sight, as a bonus action); **AL** CE; **CR** 1/2; **XP** 100.

Giant Boar (5): AC 12; HP 42 (5d10+15); Spd 40ft; Melee tusk (+5, 2d6+3 slashing); **SA** charge (if the boar move at least 20ft straight toward a target and hits it with its tusks in the same turn, the target takes 2d6 extra slashing damage; a creature must make a successful DC 13 Str saving throw or be knocked prone); **Str** +3, **Dex** +0, **Con** +3, **Int** -4, **Wis** -2, **Cha** -3; **Traits** relentless (1/between rest; an attack that does 10 damage or less reduces the boar to 1 HP instead of 0); **AL** Un; **CR** 2; **XP** 450.

Development: Once Stolen Tongue learns of the PCs' attack against Caaddan, he refuses to negotiate with them. Worse still, he puts his reservations aside and redoubles his effort to find and locate children suitable for sacrifice, regardless of the risk. With the orcs' fighting force in shambles, the tribe's noncombatants begrudgingly surrender without a fight. The orcs' human slaves halfheartedly accept their freedom if liberated, but they exact their revenge against the people that sold them to the orcs. In the event that the orcs force the PCs to surrender, the orcs strip them of their gear and bind their hands behind their back and shackle them to an iron ring built into the north wall of Stolen's Tongue's residence. If

the PCs eliminate all opposition, they are free to search the orcs' huts and lean-tos as well as Stolen Tongue's personal quarters. These areas are described in greater detail in the following sections.

A. Orc Hut

Filthy bedrolls, sweaty hide clothing and rotten food fill the cramped hut's space with a foul stench. Weapons, sundry items and other basic necessities lie on the floor sprinkled amid the tremendous clutter. Wooden beams driven into the firm earth and strong ropes form the structure's framework, while the outer covering consists of felt made from the wool of the flocks of sheep. The hut's door is a panel of felt that can be pulled back to allow access to the hut's interior and then drawn back to shield the interior from external weather conditions.

Personal space and privacy are luxuries unheard of in orc society. The orc warriors and their immediate families live in the cramped huts, sharing their space with up to 20 of their kin at any given time. Built from felt, wood and rope, the huts are surprisingly durable and offer adequate protection against the elements. The orcs are poor housekeepers who accumulate worthless junk and misplace important valuables. A PC searching through the refuse finds 10d10 gp, 1d10 gems worth 1d4x5 gp and 1d4 pieces of jewelry worth 5 gp each in a hut with a successful DC 15 Int (Investigation) check. Successful checks beyond the first do not yield any additional treasure.

B: Lean-To

Two perpendicular wooden poles support a wooden roof covered with felt. The roof slopes at a 45-degree angle, with one end of the roof sitting atop the wooden poles and the opposite end resting on the ground. Decaying and matted furs, clothing and other personal belongings cover the dirt floor.

Orc society's less-fortunate dwell beneath these crude structures, which offer little protection against the rain and no shelter from temperature extremes. These structures are less stable and structurally weaker than the huts. A successful DC 15 Strength check is enough to knock the wooden roof (hardness 5, hp 10) off its supports and onto the ground. A PC searching through the clutter finds 1d6 gp, 1d4 gems worth 5 gp each and 1d3 sundry items worth 1 gp each with a successful DC 15 Int (Investigation) check. Successful checks beyond the first do not yield any additional treasure.

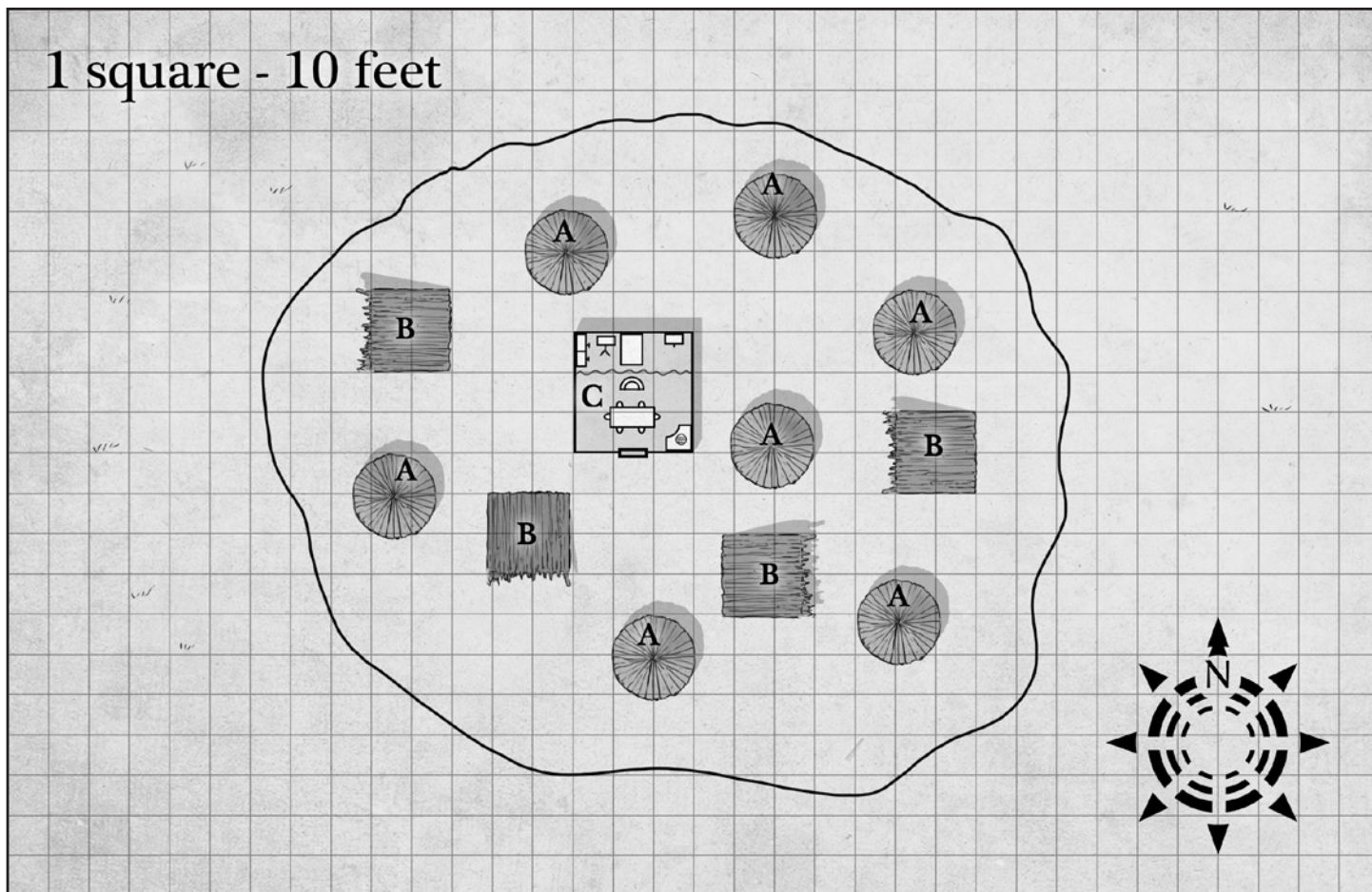
C: Stolen Tongue's Quarters

Caaddan's lone permanent structure is a one-story building with no windows, a pitched roof and one door.

The door is locked, and Stolen Tongue has the only key. The lock can be picked with thief's tools and a successful DC 10 Dexterity check, or it can be broken open with a successful DC 18 Str (Athletics) check.

After PCs open the exterior door, the GM may read or paraphrase the following description of the building's interior:

Though still cramped by typical human standards, this multifunctional room is very spacious for orcs. The front portion of the chamber functions as an audience hall with an upholstered, mahogany chair overlooking a table surrounded



by six smaller seats. A hearth is in the near corner. A curtain normally separates this part of the room from the personal quarters beyond, but the curtain is tucked against the far wall to allow open access to this area. Exotic furs cover a man-sized bed flanked by a wooden armoire, a painting easel and a locked, iron chest.

Connecting the Dots

With so many different events going on simultaneously, it may be difficult for the PCs to connect the dots and figure out how they are related. If the PCs are having trouble finding their way through the maze of lies and deceit, the GM should focus their attention on the vulnademons and their connection to the ruins of Zablada. This may be accomplished by having Khuluk travel to town to speak with them directly about the abandoned settlement's evil history or the PCs may run into another band of orc raiders looking for children to abduct and sacrifice to Cama Obuto. Though solving Crystal's murder is an important facet of the adventure, unmasking the culprit can wait until after the PCs destroy Cama Obuto and put a permanent halt to the influx of wicked fiends steadily infiltrating Ubuka and its surroundings.

Stolen Tongue uses the curtain to afford him privacy and to conceal his fondness for human furniture and art. While in Caaddan, he spends most of his time in his personal quarters, far removed from the squalor surrounding him. Stolen Tongue made many attempts to lift his people out of their filthy conditions, but his kinsfolk showed little enthusiasm for changing their age-old ways and adopting what they called "the soft comforts of humanity." Despite their outlook toward humans, Stolen Tongue prizes object made by human hands. The upholstered chair is the only publicly displayed item with obvious human origins. It is worth 50 gp. The table and chairs in front of it are intentionally inferior to Stolen Tongue's specially made seat. They are worth a grand total of 25 gp. The hearth in the corner provides heat and a means of cooking food.

Stolen Tongue's wooden armoire holds a collection of fine clothing, including three noble's outfits and one royal outfit as well as an assortment of shoes and undergarments with a total value of 50 gp. A nearly completed oil painting depicting the grasslands at night rests upon the easel. Even in its unfinished state, the artwork is worth 20 gp. The furs atop the bed come from a bear and a dire wolf. They are worth 100 gp. Stolen Tongue normally keeps his most-valuable items in his locked, iron chest, but he decided to bring most of them with him because of his anticipated long absence and inability to trust his kin. Like the front door, the chest is locked, and Stolen Tongue has the only key. The lock can be opened with thief's tools and a successful DC 15 Dex check. The only other way to open it is to smash it utterly (requiring a successful DC 25 Str [Athletics] check), which also destroys the horse statue but not the coins.

Inside of the chest are 2,306 sp, 982 gp and a small bronze statue of a horse worth 450 gp.

Part Three: The Stain of Evil

None of the major events occurring in Ubuka took place in a vacuum, and it is now most apparent that whatever lurks in Zabladai is responsible for setting the vulnademons loose on Ubuka and spurring the orcs to abduct children as sacrifices for this dark power. This portion of the adventure takes place in the abandoned city's outer ruins, where the PCs must overcome its guardians and find their way into the depths below the settlement. Orc guards supported by two wicked demons and a freelancing gargoyle stand in the PCs' way. In addition, a vulnademon may stalk the PCs and ambush them on their way here or launch a coordinated attack against the PCs within the city's ruins.

Zabladai

The grandeur and spectacle that was Zabladai is a far cry from the squalor and deprivation that is present-day Caaddan. The orc stronghold was groundbreaking in its age for its magnificent architecture and unique culture. Tall battlements towered above the ground. Its breathtaking temple awed its deities' followers. Its leaders indulged in the most luxurious fineries, including perfumed baths, exotic furnishings and wondrous artistic masterpieces. Despite the sophisticated window dressing among its elite, Zabladai remained orcish at its core. Humanoid slaves were common, and vicious blood sports were the entertainment of the day. Violence permeated every aspect of the orc society. The strong dominated the weak, and military conquest was a way of life, bringing treasure into Zabladai's coffers from its victories.

Fifty years after its founding, Zabladai reached the zenith of its power and influence during the reign of its last ruler, Cama Obuto, a half-orc general, who was the illegitimate son of Zabladai's previous ruler and his favorite human slave. In spite of his mixed heritage, the supremely talented commander rose through the ranks and ascended to the throne after his father's mysterious and untimely death.

Cama Obuto implemented even more reforms than his predecessors. He allowed human slaves to earn their freedom and integrated many freed slaves into Zabladai's army as foot soldiers and siege engineers. One such reform proved his undoing, however. Cama Obuto instituted a taxation system to supplement the traditional sources of income such as annual tributes and import tariffs. He instead levied select children from among the conquered peoples under the guise that he would personally train them to become administrators, advisors, scholars and soldiers rather than take them as common slaves. In addition to the obvious financial benefits, the system also offered the conquered peoples' children an opportunity for a better life atop Zabladai's hierarchy rather than at the bottom. The program also attracted the interest of less-fortunate orc families who saw it as a fast track to the upper levels of orc society.

In the first year of its existence, Cama Obuto's unique innovation recruited 10 youngsters for this exclusive opportunity to study under the tutelage of Zabladai's capable and charismatic ruler. Over the next decade, as more children poured into the program, some within Cama Obuto's inner circle questioned the institution's true intent. None of the levied children were ever seen again, let alone placed among Zabladai's elite. When others raised these concerns with Cama Obuto, he claimed that he sent them to the frontier to get more "hands-on" experience conducting the business of government or that they left the program and vanished after failing to meet its minimum standards. Cama's excuses allayed suspicions for a little while, but in the end, no amount of fast talking could conceal the unimaginable beast that hid beneath Cama's outwardly friendly and charismatic persona.

Twelve years into his reign, his most loyal and trusted advisors finally uncovered the ghastly truth: Cama Obuto, the innovator and the reformer, was truly the cruellest and most-sadistic monster imaginable. In a secret house of horrors beneath his quarters, Zabladai's ruler concealed his barbarous handiwork. There, his lieutenants caught the serial murderer in the midst of torturing a young orc girl. Horrified by the disgusting sight, they

slew him where he stood. But nothing they did could erase the stain of evil that plagued Zabladai. Though violence and brutality are endemic among orcs, Cama's crimes were too great and sickening for even them to stomach. To make matters worse, the restless spirits of Cama's victims and Cama himself lingered long after their earthly demise. Within a year of his death, the orcs abandoned Zabladai and razed it to the ground, hoping to forever wipe away any vestige of Cama Obuto and his twisted legacy.

Future generations shunned the haunted ruins, but those few who dared venture close enough told of a malevolent presence lingering within the shattered walls of the former stronghold. In the bowels of the earth, the malingering spirit waited for a century until a desperate orc chieftain wrongly accused of murdering his lover walked into his lair and struck a bargain with a being that knows only lies and deceit. In that way, Cama Obuto resumed his treacherous existence.

All Roads Lead to Zabladai

The PCs' travels through Ubuka and its environs eventually lead them to Zabladai. The locale's reputation precedes itself, as no humans stray anywhere near the haunted ruins. Even the wild beasts and birds avoid the location whenever possible. Stolen Tongue's recent arrival changed that in some respects; nearly all living creatures other than the orcs still stay as far away as they can.

After a century of neglect and erosion, the remnants of Cama Obuto's bygone stronghold have been reduced to piles of stone and mortar randomly littered across an open plain. None of its buildings survived the carnage, and its great circuit wall is a shadow of its former self. In spite of the devastation that befell Zabladai, its sundered structures and decrepit walls are still visible from as far as 1,000 feet away. When the PCs come within visual range, the GM may read or paraphrase the following description:

Haphazardly placed mounds of sundered rock walls and stone foundations are all that remain of a once-great settlement. Despite the wide-scale devastation, the outline of an exterior circuit wall is still visible around the ruins. Likewise, enough scattered remnants of a few buildings remain to form a mental image of how they would have appeared during their heyday. Though the grasses now lay claim to most of its land, the entire area is eerily quiet and seemingly devoid of wildlife.

Zabladai steadily comes into better view as the PCs draw closer to the ruins. At a distance of 500 feet, they make out the outlines of individual buildings within the exterior wall. At 200 feet and less, they can distinguish sundered stone statues and columns. More importantly, they may also notice someone lurking among the devastation.

Zabladai's current occupants await the arrival of another victim to bring before Cama Obuto. Scattered among the ruins are **8 orcs** and **2 orogs**. One orog hides behind the north wall in **Area Z-2**, while the other skulks near the southernmost wall in **Area Z-5**. The remaining orcs are evenly distributed throughout the area, with two near each corner of the exterior circuit wall. Because these orcs have had an ample amount of time to procure hiding spaces, they are extremely difficult to notice from a distance. If players state that they're approaching cautiously and continually scanning ahead for enemies, have each character make a Perception check and use those results until one side spots the other. Otherwise, use the characters' passive Perception scores in the same way. A PC needs a Perception result of 30 or higher to spot the orcs at a distance of 200 feet. The DC decreases to 25 at 150 feet, to 20 at 100 feet, to 15 at 50 feet, and to 10 at 25 feet.

The orcs don't expect trouble, so they aren't scanning actively; they use their passive Perception. If characters approach stealthily, have everyone perform a DC 10 Stealth check. If everyone succeeds, the orcs won't notice the characters until they get within 25 feet. Increase that range by 50 feet for each character who fails the check (for example, if two characters fail, the orcs spot them at a distance of $[2 \times 50] + 25 = 125$ feet). At night, however, the orcs' darkvision gives them an advantage over the PCs, who likely require an artificial light source to see in total darkness or near dark-

ness. Orcs spot a lantern or torch within 200 feet automatically.

The orcs don't move around on patrol. They charge the PCs at the first available opportunity, but only those who see the PCs attack. With some stealth and careful maneuvering, PCs should be able to kill a few orcs quietly and deal with the rest in small groups. If all 10 of the guards assemble and attack at once, the PCs are in major trouble.

Requests to speak with Stolen Tongue and claims that he is innocent go unanswered. Fearing Cama Obuto's retribution, these orcs fight to the bitter end rather than surrender and flee, even if the PCs kill both orogs.

Orog: AC 18; HP 42 (5d8+20); Spd 30ft; **Melee** greataxe (+6, 1d12+4 slashing); **Ranged** javelin (+6, 30ft/120ft, 1d6+4 piercing); **SA** multiattack (greataxe x2); **Str** +4, **Dex** +1, **Con** +4, **Int** +1, **Wis** +0, **Cha** +1; **Skills** Intimidation +5, Survival +2; **Senses** darkvision 60ft; **Traits** aggressive (can move up to its speed toward an enemy it can see, as a bonus action); **AL** CE; **CR** 2; **XP** 450.

Orc: AC 13; HP 15 (2d8+6); Spd 30ft; **Melee** greataxe (+5, 1d12+3 slashing), javelin (+5, 30ft/120ft, 1d6+3 piercing); **Str** +3, **Dex** +1, **Con** +3, **Int** -2, **Wis** +0, **Cha** +0; **Skills** Intimidation +2; **Senses** darkvision 60ft; **Traits** aggressive (can move its speed toward a hostile creature in sight, as a bonus action); **AL** CE; **CR** 1/2; **XP** 100.

Development: Even when the orcs are no longer a concern, the PCs must still contend with the solitary gargoyle that mans a lonely tower in **Area Z-4** and four quasits that guard the staircase in **Area Z-6**. Neither of these potential enemies wanders far from its designated location.

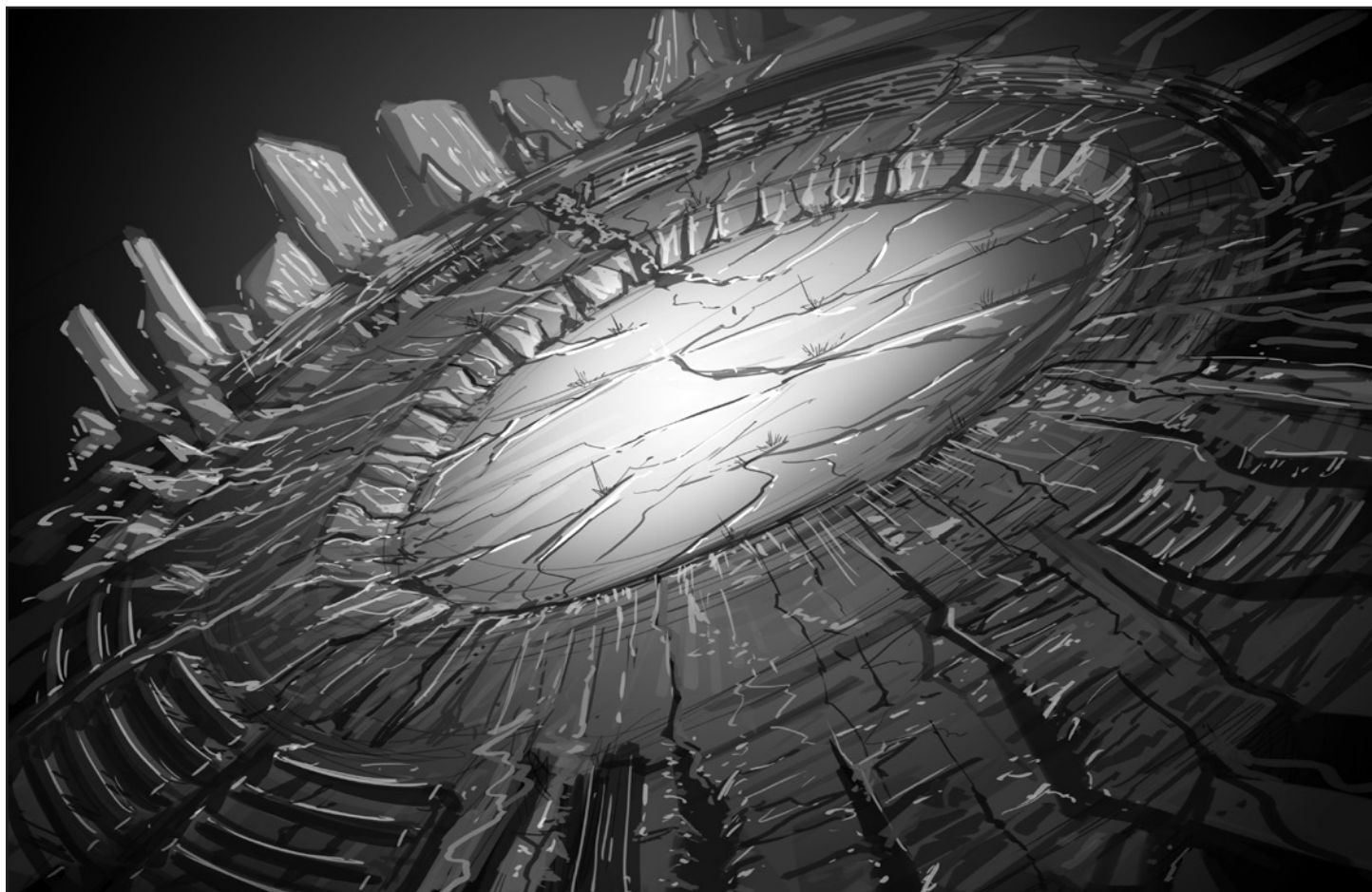
Area Z-1: Gladiator Arena

Erosion took its toll on the elevated hemispherical terraces that surround a partially intact circular ring of stones. The terraces reach a maximum height of 10 feet with a steep gradient from the highest point to ground level. Several cracked, stone benches remain in place, and the remnants of rows and aisles are still visible as deep gouges in the soil. Patches of grass grow in the loose dirt and gravel that lines the floor inside the circular ring of stones.

Zabladaï reveled in its blood sports, and this outdoor arena served as the venue for the carnage. Human prisoners from conquered lands squared off against each other in gladiatorial combats that could claim as many as 50 lives per day. The city's orc population had no qualms about warring women and even small children fight to the death. Dirt and grass cover most of the stones that made up the terraced benches, but erosion and the prevailing winds turned the terraces into an undulating surface rather than a flat, smooth one.

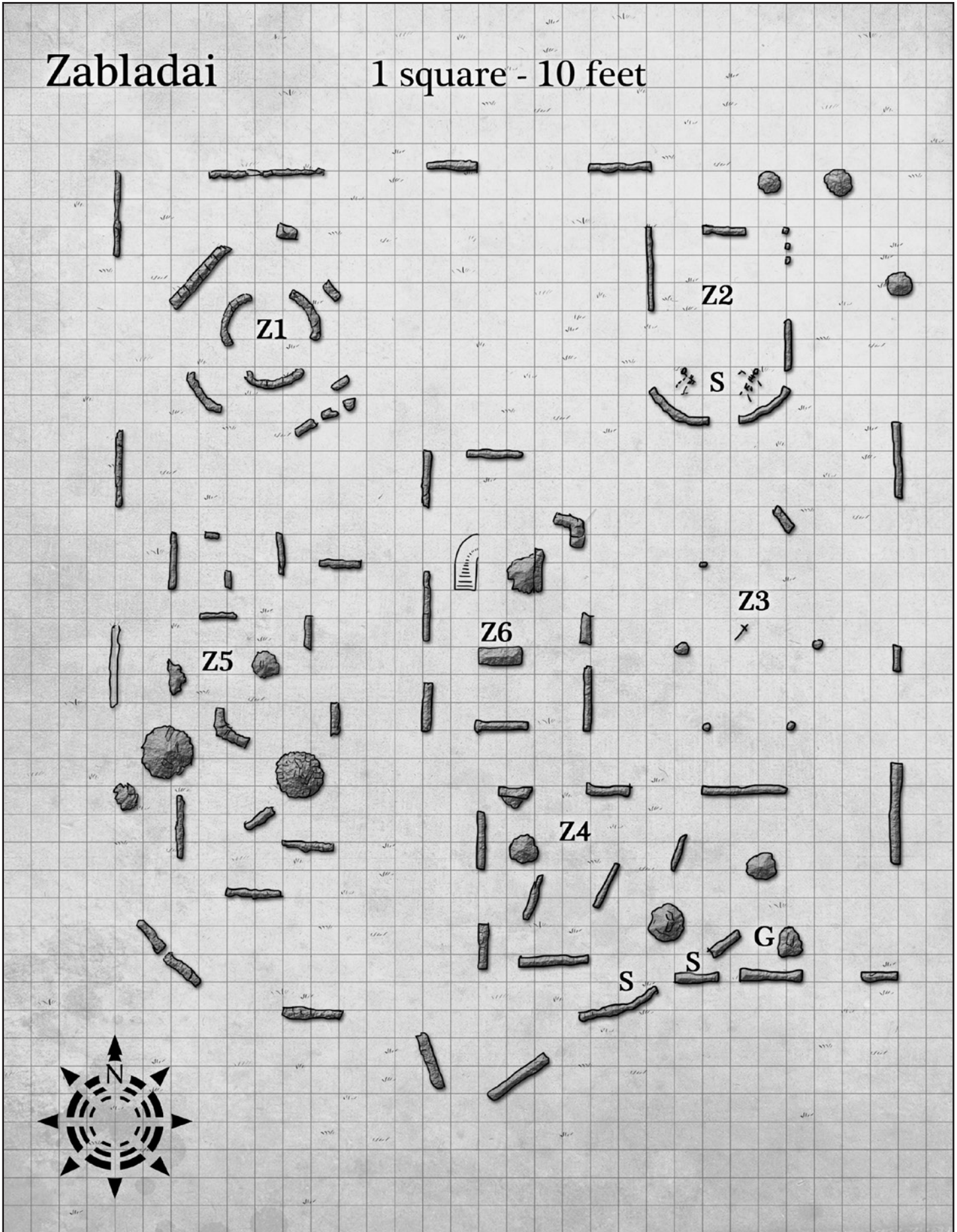
A careful search of the floor within the center ring uncovers grisly reminders of these gruesome bouts. Rusted arrow tips, a rusty iron dagger, wooden splinters and several human finger bones from fallen warriors lie a few inches below the surface. Unfortunately for the PCs, the dead scarred the bloodthirsty earth with more than physical reminders. Their horrific memories of their final moments linger here as well.

Development: Any human who spends more than 4 rounds within the gladiatorial pit brings one of these terrible memories to life (orcs and non-humans are unaffected). Multiple humans can experience the effect simultaneously, though the onset times may differ, thus alerting other humans to the danger. Observers see nothing other than the affected creature cowering in terror in the face of an unseen foe. The memory is neither alive nor real. Instead, the PC experiences a vivid recreation of a



Zabladaï

1 square - 10 feet



gladiatorial combat from Zabladaï's heyday. It is impossible to detect the memory's existence with *detect magic* or a successful Perception check, and it cannot be disabled. The GM may read or paraphrase the following description of the scene the effected PC witnesses in his mind.

A bloodthirsty crowd of orcs and human slaves surrounds a pit occupied by a massive, scarred warrior clad in plate mail armor who wields a massive greataxe. The spectators cheer wildly with the veteran combatant's every move as he raises his mighty weapon and prepares to strike the killing blow.

The effect is similar to a *phantasmal force* spell but even more dangerous. The affected PC makes a DC 14 Intelligence saving throw. If it succeeds, the vision disappears; if it fails, the gladiator lands the killing blow on the following round. The PC immediately drops to 0 hit points, unconscious but stable. Whether or not the save is successful, a creature cannot be affected again by another false memory for 24 hours. Though the effect duplicates a spell effect, it cannot be dispelled nor is it subject to spell resistance.

Area Z-2: Ruined Temple

Faded frescoes painted onto the ruined walls celebrate a bygone age of orcish military supremacy. Images of victorious orc warriors defeating vast humanoid armies and conquering humanoid cities adorn what remains of this building complex. Most of the curved southern wall is intact, though the same cannot be said of two stone statues of orc warriors. One is split in half at the waist, while the other is broken into multiple pieces.

The orc temple was a masterpiece of orcish architecture and art. Human craftsmen and artisans take most of the credit for its structural design and artwork. Though the structure served a religious purpose, Zabladaï's orcs never permanently settled on the worship of any particular deity. Instead, their temple serves as a tribute to their greatest warriors and a celebration of their most significant military victories. The paintings that adorned the walls were the embodiment of this philosophy. A PC can determine that the paintings depict scenes from the Battle of the Bloody Field and the Siege of Tabakla with a successful DC 15 Int (History) check. In addition to identifying the subject matter, the PC also knows that General Cama Obuto led the orc forces to victory on those occasions against an allied army of humans, half-elves and elves. Likewise, the ruined statues also depict Cama Obuto.

Zabladaï's orcs traditionally burned their dead, but revered generals, heroes and leaders secured a place of honor in the burial crypt beneath the temple. The crypt is accessible via a secret door built into the floor, but the portal is now covered by earth and grass, making it difficult to detect; it requires a successful DC 20 Wis (Perception) check. Loose debris can be cleared away in 1d4 rounds. The door is a solid stone slab that can be lifted with a successful DC 18 Strength (Athletics) check.

Removing the slab reveals a stairway that leads into darkness. The GM may read or paraphrase the following description:

A musty smell from what seems to be a century of stagnant air emanates upward from a dusty, stone staircase that descends into pitch darkness.

The narrow staircase opens into **Area Z-7**.

Area Z3: Marketplace

Sundered fluted columns and rotting wooden poles litter an otherwise pristine grassy field.

On a typical day a century ago, hundreds of merchants would pitch their tents and open their carts in the city's bustling marketplace. Since their departure, all that remains of Zabladaï's central shopping district are ravaged stone columns and the wooden supports used to hold the peddler's tents. A PC searching the area finds 1d6 stray odds and ends. Naturally, the merchants took everything of value with them. Any new finds are worthless.

Area Z-4: Armory

Huge piles of rubble and shattered walls measuring 1-foot thick in many places suggest that some building of great importance once stood here. Mounds of charred debris and ash are also here, though the large depressions in the ground around the mounds are more indicative of their original size. Rusted pieces of armor, bent blades and disjoined hilts lie heaped amid the refuse along with warped bows and broken javelins. Large sections of the outer wall in this area are also largely intact. Three stone statues of orc warriors stand atop the wall's ledges, peering out over the horizon in search of new enemies.

Zabladaï's armory and military barracks stood on this site. The armory stood near Zabladaï's main gate, the current breach in the southern wall. At the height of Cama Obuto's power, the four-story building housed 500 soldiers and produced dozens of new weapons every day. The orc warriors who dwell here burned everything they could not take with them, including their bunks, tables, chairs and anything else that was too heavy and bulky to carry. Unfortunately, the weapons left behind were either broken or too damaged to be of any use.

To deter enemies, the orcs frequently resorted to placing statues upon their parapets to artificially bolster the number of defenders manning their walls. Only two of the statues are real; one, however, is actually a **gargoyle** that has lived here for more than a decade. The vicious monster did not harass the orcs because it feared Cama Obuto's wrath. But the PCs are fair game in its eyes. Though the gargoyle took on the facial features and torso of the orcs, it can do only so much to conceal its wings. From the ground, a PC spots this distinguishing feature with a successful DC 20 Wis (Perception) check. Otherwise, the gargoyle appears to be identical to the two ordinary statues.

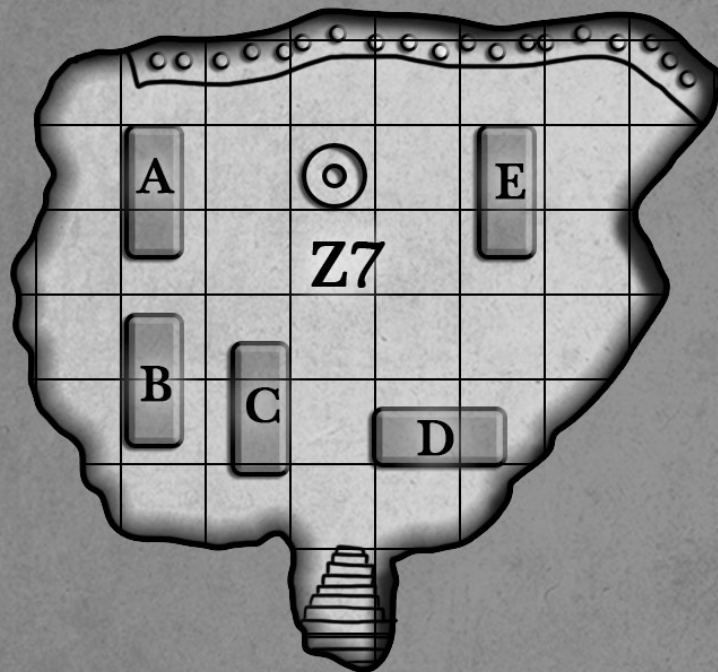
The monster lives atop a 20-foot-high section of the outer wall with an adjoining ledge. The gargoyle remains perfectly still and attacks only when the PCs come within 60 feet of its location. It then swoops down from its perch and attacks the closest foe with its vicious claws. On subsequent rounds, it unleashes both of its attacks against a single foe. If faced with imminent death, the creature flies to safety far from the ruins of Zabladaï.

Gargoyle: AC 15; HP 52 (7d8+21); Spd 30ft, fly 60ft; **Melee** bite (+4, 1d6+2 piercing), claws (+4, 1d6+2 slashing); **SA** multiattack (bite + claw); **Resist** nonmagical weapons that aren't adamantine; **Immune** poison, exhaustion, petrified; **Str** +2, **Dex** +0, **Con** +3, **Int** -2, **Wis** +0, **Cha** -2; **Senses** dark-vision 60ft; **Traits** false appearance (while motionless, is indistinguishable from a statue); **AL** CE; **CR** 2; **XP** 450.

Treasure: The gargoyle keeps a cache of items and coins on the ledge where it stood. The pile includes 1,088 sp, 205 gp, *boots of elvenkind*, and an *elixir of health*.

Ruined Temple Crypt

1 square - 5 feet



Area Z-5: Housing District

In most cases, a hearth, a few foundation stones and a stray wall are all that remain of the residences that once stood here. Two extremely large mountains of cracked stones and mortar coupled with numerous timbers and loose rocks lie strewn about the area. The layer of construction materials covering the ground measures at least 3 feet deep wherever something is not standing.

Like the armory and barracks, Zabladaï's crowded streets and cramped tenements were home to 1,000 individuals. Huge, extended families lived in these multistoried buildings and back alleys. Because of the amount of debris, the entire area is treated as difficult terrain. PCs searching for valuables come upon 2d6 sp worth of miscellaneous items per 5-foot square searched. Subsequent searches in the same 5-foot square yield nothing.

Area Z-6: Palace

Chunks of marble, faded tile mosaics and the boundaries of a recessed pool filled with dirt and debris imply that the building's resident lived a life of luxury. A stone staircase near the middle of the building's foundation steeply descends to a closed, stone door bearing archaic writing.

Cama Obuto's magnificent palace sat upon this ruined foundation, though his swimming pool and several mosaics survived the cataclysm. The tile artwork is badly faded, but a few minutes of close examination picks up enough details to identify all three mosaics as portraits of a male half-orc. A successful DC 15 Int (History) check verifies the likely hunch that Cama Obuto is the subject of these three pieces. In spite of the place's reputation, scavengers made away with the vast majority of the palace's sundered marble, leaving only a fraction of its original contents. Six large pieces of marble are scattered about the area. Each weighs roughly 20 pounds and is worth 100 gp.

A stone door at the bottom of the staircase 10 feet below the surface is not visible from the surface. The archaic writing etched onto the portal is written in Common and Orc. It states: "There is no place darker than one's twisted mind and evil soul." The inscription is meant as a warning about Cama Obuto's depravity. The door is unlocked and can be opened with a hard push.

Hiding at the top of the staircase are 4 **quasits**. The tiny creatures disguise themselves as toads, centipedes, or bats, and either scuttle across the ground or flit through the air searching for intruders. The creatures deliberately dart back and forth from one hiding spot to another at half speed. A PC must succeed on a DC 15 Perception check to notice the concealed guardians, and even then they'll appear as nothing more than normal vermin. Cama Obuto instructed them to attack everything they see except for orcs.

Quasit: AC 13; HP 7 (3d4); Spd 40ft; Melee claws or bite (+4, 1d4+3 piercing and target must make a successful DC 10 Con saving throw or take 2d4 poison damage and be poisoned for 1 minute; poisoned creature repeats saving throw at end of its turns, ending the effect on a success); SA scare (1/day; 20ft; one creature must make a successful DC 10 Wis save or be frightened for 1 minute; frightened creature repeats saving throw at end of its turns, ending the effect on a success), invisibility (turns invisible as an action until attacks or uses scare); Resist cold, fire, lightning, nonmagical weapons; Immune poison; Str -3, Dex +3, Con +0, Int -2, Wis +0, Cha +0; Skills Stealth +5; Senses darkvision 120ft; Traits shapechanger (can use its action to polymorph into a bat, centipede, or toad), magic resistance (has tactical advantage on saves against magic); AL CE; CR 1; XP 100.

Tactics: At the first sign of intruders, they turn *invisible* and move toward their enemies to attack, at which point they become visible again. They also abandon their guise and return to their natural form. The quasits repeat this pattern throughout the fight. They do not retreat or surrender under any circumstances.

Treasure: The fiends are unable to wield conventional weapons, but they keep a sheathed +1 *longsword* at the base of the staircase, along with a coin purse containing 5 pp and 39 gp.

Area Z-7: Burial Crypt

Five stone sarcophagi carved into the likeness of different orc warriors are spread throughout a subterranean crypt. More than 200 skulls rest upon a row of shelves built into the far wall. A large, marble font is filled with thick, dark goo similar to tar.

In addition to the musty smell PCs encounter when they first open the secret door, they also note the faint scent of embalming materials. However, the aroma emanates from the skulls resting on the far wall rather than the closed sarcophagi. The crypt's lone resident stripped the heads of their mummified flesh, leaving behind just the bones.

The thick goo in the font is a **black pudding**. The ravenous ooze survived all these years by devouring the rotting flesh of the crypt's dead occupants. The cunning monster waits for a PC to draw near before lashing out with its pseudopod and attacking its intended victim. The pudding has no concept of self-preservation and attacks until destroyed.

Black Pudding: AC 7; HP 85 (10d10+30); Spd 20ft, climb 20ft; Melee pseudopod (+5, 1d6+3 bludgeoning plus 4d8 acid; nonmagical armor takes -1 AC and is destroyed at -5); SA split (a Medium or larger black pudding with at least 10 HP that takes lightning or slashing damage splits into two puddings; each has half the original's HP and is one size smaller); Immune acid, cold, lightning, and slashing damage, blindness, charm, deafness, exhaustion, fright, prone; Str +3; Dex -3; Con +3; Int -5; Wis -2; Cha -5; Senses blindsight 60ft; Traits amorphous, corrosive form (creature that touches the pudding or hits it with a melee attack while within 5ft takes 1d8 acid damage; nonmagical wood or metal weapon gains -1 penalty on damage), spider climb; AL un; CR 4; XP 1,100.

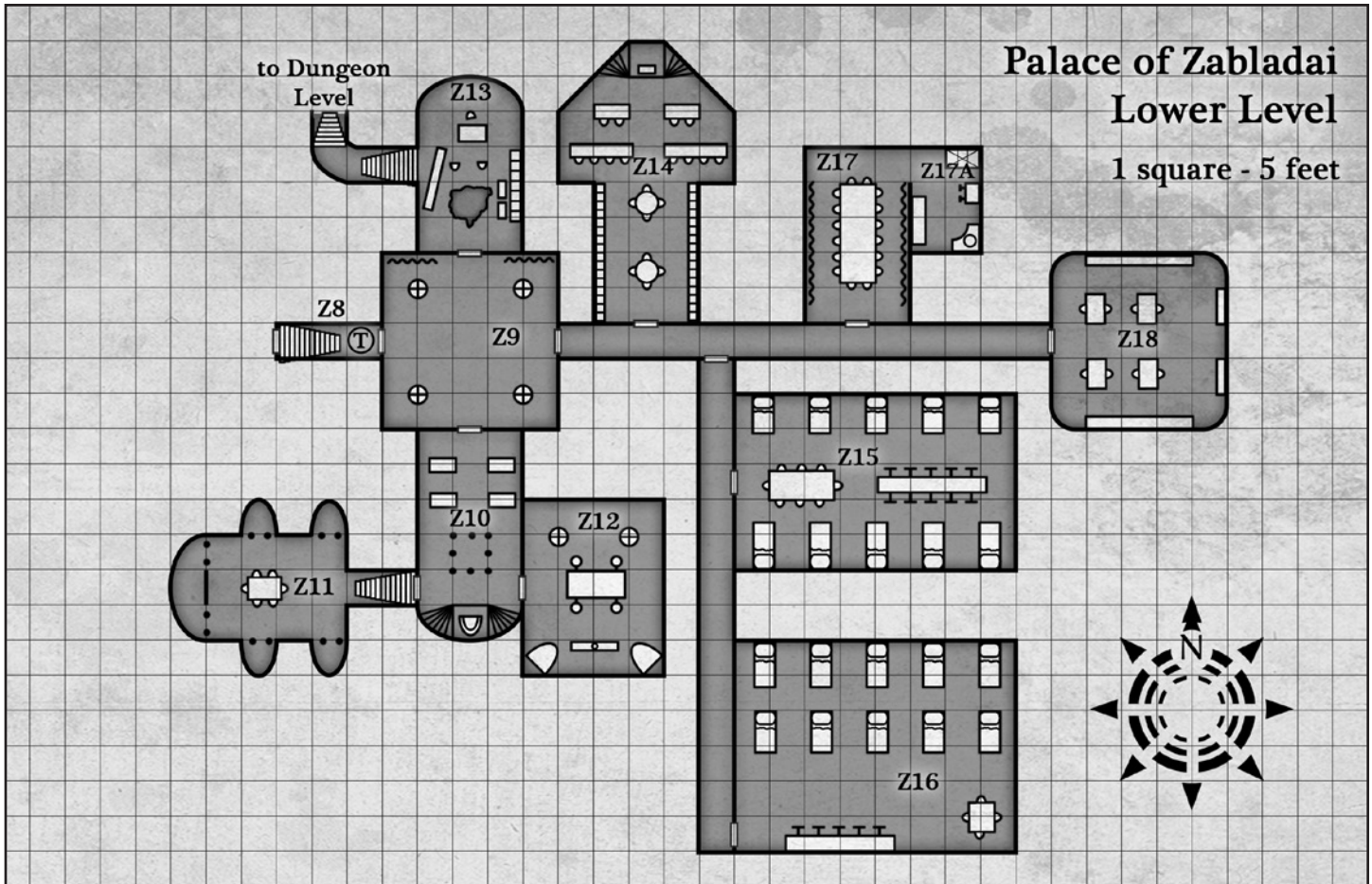
The skulls have no value and are impossible to identify. Each sarcophagus bears the name of the coffin's occupant on its side. The bas-relief images atop the lid are roughly identical, with a few minor differences. Each carving shows an orc lying on its back clutching a greataxe in its hands. The sarcophagus' lids are extremely heavy. It takes a successful DC 20 Strength (Athletics) check to open a stone coffin without damaging it or its contents. After spending at least 5 minutes examining the contents of a sarcophagus, a PC with proficiency in History can attempt an Int (History) check at the indicated DC to identify the crypt's occupant and recall the listed information.

A: Vulgug Obuto (DC 20)

Vulgug Obuto was Cama's great-great-grandfather and the founder of the Obuto dynasty in Zabladaï. His coffin contains his skeletal remains, a tattered linen sash worth 5 gp and a diamond-encrusted dagger worth 500 gp.

B: Ghorgha (DC 20)

Ghorgha was Vulgug's younger brother. Ghorgha died before his older sibling, so he never became chieftain. But he led Zabladaï's army in many of its early, pivotal battles. His coffin contains his skeletal remains and his prized weapon, *Headcleaver* a +1 *greataxe*.



C: Gradgar Obuto (DC 20)

Gradgar Obuto was Cama's great-grandfather. He ruled Zabladaï for a short time and was generally considered to be a halfwit, even by the orcs' extremely low standards for stupidity. His coffin contains his skeletal remains and a worthless cloth miter.

D: Yagnog Obuto (DC 15)

Yagnog Obuto was Cama's grandfather. He is generally considered as Zabladaï's greatest ruler. His coffin contains his skeletal remains and a bone crown with imbedded agate stones worth 100 gp.

E: Sugnatz Obuto (DC 15)

This was Cama's father. He was considered to be an average ruler who was more concerned with bedding young female slaves and drinking to excess than running the city. He died from severe alcohol poisoning 10 years into his reign, giving way to its greatest general who was also his oldest illegitimate heir. His coffin contains only his skeletal remains.

Part Four: Palace of Zabladaï Lower Level

After dispatching Zabladaï's exterior guardians, the PCs descend into the earth. The subterranean complex's uppermost level served a multitude of functions during its long existence. It housed Cama Obuto's private office, a jail, a torture chamber and his faux learning institution. During this portion of the adventure, the PCs discover more frightening facts about Cama Obuto's past.

Unless otherwise noted, the entire level is unlit. The walls, floors and ceilings are constructed from sandstone, and the ceilings are 10 feet high. Unless noted otherwise, the doors are unlocked but stuck, requiring a successful DC 12 Str (Athletics) check to force open.

Area Z-8: Antechamber

A modestly sloped stone staircase descends into an antechamber ending in a closed, wooden door.

The antechamber leads to Cama Obuto's governmental complex beneath the palace as well as his hidden house of horrors. To ward off unauthorized intruders, his priests protected the antechamber with a *glyph of warding*. To allow his child victims to pass unharmed, Cama Obuto set the trap so that it is triggered whenever non-orcs more than 5 feet tall pass through it. In that way, the half-orc Cama Obuto would not trigger the glyph, nor would human and orcish children.

Glyph of Warding Trap: The glyph can be detected only with a deliberate, close inspection of the floor in the entryway

RED WEDDING

and a successful DC 14 Int (Investigation) check. It does 5d8 lightning damage to every creature within 20 feet of the entrance when triggered, or half damage with a successful DC 14 Dex saving throw.

The wooden door at the end of the antechamber is not locked, but it has swollen over the years, making it difficult to open. No one is behind the door, so triggering the trap does not alert anyone to the PCs' presence in the complex.

Area Z-9: Audience Hall

Strips of torn tapestry litter the floor, though parts of four shredded tapestries still cling to the walls. Four stone columns spread throughout the chamber fared no better. Sizable chunks of stone are strewn about and huge gouge marks mar the surface of these support beams. Likewise, an artistic bronze statue is nothing more than an overturned clump of dented metal.

After Cama Obuto's demise, his people destroyed every handiwork crafted in his image. The tapestries depicted him leading his army into battle, but even the heroic subject matter was not enough to spare them. In addition to being torn and shredded, his detractors poured urine and other caustic materials on the fabric. The columns were a particular affront to Cama's aggrieved subjects. He fashioned them in the likeness of impish children, which seemed innocent enough at the time. In the aftermath of his downfall, the columns and the bronze statue felt the people's full wrath. They repeatedly bludgeoned the objects until they are no longer recognizable.

The wooden doors are unlocked, though they are difficult to open.

Area Z-10: Court Room

Interlocking rusty iron bars combine to create a crude cage standing before an onyx throne atop an elevated platform. Four stone benches on the dais face the impressive seat. The painted images of a blindfolded orc holding a razor-sharp axe in one hand and a broken manacle in the other adorn the walls.

Cama Obuto and his predecessors presided over criminal and civil cases in Zablada's central court. The city's ruler acted as the judge, jury and executioner in all legal matters. Naturally, Cama sat upon the throne during the trial while the accused stood in the cage awaiting the verdict and sentencing. Witnesses sat on the stone benches where they answered the judge's inquiries. By all accounts, Zablada's justice system was considered to be relatively fair in comparison with that administered in a tribal setting. Like most societies, wealth, power and personal contacts played an important role in determining the outcome of most cases. Most ordinary citizens trusted the institution's integrity and attempted to resolve personal grievances and punish wrongdoers through the court system rather than by taking matters into their own hands. For that reason, the people did not destroy the courtroom after Cama Obuto's downfall. In fact, Cama commissioned the paintings decorating the walls. The artworks symbolize guilt and innocence. Naturally, the sharpened axe implies the punishment for the former, and the broken manacle represents freedom.

Area Z-11: Holding Cells

Worn and chipped stone stairs descend through a narrow corridor before opening into a larger chamber. Six warped and broken chairs surround a decrepit table near the center of the room. Interlocking iron bars form doors that separate

the room from a large recessed cell at the far end as well as two other recessed cells on opposite walls. Mold and dust cover most of the room's surfaces. Nothing is visible in the space just beyond the entrance.

Two more cells that are not visible from the vestibule line the walls, bringing the total number to five. Zablada's jailors used this prison complex to house defendants during their trials. Afterward, the prisoners were executed, sent to a long-term penitentiary or freed. The cell doors are open and unlocked, and the cells are completely empty save for some loose dirt, scraps of linen and other bits of debris. A careful search of the largest cell and a successful DC 15 Int (Investigation) check reveals a cracked piece of mortar that conceals a letter stuffed behind it. The tightly folded piece of parchment is in terrible shape, but still legible for the most part. It is written in Orc. See the sidebox for the contents of the folded letter.

Prison Note

Unlike the others, I am an innocent man who knows a terrible secret — my judge is guilty of sins far greater than those he passes judgment against. In the depths of Zablada, he performs unspeakable acts of cruelty and murder.

(Four lines here are too damaged to read.)

Where can I turn? They are opening the door. Gods be merciful.

Tyzakko, one of Cama Obuto's lieutenants, wrote the letter 1 year before Cama's death. Nothing in the letter provides any insight pertaining to its author's identity. Zablada's absolute ruler conducted Tyzakko's trial in absentia and sentenced him to death before a closed court. After Cama's downfall, many of Tyzakko's colleagues suspected that he discovered Cama's hidden house of horrors. Though Cama officially convicted him of treason, many orcs revere him as a martyr and a hero.

Area Z-12: Torture Chamber

The grim implements of pain and agony spread throughout the chamber make the room's intended purpose very obvious. Streaks of dried blood mar the surfaces of two iron maidens occupying the corners of the near wall as well as a wooden cross and two scourging posts. The torture chamber's apparent centerpiece is the rack, which sits practically in the center of the room.

Poor drainage has created several holes in the wall behind the iron maidens that allow mice to scurry from the surface into this chamber and back again. The animals immediately run for cover at the first sign of light and the presence of a potential predator, including any humanoids. The mice are harmless and do not attack the PCs. More significantly, they served as sustenance for the far-more-dangerous creatures that are still here.

The rack and one of the iron maidens are really **mimics**. Recognizing the mimics' true nature is impossible until they react to the PCs' presence somehow. The voracious aberrations lash out with their sticky pseudopods as soon as a living creature comes within 5 feet. The mimics are too slow to escape, so they fight to the bitter end. During Cama's reign, the half-orc general let the hungry beasts devour his enemies to make them vanish without leaving a trace.

Mimic: AC 12; HP 58 (9d8+8); Spd 15ft; **Melee** bite (+5, 1d8+3 piercing plus 1d8 acid), pseudopod (+5, 1d8+3 bludgeoning plus adhesive); **SA** adhesive (target creature is grappled; escape DC 13, and escape checks are made with tactical disadvantage), grappler (has tactical advantage)

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on attack rolls against grappled creatures); **Immune** acid, prone; **Str** +3; **Dex** +1; **Con** +2; **Int** -3; **Wis** +1; **Cha** -1; **Skills** Stealth +5; **Senses** darkvision 60ft; **Traits** shapechanger (can use its action to polymorph into an object or back to true form), false appearance (while motionless, mimic is indistinguishable from whatever object it resembles); **AL** N; **CR** 2; **XP** 450.

Area Z-13: Cama Obuto's Office

Thick layers of soot cover the walls and ceiling, and tiny particles of ash still circulate in the air from a long-extinguished fire. The charred husks of hundreds of books occupy much of the room. One nearly empty bookshelf still stands on a near wall. The bookshelf that stood on the opposite wall is overturned, revealing a corridor that descends sharply. Two stone statues lie in pieces on the floor, though a nearby intricately carved mahogany desk and three chairs remain intact.

Like the adjoining chamber, Zabladaï's vengeful residents destroyed everything that bore Cama Obuto's image. The two broken statues and the burnt books are another example of their anger. Large chips and cracks marring the statue's face render it impossible to identify the artwork's subject. Likewise, his collected written works are damaged beyond recognition. A handful of books still occupy the upright shelf, but they were merely left behind as an oversight and not for any hidden purpose. The seven remaining tomes are written in Common and are worth 2 gp each. Four of them discuss art and architecture, and the balance address the ancient history of the area, basic mathematics and geology.

Surprisingly, Cama's desk and chair survived the cataclysm that befell the rest of the room. His desk has three drawers, all of which are locked and appear undisturbed. The locks can be opened with thief's tools and a successful DC 15 Dex check, or they can be pried open with a successful DC 18 Str (Athletics) check.

The first two drawers contain parchment, quills, eight jars of dried ink and a blank ledger book. The third drawer contains two potions — *gaseous form* and *suggestion*. A scroll case is in the drawer, but the document within contains nothing relevant and is merely a ruse to release another *glyph of warding* spell on the unfortunate reader.

Glyph of Warding Trap: The glyph can be detected only with a deliberate, close inspection of the scroll case and a successful DC 14 Int (Investigation) check. It does 5d8 cold damage to every creature within 20 feet when triggered, or half damage with a successful DC 14 Dex saving throw.

Development: At one time, the overturned bookshelf concealed the entrance to Cama Obuto's hidden house of horrors. His killers destroyed the secret portal that granted unfettered access to his subterranean hell. The dark passageway descends at a sharp incline before turning due north and ending in a strong wooden door.

Area Z-14: Classroom

A raised podium at the far end of the room overlooks two rows of desks with chairs tucked beneath them. Just inside the entrance are two circular tables surrounded by four chairs and two bookshelves containing a vast assortment of books. Many of the books are badly damaged with missing covers and pages, ripped bindings and obvious bite marks, particularly on the leather-bound tomes.

In the classroom's heyday, Cama Obuto conducted lessons on governance, politics and history from the elevated podium at the far end of the room. The students sat behind desks facing the dais. Cama Obuto used the

antechamber leading into the classroom as a library, stocking it with the finest books of his day. Though many of the written works are irreparably damaged, 129 viable books are worth an average of 5 gp each. They cover a range of topics, but the majority focus on history and economics.

After Zabladaï's downfall, a small colony of rats overran the library and ate many of the books. Most died out over the passing decades, but **10 shadow rats** endured and continue to feast on the books' leather coverings and parchment pages. They are difficult to spot and can be seen only with a Perception check or passive score of 16 or higher. As soon as they notice the PCs, the creatures immediately squeeze through tiny cracks in the walls and floor or disappear into the shadows. The clever, undead rodents attack whenever a PC passes close to a concealed shadow rat. They attack until they kill the PCs or vice versa. If they reduce a PC to 0 hit points, the shadow rats converge on the helpless character and gnaw him to death.

Shadow Rat: **AC** 12; **HP** 1 (1d4-1); **Spd** 40ft, climb 15ft; **Melee** bite (+4, 1 piercing and target might be infected with cadaver fever); **SA** shadow form (can assume shadow form for 1 hour; **AC** 14, immune to nonmagical weapons, can move through objects and creatures as difficult terrain but is destroyed if still inside something solid at end of its turn); **Immune** exhaustion, fright, poison, unconsciousness; **Str** -2, **Dex** +2, **Con** -1, **Int** -4, **Wis** +1, **Cha** +1; **Senses** darkvision 60ft; **Traits** shadow blend (becomes invisible when it moves into darkness, dim light, or heavy obscurement); **AL** N; **CR** 1/4; **XP** 50.

Cadaver Fever: At end of battle, anyone bitten by a shadow rat is infected with cadaver fever unless they make a successful DC 9 Con saving throw. An infected character gains one level of exhaustion immediately and must repeat the saving throw at the end of every long rest. Each failed saving throw adds another level of exhaustion. Successful saves after two consecutive long rests end the disease, as does *lesser restoration* or comparable magic.

Area Z-15: Girls' Dormitory

Two rows of beds covered with fine linen sheets line the walls. There are ten beds in all. A large, freestanding iron storage device with ten doors occupies the space between the beds, along with a wooden table surrounded by eight chairs.

Cama Obuto's female students lived in these quarters during their brief stay in the sadist's faux academy. Everything here remains exactly as it was the day Cama Obuto fell. The iron storage device in the center of the room is akin to a modern-day school locker. The doors are all locked, and all but one is empty. Cama Obuto made sure to take all of the children's belongings before they disappeared for their alleged assignment. Only his last victim's personal items remain. She kept her things in the easternmost locker on the north side.

The locks can be opened with thief's tools and a successful DC 15 Dex check, or with a successful DC 18 Str (Athletics) check.

The last victim's locker contains an assortment of girl's clothing and undergarments, including a noble's outfit, three books on history, civics and philosophy worth 5 gp each, and a diary. The young girl's narrative is written in Orc and contains many entries detailing her friends' goodbyes. If the PCs read it in its entirety (taking about 30 minutes), she refers to her teacher Cama Obuto as a brilliant and caring person. However, she mentions several troubling incidents involving his cruel behavior that she glosses over or dismisses. Her final entry states that she is excited about leaving for her upcoming assignment later that night.

Area Z-16: Boys' Dormitory

Two rows of unkempt beds fill half of the room, while an armoire with five separate doors and a table surrounded by four chairs occupy the other half. The translucent outline of an enraged humanoid floats just above the beds. The angry spirit resembles a teenage boy with flowing black hair, gaunt facial features and a malevolent scowl etched onto its contorted visage as it lunges toward the nearest living thing.

A week before Cama Obuto's lieutenants slew him, the cagey general murdered one of his male students in the boys' dormitory. His victim, Kuulagu, realized that something was amiss with the academy and told Cama that he was going to leave and tell others. With no one else around, Cama flew into a rage and strangled Kuulagu. Yet even death could not quell the young man's determination. Unable to find eternal peace, his spirit endured.

The transformation to undeath turned the otherwise good-natured Kuulagu into a vengeful **ghost** with one mission — to rid the world of Cama Obuto forever. Along the way, the angry entity attacks every humanoid creature it encounters regardless of their intentions.

Since Kuulagu's ghost wants only to destroy Cama Obuto, it shares a goal with the PCs. If it possesses a character, it leaves to search for its intended quarry. But if someone speaks to Kuulagu about Cama Obuto, he responds, repeatedly expressing his desire to destroy him. Unfortunately, the ghost is not willing to join an alliance to attack Cama Obuto. It will let the PCs pass by unharmed if they make it clear that they're hunting Obuto, but that's as cooperative as it's willing to be. If asked about its death, the ghost admits that Cama Obuto killed him in the dormitory because he threatened to expose him as a fraud.

Ghost: AC 11; HP 45 (10d8); Spd 0ft, fly 40ft; **Melee** withering touch (+5, 4d6+3 necrotic); **SA** horrifying visage (60ft, DC 13 Wis save, frightened 1 min.; if save fails by 5 or more, age 1d4x10 years), possession (5ft, DC 13 Cha save or possessed); **Immune** charm, cold, exhaustion, fright, grapple, necrotic, paralysis, poison, prone, restraint; **Resist** acid, fire, lightning, nonmagical weapons; **Str** -2, **Dex** +1, **Con** +0, **Int** +0, **Wis** +1, **Cha** +3; **Senses** darkvision 60ft; **Traits** ethereal sight (sees 60ft from Material to Ethereal Plane and vice versa), incorporeal movement (moves through objects and creatures as difficult terrain; takes 1d10 force damage if inside an object at end of turn), etherealness (as an action, moves from Material Plane to Ethereal Plane or vice versa); **AL** any; **CR** 4; **XP** 1100.

Two boys shared each locker in the armoire. Unlike the girls' dormitory, these storage cabinets are unlocked. Cama Obuto emptied the lockers and destroyed their contents shortly after he killed Kuulagu. The beds are old, rickety and worthless.

Area Z-17: Dining Hall

The door is half ajar, allowing full visibility into a once-stately dining hall. Sixteen chairs surround an immense dining table. Two full-length tapestries depicting young male and female humans and orcs leading great armies into battle adorn the walls. An opening in the far wall leads into an adjoining chamber.

Zabladaï's students dined in this large hall in the company of their purported benefactor, Cama Obuto. He commissioned the tapestries adorning the walls to demonstrate what successful students could achieve under his tutelage. The artwork is exceptionally good, and the tapestries are worth 250 gp each. Of course, these images are a complete fantasy as none of

his pupils ever left the school to accomplish anything. The opening in the east wall leads to the adjacent kitchen.

Area Z-17A: Kitchen

Hundreds of crockery pieces, utensils and goblets fill a massive cupboard. An open charcoal pit is covered by an iron grate and a corner hearth for cooking. Grease, soot and grime are everywhere. A hardened wooden worktable with drawers beneath it sits between them on the same wall.

Cama's human servants prepared meals in this crowded kitchen. They used the grill to sear meats and the hearth to make soups and stews. The plates, bowls, utensils and goblets are functional, but not decorative. There are 100 pieces in all worth an average of 1 sp each. The cooks kept their supply of food and spices in the drawers beneath the worktable. In the absence of any humans, the kitchen's vermin residents ran amok and devoured every last morsel of stored food.

With their food supply exhausted, **3 swarms of insects** consume the grease, grime and soot within the hearth and the charcoal grill. At the first sign of light, the ravenous insects scurry for the cracks and crevices throughout the room. Finding them requires a successful DC 20 Wis (Perception) check. Within 1d4 rounds of the PCs' arrival in the kitchen, the hungry insects pour out of their hiding places and attack in search of a fresh meal. The mindless vermin fight until destroyed and follow the PCs for 100 feet before giving up the chase and returning to their greasy feast.

Insect Swarm (3): AC 12; HP 22 (5d8); Spd 20ft, climb 20ft; **Melee** bite (+3, 4d4 piercing or 2d4 piercing if swarm has one-half or fewer than its original hit points); **Resist** bludgeoning, piercing, slashing; **Immune** charm, fright, paralysis, petrification, prone, restraint, stun; **Str** -4, **Dex** +1, **Con** +0, **Int** -5, **Wis** -2, **Cha** -5; **Senses** blindsight 10ft; **Traits** swarm; **AL** un; **CR** 1/2; **XP** 100.

Area Z-18: Game Room

Toy soldiers, horses and dolls line two rows of shelves built into the walls. Gaming pieces and painted game boards cover four small tables, with a chair sitting on opposite sides. Two dartboards holding a dozen darts each hang from the far wall.

Zabladaï's students indulged in various games to pass the time during their brief stay in Cama Obuto's academy. A quick examination of the playing surfaces painted on the tables identifies them as chess and pachisi. The two tables closest to the entrance are chess tables, and the other two are pachisi tables. The workmanship on the tables and game pieces is very crude, making them worthless. The toy soldiers, horses and dolls are another matter. Many are expertly crafted. Ten soldier figurines are worth 10 gp each, six horse miniatures are worth 10 gp each, and 24 dolls are worth 25 gp each. A dozen darts are stuck into each dartboard, but they're too small and light to be used as weapons.

Part Five: Palace of Zabladaï Dungeon Level

In the darkest depths of Zabladaï, the city's absolute ruler indulged his darkest fantasies and most-depraved impulses in his private hell. All of Cama Obuto's ghastly secrets are brought to light here. In the adventure's conclusion, the PCs meet the remorseful orc chieftain who foolishly bargained with a dark entity borne of lies and deceit. In the dank recesses of Cama Obuto's personal house of horrors, the PCs must decide whether Stolen Tongue can be a friend or must be a foe. With or without his aid, they press forward and confront the malingering spirit that inhabits the foulest reaches of the ruined city and human existence. Cama Obuto's wretched soul longs to resume his murderous ways by defiling the most innocent victims.

The formerly secret tunnel leading from Cama Obuto's private office to the dungeon level descends 15 feet and ends in a strong wooden door. Unless noted otherwise, the doors are unlocked but stuck, requiring a successful DC 12 Str (Athletics) check to force open. In addition, the area is unlit, and all ceilings, walls and floors are carved from roughhewn stone. The ceilings are 10 feet high.

Area Z-19: Antechamber

The smooth, polished stone walls, floors and ceilings of the upper level give way to roughhewn chambers carved from solid rock. Two statues of beautiful female warriors armed with longswords are the only decorative features.

Until his destruction, Cama Obuto kept this antechamber and the adjoining subterranean complex secret. To prevent others from discovering his house of horrors, he commissioned the construction of two guardians that he programmed. The statues are **2 improved caryatid columns** (their improvement is that they attack twice per turn instead of once). They attack any non-orcs taller than 5 feet tall as soon as the caryatid columns see them or whenever a creature attacks them. This condition allowed him to bring children into his torturous realm and lets Stolen Tongue pass unharmed. Fortunately, the fearsome creatures also allowed his killers to enter his domain without hindrance. The columns do not move more than 50 feet from this area and fight until destroyed.

Improved Caryatid Columns (2): AC 14; HP 30 (4d10+8); Spd 20ft; Melee longsword (+4, 1d10+2 slashing); **SA** multiattack (longsword x2); **Immune** disease, exhaustion, fright, necrotic, paralysis, petrification, poison, psychic, stun, unconsciousness; **Resist** nonmagical weapons; **Str +2, Dex -1, Con +2, Int +0, Wis +0, Cha -5; Senses** darkvision 60ft; **Traits** immunity to magic (automatically succeeds on saves against magic; if a save normally reduces damage by half, the caryatid column takes no damage with a success; *stone shape* cancels this effect for 1d4 rounds), shatter weapons (when a melee weapon attack against the caryatid column rolls a natural 1, 2, or 3, the attacker makes a Str check; + Str modifier, - proficiency bonus and the weapon's magical bonus; on 16 or higher, the weapon shatters); **AI un; CR 2; XP 450.** (Full details on caryatid columns can be found in *Fifth Edition Foes*.)

Area Z-20: Pool

Mildew-stained marble floors surround a half-empty pool of filthy water. Though badly faded, painted images of mermaids, sea creatures and vibrantly colored fish frolicking in clear, blue waters cover the walls. Two blue gemstones imbedded in the ceiling bathe the room in pale blue light.

Despite the room's beauty, this pool often played host to Cama Obuto's most-despicable acts of torture as he drowned his unwilling guests. The beautiful marble floors and lively artwork cannot compensate for the horrors perpetrated in the pool. Over the years, the screams and struggles of Cama's many victims fouled the waters, making it an attractive home to a summoned water elemental. The elemental is impossible to spot in the water unless it moves and creates a wave. Ideally, it waits until an enemy nears the water's edge before leaping out of the pool to attack.

Water Elemental: AC 14; HP 114 (12d10+48); Spd 30ft, swim 90ft; Melee slam (+7, 2d8+4 bludgeoning); **SA** multiattack (slam x2), whelm (recharge 4-6; creatures in elemental's space must make successful DC 15 Str saving throws or take 2d8+4 bludgeoning and be grappled [escape DC 14], restrained, and unable to breathe; on successful save, creature is pushed out of elemental's space; grappled creatures take 2d8+4 bludgeoning at start of elemental's turns); **Immune** exhaustion, grapple, paralysis, petrification, poison, prone, restraint, unconsciousness; **Resist** acid, nonmagical weapons; **Str +4, Dex +2, Con +4, Int -5, Wis +0, Cha -1; Senses** darkvision 60ft; **Traits** freeze (speed reduced by 20ft until end of elemental's next turn if it takes cold damage), water form (can enter an enemy's space and stop there; can move through 1-inch gap without squeezing); **AL N; CR 5; XP 1,800.**

Treasure: The blue gemstones imbedded into the ceiling are flawless sapphires worth 250 gp each. They can be pried loose from the ceiling with a successful DC 10 Strength check. They emit light because of a *continual flame* spell cast on them a century earlier. In addition, Cama also enticed his young victims with fabulous riches that he kept at the bottom of the pool in the northeastern corner. The objects were plainly visible in their day, but the clouded water now makes it impossible to see them from the surface. A PC who wades into the pool and feels around the bottom detects them automatically. There are 409 gp, a platinum crown worth 350 gp, a *ring of protection*, and a +1 *shield*.

Area Z-21: Parlor

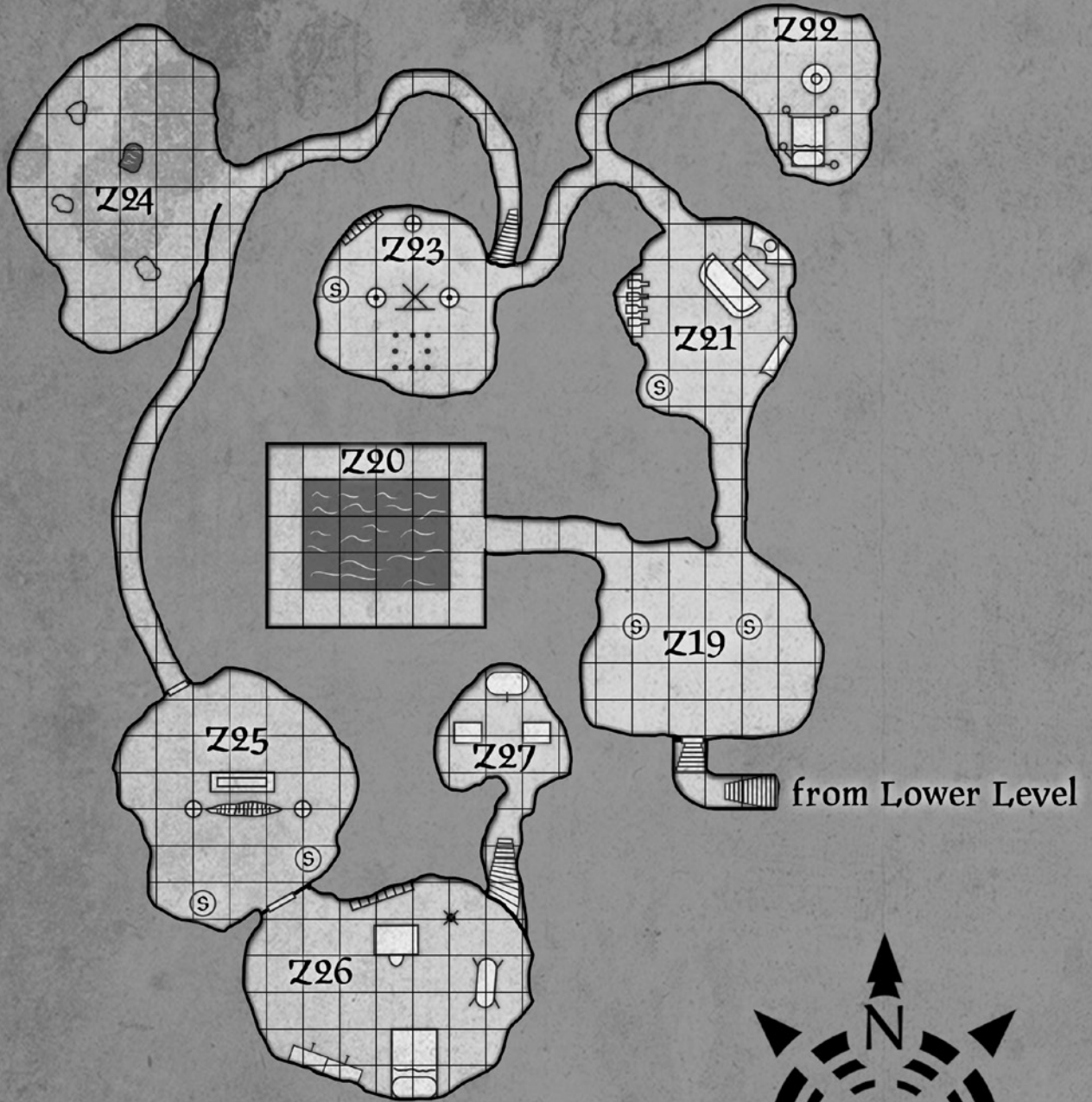
The crackling embers of a dying fire bathe the room in dim light. Thick layers of dust and soot coat the small table and leather couch in front of the hearth. Dust and ash also cover a nearly full wine rack and a macabre bronze statue of a sinister jester. An oil painting of the same figure hangs on a nearby wall.

As a lover of the fineries in life, Cama Obuto relaxed in this luxurious, subterranean hideout. The statue and painting both depict the vile half-orc in a jester's costume that he sometimes wore to entertain his young victims. He also plied his unsuspecting guests with alcohol, though he also had a taste for fine wine. Though most of the wine in the wine rack is no longer drinkable, 12 bottles valued at 50 gp each are still viable. A successful DC 5 Wis (Medicine) check is needed to separate the good wine from the spoiled wine.

Stolen Tongue lit the fire in the hearth several hours ago. There is a 20% chance that he returns to tend to the flames within 2d6 minutes of the PCs' arrival here. Otherwise, he returns 1d4 hours later to check on the hearth and uneasily nap on the couch.

Palace of Zabladai Lower Level

1 square - 5 feet



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The vulnademondid not arrive alone. The wily outsider brought a **shadow demon** with it to act as a guardian. The clever monster makes full use of the dim light, hiding in the shadows behind the couch. The creature is hidden when characters enter the chamber, and it remains perfectly still until an enemy comes within 5 feet. The shadow demon then attacks, while ensuring that it remains in the shadows. On the following round, it shrieks to alert the complex. Fearing that the shadow demon may have attacked his orc followers, Stolen Tongue arrives on the scene 1d4+1 rounds later to investigate. The creature wants to return to the Abyss, so it enthusiastically fights until it's destroyed.

Shadow Demon: **AC** 13; **HP** 66 (12d8+12); **Spd** 30ft, fly 30ft; **Melee** claws (+5, 2d6+3 psychic, or 4d6+3 psychic if demon had tactical advantage); **SA** shadowy stealth (can take the hide action as a bonus action in darkness or dim light); **Immune** cold, exhaustion, grapple, lightning, paralysis, petrification, poison, prone, restraint; **Resist** acid, fire, necrotic, thunder, nonmagical weapons; **Vulnerable** radiant; **Str** -5, **Dex** +3, **Con** +1, **Int** +2, **Wis** +1, **Cha** +2; **Saving Throws** Dex +5, Cha +4; **Skills** Stealth +7; **Senses** darkvision 120ft; **Traits** incorporeal (moves through objects and creatures as difficult terrain; takes 1d10 force damage if inside an object at end of turn), light-sensitive (has tactical disadvantage on Wis [Perception] checks that rely on sight and on attacks while in bright light); **AL** CE; **CR** 4; **XP** 1,100.

Development: Unless the PCs get the jump on the shadow demon and quickly kill it, its shriek will lead Stolen Tongue to investigate. Stolen

Tongue is surprised by the intrusion, but he is not instantly hostile. He regrets making his bargain with Cama Obuto, though he is unsure of how to get out of it without incurring Cama's wrath or turning the demons against him and his people.

Area Z-22: Bedchamber

The paintings covering the walls have long since faded beyond recognition. An iron chandelier hangs from the ceiling near the center of the room, roughly above a sturdy, unmade four-poster bed. An iron chain is attached to each leg and ends in a rusty manacle.

The charming lothario used this secret hideaway to engage in clandestine trysts with his political enemies' wives and lovers. To gain their trust, he allowed them to chain him to the bed during their rendezvous. Of course, the crafty Cama Obuto used the chains as an added piece of insurance in the event that one of his partners tried to slay him *in flagrante delicto*. The 5-foot-long iron chains are magical and immediately animate upon Cama Obuto's command and in the presence of any non-human or non-orc creature. The animated tentacles turn the entire chamber into the area of effect of a *black tentacles* spell (saving throw DC 15, 3d6 bludgeoning damage, escape DC 15). The chains only attack targets designated by Cama Obuto.

If the PCs sneaked past the shadow demon in **Area Z-21**, they find **Stolen Tongue** lying on the bed contemplating what to do next. Stolen Tongue reacts as described in the sidebox found in **Area Z-21** above.

Stolen Tongue

The orc chieftain realizes that he is between the proverbial rock and a hard place. He knows that he cannot defeat Cama and his demons alone. Even if he succeeded in that endeavor, he would then have to contend with Sukh's forces without the demons' help. He needs allies, but he is not sure whom he can trust. Certainly not the PCs; he believes Sukh sent them to kill him and the demons. Of course, if the PCs attack him, he fights back and is unwilling to listen to anything else they have to say.

This is likely to be the PCs' one and only opportunity to use their Persuasion skill to sway Stolen Tongue to their side. Because he mistrusts them, it takes a successful DC 20 Cha (Persuasion) check to change the orc's attitude. However, by using information that the PCs gathered during the course of their investigation, they can increase their odds of success. The following table details the modifiers to the DC of the Persuasion check. The modifiers are cumulative.

Diplomacy Check Modifiers

Information Revealed to Stolen Tongue	Persuasion DC Modifier
Stolen Tongue did not kill Crystal	-2
Stolen Tongue and Crystal were lovers	-2
Vulnademond is dead	-2
Sukh killed Crystal	-5
Crystal was pregnant	-5
Orcs kidnapped Bodi	+2
Sukh and/or Seven Horsemen hired the PCs	+2
Bodi's Abduction	+5
Caaddan attacked and destroyed	+20

PCs get one shot at this (multiple characters can assist, but only one character can make the Persuasion check). If they fail to win over Stolen Tongue, he attacks. Stolen Tongue's level of coopera-

tion depends upon his reaction. If the Persuasion check succeeds, Stolen Tongue is willing to work with the PCs (but not necessarily to accompany them or fight alongside them). A successful Persuasion check also means Stolen Tongue agrees to recall his warriors and prevent them from sacrificing more victims to Cama Obuto. He gives some general information about the complex, but he knows little about Cama Obuto himself other than his ability to command demons to his service.

If the Persuasion check exceeds the final DC by 5 or more, the PCs may make additional requests of Stolen Tongue. He will accompany them on the remainder of their journey into the depths of Zablada. The GM must adjust the ensuing encounters accordingly, adding more monsters and hazards to account for Stolen Tongue's assistance; his presence makes the party 50 to 100 percent stronger. The clever orc is no fool, and he insists on getting his fair share of treasure in exchange for assisting the PCs.

Throughout all of this, remember that Stolen Tongue is looking for a way out of his current predicament. He is hardly above blame in this affair; he ordered his troops to capture a teenage boy, whom he sacrificed to Cama Obuto. Though few mourned his loss, Stolen Tongue still murdered the young man. Stolen Tongue is not proud of what he did, but he feels that Sukh's actions left him no choice; he had to save his people, regardless of the cost.

Stolen Tongue (Orc War Chief): **AC** 16; **HP** 93 (11d8+44); **Spd** 30ft; **Melee** greataxe (+6, 1d12+4 plus 1d8 slashing), spear (+6, 1d6+4 plus 1d8 piercing, or 2d8+4 piercing if used 2-handed); **Ranged** spear (+6, 20ft/60ft, 1d6+4 plus 1d8); **SA** multiattack (greataxe x2 or spear x2), battle cry (1/day; 30ft; each ally gains tactical advantage on attack rolls for 1 round; the war chief makes one attack as a bonus action); **Str** +4, **Dex** +1, **Con** +4, **Int** +0, **Wis** +0, **Cha** +3; **Saves** Str +6, Con +6, Wis +2; **Skills** Intimidation +5; **Senses** darkvision 60ft; **Traits** aggressive (can move its speed toward a hostile creature in sight, as a bonus action); **AL** CE; **CR** 4; **XP** 1,100.

Area Z-23: Cama's Dungeon

Cruel instruments of pain and torment fill the cavernous chamber. An assortment of whips and blunt weaponry adorn a decorative rack built into the wall near a stone scouring pillar. Two nooses imbedded into the ceiling hang 6 feet off the ground around an upright, X-shaped cross large enough to accommodate a man-sized creature. A heavy iron cage constructed from interlocking bars is attached to a crude pulley system allowing someone outside the cage to raise and lower the device. A large creature resembling a scarlet frog with a wide, toothy mouth oversees this carnal spectacle. Its tongue salaciously licks its lips as it ogles the impressive collection of torture devices. Amid these objects of agony and the room's savage occupant is a foppish jester's outfit draped upon a statue at the far end of the room. In spite of its bright colors and silly appearance, the creepy costume is more unnerving than anything else in the chamber.

The **red slaad** was drawn to this spot by the anticipatory delight of spreading pain (and eggs) under the tutelage of a long-slumbering expert in the field, Cama Obuto. The monstrous creature is so enraptured by these wicked implements that it pays nominal attention to its surroundings, including the shadow demon's bay from **Area Z-21** and Stolen Tongue's presence in **Area Z-22**. That is not to say that the slaad is always caught off-guard by the PCs. It is simply too preoccupied to do anything about it at the present time. The malevolent being keeps a wary eye toward the room's entrance to spot unwanted intruders. If the slaad flees, it heads toward the village of Ubuka to wreak more havoc before returning to the Chaos of Limbo.

Red Slaad: AC 14; HP 93 (11d10+33); Spd 30ft; **Melee** bite (+6, 2d4+3 piercing), claw (+6, 1d8+3 piercing and humanoid target must make a successful DC 14 Con saving throw or have an egg implanted; egg hatches in 3 months, killing host; egg is destroyed by *lesser restoration* or comparable magic); **SA** multiattack (bite x1, claw x2); **Resist** acid, cold, fire, lightning, thunder; **Str** +3, **Dex** +1, **Con** +3, **Int** -2, **Wis** -2, **Cha** -2; **Skills** Perception +1; **Senses** darkvision 60ft; **Traits** magic resistance (has tactical advantage on saving throws against magic), regeneration (regains 10 HP if it has at least 1 HP at start of its turn); **AL** CN; **CR** 5; **XP** 1,800.

Stolen Tongue first encountered Cama Obuto's disembodied spirit in this torture chamber. There is a 10% chance that Cama Obuto arrives in the room 1d6 minutes after encountering the red slaad and a 100% chance that he appears in the room 10d6 minutes after the battle with the slaad. Cama Obuto never fights in this chamber. He instead passes through the west wall and retreats back to **Area Z-25**. The rack of whips includes four whips and a pair of flails. The jester's costume is the same one depicted in previous images throughout the complex. Cama Obuto enjoyed wearing the self-deprecating attire during his torture sessions.

The secret door leading to Cama's inner sanctum may be opened by rotating the scouring post 45 degrees clockwise. It can be closed by turning it 45 degrees counterclockwise. It is carved from roughhewn stone.

If the PCs open the secret door, the GM may read or paraphrase the following description:

The narrow passageway crudely carved out of the roughhewn stone descends sharply down a pitched slope with the occasional stair.

Area Z-24: Burial Chamber

Several large stones and a small pool of stagnant water are the only features of a damp, foul-smelling cavern.

Cama Obuto buried his countless victims in this mass grave concealed beneath a few inches of loose stones and hardened earth. Still, an inspection of the floor reveals a stray bone or the crown of a small, humanoid skull protruding through the surface. Most of the corpses rest in peace, but a ragtag handful of undead refuses to depart this world so easily. Despite their hatred for Cama Obuto, **4 specters** spread throughout the cavernous room now serve him. The restless dead rise from their shallow graves and attack any creature that sets foot in the burial area. The GM may read or paraphrase the following description:

Four creatures resembling translucent, living corpses emerge from their graves. Rotting flesh and hideous abscesses revealing their tightly corded muscles and sinew stretched across their skeletons belie their undead nature. Their eye sockets are hollow and emanate a hellish glow. Chipped and decaying teeth tenaciously cling to their upper and lower jaws, and their finger bones end in razor-sharp digits akin to an animal's claws.

Specter (4): AC 12; HP 22 (5d8); Spd 0ft, fly 50ft (hover); **Melee** life drain (+4, 3d6 necrotic and target must make a successful DC 10 Con saving throw or its HP maximum is reduced by the same amount until it finishes a rest); **Immune** charm, exhaustion, grapple, necrotic, paralysis, petrification, poison, prone, restraint, unconsciousness; **Resist** acid, cold, fire, lightning, thunder, nonmagical weapons; **Str** -5, **Dex** +2, **Con** +0, **Int** +0, **Wis** +0, **Cha** +0; **Senses** darkvision 60ft; **Traits** incorporeal (moves through objects and creatures as difficult terrain; takes 1d10 force damage if inside an object at end of turn), light-sensitive (has tactical disadvantage on Wis [Perception] checks that rely on sight and on attacks while in bright light); **AL** CE; **CR** 1; **XP** 200.

Area Z-25: Sacrificial Chamber

The chamber's decorative features span the spectrum of moods, ranging from the gruesomely horrific to the outright laughable. Juvenile and adult skulls, spines, ribs and long bones fill a recessed pit in front of an altar fashioned from the arched spine and attached shoulder blades of a massive reptile or beast. Leather and sinew straps are attached to several of the vertebrae. The scent of burning incense emanates from two golden braziers hanging from chains affixed to the ceiling. The lit braziers are suspended at opposite ends of the altar and bathe the area in dim light. Two bronze statues of a muscular half-orc male wearing nothing but a jester's hat are placed alongside a door at the far end of the chamber. Four human skeletons clad in broken chain shirts and armed with broken scimitars mill about the chamber.

In most cases, Cama Obuto unceremoniously buried his victims in the mass grave in **Area Z-24**. He spared enemy generals, political rivals and powerful foes such an ignominious fate and instead sacrificed these individuals to the dark powers of the nether world. He now uses this chamber again for his grisly blood tributes.

Cama Obuto is a spectral wight, a rare and peculiar sort of undead that combines the hatred, viciousness, and vanity of a wight with a ghostly insubstantiality that allows it to inhabit solid objects as easily as the air,

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making it every bit as dangerous as a wraith. (All of the spectral wight's abilities work exactly like the wight's except for its insubstantiality, which is unique.)

The sacrificial altar in this chamber is made from the spine and shoulder blades of an allosaurus, a fact PCs can determine with a successful DC 15 Int (Nature) check. The altar acts as a conduit between Cama Obuto and the Lower Planes. Within a 40-foot radius around the altar, Cama Obuto and his skeletons receive the benefits of a *bless* spell. Cama Obuto himself can't stray more than 80 feet from the altar except for brief periods of time and with great exertion; it won't happen during this encounter.

The bones in the recessed pit are a mixture of adult and juvenile human skeletons with a smaller percentage of orc, goblin and elf bones. The braziers hang from iron chains bolted into the ceiling. The golden braziers are worth 250 gp each. The bronze statues are idealized depictions of Cama Obuto. The PCs can correctly identify the subject with a successful DC 15 Int (Arcana) check. Not even the most shameless art collector would want to add these bizarre sculptures to his collection.

The 4 skeletons are standard, undead automatons under the command of **Cama Obuto**. Cama Obuto relies upon these undead minions to bring his victims to him and fasten them to the bone altar with the leather straps. About an hour before midnight, one such victim can be found here. Earlier that evening, Stolen Tongue's orcs captured Cerat, an adolescent runaway who wandered too close to Zablada. On a dare to impress a girl, the brazen youngster snuck past the witless orcs but the quasits guarding **Area Z-6** spotted him and alerted the orcs, who then subdued and brought him here. The terrified child screams for help and struggles to escape his bonds. He repeatedly claims that the "ghost" flew into the altar and is still there.

Regardless of whether he has a victim or not, **Cama Obuto** always hides inside the altar. He can only sense the presence of other creatures within 10 feet of the altar. He can attack from inside the altar, but unless he reveals himself, his targets have total concealment against him (he has tactical disadvantage on attack rolls, but adds 1d4 to the roll because of the altar's effect). He also has total cover while inside the altar; characters can attack him only with reactions or by readying an action to attack when he strikes out of the altar or when he emerges momentarily to see what's happening elsewhere in the chamber.

Cama Obuto (Spectral Wight): AC 14; HP 75 (10d8+30); Spd 30ft; Melee life drain (+5, 2d6+2 necrotic and the target must make a successful DC 14 Con saving throw or its HP maximum is reduced by the same amount), longsword (+5, 2d8+2 slashing or 2d10+2 slashing if used two-handed); **Ranged** longbow (+5, 150ft/600ft, 2d8+2 piercing); **SA** multiattack (2 attacks; only 1 can be life drain); **Resist** necrotic and nonmagical, nonsilvered bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing; **Immune** poison, exhaustion; **Str** +2, **Dex** +2, **Con** +3, **Int** +0, **Wis** +1, **Cha** +2; **Skills** Perception +3, Stealth +5; **Senses** darkvision 60ft; **Traits** insubstantial (moves through objects and creatures as difficult terrain; can occupy solid objects at the end of its turn without penalty), sunlight sensitivity (while in sunlight, has tactical disadvantage on attack rolls and Perception checks that rely on sight); **AL** NE; **CR** 5; **XP** 1,800.

Skeleton (4): AC 13; HP 13 (2d8+4); Spd 30ft; Melee shortsword (+4, 1d6+2 piercing); **Ranged** shortbow (+4, 80ft/320ft, 1d6+2 piercing); **Immune** poison, exhaustion, poisoned; **Vulnerable** bludgeoning; **Str** +0, **Dex** +2, **Con** +2, **Int** -2, **Wis** -1, **Cha** -3; **Senses** darkvision 60ft; **AL** LE; **CR** 1/4; **XP** 50.

Tactics: Cama Obuto is arrogant, evil and thoroughly twisted. More than anything else, he wants to humiliate his foes with his words and actions. He has no qualms discussing his cruel pleasures and making crude, offensive comments about the PCs' appearance and physical qualities.

He opens combat by directing his skeleton allies to attack, while he focuses his attacks against clerics and paladins. Anyone who can hurt him while he's hidden inside his altar is also a high-priority target. If severely pressed, he merges into a solid object, travels through the walls and floor, and re-emerges somewhere else in the room on the following round. He

doesn't give his opponents any more chance to pin him down than he must. He never emerges fully from a solid object if there's a target within reach (which is almost guaranteed, since he can attack from the floor).

Development: Cama Obuto's insubstantial form can't be destroyed permanently as long as the altar remains. While the altar exists, his spirit will reform in 2d4 days, and Cama Obuto will once again haunt the bowels of Zablada and await another willing pawn to fall into his malevolent clutches. The PCs can physically destroy the altar with 10 minutes of smashing, but pounding the vertebrae into tiny pieces does nothing to rid the profane magic creating of the conduit between the Lower Planes and Cama Obuto.

The PCs can learn the means of permanently destroying Cama Obuto with a successful DC 15 Int (Religion) check or through spells such as *augury* and *divination*. The most efficient method of severing the unholy conduit is to cast *remove curse*, *greater restoration*, or comparable magic on the altar. As an alternative, the PCs can douse the entire altar with holy water; completely soaking the large altar requires a minimum of eight vials of the sacred liquid. The PCs must undertake these actions after they destroy Cama Obuto's insubstantial form; otherwise, he'll simply create a new altar.

Area Z-26: Private Quarters

Stately elegance best defines a spacious bedchamber furnished with a large mahogany bed, matching armoire and writing desk. An upholstered wooden chair is tucked neatly beneath the desk, which oversees a bookshelf teeming with dusty, leather-bound tomes. A heavy marble bathing vessel and a golden candle-stand round out the private quarter's amenities.

Cama Obuto's private quarters present a stark contrast to the tawdry artwork and sadistic items found elsewhere in the complex. When not engaging in his cruel practices, Cama Obuto retired here. The mahogany bed has silk sheets and is covered by a rare mountain goat fur. The bed's accoutrements are worth 200 gp total. The armoire's two doors are closed, but inside the luxurious piece are four noble's outfits and two royal outfits, along with a full complement of undergarments and shoes. The marble bathing vessel is the envy of every wealthy family. It is worth 1,000 gp but weighs close to a ton, making it extremely difficult to transport without magical assistance or tremendous manpower. The mahogany desk has an ample writing surface and two closed drawers. The drawers are unlocked and contain six quills, 10 vials of ink, a signet ring, 25 pieces of parchment and an exquisite silver letter opener forged in the image of a dragon's tooth worth 75 gp. On the nearby bookshelf are 142 books. Unlike the chamber's other reserved features, the books are equally divided between scholarly works and graphic erotica. None are particularly significant or rare. The library's total value is 800 gp. The golden candle-stand is 4 feet high and worth 250 gp, but it is bolted into the floor. Turning it 45 degrees clockwise opens a nearby secret wall.

Area Z-27: Treasure Vault

The stone staircase descends a few feet and opens in a room with two pedestals and a closed iron chest. Three suits of ornate plate mail are arranged along the wall. A golden crown with inset diamonds and emeralds rests upon one of the pedestals, and a magnificent, shimmery chain shirt lies upon the other.

Though most of Cama Obuto's tricks and traps allow orcs and Small creatures to bypass them, his treasure vault's guardian only lets him pass. As soon as a creature enters the room, the suits of armor (which are, of course, **3 animated armors**) spring into action and attack. As with most constructs, the armors know no fear and fight until destroyed.

Animated Armor (3): AC 18; HP 33 (6d8+6); Spd 25ft; **Melee** slam (+4, 1d6+2 bludgeoning); **SA** multiattack (slam x2); **Immune** blindness, charm, deafness, exhaustion, fright, paralysis, petrification, poison, psychic; **Str** +4, **Dex** +0, **Con** +1, **Int** -5, **Wis** -4, **Cha** -5; **Senses** blindsight 60ft; **Traits** antimagic susceptibility (incapacitated while in an *antimagic field*; if targeted by *dispel magic*, the armor must make a successful Con saving throw or fall unconscious for 1 minute), false appearance (the armor is indistinguishable from normal armor while motionless); **AL** un; **CR** 1; **XP** 100.

Treasure: The golden crown is worth 750 gp and the chain shirt on the other pedestal is *armor of lightning resistance* with the *guardian* property (+2 on initiative). During his 12-year reign, Cama Obuto amassed a personal fortune that he kept in the closed iron chest against the far wall. The chest is unlocked and

contains 1,582 gp, 203 pp, *eyes of the eagle*, a +1 dagger, an amulet of *proof against detection and location*, *boots of the winterland*, a *pearl of power*, an arcane scroll (*false life*, *haste*, *magic missile*, *tiny hut*), a divine scroll (*augury*, *beacon of hope*, *enhance ability*, *spiritual weapon*), and a pouch holding three emeralds worth 250 gp each and six pearls worth 100 gp each.

Concluding the Adventure

“Destroying” Cama Obuto may end the immediate threat facing Ubuka, but the spectral wight returns several days later unless the PCs forever sever the link between the wicked undead and the higher power bestowing its malevolence upon him through the altar. Any remaining vulnademons instantly return to their home plane, though the red slaad from **Area Z-23** may linger for a few more days to torment the local citizens before returning to its home plane or going elsewhere. Likewise, Crystal’s “destruction” presents the same dilemma. She also returns several days later unless the PCs reunite her with Stolen Tongue or satisfy her need for vengeance against Sukh. In either event, the PCs must find a way to stop both threats from returning to fully defeat the threat to Ubuka. Crystal’s reincarnation presents a more pressing problem for the town, since Cama Obuto is confined to the ruins beneath Zablada. Without any fresh sacrifices on the horizon, the reconstituted spirit waits for another unfortunate creature to stumble into his lair. In either event, the town seeks the PCs’ further assistance to permanently rid these menaces from their community.

Crystal’s murder and its ramifications are the most urgent matters facing the PCs when they return to Ubuka. If the PCs already identified Sukh as her true killer, then there is no need to pursue the investigation any

further. Their interaction with Stolen Tongue as well as additional clues discovered along the way strongly implicate Sukh’s involvement in the crime. Obviously, Sukh attempts to suppress the PCs’ statements and any evidence they gathered by claiming that they are agents of Stolen Tongue and the orcs. If the Seven Horsemen hired the PCs, they dismiss Sukh’s allegations and are eager to hear the truth. If the PCs present a strong case against Ubuka’s mayor, Sukh responds as detailed in his earlier sidebar.

Stolen Tongue’s response to Crystal’s killing also complicates his relationship with the town. He and his orcs kidnapped and sacrificed at least one person, Bodi, to Cama Obuto in exchange for the vulnademon’s deadly services. If Sukh evades justice, he demands the orc chieftain’s summary execution for his crimes as well as hefty reparations from any surviving orcs. The Seven Horsemen are far more lenient. They do not want open warfare with Caaddan and offer Stolen Tongue a full pardon. Of course, their benevolence does not come for free. They demand an annual tribute as well as the forfeiture of land. The proud Stolen Tongue knows he is in a difficult spot. His depleted forces are no match for Ubuka’s military, but acquiescing to the Seven Horsemen’s terms leaves him vulnerable to a coup. In the end, his personal magnetism and long-term relationships with the people of Ubuka allow him to negotiate a mutually acceptable settlement that earns him and his people a long-term peace in exchange for a lesser monetary payment and a worthless, remote tract of land. Over time, the people of Ubuka use this land for farming and grazing of their herd animals, adding it to the collective land of the community.

These suppositions are based upon the premise that the PCs did not attack and destroy Caaddan. If that occurred, Stolen Tongue becomes an outlaw sworn to destroy Ubuka and all those who slew his people. He assembles a ragtag orc guerilla force that constantly harasses Ubuka and its citizens. His soldiers burn homes, steal livestock and hijack supplies to the town. In addition, he swears a personal vendetta against the PCs for acting on Sukh’s behalf. In the end, the PCs may be called upon to eradicate the continued threat that Stolen Tongue poses. He is also the only person who can let Crystal’s vengeful soul rest in peace.

The PCs earn the town’s eternal gratitude, and its leaders offer them a generous tract of grassland, seven sheep and seven goats as additional payment for services rendered. Of course, the PCs are more caretakers for this tract rather than owners, as Ubuka culture dictates that man does not own the land. Should PCs accept the tract, they are expected to maintain it properly, either on their own or — more likely — through the use of hired hands or by leasing the rights to someone else. The Seven Horsemen also bestow the coveted title of honorary mayor upon the PCs’ de facto leader, preferably its resident cleric, paladin or other noteworthy champion of good. The PCs are free to continue their adventuring careers in Ubuka by dealing with any threats they missed during their travels, such as the young rustlers and the worgs, or they can move on to proverbial greener pastures. In any event, the PCs are always welcome back to Ubuka at any time.

New Monster Appendix

King of Beasts

Al-hajan

Al-hajan
 XP 1,800 (CR 5)
 NE Large humanoid
 Init +0

DEFENSE

AC 15 (natural armor)
HP 133 (14d10 + 56)
Save Con +7, Str +7
Resist fire

OFFENSE

Speed 40ft
Multiattack Al-hajans attack twice with claws or quarterstaff
Melee claw (+7, 2d6+4 piercing), quarterstaff (+7, 1d8+4 bludgeoning)

STATISTICS

Str 20 (+4), **Dex** 11 (+0), **Con** 18 (+4),
Int 9 (-1), **Wis** 12 (+1), **Cha** 10 (+0)
Languages Common
Skills Intimidation +3, Perception +4, Survival +4
Senses darkvision 60ft, passive Perception 11, scent

TRAITS

Howl When an al-hajan howls, all creatures except other al-hajans within a 100 foot spread must succeed on a DC 11 Wis save or be affected by the fear condition for 2d4 rounds. Whether or not the save is successful, a creature cannot be affected by the same al-hajan's howl for 24 hours.

Scent Al-hajans have advantage on all Wis (Perception) checks involving scent.

ECOLOGY

Environment desert
Organization solitary, pair, herd (2–8) or stampede (10–40)

These large monstrous humanoids are covered in a fine coat of beige-colored hair with a texture and coloring resembling that of cashmere. Their limbs are unusually long, and their hands and feet are proportionally oversized. On average, they stand 8 feet tall and weigh almost 400 pounds. The al-hajans hunchback is actually a hump, which stores fat and water allowing the creature to go for days and even a few weeks without water or food. The presence of this rare evolutionary feature and their foul temperament leads some scholars to believe that they are the unnatural offspring of camels and men. Others surmise that some dark force or entity transformed men into these creatures as a form of punishment or a failed experiment.

Whatever their origin, experienced desert travelers know it is best to avoid these ill-tempered creatures while traveling through the desert. Al-hajans live in clans with up to 40 extended family members. They lead a nomadic existence, wandering the desert in search of prey and water. An al-hajan hunting party consists of two to twelve male clan members.

They use simple tactics. They charge anything they see and attack it as a wild mob. Like predatory animals, alhajans surround and attack a single creature if possible. Once they surround their intended victim, the remaining al-hajans use their howl ability to drive off other creatures that might come to the victims rescue.

Al-hajans hate humans, and they target them in preference to all others. In the absence of humans, they direct their attacks against elves, dwarves and other humanlike races before targeting animals or monsters. Despite their savage nature, alhajans are adept woodworkers, fashioning exquisite quarterstaves from wood harvested from the few trees they encounter during the course of their travels. Al-hajans do not amass precious metals, but they do collect valuable wooden objects.

Al-Haloon

Al-Haloon
 XP 450 (CR 2)
 Unaligned Large beast
 Init +1

DEFENSE

AC 13 (natural armor)
HP 75 (10d8 + 30)

OFFENSE

Speed 40ft, burrow 5ft
Multiattack al-haloons attack with two hooves
Melee hoof (+6, 1d8+4 bludgeoning)

STATISTICS

Str 18 (+4), **Dex** 13 (+1), **Con** 17 (+3),
Int 2 (-4), **Wis** 12 (+1), **Cha** 6 (-2)
Senses scent, passive Perception 11

TRAITS

Extend Neck An al-haloon's neck consists of strong but flexible cartilage. In its normal position, the animal's neck is 3 feet long, but it can extend its neck to a length of 10 feet with no difficulty and to a length of 15 feet with a successful DC 10 Str check. On a failure the neck immediately returns to its normal length and cannot be extended for one hour.

Scent Al-haloons have advantage on Wis (Perception) checks involving scent.

Smell Water An al-haloon can detect surface water at a range of one mile, and at a range of 1,000 feet it can detect an underground water source no more than 50 feet beneath the surface.

ECOLOGY

Environment deserts or plains
Organization solitary or family (1 adult plus 1–4 young)

Al-haloons, camels and dire camels are the mounts and packs animals of choice for many desert travelers. Al-haloons are passive, well-mannered animals that attack only when threatened or provoked. They are

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slower and more lumbering than the swifter camels, but they are better sprinters and take well to being ridden by humanoids. They resemble long, sleek giraffes and are 8 feet long and stand 6 feet high at the shoulder. Light brown coat of fine fur speckled with darker brown splotches covers their entire body. They have a thin 2-foot long tail and a 3-foot long stout neck covered by wrinkles of densely packed loose skin. The al-haloon's oddly shaped neck allows it to extend its neck and bury its head in the sand to drink water from an underground source. The animal detects water by scent and can burrow into loose sand in search of fresh water buried deep beneath the sandy dunes. Many desert travelers refer to al-haloons as the dowers of the desert because of this unique ability. In fact, al-haloons are credited with founding many settlements and villages thanks to their discovery of a nearby underground aquifer.

Al-haloons encountered in the wild are either solitary animals or a mother and her young. They are herbivores that eat shrubs, saplings and leaves. Unlike camels that store water and fat for extended periods of fasting, al-haloons drink regularly like other mammals so they typically roam an area no further than a day's walk away from a known water supply. They have some tolerance for heat, but they typically sleep during the hottest parts of the day and roam the desert during the cooler evening, overnight and early morning hours.

Al-haloons are sturdy creatures with the ability to carry significant loads. An al-haloon's carrying capacity is up to 1,500 pounds. An al-haloon can drag 7,800 pounds.

Bog Mummy

Bog Mummy

XP 2,300 (CR 6)

CE Medium undead

Init +0

DEFENSE

AC 14

HP 84 (12d8+30)

Immune charm, exhaustion, frightened, necrotic, paralyzed, poison

Resist bludgeoning, piercing and slashing from nonmagical weapons, fire

Vulnerable cold

OFFENSE

Speed 20ft

Melee slam (+6, 2d6+3 bludgeoning plus 3d6 necrotic damage plus bog rot)

STATISTICS

Str 16 (+3), **Dex** 10 (+0), **Con** 16 (+3),

Int 6 (-2), **Wis** 15 (+2), **Cha** 14 (+2)

Languages Common

Skills Perception +8, Stealth +3

Senses darkvision 60ft, passive Perception 12

TRAITS

Bog Rot A living creature struck by a bog mummy's slam attack must make a DC 14 Con save or contract bog rot. Creatures afflicted with bog rot lose 4d6 points of necrotic damage every 24 hours, do not heal naturally and gain only one-half benefit from magical healing until the disease is cured. Bog rot continues until the victim reaches 0 HP and dies, or receives a *lesser restoration* spell or similar magic.

Create Spawn Any humanoid that dies from bog rot becomes a bog mummy in 1d4 days unless a *lesser restoration* is cast (within one day after death) or the creature is brought back to life (*raise dead* is ineffective, but *resurrection* or *true resurrection* works). Spawn are under the command of the bog mummy that created them and remain enslaved until their death. They do not possess any of the abilities they had in life.

Despair All creatures within a 30-foot radius that see a bog mummy must make a DC 13 Wis save or be paralyzed with fear for 1d4 rounds. Whether or not the save is successful, that creature cannot be affected again by the same bog mummy's despair ability for one day.

Marsh Move Bog mummies can move at their normal movement speed through mud, marshes, and swamps with no penalty.

ECOLOGY

Environment any marsh

Organization solitary, wardens (2-4) or guardians (6-10)

When a corpse preserved by swamp mud is imbued with necrotic energy, it rises as a bog mummy. Bog mummies resemble normal mummies, but are covered with a thin layer of swamp mud. Bog mummies rarely leave the swamp where they were formed. They hate life and attack any living creature that trespasses in their swamp.

Drauger

Drauger

XP 450 (CR 2)

CE medium undead (water)

Init +0

DEFENSE

AC 14 (natural armor)

HP 24 (3d8+9)

Immune poison

Resist bludgeoning and slashing by nonmagical weapons, fire

OFFENSE

Speed 30ft, swim 30ft

Melee greataxe (+5, 1d12+3 slashing plus nausea)

STATISTICS

Str 17 (+3), **Dex** 10 (+0), **Con** 16 (+3),

Int 8 (-1), **Wis** 10 (+0), **Cha** 13 (+1)

Languages common (cannot speak)

Skills Swim +5

Senses darkvision 60ft, passive Perception 10

TRAITS

Nausea A creature damaged by a drauger must make a DC 11 Con save or be poisoned for 1 round.

ECOLOGY

Environment any coastal

Organization solitary or crew (2-8)

Drauger are the reanimated remains of sailors who drowned at sea in regions that are cursed or haunted by evil spirits. They can be found in coastal areas where they wade ashore to wreck vengeance on the living. Sometimes entire crews of drauger lurk in the wreckage of their old vessels.

Dust Digger

Dust Digger

XP 700 (CR 3)

Unaligned large aberration

Init +0

DEFENSE

AC 13 (natural armor)

HP 44 (8d8 + 8)

Immune prone, unconsciousness

OFFENSE

Speed 10ft, burrow 10ft

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Multiattack a dust digger attacks five times; no more than one of those attacks can be a bite.

Melee tentacle slam (+5, reach 10 ft., 1d8+3 bludgeoning, target grappled), tentacle crush (automatic hit on one creature already grappled by the tentacle at the start of the dust digger's turn, 1d8+3 bludgeoning, target grappled and restrained), bite (+5, one creature already grappled by a tentacle at the start of the dust digger's turn, 2d8+3 piercing, target must make a successful DC 13 Str save or be swallowed).

STATISTICS

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

Int 2 (-4), **Wis** 11 (+0), **Cha** 10 (+0)

Skills Stealth +4

Senses tremorsense 60ft, passive Perception 10

TRAITS

Earth Glide: A dust digger can glide through sand, loose soil, or other loosely packed earth as easily as a fish swims through water. Its burrowing leaves behind no tunnel or hole and creates no ripple on the surface or other sign of its presence. A *move earth* spell cast on an area containing a burrowing dust digger flings the creature back 30 feet and stuns it for one round unless it makes a successful Con saving throw.

Earthy Camouflage: A dust digger has advantage on Dex (Stealth) checks while it's buried in the ground.

Sinkhole: A buried dust digger can deflate its body as a bonus action, causing the sand above it to slide toward its maw. A creature standing on the surface above the dust digger when it deflates must be checked for surprise. If it is surprised, it is attacked by all five tentacles during the dust digger's surprise round. If the creature is not surprised, roll initiative normally.

Swallow: A swallowed creature is blinded and restrained but no longer grappled. It takes 1d8 + 1 bludgeoning damage plus 1d8 acid damage automatically at the start of each of the dust digger's turns. One Medium creature or two Small creatures can be inside the dust digger at one time. A swallowed creature is unaffected by anything happening outside the dust digger or by attacks from outside it. A swallowed creature can get out of the dust digger by using 5 feet of movement, but only after the dust digger is dead.

ECOLOGY

Environment warm desert

Organization solitary, gang (4–8), or colony (9–20)

Dust diggers are desert carnivores about 10 feet in diameter. The creature spends most of its life buried under the sand, waiting for potential prey to wander too close or to actually wander directly over the buried dust digger.

A hunting dust digger inflates its body with air and buries itself under a layer of sand or dirt. When a living creature walks over the dust digger, the creature deflates its body, creating a sinkhole in the loose earth that's similar in effect to quicksand. It folds its tentacles around the flailing victim and tries to shove the prey into its mouth.

Graven Guardian

Graven Guardian

XP 1,100 (CR 4)

N medium construct

Init +2

DEFENSE

AC 15

HP 102 (12d10 + 36)

Immune charmed, exhaustion, frightened, paralyzed, poisoned

Resist bludgeoning, piercing and slashing damage from nonmagical weapons

OFFENSE

Speed 40ft

Multiattack a graven guardian attacks twice per turn with its spear

Melee spear (+7, 1d8+4 piercing)

Ranged spear (+6, range 20/60, 1d6+2 piercing plus returning)

STATISTICS

Str 16 (+3), **Dex** 15 (+2), **Con** 16 (+3),

Int 8 (-1), **Wis** 12 (+1), **Cha** 1 (-5)

Senses darkvision 60ft, passive Perception 11

TRAITS

Dazzling When the graven guardian scores a critical hit with its magic weapon, a bright flash blinds the target for 1d4 rounds unless the target makes a DC 12 Con save.

Faith Bound A graven guardian cannot attack any creature that openly wears or displays the symbol of the deity to which the guardian is dedicated unless that creature first attacks the guardian.

Innate Spellcasting The graven guardian can cast the following spell innately without material components.

3/day: *entangle* (save DC 12)

Magic Weapon A graven guardian that carries its faith's favored weapon treats it as a +1 weapon as long as it is wielded by the guardian. If it is a thrown weapon, it automatically returns to the wielder as a bonus action after it has been thrown. If it is a missile weapon, it always has ammunition.

ECOLOGY

Environment any land

Organization solitary, band (2–4) or assembly (5–12)

Graven guardians are human-sized constructs made of clay, wood, stone and other materials in the shape of a deity's favored servants. Normally a graven guardian resembles a statue or other nonmagical decoration, but activates if its assigned location is violated by anyone not bearing the holy symbol of its god or gods. Graven guardians follow only the orders of their creators.

Each guardian gains a special ability appropriate to the deity that created it. The guardians encountered in this adventure were created by the Omaruri with the powers of the sun and growing things, giving them their dazzle and *entangle* abilities. Other graven guardians have similar powers based upon their creators' faiths and the favored characteristics of their deities.

Hallaraq

Hallaraq

XP 3,900 (CR 8)

Unaligned Large beast

Init -1

DEFENSE

AC 16

HP 142 (15d10 + 60)

Save Con +7, Str +7

Immune piercing

OFFENSE

Speed 40ft, burrow 10ft

Multiattack A hallaraq bites once, makes two claw attacks and one sting

Melee bite (+7, 1d8+4 piercing), claw (+7, 1d6+4 bludgeoning

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plus grapple), sting (+7, 1d6+5 piercing plus poison)

STATISTICS

Str 18 (+4), **Dex** 8 (-1), **Con** 18 (+4),

Int 1 (-4), **Wis** 10 (+0), **Cha** 2 (-2)

Senses darkvision 60ft, passive Perception 10

TRAITS

Grapple A hallaraq's target is grappled if it hits with both claw attacks. The target can break the grapple with a successful DC 15 Str check. The hallaraq can continue making claw attacks on a grappled foe, and the claw attacks hit automatically.

Poison Creatures struck by the hallaraq's sting attack must make a DC 15 Con check or lose 1d4 points from their Strength score and be poisoned for 1 hour. They must continue making this check every hour until the save succeeds or Strength is reduced to 0. A character whose Strength is reduced to 0 in this fashion is paralyzed (no longer poisoned), requiring a *lesser restoration* or its equivalent to recover from paralysis. Lost Strength can be recovered with a long rest.

ECOLOGY

Environment desert

Organization solitary or herd (2-7)

The monstrous hallaraq is referred to in many circles as the sewer of the sands for its proclivity to eat absolutely anything. Many adventurers undertake the disgusting task of cracking open its shell and searching its innards for valuables the creature may have eaten during its travels. Despite its formidable appearance, the hallaraq is a scavenger at heart, preferring to eat carrion and even inorganic matter over fresh prey. In simplest terms, the monster is an eating machine that seeks the most reward for the least effort. It is 8 feet wide from the furthest tips of its shell and 6 feet long from its beak to tail, which is roughly the same length as its body.

Hallaraqs live in small groups numbering between two and seven individuals. Rival males are extremely aggressive towards each other particularly as mating season approaches. It is not uncommon to encounter a hallaraq missing a claw or with a damaged tail. Hallaraqs are constantly on the move searching for their next meal. The hallaraqs shell reflects most of the suns energy and retains moisture. As a result, they can travel for days without drinking even in extreme heat. In battle, hallaraqs charge at smaller foes, using their claws to grab enemies and then sting them with their venomous tails. When severely threatened, hallaraqs sometimes burrow beneath the sand to escape their attackers. Hallaraqs are mindless; therefore they do not amass treasure.

Lion Beast of Chaos

Lion Beast of Chaos

XP 1,800 (CR 5)

CN large monstrosity

Init +4

DEFENSE

AC 15

HP 60 (8d10 + 16)

Save Strength +8, Dex +7

Immune fear, hold monster, slow

OFFENSE

Speed 40ft

Multiaction a lion beast of chaos attacks with 2 claws and a bite.

Melee 2 claws (+8, 1d6+5 slashing), bite (+8, 1d8+6 piercing)

STATISTICS

Str 20 (+5), **Dex** 18 (+4), **Con** 15 (+2),

Int 2 (-4), **Wis** 12 (+1), **Cha** 10 (+0)

Skills Athletics +8, Perception +4, Stealth +7

Senses darkvision 60ft, passive Perception 11

TRAITS

Frightful Presence When a lion beast of chaos roars, every creature with fewer HD than the lion beast of chaos that is within 30 feet must make a successful DC 12 Wis save or be frightened for 1 round.

Magic Resistance The lion beast of chaos gains advantage on saving throws against spells and magical effects.

Pounce If the lion beast of chaos moves at least 20 feet straight ahead then hits with a claw attack on the same turn the target must make a DC 13 Str save or be knocked prone. If the target is prone, the lion beast of chaos can make one bite attack against it as a bonus action.

Rage In the presence of bright light such as a *daylight* or *sunburst* spell (but not actual sunlight), a beast of chaos bursts into a berserk rage, attacking until either it or its opponent is dead. It gains +4 Strength and -4 AC while enraged and cannot end its rage voluntarily. If the source of light is removed or if a spell lasts only one round, the rage ends 1d4 rounds later.

ECOLOGY

Environment warm plains

Organization solitary, gang (2-5) or pack (6-11)

A beast of chaos is a creature that has been warped when the demonic forces of the Abyss reach into the Material Plane. A beast of chaos vaguely resembles the animal it once was. Its skin and fur become leprous and patchy; its color fades to a dull sheen; its teeth become razor-sharp and more pronounced; its eyes turn to a bright golden yellow.

Mythical Lion

Mythical Lion

XP 3,900 (CR 8)

Unaligned large beast

Init +5

DEFENSE

AC 18

HP 102 (12d10 + 36)

OFFENSE

Speed 50ft

Multiaction A mythical lion makes 2 claw attacks and one bite.

Melee bite (+9, 2d6+6 piercing), claw (+9, 1d8+6 slashing)

STATISTICS

Str 22 (+6), **Dex** 20 (+5), **Con** 16 (+3),

Int 3 (-4), **Wis** 14 (+2), **Cha** 10 (+0)

Skills Perception +3, Stealth +6

Senses passive Perception 13

TRAITS

Pack tactics Mythical lions have advantage on attack rolls against creatures if at least one ally is within 5 feet of the lion and not incapacitated.

Pounce If a mythical lion moves at least 20 feet straight forward, then hits with a claw attack in the same turn the target must make a DC 13 Str save or be knocked prone. If the target is knocked prone the lion may make a bite attack against it as a bonus action.

Scent Mythical lions have advantage on Wis (Perception) checks based on smell.

ECOLOGY

Environment warm plains

Organization solitary, pack (2-8)

Mythical animals are the stuff of legends; stronger, faster, wiser and more intimidating than their normal counterparts. Mythical animals ap-

appear as normal animals and are indistinguishable from them, though in some cases their eyes may betray their origin and existence (perhaps showing a glint of intellect or wisdom unknown in their lesser cousins). Mythical animals are found wherever their normal animal counterparts are, though they rarely keep company with such animals. Though they may be the creation of the gods and beasts of legend and dreams, mythical animals still pay homage and answer to the various animal lords.

Shadow Rat Swarm

Shadow Rat Swarm

XP 700 (CR 3)

Unaligned tiny undead (swarm)

Init +2

DEFENSE

AC 11

HP 39 (6d8+12)

Immune exhaustion, frightened, grappled, necrotic, paralyzed, petrified, poison, prone, restrained

Resist acid, cold, fire, lightning, thunder; bludgeoning, piercing and slashing from nonmagical weapons

OFFENSE

Speed 40ft, climb 60ft

Melee bite (+4, 3d6 necrotic plus disease plus strength drain)

STATISTICS

Str 6 (-2), **Dex** 15 (+2), **Con** 13 (+1),

Int 2 (-4), **Wis** 12 (+1), **Cha** 14 (+2)

Senses darkvision 60ft, passive Perception 11

TRAITS

Disease Any creature bitten by the shadow rat swarm must make a DC 12 Con save, or contract filth fever. The fever takes effect in 1d3 days, causes 2d6 points of damage per day and imposes the poisoned condition on the victim. The victim may make another Con save after a long rest, but must make two consecutive successful Con saves (or receive magical assistance such as a *lesser restoration* spell) to cure the disease.

Shadow Blend The swarm can disappear into shadows as a move, gaining total cover in all illumination levels save bright light.

Strength Drain On a successful bite attack, the target's Strength score is reduced by 1d4. The target dies if its Strength score is reduced to 0. If the target doesn't die, the reduction lasts until the target finishes a long or short rest.

Swarm The shadow rat swarm can occupy another creature's space and vice versa, and the swarm can move through any opening large enough for a tiny creature. The swarm cannot regain hit points or gain temporary hit points.

ECOLOGY

Environment underground

Organization solitary, pack (2–4 swarms) or nest (5–8 swarms)

Shadow rats are essentially undead rats that can assume an incorporeal form. Other than their semi-translucent form, they resemble their earthly counterparts in all respects. A shadow rat swarm is simply a massive number of shadow rats that have clustered or banded together for survival or food.

Shadow rat swarms can be found just about anywhere, but are most commonly encountered near graveyards, ruined temples and haunted sewers.

Spectre

Spectre

XP 2,300 (CR 6)

LE Medium undead (incorporeal)

Init +3

DEFENSE

AC 15 (natural armor)

HP 78 (12d8+24)

Immune cold, necrotic, poison; charmed, exhaustion, frightened, grappled, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned, prone, restrained

Resist acid, fire, lightning, thunder; bludgeoning, piercing and slashing from nonmagical weapons

Vulnerable sunlight (see below)

OFFENSE

Speed fly 80ft

Melee incorporeal touch (+6, 2d8 necrotic plus energy drain)

STATISTICS

Str 0 (-5), **Dex** 16 (+3), **Con** 14 (+2),

Int 14 (+2), **Wis** 16 (+3), **Cha** 15 (+2)

Languages Common

Senses darkvision 60ft, passive Perception 13

TRAITS

Create Spawn Any humanoids slain by a spectre become spectres themselves in 1d4 rounds. Spawn so created are less powerful than typical spectres, and suffer a –2 penalty on all attack rolls and ability checks, receive 2 hp per hit die (32 HP total), and only drain one level on a touch. Spawn are under the command of the spectre that created them and remain enslaved until its death, at which point they lose their spawn penalties and become full-fledged, free-willed spectres. They do not possess any of the abilities they had in life.

Energy Drain Any living creature touched by a spectre must make a DC15 Con save. On a failure, the target's maximum hit points are reduced by an amount equal to the damage that its touch inflicted. The reduction lasts until the target takes a long rest. A target reduced to 0 maximum hit points in this fashion becomes a spectre spawn (see above).

Resurrection Vulnerability A *raise dead* or similar spell cast on a spectre destroys it. A successful Wis save by the spectre negates this effect. Using the spell in this way does not require a material component.

Sunlight Powerlessness Spectres are powerless in natural sunlight (not merely a daylight spell) and flee from it. A spectre caught in sunlight cannot attack and is stunned.

Unnatural Aura Animals, whether wild or domesticated, can sense the unnatural presence of a spectre at a distance of 30 feet. They do not willingly approach nearer than that and panic if forced to do so unless a master succeeds at a DC 18 Animal Handling check. A panicked animal remains so as long as it is within 30 feet of the spectre.

Spectres are the hateful undead remnants of murdered or evil humans whose anger is so great that they cannot enter the afterlife. They despise daylight and haunt desolate, lonely places, seeking out living things to transform them into undead servants.

Most spectres remain lucid and remember their old lives, resembling their own mortal forms. Necromancers, evil priests and similar individuals sometimes try to make contact with spectres to gain information or power.

ECOLOGY

Environment any

Organization solitary, pair, gang (3–6) or swarm (7–12)

Canyons of Arcuri

Tree Hound

Tree Hound

XP 100 (CR 1/2)

U Medium Beast

Init +3

AC 14 (natural armor)

HP 32 (5d8 + 10)

OFFENSE

Speed 40ft, climb 20ft

Melee bite (+4, 1d6+2 slashing plus grapple, escape DC 12),
claw (+4, 1d4+2 slashing)

Str 14 (+2), Dex 16 (+3), Con 15 (+2),

Int 2 (-4), Wis 12 (+1), Cha 10 (+0)

Languages none

Skills Perception +3, Stealth +7

Senses darkvision 30ft

TRAITS

Camouflage The tree hound has tactical advantage on Dex (Stealth) checks while within a forest canopy.

Pounce If the tree hound moves at least 20ft straight toward a creature and then hits with a claw attack on the same turn, that target must succeed on a DC 12 Str save or be knocked prone. If the target is prone, the tree hound can make one bite attack against it as a bonus action.

Rake If the tree hound has successfully grappled a creature with its bite, then the target is subject to two claws attacks as a bonus action.

Keen Smell The tree hound has tactical advantage on Wis (Perception) that rely on smell.

ECOLOGY

Environment tropical forest

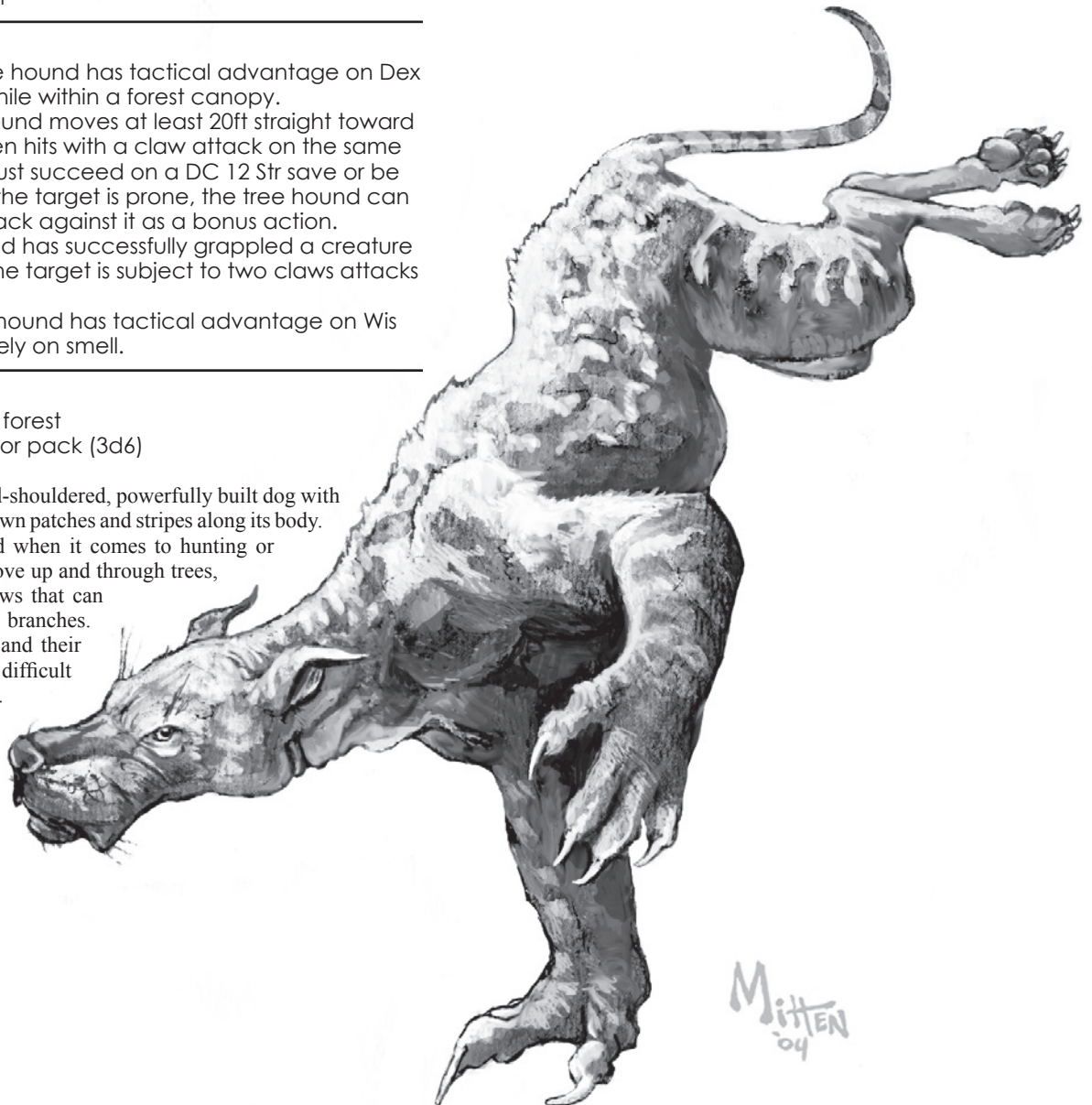
Organization solitary or pack (3d6)

A tree hound is a broad-shouldered, powerfully built dog with green-tinted hair with brown patches and stripes along its body.

They are akin to leopard when it comes to hunting or climbing. They easily move up and through trees,

and have such sharp claws that can even hang beneath tree branches.

They are adept hunters, and their coloration makes them difficult to spot in forest canopies.



My Blue Oasis

Cheitan Jann

Cheitan Jann
XP 2,300 (CR 6)
 NE medium elemental
Init +4

DEFENSE

AC 16
HP 120 (16d8 + 48)
Save Dex +7, Con +7
Resist fire

OFFENSE

Speed 30ft, fly 40ft; 20ft, fly 30ft in chainmail
Multiaction a Cheitan Jann attacks twice per round with its scimitar, longbow or slam attacks
Melee scimitar (+8, 1d8+5 slashing); slam (+8, 1d6+5 bludgeoning plus 1d4 fire)
Ranged longbow (+7, 150ft/600ft, 1d8+4 piercing)

STATISTICS

Str 20 (+5), **Dex** 18 (+4), **Con** 16 (+3),
Int 14 (+2), **Wis** 17 (+3), **Cha** 15 (+2)
Languages Common, Infernal, Primordial; telepathy 100ft
Skills Insight +6, Nature +5, Perception +6, Religion +5, Stealth +7
Senses darkvision 60ft, passive Perception 16

TRAITS

Change Size Twice per day, a cheitan janni can magically change a creature's size. This works just like an *enlarge/reduce person* (the janni chooses when using the ability), except that the ability can work on the janni. A DC 13 Con save negates the effect.

Heat (Ex) A cheitan's body deals 1d4 points of extra fire damage whenever it hits in melee with its slam attack or in each round against a creature that the cheitan has grappled.

Elemental Endurance (Ex)

Jann can remain on the Planes of Air, Earth, Fire, or Water for up to 48 hours at a time. Failure to return to the Material Plane before that time expires causes a janni to take 1 point of damage per additional hour spent on the elemental plane, until it dies or returns to the Material Plane.

ECOLOGY

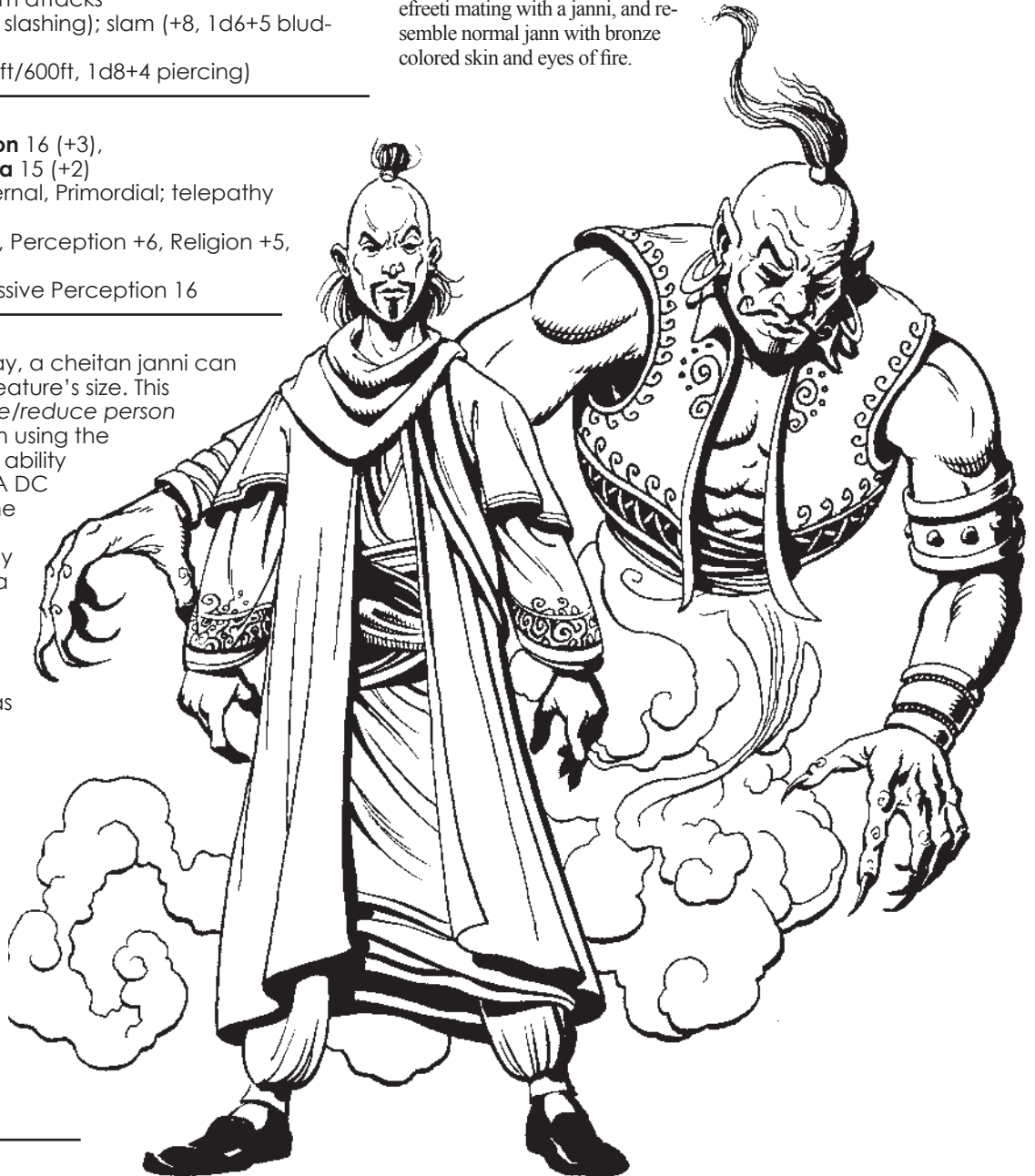
Environment warm desert

Organization solitary, pair, company (3-6) or band (7-12)
Gear chainmail, scimitar, longbow with 20 arrows

During construction of the City of Brass, the efreet employed all manner of races. Most were kept as slaves, and when the city was complete most of the slaves were killed. Some however were taken as consorts and concubines by the nobles of the city. The offspring resulting from such a mating was a creature that had traits of both parents. Many efreet killed their offspring at birth seeing them as a stain on their society. Some saw the potential for a new race -- pawns to be used in their wars against the djinn.

Over the years many efreet have taken non-efreeti mates and spawned children that they unleash against the rest of the multiverse. Cheitans are raised to be cruel, uncaring and unforbearing -- traits the efreet both possess and admire. Sometimes, a cheitan turns from its heritage and sees the good in life and embraces such things. These cheitans don't usually live long, especially in the presence of other cheitan or an efreeti.

Cheitan jann are the result of an efreeti mating with a janni, and resemble normal jann with bronze colored skin and eyes of fire.



Devourer

Devourer

XP 5,900 (CR 10)
NE large undead
Init +7

DEFENSE

AC 18 (natural armor)
HP 133 (14d8 + 70)
Save Strength +10, Wisdom +7

OFFENSE

Speed 30ft, fly 20ft
Multiattack devourers attack with 2 claws
Melee claw (+10, reach 10ft, 1d8+9 plus energy drain)

STATISTICS

Str 22 (+6), Dex 16 (+3), Con 12 (+1),
Int 18 (+4), Wis 16 (+3), Cha 20 (+5)
Languages Celestial, Common, Infernal
Skills Deception +9, Intimidation +9, Perception +7,
Stealth +7
Senses darkvision 60ft, passive Perception 17

TRAITS

Devour Soul A devourer can elect to consume any creature killed by its energy drain attack. A devoured victim cannot be brought back to life until the devourer's destruction or a spell deflection (see below). A devourer can only hold one soul at a time. A devoured soul provides the devourer with 5 essence points for each HD possessed by the soul. The devourer then uses its essence points to cast its innate spells, costing one essence point per level. Spells can be cast at higher level as specified in their description. Once the devourer has expended all its essence points, the devoured soul is completely consumed and the victim can only be restored to life by a wish or similar powerful magic.

Energy Drain When a devourer hits with its claw attack its victim must make a DC14 Con save. On a failure, the target's maximum hit points are reduced by an amount equal to the damage that the devourer's claw attack inflicted. The reduction lasts until the target takes a long rest. A target reduced to 0 maximum hit points in this fashion is dead (no death saves are allowed).

Innate Spellcasting The devourer uses essence points gained by devouring souls to cast the following spells. It does not need material components to do so. Its spell casting ability is Charisma (spell save DC17).

1st level: *bane*, *inflict wounds*

2nd level: *hold person*, *ray of enfeeblement*, *suggestion*

3rd level: *animate dead*, *bestow curse*, *vampiric touch*

4th level: *blight*, *confusion*

5th level: *contagion*, *dispel good*

6th level: *create undead*, *true seeing*

Magic Resistance The devourer has advantage on all saves against spells and magical effects

Spell Deflection If any of the following spells are cast at the devourer and it fails its save, the spell instead affects a devoured soul: *banishing smite*, *banishment*, *confusion*, *dispel evil*, *divine word*, *dominate person*, *fear*, *magic jar*, *suggestion*. None of these effects harm the soul, but the caster then makes a DC 17 ability check using his or her spellcasting ability modifier. If the check succeeds, the devoured soul is released and the creature to whom it belonged can now be restored to life as normal.

ECOLOGY

Environment any

Organization solitary

Derro

Derro

XP 450 (CR 2)
CE small humanoid
Init +4

DEFENSE

AC 14 (natural armor)
HP 60 (8d6 + 32)
Save Wis +5 (see below)
Immune charmed

OFFENSE

Speed 20ft
Melee short sword (+4, 1d6 piercing) or aklys (+4, 1d6 bludgeoning)
Ranged hand crossbow (+4, 30ft/120ft, 1d6+2 piercing plus poison) or aklys (+4, 10ft/20ft, 1d6+2 bludgeoning)

STATISTICS

Str 11 (+0), Dex 15 (+2), Con 18 (+4),
Int 10 (+0), Wis 5 (–3), Cha 16 (+3)
Languages Undercommon
Skills Perception –1, Stealth +4
Senses darkvision 60ft, passive Perception 9

TRAITS

Innate Spellcasting A derro can cast the following spells without material components. The save DC is 13.

At will: *darkness*, *minor illusion*

1/day: *crown of madness*, *thunderwave*

Madness Derros use their Cha modifier on Wis saves instead of their Wis modifier, and are immune to charming effects and confusion. Only a wish can remove a derros madness. If this occurs, the derro gains 6 points of Wis and loses 6 points of Cha.

Poison Derro crossbow bolts are treated with spider venom; a victim hit by a derro's crossbow must make a DC 11 Con save, taking 2d8 poison damage on a failure, and half as much damage on a success.

Vulnerable to Sunlight Derros take 1 point of damage every hour that they are exposed to sunlight.

ECOLOGY

Environment any underground

Organization solitary, team (2–4), squad (5–8 plus 1 sorcerer of 3rd–5th level), or band (11–20 plus 30% noncombatants plus 3 sorcerers of 3rd–8th level)

Derro are short, pale-skinned humanoids that dwell deep underground. Though they intensely desire life on the surface, derro are nevertheless vulnerable to sunlight, and feel intense, irrational hatred for the creatures of the upper world. Desperate to escape the darkness of their subterranean home, derro sometimes kidnap surface dwellers and subject them to sadistic experiments, seeking to find a way to avoid the agonizing death that awaits them on the surface. So far the derro's madness protects them from some mind-affecting magic, but it has also prevented them from discovering a way to live on the surface. Those victims who survive their ordeal at the derro's hands are returned to their homes, plagued by vague memories, fears and nightmares.

A derro normally fights with a hand crossbow equipped with 10 or more poisoned quarrels and a short sword or aklys — a throwing club attached to a 20 foot line, which allows the derro to retrieve it as a move-equivalent action if thrown.

QUESTS OF DOOM 3

Derro Sorcerer

Derro Sorcerer

XP 1,800 (CR 5)

CE small humanoid

Init +2

DEFENSE

AC 14 (+1 leather armor)

HP 60 (8d6 + 32)

Save Wis +5 (see below)

Immune charmed

OFFENSE

Speed 20ft

Melee short sword (+5, 1d6, piercing) or aklys (+5, 1d6 bludgeoning)

Ranged hand crossbow (+5, 30ft/120ft, 1d6+2 piercing plus poison) or aklys (+5, 10ft/20ft, 1d6+2 bludgeoning)

STATISTICS

Str 11 (+0), Dex 15 (+2), Con 18 (+4),

Int 10 (+0), Wis 5 (-3), Cha 16 (+3)

Languages Undercommon

Skills Perception +0, Stealth +5

Senses darkvision 60ft, passive Perception 10

TRAITS

Innate Spellcasting A derro can cast the following spells without material components. The save DC is 14.

At will: *darkness*, *minor illusion*

1/day: *crown of madness*, *thunderwave*

Madness Derros use their Cha modifier on Wis saves instead of their Wis modifier, and are immune to charming effects and confusion. Only a wish can remove a derro's madness. If this occurs, the derro gains 6 points of Wis and loses 6 points of Cha.

Poison Derro crossbow bolts are treated with spider venom; a victim hit by a derro's crossbow must make a DC 11 Con save, taking 2d8 poison damage on a failure, and half as much damage on a success.

Spellcasting The derro is a 5th-level spellcaster and his spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 14, +6 to hit with spell attacks). The derro has the following sorcerer spells available.

Cantrips: *acid splash*, *chill touch*, *dancing lights*, *fire bolt*, *poison spray*, *ray of frost*

1st level (4 slots): *mage armor*, *magic missile*, *sleep*

2nd level (3 slots): *hold person*, *shatter*

3rd (2 slots): *lightning bolt*

Vulnerable to Sunlight Derros take 1 point of damage every hour that they are exposed to sunlight.

Combat Gear *spell scroll (magic circle)*, *spell scroll (silence)*;

Other Gear +1 leather armor, short sword, aklys, hand crossbow with 10 poisoned bolts, *ring of protection +1*

ECOLOGY

Environment any underground

Organization solitary, team (2-4), squad (5-8 plus 1 sorcerer of 3rd-5th level), or band (11-20 plus 30% noncombatants plus 3 sorcerers of 3rd-8th level)

Derro High Priest

Derro High Priest

XP 1,800 (CR 5)

CE small humanoid

Init +2

DEFENSE

AC 14 (natural armor)

HP 60 (8d6 + 32)

Save Wis +5 (see below)

Immune charmed

OFFENSE

Speed 20ft

Melee short sword (+5, 1d6, piercing) or aklys (+5, 1d6 bludgeoning)

Ranged hand crossbow (+5, 30ft/120ft, 1d6+2 piercing plus poison) or aklys (+5, 10ft/20ft, 1d6+2 bludgeoning)

STATISTICS

Str 11 (+0), Dex 15 (+2), Con 18 (+4),

Int 10 (+0), Wis 5 (-3), Cha 16 (+3)

Languages Undercommon

Skills Perception +0, Stealth +5

Senses darkvision 60ft, passive Perception 10

TRAITS

Innate Spellcasting A derro can cast the following spells without material components. The save DC is 14.

At will: *darkness*, *minor illusion*

1/day: *crown of madness*, *thunderwave*

Madness Derros use their Cha modifier on Wis saves instead of their Wis modifier. Only a wish can remove a derro's madness. If this occurs, the derro gains 6 points of Wis, loses 6 points of Cha and makes Wis saves normally.

Poison Derro crossbow bolts are treated with spider venom; a victim hit by a derro's crossbow must make a DC 11 Con save, taking 2d8 poison damage on a failure, and half as much damage on a success.

Spellcasting The derro is a 5th-level cleric. Derro priests' spellcasting ability is Charisma rather than Wisdom (spell save DC 14, +6 to hit with spell attacks). The derro has the following cleric spells available.

Cantrips: *guidance*, *resistance*, *sacred flame*, *thaumaturgy*

1st level (4 slots): *bane*, *command*, *inflict wounds*, *shield of faith*

2nd level (3 slots): *aid*, *hold person*, *spiritual weapon*

3rd (2 slots): *bestow curse*

Vulnerable to Sunlight Derros take 1 point of damage every hour that they are exposed to sunlight.

Combat Gear 3 *potions of healing*; **Other Gear** +1 leather armor, short sword, aklys, hand crossbow with 10 poisoned bolts

ECOLOGY

Environment any underground

Organization solitary, team (2-4), squad (5-8 plus 1 sorcerer of 3rd-5th level), or band (11-20 plus 30% noncombatants plus 3 sorcerers of 3rd-8th level)

Desert Troll

Desert Troll

XP 3,900 (CR 8)

NE Large humanoid

Init -1

DEFENSE

AC 17 (natural armor)

HP 152 (16d10 + 64)

Save Con +7, Str +8

OFFENSE

Speed 30ft

Multiaction a desert troll attacks with two claws and one bite

Melee claw (+8, 2d6+5 slashing), bite (+8, 1d8+5 piercing plus disease)

STATISTICS

Str 20 (+5), Dex 8 (-1), Con 19 (+4),

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Int 6 (–2), **Wis** 12 (+1), **Cha** 6 (–2)

Languages Common

Skills Athletics +8, Perception +4, Stealth +2

Senses passive Perception 14

TRAITS

Disease *desert rot* — Any creature struck by the troll's bite attack must make a DC 13 Con save. On a failure, the target contracts desert rot. Within 1d4 days the victim must make another DC 13 Con save or lose 3d6 maximum hit points. The victim must continue to make Con saves every day until the disease is cured or until reduced to 0 maximum hit points. If reduced to 0 hit points the victim is dead. The disease is cured with two consecutive successful Con saves or with a *lesser restoration* or similar spell.

Pustules Once every 1d4 rounds, one of the desert troll's pustules explodes spewing disgusting ooze in a 10 foot cone in a randomly determined direction. Creatures struck by the ooze are poisoned for 2d4 rounds unless they succeed on DC 14 Con save. Once a creature succeeds on this save, it is immune to the same desert troll's pustules for 24 hours.

Regeneration A desert troll regains 10 hp at the start of its turn, unless it took acid or fire damage on the previous turn. The desert troll dies only if it begins a turn with 0 HP and does not regenerate.

ECOLOGY

Environment desert

Organization solitary, pair or cull (1 female plus 1-4 young)

No other type of troll is as poorly adapted to its particular environment as the desert troll. If not for its regenerative properties, these loathsome monsters would have undoubtedly become extinct. Their pustules are the perfect example. It would seem logical that these growths once stored water or fatty deposits below the skin for storage, but the pustules are actually 2nd-degree burns that turned into massive, pus-filled blisters. In actuality, sunburn ravages the desert troll's skin accounting for its burnt-red coloration.

Desert trolls stand upright, not stooped like their more common cousins. An adult desert troll is 10 feet tall and weighs 400 pounds. They are hideously ugly like other members of their kin with a bestial face, a grotesquely abnormal under bite and powerful claws at the ends of their hands. Because of the intense heat, desert trolls are leaner than their temperate-dwelling cousins, and they are generally active only at night when much cooler temperatures prevail.

Desert trolls, like most other trolls, lead solitary lives with the exceptions of a mated pair and a mother with her young. Desert trolls are fearsome hunters with a ravenous taste for al-haloon and camel meat, which brings them into conflict with the animals' owners. Merchant caravan owners despise desert trolls, and they handsomely reward adventurers brave enough to protect their caravans from the marauding raiders or seek and destroy them before they create any havoc. In many cases, the monsters still carry the ill-gotten spoils from earlier raids. Desert trolls are ferocious combatants. They hurl themselves into battle with reckless abandon, and flee only when confronted by foes dealing significant amounts of cold or electricity damage to them. It is not uncommon to encounter a desert troll furthering the plans of a more intelligent and ambitious master, such as a genie. In these circumstances, desert trolls fight to the bitter end rather than slink back to face their master's wrath.

Dracolisk

Dracolisk

XP 2,300 (CR 6)

N medium dragon

Init –1

DEFENSE

AC 14

HP 105 (10d10 + 50)

Immune acid damage; paralyzed

OFFENSE

Speed 20ft, fly 40ft

Multiaction a dracolisk attacks with two claws and one bite.

Melee bite (+9, 1d8+7 piercing), claw (+9, 1d4+7 slashing)

STATISTICS

Str 22 (+6), **Dex** 8 (–1), **Con** 20 (+5),

Int 4 (–3), **Wis** 13 (+1), **Cha** 13 (+1)

Senses darkvision 60ft, passive Perception 11

TRAITS

Acid Breath (Recharge 5-6) The dracolisk's breath weapon is a 5 foot wide, 30-foot long line. Each creature in the line must make a DC14 Dexterity save, taking 11d8 acid damage on a failed save, and half as much on a success.

Petrifying Gaze If the dracolisk and a creature within 30ft can see each other, it can force the creature to make a DC12 Con save unless the dracolisk is incapacitated. On a failed save the target creature begins to turn to stone and is restrained. The target must repeat the saving throw at the end of its next turn; on a success the effect ends. On a failure the creature is petrified and remains so until freed by a *greater restoration* spell or similar effect.

A creature that isn't surprised can avert its gaze and avoid the saving throw, but it cannot see the dracolisk and must continue averting its eyes on subsequent turns.

ECOLOGY

Environment type

Organization solitary or pair

A dracolisk is the result of a dragon crossbred with a basilisk. Originally the result of magical experimentation, dracolisks have begun to breed true and now exist as a separate species.

Drake, Desert

Drake, Desert

XP 3,900 (CR 8)

NE large dragon

Init +2

DEFENSE

AC 17

HP 152 (16d10 + 64)

Immune paralyzed

Resist lightning damage

OFFENSE

Speed 30ft, burrow 20ft, fly 60ft

Multiaction a desert drake attacks with one bite and a tail slap

Melee bite (+8, 2d6+5 piercing), tail slap (+8, 1d8+5 bludgeoning plus target makes DC 13 Str save or be pushed 1d6x5ft)

STATISTICS

Str 20 (+5), **Dex** 15 (+2), **Con** 18 (+4),

Int 8 (–1), **Wis** 11 (+0), **Cha** 14 (+2)

Languages Draconic

Skills Intimidation +5, Perception +3, Survival +3

Senses darkvision 60ft, tremorsense 30ft, passive Perception 13

TRAITS

Dazzling Emergence During a surprise round, a desert drake can make a Cha (Intimidation) check against all foes that

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can see it within 30 feet as a bonus action.

Immune to Sleep Desert drakes are not affected by magical sleep.

Sandstorm Breath As an action a desert drake can spit a ball of electrically charged sand that bursts into a cloud. This attack has a range of 60ft and deals 3d6 points of fire damage plus 4d8 points of electricity damage in a 15ft radius (DC 15 Dex save for half). The cloud remains for 1d4 rounds, dealing no damage but otherwise acting as a fog cloud. The drake's breath weapon recharges on a d6 roll of 6.

Speed Surge Three times per day a desert drake can boost its strength and speed, allowing it to make an additional move that round.

ECOLOGY

Environment warm desert

Organization solitary, pair or rampage (3-12)

These deadly ambush predators grow to a length of 15 feet and a weight of over 2,500 pounds. They normally dwell in rocky areas, preferring high elevations that allow them to survey the desert around them. When prey approaches, desert drakes burrow beneath the sand or fly low, attempting to approach unobserved, then attack with surprise and ferocity, accompanying their terrifying initial assault with their fierce sandstorm breath attack. Mated pairs often coordinate their attacks, with one drawing the enemy's attention while the other positions itself for a devastating surprise assault.

El-Aurens

El-Aurens

XP 1,100 (CR 4)

N Medium undead

Init +0

DEFENSE

AC 16 (natural armor)

HP 90 (12d8 + 36)

Save Str +7, Con +6

Immune poison

Resist cold, fire

OFFENSE

Speed 30ft

Melee slam (+7, 2d8+4 bludgeoning)

STATISTICS

Str 18 (+4), **Dex** 10 (+0), **Con** 16 (+3),

Int 10 (+0), **Wis** 12 (+1), **Cha** 15 (+2)

Languages Common

Skills Athletics +7, Intimidation +5, Nature +3, Survival +4

Senses passive Perception 11

TRAITS

Disorient (Su) Once per day, an el-aurens disorients a living creature within 30 feet unless it succeeds on a DC 13 Wis save. Disoriented creatures move in a random direction rather than the desired direction. Once the creature begins moving, it continues moving in the same random direction until it completes its move. The effect lasts for 1d4+1 minutes and the victim may save again each round. Once a creature has saved it is immune from that el-aurens' disorientation effect for 24 hours.

ECOLOGY

Environment desert

Organization solitary or field (2-7)

Natural dangers claim their fair share of desert travelers every year. The bodies of most victims are forever lost beneath the dunes, but some

emerge from their graves and resume their appointed tasks. These shambling cadavers are known as el-aurens. They are typically found in groups, leading sages to conclude that they once belonged to an expedition force or an exploration group. In fact, el-aurens occasionally provide directions or even temporarily guide desert travelers to their intended destination for the equivalent of 5gp worth of opals and turquoise stones per mile traveled. Alternatively, there is a 20% chance that an el-aurens has a map of the immediate area, which it may sell at an appropriate cost.

El-aurens are haughty, aloof and devoted to their duty. They stand between 5 and 6 feet tall and weigh 150 pounds. Most wear the tattered remnants of an explorer's outfit, and some carry the tools of their trade including spyglasses, compasses, backpacks, supply containers and tents. Unfortunately, their hands prevent them from using these devices, but they are once again willing to part with these items for an appropriate price in opals and turquoise stones. They attack monsters without hesitation, yet they rarely attack humanoids unless provoked. They speak with a dignified tone and become excited at the prospect of adventure. They envision themselves as guides, and they greet any overtures to pay them to fight with disdain. They ignore any orders to attack other creatures and instead disorient those giving such orders before departing. Desert travelers universally fear undead, but veteran explorers know that these creatures can save the day for those hopelessly lost in the desert.

Juju Zombie Desert Giant

Juju Zombie Desert Giant

XP 5,900 (CR 10)

LE Large Undead (augmented humanoid)

Init +4

DEFENSE

AC 18

HP 204 (24d10 + 72)

Save Str +14, Con +7

Immune cold, electricity, fire damage

Resist piercing and slashing from nonmagical weapons

OFFENSE

Speed 50ft

Multiattack a juju zombie desert giant can attack twice per round with its scimitar

Melee scimitar (+14, 1d8+10 slashing) or slam +14 (1d8+10 bludgeoning)

STATISTICS

Str 30 (+10), **Dex** 19 (+4), **Con** 16 (+3),

Int 13 (+1), **Wis** 12 (+1), **Cha** 10 (+0)

Languages Common, Giant

Skills Athletics +14, Intimidation +4, Perception +5

Senses darkvision 60 ft, passive Perception 15

TRAITS

Immune to magic missile Juju zombies take no damage from magic missile spells.

Sandwalking A desert giant travels at full speed across sand, rocky ground, or dust, and leave no trail behind unless it chooses to.

ECOLOGY

Environment warm desert

Organization solitary, gang (2-4), band (5-8)

Desert giants are nomadic creatures who wander arid regions, rarely staying in any one place for long. They are slender and graceful for giants, and are well-adapted to life in their chosen environment.

Juju zombies are the undead remains of creatures slain by necrotic magic such as *vampiric touch*, *blight* and *finger of death*. They are emaciated creatures with gnarled grey skin, possessed by hatred of the living.

Mantidrake

Mantidrake

XP 5,000 (CR 9)

LE large monstrosity

Init +2

DEFENSE

AC 16

HP 126 (12d10 + 60)

Save Str +11, Con +9

Immune acid, paralyzed, sleep

OFFENSE

Speed 30ft, fly 50ft

Multiaction When attacking in melee a mantidrake bites once and claws twice or uses its breath weapon. A mantidrake can launch up to six spikes per round as ranged attacks.

Melee bite (+11, 1d8+7 piercing), claws (+11, 1d8+7 slashing)

Ranged spikes (+6, 180ft, 1d6+7 piercing)

Special Attacks Breath weapon

STATISTICS

Str 24 (+7), Dex 15 (+2), Con 20 (+5),

Int 9 (-1), Wis 14 (+2), Cha 13 (+1)

Languages Common, Draconic

Skills Perception +6

Senses darkvision 60ft, passive Perception 16

TRAITS

Acid Breath (Recharge 5-6) A mantidrake's breath weapon takes the form of a 30ft long, 5ft wide line. Each creature in the line must make a DC 14 Dex or take 8d8 points of acid damage. A successful save halves this damage.

Immune to Sleep Mantidrakes are not affected by magical sleep.

Spikes (Ex) With a snap of its tail, a mantidrake can loose a volley of six spikes as an action (make an attack roll for each spike). This attack has a range of 180 feet with no range increment. All targets must be within 30 feet of each other. The creature can launch only twenty-four spikes in a single day.

ECOLOGY

Environment any

Organization solitary or pair

Mantidrakes were born from fell experiments and dark rituals that crossed evil dragons with manticores. The result: a creature that combines the best and worst traits of both of its parents. From a distance, a mantidrake is often mistaken for a normal manticore. Only when opponents close against it do they see that the creature is something different.

Mantidrakes like dragons are territorial predators and often claim a wide expanse of land as their hunting ground. Creatures that wander into a mantidrake's territory rarely go unnoticed, especially during the daylight hours when the mantidrake spends most of its time hunting. Slain prey is either devoured on the spot (if the mantidrake is hungry) or carried back to its lair and stored for later (or fed to the young if such creatures are present). Mantidrakes are generally solitary creatures though sometimes a pair may be encountered. Such an encounter is with a mated pair.

Female mantidrakes are just as common (or rare depending on how you classify this creature) as males and are just as likely to be encountered as both sexes are skilled hunters. When gestating, a female curtails the time she spends hunting to spend it in the lair preparing both herself and the lair for her young. Young are born live and by 2 years of age they are independent enough to go out hunting on their own.

A typical mantidrake is about 10 to 12 feet long and weighs about 1,100 to 1,300 pounds. Its draconic head is scaled and is the same color as its

dragon parent. The color slowly fades and meshes with the mantidrake's leonine body which is covered in dull tan fur, except for its underbelly which is scaled like a true dragon's. Its wings are of the same color as its dragon parent, dark, almost black (and in the case of a black dragon parent, the wings are actually black in color).

A mantidrake's environment varies based on its dragon heritage: black mantidrakes can be found in warm marshes, deserts, or underground; blue mantidrakes favor warm hills and mountains, rarely being found underground; green mantidrakes favor temperate or warm forests and underground settings; red mantidrakes favor warm mountains and underground settings; and white mantidrakes favor cold mountains, cold deserts, and underground environments.

Mantidrakes are aggressive combatants and begin most attacks with a blast from their deadly breath weapon. This is followed next by a volley of spikes or a claw/claw/bite routine against the closest opponent. Mantidrakes prefer to use their powerful wings to stay aloft and fight from the air where it can rain a combination of its breath weapon and deadly spikes down on its opponents.

Morlocks

Morlocks

XP 450 (CR 2)

CE medium humanoid

Init +4

DEFENSE

AC 15 (natural armor)

HP 52 (8d8 + 16)

Save Dexterity +6, Con +4

Immune poison damage; poisoned

OFFENSE

Speed 40ft, climb 30ft

Multiaction a morlock attacks twice with its club

Melee club (+4, 1d6+2 bludgeoning), bite (+4 1d4+2 piercing)

STATISTICS

Str 14 (+2), Dex 18 (+4), Con 15 (+2),

Int 5 (-3), Wis 14 (+2), Cha 6 (-2)

Languages Undercommon

Skills Climb +4, Perception +4, Stealth +6

Senses darkvision 120ft, passive Perception 14

TRAITS

Cavern Stealth Morlocks receive advantage on all Dexterity (Stealth) checks while in caves or underground areas.

Expert Climber Morlocks have advantage on all Str (Athletics) and Dex (Acrobatics) checks involved in climbing.

Immune to Disease Morlocks are unaffected by disease.

Leap Attack If a morlock leaps during its turn, it may make its attack at any point during its move -- at the beginning, the end or while moving. A morlock that moves in this fashion does not provoke opportunity attacks.

Light Blindness Morlocks are considered blinded in daylight or its equivalent.

Swarming Up to two morlocks can share the same five-foot square. If morlocks in the same square attack the same foe, they each do so with advantage.

ECOLOGY

Environment any underground

Organization solitary, pair, band (3-6) or tribe (7-18)

Morlocks are the descendants of degenerate humans who were lost or trapped underground, devolved into savage cannibalistic creatures with no memory of their civilized ancestors. Many still live in the ruins of old human cities, and even worship the statues left behind as images of their gods.

Normally bipedal, morlocks have oversized, muscular arms that allow them to climb, or scuttle along on all fours, often unexpectedly leaping at prey from hiding.

Morlock High Priest

Morlock High Priest
 XP 3,900 (CR 8)
 CE medium humanoid
 Init +4

DEFENSE

AC 15 (natural armor)
HP 65 (10d8 + 20)
Save Dexterity +7, Con +5
Immune poison damage; poisoned

OFFENSE

Speed 40ft, climb 30ft
Multiaction the morlock priest attacks twice with its club
Melee club (+5, 1d6+2 bludgeoning), bite (+5 1d4+2 piercing)

STATISTICS

Str 14 (+2), **Dex** 18 (+4), **Con** 15 (+2),
Int 5 (-3), **Wis** 14 (+2), **Cha** 6 (-2)
Languages Undercommon
Skills Climb +7, Perception +5, Stealth +7
Senses darkvision 120ft, passive Perception 15

TRAITS

Cavern Stealth Morlocks receive advantage on all Dexterity (Stealth) checks while in caves or underground areas.
Expert Climber Morlocks have advantage on all Str (Athletics) and Dex (Acrobatics) checks involved in climbing.
Immune to Disease Morlocks are unaffected by disease.
Leap Attack If a morlock leaps during its turn, it may make its attack at any point during its move -- at the beginning, the end or while moving. A morlock that moves in this fashion does not provoke opportunity attacks.
Light Blindness Morlocks are considered blinded in daylight or its equivalent.
Spellcasting The morlock is a 10th-level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Wisdom (save DC 13, +7 to hit with spell attacks). The morlock has the following druid spells prepared:
 Cantrips: *guidance, poison spray, shillelagh, thorn whip*
 1st level (4 slots): *charm person, entangle, fog cloud, thunderwave*
 2nd level (3 slots): *barkskin, flame blade, hold person*
 3rd level (3 slots): *dispel magic, sleet storm*
 4th level (3 slots): *blight, stoneskin*
 5th level (2 slots): *insect plague*
Swarming Up to two morlocks can share the same five-foot square. If morlocks in the same square attack the same foe, they each do so with advantage.

ECOLOGY

Environment any underground
Organization solitary, pair, band (3-6) or tribe (7-18)

Morlock Warrior

Morlock Warrior
 XP 3,900 (CR 6)
 CE medium humanoid
 Init +4

DEFENSE

AC 16 (natural armor)
HP 120 (16d8 + 48)
Save Dexterity +7, Con +5
Immune poison damage; poisoned

OFFENSE

Speed 50ft, climb 40ft

Multiaction A morlock warrior makes two club attacks or two bites per turn
Melee club (+7, 1d6+4 bludgeoning), bite (+7, 1d4+4 piercing)

STATISTICS

Str 18 (+4), **Dex** 18 (+4), **Con** 16 (+3),
Int 5 (-3), **Wis** 14 (+2), **Cha** 6 (-2)
Languages Undercommon
Skills Climb +5, Perception +5, Stealth +7
Senses darkvision 120ft, passive Perception 15

TRAITS

Cavern Stealth Morlocks receive advantage on all Dexterity (Stealth) checks while in caves or underground areas.
Expert Climber Morlocks have advantage on all Str (Athletics) and Dex (Acrobatics) checks involved in climbing.
Immune to Disease Morlocks are unaffected by disease.
Leap Attack If a morlock leaps during its turn, it may make its attack at any point during its move -- at the beginning, the end or while moving. A morlock that moves in this fashion does not provoke opportunity attacks.
Light Blindness Morlocks are considered blinded in daylight or its equivalent.
Rage As the barbarian class feature; morlock warriors can rage 4 times per day. Rage lasts 1 minute and gives advantage on Str checks and saving throws, gives a +2 bonus on damage rolls and gives the morlock resistance to bludgeoning, piercing and slashing damage.
Radiant Vulnerability Morlocks have disadvantage on all saves against radiant damage.
Reckless Attack As the barbarian class feature. Morlock warriors always attack recklessly on their first turn, giving themselves advantage, but also granting advantage on all attacks against them until their next turn.
Swarming Up to two morlocks can share the same five-foot square. If morlocks in the same square attack the same foe, they each do so with advantage.

ECOLOGY

Environment any underground
Organization solitary, pair, band (3-6) or tribe (7-18)

Sand Kracken

Sand Kraken
 XP 5,000 (CR 9)
 N large monstrosity
 Init +0

DEFENSE

AC 16
HP 94 (8d10 + 50, see below)

OFFENSE

Speed 10ft, burrow 10ft
Multiaction a sand kracken attacks with 10 tentacles each round (see below).
Melee tentacle (+13, 1d4+5 bludgeoning plus grapple check at +8), bite (+13, 2d6+2 piercing)

STATISTICS

Str 20 (+5), **Dex** 11 (+0), **Con** 20 (+5),
Int 2 (-4), **Wis** 12 (+1), **Cha** 1 (-1)
Skills Athletics +8
Senses tremorsense 60ft, passive Perception 11

TRAITS

Camouflage Because it remains buried until it attacks, it takes a successful DC 15 Wis (Perception) check to detect the presence of a sand kracken before it attacks. Anyone

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with proficiency in Wis (Survival) or Int (Nature) can use one of those skills instead of Wis (Perception) to notice the sand kraken.

Tentacles The only part of a sand kraken that is normally exposed is its tentacles. For combat purposes, the creature's tentacles are treated as separate weapons. A single tentacle has an AC 15 and 15 hit points. Once a tentacle takes more than 15 hit points of damage, it is destroyed.

A sand kraken can no longer use the destroyed tentacle to make attacks, however the loss of a tentacle cause the creature no other penalties.

Furthermore, damage dealt to a tentacle does not count against the creature's total hit points. Lost tentacles regrow in 1d4 days. A sand kraken's bite is only used when feeding on slain prey or when its body has been completely dug up and exposed.

ECOLOGY

Environment warm deserts

Organization solitary

Sand krakens are dangerous creatures only encountered in remote wastelands. A sand kraken keeps its body well concealed, buried deep in sand or loose rock, and inaccessible to most attacks. The creature never moves from the place where it digs its first burrow and once it settles in will never again see the light of day. The only parts of a sand kraken that are usually seen are its tentacles, and by then it is often too late.

Sand krakens are omnivores but prefer meat to any other food. Once it captures and kills its prey, a sand kraken pulls the carcass down into its sandy lair, and devours it with its great central maw. For this reason, a number of scholars speculate a biological relationship between sand krakens and dust diggers.

For most of its life, a sand kraken remains dormant and silent, buried several feet below the surface of the ground. When it senses prey its tentacles swiftly rise to the surface. A sand kraken uses its initial attacks to immobilize its prey by constriction. Each tentacle has its own secondary brain, and can attack independently. While tentacles can be harmed and severed, the only true way to kill a sand kraken is to dig it up and destroy its body.

Wadira

Wadira

XP 1,800 (CR 5)

NG Medium fey

Init +4

DEFENSE

AC 16 (natural armor)

HP 91 (14d8 + 28)

Save Dex +7, Wis +5

OFFENSE

Speed 30ft

Multiaction A wadira attacks twice with its quarterstaff

Melee +1 *quarterstaff* (+7, 1d6+4 bludgeoning)

STATISTICS

Str 16 (+3), Dex 19 (+4), Con 14 (+2),

Int 14 (+2), Wis 15 (+2), Cha 20 (+5)

Languages Common, Sylvan

Skills Acrobatics +7, Athletics +6, Nature +5, Perception +5,

Performance +8, Survival +5

Senses passive Perception 15

TRAITS

Oasis Bound (Su) A wadira is mystically bonded to a single natural body of water and must never stray more than 500 yards from it. The water source is typically an oasis spring, pond, lake or similar body of water, but an underground aquifer

and its associated well function as well. A wadira who moves 500 yards beyond the water's edge or the well's edge immediately becomes poisoned. Every hour thereafter, he must make a DC 12 Con save to resist becoming unconscious for an hour. A wadira that is out of range of his bonded body of water for 24 hours takes 5d6 points of damage, and another 2d6 points of damage every day that follows — eventually, this separation kills the wadira. A wadira can forge a new bond with a new body of water by performing a 24-hour ritual and making a successful DC 15 Wis save.

Pacify As a standard action, a wadira may fix its gaze on any one creature within 30 feet. If the target fails a DC 15 Con save, it is affected by *calm emotions*. The effect last for 1d6 rounds. Whether or not the save is successful, that creature cannot be affected again by the same wadira's pacify ability for 24 hours.

Replenishment Drinking water from the wadira's bonded source removes the blinded, deafened, incapacitated or stunned conditions from any living creature that does so. The drinker cannot gain these benefits again for another 24 hours. The water loses all magical properties if it is more than 500 feet from the wadira.

Serenity (Su) All living creatures within 30 feet of a wadira that attempt to directly attack the wadira must succeed on a DC 15 Con save or be unable to attack the wadira as if they were under the influence of *sanctuary*. The effect lasts for 1 minute, and it even applies to targeted spells. Whether or not the save is successful, that creature cannot be affected again by the same wadira's serenity ability for 24 hours.

ECOLOGY

Environment desert

Organization solitary or oasis (2-7)

Wadiras are the defenders and protectors of the desert's most valuable commodity — water. They are water-fey bound to a single naturally created body of water, most typically in an oasis, but they can also bond with an underground aquifer. Wadiras ensure that the water remains pure for man, beast and plant alike. Though they are bonded to the water, they take equal pride in caring for the native plants and animals that call their watering hole home. The wadira's bond to the water grants it magical properties, allowing it to cure living creatures of fatigue, fear and sickness.

Wadiras are slightly taller than the average man with a lithe, athletic build. They are handsome and rugged male fey with pronounced facial features and flowing silvery-white hair that drapes around their shoulders. They wear a finely polished, white chain shirt and always carry an ornately carved quarterstaff in their hands. Though they are water-fey, wadiras have a fondness for precious metals and gems, which they often incorporate into jewelry pieces such as necklaces and rings. They also have an eye for lovely female humanoids, particularly elves and other races with an affinity for the wilderness. They shower and adorn such beauties with glowing words and wondrous gifts.

Wadiras generally live alone, but it is possible for two or more of them to reside within a particular oasis if the location has more than one natural body of water. Wadiras view themselves as hospitable caretakers rather than protective owners of their bonded location. They are healers and providers, giving aid and respite to worthy creatures in need of such assistance. They happily share these resources with other creatures, but they steadfastly defend their sacred oasis or well against those seeking to monopolize or exploit it for their own benefit. When confrontation rears its ugly head, wadiras attempt the peaceful approach first using their serenity and pacify abilities to reduce hostility and ease tensions. If these fail, wadiras resort to combat as a measure of last resort, using their hand-crafted quarterstaff with deadly efficiency.

Niavark's Revenge

Treant, Quenching

Treant, Quenching

XP 5,000 (CR 9)

N Huge plant

Init +2

DEFENSE

AC 16 (natural)

HP 138 (12d12 + 60)

Resist bludgeoning, piercing

Vulnerable fire

OFFENSE

Speed 30ft

Multiattack a quenching treant attacks with two slams

Melee slam (+10, 3d6+6 bludgeoning)

STATISTICS

Str 23 (+6), Dex 8 (-1), Con 21 (+5),

Int 12 (+1), Wis 16 (+3), Cha 12 (+1)

Languages Common, Druidic, Elvish, Sylvan

Senses passive Perception 13

TRAITS

False Appearance: While motionless a quenching treant is indistinguishable from normal trees.

Foam Blast: Each turn a quenching treant can hurl a globule of sap up to 60ft. These globules expand into a thick foam on exposure to the air. The foam instantly extinguishes normal fires in a 5 ft. square area, and absorbs 5d4 points of magical fire damage. If the magical fire damage is less than the foam can absorb, the fire is extinguished.

Siege Monster: Quenching treants inflict double damage on objects and structures.

Spell Quenching: Once per round, even if it is not its turn, a quenching treant can target a spellcaster with its foam blast (see above) in an effort to cause a miscast and lose the spell. The quenching treant makes a +2 ranged attack roll. If the attack hits the spellcaster must make a DC 13 Con check to maintain concentration or the spell fails and is lost as if it had been cast.

ECOLOGY

Environment any forest

Organization solitary or grove (2-8)

Now a race of their own, these creatures were originally created by a circle of druids seeking to protect their forest from fires, including those fires caused by magical use. Unlike normal treants, quenching treants can be found in any type of forest; they simply alter their leaves and branches to look like the surrounding trees. In combat quenching treants prefer to watch travelers before attacking. If the travelers appear to mean some harm to the forest, or begin to cast spells, the treant bursts into action, firing its foam at anyone casting spells and charging into combat.

Madness Grows

Allip

Allip

XP 700 (CR 3)

CE Medium undead (incorporeal)

Init +1

DEFENSE

AC 11

HP 45 (10d8)

Immune cold, necrotic, poison damage; charmed, exhaustion, frightened, grappled, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned, prone, restrained

Resist acid, fire, lightning, thunder; bludgeoning, piercing and slashing from nonmagical weapons

OFFENSE

Speed 0ft, fly 30ft

Melee touch of insanity (+4, 1d4 psychic plus Wis save)

STATISTICS

Str 10 (+0), Dex 12 (+1), Con 10 (+0),

Int 11 (+0), Wis 11 (+0), Cha 16 (+3)

Languages Common

Senses darkvision 60ft., passive Perception 10

TRAITS

Babble: An allip constantly mutters to itself, creating a hypnotic effect. All sane creatures within 60 feet of the allip

must succeed at a DC 12 Wis save or be charmed for 2d4 rounds. While a target is charmed, the allip can approach it without breaking the effect, but an attack by the allip does end the effect. Creatures that successfully save cannot be affected by the same allip's babble for 24 hours.

Madness: Anyone targeting an allip with any kind of telepathic effect or spell makes direct contact with its tortured mind and takes 1d4 points of Wis damage.

Touch of Insanity: Creatures successfully hit by an allip's touch attack must make a DC 12 Wis save. On a failure, the victim is affected by short-term madness (see 5e *Core Rules*) and the allip gains 5 temporary hit points. If the madness-affected creature is touched again, it must make another Wis save, and if this fails, the creature is affected by long-term madness. A third successful touch and failed save results in indefinite madness.

ECOLOGY

Environment any

Organization solitary, pair or haunt (3-6)

Allip are the spirits of mortals cursed with madness who have taken their own lives. Still suffering from the torments of their former lives, allip take out their anger and confusion on the living, ferociously inflicting their terrifying babble and using their touch attacks to inflict the same insanity that they were cursed with.

Normally allip attack the nearest living creature, but if confronted by what they believe to be the cause of their madness, they assault these individuals instead, not resting until they have been driven to madness.

Amber Ooze

Amber Ooze

XP 200 (CR 1)

Unaligned Tiny ooze

Init +0

DEFENSE

AC 10

HP 30 (12d4)

Immune blinded, charmed, deafened, exhaustion, frightened, prone

Resist acid, cold, fire

OFFENSE

Speed 10ft

STATISTICS

Str 4 (–3), **Dex** 10 (+0), **Con** 14 (+2),

Int 1 (–5), **Wis** 1 (–5), **Cha** 1 (–5)

Senses blindsight 60ft, Passive Perception 5

TRAITS

Ability Drain: If not purged from the host's body, the acids and protoplasm of an amber ooze begin damaging its host's body and mind. After 1 week, the host loses 1 point each of Intelligence, Wisdom and Charisma drain each day. When one of the three abilities reaches 0, the host dies.

Infuse: A victim that has ingested an amber ooze must succeed on a DC 12 Con save or the amber ooze infuses itself into his body. The ooze merges with flesh and bone, and can only be removed by a *lesser restoration* spell. A *detect magic* (or similar spell) cast on the host reveals the amber ooze.

If the victim succeeds on the Con save, the amber ooze takes 1 point of acid damage per round from the host's digestive juices. Once it begins to take damage, the ooze retreats from the host's body through its mouth.

Weaken Will: An amber ooze that has infused itself into a host weakens the will of its victim. As long as the amber ooze remains in the host, he takes a –4 penalty on Wis saves to resist mind-influencing spells and effects (such as *charm person* and *suggestion*.)

ECOLOGY

Environment any temperate or warm land

Organization solitary

Amber oozes resemble small puddles of liquid the color of mead. They were created by an evil wizard as a means of gaining control over the elders of a powerful city. He bred many of the creatures in secret and sealed them into kegs of ale, then hired merchants to distribute this ale throughout the city. The wizard was ultimately slain and the city saved by a band of heroic adventurers.

Unknown to the adventurers, the merchants had wanted to line their own pockets without the knowledge of their employer. Unaware of the plot they sold some of the kegs of ale in illegal markets. Now, many of the kegs containing amber oozes have been shipped to other cities and the creatures are spreading. When an amber ooze divides, one of the new creatures seeps out of the keg to find its own lair. Stacked in rows with other kegs of uncontaminated ale, amber oozes can quickly take over a store room or pantry.

An amber ooze is approximately 1 foot in diameter, and is a dark amber color. The designs of the mad mage even provided the amber ooze with the scent of mead or heady ale. Amber oozes can lay in a state of hibernation for years, coming out of it only to replicate — a process they undergo once every few months — or when they are alerted by movement of the keg.

When a keg containing an amber ooze is tapped, the creature makes its way to the opening. Within the drawing of a few drinks, the amber ooze squeezes out of the tap and into the mug. As soon as the victim drinks, the ooze forces itself down the victim's throat and into its belly.

Baccae

Baccae

XP 700 (CR 3)

CN Medium fey

Init +3

DEFENSE

AC 13

HP 55 (10d8 + 10)

<RULE>

OFFENSE

Speed 30ft

Multiaction in beast form a baccae attacks with two claws and one bite

Melee club (+4, 2d6+2 bludgeoning), claw (+4, x2, 1d4+2 slashing), bite (+4, 2d6+2 piercing)

STATISTICS

Str 15 (+2), **Dex** 16 (+3), **Con** 12 (+1),

Int 11 (+0), **Wis** 9 (–1), **Cha** 16 (+3)

Languages Common, Sylvan

Skills Religion +3, Perception +2, Stealth +5

Senses darkvision 60ft, passive Perception 12

TRAITS

Beast Form: When angered or intoxicated, a baccae takes on a beastlike visage, growing sharpened fangs and claws. This transformation cannot be ended voluntarily and lasts for up to 1 hour.

Charming Gaze: In human form, a baccae's gaze can charm any creature meeting her gaze and within 30 feet. An affected creature can attempt a DC 12 Wis save to resist the effects. If the save fails, the opponent acquires the charmed condition. A baccae can suppress this ability as a bonus action.

Rage: Once per day, a baccae in beast form can fly into a berserk frenzy. This frenzy lasts for 1 minute (10 rounds). In this rage, she gains temporary bonuses to her ability scores: +4 Str, +4 Con. She likewise gains a +2 bonus on Wis saves, but takes a –2 penalty to AC. A baccae cannot voluntarily end her rage.

ECOLOGY

Environment any forest or hills

Organization solitary, pair, gang (2–4), bacchanal (11–20 plus one cleric of 3rd – 6th level)

The handmaidens of Bacchus-Dionysus are known as the baccae. Some say they were once his priestesses who succumbed to the madness of the grape. Others say they were a race of fey created by him who reflects his ever-changing emotions. When in peaceful playful moods, these women are comely and attractive with long hair the color of red wine. Baccae carry jugs of wine which quickly make the imbiber become complacent as if under the influence of a *calm emotions* spell. Baccae are a reclusive race of fairy who spend their time in their forested lair away from humankind. While friendly toward humans and humanoids that share their alignment, they spend most of their time associating with others of their race and other fey creatures of the same or similar alignment.

Though chaotic by nature, evil baccae are a rare sight as most lean toward a neutral disposition. Those with evil tendencies are shunned by others of their own race and often attacked on sight. (Evil baccae are known to associate with quicklings on occasion, if the agreement mutually benefits both parties involved). Good-aligned baccae, while rare, often associate with druids, elves, and other good-aligned fey creatures. A baccae stands between 5 and 6 feet tall and weighs around 120 to 130 pounds. Her hair is always long and free flowing (baccae never pull it back) and always red. Eye color is either green or commonly blue. Baccae dress in loose-fitting robes of greens, browns, and tans.

Baccae Society

Known for their wild indulgences and extremes of emotion, the baccae brew their own wine which is used in their bacchanals. This wine, called the Wine of Baccus-Dionysus is the center of their worship to these strange fey.

The wine has the effect of a *calm emotions* spell and requires the drinker to succeed on a DC 12 Wis save that increases by +1 for every cup of wine consumed. The baccae themselves have a 5% chance per cup imbibed of unleashing their bestial form and falling into a rage, attacking any non-baccae in their midst, starting with males.

Bucentaur

Bucentaur

XP 2,300 (CR 6)
CE Large monstrosity
Init +1

DEFENSE

AC 11
HP 102 (12d10+36)

OFFENSE

Speed 40ft
Multiaction a bucentaur makes three attacks: two with its hooves and one gore, or a single attack with its greataxe.
Melee hoof (+8, 2d6+5 bludgeoning), gore (+5, 2d6+5 piercing), greataxe (+5, 4d6+5 slashing)

STATISTICS

Str 20 (+5), Dex 12 (+1), Con 16 (+3),
Int 8 (-1), Wis 12 (+1), Cha 10 (+0)
Languages Kirkut (Campacha dialect)
Skills Athletics +7, Perception +3, Survival +3
Senses passive Perception 13

TRAITS

Natural Cunning: Although bucentaurs are not particularly intelligent, they possess innate cunning and logical ability. This gives them immunity to *maze* spells and prevents them from ever becoming lost. Further, they are never disadvantaged in combat.

ECOLOGY

Environment temperate forests and plains or underground
Organization solitary, pair, band (3-6), or herd (7-16 plus leader of 10th-12th level)

Bucentaurs have the lower torso of a powerful black bull and the upper torso of a powerfully-built man with the head of a bull. Also known as mantaurs or bulltaurs, these creatures are the progeny of a minotaur and a heifer, though rarely (1% chance) one is born to normal minotaurs. Bucentaurs are considered to be a blessing by many minotaur clans, and are often raised by minotaur priests to be kings and rulers of a minotaur tribe. Their battle prowess is legendary, the skulls of many heroes lining the walls of their pen.

Bucentaurs make their home in desolate forests and ruins, generally away from civilized races. They are fiercely territorial, attacking any who trespass in their realm, including other bucentaur clans on occasion. Hunts are a standard occasion and can see up to six or eight of these creatures strike out to capture and kill large game.

Bucentaurs stand almost 8 feet tall and weigh over 2,200 pounds. Skin colors vary widely, but most tend to be darker colors such as black or blackish-blue. Eyes are almost always dark. Bucentaurs typically live to 50 years of age.

Bucentaurs are straightforward combatants, bull rushing and goring foes before cutting them down with their greataxes. They are savage creatures, and rarely flee from a fight, preferring to inflict as much damage as possible on their foes before the need to escape.

Buffalo

Buffalo

XP 450 (CR 2)
Unaligned Large beast
Init +0

DEFENSE

AC 10
HP 37 (5d10 + 10)

OFFENSE

Speed 40ft
Melee gore (+7, 2d8+5 piercing plus trample)

STATISTICS

Str 20 (+5), Dex 10 (+0), Con 15 (+2),
Int 3 (-4), Wis 12 (+1), Cha 6 (-2)
Senses passive Perception 11

TRAITS

Trample: If a buffalo hits with its gore attack, the target must make a DC 12 Dex check or take an additional 2d8+5 points of bludgeoning damage from the buffalo's hooves.

ECOLOGY

Environment cold or temperate plains
Organization solitary, pair, or herd (3-30)

Cerebric Fungus

Cerebric Fungus

XP 700 (CR 3)
N Medium plant
Init +0

DEFENSE

AC 10
HP 75 (10d8 + 30)

OFFENSE

Speed 30ft
Multiaction cerebric fungi attack with one bite and two tendrils
Melee bite (+4, 2d6+2 piercing), tendril (+4, reach 15ft, 2d4+2 slashing)

STATISTICS

Str 14 (+2), Dex 11 (+0), Con 16 (+3),
Int 15 (+2), Wis 20 (+5), Cha 15 (+2)
Languages telepathy 100ft
Skills Persuasion +4, Perception +7, Stealth +2
Senses darkvision 60ft, passive Perception 17

TRAITS

Otherworldly Mind: Any creature attempting to contact a cerebric fungus's mind or read its thoughts with a divination spell or similar ability must succeed at a DC 13 Wis save or be overwhelmed by the alien thoughts in the creature's head. Those who fail take 1d6 points of psychic damage and are confused (as per the spell) for 1d6 rounds, and the divination effect immediately ends.

Star-Shriek: Once per day as an action, a cerebric fungus can unleash a shrill scream of madness. All creatures (except other cerebric fungi) within 30 feet must make a DC 13 Wisdom or be poisoned for 1d4 rounds.

Touch of Madness: The cerebric fungus may incapacitate one living creature by making a successful tendril attack. The target creature must succeed at a DC 14 Wis

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save, or it becomes incapacitated for 1d4 turns.

Unsettling Appearance: A cerebriic fungus constantly scans the minds of those around it, projecting around itself a confusing collage of images gleaned from their thoughts. Creatures within 60 feet that can see the fungus must succeed at a DC 12 Wis save or take a -1 penalty on attack rolls.

ECOLOGY

Environment any

Organization solitary, pair or colony (3–12)

A carnivorous race of intelligent fungi, these creatures hail from a distant planet and visit other worlds, investigating their inhabitants and asking endless, incomprehensible questions, engaging in strange experiments and other bizarre behavior. Some scholars claim to have gained disturbing knowledge from their contact with cerebriic fungi, but this has yet to be confirmed.

Chaos Beast

Chaos Beast

XP 2,900 (CR 7)

CN Medium monstrosity

Init +2

DEFENSE

AC 15 (natural)

HP 150 (20d8 + 60)

Immune critical and sneak attack damage

OFFENSE

Speed 20ft

Multiaction a chaos beast makes four claw attacks each turn

Melee claw (+6, 2d6+3 slashing plus corporeal instability)

STATISTICS

Str 17 (+3), **Dex** 15 (+2), **Con** 16 (+3),

Int 10 (+0), **Wis** 12 (+1), **Cha** 11 (+0)

Senses darkvision 60ft, passive Perception 11

TRAITS

Corporeal Instability: Targets struck by a chaos beast's claw attack must make a DC 13 Con save or be transformed into a spongy, shapeless mass. Unless the victim manages to control the effect (see below), its shape constantly melts, flows, writhes, and boils. An affected creature is unable to hold or use any item. Clothing, armor, helmets, and rings become useless. Large items worn or carried—armor, backpacks, even shirts—hamper more than help, reducing the victim's Dexterity score by 4. Speed is reduced to 10 feet or one-quarter normal, whichever is less. The victim cannot cast spells or use magic items, and it attacks blindly, unable to distinguish friend from foe (–4 penalty on attack rolls and a 50% miss chance, regardless of the attack roll).

A victim can temporarily regain its own shape by taking a standard action to attempt a DC 13 Con save. A success reestablishes the creature's normal form for 1 minute. Spells that change the victim's shape (such as *alter self*, *polymorph* and *shapechange*) do not remove the instability, but hold the creature in a stable form (which might not be its own form, depending on the spell). Each hour that it is unstable, the victim must make a DC 12 Wisdom or suffer short-term madness (see *5e Core Rules*). The difficulty of the save increases by one with each failure, and if the victim is already suffering from madness on failure, the madness increases by one category — short-term becomes long-term and long-term becomes indefinite.

Resistant to Transformation: Effects such as *polymorph* or petrification, force a chaos beast into a new shape, but at

the start of its next turn, it immediately returns to its normal form as a bonus action.

ECOLOGY

Environment any

Organization solitary or invasion (2–5)

Chaos beasts are living embodiments of disorder — writhing masses of tentacles and flesh without definite shape or volume. They act without purpose, spreading chaos and transforming victims into mad, shapeless monstrosities like themselves. While their shape changes randomly, their attacks are still considered claws, though they may take multiple confusing or horrifying shapes.

Clockwork Servant

Clockwork Servant

XP 450 (CR 2)

N Medium construct

Init +2

DEFENSE

AC 12

HP 84 (8d10 + 40)

Immune poison damage; charmed, exhaustion, frightened, paralyzed, poisoned

OFFENSE

Speed 30ft

Melee slam (+6, 2d4+4 bludgeoning)

Ranged net (+4, entangle)

STATISTICS

Str 19 (+4), **Dex** 14 (+2), **Con** 16 (+3),

Int 1 (–5), **Wis** 11 (+0), **Cha** 1 (–5)

Senses darkvision 60ft, passive Perception 10

TRAITS

Net: As an action, a clockwork servant can launch a net from its shoulder against any target within 10ft (see *5e Core Rules* for details on nets). The launcher itself can contain up to five nets.

Repair Clockwork: Clockwork servants are adept at repairing other clockwork constructs. As an action that does not provoke an attack of opportunity, a clockwork servant can repair damage done to either itself or an adjacent clockwork creature, healing 1d10 points of damage to the target.

ECOLOGY

Environment any

Organization solitary, team (2–4) or squadron (5–10)

Clockwork servants were originally designed to carry out repairs of other clockwork constructs, deployed in both households where clockworks are common and on the battlefield, where they can make repairs in the midst of combat. Clockwork servants resemble multi-limbed vaguely humanoid machines about 5 feet tall and around 400 pounds.

Demiurge

Demiurge

XP 2,300 (CR 6)

CE Medium undead (incorporeal)

Init +2

DEFENSE

AC 13

HP 112 (15d8 + 45)

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Immune cold, necrotic, poison damage; charmed, exhaustion, frightened, grappled, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned, prone, restrained

Resist acid, fire, lightning, thunder; bludgeoning, piercing and slashing from non-magical weapons

OFFENSE

Speed 0ft, fly 40ft

Melee icy touch (+6, 2d4 cold)

STATISTICS

Str 10 (+0), **Dex** 15 (+2), **Con** 17 (+3),

Int 14 (+2), **Wis** 14 (+2), **Cha** 18 (+4)

Languages any languages known in life

Senses darkvision 60ft, passive Perception 12

TRAITS

Soul Touch: A demiurge can damage a creature's soul by moving through a space occupied by the creature. This is a normal action that does not provoke an attack of opportunity. The target can resist the attack by succeeding on a DC 14 Wis save. If the save fails, the target dies as the shock of unlife permeates its soul. If the save succeeds, that creature cannot be affected again by the same demiurge's soul touch for one day.

Transfixing Gaze: Any creature within 30 feet meeting the demiurge's gaze must succeed on a DC 14 Wis save or be transfixed for one minute as if affected by a *hold person* spell. An affected creature can attempt a new save each round to break the effects.

ECOLOGY

Environment any

Organization solitary

A demiurge appears as a humanoid with sunken nose, hollow eye sockets and sickly pale semi-transparent flesh. Its hair is unkempt and dirty, and its clothes are nothing more than rags that hang loosely from its translucent form. The demiurge is the undead spirit of an evil human returned from the grave with a wrathful vengeance against all living creatures that enter its domain. The demiurge is very territorial, usually haunting an area of up to three square miles surrounding its place of death.

Dullahan

Dullahan

XP 2,900 (CR 7)

LE Medium undead

Init +2

DEFENSE

AC 15 (natural)

HP 136 (16d8 + 64)

Save Str +8, Con +7

Immune necrotic, poison damage; charmed, exhaustion, frightened, paralyzed, poisoned

Resist bludgeoning, piercing and slashing from nonmagical weapons

OFFENSE

Speed 30ft, 60ft when mounted

Multiaffack a dullahan attacks twice with its longsword

Melee +1 longsword (+9, 1d8+6 slashing plus 1d6 cold)

STATISTICS

Str 20 (+5), **Dex** 14 (+2), **Con** 18 (+4),

Int 14 (+2), **Wis** 16 (+3), **Cha** 18 (+4)

Languages Common, Sylvan

Skills Athletics +8, Intimidation +7, Perception +6

Senses darkvision 60ft, passive Perception 16

TRAITS

Chilling Blade: When a dullahan wields a slashing weapon, it inflicts 1d6 cold damage in addition to normal damage on a successful hit.

Death's Calling: Once per day as an action the dullahan may place death's calling on a target within 60ft. The target must succeed on a DC 16 Con save, and if the dullahan calls out the target's name this check is at a -2 penalty. If the save fails the target is incapacitated for one round and for the next 24 hours, or until the dullahan is slain, all critical hits on the target inflict maximum damage and automatically fails all death saves.

Summon Mount: As an action the dullahan may summon a warhorse (see 5e Core Rules) which remains until slain or dismissed by the dullahan.

ECOLOGY

Environment any

Organization solitary

Dullahans are soul-reaping creatures created by powerful fiends from the cruelest generals, the most savage warlords and other fearsome military leaders. Returning to their homelands, dullahan prey on the most evil and wicked among the populace, slaying them and sending their souls to perdition to please their fiendish masters. Dullahans do not only prey on the wicked, however — they remain as cruel and savage as they were in life, cutting down the guilty and the innocent alike in their quest for souls.

Garden Ooze

Garden Ooze

XP 450 (CR 2)

Unaligned Small ooze

Init +3

DEFENSE

AC 13

HP 39 (6d8 + 12)

Immune acid damage; blinded, charmed, deafened, exhaustion, frightened, prone

Resist cold, fire

OFFENSE

Speed 20ft, climb 20ft

Melee slam (+5, 2d4 bludgeoning plus 2d8 acid)

STATISTICS

Str 11 (+0), **Dex** 16 (+3), **Con** 15 (+2),

Int 1 (-5), **Wis** 1 (-5), **Cha** 2 (-4)

Senses blindsight 60ft, passive Perception 5

TRAITS

Acid: A garden ooze excretes digestive acid that can dissolve flesh. Creatures made of harder materials or plant matter are immune to the ooze's acid.

Camouflage: A garden ooze is difficult to spot when it is at rest among plant growth of any type. A DC 12 Wis (Perception) check is required to notice the ooze is a separate entity and not a diseased portion of the plant it rests upon. The ooze automatically hits with a slam against any creature that fails to notice the ooze and comes within range.

Stink: Once every 24 hours, a garden ooze can release foul-smelling gases in a 5-foot-radius spread centered on the ooze. The ooze usually does so after it is first injured. The stench of these vapors is overpowering during the first round it exists, causing living creatures within it to become

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poisoned for 1d3 rounds. A DC 11 Con save negates the effect.

ECOLOGY

Environment temperate forest, marshes and urban

Organization solitary, pair or patch (3-5)

At first glance, a garden ooze looks like nothing more than a patch of diseased or rotting matter adhering to a normal plant. On closer inspection however, the ooze reveals its true nature — an animate mass of protoplasmic slime that feeds on carrion or small animals. Garden oozes can move surprisingly quickly, often pursuing prey as it flees, changing color to hide its presence as it does so. Occasionally, certain gardeners who may or may not be suicidal actually cultivate garden oozes as natural predators to catch vermin and small pests.

Giant Porcupine

Giant Porcupine

XP 450 (CR 2)

Unaligned Medium animal

Init +1

DEFENSE

AC 11

HP 37 (5d8 + 15)

OFFENSE

Speed 40ft

Melee tail slap (+5, 3d6+3 piercing)

STATISTICS

Str 17 (+3), Dex 12 (+1), Con 16 (+3),

Int 2 (-4), Wis 13 (+1), Cha 5 (-3)

Senses passive Perception 11

TRAITS

Quills: Any creature attacking a giant porcupine with light or one-handed melee weapons, natural weapons, or an unarmed strike with reach of 5ft or less takes 1d3 points of piercing damage. A creature that grapples a giant porcupine takes 2d4 points of piercing damage each round it does so.

ECOLOGY

Environment temperate forests or plains

Organization solitary, pair or prickle (3-6)

Hungry Fog

Hungry Fog

XP 2,300 (CR 6)

N Huge ooze

Init -3

DEFENSE

AC 7

HP 147 (14d12 + 56)

Immune acid, lightning damage

Resist cold

Vulnerable radiant

OFFENSE

Speed 0ft, fly 15ft

Melee touch (+3, reach 20ft, 6d6 necrotic)

STATISTICS

Str 10 (+0), Dex 4 (-3), Con 18 (+4),

Int 10 (+0), Wis 1 (-4), Cha 1 (-1)

Senses passive Perception 6

TRAITS

Bewitching Brume: Any creature within 10 feet of a hungry fog or currently being affected by its enveloping mists must succeed on a DC 8 Wis save at the start of that creature's turn or become stunned for 1 round at the half-glimpsed shapes of phantoms floating within the fog.

Enveloping Mists: A hungry fog can engulf foes by moving into their space. A living creature engulfed by a hungry fog must make a DC 12 Con save each round that it is engulfed or be considered poisoned. The hungry fog can make touch attacks on any living creatures that it has engulfed.

Heal Undead: Each round a hungry fog can heal 6d6 points of damage, distributing it freely among any undead that it has engulfed.

Gaseous: A hungry fog has a body composed of eerie mist. It can pass through small holes or narrow openings, even mere cracks, but cannot enter water or other liquid. It is insubstantial and cannot handle objects as a result.

ECOLOGY

Environment any temperate

Organization solitary, pair or bank (3-10)

A hungry fog is a greenish, creeping ooze that is infused with necrotic energy. They are commonly found in graveyards, where their presence actually heals undead creatures. Hungry fogs retain wisps and images of those they have slain, and these wisps sometimes appear within the fog's swirling form. Though they are not actually dead, hungry fogs are vulnerable to radiant damage, and their frequent proximity to the undead often causes them to be mistaken for undead themselves.

Killmoulis

Killmoulis

XP 25 (CR 1/8)

CN Tiny fey

Init +3

DEFENSE

AC 13

HP 4 (1d6 + 1)

Save Dexterity +5

Resist bludgeoning, piercing and slashing damage from non-magical weapons

OFFENSE

Speed 40ft

Melee needle (+5, 1d4-3)

STATISTICS

Str 5 (-3), Dex 16 (+3), Con 12 (+1),

Int 10 (+0), Wis 14 (+2), Cha 6 (-2)

Languages telepathy 100ft

Skills Perception +4, Stealth +10

Senses darkvision 60ft, passive Perception 14

TRAITS

Stealthy: Killmoulises receive a +5 bonus to Dex (Stealth) checks.

ECOLOGY

Environment temperate forests or underground

Organization solitary or gang (2-4)

A killmoulis is thought to be distantly related to brownies and other small, helpful fey, though it bears little physical likeness to its

Mothman

Mothman
 XP 2,300 (CR 6)
 CN Medium monstrosity
 Init +4

DEFENSE
 AC 14
 HP 129 (18d8 + 48)

OFFENSE
Speed 3ft, fly 60ft
Multiaction a mothman attacks with two claws and uses its mind-warping gaze.
Melee claw (+7, 2d6+1 slashing)

STATISTICS
Str 12 (+1), **Dex** 19 (+4), **Con** 16 (+3),
Int 17 (+3), **Wis** 19 (+4), **Cha** 18 (+4)
Languages Common, Sylvan, Undercommon (can't speak); telepathy 100ft
Skills Arcana +6, Deception +7, Insight +7, Perception +7, Stealth +7
Senses darkvision 60ft; passive Perception 17

TRAITS

Agent of Fate: A mothman may recreate the effects of any spell of 5th level or lower once per day, but only if doing so steers the flow of fate in its proper course. What the proper flow of fate entails is determined by the DM. Typical uses of this ability include casting *major image* to coax someone to a portentous location, casting *raise dead* to return someone with an important fate to life, or using *shatter* to weaken a structure and cause some necessary calamity.

Innate Spellcasting: A mothman's innate spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 17). It can innately cast the following spells without material components.

Continuous: *blur*

At will: *dancing lights*, *detect thoughts*, *prestidigitation*
 3/day: *greater invisibility*, *major image*, *modify memory*, *phantasmal killer*, *suggestion*

1/day: agent of fate, *feeblemind*, *mislead*, *project image*

Mind-Warping Gaze: Once per round a mothman can make a gaze attack on one creature within 30 feet that can see its eyes, forcing that creature to make a DC 14 Wis save. On a failure the creature gains the frightened condition for 1d6 turns. If the creature was already frightened it is stunned instead.

ECOLOGY

Environment any land

Organization solitary

Mothmen are slender humanoid creatures with insect-like heads, glowing red eyes and dark wings. They are over seven feet in height and weigh about 100 pounds. Mysterious and incomprehensible, mothmen act as agents of fate, directing the actions of other creatures and guiding them toward catastrophe. Those who meet mothmen often remember the encounter only in confused dreams and vague memories, but almost inevitably follow the creature's strange whims and obscure schemes.



kin. Standing about 1 foot tall, they do not speak except through a limited form of telepathy. The race appears to be sexless. A killmoulis gang always tries to take up residence in places of human habitation where foodstuffs are prepared or handled, dwelling beneath floorboards or in garrets or behind pantry shelves. The killmoulis has the same loyalty to its host family and eagerness to perform chores as the brownie, but unlike the brownie they are more prone to pointless but harmless mischief.

Killmoulises are inoffensive creatures, lacking any real combat capability. They do carry dagger-like needles, however, and use these to stab and pierce their opponents. Occasionally, these needles are poisoned (with whatever poison is readily available).

Naga, Lunar

Naga, Lunar

XP 2,300 (CR 6)

CN Large monstrosity

Init +4

DEFENSE

AC 15 (natural armor)

HP 137 (14d8 + 56)

Immune poison damage; charmed, poisoned

OFFENSE

Speed 40ft

Melee bite (+5, 3d6+2 piercing plus poison)

STATISTICS

Str 14 (+2), Dex 19 (+4), Con 18 (+4),

Int 13 (+1), Wis 16 (+3), Cha 17 (+3)

Languages Common plus one other

Skills Arcana +4, Investigation +4, Nature +4, Perception +5, Stealth +6

Senses darkvision 60ft, passive Perception 15

TRAITS

Hypnosis: Once per day, by weaving and coiling its body and hissing as an action, a lunar naga can cause its scales to shimmer and glow with moonlike radiance. All creatures within 30 feet must make a DC 14 Wis save to avoid becoming charmed. The lunar naga can maintain this effect as long as it concentrates. Charmed follow the still-glowing naga if it moves as long as it maintains the effect by concentrating.

Poison: **Bite**—injury; save Con DC 14; effect 6d6 poison damage

Spellcasting: The lunar naga is a 5th-level spellcaster and its spellcasting ability is Charisma (save DC 13, spell attack bonus +6). It has the following spells prepared:

Spells (slots): 0 (at will)—*acid splash, chill touch, mage hand, minor illusion, prestidigitation*; 1st (4)—*color spray, expeditious retreat, mage armor, magic missile*; 2nd (3)—*blindness/deafness, invisibility, scorching ray*; 3rd (2)—*dispel magic, lightning bolt*

ECOLOGY

Environment any land

Organization solitary or nest (2–4)

Lunar nagas resemble 10-foot serpents with the pale faces and long hair of women. Their lower bodies are the color of a night sky, covered in glittering star-like scales.

Stargazers who specialize in astronomy and divination through astrology, lunar nagas are experts in all lore of the heavenly bodies and it is even said that they possess forbidden knowledge of the horrors beyond the stars. They are often found in ruined towers and the tops of mountains where they can best observe the heavens.

Protean

Proteans are beings of pure chaos, inhabitants of the plane of Limbo. The proteans themselves believe that their own existence predates the creation of the universe, and see it as their duty to return all reality to its primal, chaotic state. Many different types of proteans exist and are difficult to categorize as their shape, character, reproduction, biology and even their language, are all as changeable and chaotic as the entropic realm that they inhabit. Several similar proteans have been observed however, all configuring to relatively predictable forms and behavior, but even this consistency may be temporary, as proteans' changeable nature makes almost anything possible.

The most ancient proteans are known as protean lords, and may have existed even before the creation of this multiverse. They are near-godlike in their power, easily equal to demon lords and other extradimensional beings, but due to their chaotic nature do not exercise anything like direct leadership of their people. Instead they act in accordance with their own desires, sometimes guiding lesser proteans for obscure and inscrutable purposes, or maintaining wary watch on other beings that may represent a threat to their plans for universal chaos.

Protean Traits

Proteans are all chaotic neutral aberrations. They share the following traits:

- Blindsight (range varies by protean)
- Immunity to acid
- Resistance to lightning and thunder
- Continuous *freedom of movement* (as per spell)

Amorphous anatomy: A proteans vital organs constantly shift and change size and shape, granting resistance to critical hits and sneak attack damage, and also granting immunity to *polymorph* spells. A protean recovers from physical blindness or deafness after one round, regrowing any organs it needs to replace.

Resistance to magic: Proteans receive advantage on all saves against spells and other magical effects.

Shapechange: Once per day as an action a protean may *shapechange* (as per spell) into any small, medium or large beast, elemental, giant, humanoid, ooze or plant. The protean can resume its true form as a bonus action, and gains the effects of a *heal* spell when it does so.

Warpwaves

Many proteans, particularly the imenteshes, have the ability to create and manipulate ripples in reality known as warp waves. These waves produce random, often bizarre effects that even the proteans themselves cannot control — nor do they want to, for the utter perfection of absolute chaos is their ultimate goal. When a protean uses a warpwave, roll 1d20 and consult the table below to see its effect on the target creature.

d20	Warpwave effect
1	Target loses 2 points of Strength.*
2	Target loses 2 points of Dexterity.*
3	Target loses 2 points of Constitution.*
4	Target loses 2 points of Intelligence.*
5	Target loses 2 points of Wisdom.*
6	Target loses 2 points of Charisma.*
7	Target rolls 1 HD and loses that number of HP.
8	Target is blinded or deafened for 1d4 rounds.
9	Target is <i>confused</i> (as per spell) for 1d4 rounds.
10	Target is restrained by filaments of energy for 1d4 rounds.
11	Target gains one level of exhaustion.
12	Target becomes poisoned for 1d4 rounds.

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d20	Warpwave effect
13	Target is stunned for 1d4 rounds.
14	Target is sickened for 1d4 rounds.
15	Target is paralyzed for 1d4 rounds.
16	Target gains 4d6 temporary hit points.
17	Target is affected by a <i>heal</i> spell.
18	Target is petrified.
19	Target is <i>polymorphed</i> (as per spell), form determined by DM.
20	Portions of target's body burst with energy of a random type (choose between acid, cold, lightning, or fire), dealing 4d6 points of damage of the appropriate type to the target.

* All drained abilities are recovered if *greater restoration* or comparable magic is used on the victim within 24 hours of the loss. After 24 hours, each casting of *greater restoration* restores just one point of ability loss.

Protean, Imentesh

Protean, Imentesh

XP 5,900 (CR 10)

CN Large aberration (shapechanger)

Init +3

DEFENSE

AC 17 (natural)

HP 228 (24d10 + 96)

Immune acid damage

Resist lightning, thunder

OFFENSE

Speed 30ft, fly 30ft, swim 30ft

Multiaction an imentesh attacks with one bite, two claws and one tail, or uses its warpwave trait.

Melee bite (+11, reach 10ft, 2d6+7 piercing), claw (+11, reach 10ft, 1d8+7 slashing), tail (+11, reach 20ft, 1d6+7 bludgeoning plus grapple check)

STATISTICS

Str 24 (+7), Dex 17 (+3), Con 18 (+4),

Int 20 (+5), Wis 18 (+4), Cha 20 (+5)

Languages Abyssal, Protean

Skills Acrobatics +7, Athletics +11, Deception +9, History +9, Insight +8, Intimidation +9, Nature +9, Perception +8, Persuasion +9, Stealth +7

Senses blindsight 30ft, darkvision 60ft; passive Perception 18

TRAITS

Constrict: Each round the imentesh can automatically inflict 1d8+7 bludgeoning damage on any creature restrained by its tail attack.

Grapple: The imentesh may make a grapple check against any opponent that is struck by its tail attack. If the check succeeds the opponent is considered grappled and restrained. The imentesh cannot make tail attacks as long as an opponent is grappled in this manner. The restrained opponent can attempt to break the grapple on its turn.

Inflict Warpwave: As an action, an imentesh can inflict a warpwave upon any corporeal creature within 100 feet.

Innate Spellcasting: The imentesh's innate spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 16). It can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components:

Constant: *freedom of movement*, *tongues*

At will: *creation*, *dimension door*, *enlarge/reduce*, *fabricate*, *major image*, *shatter*

3/day: *dispel magic*, *haste*, *slow*

1/day: *hallucinatory terrain*, *polymorph*

Protean Traits: Amorphous anatomy, blindsight, continuous *freedom of movement*, immune to acid, resistance to magic, resistance to lightning and thunder, shapechange.

ECOLOGY

Environment any (Limbo)

Organization solitary, pair or envoy (3-10)

Imentesh proteans are serpentine creatures with the lower body of a snake, a humanoid torso and a birdlike head and talons. They are 15ft long and weigh over 1,200 pounds.

These proteans act as missionaries and heralds of chaos, altering the shapes and terrain of Limbo, but also visiting other planes to wreak havoc and undo works of order and law. Though they are often polite, talkative and even friendly, they remain prone to chaotic acts of destruction and unpredictable behavior, often driving the inhabitants of other planes and worlds mad simply by their presence. Imentesh are surrounded by a cloud of soft telepathic "noise" that constantly threatens to warp the minds and bodies of lesser creatures.

Protean, Keketar

Protean, Keketar

XP 18,000 (CR 17)

CN Large aberration (shapechanger)

Init +5

DEFENSE

AC 19 (natural)

HP 345 (30d10 + 180)

Immune acid damage

Resist lightning, thunder

OFFENSE

Speed 40ft, fly 40ft, swim 40ft

Multiaction a keketar attacks with one bite, two claws and one tail.

Melee bite (+14, reach 10ft, 4d8+8 piercing plus warpwave), claw (+14, x2, reach 10ft, 2d6+7 slashing plus warpwave), tail (+14, reach 20ft, 1d6+7 plus grapple check)

STATISTICS

Str 26 (+8), Dex 20 (+5), Con 22 (+6),

Int 20 (+5), Wis 20 (+5), Cha 22 (+6)

Languages Abyssal, Protean

Skills Acrobatics +11, Athletics +14, Deception +12, History +11, Insight +11, Intimidation +12, Nature +11, Perception +11, Persuasion +12, Stealth +11.

Senses blindsight 60ft, darkvision 120ft; passive Perception 21

TRAITS

Constrict: Each round the keketar can automatically inflict 2d6+8 bludgeoning damage on any creature restrained by its tail attack.

Grapple: The keketar may make a grapple check against any opponent that is struck by its tail attack. If the check succeeds the opponent is considered grappled and restrained. The keketar cannot make tail attacks as long as an opponent is grappled in this manner. The restrained opponent can attempt to break the grapple on its turn.

Spatial Riptide: Any non-protean using spells such as *teleportation* or *dimension door* within 60ft of the keketar must make a DC 17 Wis save or enter a state of suspended animation (equivalent to incapacitated state) for 1d3 rounds; success means the creature is merely sickened by the process and suffers a poisoned state for 1 round.

Warpwave: A creature struck by a keketar's claw or bite must make a DC 17 Wis save or be affected by a warpwave.

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Innate Spellcasting: The keketar's innate spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 20). It can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components:

Constant: *freedom of movement, tongues*

At will: *creation, dispel magic, fabricate, major image, shatter*

3/day: *confusion, polymorph*

1/day: *disintegrate, mirage arcane, prismatic spray, prismatic wall*

Protean Traits: Amorphous anatomy, blindsight, continuous *freedom of movement*, immune to acid, resistance to magic, resistance to lightning and thunder, shapechange

ECOLOGY

Environment any (Limbo)

Organization solitary or chorus (2-4)

Keketar are serpentine creatures whose colors, patterns and size constantly shift and alter, ranging from 7 to 40 feet in length with shifting, intricate shapes and symbols flickering across their scaly hides. A series of strange glowing symbols crowns a keketar's head, glowing with strange colors and shifting constantly. Each keketar has its own series of symbols and icons, which might help outsiders identify individuals.

Keketar are priest-kings among the proteans, interpreting and carrying out the supposed will of the protean lords and any other bizarre entities that the protean race may (or may not) serve. Of all the proteans, keketar take their duty to destroy reality and restore the beauty of chaos most seriously, and in this task they are supremely arrogant and manipulative, viewing lesser creatures as little more than tools and servants to carry out their greater plans for the cosmos.

Protean, Naunet

Protean, Naunet

XP 2,900 (CR 7)

CN Large aberration (shapechanger)

Init +3

DEFENSE

AC 15 (natural)

HP 168 (16d10 + 80)

Immune acid damage

Resist lightning, thunder

OFFENSE

Speed 30ft, fly 30ft

Multiattack a naunet attacks with one bite, two tentacles and one tail.

Melee bite (+7, reach 10ft, 1d8+4 piercing plus confusion), claw (+7, x2, reach 10ft, 1d6+4 bludgeoning plus confusion), tail (+7, reach 20ft, 1d4+4 plus grapple check)

STATISTICS

Str 18 (+4), **Dex** 17 (+3), **Con** 18 (+5),

Int 10 (+0), **Wis** 16 (+3), **Cha** 14 (+2)

Languages Abyssal, Protean

Skills Acrobatics +6, Athletics +7, Intimidation +5, Perception +6, Stealth +6

Senses blindsight 30ft, darkvision 60ft; passive Perception 16

TRAITS

Adaptive Strike: A naunet's natural weapons count as magical for purposes of overcoming resistance.

Coalesce Chaos: Once per day as an action, three or more naunets working together can create a cloud of multicolored chaotic matter. The effect is identical to a *wall of force* and lasts 2d6 rounds. If six or more naunets are present, the coalesced chaos instead functions as a *forcecage*.

Constrict: Each round the naunet can automatically inflict 1d6+4 bludgeoning damage on any creature restrained by its tail attack.

Grapple: The naunet may make a grapple check against any opponent that is struck by its tail attack. If the check succeeds the opponent is considered grappled and restrained. The naunet cannot make tail attacks as long as an opponent is grappled in this manner. The restrained opponent can attempt to break the grapple on its turn.

Innate Spellcasting: The naunet's innate spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 20). It can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components:

Constant: *freedom of movement, tongues*

At will: *acid splash (3d6), fog cloud, dimension door, shatter*

1/day: *prismatic spray*

Protean Traits: Amorphous anatomy, blindsight, continuous *freedom of movement*, immune to acid, resistance to magic, resistance to lightning and thunder, shapechange

ECOLOGY

Environment any (Limbo)

Organization solitary, pair or cacophony (3-12)

Naunets are the lowest form of protean, used as shock troops and raiders in the cause of spreading chaos. Most dwell in the borderlands between Limbo and other planes, driven half-mad by the stability of other realities. Naunets often leave Limbo and rage through other planes, causing vast damage and sowing disorder wherever they go.

Naunets are 12 feet long and weigh 900 or more pounds. They resemble thick-bodied serpents with reptilian faces and fanged tentacles emerging from their backs.

Protean, Phambente

Protean, Phambente

XP 1,800 (CR 5)

CN Medium aberration (shapechanger)

Init +1

DEFENSE

AC 15 (natural)

HP 120 (16d8 + 48)

Immune acid damage

Resist lightning, thunder

OFFENSE

Speed 30ft, fly 30ft

Multiattack phambente proteans attack with two claws and one bite

Melee claw (+6, 2d4+3 slashing), bite (+6, 2d6+3 plus delusion)

STATISTICS

Str 16 (+3), **Dex** 13 (+1), **Con** 16 (+3),

Int 11 (+0), **Wis** 6 (-2), **Cha** 13 (+1)

Languages Abyssal, Protean

Skills Acrobatics +4, Athletics +6, Intimidation +4, Perception +1, Stealth +4

Senses blindsight 30ft, darkvision 60ft, passive Perception 11

TRAITS

Delusion: A creature struck by a phambente's bite attack is infused with raw insanity and must succeed on a DC 13 Wis save or become delusional for 1 round. Rounds of delusion dealt in this manner stack. A delusional character cannot discern what is real and what is not. He is unsure how to act, causing him to suffer disadvantage on attack rolls, saving throws and ability checks. Spells cast by a delusional character have a 20% chance of failure. In this state, the victim is particularly vulnerable to illusions, au-

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tomatically failing all saves against spells from the illusion school.

Innate Spellcasting: The phambente's innate spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 11). It can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components:

Constant: *freedom of movement*, *tongues*

At will: *see invisibility*, *sleep*

3/day: *confusion*, *spiritual weapon*

1/day: *polymorph*

Protean Traits: Amorphous anatomy, blindsight, continuous *freedom of movement*, immune to acid, resistance to magic, resistance to lightning and thunder, shapechange

ECOLOGY

Environment any (Limbo)

Organization solitary, pair, choir (3-6)

Rational minds institute law and irrational minds sow chaos. Insanity is the seed that grows entropy and chaos. Sunder the bonds of reality, and the universe reverts to its disordered, primordial state. These statements best describe the phambentes' philosophy. These outsiders aspire to spread delusion and delirium to every living creature and inanimate object they encounter. They believe they are the agents of lunacy and entropy in a world destined to come undone. Phambentes rarely seek to corrupt sane minds, and instead focus their energies on those already afflicted with madness. Some even masquerade as asylum staff and patients, where they roam the hallways whispering their inane babbling into the welcoming ears of their crazed minions. Insane mortals summon these creatures to advance their absurd plots, and these creatures are all too willing to aid them in their endeavors.

Phambentes achieve these goals by instilling madness into their opponents using their magical abilities. They are particularly fond of confusing their enemies as well as using their delusion attack to implant doubt into their foes' uncertain minds. They prefer to spread the plague of insanity to other sentient creatures rather than outright kill them whenever possible. With that said, they are not averse to slaying those that stand in their way.

Like other proteans, phambentes are decidedly snakelike with bluish-green scales covering the length of their serpentine bodies. Though undoubtedly reptilian, their heads are shaped like a typical humanoid skull. They have a crocodilian snout filled with serrated teeth that protrudes from their scaly faces, and stubby, prehensile hands with sharp claws. Phambentes are equally comfortable slithering across the ground or taking to the air. In spite of their entropic outlook, these creatures hoard precious gems and are particularly covetous of brightly colored, shiny jewelry

Protean, Voidworm

Protean, Voidworm

XP 450 (CR 2)

CN Tiny aberration (shapechanger)

Init +3

DEFENSE

AC 13

HP 25 (10d4)

Immune acid damage

Resist lightning, thunder

OFFENSE

Speed 30ft, fly 30ft

Multiattack a voidworm attacks with one bite and one tailslap.

Melee bite (+5, 1d6-2 piercing), tail (+5, 1d8-2 bludgeoning plus confusion)

STATISTICS

Str 7 (-2), **Dex** 17 (+3), **Con** 10 (+0),

Int 8 (-1), **Wis** 8 (-1), **Cha** 13 (+1)

Languages Abyssal, Protean

Skills Acrobatics +5, Athletics +1, Intimidation +4, Perception

+2, Stealth +5

Senses blindsight 30ft, darkvision 30ft; passive Perception 12

TRAITS

Confusion: A creature struck by a voidworm's tail slap must make a DC 11 Wis save or become confused (as per spell) for 1 round.

Innate Spellcasting: The voidworm's innate spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 20). It can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components:

At will: *dancing lights*, *prestidigitation*

3/day: *blur* (self only), *fog cloud*

1/day: *commune*

Protean Traits: Amorphous anatomy, blindsight, continuous *freedom of movement*, immune to acid, resistance to lightning and thunder, shapechange

ECOLOGY

Environment any (Limbo)

Organization solitary, pair or school (3-18)

Voidworms resemble tiny iridescent serpents with feathery, multicolored wings. The air around them shimmers and shifts as if from heat. No one is certain whether voidworms are actually proteans at all — certainly other creatures such as naunets and keketars find such suggestions downright insulting, claiming instead that voidworms are naturally-occurring vermin conjured into existence by spellcasters seeking familiars or investigating the realms of chaos.

Regardless of their origin, voidworms are common in Limbo, traveling in shimmering swarms, sometimes hunted by other proteans for sport. Outside of Limbo, voidworms are most often encountered as familiars to illusionists, evokers and other arcanists interested in the nature of reality and chaos.

Child's Play

Al-Mir'aj

Al-Mir'aj
XP 100 (CR 1/2)
 N Small monstrosity
Init +3

DEFENSE
AC 13
HP 20 (3d10 + 3)
Save Dex +5
Immune poison

OFFENSE
Speed 40ft
Melee gore (+5, 1d4+3 piercing)

STATISTICS
Str 6 (-2), **Dex** 17 (+3), **Con** 12 (+1),
Int 5 (-2), **Wis** 12 (+1), **Cha** 6 (-2)
Senses darkvision 60ft, passive Perception 11

TRAITS
Innate Spellcasting The al-mi'raj can cast the following spells without material components:
 At will: *blink*
 1/round: *dimension door* (self only)
Magic Resistance The al-mi'raj has advantage on all saving throws against spells and other magic effects.

ECOLOGY
Environment temperate plains
Organization solitary or warren (2-20)

The al-mi'raj is a dangerous creature with long white, pink, yellow or light green fur. Its horn is golden or black in color. Because of the al-mi'raj's interdimensional travel abilities, sages often refer to them as "blink bunnies."

Al-mi'raj react to threats much differently than their normal rabbit cousins. When danger is nearby, the al-mi'raj becomes aggressive and moves to attack. In combat, the al-mi'raj stabs with its horn.

Attic Whisperer

Attic Whisperer
XP 700 (CR 3)
 NE Small undead
Init +4

DEFENSE
AC 15
HP 45 (6d8 + 18)
Save Dex +6
Immune poison

OFFENSE
Speed 20ft
Melee bite (+6, 1d4-1 piercing plus steal breath)
Melee touch (+4, steal breath)

STATISTICS
Str 9 (-1), **Dex** 19 (+4), **Con** 10 (+0),
Int 14 (+2), **Wis** 16 (+3), **Cha** 17 (+3)
Languages Common (plus any 2d4 from victims)

Skills Perception +5, Stealth +6
Senses darkvision 60ft, passive Perception 15

TRAITS

Aura of Sobs All of the voices that the attic whisperer steals linger around it in an invisible sonic aura. Anyone living creature within 10 feet of the attic whisperer loses any benefit from bardic inspiration and suffers a -1 penalty to all attack, damage and ability checks. The attic whisperer can suppress this effect as a bonus action.

Steal Breath Any creature bitten by an attic whisperer must make a DC 13 Wis save or suffer one level of exhaustion. These levels of exhaustion are cumulative, so subsequent successful bites further increase the victim's levels of exhaustion.

Steal Voice Any creature touched by an attic whisperer must make a DC 13 Wis save or lose the ability to speak for 1 hour. An attic whisperer can perfectly mimic any voices it has stolen, and can speak any language that the speaker knew.

ECOLOGY

Environment any urban or ruins
Organization solitary, pair or chorus (2-8)

An attic whisperer is the risen spirit of a lonely, neglected or abused child. It manifests from the discarded clothing, toys and other detritus from the child's life. Initially headless, attic whisperers seek out the skulls of small animals as heads. Attic whisperers haunt the places where they perished, and are typically found in old houses, slums, workhouses, orphanages and similar dreary and tragic places. Sometimes such creatures lie dormant for years, but can be reawakened by the coming of new children, whose innocence kindles the sad spirit's longing for companionship. In these cases attic whisperers try to use their stolen voices to lure away children, hoping for new friends and relief from their hopeless loneliness.

Dancer, Inphidian

Inphidian Dancer
XP 700 (CR 3)
 NE Medium monstrosity
Init +3

DEFENSE
AC 13
HP 45 (6d10 + 12)
Save Dex +5, Con +4

OFFENSE
Speed 30ft
Multiattack dancer inphidians attack with two snake-hand bites
Melee snake-hand bite (+5, 1d4+1 piercing plus poison, target must make a DC 11 Con save, taking 3d6 points of poison damage on a failed save, or half if the roll succeeds)

STATISTICS
Str 12 (+1), **Dex** 17 (+3), **Con** 14 (+2),
Int 13 (+1), **Wis** 12 (+1), **Cha** 16 (+3)
Languages Common, Inphidian
Skills Performance +5, Stealth +5
Senses darkvision 60ft, passive Perception 11

TRAITS

Entrancing Dance A dancer inphidian can sway its body in a

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rhythmic motion that charms all those within 30 feet viewing the dance. The charmer makes a Cha (Performance) check. Those viewing the dance must make a successful Wis save (DC equal to the charmer's Cha check) or be charmed for 1d4+2 rounds. A creature that makes a successful save is immune to the entrancing dance of that charmer for one day.

Master Dancer Dancer inphidians receive advantage on all Cha (Performance) checks involving dance.

ECOLOGY

Environment warm forests and plains or underground

Organization solitary or troupe (1 dancer plus 2-4 common inphidians)

Sometimes referred to derogatorily as snake charmers, dancer inphidians are found throughout the inphidian communities and act as entertainers, often using their dancing ability to soothe onlookers. Dancers also function as spies, using their ability to fascinate to extract information from a target. They are sometimes used by more powerful inphidians to seduce enemies, and rumors speak of a great city where a single inphidian ruler keeps a personal harem of dancers in his palace.

The dancer inphidian prefers to avoid combat if possible, relying on her entrancing ability to fascinate opponents. Fascinated opponents are then left to the dancer's retinue (usually consisting of 2-4 common inphidians). If forced into melee, the dancer, like her brethren, relies on her snake-hands and poison to slay her opponents. If overwhelmed, a dancer attempts to flee by any means possible.

Dire Rat Zombie

Dire Rat Zombie

XP 50 (CR 1/4)

NE Medium undead

Init +2

DEFENSE

AC 12

HP 12 (2d8 + 3)

Save Wis +0

Immune poison

OFFENSE

Speed 40ft, climb 20ft, swim 20ft

Melee bite (+3, 1d4+2 piercing)

STATISTICS

Str 14 (+2), Dex 14 (+2), Con 16 (+3),

Int 2 (-4), Wis 6 (-2), Cha 5 (-3)

Senses darkvision 60ft, passive Perception 10

TRAITS

Undead Fortitude If reduced to 0 hit point, it must make a Con save with a DC of 5+ damage taken unless the damage is radiant or from a critical hit. On a success, the zombie drops to 1 hit point instead.

ECOLOGY

Environment any

Organization any

Ghul

Ghul

XP 1,800 (CR 5)

CE Medium undead (shapechanger)

Init +2

DEFENSE

AC 14

HP 75 (12d8 + 24)

Save Str +9, Wis +5

Immune poison

Resist fire, piercing and slashing damage from non-magic weapons

OFFENSE

Speed 40ft, climb 20ft

Multiaffack Ghuls attack with their bite and two claws

Melee bite (+9, 1d6+6 piercing); the ghul's bite attack automatically hits a grappled foe

Melee claw (+9, 1d4+6 slashing plus bleed plus grapple)

STATISTICS

Str 22 (+6), Dex 15 (+2), Con 14 (+2),

Int 14 (+2), Wis 15 (+2), Cha 18 (+4)

Languages Common, Primordial, Abyssal

Skills Deception +7, Intimidation +7, Perception +5,

Stealth +5

Senses darkvision 60ft, passive Perception 15

TRAITS

Bleed Damage Any living creature damaged by a ghul's bite attack continues to lose 1d4 hp each round until the victim succeeds on a DC 13 Con save. Multiple bites do not increase this bleeding damage.

Grapple Any opponent of medium size or smaller is grappled if the ghul hits with two claw attacks.

Shapechanger Ghul can freely change into a hyena (see 5e Core Rules, "miscellaneous creatures, hyena") or back into ghul form as an action. The ghul cannot be magically detected as undead or evil while in hyena form.

ECOLOGY

Environment warm deserts

Organization solitary or pack (2-8)

Ghuls are jann who displeased their lord Ahriman and were cursed with undeath. They resemble tall, emaciated skeletal creatures with donkey hooves instead of feet. Like ghouls they feed on the dead and dwell in graveyards and catacombs, but they also savor the flesh of the living, often following funeral processions in hyena form and seeking out the most innocent and grief stricken of the mourners.

Ghuls often accompany ghouls, ghosts and other lesser undead in seeking prey, and may even lead such groups in organized hunts. If deprived of food for too long however, a ghul shuns the company of others and savagely pursues its prey alone.

Kharam

Kharam

XP 3,900 (CR 8)

LE Medium humanoid (kharam)

Init +3

DEFENSE

AC 17 (natural armor)

HP 90 (12d8 + 36)

Save Con +6, Dex +6

Immune charm

Resist enchantment (see below)

OFFENSE

Speed 30ft

Multiaffack A Kharam can attack twice with its dagger and once with its enfeebling gaze.

Melee dagger (+6, 1d4+3 piercing plus poison)

Ranged dagger (+6, 20ft/60ft, 1d4+3 piercing plus poison),

enfeebling gaze (+6, 30ft, target must make DC 14 Con save or lose 1d4 Strength. Targets reduced to 0 Strength are

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incapacitated. Lost Strength is recovered after a long rest)

STATISTICS

Str 12 (+1), **Dex** 17 (+3), **Con** 16 (+3),

Int 12 (+1), **Wis** 12 (+1), **Cha** 15 (+2)

Languages Common, Draconic

Skills Acrobatics +6, Deception +5, Insight +4, Perception +8

Senses all-around vision, darkvision 60ft, passive Perception 18

TRAITS

All-Around Vision The kharam's eyes in the back of her head allow her to see in all directions. Kharams gain a +4 bonus to Wis (Perception) checks and opponents can never have advantage over them in combat, unless the kharam is blinded or its vision is otherwise impaired.

Disarming Kiss The kharam disarms living creatures with a kiss, causing them to drop all of their items and take no actions other than stare lovingly into the kharam's eyes, which causes additional Strength damage from her enfeebling gaze each round. The kharam must grapple an unwilling victim before the kharam can use this ability. A creature must succeed on a DC 14 Wis save to resist the effects of this ability. The effect ends if the kharam directly attacks a victim influenced by disarming kiss.

Poison Dagger—target must make a DC 14 Con save or take 4d8 points of poison damage and the target is poisoned for 1 hour, a successful save halves damage, and the target is not poisoned.

Resistant to enchantment In addition to being immune to being charmed, kharams have advantage on all saves against enchantment spells.

ECOLOGY

Environment desert

Organization solitary

According to legend, kharams first appeared six centuries ago, thanks to a misguided wish. The rich and powerful King Youssef boasted a harem of twelve wives and sixty concubines. Intrigue abounded within the harem, and the exasperated king had just survived a third assassination attempt within as many months. He turned to his marid advisor and wished that there was a way he could tell which of his wives or concubines were planning to kill him. In an instant, the genie fulfilled his wish and transformed nearly his entire harem into kharams, or so the story goes. Whether this tale is true or not, there is no doubting that kharams are mistresses of seduction, intrigue and murder.

A kharam appears as an ordinary woman with a few noteworthy exceptions. She is completely bald and has a pair of eyes in the front and back of her head. Her tongue is forked, presumably to lie, but she relies on her gaze and kiss to seduce victims rather than her words. She is shapely and beautiful and often wears ornate jewelry crafted from gold, silver and precious stones along with formfitting clothing that accentuates her curvaceous body. The lust for wealth drives her murderous schemes, as she always targets wealthy men and even other women to amass more riches for her treasure hoard. A kharam can never have too much gold.

Kharams typically stalk royal palaces, mansions and noble families in search of more riches. When moving about a city or within a household, kharams veil their eyes and wear a wig to conceal their baldness and the pair of eyes in the back of their head. Once they are alone with their intended victim, they unveil their eyes, remove their wig, unsheathe their poisoned daggers and stab their prey in the back. If the victim survives the surprise attack, the kharam focuses its gaze attack on the unfortunate foe and grapples the creature in order to use its disarming kiss ability. Though the victim is often rendered helpless, the kharam murders the unfortunate for good measure before stealing its valuables.

Kharams are not immune to the gaze attack of others of their kind thus they live and operate alone. They are still fertile and reproduce every 3 to 5 years. The beautiful kharam would have little difficulty finding willing partners, but they prefer taking advantage of unwilling partners to father their children. Young kharams remain with their mothers until adoles-

cence, when they acquire their enfeebling gaze ability. When that time approaches, the mother often sends the child to live with a wealthy family as a servant or other member of the household to learn how to interact within high society and make its own way in the world.

Poltergeist

Poltergeist

XP 450 (CR 2)

CN Medium undead (incorporeal)

Init +1

DEFENSE

AC 11

HP 21 (4d8 + 3)

Immune cold, necrotic, poison damage; charmed, exhaustion, frightened, grappled, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned, prone, restrained

Resist bludgeoning, piercing and slashing from nonmagical weapons

OFFENSE

Speed fly 20ft

Ranged telekinesis (+3, 20/60ft, 1d4 bludgeoning; see below)

STATISTICS

Str 10 (+0), **Dex** 13 (+1), **Con** 11 (+0),

Int 5 (-3), **Wis** 12 (+1), **Cha** 12 (+1)

Languages Common

Senses darkvision 60ft, passive Perception 11

TRAITS

Frightener Once per minute as an action a poltergeist can drop its natural invisibility, revealing its ghostly, skeletal form. All creatures within 30 feet must then make a DC 12 Wis save or be frightened for 1d4 rounds. The poltergeist then again becomes invisible at the end of its round as a bonus action. A creature that successfully saves against this ability is immune to the effect of that specific poltergeist for 24 hours. Creatures who can see invisible creatures are immune to this attack. If the poltergeist's invisibility is negated by other means it cannot use this ability.

Natural Invisibility A poltergeist is normally invisible unless it ends the condition using its frightener trait. It can be detected by creatures that are able to see invisible.

Rejuvenation If a poltergeist is destroyed it only remains destroyed for 2d4 days, after which it returns to the place of its destruction, fully healed. The only way to permanently destroy a poltergeist is to determine the reason for its existence and correct whatever events caused it to be created.

Site Bound A poltergeist cannot travel more than 120ft from the place where it was created.

Telekinesis Poltergeists have no means of attacking other than telekinesis. Using this ability a poltergeist can hurl objects or creatures weighing up to 75 pounds. Its ranged attack bonus is +3, range 20/60ft and typically does 1d4 points of damage. The GM may determine that heavier objects do more damage. If the poltergeist tries to throw a creature with this ability, the target can resist the effect with a successful DC 10 Wis save.

ECOLOGY

Environment any

Organization solitary or haunting (2-7)

A poltergeist is an angry spirit that is unable to leave the site of its death. This may be due to unfinished tasks, great tragedy, or because its resting place has been desecrated — if, for example a home or other structure is unknowingly built atop a grave or similar sacred site. Poltergeists

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are driven by rage, sorrow and other strong emotions and attack the living, seeking vengeance or rest. They are typically bound to a single location — a room, building or haunted place in the wilderness, and can only be appeased when the reason for their creation is addressed and corrected.

Quickling

Quickling
XP 700 (CR 3)
CE Small fey
Init +7

DEFENSE

AC 17
HP 14 (4d6)
Save Dex +9

OFFENSE

Speed 120ft
Melee dagger +9 (1d3-1 piercing plus poison)

STATISTICS

Str 8 (-1), Dex 24 (+7), Con 11 (+0),
Int 15 (+2), Wis 15 (+2), Cha 14 (+2)
Languages Common, Sylvan
Skills Acrobatics +9, Nature +4, Stealth +9
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 12

TRAITS

Innate Spellcasting Quicklings' innate spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 12). They can innately cast the following spells with no material components:

1/day each: *blur*, *dancing lights*, *levitate*, *minor illusion*, *shatter*

Natural Invisibility A quickling is invisible when motionless. It loses this invisibility and remains visible for 1 round in any round in which it takes any action.

Poison A quickling carries four doses of kava leaf poison (equivalent to drow poison), each sufficient to poison one target.

Supernatural Speed A quickling moves with incredible speed. Save for when it remains motionless (at which point it is invisible), a quickling's shape blurs and shimmers with this speed, and all attacks have disadvantage.

Slow Susceptibility A quickling that succumbs to a slow effect loses its supernatural speed ability and gains a level of exhaustion.

ECOLOGY

Environment temperate forests

Organization gang (2-4) or band (4-11)

Believed to be the offspring of an elf and a brownie, the quickling is an evil faerie creature that hates other races (especially other fey races). How they came to be evil and malign is still a mystery, but legend speaks of the first quicklings as being great sorcerers. Elven scholars believe these quickling sorcerers unleashed some spark of the arcane that was never meant for mortal creatures.

Quicklings resemble small elves with large ears that rise to points above their heads. Their skin is pale blue to blue-white and hair is either silver or white. They prefer clothes of bright and boisterous colors; red, yellows, silvers, blacks, and blues are among their favorites. Quicklings never wear armor.

No creature can match the natural speed and agility of a quickling. It knows this, and uses its great speed to its advantage in combat. A quickling often rushes an opponent, stabs with its dagger and then retreats out of melee range before an opponent can react.

Soulbound Doll

Soulbound Doll
XP 450 (CR 2)
N (see below) Tiny construct
Init +2

DEFENSE

AC 14 (natural armor)
HP 32 (10d4 + 10)

OFFENSE

Speed 20ft
Melee dagger (+3, 1d4-2 piercing)

STATISTICS

Str 7 (-2), Dex 14 (+2), Con 12 (+1),
Int 11 (+0), Wis 10 (+0), Cha 9 (-1)
Languages Common
Skills Perception +2, Stealth +4
Senses darkvision 120ft, passive Perception 12

TRAITS

Alignment Variation: Soulbound dolls are neutral, but can be chaotic, lawful, good or evil. Each doll has an innate spellcasting ability that it can use once per day based upon its alignment as listed here. Saves are DC 10.

Chaotic Neutral: *blindness/deafness*

Lawful Neutral: *suggestion*

Neutral: *sleep*

Neutral Evil: *inflict wounds*

Neutral Good: *heroism*

Soul Focus: The soul bound to the doll lives in a focus that is integrated into the doll such as its eye or a piece of jewelry. As long as the focus remains intact it can be moved to another doll, allowing the soul to retain all personality and memories from previous bodies. A soul focus has an AC of 14 and 8 hp.

Susceptible to Enchantment: The soul-bound doll is at disadvantage on all saves against spells of the Enchantment school.

ECOLOGY

Environment any

Organization solitary, pair, family (3-12)

These small dolls are crafted using small fragments of a living creature's soul. This fragment's owner must have died at some point during the doll's creation, so most of these creatures are crafted by evil magicians. When created, soulbound dolls are all but mindless, though they retain some elements of the original creature's personality. They are used as companions, servants, surrogate children, guards or curiosities. Normally the doll's alignment reflects that of the soul's owner (a lawful good soul would become a neutral good or lawful neutral soulbound doll, for example), but if the soul utilized is unwilling, it might gain an alignment entirely opposite of its owner's.

Red Wedding

Vulnademom

Vulnademom

XP 1,100 (CR 4)

CE Small fiend (demon)

Initiative +3

DEFENSE

AC 13

hp: 67 (15d6 + 15)

Saving Throws: Dex +5, Con +3

Resistance: cold, fire, lightning; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical weapons that aren't silvered

Immunity: acid, poison; poisoned

OFFENSE

Speed: 30 ft.

Multiattack: The vulnademom attacks once with its shortsword and bites once.

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

Melee Attack—Shortsword: +5 to hit (reach 5 ft.; one creature). *Hit:* 1d6 + 3 piercing damage plus 2d8 necrotic damage.

STATISTICS

Str 14 (+2), **Dex** 17 (+3), **Con** 13 (+1),

Int 12 (+1), **Wis** 13 (+1), **Cha** 16 (+3)

Languages: Abyssal, telepathy 100 ft.

Skills: Deception +5, Stealth +5

Senses: Darkvision 60 ft.

TRAITS

Aura of Doom: Any enemy that starts its turn within 20 feet of the vulnademom must make a successful DC 13 Wisdom

saving throw or have tactical disadvantage on attack rolls and ability checks while in the aura. The effect wears off after 1 hour.

Spell-like Abilities: The vulnademom can use the following spell-like abilities, using Charisma as its casting ability (DC 13, attack +5). The vulnademom doesn't need material components to use these abilities.

At Will: *detect evil and good*, *detect magic*, *disguise self*, *silent image*

3/day each: *inflict wounds*, *mirror image*, *phantasmal force*
1/day: *invisibility*

ECOLOGY

Environment: Any

Organization: Solitary, pair, or murder (3-12)

These demons are drawn to murder and betrayal. Vulnademons spread insanity and fear through deception and grisly crimes.

Vulnademons infect their prey with a sense of despair. They strike from hiding, while invisible, or while skillfully disguised as something harmless—children are both their favorite disguises and their favored targets.

Cultists dedicated to murder and assassination are the most frequent summoners of vulnademons. These cultists sometimes set a vulnademom free to wander and kill as it wishes, after agreeing upon a sign that cultists can use to identify and safeguard themselves. Whether a vulnademom gives an intended victim time to flash a secret sign, or even pays attention when one does, is another matter.

Vulnademons rarely appear in their true form—a cloud of bloody mist with the shape of a ghostly, cloaked figure, perpetually dripping a trail of blood that disappears moments after the demon passes by. Instead, they magically disguise themselves as children, halflings, gnomes, or other Small (and usually innocuous) creatures.

Once set loose, a vulnademom launches into a nightmarish killing spree. The culprit is nigh impossible to catch, because the demon alters its appearance frequently.

Vulnademons stand 3 feet tall and weigh 25 pounds.

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