

# War of the Burning Sky

## Trial of Echoed Souls

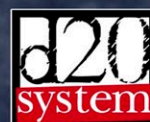
by Ari Marmell and Ryan Nock



A fantasy adventure for 13th-level characters



Requires the use of a Roleplaying Game Core Book published by Wizards of the Coast, Inc.



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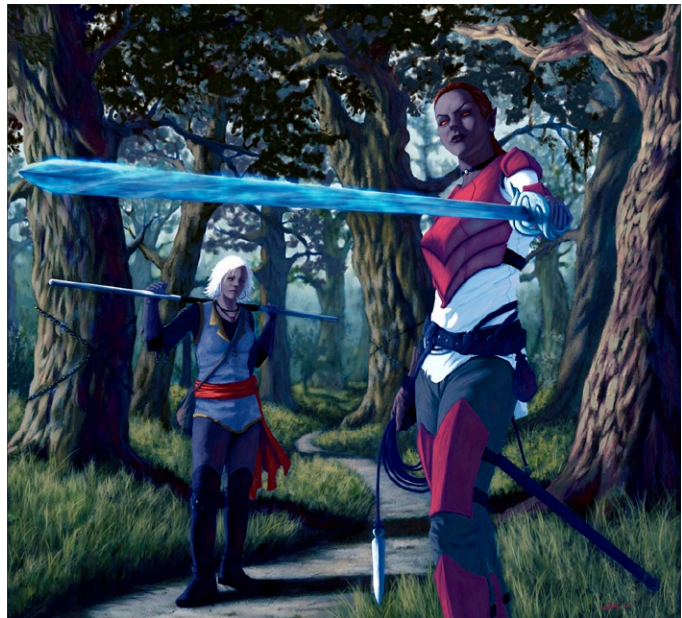
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**Note on Rules Content:** *This adventure uses Open Game Content as well as material that is in the System Reference Document but is not in the core rulebooks. All the information you need to use this material is presented in this adventure, but if you are interested in learning more, search for the System Reference Document online, available through various sources.*

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## INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the seventh adventure of the *War of the Burning Sky* campaign saga. The heroes stand poised to seize control of their fates and decide who will be victorious in this war, but only if they are first to claim the Torch of the Burning Sky.

Months ago, the Ragesian emperor Drakus Coaltongue was assassinated, leaving his empire in disarray, and a vacuum waiting to be filled by the rulers of other nations. More devastating, however, was the loss of the Torch of the Burning Sky, the artifact that had led Ragesia to conquest, capable of instantly teleporting armies. Stolen by the assassins who slew the emperor, and hidden in the haunted elvish forest of Ycengled, the Torch will surely grant victory to whoever can find.

Ycengled is guarded by the restless spirits of its native elvish people, the Taranesti, who were murdered by the neighboring nation of Shahalesti in a genocidal purge, and the heroes will likely need to enlist the aid of the survivors of the Taranesti to track down the assassins and recover the Torch before either the Shahalesti or the Ragesians can. Once they get the Torch, however, they realize that it has been damaged by one of the assassins: the draconic soul that gave the Torch its power has been destroyed, and without it the Torch is just a useless club.

To repair the Torch, the heroes head to the Temple of Echoed Souls, the power of which holds the cursed spirits of the Ycengled elves hostage, and where, by facing memories of their own past and of the dead of Ycengled, they can forge a new soul to repair the Torch. In their success they learn of a hidden threat posed by Ragesia, which lays the foundation for the next two adventures.

## BACKGROUND

For centuries the Temple of Echoed Souls was home to meditative monks who practiced an art called soul-tapping, in which they could experience the essence of other beings. Powerful monks of the order could actually take on traits and powers of those whose souls they tapped, from acquiring bestial features to wielding the magic of their enemies.

### ADAPTING THE ADVENTURE

*The Trial of Echoed Souls* has two main components. The first is exploring a haunted forest while agents of a group who killed the forest's inhabitants try to beat you to what you're looking for. This can easily be adapted to different settings, with the goal of the Torch replaced by some other item of power, secret, or sacred site.

The second part of the adventure is delving into the Temple, facing echoes of events in their history and those of their enemies, and crafting a soul amid this chaos. While this idea can be compelling if used in your own campaign, most of the scenes that occur would need to be revised to fit the events in your campaign. However, we have tried to incorporate classic mythic archetypes into these visions, so even if they don't *perfectly* fit your players' characters, they are open to interpretation, and at least *seem* meaningful. If you are running your own game, hopefully you can use the structure of the third act as an example of how to use the temple in your own game, be it to restore the magic of an artifact, to bring a long-dead hero back to life, or to heal the soul of the world itself.

The temple trial is particularly useful as a way to let players rebuild their characters' abilities. By completing the trial they gain the right to reshape their soul, which can manifest in picking new skills and feats or even classes and races.

However, there were always those monks who would abuse these powers, and they would be punished. The other monks of the order would all tap into the villain's soul simultaneously, ripping it apart and leaving a husk with no spirit of its own, and no memories. These husks were branded, a simple number replacing their old name, and then were exiled, left to live as a beast.

One of these exiles, 41 (for he was the forty-first monk banished from the temple), returned after he learned what had happened to him. He fought the temple's masters and wrested control of the temple, crafting a new soul for himself from the echoes of those he had met since his exile. With his new soul, one of unadulterated darkness, 41 was content to drive out the surviving monks and simply remain at the temple's heart, meditating on the nature of evil.

He had much to interest him. Not far from the temple lay Ycengled Phurst, a forest in which two nations of elves, the Shahalesti and the Taranesti, were forced to live by the nation of Morrur. Ycengled was the scene of constant political backstabbing and violent struggles of brother against brother for decades. 41 basked in it, using the power of the temple to experience the suffering of those in the conflict.

But then, sixty years ago, when the warlord Coaltongue was beginning to carve an empire of his own, a general among the Shahalesti named Lord Shaaladel forged an alliance with Coaltongue, hoping to lift his people above the constant struggles so they could have a nation of their own again. Together, the two warlords succeeded in toppling the empire of Morrur, but Shaaladel was nervous, for in the course of their conquest, Coaltongue had acquired the Torch of the Burning Sky.

The Torch's creation had been a remarkable chance, a rare confluence of powers – the fire of a devil, the grace of an archon, and, most importantly, the dreams of a young psionic gold dragon named Trilla.

Trilla was the daughter of Syana, a gold dragon who served as guardian to the Taranesti. Coaltongue had taken Trilla hostage to lure Syana away while Shaaladel assaulted the leaders of the Taranesti, and in the battle Coaltongue slew the mother dragon. Trilla's grief, mixed with powerful heavenly and infernal magic unleashed in the struggle, transformed a thigh bone of the devil into the artifact that would shape the fate of nations.

Trilla escaped, rescued by a group of Taranesti elves. They took the young Trilla into hiding, and pledged themselves to secrecy.

Shaaladel gained the nation he desired, and the Taranesti were still forced to cower in Ycengled, but

over the years Shaaladel grew jealous of Coaltongue, and fearful that his nation would fall under the man's thumb. Hoping to create a "Torch" of his own, forty years ago he ordered a crusade against the Taranesti to locate Trilla, publicly claiming that the Taranesti were a threat that needed to be removed once and for all.

The crusade succeeded in murdering almost all of the Taranesti, but did not find Trilla, for she had fled deep underground, afraid of a dark power growing in her. Enraged over this failure, Shaaladel ordered all the Taranesti who had been captured to be chained to the trees at the edge of their forest, left to wither and die unless they revealed Trilla's hiding place. None could, and so the Taranesti were wiped out nearly to the last man.

But the Taranesti did not leave. 41, wretched and aged inside his temple, did not want to let the enjoyment he had taken at their suffering end, so he turned the temple's powers upon the forest, trapping the ghosts of the dead within the forest's borders. Now he can enjoy their torment forever.

## RECENT EVENTS

In the past half year, the Ragesians have managed to drive deep into Shahalesti lands, but for now they have avoided Ycengled. Despite the threat the Ragesians pose to the Shahalesti heartlands, Lord Shaaladel has sent several hundred of his men into Ycengled, his various spies having informed him that Coaltongue's assassins have hidden there, though for now his troops have no clue how to find them.

No divinations can pierce the haunted forest, which has kept Supreme Inquisitor Leska, current emperor of Ragesian, from realizing that the greatest threat to her reign lies there, but she has always been cautious. Among the thousands of soldiers who camp near the forest to ensure the security of the army's supply lines, one detachment of inquisitors and elite warriors watch the forest, ready to react at a moment's notice.

There are still survivors of the Taranesti, fighting to keep their forest free of the Shahalesti, though right now they are resigned to their homeland's curse. Their greatest warrior, Fayne Rawnbeck, has been

hoping that the enemies of the Shahalesti might come as well, and so she will seek the heroes out.

The assassins who killed Coaltongue are hiding in the lost city of Phorros Irrendra, which exists in a demiplane that can only be reached by braving a perilous passage in the mountains west of the forest. Two of the assassins are drow women – Quillathe and Yvonnell – who befriended some of the Taranesti who fled underground during the purge decades ago. They wish to punish the arrogance of the Shahalesti, and believe that by bringing the Torch to Shahalesti they can provoke the Ragesians into invading Shahalesti and conquering the light-skinned elves.

With them is Rhuarc, a half-Taranesti man who survived the purge and spent years on the run. He just wants to ensure no one can use the Torch's power to conquer the world. Rhuarc possesses a black scimitar, called *Shaalguenyaver*, crafted by his diabolist mother to protect his soul from a bargain made with a devil. Rhuarc managed to use the sword to extract from the Torch a sliver of Trilla's soul, which provided the artifact its power. Trapping that soul in a gem from the scimitar's edge, he brought it to the Temple of Echoed Souls and placed it in one of the temple's sonic traps, shattering both the gem and the soul within it. He also trapped the soul of immortal Emperor Coaltongue, preventing him from simply returning to life.

### WHO HIRED THE ASSASSINS?

There is no clear answer to who recruited the assassins to kill Drakus Coaltongue, or if they did it of their own free will. You can generally assume Leska, the new emperor of Ragesia who ascended after Coaltongue's fall, is responsible, and that the assassins simply betrayed her in the aftermath, but feel free to change this based on whoever the heroes seem to dislike the most. If they particularly loathe the Shahalesti, for instance, perhaps it was Lord Shaaladel who recruited the drow, ironic certainly given the man's calls for purity of the elvish people.

### PSIONICS IN THE ADVENTURE

As in all of the adventures in the campaign saga, the psionics rules are not necessary in *Trial of Echoed Souls*. Where psionic abilities appear, we have provided nonpsionic equivalents in the text or in sidebars.

Rhuarc did all this without Quillathe or Yvonnell finding out, and now he simply waits in the old capital of his people, ready to kill those who come looking for the Torch.

### ADVENTURE OVERVIEW

The adventure is divided into three main sections as detailed below.

**Act One.** The heroes enter Ycengled, facing various Shahalesti forces and uneasy spirits of the forest as they search for clues to the location of the assassins. They are guided by haunting spirits to a sacred henge, which the Shahalesti are keeping watch on. Here the heroes get the attention of the surviving locals, led by a ranger named Fayne. She offers to help the heroes find the assassins if they defeat the Shahalesti. Somehow the heroes must discover the secret to locating the lost city of Phorros Irrendra, and decide how to deal with the Shahalesti who hope to follow them to the assassins' lair. The heroes face the demonic guardians of the path to Phorros Irrendra, which lies in a demiplane that can only be reached by following the proper path in a labyrinth of sunless tunnels.

**Act Two.** Once they reach the lost city, a ruined chaos of massive trees, twisting caves, and jutting peaks, the heroes must catch the assassins and defeat them in order to claim the Torch. The two drow – Quillathe and Yvonnell – can be negotiated with, but the bitter half-elf Rhuarc will lead the heroes on a deadly chase through trapped locations across the city, and will not surrender. After he is defeated, the heroes can claim the Torch, only to learn that which they have fought so hard to retrieve doesn't work.

**Act Three.** The heroes discover that they can restore the Torch if they defeat the dark master of the Temple of Echoed Souls. The heroes enter the

temple, as do agents of both the Ragesians and the Shahalesti, and the heroes must fight their way through scenes of their past, and of those who oppose them. These deadly flashbacks provide a great wealth of information about the enemy's plans, but the heroes must still face the temple's master, 4I, and capture echoes of a soul that has been destroyed.

## WHERE ARE WE?

In a long campaign, it can be easy to become lost, especially near the middle when a lot of plot threads are dangling and none have been resolved yet. Where things stand now, the heroes are likely some of the most powerful agents of a resistance that has formed to stop the Ragesian Empire. Led by a force of refugees who rallied in Seaquen, the resistance is sending aid to areas under attack by the Ragesians, while the Ragesians use their massive armies to search for the Torch. Ragesia has not conquered so much as scoured.

If the heroes have done well, the resistance is aided by the armies of Sindaire and Dassen. Gate Pass and the Ragesian heartlands are the only real territories that have been gripped by war, though Dassen's border is in constant struggle, and the Shahalesti are losing ground month by month. If the heroes have done poorly, Dassen is a war zone, and armies might be marching even now to sack Seaquen. Without Seaquen's aid, Sindaire's rulers are forced to yield to a Ragesian fleet while armies from Ostalin encroach from the south.

In either case, the resistance cannot hold out for long before the Ragesians simply overwhelm them. Finding the Torch will rally those who are afraid of Ragesia, and will let the resistance start fighting back.

## What to Do?

After escaping Castle Korstull, the heroes should likely return to Seaquen before they set out on this mission, if for nothing else than to resupply and make sure they have as clear a sense as possible of where they're going. The mages of Lyceum can dredge up an old map of Ycengled, which is not necessarily accurate, but which can help you nudge them in the direction of locations you want encounters to take place.

In the fifth adventure, *Mission to the Monastery of Two Winds*, the heroes' NPC guide, Three Weeping Ravens, was a descendant of monks from the Temple of Echoed Souls. Before the heroes set out on this adventure, you might want to have him talk to them again, since they'll be going near his people's lost homeland.

## What Good is the Torch?

Once the resistance gets the Torch, their first goal will be to liberate Gate Pass. By teleporting their armies to strategic locations, they will divide the two occupying forces – Ragesian and Shahalesti – and conquer them. The city has been occupied for months but refuses to yield, and so it serves as a powerful symbol to the resistance.

After that the resistance hopes to teleport an army directly to Ragos, the capital of Ragesia. They suspect Leska will either flee or try to go out in a blaze of glory, but seizing Ragos will weaken the Ragesian armies to the point that they will hopefully negotiate a truce. No one expects to easily crush Ragesia, but they can work to assure that there is at least a temporary peace.

If the heroes were to lose the Torch to another power such as Ragesia or Shahalesti, it would be all but impossible to hold back their armies.

## Who Deserves the Torch?

Whoever wields the Torch will be viewed as a potential conqueror and enemy by most other nations. Hopefully one of the heroes is particularly persuasive and beloved by several nations, or has at least tried to take the role of leader, in which case you should be thinking of how he'll handle his fame and notoriety once Ragesia is defeated. If none of the heroes are up to being a leader, Simeon – leader of the resistance – recommends that the heroes turn the Torch over to him. He recognizes the temptation of power the Torch poses, but he trusts others to guide him so he does not become a new Coaltongue. In the aftermath of the war he hopes to destroy the Torch, or to hide it in a dungeon full of perilous traps that no one will pierce for thousands of years.

## SEAQUEN AND LYCEUM

The heroes have just escaped from the firestorm over Castle Korstull, where they learned how the emperor was slain, and got a few clues to where he had been taken. The single survivor of the attack, an inquisitor named Darius, had scratched snippets of feverish visions he had after being poisoned by the drow assassin Quillathe. These passages gave hints to the broader war, as well as these clues pertinent to the current mission:

*The bright shadow returns to its homeland,  
and the sky may burn for its last time.*

*Five rivers flow, one black, down to sunless  
seas. Between lives she sees shades chained,  
warring against the shining one. Golden  
wings, like branches in winter, shelter them  
against a thousand scouring eyes.*

The clues of Darius's fevered vision can help the heroes determine where the assassins went. Scrying simply fails, as does *discern location*. Careful study of old lore – such as a *legend lore* or *vision* spell (which Lyceum's headmaster Simeon can cast), or a DC 30 Knowledge (history) or bardic knowledge check – shows that the visions point to a haunted elvish forest, Ycengled Phuurst. Give the heroes a chance to figure it out themselves, but if they can't, the mages of Lyceum can easily solve the mystery.

With this as a guide, Simeon suggests starting either at the Taryaver River (which is dark) or Shan River (which is near the Temple).

Most likely the clues in Castle Korstull were obliterated when the heroes escaped, so if they did their job well they shouldn't be in a rush to go to Ycengled. If anyone else (such as Deception) escaped with the same information, the pressure of time should be on the heroes.

The heroes probably should be aware of the information in the "Lore and Legends" sidebars (see pages 8 and 44) before they set out.

**The Double Agent:** In adventure three, *Shelter from the Storm*, the heroes met Katrina, a sorceress who quickly ingratiated herself to the top levels of Resistance planning because of her experience

fighting the inquisitors. Katrina is a spy, but even when she arrived in Seaquen she was uncertain what side she wanted to be on. Depending on her interactions with the heroes she may have become more heroic, or may be resigned to the fact that Ragesia will win, and that the only way to save herself is to side with them. Either way, Katrina shows up in Act Three at the temple, though she might aid the Ragesians or turn on them.

**Allies:** Given the importance of the mission to retrieve the Torch, the heroes might want to enlist some of their allies from previous adventures, such as Torrent, Katrina, Balan, Three Weeping Ravens, or even Darius or the gnomes of Clan Millorn. If the heroes have had friendly contact with Shalosh, daughter of the Shahalesti ruler Lord Shaaladel, she might even contact the heroes to offer her help. She is sincere, and her aid would help immensely in encounters against the Shahalesti forces, though the heroes might find her hard to trust.

**Routes to Ycengled:** The main limiter to who can go is how many people can be teleported at a time. Other types of magical travel can work, though sailing or walking is too slow and too hazardous. Even with the dangers of the Burning Sky, teleportation is likely the best option.

If the heroes have wayfarer Sheena Larkins teleport them, she can take herself plus eight people in the same day, and the closest she is able to take them is a burned out elvish village on the mouth of the Nindan River. The Ragesians marched through here months ago, and the small garrison left would be an inconsequential challenge for the heroes. If the heroes prefer to teleport themselves, despite the risk, they can get descriptions or use a map to take them anywhere along the outskirts of the forest. None of the monks of the Order of Echoed Souls has seen their temple in decades, so their descriptions aren't clear enough to get the heroes there.

The heroes might also use *shadow walk*, *wind walk*, or *overland flight* to reach the forest. What means the heroes use to get to the forest is not an issue, though some of the encounters could prove difficult to run if the heroes never actually enter the forest – if, for example, they fly over it or stay



in a different plane. You may have to change when some of the encounters occur, but don't penalize the heroes for using their high-level abilities to avoid hazards and enemies.

## STARTING ELSEWHERE

The heroes might not even start at the forest.

**Ragesian Camp.** Here they face a thousand soldiers of the Fourth Ragesian Army, securing the supply lines. The main army has just sacked Nacaan, capital of northern Shahalesti, many miles south of Ycengled. There is nothing here to help them locate or repair the Torch, though they could trim out some of the Ragesians who would be a threat in Act Three.

**Temple of Echoed Souls.** If the heroes go here first, the order of the adventure changes slightly. The heroes go through Act Three first, but instead of going to re-forged the soul that should be in the Torch, they go to use the temple's supremely powerful divination powers to tell them how to get to the assassins. The other forces still head there to stop the heroes (perhaps having had the same idea), and once the heroes defeat them and 4T, they see a clear path leading them to the Shahalesti who are watching the henge (see Act One).

### THE BURNING SKY

As detailed in the *Campaign Guide*, teleportation is hazardous during the adventure due to a strange mishap tied to the Torch of the Burning Sky. Any creature teleporting takes fire damage based on the distance traveled. For more details, see the *Campaign Guide*.

The heroes still likely need the help of the Taranesti to get the password into Phorros Irrendra. Once they do, the heroes go through Act Two as normal. In this version, Rhuarc has managed to damage the Torch by weakening the soul within it with his sword, but it still works enough that the heroes don't need to go to the temple again. Defeating Rhuarc is the adventure's climax.

**Nacaan or Calanis.** If the heroes go to either of these major Shahalesti cities and either ask for or offer aid, they can forge a temporary alliance with Lord Shaaladel. The enemy Shahalesti forces then become rogue elements who are secretly working for Shaaladel's trusted aide, the vampire wizard Aurana. Details of Shaaladel and Aurana will be presented in the ninth adventure, *The Festival of Dreams*.

## ACT ONE: YCENGLED PHUURST

The heroes have arrived at one of the most dreadful, most haunted sites known to the Empire and lands beyond. Here, the forest hides an awful wound, the soil births things that should not walk, and the faces of the dead constantly watch in silence. Here stands Ycengled Phuurst, the Forest of Graves. And here the heroes must go, if they are to find the slain emperor and recover the Torch from his assassins.

In this act the heroes explore the forest, witnessing various horrors and facing deathly foes. Based on the background information about Ycengled, it should be fairly easy for the heroes to guess that the assassins are hiding in Phorros Irrendra, so their primary goal in this act is to find out how to get there.

The stats for all creatures in this and later acts are presented in Appendix One, unless they appear in the core rules.

### EXPLORING THE WOOD

The dead of Ycengled Phuurst do not rest, and the horrors committed here have stained the land's very soul. Because of this and of the influence from the Temple of Echoed Souls, certain magic and abilities do not function properly within its borders. The following effects, both magical and nonmagical, may impact the heroes' journeys through the wood.

Game trails and clearings are considered normal terrain. The remainder of the forest is considered light undergrowth unless otherwise indicated. Most trees are large trees, again unless stated otherwise.

The forest is cold, and the ground and treetops are generally covered in snow, and a mild snowfall endures almost constantly.

Multiple rivers wend their way through the shadows of Ycengled Phuurst. The ground within five feet of a river is either slippery rock or mud. The forest terrain is hilly, so rapids are common, except along the river Taryaver, whose dark waters are eerily placid. None of the rivers are frozen, despite the cold.

The forest is deathly quiet. No native creatures here make vocalizations unless otherwise noted. The sound of crunching snow is muted. Listen checks suffer a -2 penalty.

### EERIE EFFECTS

Ycengled Phuurst is a creepy, alien place, and not just due to its monsters. Every so often – don't worry about precise intervals, just whenever it feels appropriate – have one of the following effects occur to provide some spooky atmosphere.

- The next few words uttered by one of the heroes are echoed repeatedly, each time by a different stranger's voice.
- A bunch of leaves shifts suddenly, appearing now to be green and leafy feathers on something's wing, and flutters away into the treetops.
- The heroes come across a ring of stones or mushrooms – very clearly a faerie ring, to those with Knowledge (arcana) or (nature) – now grown rotted, overgrown, and corrupted.
- A hero's weapon oozes blood for several moments.
- Tree branches, leaves, and foliage wave and shuffle without regard for the strength or direction of the wind.
- Gleaming red eyes peer at the party from within the darkened wood. Any attempt to move or attack in their direction causes them to vanish, accompanied by the swiftly fading laughter of a child.
- The party stumbles across a naked corpse that looks exactly like one of the heroes, apparently stabbed from behind. (This can, of course, lead to all sorts of fascinating accusations.) It vanishes after a few minutes, dissolving into a swarm of snakes which themselves dissolve into a pile of dead leaves as soon as disturbed.
- A loud crack sounds in the distance. When the heroes reach its source, they find a large tree, recently dead, split down the middle. Close examination suggests that something clawed its way *out* from inside.

Likewise, should the heroes sleep, they dream of being chained to trees and tortured for months, of armies turning to dust at the rising sun, and of being trapped inside a mirror, screaming to get out.

Divinations are useless beyond a range of 60 feet. Any divination spell targeted on, or attempting to find, an item or creature beyond that range automatically fails.

Trees, plants, and even the land itself shift subtly as though manipulated by unseen hands, or of their own accord. Sunlight filters through trees in uneven patterns, and compasses lead their users astray. For long distance travel, generally a Survival check (DC 25) is necessary to reach one's location without getting lost. Tracking attempts suffer a -5 penalty.

The thick canopy of leaves and branches, as well as the spiritual shadow of the forest itself, blots out much of the sunlight. Even during the day, the forest is dark (treat as shadowy illumination), and creatures that are vulnerable to daylight are unharmed.

**Impeded magic.** A caster must succeed a Spellcraft check (DC 20 + spell level) to cast spells that manipulate positive energy, such as *cure* spells. Turning undead attempts fail unless the character succeeds a Spellcraft check (DC 25).

**Enhanced magic.** Spells that manipulate negative energy are automatically maximized. Rebuking, bolstering, and commanding undead function as if the character had 4 additional cleric levels.

## THE FOREST LOOMS

Read the following as the heroes approach the edges of Ycengled Phurst.

It looms before you, a cancer upon the land. The trees are gnarled, bent, twisted as if caught writhing in endless agony. The green of the leaves screams of sickness, not of growth. A shadow creeps from the bases of the trees, spreading around the forest like a skirt, though no light source from within seems to cast it. Several paths and game trails provide ingress, but each is a faint, crooked thing, threatening to vanish utterly amidst the heavy growth to either side.

From within you do not hear the calls of animals or the chirping of birds. You do not hear the rustle of leaves and branches. You do not hear the whispers of the dead who are said to haunt these woods. The forest is deathly quiet,

### LORE AND LEGENDS OF YCENGLED

Ycengled Phurst is a wintry, haunted elvish forest that lies on the northern border between Ragesia and Shahalesti. The elves who lived there, called the Taranesti, were driven into exile by the Shahalesti, and most believe they fled underground.

There is a legend that tells of an order of paladins who tried to slay a Taranesti diabolist who they believed had ensorcelled one of their own. The paladin died to defend his wife and unborn half-elf son. It is said that the son, Rhuarc, grew up to be a powerful agent for the Taranesti, and that he was one of the few survivors of the war between the two elvish nations. The name of Rhuarc's black scimitar, *Shaalguenyaver*, translates to "bright shadow."

There are five rivers in Ycengled, including the Taryaver, which means "black" in the local tongue, so named for its dark waters. The locals avoid it, believing it carries the cursed souls of the fallen elves. Another river, the Nallanthes, occasionally flows underground. It is said this forest was once home to the drow, long ago, and that they "fled with the dawn at their backs" through the shadowed tunnels carved by the river. The lost city of Phorros Irrendra was supposedly a drow city from ages past, later inhabited by the Taranesti and never discovered by the Shahalesti.

A gold dragon, Syana, was guardian of Ycengled, and she supposedly had a lair in each river. Her daughter, Trilla, was once captured by Coaltongue when he was helping the Shahalesti conquer a land for their own. Syana helped her daughter escape, but was slain herself. Her bones were mounted in Castle Korstull as a trophy.



but one faint sound does catch your attention: the squeal of metal on metal.

At the nearest tree you see something move, and you realize it is a chain swaying in the wind, dangled from a branch. The length of chain wraps repeatedly around the branches and trunk, having bound the tree so long that the bark has grown around it, so the links have become part of it. Then you see, in both directions along the entrance to the forest, more of the trees are so wrapped, hundreds and thousands.

You have come to Ycengled Phurst.

### Encounters within the Wood

While the search may last a long time, following the clues they have learned already should eventually lead the heroes to the right path. Along the way, we suggest you have them experience the following encounters, to give them a sense of the various forces at work in the forest. Not all of them are strictly necessary, and don't be surprised if the heroes avoid some of them, though a few provide a guide to moving the heroes toward locating the assassins, so if they seem lost, you might nudge them to look into those strange things they were hiding from. After all, they're great heroes; a spooky forest shouldn't be a problem for them.

Most of these encounters can occur anywhere and in any order, though we suggest you start first with Encounter 1-A: The Root of All Evil, soon after the heroes enter the forest.

Once the heroes have gotten a feel for the situation in the forest, one of the Taranesti survivors approaches them. This encounter, Encounter 1-F: The Elves of the Wood, is the heroes' best hope for finding the

hidden city of Phorros Irrendra, and may spur them to undertake encounters they avoided before.

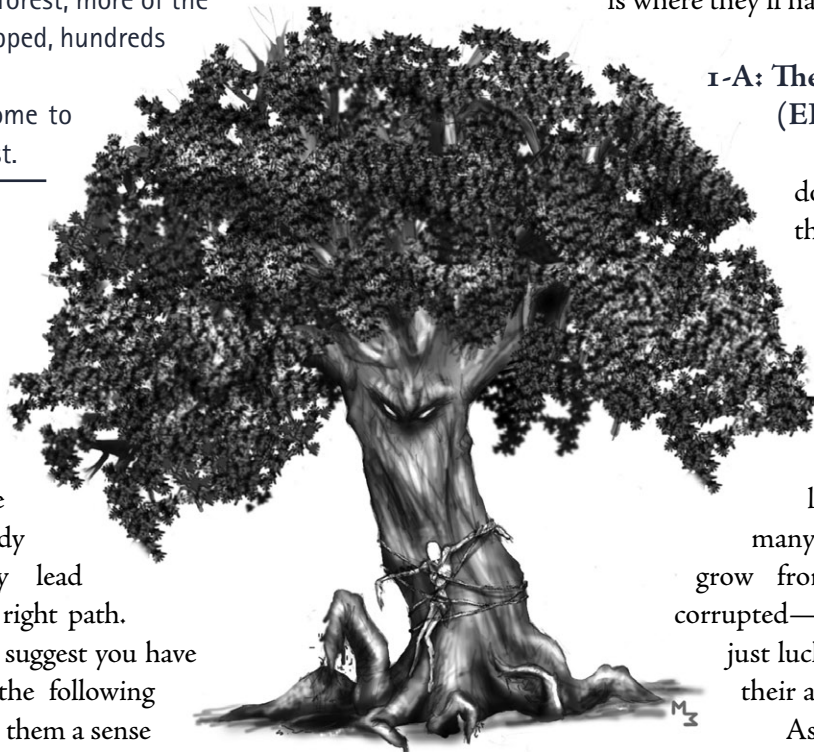
Only two of the encounters that occur within the Forest of Graves have fixed locations. The Henge is a Taranesti holy site guarded by Shahalesti, where the heroes can either learn a key clue or gain the favor of the few Taranesti survivors. The Shahalesti Camp is somewhere the heroes should probably avoid, though if they want to make an alliance, here is where they'll have the opportunity.

#### 1-A: The Root of All Evil (EL 13)

The evil that was done to the elves of these woods, and the blood that was shed, has long since seeped into the soil, poisoning it on a spiritual level. As a result, many of the things that grow from the earth are corrupted—and the heroes are just lucky enough to make their acquaintance.

As the heroes travel the forest, they spy a wraithlike child, dressed in tattered clothes in the style of the Taranesti elves, standing beside a moss-covered black obelisk about thirty feet away. He watches them for a moment, turns and runs into the woods. If the heroes follow, they find a clearing less than a hundred feet away. The clearing is roughly sixty feet wide, the ground rough and rocky, with tall trees on all sides. A pool lies in the grove's center, the rocks surrounding it stained with old blood.

Three fiendish, carnivorous treants are hidden thirty feet outside the grove's edge, spread out so they can intercept the heroes if they try to escape. A fourth treant sits at the opposite edge of the grove, ready to lead the attack. A Spot check (DC 23) lets the heroes avoid being surprised.



There is no sign of the child, but at the far end of the clearing you notice the branches of a tree shifting. The wind seems to have picked up, for the rustling of leaves and branches is audible from all directions, but the air in the clearing is strangely still.

Then, with a deafening clamor, the air trembles with the crack of snapping branches and rending wood! Whole trunks topple to the ground as entire trees are shoved aside by something enormous, something powerful, something angry.

From all sides of the clearing, the trunks of several mighty trees step out of the surrounding forest like living creatures. Their branches clutch at the air, foul claws dripping blackened, rotted sap, and the patterns in their bark form gaping eyes and screaming maws. As they clamber toward you, you see at the base of the nearest one, chained to the rotting bark, the desiccated corpse of an elven child.

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Vile Oaks (4, CR 9). 66 hp.

The first action of the three fiendish treants hidden in the forest is to animate trees behind the heroes, while the lead treant charges in to pincer them. The next round the three hiding treants animate a further three trees, trying to keep the heroes contained to the grove, and then they advance. A Spot check (DC 17, modified by range) notices the hiding treants.

The vile oaks do not fight to the death initially, but they feign retreat if brought to below half hit points. When they do so, they use their animated trees to cover their escape and attempt to hide in the woods, hoping to surprise the heroes once they believe combat is over. If they have already used this tactic once, or if no animated trees remain, the fiendish treants will then fight to the death.

**Development:** If one of the treants or animated trees is destroyed, it remains on the field as part of the terrain. Particularly grievous attacks might lop off tree limbs, which can count as fallen logs.

**Fallen Log:** 3 feet thick; hardness 5; hp 360; break DC 35.

A fallen log provides cover. The hit points and break DC listed are for a 10-foot section. If a log is broken, the squares broken and all squares adjacent to the broken section that aren't already blocked by the log become light debris.

**Aftermath:** Should any of the treants escape, they stalk the heroes if possible, and may attempt to attack and devour them as they sleep. Also, these are not the only vile oaks in the forest, and the heroes may occasionally be set upon by one or two hungry trees.

The heroes can remove the child's corpse from the trunk of the lead treant. If they give it a burial, no further treants attack them.

### **I-B: Phantoms of the Wood (EL – or 14)**

The elves of Ycengled Phurst are all but extinct, wiped out by a Shahalesti prince obsessed with the purity of elven blood. The forest remembers them still, and their spirits haunt the paths and the glades in which they once dwelt.

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Moving through the woods in the distance, as though following a path only they can see, is a procession of swiftly running figures. Their features seem elven, though you cannot be certain, for each and every one is utterly transparent, and glows as though touched by the light of the moon. They clutch weapons, but also heavy sacks, and many carry children far too young to travel. They glance around warily even as they run, and more than a few spend as much time looking behind as ahead. If they see you at all, they offer no sign.

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What happens next depends entirely upon the heroes' actions, both past and present. If they simply stand and watch as this sad echo of bygone days passes them by, the phantom elves eventually vanish into the wood, and things return to normal. (At least, as normal as Ycengled ever gets.)

If they approach the elves and offer any sign of respect or sympathy, such as saying a prayer for their

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souls to find peace, or simply expressing condolences in Common or Elven, or if they buried the body of the elf child in the treant grove, one of the elves breaks from the procession. She looks deeply into the eyes of the nearest hero, and then smiles sadly. The heroes feel a brief wave of peace wash over them. For the next day, they ignore the impeded magic trait of the forest regarding positive energy. In addition, when they finally meet Fayne and her companions, the elves sense the favor of the dead upon them, granting them a bonus to their Diplomacy check. (See “The Elves of the Wood.”)

If, however, the party attacks the procession in any way, if they desecrated the natives’ holy grove (see “The Henge”), or if one of their number is a Shahalesti elf, the spirits of the wood grow wroth and attack. The phantoms’ features twist in silent snarls of rage, bending and stretching obscenely, and their pale glow shifts to an emanation of darkness deeper than the shadows of the forest. The spirits begin to fracture into countless thousands of black bat-shaped things, which flutter and swoop into a massive swarm. Two slivers of pale light in the swarm’s center resemble eyes, and the huge figure flies toward the heroes in rage.

**Nightwing (CR 14).** 144 hp. MM.

The swarm-like appearance of the huge flying undead horror does not change its abilities. However, its movement is not impeded by even the most massive trees, and it can pass through and occupy the same space as other creatures, though doing so provokes attacks of opportunity.

After one or two initial passes in which it strikes with its “bite” (the shadow bats briefly pluck a creature up into the air and rip it to pieces before dropping it again), the nightwing rises into the air and circles, using its spell-like abilities or summoning undead. When it is reduced to below 30 hit points it swoops down again. The nightwing is considered an extraplanar creature. If it is banished to its home plane, the bats squeal and die, and the spirits return to their normal forms and flee into the woods.

If the heroes either defeat the nightwing or win the favor of the spirits, after the encounter they feel a strange tug toward something in the forest. If they follow the urge, it leads them eventually to the Henge, though along the way they may run into other encounters.



### 1-C: Dead Shahalesti (EL –)

The heroes learn that they're not the only ones battling the Shahalesti forces in the region.

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Almost a dozen corpses, scattered haphazardly across the forest floor, lay strewn in your path. Though already partially consumed by various unnatural forest creatures, you can tell immediately that these were elves, and that they died violently. Most bear deep cuts, while a few were slain by clusters arrows, making them resemble obscene porcupines. Two seem to have been mauled by a carnivore while they yet lived.

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This Shahalesti scouting party was ambushed and slaughtered by the surviving native Taranesti elves. They have been stripped of almost all valuables, but a DC 25 Search check reveals that one of the corpses still wears a pair of high-quality boots. These are actually *boots of the winterlands*.

Should the heroes successfully *speak with dead*, they can learn that other scouting parties of Shahalesti scour the woods, while the bulk of the battalion is setting up base camp. The corpse can provide directions to that camp. They can also describe the elf who slew them; see "The Elves of the Wood."

### 1-D: Shahalesti Soldiers (EL 13)

The Shahalesti know full well that the assassins of Emperor Coaltongue – and, more importantly, the thieves of the *Torch* – are hiding deep within Ycengled Phurst. Desperate to retrieve the artifact, Lord Shaaladel has dispatched an elite military unit to the Forest of Graves, arrogantly confident that his soldiers possess both the knowledge and the skill to hide from the Ragesians, who control the lands outside, and to safely navigate the wood and retrieve the prize.

He's quite wrong, of course. But that doesn't mean the various scouting parties aren't a threat to the heroes in their own right. These soldiers view the heroes as enemies of their nation, and they will not offer surrender, though they will accept if the heroes surrender on their own.

If the heroes have been traveling on foot, this group has found their trail, cut ahead, and laid an

ambush, waiting 30 feet off the trail. A Spot check (DC 23) alerts the heroes just before combat begins.

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With precious little warning, arrows rain from the surrounding foliage, as though the trees themselves were shooting at you!

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Alternately, the elves could ambush the heroes while they are camped, or the heroes might even notice the presence of the elves (Survival DC 25) and follow their trail, catching them unaware.

Veteran Shahalesti Scouts (8, CR 6). 35 hp.

Elite Shahalesti Scouts (2, CR 8). 45 hp.

In either case, the Shahalesti prefer to remain at range, sniping with their bows and using the trees for cover. They engage in melee only if the heroes close on them, or if the heroes prove too potent with their own ranged attacks and spells. The Shahalesti would prefer to take at least a few of the heroes alive for questioning, but they don't risk themselves to do so. No Shahalesti retreats so long as at least half of them live; once half have been defeated, a scout attempts to flee when reduced to 10 hit points.

**Aftermath:** Captured Shahalesti can provide the same information as the Shahalesti bodies in Encounter 1-C, though they only suspect there are Taranesti still in these woods. Additional patrols of roughly the same composition march elsewhere in the forest, and their presence can be used to remind the heroes they don't have time to dally.

### 1-E: Howling at the Moon (EL 14)

Sweeping through the wood is a pack of spectral horrors, hunting for the heroes wherever they may be. Led by the canny vampiric worg Malhûn, known as the Blood Wolf, these hunters wait until nightfall to strike. These are the minions of Aurana Kiirodel, chief advisor to the Shahalesti prince—and also an undead witch of great power. The heroes will likely not know the identity of their enemy until the ninth adventure, *The Festival of Dreams*, but she knows of them, and she does not want them keeping the Shahalesti from retrieving the *Torch*.



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As the first sliver of moonlight filters weakly through the canopy, a monstrous howl chills your blood, sends shivers down your spine. A second voice joins the cry, then a third. The wolfish cries approach swiftly, and you see in the woods a half-dozen ghostly forms, gleaming blue in the darkness. They look like elves clad in wolf pelts, but they lope on all fours, flying through the trees and underbrush, unslowed by any obstacle. Howling and barking, they bear down upon you.

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The pack of spectres, while certainly dangerous, is only the first stage, meant to distract the party and deplete their resources for the true attack to come. The greater hunters appear after two rounds, or when the spectres are defeated. Able to fly, they approach stealthily over the trees if possible, then swoop down from above, while Malhûn appears in the center of the battle, returning to his normal form from his swarm form. (This is a bit of a cheat, since realistically Malhûn wouldn't have a chance to get into the battle, but it makes for a frightening first impression.)

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Another howl rises up from the forest floor, ascending chillingly to the night sky, but this is no voice, no beast, you've heard before. In the center of the battle, a wolf of icy, deathly white, its chest stained with blood that has poured from its wounded neck, rises up from the ground, calling into the sky. The forest canopy is burst open with a blast of wind as cold as a witch's heart, and from the darkened sky above plunge more spectral shapes, dozens upon dozens, howling with exultation in a chorus worthy of Hell's own damned.

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Spectres (6, CR 7). 45 hp. MM.

Dread Spectral Hounds (3, CR 9). 97 hp.

Malhûn, the Blood Wolf (CR 10). 119 hp.

The "dread spectral hounds" are considered Large creatures, but they represent a pack of spectral wolves that each swarm over a single target. They recognize the danger posed by divine casters, and focus on them first, unless someone else reveals themselves

to be a greater threat. The hounds and the spectres make every effort to attack on difficult terrain, even moving through trees to take advantage of cover, making full use of their incorporeal natures.

Malhûn is the leader of the group. Using an *overland flight* spell cast on it earlier, it tries to bite and drink the blood of a weak creature, or just aid the spectres by tripping enemies one by one.

Because all of the enemies can fly, this encounter can occur even if the heroes are flying themselves. The wolves and spectres do not hesitate to follow the heroes into the sky.

**Development:** Upon inspection, the barding Malhûn is wearing bears marks of the Shahalesti military, as well as a strange symbol of crescent moon made of red gems. A Knowledge (local) or (nobility and royalty) check (DC 20) identifies this

#### WHO IS AURANA?

Aurana won't show up until the ninth adventure, but if the heroes go looking for her, they can find her among Shaaladel's armies that are helping hold the Ragesians from marching through Gate Pass. However, she only ever is seen at night, usually in the light of the moon. She is pale, dark-haired, and carries herself with a posture of faint, aged resignation.

Aurana was a wizard in the Shahalesti army decades ago when Shaaladel first came to power. She served loyally and was eventually chosen as his vizier. A few years ago the elves became worried that Supreme Inquisitor Leska was advising the Ragesian emperor Coaltongue to attack Shahalesti, and Aurana tried to assassinate Leska. This attempt failed, and the inquisitor retaliated by feeding her own immortal blood to Aurana, turning the elf woman into a unique type of vampire. Unable to ever again experience the sun that is so precious to her people, Aurana despaired, but her duty to her lord kept her from destroying herself.

Now she seeks to ensure Leska's downfall.

“gem moon” as the mark of Aurana Kiirodel’s house, and recalls that she is Lord Shaaladel’s chief advisor.

If the heroes have allied with the Shahalesti, this encounter should occur after the heroes learn how to get into Phorros Irrendra. Aurana knows she can extract the information from their dead bodies, so she sends her beloved wolf to kill the heroes, now that their lives are no longer useful.

### 1-F: The Elves of the Wood

The ranger **Fayne Rawnbeck** (CN female elf ranger 15/barbarian 1) is one of the few surviving Taranesti. She has been picking off Shahalesti intruders one by one, trying to keep her forest free of the villains who destroyed her people, but her true hope is to find allies against the Shahalesti. At some point she becomes aware of the heroes and will cautiously approach them. Just when is up to you, but we suggest it happens after they have a chance to interact with both the spirits of the forest and the Shahalesti patrols.

Whenever Fayne is ready to approach them, she sends her dire fox companion first.

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A fox the size of a wolf darts out of the underbrush and stops two dozen feet away, head tilted to one side. It might not seem so odd, if this weren't the first normal creature you'd see in this blasted forest—and if the fox weren't so clearly looking directly at you, examining you.

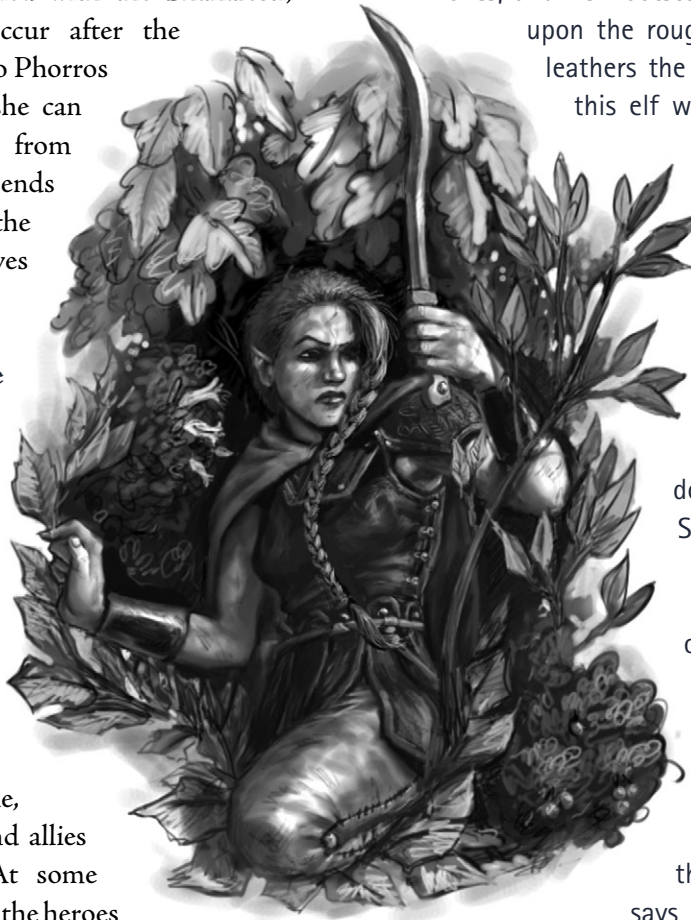
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This is Tinncey, Fayne’s animal companion, As long as the heroes don’t take hostile action, a few moments later Fayne herself steps out of the brush (Listen and Spot DC 30).

A woman steps out of the forest, appearing out of nowhere. Branches do not sway as she moves, and her footsteps make no sound upon the rough ground. Clad in leathers the color of tree bark, this elf woman’s eyes are a piercing gold, her hair the same red-brown of the fox’s fur, cut short except for one long braid that falls along the left side of her face, almost down to her waist. She warily holds a battered sickle in one hand, and has other sickles, a bow, and various other weapons about her body.

“Clearly you are no friend of the Shahalesti,” she says in Elven, her voice slightly rough. “But I must know if you are a friend to us. I am called Fayne. Who are you?”

If none of the heroes speak Elven, do not tell them immediately what Fayne says. If they appear confused, she repeats the question in heavily accented Common. Fayne’s entire demeanor is cautious; she has survived this long by being very careful, and she values her people’s secrets above her own life. Until she is confident the heroes are not allied with the Shahalesti, she responds to most questions with a shrug and a question of her own, not giving any important information. If the heroes have made an alliance with the Shahalesti, Fayne is not immediately hostile, but she attempts to convince them they have made the wrong choice. She is not a particularly eloquent speaker, however,



so this consists mostly of curses and insults about how the betrayers cannot be trusted.

Eventually, Fayne admits that she can help the heroes, but she is not certain if it is worth the risk to her homeland to reveal secrets to outsiders. Let the heroes negotiate with her, and then make a Diplomacy check.

If the heroes are foolish enough to attack, Fayne will flee, using *tree stride* if necessary. If pursued, she leads them on a chase across the forest, heading for the Taryaver River, where she will call upon the aid of her people's haunted spirits. If Fayne is killed, the remaining Taranesti will be of no help even if the heroes do find them, and the spirits of the forest will be hostile thereafter.

Assuming the heroes are wise enough to talk, Fayne starts as Indifferent, and a Diplomacy check (DC 30) is required to get her complete help. The check is modified as noted on the table below.

If the heroes succeed in at least making Fayne friendly (DC 15), she cautiously offers them a chance to prove their trustworthiness. If the heroes have not already done so, she asks them to help her defeat the Shahalesti who are desecrating the sacred henge, and then to rescue Liat, one of her people who was captured by the Shahalesti. After they do one or both, allow them another Diplomacy check.

If the heroes make Fayne helpful, she offers the following guidance.

#### ELVES OF THE WOOD DIPLOMACY MODIFIERS

Circumstance	Modifier
Heroes were blessed by the phantoms	+5
If any hero is an elf, but not a Shahalesti	+2
The heroes negotiate in Elven without the aid of magic	+2
The heroes defeated the Shahalesti at the henge	+5
The heroes rescue Liat from the Shahalesti camp	+5
The heroes make it clear that removal of the <i>Torch</i> should cause the Shahalesti to depart	+2
Heroes were attacked by phantoms	-5
Heroes showed disrespect to the henge	-5
If any hero (or NPC ally) is a Shahalesti elf	-10

#### TARANESTI SURVIVORS

Three dozen other survivors are all that are left of the Taranesti people. They live in a huge wood-shaded sinkhole carved by a waterfall along the Nallanthes River, with numerous spies and a complex network of animal calls and signals to warn if enemies are approaching. Fayne will not bring the heroes here for a long while, and even then only if they have shown themselves to be loyal allies. All of the Taranesti survivors are, by now, experienced warriors, mostly barbarians, druids, and rangers of 10th level or higher

"To reach Phorros Irrendra, you must leave light behind. Follow the Nallanthes River west to the mountains. The river flows in and out of many caves, but do not enter any of these, not until you come to a cavern with a beach of black sand. Here you must create a bright light to the east – a bonfire, a powerful spell, or wait for sunrise. Follow your shadows into the cavern, walking alongside the edge of the river. Whenever the passage branches, create another light behind you, but never carry light in front of you. Remember, let your shadows guide you.

"There are other dangers in the passage, and I think my people's spirits, may they some day find peace, will not idly let you pass. Destroy them if you must. At least that will end their torment.

"When you reach the hidden city, two of the three you seek can be found in a tree manor that is near a prominent peak. You'll recognize the peak by its emerald trees. Their leaves are translucent. The third one, Rhuarc, could be hiding anywhere.

"When you leave, return to the passage and hold light before you. You'll find your way out quickly. If you are successful, I'll find you. If I am lucky, once you take this *Torch* away, the traitorous Shahalesti will leave my people."

## Without the Taranesti

So what happens if the heroes fail to get Fayne's aid, or if they choose to ally with the Shahalesti instead? The Shahalesti actually could be more valuable allies in the long run, but thankfully the heroes don't have to help Fayne murder her enemies in order to complete their mission. The Taranesti have done a good job keeping their secrets, but the heroes have a few options.

First, the heroes might simply figure out the clue themselves from the lore of Ycengled, "fleeing with the dawn at their backs." Alternately, by performing a ritual detailed on the henge stones, they can learn the path themselves. Also, divination magic cast at the henge can reveal answers that would be concealed elsewhere.

Second, you can offer the heroes a second chance. Perhaps they come across another patrol of Shahalesti, about to slay several of Fayne's companions, or to further desecrate the henge. In such an instance, Fayne likely reconsiders her opinion of the heroes.

The heroes might eventually stumble upon the tunnel to Phorros Irrendra. Without guidance, however, this takes at least days, and potentially weeks, of labored searching. If the party takes this long, a few additional Shahalesti patrols likely also have found the spot, which admittedly is somewhat suspicious for its black sand, though they will not have figured out the trick to navigating the maze.

Just what awaits the heroes in the passage to Phorros Irrendra is detailed at the end of this act, in *The Darkness Your Guide*.

**Ad-Hoc Experience:** For learning the route to Phorros Irrendra (however the heroes do it), reward them for a CR 15 encounter.

## THE HENGE

A sacred, forbidden site for the Taranesti elves of Ycengled Phurst, this henge of black monoliths still stands as a monument to the culture that was obliterated by the Shahalesti genocide. A small group of Shahalesti guards this location, thinking the assassins might come here. Their presence offends the spirits of the Taranesti.

In the distance through the trees you see a flickering light, alternately bright as day and dark as midnight, and within it some structure. After a moment the flickering fades, until eventually the distant grove has the same ambient gloom as the rest of the forest.

Rising from the center of the clearing is a circle of great stones, each one foot thick, four feet across, and nine feet high, their black surface smooth as a polished mirror but reflecting nothing. Each is wrapped in clinging ivy, which seem to have curled in the shapes of ancient symbols and elven pictographs. A few are cracked and toppled, or bear the signs of abuse, but no mark from the weathers of time.

In the center of this ringed henge you see movement, the figures of a half-dozen Shahalesti elves, as well as a graceful humanoid with wings instead of arms, and a stoic man-beast with the head of a lion.

## Shahalesti Guards (EL 15)

The heroes come upon the henge just as the Shahalesti wizard Lkendreis is renewing a *daylight* spell to hold back the perpetual darkness that shrouds it. Normally the henge is completely shrouded in absolute blackness that not even darkvision can see through, but the *daylight* spell returns it to the ambient lighting conditions, and drives away the spirits of the wood.

Elite Shahalesti Soldiers (4, CR 8). 57 hp.

Lkendreis, 8th-level Shahalesti Wizard (CR 8). 20 hp.

Toruviiist, Solei Palancis Dreadnought (CR 12). 73 hp.

Chaeluk, avoral (CR 9). 66 hp, MM.

Manrik, leonal (CR 12). 114 p, MM.

The wary Manrik's Spot check is 27, though the heroes can likely approach through the cover afforded by the terrain and large trees, completely avoiding line of sight to the henge if they're careful. When he spots the heroes, he assumes they are enemies and uses his roar. If none of the party is affected by the *holy word*, he shouts for the rest of the guards to wait, then apologizes and asks to parlay.

The elves are not fond of this, and look for an excuse to fight the heroes. Alignment notwithstanding, they think of foreigners as enemies. After at most a minute of conversation, unless the heroes have clearly stated their allegiance to the Shahalesti, Lkendreis suggests it will be best to take the heroes into custody for questioning back at the main camp. If the heroes decline, she insists, violently. The celestials are officially under the command of the elves, and will defer to the wizard.

If the heroes came at Fayne's urging, encountering the celestials might give them pause. If Fayne is with the heroes, the Shahalesti desire to capture her, take her back to their camp, and magically coerce knowledge of the forest out of her. Fayne, on the other hand, will want to kill all the Shahalesti. It takes a Diplomacy check (DC 30) just to get her not to attack at the first opportunity.

Be forewarned, this can be a morally muddy encounter. The safest option to avoid a fight would be for the heroes to keep Fayne away, then to approach the Shahalesti and convince them to depart. Neither of these is an easy task.

**Tactics:** The wizard Lkendreis is the leader of the team, and it is she who gives the orders. When combat begins, she prefers to start with *haste* on her allies, followed by *greater invisibility* on Toruviist, then *flaming sphere*, which she can make use of for several rounds. Her *still magic missile* is a last-resort spell for if she is captured or grappled. Her sonic attacks are intended for devils. The soldiers form a defense for Lkendreis, while invisible Toruviist tries to take out the opposition's own mages.

Manrik uses *hold monster* to try to subdue non-evil enemies, and though he prefers not to kill, he will do so to save his elvish allies. Chaeluk focuses on flying enemies and those with magical defenses, and repeated use of *dispel magic* or *magic missile* is a favored tactic of his.

**Aftermath:** Should the heroes pay their respects to the standing stones or offer prayers appropriate to the site, they benefit as if they had received the favor of the spirits. Even if the heroes do not, they still enjoy those benefits for as long as they stay at the henge.

If the heroes show disrespect to the stones,

such as climbing upon them, mocking them, or further desecrating them, they gain no benefits from camping here and suffer a Diplomacy penalty with the surviving Taranesti. In addition, the next time they come upon one of the ghostly processions, the phantoms automatically turn hostile and attack.

A successful bardic knowledge, Decipher Script, or Knowledge (religion) check (DC 20) is sufficient to inform the heroes to the nature of this holy site. The henge was home to the most sacred rites of the Taranesti, performed to ensure that light and dark remained balanced. Every month a trio of priests from the hidden city would come to renew the henge's power.

If the heroes wish, they can perform this ritual themselves. It requires an arcane spellcaster and a divine spellcaster to circle clockwise on opposite sides of the henge, and a person to dance in the henge's center while wielding two swords, all of which must be done in absolute darkness.

After the one-hour ritual, the henge's power is renewed, and those who participated in the ritual, or simply stood reverently in its presence, no longer suffer any of the negative effects associated with the forest, and unerringly know the route to Phorros Irrendra. However, they lose the ability to cast or use any magic with the [light] descriptor for one month, except when cast for the express purpose of finding the path to the lost city.

## SHAHALESTI BASE CAMP

At the southern end of Ycengled Phurst camps the bulk of the Shahalesti forces in Ycengled. Over a hundred warriors and war-wizards of the elven empire wait to hear back from their scouts, and are ready to march in force upon the hiding place of the assassins.

The Shahalesti have built their camp in one of the largest clearings of the entire wood, setting up an abatis of recently felled trees to create a rough but effective defensive barricade around a small community of tents magically-conjured huts. No trees stand within leaping or climbing distance of the wall; those that one did have been cut down to build the defenses.



If the heroes come here unaccompanied, the elves are generally hostile, but their leader, Kiznith, is willing to negotiate. If the heroes pick a fight, they will likely be overwhelmed in short order.

### Camp Patrol (EL 13)

Six groups take shifts patrolling the outskirts of the camp, but magical wards alert the elves when the heroes are still a quarter mile away, unless the heroes can hide from *prying eyes*.

Veteran Shahalesti Scouts (4, CR 6). 35 hp.

Elite Shahalesti Scouts (2, CR 8). 45 hp.

Elite Shahalesti Soldier (CR 8). 57 hp.

Shahalesti Wizard (CR 8). 20 hp.

After combat begins, an additional patrol is ready to join the fight in four rounds, plus however long it takes them to reach the battle. If things are going poorly, the patrol will attempt to fall back and call upon the aid of the greater numbers in the camp.

### Camp Interior (EL 21)

The abatis is roughly a hundred feet square, and has archery platforms built into its interior corners, letting soldiers stand partly behind the wall and thus gain cover while they fire at enemies. The whole camp is warded with a *hallow* spell keyed to *protection from energy (fire)*, and a *forbiddance* spell that hedges out non-lawful good creatures, with the password, "This forest is our shame." The password was chosen by the trumpet archon.

Veteran Shahalesti Scouts (32, CR 6). 35 hp.

Elite Shahalesti Scouts (8, CR 8). 45 hp.

Veteran Shahalesti Soldiers (32, CR 6). 44 hp.

Elite Shahalesti Soldiers (8, CR 8). 57 hp.

Shahalesti Wizards (8, CR 8). 20 hp.

Solei Palancis Dreadnoughts (4, CR 12). 73 hp.

Kiznith, Unit Commander (CR 16). 90 hp.

Jafreinjar, trumpet archon (CR 14). 126 hp, MM.

At all times, three veteran scouts and one elite scout are on guard duty at each archery platform,

watching in every direction. The remaining Shahalesti are within the tents, discussing battle plans and waiting for the scouting parties to return and report.

**Terrain:** Due to the constant activity here, the underbrush in the clearing has been trampled or cut down. The ground here thus qualifies as normal, easy terrain.

**Abatis:** 3 ft. thick; hardness 5; hp 300 per 5-foot section; break DC 30; Climb DC 10.

The outside of the abatis (a wall made of felled trees) has sharpened wooden spikes protruding outward. Anyone attempting to climb the abatis takes 1d4 points of damage each round. Anyone standing on the archery platforms inside gains a +1 bonus on attack rolls against foes on the ground, and cover from foes outside the wall. The abatis is only 10 feet tall, one hundred feet long per side. It has two gates, also made of wood, providing egress on the northwest and southwest sides. Each of these has the following attributes: 2 in. thick; AC varies; hardness 5; hp 20; open DC 25 (locked).

**Development:** The Shahalesti have managed to capture one Taranesti elf, Liat (CN female elf ranger 10), who so far has resisted mental compulsion to reveal her people's secrets. She is kept manacled and gagged in a cage in the center of camp, watched constantly. Fayne may ask the heroes to help rescue her.

Kiznith won't seek out the heroes, but if they come to him, he is more than willing to negotiate. He suggests, subtly and persuasively, that they could track down the Taranesti, feign a desire to defeat the Shahalesti, and then betray the Taranesti. Doing so, he says, would save a lot of bloodshed, and would win Lord Shaaladel's favor toward the resistance. Of course the Shahalesti, consummate betrayers themselves, will eventually turn on the heroes unless they have managed to secure a more lasting allegiance (such as by befriending Shaloshia in the previous adventure).

If the heroes are captured, they are brought here and given the same offer.

## THE DARKNESS YOUR GUIDE

After the heroes have learned the secret to enter Phorros Irrendra, it is not hard for them to find the tunnel that is the mouth of the road between Ycengled and the demiplane of the lost city. A stretch of black sand leads to the mouth of a tunnel from which flows the Nallanthes River. Further travel to the west overland simply will not find Phorros Irrendra, since it does not lie on this same plane.

The river here is rough, the rocky ground dropping unevenly away from the mouth of the cave. Because of the land's slope, there is a clear view of the forest stretching out to the eastern horizon. The tunnel from which the river flows is huge, a hundred feet wide and twenty feet high, with a fifteen foot wide walkway of black sand on the right side. However, if the heroes simply enter the cave without proper preparation, they find that it only goes in for about a quarter mile before the passage opens up again, emerging at a point further downstream than where they entered.

The tunnel does not detect as magical at all.

## NAVIGATING THE DARK LABYRINTH

To properly find the path, the heroes must create a bright light within sight of the mouth of the cave, bright enough to cast their shadows down the tunnel in front of them. The tunnel is very straight, so they can easily go in two hundred feet before it becomes too dark to make out their shadows anymore. At that point, the heroes notice a change in air pressure and how the roar of the river echoes off the walls, caused by a pair of small tunnels, each 10 feet wide, that branch off from the main path. This is the first of six branches in the dark labyrinth, and the heroes must follow a proper ritual to determine whether to take one of the side paths, or to continue to follow the river.

At each intersection, the heroes must place a light, at least as bright as a torch, downstream of themselves, so that their shadows are cast upstream. As they look at the shadows they cast, they will notice shallow grooves and lines in the stones of the wall,

reminiscent of Celtic knotwork. Darker than the surrounding shadows, these lines only lead down one of the three pathways, and that is the one the heroes must take. Due to the magic of the passage, there is no preset route – the tunnels shift with a will of their own, so that the only way to take the right path is to let your shadows stretch out before you.

The heroes can look backwards if they want, but they must never hold or create a light source so that their shadows are cast *downstream*. If they do so, or if they take the wrong pathway or choose a pathway without the ritual use of shadow, they are discreetly transported to another section of the Nallanthes River downstream, and soon the tunnel emerges back in the normal forest. They must start all over again. Even so much as casting *fireball* in front of yourself is enough to disrupt your journey.

After taking each proper path, the tunnel continues for roughly a quarter mile, either continuing alongside the river, or taking a passage which eventually returns to the river, even though it seems as if the route is taking them away from it. Soon thereafter the heroes come to another intersection, until the heroes have chosen the proper path six times.

Rhuarc, however, has arranged for dangers along the way, calling upon magic and demonic favors originally owed to his diabolist mother. They are ultimately a mild hindrance to those of the heroes' power, but might lead them astray.

### MAGICAL TRAITS

This passage is suffused with energy from the plane of shadow, so shadow-based spells function differently.

**Enhanced magic.** Spells with the shadow descriptor function as if cast with the Maximize Spell feat. *Shadow conjuration* and *shadow evocation* are 30% as powerful as the spells they emulate, *greater shadow conjuration* and *greater shadow evocation* are 70% as powerful as the spells they emulate, and *shades* is 90% as powerful as the original.



### Lust in the Shadows (EL 10)

After the third intersection, a trio of succubi waits for the heroes, disguised as seductively-dressed drow women. Two of them wait to speak with the heroes, pretending to be the assassins and to guide the heroes off the path, with misdirection such as, “Rhuarc took the Torch and gave it to the Shahalesti. He never told us how to leave the lost city, so we have been wandering here for weeks. Congratulations, now you’re trapped too.”

Meanwhile, the third succubus uses *ethereal jaunt* to hide as the heroes to approach, then turns corporeal once the heroes pass by, soothingly reaching out to embrace the last character in the group. She presses herself upon him, putting a hushing finger to his lips as she moans into his ear. Only one of the succubi in the front of the group actually speaks; the other two use telepathy to cast *charm monster* and *suggestion* upon the rear-most hero, trying to convince him to go off the path and enjoy wonderful sensual pleasures.

Catelyn, Katheryn, and Katcha, Succubi (3, CR 7).

33 hp, MM.

The succubi don’t expect their ruse to succeed, but if the heroes do fall for it, they continue to lie, saying that every hour or so they see a spirit peek out of the walls, watching them. Their suggestion is that the group splits up, spread out across the cavern so someone will hopefully be close enough to spot the spirit and attack it, keeping it distracted long enough that the two women can use their “drow magic” to order it to help them out. This is, of course, just an excuse to try to pick off the heroes one at a time.

More likely, they’ll be found out, and as soon as they are attacked they’ll turn ethereal and flee. However now they know what the heroes look like, so the next time the heroes are distracted, they’ll try to sneak in disguised as members of the group.

### Leashed Power (EL 13)

After the fifth intersection, the heroes hear chuckling in the darkness ahead. Daukran, a glabrezu, stamps toward the heroes, shouting, “Finally, men not afraid to wield the power of the Burning Sky!”

Daukran, glabrezu (CR 13). 174 hp.

Rhuarc placed Daukran here to ward the path, knowing the demon would chafe at his leash and try to betray him. Glabrezu are notorious for tempting mortals with power, and the Torch is one of the greatest powers in this world. Despite a lifetime of bitterness, Rhuarc suspects he will die soon, and wants to give the world one last chance not to disappoint him.

Daukran is bound magically, but he offers to tell the heroes where Rhuarc hides if they can prove to him they will wield the might of the Torch with proper violence, and can then manage to defeat him in combat. If the heroes agree to talk, Daukran explains Rhuarc’s history, sneering at the idea that the child of such a marvelous dark sorceress would be so foolish as to reject the very impressive powers the Torch offers. The impatient glabrezu soon grows bored of talking, though, and attacks, demanding that the heroes prove they are mighty enough to earn the Torch.

If the heroes defeat him, as his body is swallowed back to the Abyss Daukran cries out, “He hides in the Grove of Fallen Hallows.”

In fact, Rhuarc almost never goes to the Grove of Fallen Hallows; he tricked the demon and created a way by which he can gauge the demeanor of those seeking to kill him. If the heroes look for Rhuarc in the Grove of Fallen Hallows, the shadowdancer will presume that they managed to impress Daukran with their thirst for power, and he will remain confident that the world is too full of greed to merit helping.

However, if the heroes do not go to the Grove of Fallen Hallows, or at least do not go there early in their search for him, Rhuarc will be left with a hint of doubt. Normally Rhuarc uses his scimitar to trap the souls of those he kills so that they cannot be resurrected; if the heroes have caused him to question his belief about greed, he will not steal the souls of those he kills. He’ll still fight to the death, but as he expires he’ll allow himself a tiny sliver of hope that perhaps his actions weren’t completely in vain.

### Screams of Revenge (EL 12)

After the sixth intersection, the heroes return to the river, and ahead they see a pinpoint of light in the distance: the end of the tunnel, and the exit to Phorros Irrendra. However, as the heroes approach the exit, the light flickers as if something had flown in front of it. It flickers again, and the constant rushing echoes of the river change into a rising chorus of angered screams and cries for vengeance, a cacophony of hundreds of voices of the murdered.

The light at the end of the tunnel vanishes, and the air becomes thick with the flutter of wings or tattered clothes sweeping past the heroes. The heroes see nothing, not even those with darkvision, and in this absolute blackness they must face one final demon.

Nihilheim, abyssal greater basilisk (CR 12). 189 hp, MM.

This massive reptilian demon's roar joins the chorus of screaming spirits as it leaps from the river just upstream and charges the heroes. The tunnel is cloaked in a unique supernatural darkness that blocks normal vision, low-light vision, and darkvision, but which can be dispelled with even the faintest light. So much as lighting a candle ends the supernatural darkness (though the tunnel is naturally nearly pitch black). This, however, is

the worst thing the heroes can do; though creating light here holds no risk of forcing the heroes to exit the labyrinth, it reveals the face of their foe.

If the heroes create any sort of light, the glow illuminates the demonic black-eyed visage of the demonic basilisk, and the heroes can see that the air is suddenly thick with swooping, screaming ghosts.

The ghosts cannot harm the heroes, but their screams make it difficult to concentrate, forcing Concentration checks (DC 15 + spell level) to cast spells, and their presence acts like severe wind, making ranged attacks difficult and threatening to carry off heroes in random directions. Any turning or rebuking attempt scatters the ghosts, negating the winds and reducing the loudest of the screaming, though the tunnel is still filled with more ghosts down both directions.

Nihilheim's gaze attack does not turn creatures to stone, but rather to obsidian. If Nihilheim manages to shatter one of these statues, a swarm of incorporeal bat-shaped shadows burst into the air and are carried away by the swarm of ghosts. *Stone to flesh* restores an obsidian hero to life as usual, and a turn undead attempt that affects a creature of the hero's Hit Dice can also restore life – but only after the basilisk is dead.

Upon the demon's defeat, the spirits flee, and the cavern seems deathly quiet in their absence. Up ahead the heroes can see the faint green light of Phorros Irrendra, the lost city of the Taranesti.

## ACT TWO: PHORROS IRRENDRA

Deep within the mountains west of Ycengled Phurst, hidden within a demiplane whose location has been a secret for centuries, there stands a deserted city. Phorros Irrendra, once a thriving community of the Taranesti elves, has lain abandoned for four decades. During the Shahalesti crusade, many of its people went to aid their brethren, and those few who were smart enough to remain hidden were slain in turn by the bitter spirits of those same kin. Some fled to the shadows in the depths of the earth, leaving their city trapped and abandoned. Only the handful of Taranesti who were brave enough to go and face the Shahalesti, but smart enough not to be caught, survive today, eking out an existence in the haunted wood.

Yet Phorros Irrendra is not *completely* empty, for it is here that the assassins of Emperor Drakus Coaltongue, the thieves of the Torch of the Burning Sky, have gone to ground.

In this act the heroes track down the assassins. The two drow – Quillathe and Yvonnell – may be willing to negotiate, but the half-Taranesti Rhuarc is willing to die to keep the Torch from ever being used again. First we present a general overview of the city, then details of the two main parts of this act – finding the drow assassins, and running down Rhuarc. Finally we provide descriptions of the key locations in the city.

Preferably the heroes should be 14th level by the start of this act.

### THE LOST CITY

Phorros Irrendra is an odd city indeed. Built in a steep valley and on the slope of several forested hills, it consists of traditional elven tree-houses and similar structures—but also of deep caves and sinkholes within the slanted earth. Some of the unnaturally massive oaks that tower high overhead emerge from those holes, and some buildings are built directly on, or under, the forest floor.

No formal “levels” exist within the city. Rather, each building simply stands at the height (or depth)

that its builders preferred. Thus, the bridges that crisscross the city like some great spiderweb often slant upward or downward. Most of the buildings are in poor shape, slowly crumbling beneath the weight of years, but a significant minority remains structurally sound. Alas, even these are not safe, for the hiding assassins have reset many of the traps built by the elves long ago, and intended for the advancing Shahalesti.

In total, the lost city covers roughly ten square miles. Travel beyond the city boundaries eventually leads into the mountains west of Ycengled, from which one cannot simply back-track to return to the city, for losing sight of the city means leaving the demiplane; if they leave the demiplane, the heroes must follow the path of shadow to return.

### ENTERING PHORROS IRRENDRA

Read the following as the heroes emerge from the dark labyrinth.

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The depths of the cavern open up ahead, and faint light filters in from overhead, revealing that you stand in the bottom of a wide, deep grotto. Vast carvings span the walls, stretching up hundreds of feet to a forest-shrouded sky, while the floor of the grotto is mostly flooded, smooth black flagstones cracked from exposure and the growth of wild brush. Above the floor there are two main tiers, at forty and eighty feet. Amid the carvings are small tunnels on these tiers, accessible by ladders, most of which look ready to crack if weight were put upon them.

A toppled ring of black obelisks marks the base of a switchback stairway that climbs one wall of the grotto, and they too are overgrown. If this is truly the entrance to the lost city, it looks to have been abandoned for decades.

The river continues upstream, its ultimate source hidden in caves too narrow to navigate, so it seems your only route is up.

---

More details of this area are provided at Mouth of the Earth, below. When the heroes reach the top of the grotto, read the following.

The stairway ends at a broad, open cliff, revealing a remarkable vista. The city lies nestled in a valley surrounded by high, snow-topped peaks. Behind you, the slope of a mountain rises up thousands of feet like a wall, though its full size is hidden by colossal trees. Chill, misty air, stuff that you would call clouds if you were on lower ground, seems to float within the city itself.

Phorros Irrendra is built on many levels, amid massive trees and jagged hills and dark sinkholes. Wooden structures, most of which seem on the verge of falling apart, stand high on distant branches, or sit at the mouths of caverns in the hills. The trees, hundreds of feet tall and across, rise from the slanted earth, their roots merging with the stone to create a confusing mess of tunnels and passageways. Another disorienting network of wooden bridges, many of them aged and fragile, span from building to building amid the trees.

It is a city built just as fully, and just as haphazardly, on the vertical as well as the horizontal. Just looking at it is dizzying. And somewhere in that chaos hides your prey.

## FINDING THE ASSASSINS

With Fayne's guidance, the heroes should know to look for the drow women at the Grand Manor, near the Emeraldgreen Peak. If the heroes aren't particularly quiet, the drow become aware of their presence, and will be ready whenever the heroes do find them.

Rhuarc, for his part, simply won't be surprised. Closely tied to the demons he left in the dark labyrinth, he already knows the heroes are coming. He sends his shadow out to hide about four hundred feet from the Grand Manor, where it can get a better view of the heroes' interactions with the drow. Because of the distance, spotting it should be nigh impossible (DC 54).

## CITY TRAITS

Given the parameters of the adventure, it's impossible to detail the entire city, and indeed, the bulk of it is rather empty. Instead, only a few significant locations are presented below. If the heroes choose to go elsewhere, or engage in combat outside a defined area, use the existing areas as inspiration, making use of the following traits.

Because Phorros Irrendra lacks the accumulation of spirits common to the rest of the wood, magic that uses positive or negative energy works normally here, as do divination spells.

There is no snow here. The temperature never drops below freezing.

Ground level is generally heavy undergrowth outside of structures, and light undergrowth along old roads.

Cave floors, once smoothly tiled with river stones, are now broken and uneven. The entrances of most caves have light rubble from fallen rocks.

Building floors above ground level are easy terrain, though most are slightly slanted from age and growth of trees. Most tree branches are wide enough to walk along, though they count as light underbrush.

Bridges are easy terrain, but movement along them requires a Balance check (DC 12). Failure indicates that the character cannot run or charge along the bridge, but can otherwise act normally. Failure by 5 or more results in a fall. A Reflex save (DC 15) allows a falling character to catch on and dangle; otherwise, the character plummets to the ground.

The foliage, leaves, and branches are thick. Thus, anyone who falls from a point in the trees is entitled to a Reflex save (DC 20) every 20 feet. Success indicates that the character manages to stop, taking damage only for the distance fallen to that point.

Phorros Irrendra once had platforms that carried people and cargo up and down to various heights, secured to heavy ropes and vines and lifted by great pulleys, but these have all fallen apart. While it is possible for heroes to navigate between levels of the city, usually this involves crossing great horizontal distances just to find a staircase down a hundred feet. Unless the heroes use magic, their only quick way of traveling up and down the trees, or down into the tunnels and sinkholes, is to climb.

### Climbing in Phorros Irrendra

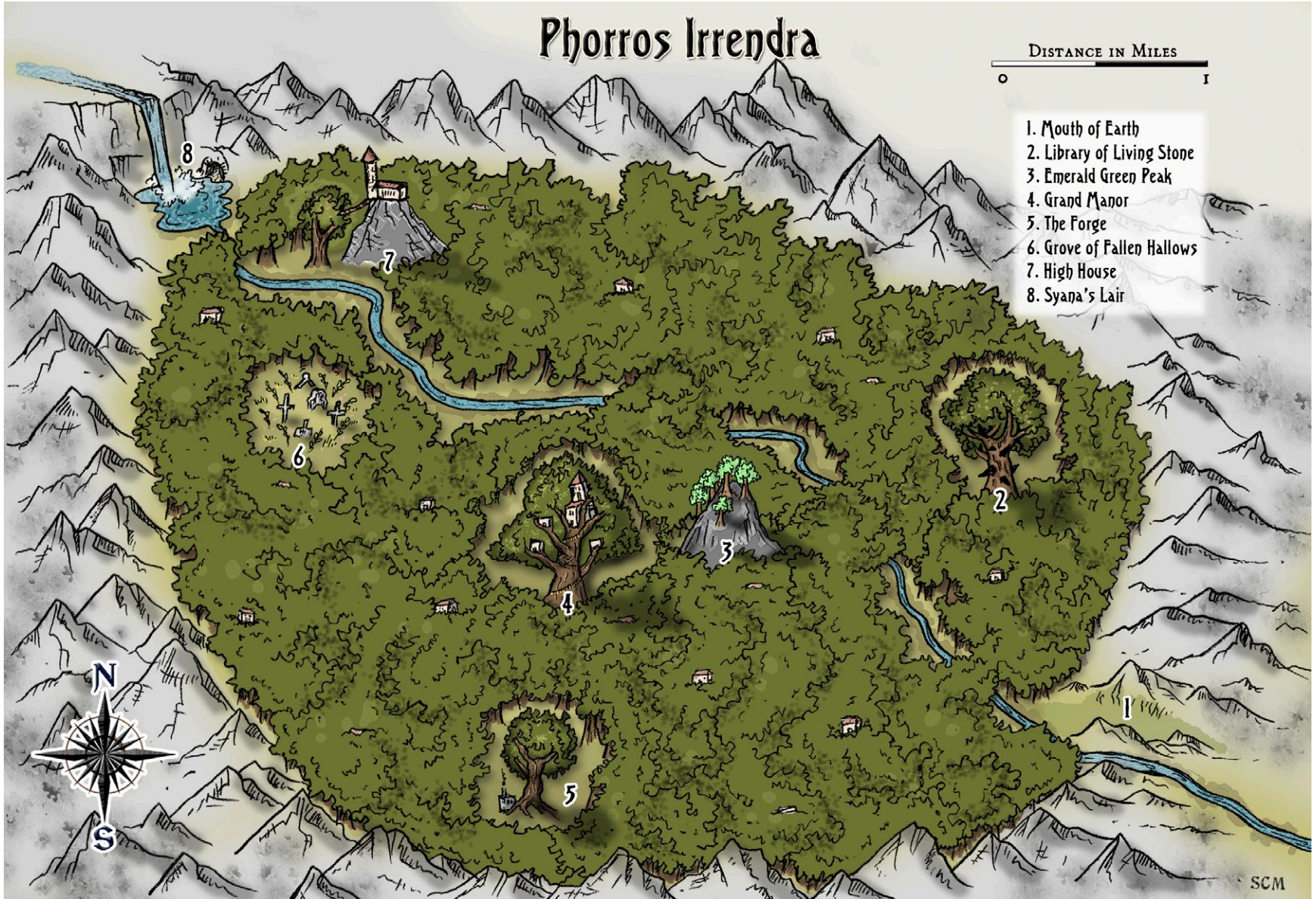
Surface	DC
Cave walls	15
Surviving ropes and vines	8
Trees	12

# Phorros Irrendra

DISTANCE IN MILES



1. Mouth of Earth
2. Library of Living Stone
3. Emerald Green Peak
4. Grand Manor
5. The Forge
6. Grove of Fallen Hallows
7. High House
8. Syana's Lair



## Black Widows (EL 18)

**Elevation:** 100 feet.

Yvonne and Quillathe are in over their heads, and they know it. Hired to murder Emperor Coaltongue, they thought to drive the Ragesians and the Shahalesti to war by absconding with the Torch itself. Though they have stayed hidden in the forest for months now, the various demons Rhuarc has called upon have kept them informed to the events in the wider world. They know the Shahalesti suspect they are here, and worry that soon Leska will turn her attentions to finding the path through the dark labyrinth.

They recently abandoned their partner Rhuarc, having realized the man is actually happy with the way things are, and have taken up residence in a small home near the edge of the Grand Manor. Though the care they have given their new home makes it stand out, here they have access to many potential escape routes. Here also is where the assassins have

hidden the body of Emperor Coaltongue, concealed under the floor in a lead-lined coffin.

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The Grand Manor spans the entire vast boughs of what must be the largest tree you have ever seen. Buildings lie scattered all across its branches, connected by bridges of wood and curling stone, most cracked or warped from age.

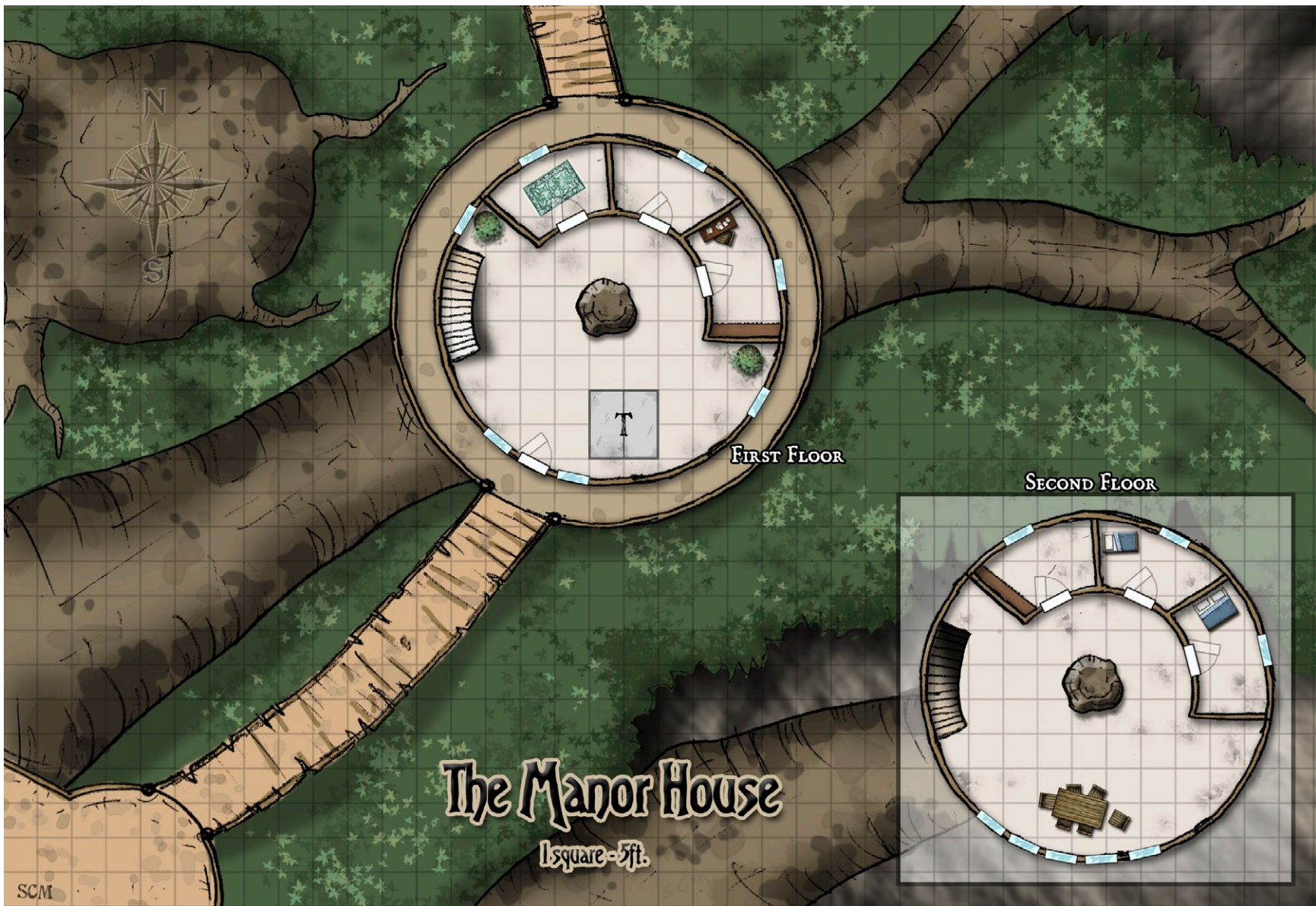
While most of the structures here are dilapidated and deserted, you spy one, a family dwelling, that clearly looks like it has been cared for recently. Round, with a walkway around its edge, it boasts a sloped roof to shed the rain and falling leaves. A single branch protrudes from the center of the roof, alone the size of a normal tree. A single door provides ingress, though several of the windows would be large enough to climb through if they weren't tightly shuttered.

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Quillathe (CR 16). 85 hp.

Yvonne (CR 16). 128 hp.





The two women are curious that the heroes do not seem clearly affiliated with either the Shahalesti or the Ragesians. However, it would be against their nature to start talking without a clear position of superiority, so when they notice the heroes approaching they hide and prepare to ambush them. Their attitude is only Unfriendly, but they're drow, so attacking strangers is not unusual for them. They intend to keep at least one hero alive to question; if the heroes call for negotiations, they're willing to listen. If the heroes don't manage to make them at least Indifferent, they eventually renew their attacks, preferring to demand answers from prisoners rather than negotiate.

If they are made Friendly, the pair reveal that they're willing to depart for greener pastures, and they direct the heroes to the Forge, where they believe Rhuarc typically lairs (Rhuarc cleverly led them to this belief, since in truth the Forge is a deadly trap). They secretly expect that any ire directed toward them will be redirected to the heroes once the heroes get the Torch.

If they are made Helpful, the women actually become talkative, explaining why they have done as they did. They might be willing to aid the party in getting the Torch from Rhuarc, and if the heroes seem particularly opposed to the Shahalesti, they might be willing to aid them in the future, perhaps helping guide them through the Underdark in adventure ten, *Sleep, Ye Cursed Child*.

**Tactics:** If possible, Quillathe prefers to poison her weapons before combat, and both assassins drink a *potion of heroism*. If it seems like the heroes will be approaching by rope bridge, Quillathe hides underneath the one they're taking, and, once she has had three rounds to observe her target, she strikes with a death attack from below, entangling a victim's throat with her bladed whip to either snap his neck or simply slice his head off. Meanwhile, Yvonnell hides by flying underneath the house, ready to swoop to Quillathe's aid.

If the heroes don't use the rope bridges, the two women don't wait in the building for it to be fireballed or otherwise assaulted; they hide in the

branches and keep their distance. The two women have a ridiculous number of attacks with wounding weapons, but they are somewhat fragile and avoid melee with strong foes, preferring to focus on enemy spellcasters, or to have Yvonnell use her thrown sword against barbarians and the like. However, if they can manage to flank, few creatures can survive the flurry of Quillathe's sneak attacks. Yvonnell sometimes will grapple a foe, holding them so that Quillathe can strike their vulnerable points.

The drow try to lure enemies to narrow terrain that forces Balance checks, so those with fewer than 5 ranks in Balance lose their Dexterity bonus to AC while on the tree, making them easy for her to sneak attack. Yvonnell can fly, and Quillathe has good enough balance to avoid this threat. Note that even creatures with uncanny dodge lose their Dexterity bonus to AC in this situation.

The drow arranged the pit trap in the center of the main room, and if they are caught inside they attempt to maneuver heroes over it. Likewise, as they move away from the main building, they will look for more opportunities to send heroes who cannot fly plummeting off bridges.

**Wide-Mouth Pit Trap (CR 9):** mechanical; location trigger; repair reset; DC 25 Reflex save avoids; 100 ft. deep (10d6, fall); multiple targets (all within 10-ft. by 10-ft. area); Search DC 25; Disable Device DC 25. Remember that falling heroes have a chance to arrest their plummet, as detailed above.

**Terrain:** The floor here is slightly sloped and uneven, and most of the rooms have scattered bits of old, rickety furniture, which count as difficult terrain, and provide partial cover (+2 AC, +1 Reflex saves) to those in the same square.

**Aftermath:** Quillathe and Yvonnell are fiercely loyal to each other – their relationship is about the only thing either of them really cares about anymore – and if one of them falls, the other despairs, fighting in a rage, not relenting unless she is convinced that by ending combat she'll be allowed to take her friend's body and go in peace.



### If it Bleeds, We Can Kill It (EL 18)

While the confrontation with the drow has a predetermined location, the heroes' fight with the half-elf Rhuarc is a running battle, one that occurs over the span of multiple locations. Rhuarc is a cunning, scheming creature, and he knows full well how to maximize his advantages. He keeps the Torch of the Burning Sky with him at all times, carefully secured in a backpack.

Rhuarc has specially prepared half a dozen locations throughout the length and breadth of Phorros Irrendra. The traps in these areas are set and ready to trigger; Rhuarc knows them well enough that he himself never risks activating them. Throughout the course of his struggle with the heroes, he attempts to lead them through each of these areas, using his amazing stealth to stay one step ahead.

**Introducing Rhuarc:** The heroes' first encounter with Rhuarc should occur not long after they finish their fight with Quillathe and Yvonnell. Rhuarc hides about a hundred feet away and waits for someone who looks like a healer to go up next to a heavily wounded character. As soon as the healer begins to cast a spell, Rhuarc fires a single shatterspell arrow, then flees. No one should be expecting to get attacked in the post-combat healing rounds, so this should start things off well.

Rhuarc (CR 18). 131 hp.

Rhuarc's shadow (CR n/a). 45 hp.

Tragedies (variable, CR 7). 69 hp.

After this, Rhuarc flees to any of his prepared locations, preferring first to go to the Forge. Thereafter, feel free to use whatever order you think best.

**The Forge.** Overall the deadliest trap, Rhuarc is willing to linger here a bit longer than might be safe so that he gets a chance to catch all the heroes at once. After he springs this trap, he suspects the heroes won't fall for anymore obvious tricks.

**Library of Living Stone.** Rhuarc flees here if his foes are capable of flying, since this trap covers a vast enough area that fliers won't be able to escape it.

### ALAS, POOR COALTONGUE

What of the corpse of Emperor Drakus Coaltongue (LN male venerable immortal half-orc fighter 4/commander 20)? It lies in a lead-lined coffin under the drow women's home. A special divider is in place separating the Emperor's head from his shoulders, intended to keep the blood of the Aquiline Heart that flows through his veins from restoring him to life. This is unnecessary, because Rhuarc stole his soul with his black scimitar, *Shaalguenyaver*, but the women do not know this.

If you prefer to keep things simple, you can say that after Rhuarc trapped the soul of the emperor with his scimitar, he threw away the gem in which the soul was held, so that now the emperor's body is simply a lifeless husk. The gem lies somewhere lost in Ycengled, all but impossible to ever find.

Alternately, the heroes can recover Coaltongue's soul from the black scimitar, and return it to the late emperor's body. Coaltongue's immortality (see adventure six, *Tears of the Burning Sky*) restores him within a matter of seconds. The old half-orc is calm and curious, aware of his relatively tenuous position. He wants to know what has happened since his death, and does his best not to show his fear at having his soul trapped again.

How he interacts in the wider scope of the campaign saga is up to you. Leska will use all her power to ensure that she does not have to turn Ragesia back over to him, but if the heroes are willing to ally with him, he could easily rally all the nations in this war to strike against Leska. His defeat has actually humbled him, and he realizes that Leska had long led him astray, but old habits die hard. In truth, the people of the region are looking for change, not a return to the rule of the Old Dragon.

**Mouth of the Earth.** This area has many tunnels that Rhuarc hopes to use to split up his enemies so he can take them on one at a time.

**Grove of Fallen Hallows.** The poisonous pollen of the black lotuses and keshweed plants growing here, combined with the bevy of options for cover and a small horde of ghouls, should make this an interesting place for a battle.

**Syana's Lair.** This is where Rhuarc keeps a cache of supplies, which he will flee to if he begins to feel overwhelmed.

**High House.** His mother's old home, here Rhuarc has his shadow ambush the heroes, and then he crushes the bridge they are approaching along. He peppers the heroes with arrows until they get too close, and then waits inside the building for the heroes to pursue him.

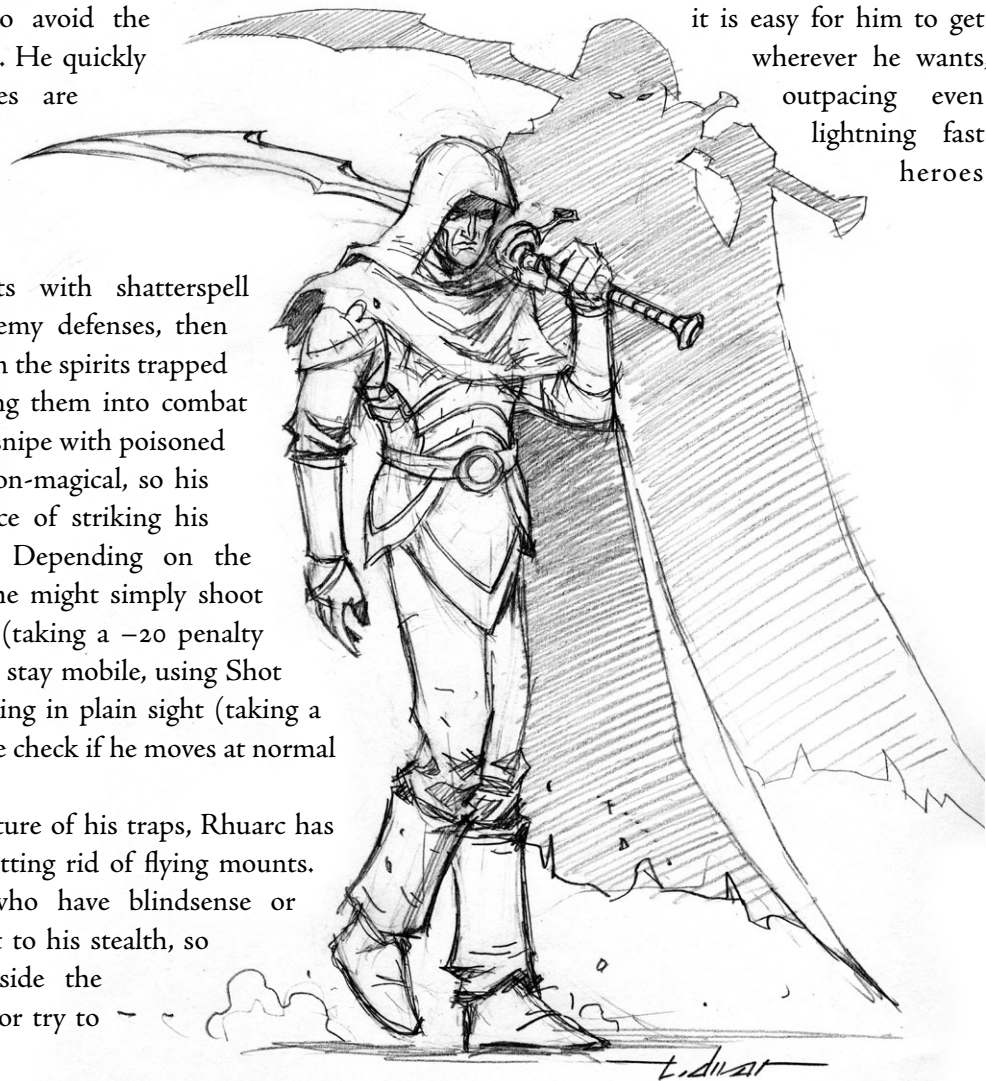
**Tactics:** Rhuarc attempts to remain at range, sniping at the heroes and trusting in his numerous defenses to avoid the worst of hostile spells. He quickly learns which enemies are most dangerous at what distances, and does his best to disrupt their tactics.

He usually starts with shatterspell arrows to remove enemy defenses, then conjures tragedies from the spirits trapped in his scimitar, sending them into combat while he continues to snipe with poisoned arrows. His bow is non-magical, so his arrows have no chance of striking his incorporeal minions. Depending on the nature of the battle, he might simply shoot once then hide again (taking a -20 penalty to his Hide check), or stay mobile, using Shot on the Run while hiding in plain sight (taking a -25 penalty to his Hide check if he moves at normal speed).

Because of the nature of his traps, Rhuarc has a vested interest in getting rid of flying mounts. Likewise, creatures who have blindsense or blindsight are a threat to his stealth, so he'll either stay outside the range of their senses, or try to kill them first.

Once he suffers more than 25 points of damage, he typically seeks to move on to his next location. He prefers to do so through hiding and stealth, but makes use of his *shadow jump* ability if necessary. The powerful combination of teleporting a short distance where he can then hide in plain sight – perhaps just to the far side of a tree – should make it easy for him to flee when the danger gets too hot. He then sprints to his next ambush point, not bothering to cover his trail because, in truth, he wants the heroes to follow him. Indeed, before his first encounter with the heroes, he sets up a trail of blood to make it easier for the heroes to “track him down” to the Forge.

Because Rhuarc knows the city well and is familiar with all the shortcuts, it is generally safe to assume that once he manages to successfully hide and move more than 200 feet from the heroes, it is easy for him to get wherever he wants, outpacing even lightning fast heroes



if they don't know where to look. Rhuarc thinks in three dimensions, fleeing down tree trunks, blazing trails through the boughs of trees, and sometimes even leaping and *feather falling* to ground level, and his shadow companion makes for a useful distraction.

Rhuarc has dyed his clothes and hair dark, and covered his skin in ash. It takes a Spot check (DC 23, modified by distance) to tell Rhuarc apart from his shadow companion. He rarely sends his shadow into combat except as a first strike against feeble-looking spellcasters, but when he needs to throw the heroes off his trail for a moment, he and his shadow will split up, the shadow intentionally doing a poor job of hiding itself. It tries to flee around a corner, and then melds incorporeally into a solid object.

If the heroes wander into one of the numbered encounter areas on their own, assume Rhuarc beats them there even if they're not actively tracking him, and run the encounter as presented.

**Waiting Out Rhuarc:** Should the heroes choose not to pursue him, Rhuarc can still be a threat. If the heroes simply find a defensible place to wait and rest, Rhuarc should be able to sneak up and kill someone in his sleep. It takes truly amazing cunning to trick the old shadowdancer into a trap, and if he suspects an ambush he'll try to spring the trap, then attack elsewhere while the heroes go after the red herring.

If somehow the heroes manage to keep the hunt going for more than a day, Rhuarc does eventually need to sleep, though he spares no expense to ensure his trail is cold – he uses what *shadow jump* he has left, *feather falls* into the river, and heads upstream to Syana's lair.

For all his wariness, Rhuarc does still have an Achilles' heel: he loathes paladins, knights, and their ilk, for it was knights who murdered his father and set his life down this bleak path. He's a little less cautious when he thinks he has a chance to kill a knight or paladin.

Rhuarc is not a conversationalist, but he does get bored hiding all the time, so he might strike up a conversation as he snipes at the heroes. He never stops to negotiate, but he'll begrudgingly complain about the state the world is in, or

critique the heroes' choices of tactics (especially if they summon outsiders), or try to disturb the heroes by telling them about the time his mother was possessed by a demon and he had to kill her. He doesn't complain – he's far too old and jaded for that – but rather his tone is one of perpetual disappointment.

**Pursuing a Shadow:** So how are the heroes supposed to follow the half-elf through the city? Actually, though it sounds like a daunting task, it's not all that hard.

**Listen and Spot.** An average result of Rhuarc's Hide and Move Silently checks is 42, but he tends to run quite recklessly when fleeing the heroes, reducing this to 22: a respectable total, but not unbeatable.

**Tracking.** Even if he *shadow jumps* to escape an encounter, Rhuarc usually only moves 40 feet at a time, before he starts leaving a trail again. Assume a base DC 18 to track Rhuarc during the day, and DC 21 to follow him at night. It might take a few minutes to get the scent, but they can then locate his tracks on the forest floor or the leaf-and-needle covered branches. And speaking of scent, trained animals can come quite in handy here, at least until Rhuarc kills them.

**Divination.** Divination magic works normally here. This might actually foil a few of the shadowdancer's ambushes, which should help keep the heroes from getting too frustrated.

Finally, the heroes might fail to find him. In this case, he doesn't perceive them as a threat *per se*, but he knows they might return with assistance, so he cannot let them leave Phorros Irrendra. He will actually try first to make himself easier to pursue, since he prefers to lay ambushes, but if that fails, he'll run down these incompetent intruders so they can't waste any more of his time. Hopefully, though, the heroes will be clever enough to catch Rhuarc.

The pursuit of Rhuarc is meant to be a complex challenge that the heroes and their players should remember for a long time to come. Expect the players to get a little frustrated, and don't hesitate to have Rhuarc grow a little overconfident, or linger just a little too long, when you feel it is time for the hunt to end.

## CITY LOCATIONS

The heroes enter Phorros Irrendra at its eastern end, about a hundred feet above the valley floor. Though the city is huge, there aren't that many locations with enough structural stability to serve as a home for the assassins. Prominent locations include:

**Emeraldgreen Peak.** This jagged hill is capped with small trees that have translucent leaves that glint like emeralds.

**The Forge.** Built between roots of a huge tree, this stone structure descends deep into a cavern below it.

**The Grand Manor.** In the center of the city, the largest tree in the valley is covered with numerous buildings, attached by curling stone arches crafted by *stone shape*, now warped by the growth of the tree and the passage of years. Long ago this tree was a manor for one of the noble families of the city. Now it is where the two drow live, in one of the smaller outlying houses.

**The Grove of Fallen Hallows.** Located on the ground level, this garden is ringed with sculptures of all manner of holy icons, and wild lotuses bloom within.

**The High House.** A fancy, tower-like home built on a jutting peak, this building is the highest in the city, and has a clear view of the Grove of Fallen Hallows. This is where Rhuarc spends most of his time. Conveniently, it is across the river from the Grand Manor; the running water blocks *locate creature* spells.

**Library of Living Stone.** A small, shadowed building lies in the boughs of a once well-groomed tree. Black stones grow from the tree's bark, and upon these stones are scribed the history of the city. The tree's upper branches spread wide, casting a huge shadow.

**Mouth of the Earth.** This is the sinkhole where the heroes enter.

**Syana's Lair.** A large waterfall on the northwest end of the valley feeds into a dark lake. Beneath its surface, a tunnel leads back up behind the waterfall to the lair of the gold dragon who once defended Ycengled.

Each location is detailed below, with emphasis given to how the location can be used as part of the greater chase for Rhuarc.

### 2-A: Emeraldgreen Peak

**Elevation:** Ground level, though the ground is 250 feet above the valley floor.

This tall hill holds no threats, but is capped with vividly green trees, and it has a clear vantage point to the Grand Manor, about four hundred feet away. A creature on the hill, such as Rhuarc's shadow, will have an easy view of the house where Quillathe and Yvonne live, and of any fight that goes on there.

### 2-B: The Forge

**Elevation:** Ground level.

Rhuarc has set a trap in an old forge, which he has set up to look like his lair.

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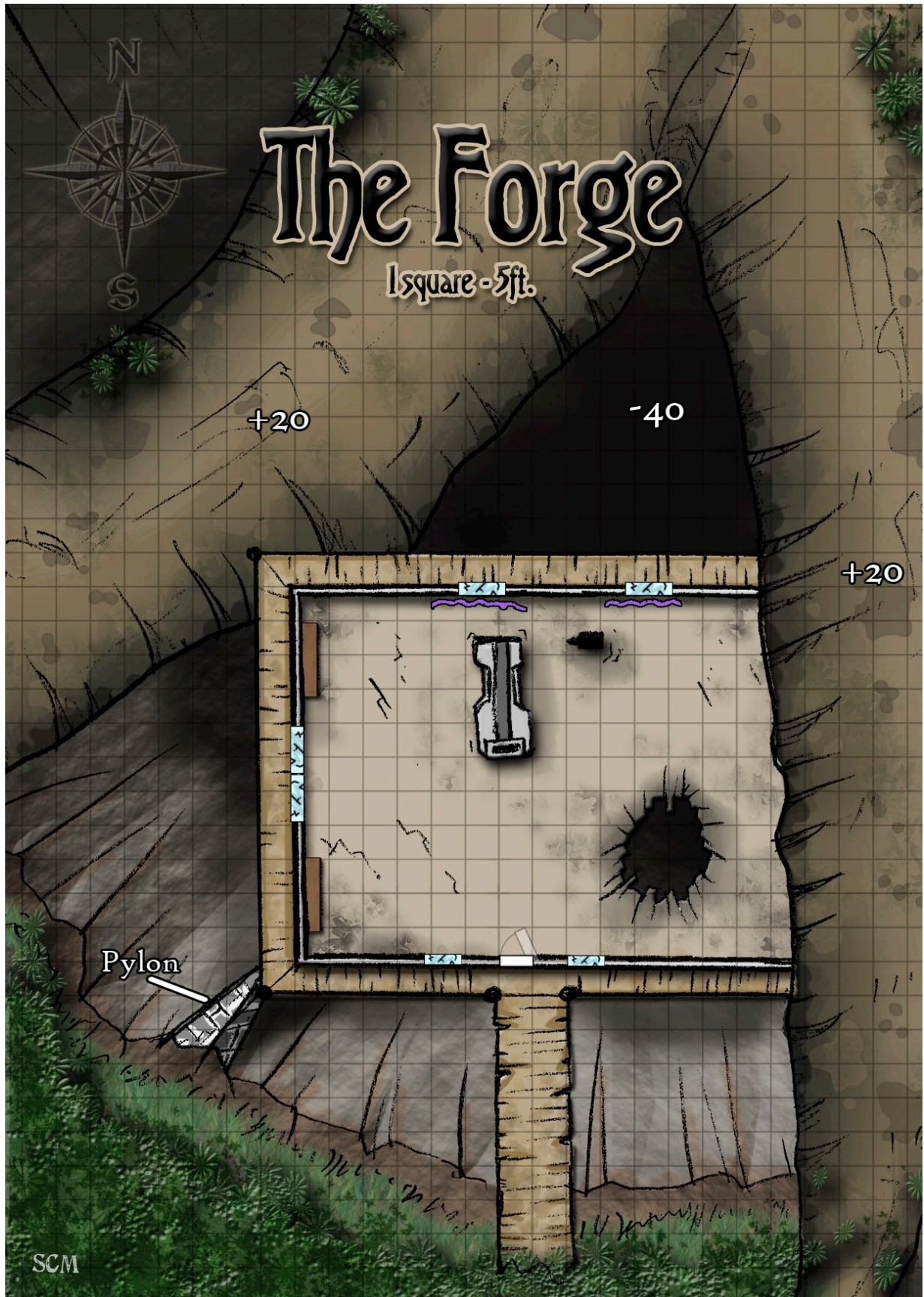
A somewhat clear pathway of low brush cuts through the thick forest to the base of a huge tree. A black obelisk jutting up from the foliage marks the destination, announcing in elvish that this is a forge.

The roots of this huge tree stretch over a shallow pit filled with fallen leaves, and the large stone forge building stretches between two of the closest roots. Its upper floor is level with the main forest floor, but it has a lower floor down beneath the roots. A wooden walkway crosses the pit to the building's porch, and a broken staircase looks to once have led downstairs. The roof has broken shingles and a narrow chimney.

Strange winds blow through the gaps under the roots, fluttering the curtains that hang behind the building's shattered windows. The air here smells faintly of smelted iron.

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Inside the forge are many tools for crafting adamantine and mithral, and mostly empty racks that once held precious weapons and armor. The forge in the center of the room is powered by a huge bellows built into the underside of the building, which is pumped by the constant flow of wind through a massive tunnel under the tree.



The “ground” of the pit appears to be only about 10 feet deep, but this is just a net Rhuarc placed to hide the pit’s true depth, which is forty feet. A Spot check (DC 25) realizes that the pit actually is much deeper beneath the net. The forge’s bottom level’s floor actually fell out over the years, though from afar it looks perfectly normal.

**Rhuarc’s Trap (CR 14):** Rhuarc hides in plain sight atop the root nearest the black pillar outside the forge, waiting for the heroes to approach. Through the cracks in the roof, he uses his *shadow illusion* ability to create an image of himself inside the forge, hoping to lure the heroes inside. When the heroes spot the illusion, he has it grab the one sword that still hangs on a rack, and then duck behind the anvil, where it vanishes. He hopes to draw the heroes inside, and then drop the whole building into the pit.

He simply has to cut a cable that runs up the length of the root and tree (easily done with his adamantite scimitar), which releases the mooring that keeps the forge from plummeting into the pit, while simultaneously releasing a huge deadfall of logs and branches that hangs a hundred feet up, in the low branches of the tree.

Creatures in the building when the trap is triggered take 4d6 points of damage from falling, plus 4d6 points of damage from the crush of the building (Reflex DC 15 halves the crushing damage). Then the deadfall strikes, and then everyone in the path of it takes 12d6 points of damage (Reflex DC 15 halves). They are subsequently buried.

Buried characters take 1d6 points of nonlethal damage per minute. If a buried character falls unconscious, he or she must make a DC 15 Constitution check or take 1d6 points of lethal damage each minute thereafter until freed or dead. Digging free requires three Strength checks (DC 24).

Upon impact, several flasks of alchemist’s fire Rhuarc hid in the building’s rafters shatter. While not immediately dangerous, the flames slowly set fire to the building, and within five minutes the whole place is burning.

## 2-C: The Grand Manor

**Elevation:** 100 feet.

This location is detailed in the Black Widows encounter, above.

## 2-D: Grove of Fallen Hallows (EL 14)

**Elevation:** Ground level.

This garden is ringed with huge statues and religious icons from a dozen faiths, and within its borders are rows of smaller hallowed items. Among these stone art objects sways a huge field of black and violet flowers – lotuses and keshweed, both very toxic. The air is sickly sweet, and poisonous pollen floats in a shadowy haze over the whole garden. More dangerous, though, are the ghastrs that sleep in the field, sleeping in this self-made graveyard until they are disturbed.

Ghastrs (32, CR 3). 29 hp, MM.

Creatures can move at a rate of 5 feet per round without kicking up the pollen on the flowers. Any faster, though, and the air quickly fills with poison. Each round spent in the field counts as one dose of poison, though heroes can simply hold their breath.

**Black lotus pollen.** Inhaled (DC 14). Initial and secondary 1 Con.

**Keshweed pollen.** Inhaled (DC 14). Initial and secondary 1 Wis.

One stone building in the center of the garden looks like it might be a place where Rhuarc could be hiding, and inside it Rhuarc has placed a wrapped piece of leather that looks like it holds something about the size and shape of a torch. However, this is just another trap, a *greater glyph of warding* that triggers *greater dispel magic* (caster level 11th).

## 2-E: The High House (EL 12+)

**Elevation:** The house is at ground level, but is 220 feet above the valley floor.

Once one of the finest dwellings in Phorros Irrendra, this house belonged to Rhuarc’s own mother, Stacia. Built atop the highest hill in the



valley, its impressive stonework, black etched with silver in patterns akin to binding circles, still survives, and it is Rhuarc's favorite bolt-hole in the city. Inside, much of the old furniture remains, and in long, dark hallways the shattered windows are hidden by tattered curtains that flutter eerily in the wind. Various bits of furniture can provide cover, and several ropes dangle from the nearby branches, tied off to balconies and rooftops, giving Rhuarc a quick way to swing away to safety.

The few infernal beings Rhuarc's mother had left in stasis have already been released, sent by Rhuarc to guard the dark labyrinth, but the place has a wealth of lore about demons and devils, as well as on Rhuarc himself.

Rhuarc hides atop the balcony of the second floor, with a clear view of the only rope bridge that comes to this hilltop, and to the distant Grove of Fallen Hallows. When he thinks the heroes are approaching, he sends his shadow companion out to float under the bridge. When the heroes get within 200 feet, it "climbs" up onto the bridge and then runs for the entrance of the house.

**The Bridge of Terror (CR 12):** mechanical; location trigger; manual reset; DC 22 Reflex save avoids; swinging log (12d6 crush); multiple targets (all targets in the center 15 feet of the bridge); Search DC 28; Disable Device DC 18.

This trap is made up of two enormous logs, attached to higher trees by thick ropes and vines. When the heroes reach a spot on the bridge 20 feet from the high house, they trip a wire that releases the logs, which swing down from either side, striking a 15-foot-long area centered on the trapped area.

In addition to crushing approaching creatures, this impact also mangles the bridges. One round later the bridge snaps in the middle and collapses, and until that time creatures on the bridge must make a Balance check (DC 15) to move along the bridge. All during this time, Rhuarc peppers them with arrows, since most should be denied their Dexterity while balancing.

This will likely be the last location Rhuarc runs to. Once the heroes get inside, he leaves his balcony perch and goes to hunt them down.

Areas within the house have yet further traps, their locations marked on the map.

**Bladed Portcullis Trap (CR 2).** Mechanical; location trigger; manual reset; Atk +10 melee (4d6); Search DC 20; Disable Device DC 25. Portcullis blocks hallway or doorway.

**Falling Spiked Block Trap (CR 6).** Mechanical; location trigger; repair reset; Atk +20 melee (7d6); multiple targets (can strike all characters in four adjacent specified squares); Search DC 24; Disable Device DC 20.

**Forcecage and Summon Monster VII trap (CR 10).** Magic device; proximity trigger (*alarm*); automatic reset; multiple traps (one *forcecage* trap and one *summon monster VII* trap that summons a babau demon); spell effect (*forcecage*, 13th-level wizard), spell effect (*summon monster VII*, 13th-level wizard, babau demon); Search DC 32; Disable Device DC 32. Cost: 241,000 gp, 7,280 XP. Note: This trap is really one CR 8 trap that creates a forcecage and a second CR 8 trap that summons a babau demon in the same area. If both succeed, the demon appears inside the forcecage. These effects are independent of each other.

**Forcecage and Summon Monster IX trap (CR 12).** Magic device; proximity trigger (*alarm*); automatic reset; multiple traps (one *forcecage* trap and one *summon monster IX* trap that summons a barbed devil); spell effect (*forcecage*, 13th-level wizard), spell effect (*summon monster VII*, 13th-level wizard, barbed devil); Search DC 32; Disable Device DC 32. Cost: 241,000 gp, 7,280 XP. Note: This trap is really one CR 8 trap that creates a forcecage and a second CR 11 trap that summons a barbed devil in the same area. If both succeed, the devil appears inside the forcecage. These effects are independent of each other.

**Treasure:** Eerily, one room contains a fair amount of torture equipment, as well as a scroll rack with clear labels. Most are missing, but two *scrolls of speak with dead* remain.

## 2-F: Library of Living Stone (EL 10)

**Elevation:** 90 feet above ground level.

This is a particularly nasty setup, in that it has a good chance of catching the entire party in the trap.





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Nestled in the bough of this tree is a plaza dominated at one end by a large, broken building. All along the tree's bark are stone plaques, the size of a shield, covered in writing.

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This used to be a center for learning in Phorros Irrendra, a library of history and naturalism. Now, though, Rhuarc has set it up to be a massive deadfall trap, somewhat less deadly than the forge, but covering a larger area. Over the past several months he has cut into the branches of this tree, rigging one whole side to collapse with a bit of judicious leverage. A Knowledge (nature) or Spot check (DC 20) notices that about half of this tree has leaves that are withered, for the tree is half-dead.

Rhuarc hides in the part of the tree that is not dead, and has set up a dummy on top of the building, which should fool some people (Spot DC 27, modified by distance, to tell the dummy is not a living creature). He snipes from behind the dummy, hoping to entice the heroes into approaching before he triggers the trap. When he does, a huge weight of logs higher in the tree swings toward the perfect spot on the weakened side of the tree. One round later, the huge weight strikes, and with a deafening crack the tree is practically cleft in twain. Branches snap and crash into the heroes, and as the tree collapses around them like a ship capsizing, the heroes are tossed into the air.

The tree doesn't crumple, so there is no threat of being buried, as at the Forge.

**Collapsing Bough Trap (CR 10):** mechanical; location trigger; no reset; DC 25 Reflex save partial (half damage from debris); 90 ft. deep (9d6, fall, plus 4d6 debris); multiple targets (everyone within 150 ft., including those in the air); one-round onset; Search DC 25; Disable Device DC 25.

## 2-G: Mouth of the Earth

**Elevation:** The entrance to the sinkhole is 80 feet above the valley floor. The bottom is 20 feet below ground level.

This area is where the heroes first emerge from the dark labyrinth. A tiny complex of tunnels weaves

through the different levels of the sinkhole, which was once a religious meditative aid. The elves of Phorros Irrendra would walk the path here slowly, multiple times, focusing on the religious iconography carved into the walls. Now it's nothing but another kill zone for Rhuarc's amusement.

This area is described in *Entering Phorros Irrendra*, above. There is no trap here, just a convoluted mess of tunnels where Rhuarc hopes to split up the heroes.

Once the heroes enter the tunnels, Rhuarc maintains a pattern of shooting once and then retreating, trying to always keep at least one bend of the tunnel between him and the heroes except when he's attacking.

## 2-H: Syana's Lair (EL 10)

**Elevation:** Entrance 15 feet below river level.

The former lair of the gold dragon who once protected this wood (and whose bones the heroes might have seen on display earlier in *Tears of the Burning Sky*), this cave is Rhuarc's back-up supply cache. Not only does it provide him a number of vantage points from which to snipe, and a nasty trap, but he has stockpiled food and supplies here, in case he has to pretend he's dead.

To reach the lair, the heroes must dive into the lake in front of the waterfall at the west end of the valley, swim down a 40-foot tunnel, and then ascend a 40-foot vertical chute that is 30 feet wide. This was easy for a gold dragon, and Rhuarc handles it fairly well, but the heroes might have a hard time.

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Above the lip of the chute you find a broad cave, marked with tall, scattered toadstools. Beautiful swirling patterns line the wall, looking to have been carved into the stone by large clawed hands, and amid this artwork are many small caves and ledges. Stone pillars jut upward around the edges of the cavern, though the center is clear.

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The fungus near the entrance is a cluster of shriekers, which helps warn Rhuarc of ambushes if he needs to find some brief rest here. Of course,



that's assuming the heroes don't trigger the trap, which has outlasted its crafter, Syana.

Anyone who steps on the 10-foot area nearest the vertical chute triggers the trap; the safe route into the cavern is to fly or *spider climb* along the wall, avoiding the trapped area.

**Tinder and Flame Trap (CR 10):** magic device; proximity trigger (*alarm*); automatic reset; multiple traps (one *transmute metal to wood* trap and one *fire storm*); spell effect (*transmute metal to wood*, 13th-level druid, all within 40 of the trigger), spell effect (*fire storm*, 13th-level druid, 13d6 damage throughout the entry passage, DC 20 Reflex half); Search DC 32; Disable Device DC 32. Note: This trap is really one CR 8 trap that creates a *fire storm* and a second CR 8 trap that casts *transmute metal to wood*. These effects are independent of each other.

The various tunnels and ledges don't lead much of anywhere, just going back into the central cavern, with just one that leads into the face of the waterfall. Rhuarc uses the ledges as vantage points, and cover, for sniping at the heroes, and attempts to lurk around corners and sneak attack them if they follow him in. He sometimes has his companion appear out of one tunnel just as he enters another, again hoping to confuse the heroes as to where he actually is.

## CONCLUDING ACT TWO

Finally, after a long hunt, the heroes have managed to run Rhuarc down and defeat him. They have retrieved the Torch of the Burning Sky (not to mention the body of Emperor Drakus Coaltongue). They have practically assured the victory of their side in the war.

Or have they? Even a cursory examination of the Torch reveals that while it still radiates an overwhelming magical aura, there's something very, very wrong. *It doesn't work!* Rhuarc, the annoying bastard, has managed to spite them even in death.

The heroes can try to speak with Rhuarc's corpse, use divination magic (the proximity of the Torch and black scimitar makes it easy to divine their recent past), or contact Seaquen in order to find out what happened. If any of them accepts the offer Rhuarc's sword makes, he can speak with Rhuarc and compel him to answer a few questions before his spirit mingles with the countless others the shadowdancer has killed, erasing his individuality.

Even if they do none of these things, a key clue is that Rhuarc's scimitar is missing one of the diamonds in its blade, which indicates a soul has been taken away. You might want to suggest that the heroes not leave the forest just yet, because as soon as they're outside the divination protection provided by its spirits, they'll no doubt have everyone descending upon them. This encourages them to figure out what happened and resolve the damage, which keeps the momentum of the adventure, instead of heading home for a rest.

Eventually, somehow, the heroes find out that Rhuarc took a sliver of the soul that powered the Torch, brought it to the Temple of Echoed Souls, and destroyed it. The master of the temple then consumed the spirit. However, if the heroes were able to defeat the master of the temple and survive its trial, they might be able to recreate the lost soul from its lingering echoes.

Now all they have to do is get there without the many, many people who want the Torch realizing they have it.

## ACT THREE: THE TRIAL

In this act, in order to restore the power of the Torch of the Burning Sky, the heroes explore the Temple of Echoed Souls, whose evil master will turn the psionic temple's powers against them. Some of the dangers they face are intentionally set upon them by the temple's master, but others they bring with them.

This act has a great deal of information important to the plot of later adventures in the campaign saga. We have attempted to present this information as part of the narrative, rather than as exposition. Because of this, some sections of this act possess a great amount of detail. Feel free to excise this if you find it clashing with your gaming style. Likewise, if you are running this adventure as a stand-alone, you can adapt these details to fit revelations in your own campaign, or simply remove them, putting the focus on getting to the temple's master and defeating him.

### MOST WANTED

A lot of people are looking for the heroes and the Torch, and once the heroes leave the forest, as they're nearing the temple, have them each make several Intelligence checks (DC 20) to recognize the numerous scrying sensors watching them. They should realize that it won't be long before their enemies come in force to try to take the Torch back.

The heroes might react to this in many ways, though their two most likely reactions are to hurry and try to get the Torch fixed as quickly as possible (because if they don't, the next time they try to come, there will likely be a whole army camped outside the temple waiting for them), or to return to Seaquen, where they'll be well-defended enough against the few enemies who would be able to teleport in at a given time.

If the heroes don't go to the temple yet, nothing keeps them from going later, though you'll have to change some of the events in the next adventure, *O Wintry Song of Agony*, to adjust for the resistance lacking the power of the Torch. They might not try to fix the Torch until they find Trilla herself to get a legitimate piece of her soul, which can happen in

### THE TEMPLE'S TRIALS

When the temple was in use, there were two main reasons someone would undergo a trial in the temple. One was to reshape your soul, removing elements you didn't like and adopting traits you did. Many students would go into this trial, and would carefully choose who came with them, since it was easiest to adopt traits that your companions possessed. This trial could also be used to create a soul, such as to bring sentience to a construct, or to restore a friend who had been slain by dark magic. It is this trial the heroes will be undergoing.

The other trial was to achieve enlightenment, to learn that one's soul is constantly in flux, a balance between multiple scales of forces in the world around you. Those who passed that trial surrendered their corporeal bodies, and thereafter existed within the temple only to provide wisdom and guidance. The temple's current master, 41, never undertook this second trial.

the tenth adventure, *Sleep Ye Cursed Child*, though between now and then agents of the Ragesians and Shahalesti will be trying to steal the Torch away.

### THE TEMPLE OF ECHOED SOULS

The temple lies along the Shan River, eight miles from Ycengled Phurst. The terrain here consists of cold hills, covered in hard-packed snow and ice. The temple itself is built into the side of a cliff, and aside from the entry room, the meditation rooms, and the final chamber of the master, the temple interior does not really exist.

Beyond the mirror in the front hall, the next three sections of the temple are created as needed, each fulfilling one of the three stages of the temple's trial. A creature who passes through the mirror willingly accepts the temple's power into his mind, allowing those rooms to be as good as real for them.



However, if someone tries to move forward before completing the appropriate part of the trial (such as by traveling ethereally, using *greater teleport*, or other magic), the rest of the temple is effectively solid rock. If a hero manages to get into the final chamber, 4I will be quite irritated.

Similarly, fleeing the temple during the trial is difficult. While it is possible to simply bash your way through the stone between areas 2 and 11, teleportation magic and similar powers used to escape the temple require beating Spell Resistance 31.

The temple reacts when the heroes arrive, and so the following area descriptions include some scripted elements that occur as the heroes travel inside. Some of these may change based on the heroes' actions.

## RUNNING THE TRIAL

When the heroes undergo this trial, they will face challenges in the physical world while intermittently seeing flashes of visions from their pasts, either events they participated in, or events that involved them that they were unaware of. Then later, once 4I starts meddling, some of the visions become dangerously real, and these echoes of the past start to react with a life of their own.

Some of these visions will be drawn from the heroes' lives, while others are reflections of the enemies the heroes are facing. For your player's characters, we suggest general themes to focus on, though you will need to draw on the characters' individual backgrounds to personalize them for your group. The NPC visions are provided in greater detail, though of course if you aren't using this adventure as part of the campaign saga, you'll need to change some things.

When a vision occurs, at least at first, all of the heroes find themselves standing in a perfectly realistic illusion of the event. The vision occurs around them, the figures within the illusion simply re-enacting events that occurred, and so nothing and no one reacts to the heroes' presence. The visions are insubstantial and cannot harm the heroes, and when they end, the images fade around the heroes, and they are left where they were when the vision began.

### LORE AND LEGENDS OF THE TEMPLE OF ECHOED SOULS

Monks of the Temple of Echoed Souls seek to become one with all creatures by learning to experience the lives of others. The order was driven into exile decades ago by one of its own members.

The temple itself was used by monks to reshape their souls, requiring long years of meditation. Sometimes outsiders would come to seek to change themselves. Those who were not wise enough lost their souls and became phantoms. The true masters of the order transcended their mortal bodies, letting their souls persist as echoes within the halls of the temple.

Eight was a highly significant number for the order, representing the four corporeal elements – air, earth, fire, and water – and four ethereal elements – death, life, space, and time. Their belief was that every man's soul could be seen in the interaction of any other eight people, and that no man could achieve transcendence if he did not have eight others who would aid his journey.

The visions serve to highlight the action in the real world, and should be relatively brief, because they somewhat remove control of events from the players, since the visions are intangible and cannot be interacted with. Your goal, then, with these visions is to ensure that every vision provides some motivation to act.

Early visions can reveal elements of character backgrounds that might prompt the rest of the heroes to be helpful or suspicious, especially if the vision reveals a secret. Some of these secrets might even be things the character himself is not aware of, though be careful not to change a character's background in a way the player won't like. For later visions, 4I will cause things to start going crazy, which turns the visions into potential role-playing and combat encounters.

Normally you should only have one vision per character, but if you have a particularly small group, you might want to double up on a few, to give the heroes as much screen time as the villains.

Note that except for the Shahalesti and Ragesian forces who the heroes encounter in Area 14, and 41's actual physical body in Area 15, all of the things the heroes encounter during the trial are semi-real. Creatures who attempt to disbelieve what they see and succeed their Will save (DC 25) treat these creations as only 80% real. They deal less damage, and nondamaging effects only have an 80% chance of working, though the walls of the various rooms are all solid. A successful disbelief works for the current encounter, but the hero must try again once the next encounter starts. (These encounters, in general, are the Trial of the Bell, the Trial of the Offering, the Trial of the Self, and The Final Trial.)

### Area 1 – Front Balcony

Two stone staircases ascend 40 feet up to a large balcony here. Four bells hang alongside each staircase, just out of arm's reach. Proper ritual requires that no more than four people ascend each staircase, and that groups of eight who enter are considered blessed. A Knowledge (religion) check (DC 25) recalls this fact.

The bells begin to ring on their own as the heroes ascend past them, though the number of bells which ring is never greater than the number of people who climb the stairs. (If three went up one side and two another, only three would ring on the one side, and two on the other.) The bells toll until the heroes pull open the front doors, at which point they stop, and the ringing seems to hover over the heroes for a moment.

If four people have ascended the stairs when the doors are opened, those characters gain a +2 bonus on Will saves within the temple. For each additional person, this bonus improves by +1, to a maximum of +6 for a group of eight people. If more than eight have climbed the stairs when the doors are opened, none of them gain the bonus. This bonus lasts for a day, but only while in the temple.

For the purpose of this boon, creatures with an Intelligence of 3 or greater count as "people" as long

as they have a soul. Familiars and similar intelligent bound companions can be considered part of the same person, or a separate, at your discretion. If the heroes have more than eight people with them, they can still gain the bonus if they make sure to open the doors with just eight (perhaps having others fly up to the balcony instead of walking).

### Area 2 – Front Hall

Directly in front of the entrance is a large mirror, which reflects everything in it as if seen through *true seeing*.

As soon as the heroes enter, eight faintly glowing rings appear on the ground, and an aged, brown-skinned man in light burgundy robes appears in the mirror, standing among their reflections. This is the spirit of one of the temple's old masters, Haathon.

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The figure in the mirror speaks slowly, his voice echoing strangely. "I cannot hold his power back for long, but you stand at the edge of peril. The one called 41 controls the temple now, and will destroy you if you enter."

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If the heroes insist on entering, Haathon asks what they have come for, and if they present their goals so they sound worthy, he nods in acceptance.

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"41 is cruel, and will turn his vileness upon you, but the ritual of the trial is older than him, so I and my fellow old masters will ensure you have a chance. You must face the temple's trials. If you pass them, reach 41, and defeat him, you will be able to craft a soul to your desires.

"First is the trial of the bell. Not all dangers can be defeated with physical might.

"Second is the trial of the offering. The sinister and righteous paths await you, and how you best the challenge will determine what awaits you beyond.

"Third and final is the trial of the self. Your past will return to you, and you must find within yourselves that which you seek. Be warned that 41 will attempt to corrupt your past. Your wills must be strong if you are to defeat him.

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### SOUL TAPPING FOR DUMMIES

While advanced soul tapping is represented by various psionic powers (which, for ease of play, we present as spell-like abilities in 41's stat block), the temple allows people to easily draw upon the powers of their companions. To attempt any of these options, you must first be mentally focused. Attaining focus requires a Concentration check (DC 20) as a full-round action. Then choose an ally within line of sight who possesses the power you want to tap, and spend a standard action to make a Will save. Each attempt expends your focus, and you must regain focus before you can try again.

If successful, you gain access to that power, as described below, for one minute. Unless otherwise noted, any ability you gain functions exactly as it would if your ally were using it, so if a feeble mage uses mimic attack to echo the raging two-handed axe-chopping barbarian, his attacks and damage are the same as that person, as he briefly gains the strength, skill, and even weapon of that person.

If you fail, you take 1 point of Wisdom damage. If you fail by 5 or more, you instead take 1d6 points of Wisdom damage.

You can only tap one ability at a time. If you tap another ability, you lose the previous ability.

**Communicate (DC 0).** You can communicate telepathically with your chosen ally for one minute.

**Mimic skill (DC 10).** You can use a single skill your ally possesses with that ally's skill modifier.

**Mimic save (DC 10).** One of your save modifiers becomes equal to that of your ally. If you mimic a Will save, you still suffer penalties to soul-tapping attempts due to previous failed attempts. You also gain evasion or similar abilities related to the chosen saving throw.

**Mimic attack (DC 15).** Choose one attack form your ally is skilled with, such as melee with two weapons, or grappling, or firing a bow. With that combat style you fight as well as your ally.

**Tap spell (DC 15 + spell level).** You can cast a spell or use a spell-like ability an ally possesses. This expends the ally's ability to use that magic, just as if your ally had used it.

**Grant Power (varies).** You can also give an ability you possess to an ally. The DC is the same as it would be to take that power yourself.

**Miscellaneous (varies).** Other options for powers to soul tap are of course available, though these should generally be limited to powers characters possess, and not those of items they have. Use your best judgment to determine an appropriate DC.

"No person exists alone in this world. This is a truth you have only begun to grasp as you travel together. Within this temple, your companions' strength is your own. The temple gives you the power to tap their souls briefly. I suggest you try now and practice, but be warned that using this gift can leave souls entangled, and abusing it can make it impossible to disentangle.

"When you are ready, stand in the circles and face your reflections, then will yourself through the glass, and the trial shall begin. I cannot tell you how to face these trials, but be true to yourselves. Remember, what you bring with you is all that will be present in the trial."

Haathon can briefly instruct the heroes on how to tap each other's souls (see the sidebar), and briefly explain the nature of the temple and what the meditation rooms represent, though he stresses that he doubts they can hold back 41's power for more than a few minutes.

If the heroes linger for too long, 41 overwhelms the old master and comes to taunt the heroes.

The old monk's image in the mirror flickers and fades. The doors to the temple slam shut with a boom, and in the meager light coming through the cracks under the doors, you see a new figure reflected in the mirror. The new figure is that of a strong and muscular male human wearing an expression that reveals him to be violently annoyed, as though he is someone who will commit the basest crime merely to silence the source of his irritation.

"I don't make speeches," he says abruptly, in a grim voice. "You probably expect something dramatic, but I'm just going to kill you. Then your souls – you know those? – I'm going to destroy them, because you're not even interesting enough for me to bother keeping you around to torment. Hurry up! Hurry up and come to your deaths."

The man's image in the mirror vanishes, his confident voice echoing long after he is gone.

### Areas 3 to 10 – Meditation Chambers

These eight rooms each represent one of the elements of the temple's philosophy. Each contains a simple cot for sleeping, a dish for water, and a desk upon which sits some token that represents that element.

**Area 3 – Space.** A folded game mat with a grid on it – akin to the game Go – lies on the desk.

**Area 4 – Death.** An empty clay flower vase sits on the desk.

**Area 5 – Life.** A pomegranate, looking freshly picked, waits on the desk.

**Area 6 – Time.** On the desk sits the bottom half of an hourglass, with no sand in it.

**Area 7 – Earth.** A gold nugget lies on the desk.

**Area 8 – Fire.** A candle sits on the desk, beside flint and steel.

**Area 9 – Water.** Nothing sits on the desk. The token from this room is the dish of water.

**Area 10 – Air.** On the desk sits a recorder.

### BEGINNING THE TRIAL

When the characters are all ready, they must stand in the glowing circles, and once everyone is ready, the trial begins. Normally no more than eight people can go into the trial at once, though if you have a particularly large group, or if there are animal companions and such, they can probably squeeze into the glowing rings as long as they're no larger than Large.

Haathon makes it clear that anyone who does not go with the group will be stuck outside and not be able to follow.

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You face your reflections in the mirror, and then among your companions you sense a unity of purpose. As one, you will the trial to begin. You feel the sensation of traveling without moving, and then the world around you vanishes, replaced with somewhere new, a place and time that you somehow know is long gone. You are standing in a vision of the past.

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### MEDITATION CHAMBER BOONS

**Air.** The hero gains a fly speed of 60 with perfect maneuverability.

**Earth.** The hero gains DR 10/adamantine and sonic resistance 5.

**Fire.** The hero gains fire immunity.

**Water.** The hero gains a +5 bonus on attack rolls, a +5 dodge bonus to AC, and a swim speed equal to his base land speed.

**Space.** The hero can teleport 30 feet as a swift action once per round, but must have line of sight to his destination.

**Time.** The hero's initiative is determined as if he had rolled a 30. He can choose to take a standard action any time he could take an immediate action, but if he does so he cannot take any actions on his next turn, as if he were dazed.

**Life.** The hero gains fast healing 5.

**Death.** As a standard action, the hero can create a 10-foot-radius field, centered on himself, that blocks psionic effects. This is particularly useful in defending against 41's mental attacks.

If the heroes took the time to explore the meditation chambers, and were wise enough to consider the metaphorical import of the temple's elements, they gain useful boons, as listed in the sidebar above. Each of the meditation chambers had one token that represents the appropriate element, and if a character brought that item with him, he gains the appropriate boon for the duration of the trial. The hero becomes aware of that boon as soon as the trial starts.

These boons only last as long as the heroes are in the trial, and cannot be exchanged (though their powers can be mimicked by soul tapping). They are considered supernatural abilities.

### List of Visions

Of this list, “The Fellowship” needs to occur. The others can be used or discarded as you choose. If you plan to use one type more than once, it is easiest to reuse “The Shadow” and “The Child.”

**The Fear.** Vision of a hero’s past in which he is frightened, fleeing from danger. An example would be the surging crowds in Gate Pass the night the war began. The vision reveals something about the nature of what caused the fear, such as revealing that the creature flying over the streets of Gate Pass provoking the panic was a huge red dragon, its face scarred with a flame design.

**The Child.** A vision of one of the heroes in his childhood, revealing some element of his family or youth he had forgotten, such as an encounter with something magical that explains a mysterious power he possesses.

**The Fellowship.** A vision of the heroes as a group, working together, or of them failing to work together. This vision occurs just as the enemy group is entering the temple, and the vision cuts to reveal them approaching, to show contrast (hopefully) between the heroes’ unity and the disunity of the enemies.

**The Shadow.** Vision of a hero’s past where he acts against his perceived nature, or where he confronts someone who is his dark opposite. An example would be a hero seeing a hint that Katrina is a traitor. The vision should preferably reveal something that the hero was hiding from the rest of his companions.

**The Self.** A vision of the hero coming into his own, perhaps a coming of age ceremony, or being recognized as a hero. An example might be a mage being recognized as a master spellduelist at Lyceum, or a warrior defeating a symbolic representation of his father. However, the vision also reveals some consequence of whatever led to the hero’s victory – an ally of the foe plotting revenge, or a rival growing jealous – to show that by becoming an individual, the hero has accepted a life more complicated than before.

Alternately, the vision might occur later, when the visions can be interacted with, giving

the hero a chance to face someone he never resolved his issues with. For example, a mage who studied with Gabal in Gate Pass might be able to witness the archmage’s power, and show off some of his own, earning Gabal’s approval.

**The Battle.** A vision of one of the heroes in a battle. This scene reveals little if anything, but serves as a backdrop for the battle between the heroes and the group of Ragesians and Shahalesti in Area 14, The Trial of the Self. While the heroes face their current foes, earlier versions of themselves fight other enemies from the past.

**The Mother.** A vision of a wounded hero, physically or emotionally, being tended by a nurturing figure. Preferably the “mother” should say something pithy and wise that means one thing in context, but also comes across as valuable advice to some problem the hero currently has.

The following visions occur once the enemies enter the temple. A suggested order is included in the description of the temple. If you are not using this adventure as part of the campaign saga, you’ll need to change these to fit your own setting.

**Katrina the Spy.** The heroes see proof that Katrina was closely associated with Leska.

**The Indomitable One.** The heroes witness the capture of Indomitability, a trillith from the Fire Forest (see adventure two, *The Indomitable Fire Forest of Innenotdar*). The fey Song of Forms becomes a liability for the heroes.

**The Fall of the Taranesti.** In this vision, Taranesti armies battle the Shahalesti.

**Warriors of the Fourth Army.** This vision shows Ursus, the druid inquisitor, leading a battle into a Shahalesti city.

**The Scourge.** The heroes see the inquisitor Etienne discussing the Scourge Prison, which provides the hook for the next adventure, *O Wintry Song of Agony*.

**Shaaladel’s Purge.** Here the heroes see Shaaladel and one of his lieutenants discussing the genocide against the Taranesti.

**Shalosh, daughter of Shaaladel.** The heroes witness the Lord of the Shahalesti being a gentle father and a noble leader.

**The Torch.** Another battle, with warriors standing at the side of Coaltongue as they defeat Syana the gold dragon and provoke the creation of the Torch of the Burning Sky.

**The Aquiline Heart.** The heroes witness a young Leska returning to her emperor, announcing that she has found the Aquiline Heart, secret of immortality.

### Area 11 – Trial of the Bell (EL 12)

The heroes first witness a vision of The Fear (detailed above), and near the end, the sound of a bell overlaps the sounds of the vision. The vision ends suddenly, and the heroes are in a long hallway with a vaulted ceiling, and mirrors on three walls. They are all clustered in the three squares adjacent to the west wall, and above them hangs a bell, 15 feet up. The east end of the hall looks like it has been bricked up, with a keyhole in its center. (This wall hides the doors shown on the map.)

The vaulted ceiling acts as an echo chamber, but is amplifying the sound much more than it should. Any creature that whispers takes 1 point of sonic damage each round it speaks as its words rebound on it. Speaking with a normal voice deals 1d6 damage to the speaker and 1 point of damage to everyone adjacent, and shouting deals 4d6 damage to the speaker and 1d6 to anyone adjacent. Even moving is dangerous; creatures must make a Move Silently check for each move or standard action they take. If the check beats DC 20 the creature takes no damage. If it beats DC 10 the creature takes damage as if it whispered. If the check fails DC 10, the creature takes damage as if it spoke.

If the heroes look, a Search check (DC 30) finds a small shattered gem on the floor, similar to one in Rhuarc's black scimitar.

**The Two Paths:** Opening the lock on the east wall requires an Open Lock check (DC 30), which causes the wall to silently split apart and slide into the wall. Alternately, the wall can be broken (hardness 8, 60 hp). Beyond the wall are two oval mirrors. The left is tinted blue, and the right is tinted red, and a message is carved in the wall between them.

**SPEAK YOUR NAME AND BE DIVIDED  
TO PATHS SINISTER AND RIGHTEOUS.  
A SACRIFICE OF BLOOD  
IS THE KEY TO YOUR SALVATION.**

Speaking your name transforms one of the mirrors into a glowing portal. Only one portal can be open at a time, and only the person who opened it can pass through. Once he does, it closes. If a hero has one of the boons gained from bringing an elemental token, the portal opens on a specific side. Otherwise, the portals alternate so that an equal number of people end up in each of the two following rooms.

The first portal that opens is the left one, the "sinister path," which is keyed to the elements of air, life, time, and water. The right portal leads to the "righteous path," keyed to the elements of death, earth, fire, and space.

**Bell Trap (CR 12).** Unfortunately, the floor directly in front of the brick wall is a pressure plate, which triggers the bell at the other end of the hall to ring. A Search check (DC 20) locates this, and a Disable Device check (DC 25) disables it.

If the bell rings, it tolls once per round, its sound echoing and shaking the hall. At the start of the first round it does 1d6 points of sonic damage. This damage doubles each round (2d6, 4d6, 8d6, and finally 16d6). Casting a spell requires a Concentration check (DC 10 + half damage dealt that round + spell level). Once the bell's damage reaches 2d6, the mirrored walls begin to crack, and once it reaches 8d6, the stone wall with the keyhole shatters, revealing the mirrors beyond. These mirrors are immune to shattering.

If the heroes are not careful, they will trigger the bell, and then have to race to open the lock or shatter the wall so they can pass through the portals. And once they do, the temple forces the group to split up.

### Areas 12 & 13 – Trial of the Offering

When the heroes enter these areas, they witness a vision of The Child (detailed above). When the vision fades, the heroes are standing near each other, but the two groups see two dramatically different scenes.

Those forced down the sinister path find themselves in the eye of a storm, a circular wall of rain surrounding them, forming the boundary of the room that is as solid as stone. The ground is flooded ankle-deep with water, and floating 20 feet overhead is a blue orb that contains a willow tree, a single glob of amber gleaming on its trunk. Standing beneath the willow is a ghaele, the same celestial being whom the heroes encountered in the Fire Forest. She is confused to be here. On the east end of the room, undisturbed by the wind and surf, is another mirror, with a space in its frame just the same size as the piece of amber.

In the righteous path, the heroes find themselves standing on a rocky platform above a cracked ground that seethes with fire, surrounded by walls of stone. Huge pillars of stone spiral upward around the room, starting at 2 feet high, increasing by another 2 feet with each consecutive pillar, so that the final pillar is 18 feet above the ground. In the center of the floor is the top hemisphere of a red orb, within which lies a silver sword. On the east wall is a mirror, with a piece missing that is the exact shape of the sword. Twenty feet overhead floats a misshapen creature, resembling a mass of arms, legs, and faces, which is moaning in a hideously beautiful chorus.

These two areas are linked. Each room has a mirror which becomes a portal when the proper item is placed in the mirror – the piece of amber for the sinister path, the sword for the righteous path. However, acquiring either of these items requires a sacrifice, since only the death of an intelligent creature can open the barrier that holds the necessary item.

The names of the paths refer to what is expected in each. The sinister path confronts the heroes with a noble being as their prospective sacrifice, while the righteous path confronts them with a monster, which few would have qualms with killing. However, each room's trial can be defeated either by killing the creature, or by a hero willingly sacrificing himself to save the creature from death.

Though the events in the two rooms are separate, a portion of each room overlaps the other. In the overlapping portion, heroes can see their allies in the other room, and if two heroes touch each other, they exchange which room they are in. A given creature

can only switch rooms once per round. Area effects in one room do not cross over to the other room, and neither the ghaele nor the monstrous chorus can see creatures in the other room.

To run this encounter, we suggest you draw the two areas next to each other, so that it is easy to tell where a space in one room correlates with the other.

### **Area 12 – Sinister Path (EL 13)**

This room quickly floods, the water deepening by 2 feet per round, though it is fairly calm and easy to swim in (Swim DC 10). The ghaele is not willing to let itself be sacrificed for the heroes' ambitions, and will fight to defend itself if the heroes try. It takes to the air, swooping around the globe encasing the willow to keep cover as it uses its spell-like abilities.

**Ghaele (CR 13).** 65 hp, MM.

If the heroes kill the ghaele, the globe around the willow shatters, and the heroes can recover the piece of amber (assuming they can get to it). Alternately, one of the heroes can choose to willingly kill himself, which likewise shatters the orb. When the amber is placed in the appropriate spot on the mirror's frame, the mirror transforms into a portal to Area 14.

Once both the portal here and in Area 13 are opened, any creature who willingly sacrificed himself is returned to life by *true resurrection*.

### **Area 13 – Righteous Path (EL 13)**

This room's floor is on fire, and in the center is a hemispherical globe, beneath which is the silver sword the heroes need to open the portal on the far wall. Moving through the flaming ground deals 2d6 points of fire damage each round.

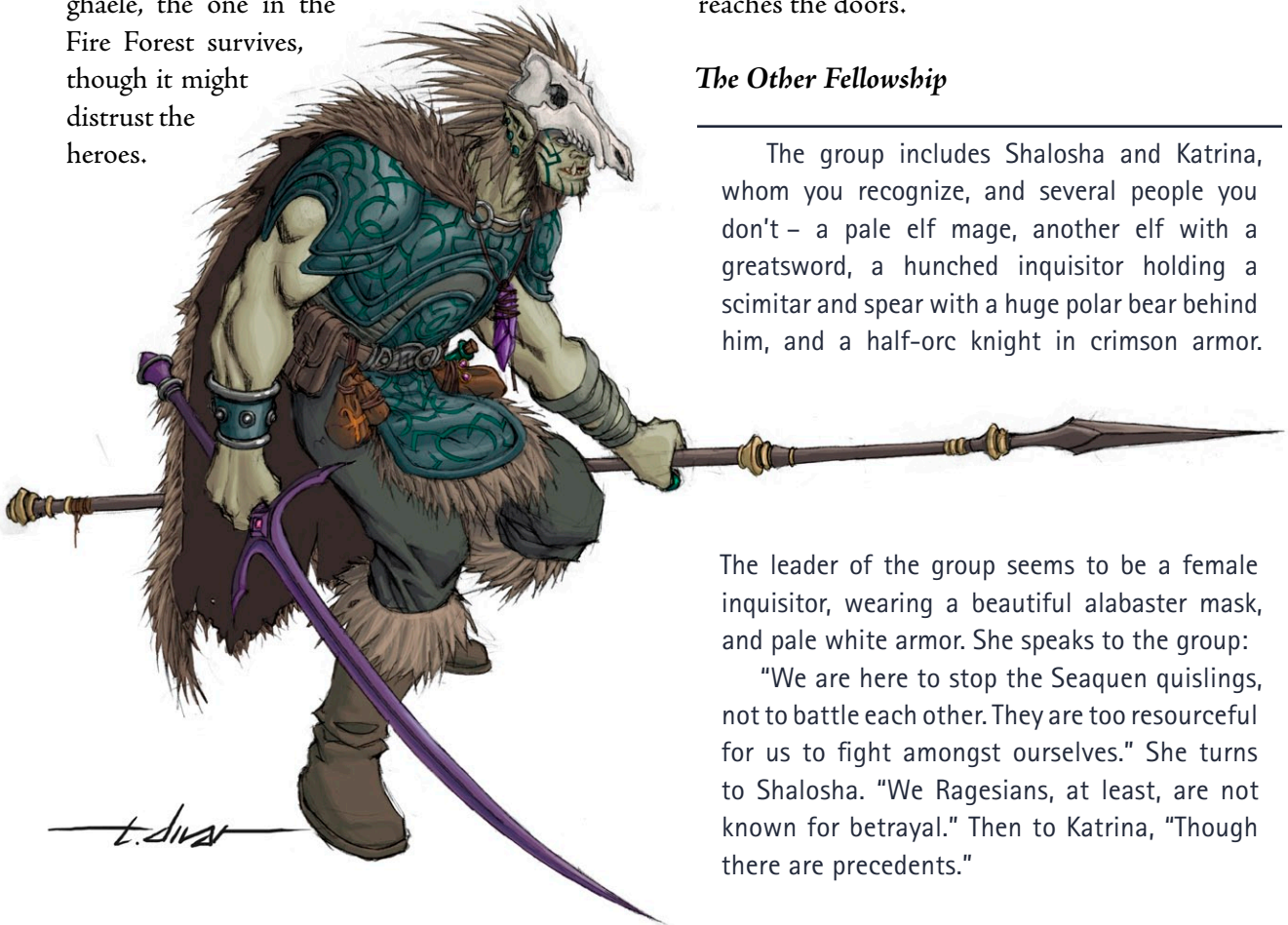
The heroes will likely need to climb up the spiraling pillars to reach their foe. This horrible creature was once a group of adventurers who delved into the temple and failed the trial. Their souls and bodies were fused together and bound within the temple. Now they simply serve as a guardian, barely able to understand their wretched condition. It attacks aggressively.

The Chorus (CR 13). 133 hp.

As with the sinister path, the globe dissolves once the chorus is killed, or once a hero willingly sacrifices himself, and a creature who sacrifices himself is restored by *true resurrection* when both portals are opened.

**Choices and Consequences:** If the portal is opened after slaying the creature in that room, each creature who passes through that portal gains the ability to use *slay living* as a spell-like ability (caster level 11th, Fort DC 17) one time before the end of the trial. If the portal is opened after a hero sacrifices himself, those who pass through that portal can use *heal* as a spell-like ability (caster level 11th) one time before the end of the trial, and the creature guarding that room becomes loyal, following and aiding through the rest of the temple.

These creatures are merely echoes of real beings, so if the heroes slay the ghaele, the one in the Fire Forest survives, though it might distrust the heroes.



### Area 14 – Trial of the Self (EL 18)

When the heroes first step into this room, it is simply a huge, spare chamber, 40 feet high, 40 feet long, and 65 feet wide. The portcullis on the map does not exist yet. This room is where the heroes' pasts will be brought to confront them, starting slowly, but quickly growing more and more chaotic when the Ragesians and Shahalesti enter.

The heroes will face enemies here, but the environment will change every few rounds. Despite the backdrop for the battle, the dimensions of the fight are always limited to the same area, filling the size of this room. These borders are as solid as stone, and the images that lie beyond them are just illusions.

After a moment of standing in the open room, the heroes witness a vision of The Fellowship. After witnessing a moment of teamwork (or failed teamwork) from their own past, the vision flickers to the front of the temple as the enemy group reaches the doors.

### The Other Fellowship

The group includes Shaloshia and Katrina, whom you recognize, and several people you don't – a pale elf mage, another elf with a greatsword, a hunched inquisitor holding a scimitar and spear with a huge polar bear behind him, and a half-orc knight in crimson armor.

The leader of the group seems to be a female inquisitor, wearing a beautiful alabaster mask, and pale white armor. She speaks to the group:

"We are here to stop the Seaquen quislings, not to battle each other. They are too resourceful for us to fight amongst ourselves." She turns to Shaloshia. "We Ragesians, at least, are not known for betrayal." Then to Katrina, "Though there are precedents."

She turns to the doors and says, "I shall guide us, for my eyes can pierce the illusions of this temple."

The pale elf mage sneers. "Don't overestimate yourself."

The female inquisitor says nothing in reply. She nods to the red knight, and the man steps forward to open the doors.

- 
- Etienne, inquisitor (CR 13). 88 hp.
  - Karedan, the Red Knight of Ragesia (CR 12). 95 hp.
  - Katrina, traitorous fire mage (CR 13). 74 hp.
  - Nahrem, Shahalesti necromancer (CR 12). 42 hp.
  - Skeletal Minion (CR n/a). 78 hp.
  - Rihalles, Solei Palancis dreadnought (CR 12). 73 hp.
  - Shaloshia, Shahalesti princess (CR 14). 61 hp (74 hp w/temporary hit points).
  - Ursus, druidic inquisitor (CR 12). 119 hp.

These enemies have a +5 bonus to their Will saves while in the temple, because they came in a group of seven, and most of them have used some manner of buffing spell or magic items, detailed in their stat blocks. If the heroes have previously killed off any of these NPCs, try to replace them with someone thematically similar, though with a lower power level.

This combat can be difficult to run because it involves seven unique NPCs, and because the combat environment will be rapidly changing, so we have tried to provide simple and straightforward round-by-round tactics for each of them. However, the scene should be quite memorable.

Eventually these enemies will reach the heroes, but not quite yet. First, the temple has some challenges of its own for them.

## FACING THE PAST

While the Ragesians and Shahalesti make their way through the temple, the heroes are caught up in more visions of their past, some of them overlapping with visions from their enemies.

First, they witness a vision of The Shadow (detailed above). When this vision ends, the world shifts to become a grand ballroom, with a giant

### THE MOTHER VISION

This series of encounters can be very dangerous, and the heroes have little chance to rest once they begin the trial. If you want to avoid a potential Total Party Kill, the nature of the temple gives you a viable out that doesn't smack too much of *deus ex machina*.

Whenever the heroes seem close to defeat, the action is interrupted and the world suddenly goes black. This vision involves only the heroes, and is hidden from the Ragesians and Shahalesti, as well as from 41. The heroes can see each other, and they also see a moment from the past when one of them is being tended to by a gentle, motherly figure, after the young hero was injured or when he was facing a difficult challenge. The scene is quiet and subdued, passing in a moment, just long enough for the heroes to catch their breaths.

The vision fades out, and all of the heroes are restored to full health and have limited-use abilities (such as spells) restored to their condition when the heroes entered the temple. The action then continues where it left off.

Only use this option if you think the players will accept it. If your group would balk, it's better to have the heroes be defeated and survive through their own wits instead. If you do use it, however, it should be a dramatic turning point. Hopefully the heroes won't end up losing afterward....

gilded window facing outward to a moonlit lake. The heroes are now witnessing Emperor Coaltongue's midsummer ball from three years ago, taking place in the Ragesian Imperial Palace.

### Katrina the Spy

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The hall is filled with hundreds of the most powerful and wealthy people in the world, dressed to celebrate the midsummer festival. Elvish warlords trade stories with an international cavalcade of noblemen, while Wayfarers tumble

and blink their way through the room, sending up smatterings of applause.

One end of the room is dominated by a huge gilded window that looks out upon a moonlit lake. Standing before this vista is a huge crowd, and in its center stands Emperor Coaltongue, smiling as he regales his audience with an amusing battle anecdote from his early years as a soldier, of how he got the scar across his face. The group laughs at the story's conclusion, and amid the crowd you recognize Shalocha, the princess of the Shahalesti. She stands beside an older elf with a severe face, who by the respect given him must be Lord Shaaladel.

A woman in a conservative red ballroom dress comes up to the emperor's side, and it takes you a moment to recognize this as Katrina, looking far more humble than you've ever seen her. She moves beside the emperor, and when Coaltongue sees her his smile falters.

"Your mistress sent you to ruin my party?" he asks. "Have Leska tell Guthwulf he can take longer if he'd like. I know he enjoys it so much.

Katrina shakes her head. "The Supreme Inquisitor actually sent me to ask for Lord Shaaladel's presence. He... pardon, the Lord of the Shining Land apparently missed an appointment."

Shaaladel seems to pale, and Coaltongue looks to him in curiosity.

"Are you two squabbling again?" asks the emperor. His sigh is like the growl of a dragon. "I was hoping she wouldn't bother us tonight. Go talk to her before she decides to come to the party. We're trying to have fun, and I would hate to see Leska so completely out of her element."

The room grows suddenly quiet, and the Emperor turns to glare in your direction. For a moment you think he's seen you, but then a woman glides through you, part of the illusion. She wears a dark red robe and a bleak skull mask, capped with an elaborate head-dress of feathers and primitive tribal charms. The crowd quickly parts as she moves toward the emperor. This is Leska, majestic and imposing. Even in a vision, her presence is chilling.

"Attend to your advisor, Shaaladel," she says.

The elvish ruler's eyes widen in shock, and then he quickly excuses himself, striding to the doors out of the hall. Leska's eyes are cold, but a dark smile curves her lips.

"The music, please, my emperor," she says. "Do not for me deny yourself your 'fun.' The summer is so precious, these long years."

Leska turns to leave, and Coaltongue quickly snaps to the musicians to start playing again. Dance music fills the room as Leska nears the exit. Just then the doors open with a boom as seven people and a white bear burst into the room. Your enemies have arrived.

---

The battle with the Ragesians and Shahalesti begins right as the ballroom's occupants pair up to dance. The dancers are incorporeal and do not react to the heroes or their enemies – not yet, at least. After two rounds of combat, the world shifts.

### **The Indomitable One**

The strings of the ballroom music change to the aural symphony of the fey song of the Fire Forest, and in the middle of the battle, the dancers look around, reacting to the presence of the heroes and their enemies. Only a moment later, though, they dissolve, and the grand hall is replaced with the towering trees of the Fire Forest, surrounding the bank of Lake Seela. The room becomes stifflingly hot, and the trees become actual physical obstacles, for the fey song has given flesh to the intangible.

From the tree line bursts a flaming stag, swinging its fiery antlers at an elvish warrior woman with a wooden greatsword, the legendary Anyariel. The heroes are witnessing the battle in which the elvish champion defeated the trillith Indomitability and bound it to the bottom of Lake Seela.

After another two rounds of combat, the scene shifts again.

### **The Fall of the Taranesti**

The song of the fey continues to float in the air, but now the heroes are at a different forest, Ycengled Phurst of decades ago, and they are in the midst



of a huge battle. Shahalesti arcane warriors clash with Taranesti skirmishers on the side of a hill covered with dark trees. Leading the Shahalesti is Rihalles, the Solei Palancis dreadnought currently fighting them. Beside him is a slender, dark-haired elf woman. While the battle persists, the illusions of the various soldiers are solid and react to the heroes; only a few attack them, though they're not skilled enough to be a threat.

Illusory elf warriors (8, CR 2). 15 hp.

At the end of the first round of the vision, the dark-haired woman raises her hands, and a wave of dust bursts outward from her, disintegrating the forest and many of the Taranesti. Everyone needs to make a Fortitude save (DC 20), or else the dust deals 5d6 points of damage as it partially disintegrates them.

When the dust clears, the vision has changed again, partially. The battle in Ycengled persists in one half of the room, while the other is witness to another scene. From this point on, each half of the room changes every other round, staggered so one is changing at the end of each round.

### Warriors of the Fourth Army

Half the room shifts to a huge assault upon a Shahalesti city, buildings springing up throughout the room, and dozens of troops filling nearly every empty space. If the fight is still going on this long, use the layout of this area to divide the two sides if possible – perhaps putting the heroes inside a building while their enemies are trapped in the streets – giving each side a chance to regroup. In the vision, Ursus calls down a *flame strike* upon an archery nest of Shahalesti soldiers, while his polar bear companion tears through soldiers in the streets.

Illusory orc warriors (8, CR 2). 16 hp.

The heroes might miss it if they are busy, but once Ursus has defeated his immediate foes, a woman in black monk robes glides down from the night sky and nods to the inquisitor. This woman is a monk of the east wind, agent of the air mage Pilus whom the

heroes encountered in adventure five, *Mission to the Monastery of Two Winds*.

She is alerting Ursus that a group from Seaquen is headed to Ycengled, and that he should make sure he is part of the group that goes to stop them. Ursus nods at this, and then the vision ends.

### The Battle

The other part of the room shifts to be a battle from one of the heroes' pasts. The enemies here might join into the battle, and weaker versions of the heroes might briefly aid their current selves.

### The Scourge

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A part of the chaotic battle calms suddenly, revealing a dark room where Etienne the inquisitor is braiding the hair of what must be Leska. The supreme inquisitor's face lies in shadow, but her mask and head-dress sit on a nearby table.

"The progress of this foot war wearies me," Leska says. "Pray, raise my spirits, Etienne."

"My mistress," Etienne says, "Kreven sends word that he now has his six hundred souls to torture, so the Scourge will be ready within a month. Soon, we will no longer need to seek the Torch."

"Yet she who trusts the sun can still be burned," Leska says. "And I feel heat upon my neck this night."

The vision fades.

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### Shaaladel's Purge

Half of the room cuts to the outskirts of Ycengled in the aftermath of the Shahalesti crusade. Shaaladel stands beside the necromancer Nahrem, directing the chaining of a Taranesti prisoner to the side of a tree. A Shahalesti scout notices the heroes' battle, and weak Shahalesti soldiers move to defend the elvish lord, who activates an amulet to teleport himself away. The older version of Nahrem might have some spells to harass the heroes briefly.

Illusory elf warriors (8, CR 2). 15 hp.

## The Self

Now an eye of calm appears around one of the heroes as he is presented with some part of his past that either represents his coming of age, or gives him a chance to face a rival. This small area, just 20 feet in diameter, persists as long as you deem it interesting, then fades away.

## Shalosh, Daughter of Shaaladel

Meanwhile, part of the room shifts to an illusion that is as intangible as the early ones. Here, Shalosh tells her father Shaaladel about her concerns that the war will tear their people apart. Her father responds that they may have to do terrible things to ensure the safety of their nation, and that he would die to protect his beloved daughter. She promises to act with honor on her mission to Seaquen. Then the vision ends.

## The Torch

In this vision, a much younger Coaltongue and a small horde of orcs battle the gold dragon Syana at the edge of a waterfall. A young gold dragon, Trilla, is chained and guarded, and one of the guards is Karedan, wearing a red tunic the same color as his current armor. A group of allies fighting with Syana are aided by a trumpet archon, while a bone devil fights at Coaltongue's side.

Illusory orc warriors (17, CR 2). 16 hp.

While orcs swarm toward the strange threat posed by the heroes and their rivals, the Coaltongue of the vision has his axe sundered by someone who can be recognized as a much younger Rhurac, wielding his signature black scimitar.

The trumpet archon cuts down the bone devil, and a desperate Coaltongue boots Rhurac into the river so that he eventually tumbles over the waterfall. Then the half-orc warlord rips out the femur of the bone devil just in time to parry a killing blow from the trumpet archon. He grabs the archon by its neck and drives it to the ground, then caves in its skull with the bone club.

The club begins to glimmer with fire as Coaltongue stands and orders his men to all fire at

Syana, who is wheeling in the air for a strafing pass. Hundreds of arrows rise into the sky, blotting out the sun, but Syana breathes a gout of fire that ignites them, filling the sky with a rain of cinders. Unfazed, Coaltongue stalks over to the panicking young Trilla, plants his heel on her neck, and holds the newborn Torch high, threatening to kill the child if her mother does not relent.

But Syana draws in a breath, and fire engulfs the warlord as he brings down the Torch in spite. The blow connects with Trilla's jaw, and then flame consumes all. The vision ends abruptly, the song of the fey fades, and the room is left dark.

## The Final Trial (EL 18)

Light reenters the room, dimly illuminating even its farthest corners, and revealing a bronze portcullis in the east wall.

Right where Trilla lay, a small gem gleams on the ground, a sliver of diamond holding a fragment of the dragon's soul, created anew. If any enemies survive, they all try to get the gem, sensing its import. Most likely the battle will have ended well before this, and the heroes will be able to claim the reward for surviving this trial.

When the heroes pick up the gem, they feel a presence within it, and get the mental image of a child sleeping. Then before the heroes can start wondering if they have won, the portcullis rises, and 41 enters the room.

"So you have what you came for," he says. "Intriguing, but you don't know what to do with it." He cocks his head with a smile. "Too bad." His forearms transform into bear claws, and he attacks.

41's projection (CR 18). 127 hp.

The heroes now have the soul they sought to create, but getting it into the Torch where it needs to be requires applying the teachings of the temple. A hero must attempt to tap the soul in the gem (Will DC 15), and then grant that same power to the Torch (Will DC 15). Each attempt is a standard action, and requires the hero to attain focus each time (Concentration DC 20 as a full-round action).

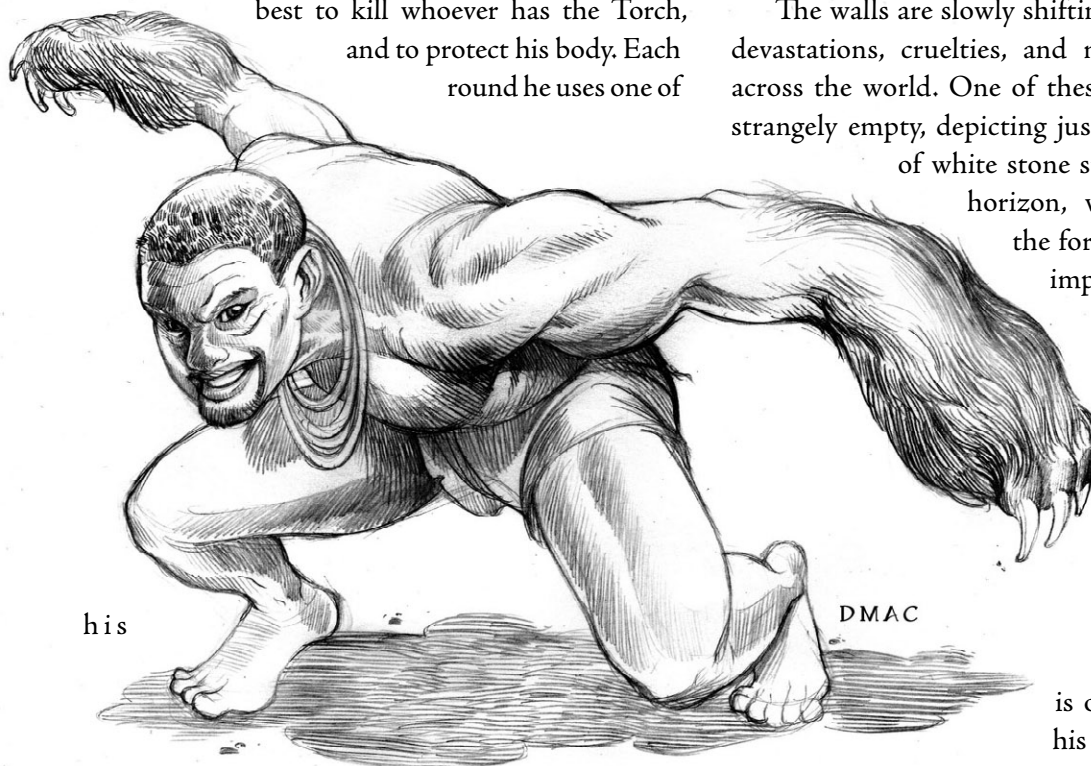
If a hero is successful, the gem's light dims, but the Torch's flame flickers to life.

See Appendix Three for details of the powers available to the Torch in this slightly weakened state. The hero who fixes the Torch is fully aware of the powers of the Torch, and may choose to gain control of it if he wishes.

**Tactics:** Fighting 4I is more of a puzzle than a test of arms. What the heroes face is not the monk's real body. If the heroes try to disbelieve what they see, they realize that his body is but a projection, semi-real like everything else here. Killing this projection is impossible. The heroes have to either kill 4I's real body, or consume 4I's spirit with the power of the Torch.

Until the heroes figure out what to do, 4I toys with them, clawing at them and making them recall past agonies. If after two rounds the heroes haven't figured out that their attacks aren't effective, you can have an image of Haathon appear near the portcullis just long enough to beckon the heroes to go down the hallway.

When the heroes get wise to where 4I really is, or when they start swinging the Torch at him, he changes tactics dramatically, and does his best to kill whoever has the Torch, and to protect his body. Each round he uses one of



his

DMAC

### OVER TOO SOON?

What if the heroes easily wipe the floor with the Ragesian and Shahalesti agents? It's certainly a possibility, and is almost a certainty if they can get Katrina on their side. In this case, simply watching the visions or fighting the few monks in the visions, who would normally be little threat, is not satisfying. Instead of having the heroes sit around and wait for the visions to finish, you can just have 4I appear, and have the visions continue as 4I provides the climactic battle.

four favored attacks – *psychic crush*, *recall agony*, *telekinetic maneuver*, and *ultrablast* – until he is out of powers.

### Area 15 – Master's Lair

This room is dominated by a 20-foot-tall gold shrine, and the 30-foot-high ceiling is one massive mirror. The shrine is a simple pointed roof supported by four wooden pillars (hardness 4, 20 hp), and beneath the roof of the shrine are racks of aged scrolls on the nature of evil.

The walls are slowly shifting murals of various devastations, cruelties, and massacres going on across the world. One of these walls, however, is strangely empty, depicting just a cracked expanse of white stone stretching out to the horizon, with a sinkhole in the foreground. Its scale is impossible to judge.

4I watches these images from his vantage point on the top of the shrine's roof.

4I's body  
(CR n/a). 1 hp.

The temple's master is old beyond his years, his body withered and

### WHAT IF THEY LOSE?

If the heroes are defeated in battle, they might still have a chance for victory. The surviving enemies have to face 41, and the old masters of the temple might aid the heroes briefly, healing them and guiding them toward 41's vulnerable physical body.

Alternately, the heroes could be captured, and the Torch seized (but not repaired). The next adventure just happens to be centered on a deadly prison, so you could start that adventures with the heroes imprisoned, having to engineer a prison break.

helpless, but with the temple his mind can still influence the physical world. 41's physical body can easily be coup de graced, and any attack that deals 11 points of damage to him kills him. While getting up to him might be difficult, if two of the legs of the shrine are destroyed, the roof collapses, and the fall itself will nearly kill the feeble monk.

Alternately, if 41's projected body is reduced below 0 hit points when the Torch is repaired, the Torch consumes the monk's soul. The body of 41 spasms and cries out one brief retort, then goes limp and rolls off the roof of the shrine, cracking unceremoniously on the temple ground. Regardless of how 41 is defeated, the Torch's flames flicker with renewed power, and if the heroes want, they can *greater teleport* wherever they want, though they might want to wait to loot or resolve loose ends.

Perhaps a strong-willed hero might briefly bend the temple to his will to divine the answer to some mystery; or a hero who seeks a change within himself can now accomplish it.

If the heroes want to walk out, the next doorway they pass through takes them through the mirror back into the front hall.

**Treasure:** The scrolls under the pagoda, though unwieldy to carry, function as the lesser artifact, *book of vile darkness*.

**Aftermath:** Whenever the heroes leave the temple, be it by teleportation or traditional means, one final vision appears in their mind's eye. They see again the rift in the white stone from the wall in 41's chamber, and then the image fades to Emperor Coaltongue sitting upon his throne, looking down at what must be a younger Leska. Her face is still hidden under a mask, but she is prostrated before the Ragesian ruler.

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"My emperor," she says, "my quest is now complete. This last lost secret finally is ours. Immortality, my lord. The Aquiline Heart."

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### CONCLUDING THE ADVENTURE

The heroes have the Torch of the Burning Sky, and they have learned clues to mysteries that will drive the campaign's conclusion. There are many ways they could resolve the rest of the campaign saga, but numerous threats still remain. Leska has prepared some powerful magic, the Scourge, and the final visions claims that she has found the secret of immortality.

The heroes may have made new allies, however. By defeating 41, they have freed Ycengled from its curse. The heroes have earned the favor of the surviving Taranesti – a powerful cadre of high-level barbarians, druids, and rangers – or, if you're interested in a nod to *The Lord of the Rings*, they could gain the ability to call on an army of Taranesti spirits. The former is better if the heroes are already winning, while the latter can help turn the tide if the resistance has not been doing well to this point.

If the heroes fail here, the Torch falls into the hands of their enemies, though who among the Ragesians and Shahalesti claims it can make a huge difference. The range of potential outcomes goes far beyond the scope of this adventure.

Even if the heroes do win, though, the battle is not over yet. Powerful though the Torch is, it is not now strong enough to win the war itself. That task is up to the heroes.

# APPENDIX ONE: ENEMIES AND ALLIES

Items marked with an asterisk are detailed in Appendix Two: New Feats and Magic.

## ACT ONE ENCOUNTERS

### Malhûn, the Blood Wolf CR 10

Advanced heartsblood vampire worg paladin of slaughter  
(UA) 8

CE Medium undead (augmented magical beast)

Init +9; Senses darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision, scent;  
Listen +6, Spot +6

Aura debilitating aura (10 ft. radius)

Languages Elf

AC 28, touch 15, flat-footed 23 (+5 Dex, +8 natural, +5  
armor); Dodge

hp 119 (14 HD), DR 10/silver and magic, fast healing 5

Immune undead immunities

Resist turn resistance +4, cold 10, electricity 10

Fort +10, Ref +13, Will +12

Speed 50 ft. (10 squares), climb 20 ft.

Melee bite +17/+12/+7 (1d6+10)

Base Atk +11; Grp +22

Atk Options blood drinking, cause disease, combat  
reflexes, power attack, reckless offense, smite good  
(2/day, +2 attack, +8 damage), trip

Special Actions alternate form

Spells (caster level 4th)

2nd – *eagle's splendor*

1st – *corrupt weapon, magic weapon*

Abilities Str 24, Dex 20, Con —, Int 8, Wis 16, Cha 14

SQ undead traits, unholy toughness, vampire weaknesses

Feats Alertness, Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Improved  
Grapple, Lightning Reflexes, Power Attack, Reckless  
Offense, Track, Weapon Focus (bite)

Skills Hide +14, Intimidate +10, Listen +14, Move  
Silently +16, Spot +14, Survival +3.

\* Malhûn has a +4 racial bonus on Survival checks  
when tracking by scent.

Possessions +1 mithral shirt barding

Alternate Form (Su): Malhûn can assume the form of a  
swarm of vipers (as a centipede swarm, except poison  
does Con damage) or a large viper as a standard action.  
Once per year on the winter solstice it can assume the  
form of a feral male elf, but reverts to normal at sunrise.

If Malhûn is reduced to 0 hit points, he is not  
destroyed. Instead he collapses into a swarm of vipers  
and attempts to escape by burrowing into the ground.  
While in this form, it cannot attack and further  
damage has no effect, though if a bird manages to  
catch one of the serpents and devour it, Malhûn is  
destroyed. As long as it can reach shadowed soil  
within 2 hours, however, it will begin to heal.

**Blood Drinking (Ex):** Malhûn can suck blood from a  
living victim with its fangs by making a successful  
grapple check. If it pins the foe, it drains blood, dealing  
1d4 points of Constitution damage each round the pin  
is maintained. On each such successful attack, Malhûn  
gains 5 temporary hit points.

**Cause Disease (Sp):** Malhûn can use *contagion* once per  
week.

**Death Touch (Su):** Malhûn can inflict wounds with  
its touch, dealing 12 damage, divided as he chooses  
throughout the day.

**Debilitating Aura (Su):** All enemies within 10 ft. take a  
–1 penalty to their AC.

**Reckless Offense (Ex):** Malhûn can take a –4 penalty to  
AC to gain a +2 bonus to his attacks for one round.

**Trip (Ex):** When Malhûn hits with a bite attack, it can  
attempt to trip the opponent (+7 check modifier)  
as a free action without making a touch attack or  
provoking an attack of opportunity. If the attempt fails,  
the opponent cannot react to trip Malhûn.

**Unholy Toughness:** Malhûn adds its Charisma modifier ×  
HD to its hit points. He gains this ability instead of the  
standard paladin mount.

**Vampire Weaknesses:** Malhûn has the same  
vulnerabilities to holy symbols, sunlight, and running  
water that normal vampires do. It avoids birds as a  
normal vampire avoids garlic, and cannot come within  
20 ft. of an intentionally built fire, such as a campfire  
or hearth. It can be perpetually incapacitated by  
staking it with a bone from a large bird, and can be  
slain by immersion in water, decapitation, or if the  
final damage is dealt by a bird.

## Dread Spectral Hound

CR 9

*Note: Each of these creatures resembles a swarming pack of a half dozen spectral wolves, as opposed to one large wolf.*

Dread spectre advanced dire wolf

NE Large undead (augmented animal, incorporeal)

Init +10; Senses darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision, scent;

Listen +12, Spot +12

Aura frightful presence (60 ft.), unnatural aura (30 ft.)

Languages –

AC 17, touch 17, flat-footed 11 (–1 size, +6 Dex, +2 deflection)

Miss Chance 50% incorporeal

hp 97 (15 HD)

Immune undead immunities

Resist turn resistance +4

Fort +9, Ref +15, Will +12

Weakness daylight vulnerability

Speed fly 100 ft. (perfect) (20 squares)

Melee incorporeal touch (bite) +18 (2d6 plus energy drain)

Space 10 ft.; Reach 5 ft.

Base Atk +11; Grp –

Atk Options combat reflexes, create spawn, energy drain, flyby attack, frightful presence

Special Actions command spectres

Abilities Str –, Dex 22, Con –, Int 6, Wis 16, Cha 14

SQ incorporeal traits, retributive drain, undead traits

Feats Alertness, Combat Reflexes, Flyby Attack, Improved Initiative, Run, Track, Weapon Focus (bite)

Skills Hide +11, Listen +12, Move Silently +8, Spot +12, Survival +4

\*Dire wolves have a +4 racial bonus on Survival checks when tracking by scent.

**Command Spectres (Su):** A spectral hound can automatically command all normal spectres within 30 feet as a free action. Normal spectres never attack a spectral hound unless compelled.

**Create Spawn (Su):** Any creature with a Charisma score of 16 or higher that is killed by a spectral hound rises as a dread spectre in 1d4 rounds. Any other creature slain by a spectral hound instead rises as a normal spectre in 1d4 rounds. A spectre or dread spectre created in this manner is under the command of its creator and remains so until either it or the creator is destroyed. (If you lack access to the dread spectre template, you can make do by advancing a normal spectre to the appropriate HD.)

**Daylight Vulnerability (Ex):** A spectral hound takes a –4 penalty on all attack rolls, checks, and saves when in natural sunlight (but not a *daylight* spell).

**Energy Drain (Su):** An creature struck by a spectral hound's incorporeal touch attack gains two negative levels. These negative levels fade after one hour.

**Frightful Presence (Su):** Any creature within 60 feet that witnesses a spectral hound's attack must succeed on a DC 19 Will save or become frightened for 5d6 rounds. This ability only effects creatures with fewer HD than the spectral hound. A creature that successfully saves is immune to that spectral hound's frightful presence for 24 hours.

**Retributive Drain (Su):** Any time someone attempts to turn a dread spectral hound, or cast a positive energy spell upon it, he must make a DC 19 Fortitude save. Failure indicates that he suffers a negative level, which disappears after one hour. A successful save renders that individual immune to that particular dread spectral hound's retributive drain ability for 24 hours.

**Unnatural Aura (Su):** Any animal within 30 feet of a spectral hound is automatically panicked, and remains so as long as they remain within that range.

## Fayne Rawnbeck

CR 16

A red-haired elf woman, her posture cautious and her hands tight on the hilts of a pair of battered sickles, steps out of the forest brush, looking curious despite wariness.

Female elf ranger 15/barbarian 1

CN Medium humanoid (elf)

Init +2; Senses low light vision; Listen +19, Spot +19

Languages Common, Elf

AC 18, touch 12, flat-footed 16 (+2 Dex, +6 armor)

hp 110 (16 HD), DR 3/bludgeoning (Bladeproof Skin)

Fort +14, Ref +12 (evasion), Will +8 (+10 against enchantment)

Immune sleep

Speed 40 ft. (8 squares)

Melee +1 sickle +23/+18/+13 (1d6+7, 19–20/x2) or

Melee +1 sickle +21/+16/+11 (1d6+7, 19–20/x2) and +1 sickle +21/+16/+11 (1d6+4, 19–20/x2) or

Melee raging +1 sickle +23/+18/+13 (1d6+9, 19–20/x2) and +1 sickle +23/+18/+13 (1d6+6, 19–20/x2)

Ranged mwk longbow [+6 Str] +19/+14/+9 (1d8+6, x3, increment 110 ft.)

Base Atk +16; Grp +26

Atk Options favored enemy (elf +8, orc +2, human +2, good outsider +2)

Special Actions rage (+4 Str, +4 Con, +26 hp, +2 Fort, +2 Will), quickdraw

Combat Gear wand of cure light wounds (50 charges)

Spells Prepared (caster level 7th)

4th – *tree stride*

3rd – *neutralize poison*

2nd – *barkskin* (+3)

1st – *alarm*, *pass without trace*, *speak with animals*

Abilities Str 22, Dex 14, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 14, Cha 8

SQ camouflage, elf traits, swift tracker, wild empathy (+11), woodland stride

Feats Bladeproof Skin (UA), Endurance<sup>B</sup>, Greater Two-Weapon Fighting<sup>B</sup>, Improved Critical (sickle), Improved Grapple, Improved Two Weapon Fighting<sup>B</sup>, Improved Unarmed Strike, Secret Keeper\*, Track<sup>B</sup>, Two-Weapon Fighting<sup>B</sup>, Weapon Focus (sickle)

Skills Climb +19, Handle Animal +14, Hide +20, Listen +19, Move Silently +20, Spot +19, Survival +20

Possessions combat gear plus +3 studded leather, two +1 sickles, two masterwork sickles, whip, net, bolas, masterwork longbow [+6 Str], *belt of strength +4*, *amulet of health +2*, *cloak of resistance +1*.

Tactics: Fayne has a lot of pent up anger, so she prefers to run into combat and start cutting, particularly against enemies with blades. Her sickles are light weapons, so she can use them in a grapple.

## Tincev, Fayne's Fox

CR n/a

N Medium animal

Init +4; Senses low-light vision; Listen +2, Spot +2

AC 20, touch 14, flat-footed 16 (+4 Dex, +6 natural)

hp 45 (6 HD)

Fort +5, Ref +5 (evasion), Will +1

Speed 50 ft. (10 squares)

Melee bite +9 (1d8+3)

Base Atk +4; Grp +6

Atk Options sneak attack +2d6

Abilities Str 14, Dex 18, Con 16, Int 2, Wis 12, Cha 6

Feats Improved Natural Attack (bite), Stealthy, Weapon Finesse<sup>B</sup>, Weapon Focus (bite)

Skills Hide +10, Listen +2, Move Silently +9, Spot +2



### Veteran Shahalesti Scout

CR 6

Male elf ranger 2/fighter 2/wilderness rogue (UA) 2  
 N Medium humanoid (elf)  
 Init +8; Senses Listen +12, Spot +12, low-light vision  
 Languages Common, elf, orc, goblin

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AC 19, touch 14, flat-footed 15  
 hp 35 (6 HD)  
 Fort +8, Ref +11, Will +2 (+4 vs. enchantment), evasion  
 Immune sleep

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Speed 30 ft. (6 squares)  
 Melee +6 longsword (1d8+1, 19–20), or +6 spiked gauntlet (1d4+1)  
 Ranged +11 +1 longbow (1d8+2, x3), point blank shot, precise shot, rapid shot  
 Base Atk +5; Grp +6  
 Combat Gear 2 tanglefoot bags, 2 thunderstones, wand of *cure light wounds* (20 charges)

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Abilities Str 13, Dex 18, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 8  
 Feats Improved Initiative, Point Blank Shot, Precise Shot, Rapid Shot, Weapon Focus (longbow), Track  
 SQ favored enemy (orcs) +2, wild empathy, sneak attack +1d6  
 Skills Climb +7, Hide +10, Listen +12, Move Silently +10, Spot +12, Survival +8  
 Possessions masterwork chain shirt, masterwork buckler, longsword, spiked gauntlet, +1 composite longbow [+1 Str] with 20 arrows, *cloak of resistance +1*

### Elite Shahalesti Scout

CR 8

Male elf ranger 3/fighter 2/wilderness rogue (UA) 3  
 N Medium humanoid (elf)  
 Init +8; Senses Listen +14, Spot +14, low-light vision  
 Languages Common, elf, orc, goblin

---

AC 19, touch 14, flat-footed 15  
 hp 45 (8 HD)  
 Fort +9, Ref +11, Will +4 (+6 vs. enchantment), evasion  
 Immune sleep

---

Speed 30 ft. (6 squares)  
 Melee +8 longsword (1d8+1, 19–20), or +8 spiked gauntlet (1d4+1)  
 Ranged +13 +1 longbow (1d8+2, x3), point blank shot, precise shot, rapid shot  
 Base Atk +7; Grp +8  
 Combat Gear 2 tanglefoot bags, 2 thunderstones, wand of *cure light wounds* (20 charges)

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Abilities Str 13, Dex 18, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 8  
 Feats Endurance, Improved Initiative, Point Blank Shot, Precise Shot, Rapid Shot, Weapon Focus (longbow), Track  
 SQ favored enemy (orcs) +2, wild empathy, sneak attack +2d6  
 Skills Climb +9, Hide +13, Listen +14, Move Silently +13, Spot +14, Survival +10  
 Possessions masterwork chain shirt, masterwork buckler, longsword, spiked gauntlet, +1 composite longbow [+1 Str] with 20 arrows, *cloak of resistance +1*, *boots of the winterlands*



**Veteran Shahalesti Warrior**

**CR 6**

Male elf fighter 6  
 N Medium humanoid (elf)  
 Init +3; Senses Listen +3, Spot +3, low-light vision  
 Languages Common, elf

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AC 21, touch 13, flat-footed 18  
 hp 44 (6 HD)  
 Fort +6, Ref +5, Will +3 (+5 vs. enchantment)  
 Immune sleep

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Speed 20 ft. (4 squares)  
 Melee +10/+5 mwk longsword (1d8+2, 19–20), or +8/+3 shortsword (1d6+2, 19–20)  
 Ranged +11/+6 mwk longbow (1d8+4, x3), point blank shot, precise shot  
 Base Atk +6; Grp +8  
 Combat Gear 2 thunderstones, 2 potions of *cure moderate wounds*, 2 oils of *magic weapon*

---

Abilities Str 14, Dex 17, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 8  
 Feats Combat Reflexes, Point Blank Shot, Precise Shot, Weapon Focus (longbow), Weapon Focus (longsword), Weapon Specialization (longbow)  
 Skills Climb +9, Ride +12  
 Possessions +1 *breastplate*, +1 *buckler*, masterwork longsword, shortsword, masterwork composite longbow [+2 Str] with 40 arrows

**Elite Shahalesti Soldier**

**CR 8**

Male elf fighter 8  
 N Medium humanoid (elf)  
 Init +4; Senses Listen +3, Spot +3, low-light vision  
 Languages Common, elf

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AC 23, touch 12, flat-footed 21  
 hp 57 (8 HD)  
 Fort +7, Ref +6, Will +3 (+5 vs. enchantment)  
 Immune sleep

---

Speed 20 ft. (4 squares)  
 Melee +12/+7 mwk longsword (1d8+2, 19–20), or +12/+7 short sword (1d6+4, 19–20)  
 Ranged +16/+11 +1 *longbow* (1d8+7, x3), point blank shot, precise shot  
 Base Atk +8; Grp +10  
 Combat Gear 2 thunderstones, 2 potions of *cure moderate wounds*, 2 oils of *magic weapon*, potion of *resist energy (fire)*, potion of *heroism*

---

Abilities Str 14, Dex 18, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 8  
 Feats Combat Reflexes, Elite Training (longbow), Point Blank Shot, Precise Shot, Weapon Focus (longbow), Weapon Focus (longsword), Weapon Specialization (longbow)  
 Skills Climb +11, Ride +15  
 Possessions +1 *full plate*, +1 *buckler*, masterwork longsword, short sword, +1 *composite longbow* [+2 Str] with 40 cold iron arrows and 20 silver arrows

### Shahalesti Wizard

CR 8

Female elf wizard (evoker) 8  
 N Medium humanoid (elf)  
 Init +3; Senses Listen +3, Spot +3, low-light vision  
 Languages Common, Celestial, Draconic, Elven

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AC 17, touch 13, flat-footed 14  
 hp 20 (8 HD)  
 Fort +2, Ref +5, Will +7 (+9 vs. enchantment)  
 Immune sleep

---

Speed 30 ft. (6 squares)  
 Melee +3 longsword (1d8–1, 19–20)  
 Ranged +7 longbow (1d8–1, ×3)  
 Base Atk +4; Grp +3  
 Combat Gear *elemental gem* (air), two *potions of cure moderate wounds*, *potion of fly*, *potion of invisibility*, *potion of cure light wounds*, *wand of magic missile* (1st level, 25 charges)  
 Spells Prepared (CL 8th, +7 ranged touch)  
 4th – *greater invisibility*, *ice storm* (DC 17), *wall of ice*  
 3rd – *daylight*, *haste*, *lightning bolt* (DC 16), *protection from energy*, *sonic lightning bolt*  
 2nd – *flaming sphere*, *minor image*, *invisibility*, *sonic scorching ray*, *still magic missile*  
 1st – *alarm*, *magic missile* ×3, *protection from evil*, *shield*  
 0 – *detect magic*, *light* ×2, *prestidigitation*, *ray of frost* ×2  
 Prohibited Schools Conjuraton, Enchantment, Necromancy

---

Abilities Str 8, Dex 16, Con 10, Int 17, Wis 13, Cha 10  
 SQ mageknight (*Player's Guide*, pg 14), familiar  
 Feats Armor Proficiency (light), Energy Alteration (sonic), Spell Penetration, Still Spell  
 Skills Concentration +10, Diplomacy +5, Knowledge (arcana) +14, Knowledge (the planes) +9, Spellcraft +16  
 Possessions spellbook (contains listed spells plus cantrips and *daylight*, *dimensional anchor*, *fly*, *jump*, *scorching ray*, *shocking grasp*, and *spider climb*), spell components, +1 *chain shirt*, +1 *mithral buckler*, mithral gloves worth 200 gp, 10 pp, two doses of silversheen, *hand of the mage*

### Solei Palancis Dreadnought

CR 12

Male elf fighter 8/wizard (transmuter) 2/rogue 2  
 N Medium humanoid (elf)  
 Init +3; Senses Listen +2, Spot +2, low-light vision  
 Languages Common, Celestial, Elven

---

AC 19, touch 13, flat-footed 16 (+6 armor, +3 Dexterity);  
 dodge, mobility  
 hp 73 (12 HD)  
 Fort +8, Ref +8, Will +6 (+8 vs. enchantment); evasion  
 Immune sleep

---

Speed 30 ft. (6 squares)  
 Melee +20/+15 +2 *great sword* (2d6+13, 17–20)  
 Base Atk +10; Grp +15  
 Combat Options combat expertise, combat reflexes, power attack, sneak attack +1d6  
 Combat Gear *potion of fly* ×2, *potion of invisibility* ×2, *potion of heroism* ×2  
 Spells Prepared (CL 2nd)  
 1st – *enlarge person*, *shield*, *true strike*  
 0 – *detect magic*, *ghost sound*, *light*, *mage hand*  
 Prohibited Schools Conjuraton, Enchantment, Necromancy

---

Abilities Str 20, Dex 16, Con 12, Int 13, Wis 10, Cha 8  
 SQ mageknight (*Player's Guide*, pg 14), familiar  
 Feats Combat Expertise, Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Elite Training (great sword), Improved Critical (great sword), Mobility, Power Attack, Spring Attack, Weapon Focus (great sword), Weapon Specialization (great sword)  
 Skills Climb +16, Intimidate +13, Jump +18, Spellcraft +7, Tumble +20  
 Possessions spellbook, spell components, +1 *mithral breastplate*, +2 *great sword*, *cloak of resistance +1*, *gloves of dexterity and strength +2*

---

Tactics: Solei Palancis Dreadnoughts prefer to sneak up invisibly, cast *enlarge person*, then go to town.

## Kiznith

CR 16

*Tall and charming, with dramatic blonde hair, when this elf moves, his soldiers watch raptly.*

Male elf bard 16

N Medium humanoid (elf)

Init +3; Senses low-light vision; Listen +2, Spot +2

Languages Celestial, Common, Elf

---

AC 28, touch 17, flat-footed 24 (+4 Dex, +7 armor, +4 shield, +2 deflection, +1 insight)

hp 90 (16 HD)

Fort +7, Ref +14, Will +10 (+12 vs. enchantment)

Immune sleep

---

Speed 30 ft. (6 squares)

Melee +19/+14/+9 +2 *shocking rapier* (1d6+1 plus 1d6 electricity, 15–20)

Base Atk +12; Grp +11

Combat Gear wand of cure light wounds (50 charges)

Special Actions bardic music (16/day – countersong, fascinate, inspire competence, inspire courage +3, inspire greatness, inspire heroics, song of freedom, suggestion), improved disarm

Spells Known (CL 16th)

6th (1) – *animate objects, heroes' feast*

5th (3) – *greater dispel magic, mass cure light wounds, mass suggestion, song of discord*

4th (4) – *break enchantment, dimension door, dominate person, locate creature*

3rd (4) – *charm monster, cure serious wounds, daylight, see invisibility*

2nd (6) – *alter self, detect thoughts, enthrall, silence*

1st (6) – *alarm, animate rope, cause fear, charm person, comprehend languages*

0 (4) – *who cares?*

---

Abilities Str 8, Dex 18, Con 14, Int 13, Wis 10, Cha 22

SQ elf traits

Feats Combat Expertise, Improved Critical (rapier), Improved Disarm, Skill Focus (Use Magic Device), Weapon Finesse, Weapon Focus (rapier)

Skills Bluff +25, Concentration +21, Diplomacy +27, Knowledge (the planes) +20, Perform (oratory) +25, Sense Motive +19, Use Magic Device +28

Possessions *cloak of charisma +4, +2 shocking rapier, +3 mithral shirt, +3 mithral buckler, ring of protection +2, gloves of dexterity +2, ioun stone of +1 insight to AC, amulet of health +2*

---

Tactics: Kiznith inspires his troops, using a different bardic music ability every few rounds. He has enough to spare that he can let a previous use lapse, so he doesn't worry about maintaining one song forever.

## Vile Oak

CR 9

Fiendish treant

CE Huge plant (extraplanar)

Init -1; Senses darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; Listen +8, Spot +8

Languages Common, Sylvan, Treant

AC 20, touch 7, flat-footed 20 (-2 size, -1 Dex, +13 natural)

hp 66 (7 HD); DR 10/slashing and 5/magic

Immune plant immunities

Resist cold 5, fire 5; SR 12

Fort +10, Ref +1, Will +7

Weakness vulnerability to fire, banishment vulnerability

Speed 30 ft. (6 squares)

Melee 2 slams +12 (2d6+9)

Space 15 ft.; Reach 15 ft.

Base Atk +5; Grp +22

Atk Options Improved Sunder, Power Attack, double damage against objects, smite good 1/day (+7 damage), trample 2d6+13

Special Actions animate trees

Abilities Str 29, Dex 8, Con 21, Int 12, Wis 16, Cha 12

SQ plant traits

Feats Improved Sunder, Iron Will, Power Attack

Skills Diplomacy +3, Hide -9\*, Intimidate +6, Knowledge (nature) +6, Listen +8, Sense Motive +8, Spot +8, Survival +8 (+10 aboveground)

\* Fiendish treants have a +16 racial bonus on Hide checks made in forested areas.

**Animate Trees (Sp):** A fiendish treant can animate trees within 180 feet at will, controlling up to two trees at a time. It takes 1 full round for a normal tree to uproot itself. Thereafter it moves at a speed of 10 feet and fights as a treant in all respects. Animated trees lose their ability to move if the fiendish treant that animated them is incapacitated or moves out of range. The ability is otherwise similar to *liveoak* (caster level 12th). Animated trees have the same vulnerability to fire that a treant has.

**Double Damage Against Objects (Ex):** A treant or animated tree that makes a full attack against an object or structure deals double damage.

**Trample (Ex):** Reflex DC 22 half. The save DC is Strength-based.

**Banishment Vulnerability:** If a vile oak is affected by magic that would banish an extraplanar creature, the evil spirit within it is sent back to the lower planes. The tree is rendered inert and immediately roots itself, and though its twisted shape remains, the vile taint in its sap is gone.



## ACT TWO ENCOUNTERS

### Quillathe

CR 16

*This ebony-skinned elf woman moves with lithe agility despite her dark red armor, wielding a lashing bladed whip in one hand, a dimly glowing rapier in the other. Her dark red-violet hair is plaited in a spiderweb pattern, and her lips curl with haughty scorn. Her crimson-eyed gaze seems to pierce through you.*

Female drow duelist-path assassin 15

CE Medium humanoid (drow)

Init +8; Senses darkvision 120 ft.; Listen +9, Spot +9

Languages Common, Draconic, Elf, Orc, Sylvan, Undercommon

AC 24, touch 15, flat-footed 20 (+4 Dex, +8 armor, +1 natural, +1 deflection); improved uncanny dodge

hp 85 (15 HD)

Fort +7 (+12 against poison), Ref +17 (improved evasion), Will +6 (+8 against enchantments, spells, and spell-like abilities)

Immune sleep, SR 26

Weakness light blindness

Speed 40 ft. (8 squares), climb 20 ft.

Melee +1 *wounding bladed whip* +20/+15/+10 (1d6+1/19–20 plus 1 Con) or

Melee +1 *wounding rapier* +20/+15/+10 (1d6+1/18–20 plus 1 Con) or

Melee +1 *wounding bladed whip* +16/+11/+6 (1d6+1/19–20 plus 1 Con) and +1 *wounding rapier* +16/+11 (1d6+1/18–20 plus 1 Con)

Reach 5 ft. (15 ft. w/bladed whip)

Base Atk +11; Grp +11

Atk Options combat reflexes, death attack (DC 19), kesh poison, sneak attack +8d6, spell-like abilities, swift feint

Spell-Like Abilities (caster level 15th)

1/day – *dancing lights, darkness, faerie fire*

Combat Gear four *potions of cure serious wounds*, *potion of heroism*

Abilities Str 10, Dex 26, Con 14, Int 14, Wis 12, Cha 12

SQ drow traits, lay low, poison use

Feats Combat Reflexes, Exotic Weapon Proficiency (bladed whip), Improved Two Weapon Fighting, Lashing Whip\*, Third Hand\*, Two-Weapon Fighting, Weapon Finesse

Skills Balance +12, Bluff +19, Climb +11, Escape Artist +10, Hide +23, Intimidate +3, Jump +17, Listen +9, Move Silently +23, Search +10, Sleight of Hand +15, Spot +9, Tumble +18

Possessions combat gear plus +1 *wounding rapier*, +1 *wounding bladed whip*, +3 *mithral breastplate*

Tattoos (Su): *amulet of natural armor* +1, *boots of striding and springing of spider climbing*, *gloves of dexterity* +6, *ring of protection* +1. Quillathe has the benefit of these magic items, but they come from magical tattoos, and so cannot be looted.

Death Attack (Ex): After three rounds of observation, Quillathe's sneak attack can kill target or paralyze it for 1d6+15 rounds (Fort DC 19 negates).

**Kesh Poison (Ex):** Quillathe has learned to manipulate her bodies to create two varieties of poison. She is immune to her own poison.

The first type of poison, black kesh, is created when her saliva mixes with a victim's blood. As a standard action she can spit on a weapon to apply the poison, though the poison only remains potent for one minute thereafter. This is a paralyzing poison. A creature must make a Fortitude save (DC 18) when first affected and each round thereafter, for ten rounds. Each failed save deals 1d6 points of Dexterity damage.

The second type of poison, violet kesh, must be tasted or ingested to function, and it results from the mixture of Quillathe's saliva and her own blood. She must spend a move action to bite herself and mix the poison, and can then deliver the poison with a kiss as a free action if she successfully pins a creature. A creature must make a Fortitude save (DC 18) when first affected by the poison, and then each round thereafter, for ten rounds. Each failed save deals 1d6 points of Wisdom damage. A creature reduced to 0 Wisdom by this poison sees visions of events around the world.

**Lashing Whip (Ex):** Quillathe threatens any square her whip can reach, except for squares within her natural reach.

**Lay Low (Ex):** The difficulty for anyone to locate Quillathe through tracking, or through social skill checks such as Gather Information or Knowledge (local), is increased by 7.

**Poison Use (Ex):** Quillathe is trained in the use of poison and never risks accidentally poisoning herself when applying poison to a blade.

**Swift Feint (Ex):** Quillathe can attempt to feint in combat as a swift action, rather than a standard action.

**Third Hand (Ex):** When armed with a whip, Quillathe is treated as having a free hand that can reach as far as her whip's reach, which she can use to manipulate objects, throw weapons, or even grapple.

Grappling with a whip works as it would with an unarmed strike, except that if successful Quillathe deals her whip's damage instead of her unarmed damage. She must still enter her opponent's square if she wants to maintain the grapple, or she can simply use her additional attacks to make grapple checks, then release her opponent at the end of her turn.

With a successful grapple check, Quillathe can perform any of the following actions:

- Deal her whip's damage to her opponent.
- Move at half speed and bring her opponent with her (though he keeps the same relative distance to her).
- Pull her opponent closer, up to being adjacent.

Quillathe uses this ability to attack and grab with her bladed whip, pull her foe in, then release him and attack with her rapier at close range.

## Yvonne

## CR 16

*This muscular drow woman carries her two-bladed sword with a hint of resigned boredom. She appears to not even be wearing any armor, but intangible wings of shadowy feathers are briefly visible at her back when the light strikes her.*

Female drow ex-monk 3/fighter 12

CE Medium humanoid (drow)

Init +3; Senses darkvision 120 ft.; Listen +6, Spot +6

Languages Common, Drow Sign Language, Elf, Orc, Undercommon

AC 24, touch 12, flat-footed 23 (+1 Dex, +11 armor, +1 shield, +1 deflection); Two-Weapon Defense

hp 128 (15 HD)

Fort +14, Ref +10 (evasion), Will +9 (+11 against spells and spell-like abilities, +13 against enchantments)

Immune sleep, SR 26

Weakness light blindness

Speed 20 ft. (4 squares), fly 40 ft. (good)

Melee +1 wounding two-bladed sword +27/+22/+17 (1d8+19/17–20 plus 1 Con) or

Melee +1 wounding two-bladed sword +25/+20/+15 (1d8+15/17–20 plus 1 Con) and +1 throwing returning two-bladed sword +25/+20 (1d8+11/17–20) or

Melee unarmed strike +23/+18/+13 (1d6+8)

Ranged +1 throwing returning two-bladed sword +22 (1d8+15/17–20; increment 10 ft.)

Combo melee +1 wounding two-bladed sword +25/+20/+15 (1d8+15/17–20 plus 1 Con) and +1 throwing returning two-bladed sword +25 (1d8+11/17–20) and ranged +1 throwing returning two-bladed sword +15 (1d8+8/17–20)

Base Atk +14; Grp +26

Atk Options combat reflexes, flyby attack

Spell-Like Abilities (caster level 15th)

1/day – dancing lights, darkness, faerie fire

Combat Gear wand of cure light wounds (37 charges), wand of entangle (7 charges), potion of heroism

Abilities Str 26, Dex 17, Con 16, Int 12, Wis 10, Cha 8

SQ drow traits, still mind

Feats Combat Reflexes<sup>B</sup>, Elite Training (two-bladed sword), Exotic Weapon Proficiency (two-bladed sword), Flyby Attack, Greater Weapon Focus (two-bladed sword), Greater Weapon Specialization (two-bladed sword), Greater Two-Weapon Fighting, Improved Critical (two-bladed sword), Improved Grapple<sup>B</sup>, Improved Two-Weapon Fighting, Improved Unarmed Strike<sup>B</sup>, Iron Will, Two-Weapon Defense, Two-Weapon Fighting, Weapon Focus (two-bladed sword), Weapon Specialization (two-bladed sword) 11

Skills Climb +7, Hide +9, Listen +6, Move Silently +9, Spot +6

Possessions combat gear plus +1 wounding/+1 throwing returning two-bladed sword, +3 glamered full plate, hurling bracers

Tattoos (Su): amulet of health +2, belt of strength +6, glove of storing and dexterity +2, ring of protection +1, wings of flying. Yvonne has the benefit of these magic items, but they come from magical tattoos, and so cannot be looted.

### NEW ITEM

**Hurling Bracers:** These items can be activated as a swift action once per day. For one round, the wearer is treated as one size category larger for purposes of lifting capacity, grappling, and what sort of weapons the creature can wield. If being treated as larger would be a detriment for any given effect, it may use its normal size instead. (For instance, a human would not suddenly be unable to use a Medium dagger just because he counts as being Large). Typically wyverns use these bracers to pick up enemies during a flyby attack (taking a –20 penalty to their grapple check so they can keep moving), and then drop them before the bonus wears off.

Moderate transmutation; CL 7th; Craft Wondrous Item, polymorph; Price 2000 gp; weight 1 lb.

## Rhuarc

## CR 18

*There, amid the shadows, you glimpse the faintest hint of dark eyes, of an aged face with a hint of elvish blood, of a scimitar edged with smoky diamonds. And then he is gone.*

Middle-aged male half-elf wilderness rogue (UA) 7/  
ranger 1/shadowdancer 10

CN Medium humanoid (elf)

Init +6; Senses low-light vision, darkvision 60 ft.; Listen +21, Spot +21

Languages Common, Elf, Infernal

AC 28, touch 17, flat-footed 22 (+6 Dex, +6 armor, +4 shield, +1 natural, +1 deflection); Dodge, Mobility, improved uncanny dodge

hp 131 (18 HD)

Fort +15, Ref +25 (improved evasion), Will +10 (+12 against enchantments, slippery mind)

Immune energy drain, movement restriction, poison, sleep

Speed 40 ft. (8 squares), climb 20 ft.

Melee +20/+15/+10 *black scimitar* (1d6+3/18–20)

Ranged +20/+15/+10 mwk composite longbow [Str +2] (1d8+2/x3, increment 110 ft.)

Base Atk +13; Grp +15

Atk Options archery (poisoned arrows or shatterspell arrows), combat reflexes, favored enemy (evil outsiders +2), shot on the run, sneak attack +4d6, spring attack

Special Actions hide in plain sight, shadow illusion, shadow jump 160 ft.

Combat Gear two *wands of cure light wounds* (50 charges each), *potion of cure serious wounds* x2, alchemist fire x4

Abilities Str 14, Dex 22, Con 16, Int 12, Wis 10, Cha 8

SQ half-elf traits, defensive roll, hide in plain sight, slippery mind, summon shadow, trap sense +2

Feats Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Mobility, Point Blank Shot, Shot on the Run, Spring Attack, TrackB, Weapon Finesse

Skills Balance +16, Bluff +9, Climb +4, Craft (cooking) +11, Disguise +9, Handle Animal +4, Hide +32, Jump +17, Listen +21, Move Silently +32, Open Lock +11, Perform (dance) +4, Spot +21, Survival +10, Swim +4, Tumble +16

Possessions combat gear plus *efficient quiver* (40 arrows, 10 cold iron arrows, 10 silver arrows), +2 *mithral shirt*,

+2 *glamered mithral heavy shield* with +1 *silver shield spikes* (the shield is invisible when worn; when Rhuarc uses the spikes they appear to emerge from the back of his hand like claws), masterwork composite longbow [Str +2], *black scimitar*, *Torch of the Burning Sky*

**Tattoos (Su):** *amulet of health +2 and natural armor +1 and proof against poison, boots of striding and springing and spider-climbing and elvenkind, cloak of resistance +5 of elvenkind, gloves of dexterity +4, ring of freedom of movement, ring of featherfalling and protection +1.* Rhuarc has the benefit of these magic items, but they come from magical tattoos, and so cannot be looted.

**Archery – Poisoned Arrows (Ex):** Rhuarc has poisoned twenty arrows in his quiver with a poison mixed from kesh and black lotus extract, which slowly paralyzes his heart and lungs. Injury DC 24. Initial and secondary 1d6 Constitution.

**Archery – Shatterspell Arrows (Ex):** Rhuarc has coated another twenty of his arrows with a potent antimagic alchemical. A creature struck by one of these arrows is affected as if by a targeted *dispel magic* (caster level 10th). He prefers to use this against flying foes, and those who seem immune to his poisoned arrows.

**Defensive Roll (Ex):** Once per day, when Rhuarc would be reduced to 0 hit points or less by damage in combat (from a weapon or other blow, not a spell or special ability), he can attempt to roll with the damage. He makes a Reflex saving throw (DC = damage dealt) and, if successful, takes only half damage from the blow. He must be aware of the attack and able to react to it in order to execute his defensive roll. If he is in a situation that would deny his Dexterity bonus to AC, he can't attempt a defensive roll.

**Hide in Plain Sight (Ex):** Rhuarc can use the Hide skill even while being observed. As long as he is within 10 feet of some sort of shadow, he can hide himself from view in the open without having anything to actually hide behind. He cannot, however, hide in his own shadow.

**Shadow Illusion (Sp):** This ability's effect is identical to that of the arcane spell *silent image* and may be employed once per day.

**Shadow Jump (Su):** Rhuarc can travel between shadows as if by means of a *dimension door* spell. The magical transport must begin and end in an area with at least some shadow. Rhuarc can jump up to a total of 160 feet each day in this way. This amount can be split among many jumps, but each one, no matter how small, counts as a 10-foot increment.

**Slippery Mind (Ex):** If Rhuarc fails his save against an enchantment effect, 1 round later he can attempt his saving throw again.

### Rhuarc's Shadow

CR n/a

CN Medium undead (incorporeal)

Init +6; Senses Listen +7, Spot +7; darkvision 60 ft.

Languages communicate with master

AC 13, touch 13, flat-footed 11 (+2 Dex, +1 deflection)

Miss Chance 50% incorporeal

hp 45 (7 HD)

Immune turning, undead immunities

Fort +2, Ref +4, Will +6

Speed fly 40 ft. (good) (8 squares)

Melee incorporeal touch +6 (1d6 Str)

Base Atk +3; Grp –

Abilities Str –, Dex 15, Con –, Int 6, Wis 12, Cha 13

SQ incorporeal traits, undead traits

Feats Flyby Attack, Improved Initiative, Weapon Focus (touch)

Skills Hide +10\*, Listen +7, Search +6, Spot +7

\* A shadow gains a +4 racial bonus on Hide checks in areas of shadowy illumination. In brightly lit areas, it takes a –4 penalty on Hide checks.

#### NEW ITEM

**Black Scimitar:** Created by Rhuarc's diabolist mother to shelter their souls against an infernal pact, this *+1 adamantite scimitar*, named *Shaalguenyaver* ("bright shadow"), is almost completely black. The S-shaped crossguard is fire-blackened ivory, the hilt is wrapped in black velvet, and the pommel is capped with a large black pearl. The blade itself is lined with flawed, smoky diamonds, with one piece missing near the blade's base. It radiates no magical aura.

When a wielder picks up the sword for the first time, he hears a dark, feminine voice whisper, "Be with me, my child." The wielder inherently knows he is being offered a pact – give over his soul, and his life will be protected. If the wielder agrees, he gains access to the following benefits.

- The scimitar gains the *ghost touch* ability.
- When the wielder holds the black scimitar, it generates a ward against disembodied souls, such as ghosts and other incorporeal undead. Such creatures must make a Will save (DC 27) to approach within 20 ft. of the wielder or to attack him. (Rhuarc's shadow is an extension of himself, and is not limited by this.)
- The wielder is immune to energy drain.
- In exchange, the wielder forfeits his soul into the blade upon his death. He still has a soul while he is alive, but he cannot be returned from the dead, and his soul never passes into any afterlife. For Rhuarc, this is a better fate than the hell his mother bargained him into.
- Anyone making this pact also is considered to owe payment on the bargain Rhuarc dodged. Evil outsiders are subconsciously drawn to the wielder, and will attack him first, hoping to subdue him and seize his soul for the archdevil to whom it is pledged.

Additionally, when Rhuarc wields the weapon, it has several abilities only accessible by him personally.

- When Rhuarc kills a creature with the sword, he can choose to trap its soul. The dying creature makes a Will save (DC 27), and if it fails its soul is pulled into one of the gems along the scimitar's blade. Sometimes, for his own reasons, Rhuarc will pry out that gem and toss it into a cave or into the sea where it will be lost forever, so that the spirit will never reach its resting place. Usually he does not trap souls, however, since the blade can now only hold seventeen.
- Once per minute as a free action, Rhuarc call forth some of the souls trapped in the sword, summoning 1d4+1 tragedies, which serve him loyally for one minute before vanishing.

No aura; CL 17th; Craft Magical Arms & Armor, *antipathy*, *death ward*, *nondetection*, *trap the soul*; Price 31,315 gp; weight 4 lb.



## Tragedy

CR 7

*Shadowy, incorporeal creatures swoop toward you, rotted skeletal hands reaching out from ashen shrouds. Twisting, roiling faces push up from within its form, faces of elvish men and women mutely screaming at their tragic end.*

CE Medium undead (Incorporeal)

Init +7; Senses Darkvision 60 ft., Listen +14, Spot +14

Languages Common, Gnome, Orc

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AC 15, touch 15, flat-footed 13

hp 69 (7 HD); 50% miss chance (incorporeal)

Fort +2, Ref +5, Will +7

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Speed 40 ft., fly 80 ft. (perfect)

Melee +6 incorporeal touch (1d8 plus negative level)

Base Atk +3; Grp –

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Abilities Str –, Dex 16, Con –, Int 14, Wis 14, Cha 15

SQ energy drain, incorporeal traits, +2 turn resistance, undead traits, unholy toughness

Feats Alertness, Improved Initiative, Track

Skills Hide +13, Intimidate +12, Listen +14, Search +12, Spot +14, Survival +12 (+14 following tracks)

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**Energy Drain (Su):** A creature struck by the tragedy's touch gains a negative level, and the tragedy gains 5 temporary hit points. These negative levels go away after one hour, and never cause permanent level loss.

**Unholy Toughness (Ex):** The tragedy gains a bonus to its hit points equal to its Charisma modifier x its Hit Dice.

## ACT THREE ENCOUNTERS

### The Chorus

CR 13

Vaguely equivalent to a half-fiend eight-headed  
pyrohydra wilder 4

CE Huge Magical Beast

Init +3; Senses darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision, scent;

Listen +7, Spot +8

AC 21, touch 11, flat-footed 18 (-2 size, +3 Dex, +10  
natural)

hp 133 (12 HD), DR 10/magic, fast healing 18

Fort +13, Ref +12, Will +8

Immune poison, sonic; Resist acid 10, cold 10, electricity  
10, fire 10

Vulnerable sundering; SR 22

Speed 20 ft. (4 squares), fly 20 ft. (good)

Melee eight slams +15 (1d10+6)

Base Atk +10; Grp +28

Space/Reach 15 ft./10 ft.

Atk Options independent attacks, smite good (1/day, +12  
damage), spell-like abilities, wailing

Abilities Str 23, Dex 16, Con 22, Int 6, Wis 10, Cha 12

Feats Combat Reflexes, Improved Grapple, Lightning  
Reflexes, Toughness, Weapon Focus (slam)

Skills Listen +7, Perform (sing) +5, Spot +8

**Independent Attacks (Ex):** The chorus's eight bodies can  
each attack even if the chorus moved that round.

**Spell-Like Abilities (Sp):** The chorus can use one of  
these abilities each round as a swift action. Caster  
level 12th. At will – charm person, daze monster. 3/  
day – darkness, poison. 1/day – blasphemy, contagion,  
desecrate, unholy blight.

**Sundering Vulnerability (Ex):** Because the chorus is  
a conglomerate of eight separate creatures, sunder  
attacks can be used to hack loose parts of it. This  
functions similarly to the rules for sundering the heads  
of a hydra.

The chorus can be killed either by severing all its  
component bodies or by slaying it as one. To sever a  
body, an opponent must make a successful sunder  
attempt with a slashing weapon. Making a sunder  
attempt provokes an attack of opportunity unless  
the foe has the Improved Sunder feat. An opponent  
can strike at a body from any position in which he  
could strike at the chorus itself, because the chorus's  
component bodies clamber and writhe about in  
combat. An opponent can ready an action to attempt  
to sunder a body when the creature slams him. Each  
of the chorus's component bodies has 16 hit points.  
Losing a body deals 8 points of damage to the chorus  
as a whole, and reduces its maximum hit points by the  
same amount. The chorus can no longer attack with a  
severed body but takes no other penalties.

Unlike a hydra, new bodies do not spring up in the  
place of the old one.

The chorus can be slain just like any other creature,  
but its fast healing makes it difficult to defeat in  
this fashion. Any attack that is not (or cannot be)  
an attempt to sunder a body affects the chorus as a  
whole.

**Wailing (Su):** Once every 1d4 rounds, each of the  
chorus's eight bodies can release a hideous wail,  
dealing 3d6 points of sonic damage in a 20 ft. line. A  
Reflex save (DC 20) halves the damage.

## Etienne, Inquisitor

CR 13

*Thick black bearskins cover rune-etched white plate armor, combining with this woman's alabaster mask to create a pale image of death.*

Female human cleric 13

LE Medium humanoid

Init +0; Senses Listen +5, Spot +5

Languages Common, Infernal, Orc

**Aura** invisibility purge (65-ft. radius)

**AC** 30, touch 15, flat-footed 30 (+11 armor, +4 shield, +1 insight, +4 deflection)

**hp** 88 (13 HD)

**Fort** +13, **Ref** +7, **Will** +16

**Immune** death effects, effects that restrict movement, negative energy

**Resist** acid 30, cold 30, electricity 30, fire 30, sonic 30

**Damage buffer** 101 points of *magic missiles*; **SR** 25

**Buff Suite** *death ward, endure elements, fire seeds, freedom of movement, greater magic weapon, invisibility purge, magic vestment* (armor & shield), *resist energy* (all five), *shield of faith, spell resistance, status, true seeing*. All these last 13 minutes or more, and Etienne casts them before entering the temple. Their effects are included in her stat block.

**Speed** 20 ft. (4 squares)

**Melee** +14/+9 +3 *vicious hand claw* (1d4+2d6+4, 1d6 to Etienne)

**With Divine Power** **hp** 101; **melee** +21/+16/+11 (1d4+2d6+7, 1d6 to Etienne); **grapple** +16

**With Righteous Might** **AC** 29 (touch 13, flat-footed 29); **hp** 101; **Fort** +14; **melee** +15/+10/+5 (3d6+6, 1d6 to Etienne); **grapple** +16; **DR** 6/good; Large size

**With Divine Power and Righteous Might** **AC** 29 (touch 13, flat-footed 29); **hp** 114; **Fort** +14; **melee** +22/+17/+12 (3d6+9, 1d6 to Etienne); **grapple** +22; **DR** 6/good; Large size

**Base Atk** +9; **Grp** +10

**Combat Gear** *brooch of shielding* (101 charges), *scroll of break enchantment, scroll of heal, scroll of invisibility* ×2, *scroll of speak with dead, wand of cure moderate wounds* (30 charges), *wand of hold portal* (10 charges)

**Combat Options** power attack, reactive counterspell, rebuke magic (7/day, 1d20+13), turn water creatures or command fire creatures (3/day, 1d20)

**Spells Prepared** (CL 13th; ranged touch +9)

7th – *fire storm*<sup>D</sup> (DC 22), *mass cure serious wounds*

6th – *fire seeds*<sup>D</sup> (DC 21), *greater dispel magic, heal*

5th – *overmaster*<sup>\*</sup>, *righteous might, true seeing, spell resistance*<sup>D</sup>

4th – *cure critical wounds, death ward, divine power, freedom of movement, greater magic weapon, wall of fire*<sup>D</sup>

3rd – *dispel magic*<sup>D</sup> ×3, *invisibility purge, magic vestment* ×2

2nd – *produce flame*<sup>D</sup>, *resist energy* ×5, *status*

1st – *bane, burning hands*<sup>D</sup> (DC 16), *cure light wounds* ×3, *endure elements, shield of faith*

0 – *create water, detect magic* ×4, *guidance*

**D Domain spell Domains** Fire, Magic; ~~strikerthrough~~ spells are already cast

**Abilities** Str 13, Dex 10, Con 14, Int 12, Wis 20, Cha 10

**SQ** rebuke magic (see below), spontaneous casting (inflict spells)

**Feats** Extra Turning, Improved Counterspell, Power Attack, Reactive Counterspell, Skill Focus (Concentration), Weapon Focus (hand claw)

**Skills** Concentration +21, Ride +12, Sense Motive +12, Spellcraft +17

**Possessions** masterwork full plate, masterwork light shield, *inquisitor's mask* of +3 resistance and +2 Wisdom, +1 *vicious hand claw, ring of counterspell* (currently holding *greater dispel magic*), *gloves of dexterity* +2, *dusty rose ioun stone* (+1 insight to AC)

**Reactive Counterspell (Ex):** Etienne can counterspell even when she has not readied an action, as long as she is aware of a spell being cast. If she does so, she gives up her standard action on her next turn, having effectively already used it.

**Rebuke Magic (Su):** Seven times a day, Etienne can attempt to counterspell or dispel, as if with *dispel magic*. She rolls 1d20+13 against DC 11 + caster level of the targeted effect. A given use of Rebuke Magic can dispel no more than one magical effect. See *Campaign Guide* for more details.

**Tactics:** Etienne has plenty of time to prepare herself before combat, and so is loaded up with more buff spells than is really fair. Having invested so much effort into fortifying herself, she is wary of having her defenses dispelled, but her *ring of counterspells* (keyed to *greater dispel magic*) should help, and if she is targeted by antimagic she can use *overmaster* or her rebuke magic ability to protect herself. She will also use her reactive counterspelling ability against threats that would likely drop any of her allies, though she's less concerned with them than with herself.

If she is not busy counterspelling, she hurls her *fire seeds*, then uses *greater dispel magic* to stop something annoying the heroes are doing. Thereafter she will likely go on healing duty, using *mass cure serious wounds* or *heal* on her allies, though she reserves a *scroll of heal* for herself.

If combat is still not over, she uses *divine power* and, if she thinks she has time, *righteous might*, and spends the rest of the battle in melee.

## Katrina

## CR 13

This woman of fiery red hair and slender curves holds herself with a sultry air of practiced overconfidence. She dresses as if she is the iconic pyromancer, wearing a red robe with extravagantly flowing sleeves, a tight belt with spell components, and long leather boots. A bulky velvet glove covers her left hand, and with the heavy sleeve it nearly hides the silvery gauntlet and metal guard that protects her forearm.

Female human sorcerer 13

N Medium humanoid

Init +5; Senses Listen -1, Spot -1

Languages Common, Orc

**Aura** cannot be touched by a summoned creature unless it has spell resistance

**AC** 18, touch 11, flat-footed 17 (+4 armor, +1 Dex, +3 shield); +2 deflection against evil

**hp** 74 (13 HD); **DR** 10/magic for missile weapons (stops 100 damage)

**Fort** +7, **Ref** +5, **Will** +7

**Resist** fire 10; **Immune** fire from her own spells, mind control, possession

**Energy buffer** 120 points of cold damage

**Buff Suite** *fly*, *mage armor*, *protection from arrows*, *protection from energy* (cold), *protection from evil*. All these effects last at least 13 minutes, and so Katrina casts them before entering the temple. Their effects are included in her stat block.

**Speed** 30 ft. (6 squares), fly 60 ft. (good)

**Melee** +5 dagger (1d4-1, 19-20)

**Base Atk** +6; **Grp** +5

**Combat Gear** four *potions of cure moderate wounds*

**Special Actions** *produce flame* at will, silent spell, spellduelist

**Spells Known** (CL 13th or 14th for fire spells, +7 ranged touch)

6th (3) – *Gabal's viral flame*\* (DC 25), *mislead*

5th (6) – *dismissal*, *sending*, *teleport*

4th (7) – *charm monster*, *fire shield*, *lesser globe of invulnerability*, *wall of fire* (DC 23)

3rd (5) – *fireball* (DC 22), *fly*, *magic circle against evil*, *protection from energy*

2nd (7) – *hideous laughter*, *invisibility*, *mirror image*, *protection from arrows*, *scorching ray*

1st (6) – *burning hands* (DC 20), *disguise self*, *mage armor*, *protection from evil*, *unseen servant*

0 (6) – *detect magic*, *flare*, *ghost sound*, *light*, *mage hand*, *mending*, *prestidigitation*, *read magic*

**Abilities** Str 8, Dex 12, Con 16, Int 12, Wis 8, Cha 25

**SQ** spellduelist

**Feats** Elemental Control (fire), Greater Spell Focus (evocation), Improved Initiative, Silent Spell, Skill Focus (Concentration), Spell Focus (evocation)

**Skills** Bluff +23, Concentration +16, Knowledge (arcana) +16, Spellcraft +14, Tumble +6

**Possessions** +2 *mithral buckler* that covers her forearm, *gloves of dexterity* +2, *tindertwigs*, *beautiful red robe of charisma* +4, *twenty potions of cure light wounds*.

**Tattoos (Su):** *amulet of health* +2. Katrina has the benefit of this magic item, but it comes from a magical tattoo, and so cannot be looted.

**Spellduelist (Ex):** See the Spellduelist feat (page 81).

**Tactics:** Katrina is impulsive, overconfident, and smart enough to pretend that those are weaknesses. She takes to the air and opens up with *Gabal's viral flame* to ensure that her enemies cannot resist her fiery onslaught. Then, as long as nothing else is threatening her, she keeps the pressure up by hurling *fireball* after *fireball*, though she can switch tactics if threatened by summoned creatures (*dismissal*), warriors attacking her (*mislead* and *hideous laughter*), or low-level spellcasters (*lesser globe of invulnerability*). Her spellduelist ability helps her dodge counterspells.

*Gabal's viral flame* is the perfect foil to inquisitor tactics, and because the fire resistance from her Elemental Control feat cannot be dispelled by it, if Katrina *does* decide to side with the heroes, she'll try to get as close to as many of the Ragesians as possible, and drop the spell at her own feet.

### Karedan, Red Knight of Ragesia

CR 12

*This half-orc knight wears crimson spiked armor.*

Male half-orc fighter 12

LN Medium humanoid (orc)

Init +5; Senses Listen –1, Spot –1, darkvision

Languages Common, Orc

AC 31, touch 12, flat-footed 30 (+11 armor, +7 shield, +1 Dex, +1 natural, +1 deflection)

hp 107 (12 HD); Fast Healing 10

Fort +13, Ref +5, Will +3

Speed 20 ft. (4 squares)

Melee +22/+17/+12 +2 *dwarven waraxe* (1d10+17, 19–20/x3) or +18/+13/+8 silver shortsword (1d6+7, 19–20/x2)

Base Atk +12; Grp +18

Combat Gear three *potion of cure serious wounds*, *potion of fly*

Combat Options power attack

Abilities Str 22, Dex 13, Con 16, Int 8, Wis 8, Cha 8

SQ aquiline blessing

Feats Elite Training (*dwarven waraxe*)\*, Exotic Weapon Proficiency (*dwarven waraxe*), Greater Weapon Focus (*dwarven waraxe*), Greater Weapon Specialization (*dwarven waraxe*), Improved Critical (*dwarven waraxe*), Improved Initiative, Point-Blank Shot, Power Attack, Precise Shot, Weapon Focus (*dwarven waraxe*), Weapon Specialization (*dwarven waraxe*)

Skills Intimidate +7, Ride +7

Possessions +3 *full plate*, +3 *tower shield*, *ring of protection +1*, *amulet of natural armor +1*, *gauntlets of ogre power*, +2 *dwarven waraxe*, silver shortsword

**Aquiline Blessing (Ex):** Though Karedan does not have the full immortality provided by the Aquiline Heart, he has tasted its blood, and so no longer ages. He has fast healing 10.

**Tactics:** Karedan simply fights, though he tries to stay near Etienne and keep enemies from charging her.

### Rihalles, Solei Palancis Dreadnought

CR 12

Male elf fighter 8/wizard (transmuter) 2/rogue 2

N Medium humanoid (elf)

Init +3; Senses Listen +4, Spot +4, low-light vision

Languages Common, Celestial, Elven

AC 23, touch 13, flat-footed 20 (+6 armor, +3 Dexterity, +4 shield); dodge, mobility

hp 73 (12 HD)

Fort +10, Ref +10 (evasion), Will +8 (+10 vs. enchantment)

Immune magic missiles, sleep

Buff suite *potion of fly*, *potion of heroism*, *shield*. Rihalles applies these effects before entering the temple. They are included in his stat block.

Speed 30 ft. (6 squares), fly 60 ft. (good)

Melee +22/+17 +2 *greatsword* (2d6+13, 17–20)

Base Atk +10; Grp +15

Combat Options combat expertise, combat reflexes, power attack, sneak attack +1d6

With Enlarge Person melee +22/+17 (3d6+15, 17–20); AC 21; Ref +9

Combat Gear *potion of fly* ×2 (one used), *potion of invisibility* ×2, *potion of heroism* ×2 (one used)

Spells Prepared (CL 2nd)

1st – *enlarge person*, *shield*, *true strike*

0 – *detect magic*, *ghost sound*, *light*, *mage hand*

Prohibited Schools Conjuraton, Enchantment, Necromancy; ~~strikerthrough~~ spells are already cast

Abilities Str 20, Dex 16, Con 12, Int 13, Wis 10, Cha 8

SQ mageknight (*Player's Guide*, pg 14)

Feats Combat Expertise, Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Elite Training (*greatsword*), Improved Critical (*greatsword*), Mobility, Power Attack, Spring Attack, Weapon Focus (*greatsword*), Weapon Specialization (*greatsword*)

Skills Climb +18, Intimidate +15, Jump +20, Spellcraft +9, Tumble +22

Possessions spellbook, spell components, +1 *mithral breastplate*, +2 *greatsword*, *cloak of resistance +1*, *gloves of dexterity and strength +2*

**Tactics:** Rihalles attacks in a straightforward manner. He flies over enemies to gain a high ground advantage, and knows enough to keep away from whichever enemy Nahrem is currently picking on.

## Nahrem, Shahalesti Necromancer CR 12

*Death hangs in the air around this pale elf mage.*

Male elf wizard (necromancer) 12

N Medium humanoid (elf)

Init +3; Senses Listen +3, Spot +3, low-light vision

Languages Common, Celestial, Draconic, Elven, Infernal

AC 13, touch 13, flat-footed 10 (+3 Dex)

hp 42 (12 HD), temporary hp 16 from *false life*

Fort +6, Ref +8, Will +11 (+13 vs. enchantment)

Immune sleep

Buff suite *false life*, *true seeing*. These spells last more than 12 minutes, so Nahrem casts them before entering the temple. Their effects are included in his stat block.

Speed 30 ft. (6 squares)

Melee +10/+5 mwk shortsword (1d6–1, 19–20/x2)

Base Atk +6; Grp +5

Combat Gear two *potions of cure moderate wounds*, eight *potion of cure light wounds*

Spells Prepared (CL 12th, +9 ranged touch, +11 w/ spectral hand)

6th – cold-substituted *chain lightning*, *disintegrate*, quickened *spectral hand*, *true seeing*

5th – *break enchantment*, empowered *vampiric touch* x2, quickened *true strike*, *sending*

4th – *bestow curse* (DC 22), cold-substituted *wall of fire*, cold-substituted *shout*, *contagion* (DC 22), empowered *touch of idiocy*

3rd – cold-substituted *lightning bolt*, cold-substituted empowered *shocking grasp*, empowered *magic missile*, empowered *ray of enfeeblement*, *vampiric touch*

2nd – *blindness/deafness* (DC 20) cold-substituted *flaming sphere*, *false life*, *locate object*, see *invisibility*, *spectral hand*, *touch of idiocy*

1st – *magic missile* x3, *ray of enfeeblement* x2, *shocking grasp*, *true strike*

0 – *disrupt undead*, *light* x2, *ray of frost* x2

Prohibited Schools Conjuration, Illusion; ~~strikethrough~~ spells are already cast

Abilities Str 8, Dex 16, Con 12, Int 22, Wis 13, Cha 10

SQ skeletal minion (UA)

Feats Empower Spell, Energy Substitution (cold), Greater Spell Focus (necromancy), Quicken Spell, Spell Focus (necromancy), Weapon Finesse

Skills Concentration +15, Diplomacy +7, Knowledge (arcana) +21, Knowledge (the planes) +16, Spellcraft +23

Possessions spellbook (contains listed spells plus various others), spell components, *cloak of resistance* +2, *headband of intellect* +4, *amulet of health* +2

## Skeletal Minion (CR n/a)

NE Medium undead

Init +7; Senses Listen +7, Spot +7; darkvision 60 ft.

AC 26, touch 13, flat-footed 23 (+3 Dex, +8 natural, +5 chainmail)

hp 78 (12 HD); DR 5/bludgeoning

Immune cold, undead immunities

Fort +4, Ref +7, Will +8

Speed 30 ft. (6 squares)

Melee mwk spiked chain +10 (2d4+4, x2)

Base Atk +6; Grp +9

Abilities Str 17, Dex 16, Con –, Int –, Wis 10, Cha 1

SQ undead traits

Feats Improved Initiative

Tactics: Nahrem keeps his skeletal minion by his side, so that its spiked chain can deter enemies from approaching (though against the heroes, the skeleton's attacks are laughably weak). On the spellcasting front, Nahrem is extremely dangerous, though he is fragile.

Nahrem begins by choosing someone he doesn't like the look of – almost certainly a non-elf – and then casts a quickened *spectral hand* to strike with an empowered *vampiric touch*. Thereafter he focuses all his effort on killing that one enemy, casting cold-substituted *chain lightning* (with the chosen enemy as the primary target), cold-substituted empowered *shocking grasp*, and empowered *magic missile*. Once that creature is dead, he uses a quickened *true strike* to cast *disintegrate*, then uses his various other touch spells however seems best at the time. Whenever his hit point total (including temporary hit points) drops below 40, he uses another *vampiric touch* to "heal" himself.

## Shalosh

CR 14

Regal and beautiful, by the sword at her hip and her silvery chainmail this blond elf woman looks prepared for combat, but her demeanor is genuinely peaceful. Her elegant and rich attire – a cloak, long gloves, and high boots, all brilliant silver and blue – mark her as nobility, but the gleam in her sapphire eyes hints at something otherworldly in her blood.

Female elf commander 1/wizard 6/eldritch knight 7

CG Medium humanoid (elf)

Init +1; Senses Listen +9, Spot +9, low-light vision, celestial sight

Languages Celestial, Common, Draconic, Elven, Orc

AC 25, touch 12, flat-footed 24 (+8 armor, +4 shield, +1 Dex, +1 deflection, +1 natural)

hp 61 (14 HD); temporary hp 13

Fort +14, Ref +9, Will +12 (+14 vs. enchantment)

Immune sleep, fear, blinding or dazzling from bright light

DR 10/adamantine (130 points of damage)

Energy buffer 120 points of fire damage

Buff suite *fly*, *greater heroism*, *protection from energy* (fire), *stoneskin*. All these last 13 minutes or more, and are included in the stat block.

Speed 30 ft. (6 squares), fly 60 ft. (good)

Melee +19/+14 +1 *merciful longsword* (1d8+1d6+4 nonlethal, 19–20/x2)

Ranged +16/+11 mwk composite longbow [Str +2] (1d8+2, x3)

Base Atk +10; Grp +13

Combat Gear 8 potions of *cure moderate wounds*, 2 oils of *bless weapon*, potion bracer.

Special Actions combat expertise, direct orders +1, shining strike, spring attack

Spells Prepared (CL 12th, ranged touch +15)

6th – *freezing sphere* (DC 20), *greater heroism*

5th – quickened *magic missile* x2, *wall of force*

4th – *dimension door*, *fire shield*, *greater invisibility*, *stoneskin*

3rd – *fly*, *haste*, *lightning bolt* (DC 17) x2, *protection from energy*

2nd – *glitterdust*, *hideous laughter* (DC 16), *invisibility* x2, *resist energy*

1st – *magic missile* x2, *protection from evil*, *shield*, *true strike*

0 – *detect magic*, *detect poison* x2, *prestidigitation*

Prohibited School necromancy; ~~strikerough~~ spells are already cast.

Abilities Str 17, Dex 12, Con 12, Int 18, Wis 8, Cha 12

SQ mageknight (*Player's Guide*, page 14), celestial sight

Feats Combat Expertise, Dodge, Mobility, Quicken Spell, Shining Strike, Shining Warrior, Spring Attack, Weapon Focus (longsword)

Skills Concentration +21, Diplomacy +20, Listen +9, Knowledge (arcana) +24, Knowledge (nobility & royalty) +14, Knowledge (the planes) +14, Ride +8, Sense Motive +9, Spot +9, Spellcraft +26, Swim +7 [+11 without armor].

Possessions +1 *merciful longsword*, +3 *elven chain*, +3 *mithral buckler*, *ring of protection +1 and counterspells* (currently holds *dispel magic*), *amulet of natural armor +1*, *earrings*

*of intellect +2* (as headband), *gauntlets of ogre power*, masterwork composite longbow [Str +2] w/40 arrows, royal outfit, spellbook (listed spells plus *break enchantment*, *bull's strength*, *charm person*, *contingency*, *daylight*, *disguise self*, *disintegrate*, *dispel magic*, *identify*, *scrying*, *sending*, *sleep*, *summon monster I*, *teleport*, *wall of force*, and *cantrips*)

**Direct Orders (Ex):** Each round as a swift action, Shalosh may choose one of the following types of rolls. She grants every ally within 30 ft. a +1 bonus to rolls of that type for one turn: Attack rolls to confirm critical hits. Attack rolls while charging. Caster level checks. Disarm attempts, both to make and resist. Fortitude saves. Grapple checks. Reflex saves. Sunder attempts, both to make and resist. Trip attempts, both to make and resist. Will saves.

**Celestial Sight (Su):** Shalosh is of a royal elvish bloodline with a distant celestial heritage. She has a unique form of vision in which all living things shine with an inner light, and all inanimate objects and non-living creatures appear as gleaming crystal. In this vision, she can see regardless of light conditions, since the inner light of any living creature effectively illuminates a 60-ft. radius. This does not allow her to see invisible creatures, but she can detect the presence of creatures behind cover or concealment by noticing their glow.

Celestial sight functions just as well in well-lit areas as it does in dark areas. However, magical darkness blocks her line of sight for this ability, and a shadowdancer using its hide in plain sight ability does not appear to emit light.

Shalosh cannot be blinded or dazzled by bright light.

**Shining Warrior (Su):** Shalosh can choose to intensify the light shed by her longsword, increasing from the strength of a *light* spell to that of a *daylight* spell (60 ft. radius, with shadowy light another 60 ft.) as a swift action once a day, lasting 10 minutes. While so illuminated, her sword deals an extra 1d6 points of light damage with each hit, or an extra 2d6 damage against creatures particularly vulnerable to light. Whenever she inflicts a critical hit on a creature with the longsword, that creature must make a Fortitude save (DC 14) or be blinded for 1 round. On a successful save, the creature is merely dazzled for 1 round.

While in an area that is brightly illuminated, Shalosh gains a +2 bonus to saves against fear and negative energy effects.

**Tactics:** Shalosh directs her allies, most likely giving them a bonus to Reflex saves to protect against enemy spells. For the first two rounds she flies, casting *freezing sphere*, *lightning bolt*, and *quickened magic missiles*, focusing her attacks on spellcasters. Thereafter she activates her Shining Warrior ability and begins spring attacking, hoping to strike each of the heroes at least once so that the nonlethal damage from her sword will let them be knocked out without dying. She does not want to kill anyone if she can avoid it. If reduced below 30 hit points, she finds a corner and seals herself in with *wall of force* until she can heal with her potions.

## Ursus, Druidic Inquisitor

CR 11

This hunched half-orc wears the mask of an inquisitor, but is armed with an unmatched scimitar and spear, looking more ready for melee than magic.

Male half-orc aspect of nature druid 11 (UA)

NE Medium humanoid (orc)

Init +8; Senses Listen +3, Spot +3; darkvision 60 ft.

Languages Common, Druidic, Orc

AC 23, touch 14, flat-footed 19 (+5 armor, +4 natural, +4 Dex)

hp 119 (11 HD), DR 10/adamantine (stops 110 damage)

Fort +12, Ref +7, Will +10

Immune effects that restrict movement, poison

Energy Buffer 120 points of fire damage

Buff suite *barkskin*, *bear's endurance*, *bull's strength*, *freedom of movement*, *greater magic fang* (on Fell the bear), *protection from energy* (fire), *speak with animals*, *spider climb*, *stoneskin*. All these last 11 minutes or more, and are included in the stat block.

Speed 30 ft. (6 squares)

Melee +1 scimitar +13/+8 (1d6+9, 18–20/x2) and +1 shortspear +13 (1d6+5) or

Melee +1 scimitar +17/+12 (1d6+9, 18–20/x2)

Ranged +13 +1 shortspear (1d6+9, range increment 20 ft.)

Base Atk +8; Grp +12

Combat Gear x

Combat Options power attack, spontaneous cast (summon nature's ally)

Special Actions aspect of nature 4/day

Spells Prepared (CL 11th; ranged touch +11)

6th – *greater dispel magic*

5th – *cure critical wounds*, *stoneskin*

4th – *dispel magic*, *flame strike*, *freedom of movement*

3rd – *cure moderate wounds*, *dominate animal*, *greater magic fang*, *neutralize poison*, *protection from energy*

2nd – *barkskin*, *bear's endurance*, *bull's strength*, *lesser restoration*, *spider climb*

1st – *cure light wounds* ×5, *speak with animals*

0 – *detect magic* ×6

Strikethrough spells are already cast

Abilities Str 26, Dex 18, Con 22, Int 6, Wis 16, Cha 6

SQ nature sense, resist nature's lure, trackless step, venom immunity, wild empathy +9, woodland stride

Feats Improved Initiative, Power Attack, Reactive

Counterspell, Two-Weapon Fighting

Skills Concentration +20, Ride +18

Possessions *Inquisitor's mask of wisdom* +2, +1 shortspear, +1 scimitar, +2 hide armor

**Aspect of Nature (Su):** Four times a day as a standard action, Ursus can choose two of the following physical alterations. The effect lasts eleven minutes, or until he chooses to end it or adopt a different pair of alterations. This replaces a druid's normal wild shape ability. He begins combat with the agility, endurance, and vigor aspects active.

- **Agility.** +8 Dex, –4 Str
- **Endurance.** +4 Con
- **Flight.** Ursus grows batlike wings that let him fly at speed 30 with average maneuverability
- **Vigor.** +8 Str, –4 Dex

**Reactive Counterspell (Ex):** Ursus can counterspell even when he has not readied an action, as long as he is aware of a spell being cast. If he does so, he gives up his standard action on his next turn, having effectively already used it.

**Tactics:** The dim-witted Ursus lacks spellcraft, but if Etienne shouts for him to counter something, he will. Otherwise, he rides his polar bear into melee, swinging with his mismatched pair of weapons, but confident in his nature-empowered fury. If he uses *summon nature's ally* for anything, it is to summon more bears.

## Fell, Polar Bear Animal Companion CR n/a

Stats are identical to normal polar bear, except this one benefits from *greater magic fang* (+2 enhancement bonus to its bite) and knows the tricks combat riding and attack unnatural creatures.



### Illusory Elf Warriors

CR 2

Male elf fighter 2

N Medium humanoid (elf)

Init +3; Senses Listen +3, Spot +3, low-light vision

Languages Common, Elf

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AC 19, touch 13, flat-footed 16 (+5 armor, +1 shield, +3 Dex)

hp 15 (2 HD)

Fort +4, Ref +3, Will +1 (+3 vs. enchantment)

Immune sleep

---

Speed 20 ft. (4 squares)

Melee +5 mwk longsword (1d8+1, 19–20)

Ranged +6 mwk longbow (1d8+1, ×3), point blank shot, precise shot

Base Atk +2; Grp +3

---

Abilities Str 13, Dex 17, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 8

Feats Point Blank Shot, Precise Shot, Weapon Focus (longsword)

Skills Climb +2, Ride +8

### Illusory Orc Soldiers

CR 2

Male half-orc fighter 2

LN Medium humanoid (orc)

Init +1; Senses Listen –1, Spot –1, darkvision

Languages Common, Orc

---

AC 19, touch 10, flat-footed 19 (+7 armor, +2 shield) hp 16 (2 HD)

Fort +7, Ref +1, Will –1

---

Speed 20 ft. (4 squares)

Melee +7 mwk battleaxe (1d8+3, ×3)

Ranged +4 mwk shortbow (1d6, ×3)

Base Atk +2; Grp +5

---

Abilities Str 17, Dex 13, Con 14, Int 8, Wis 8, Cha 10

Feats Great Fortitude, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (battleaxe)

Skills Intimidate +2, Ride +3

## 41, Master of the Temple

CR 18

As this brown-skinned man stalks toward you, his forearms transform into bear-like claws. You can feel his soul grappling with yours as his body leads the attack. Despite his confident fury, his eyes are always thinking, pondering ways to blight the world.

Male human monk 3/monastic psion (seer) 15

NE Medium humanoid (evil)

Init +3; Senses Listen +8, Spot +8; true seeing

Languages Common

Immune divination, mind control

AC 36, touch 25, flat-footed 33 (+3 Dex, +8 Wisdom, +11 inertial armor, +4 insight); deflect arrows

hp 127 (18 HD)

Fort +12, Ref +11 (evasion), Will +22 (+24 vs. enchantment)

Speed 40 ft. (8 squares)

Melee +16/+16 claws of the beast (4d6+3, 19–20/x2)

Base Atk +9; Grp +12

Combat Options psionics, stunning fist (7/day, DC 25)

Psionics (ML 15th; 240 pp; 94 spent so far)

8th – *hypercognition*

7th – *divert teleport, personal mind blank, ultrablast*

6th – *fuse flesh, greater precognition, psionic contingency*

5th – *psionic major creation, psionic true seeing, psychic crush, shatter mind blank*

4th – *correspond, psionic divination, remote viewing, telekinetic maneuver*

3rd – *fate link, forced share pain, mental barrier, psionic blast*

2nd – *clairvoyant sense, claws of the beast, object reading, recall agony, sensitivity to psychic impressions*

1st – *defensive precognition, empathy, inertial armor, offensive precognition, sense link*

Abilities Str 17, Dex 16, Con 18, Int 13, Wis 26, Cha 11

SQ renewal

Feats Cleave, Deflect Arrows, Expanded Knowledge (animal affinity), Expanded Knowledge (claws of the beast), Great Cleave, Greater Psionic Fist, Improved Critical (claws), Iron Will, Power Attack, Psionic Fist, Psionic Meditation, Stunning Fist, Unavoidable Strike, Weapon Focus (claws)

Skills Concentration +25, Jump +15, Knowledge (religion) +22, Sense Motive +14 Spellcraft +16, Tumble +11

Possessions none

**Monastic Psion (Ex):** 41's primary ability score for his psionic powers is Wisdom, not Intelligence.

**Psionic Focus (Ex):** As a move action, 41 can make a Concentration check (DC 20) to attain focus. He can expend his focus to resolve an attack as a touch attack, or to have an attack deal +4d6 damage. When he makes a touch attack, he usually power attacks.

**Renewal (Ex):** If 41's projected body is destroyed, it returns at full power one round later. He can only truly be destroyed by capturing his soul or killing his physical body.

### SOUL MAGIC, NOT PSIONICS

If you are not using the psionics rules, this simplified version covers all you need to handle 41's powers.

**Psionics (Sp):** When 41 uses one of these powers, there is no special sound or visual display, but those around him are simply aware that he has tapped a power, as clearly as they would notice someone casting a spell. The caster level for all these abilities is 15th.

Ten times per day he can use one of the following – *psychic crush, recall agony, telekinetic maneuver, ultrablast*.

Four times per day he can use one of the following – *lion's charge or painful strike*.

Once per day he can use any one of *bear's endurance, bull's strength, cat's grace, eagle's splendor, fox's cunning, or owl's wisdom*. While so affected, he takes on minor physical traits of the appropriate creature.

Once per day he can use *forced share pain*.

**Forced share pain** – If a creature in close range fails a save (Fort DC 25), 41 takes half the damage dealt to him for the next 15 rounds, and the target of this ability takes the other half. If the save succeeds, there is no effect.

**Lion's charge** – 41 can charge and make a full attack in the same round. Activating this ability is a swift action, and it only affects him on the round he activates it.

**Painful strike** – 41's natural attacks deal an additional 1d6 nonlethal damage. This bonus lasts 15 rounds.

**Psychic crush** – If a creature in close range fails a save (Will DC 23), he is reduced to –1 hit points. If he succeeds, he takes 6d6 damage instead.

**Recall agony** – One target in medium range takes 14d6 damage (Will DC 25 half) as pains from his past return to him.

**Telekinetic maneuver** – 41 can bull rush, disarm, grapple, or trip as if his base attack bonus were +15 and his Strength modifier +8. He can do this once per round, as long as he maintains concentration.

**Ultrablast** – 41 infuses horrible elements of anguished and tortured souls into the souls of those within 15 ft, dealing 15d6 damage (Will DC 25 half).

## APPENDIX TWO: NEW FEATS AND MAGIC

Several of the characters in this adventure have new feats or new spells.

### NEW FEATS

#### Elemental Control [General]

You possess great control over one of the classical four elements – air, earth, fire, or water.

**Prerequisite:** Knowledge (arcana) 15 ranks, ability to cast six spells of the chosen element, at least one of which must be 6th level.

Spells with the air, cold, electricity, or sonic descriptor, or which grant a fly speed count as “air” spells. Those with the acid or water descriptor count as “water” spells. Other spells may count even if they lack the precise elemental descriptor, at the game master’s discretion.

**Benefit:** Your caster level for spells with the descriptor of your chosen element increases by +1.

You can use one of the following sets of powers, as appropriate to your chosen element. For spell-like abilities, your caster level is equal to your normal caster level.

**Air.** You can use *gust of wind* at will as a spell-like ability. You gain cold, electricity, and sonic resistance 5.

**Earth.** You gain the spell-like ability to use *stone shape* at will as a spell-like ability. You are immune to petrification and your natural armor bonus increases by +1.

**Fire.** You can use *produce flame* at will as a spell-like ability. You gain fire resistance 10, and are immune to the fire damage from you own spells.

**Water.** You can use *create water* at will as a spell-like ability. You can breathe underwater. You gain acid resistance 10, and are immune to the acid damage from you own spells.

#### Elite Training [Fighter]

Choose a weapon you have weapon specialization in. You have elite training with weapons of that type.

**Prerequisite:** Weapon Focus, Weapon Specialization, Fighter level 8th (or Fighter level 4th and base attack bonus +10).

**Benefit:** With the chosen weapon and all weapons with the same damage type, you gain a +2 bonus to attack and damage. If the weapon has multiple damage types, choose one of its damage types.

#### Lashing Whip [Fighter]

You threaten the area around you with a whip.

**Prerequisite:** Exotic Weapon Proficiency (whip), base attack bonus +1.

**Benefit:** When armed with a whip or other whip-like weapon, you threaten any square your whip can reach, except for squares within your natural reach.

**Normal:** A whip has 15-foot reach, but does not threaten that area.

#### Secret Keeper [General]

You have sworn yourself to keeping secrets, and your oath gives you power.

**Prerequisite:** Base Will save +3.

**Benefit:** You cannot be compelled by magic or torture to reveal any secrets, neither by telling the secret nor by guiding your foes to a secret location. Coercion and threats to those you care for can change your mind, but pain and magic cannot crack your will in this regard.

### Spellduelist [General]

You have studied the art of spell dueling, perhaps under the famed evoker Gabal in the small school he maintains in Gate Pass, or at the Lyceum academy in Seaquen.

**Prerequisite:** Ability to cast spells.

**Benefit:** You gain Bluff and Sense Motive as bonus class skills.

You know how to conceal your spellcasting. Whenever you cast a spell you may make a Bluff check, and any onlooker who would respond to you casting a spell – such as by attempting to counter it, taking an attack of opportunity, or performing a readied action – makes a Sense Motive checks opposing your Bluff check. If you win the opposed check, you succeed in faking out the onlooker, causing their action to go off just before you begin casting your spell. Countered spells are wasted, and attacks of opportunity that hit you do not force you to make a Concentration check, since the damage was not dealt when you were actually casting the spell. If you fail the opposed check, the onlooker's action goes off normally.

### Third Hand [Fighter]

You can use your whip as if it were a spare hand.

**Prerequisite:** Dex 13, Exotic Weapon Proficiency (whip), Weapon Finesse.

**Benefit:** When armed with a whip, you are treated as having a free hand that can reach as far as your whip's reach, which you can use to manipulate objects, throw weapons, or even grapple.

Grapple with a whip as you would with an unarmed strike, except that if successful you deal your whip's damage instead of your unarmed damage. You must enter your opponent's square if you want to maintain a grapple, or you can simply use additional attacks (if any) to make grapple checks, then release your opponent at the end of your turn. With a successful grapple check, you can perform any of the following actions.

- ♦ Deal your whip's damage to your opponent.
- ♦ Move at ½ speed and bring your opponent with you (he keeps the same distance relative to you).
- ♦ Pull your opponent one square closer to you (up to an adjacent square).

## NEW SPELLS

### Gabal's Viral Flame

Abjuration/Evocation [Fire]

**Level:** Sor/Wiz 6

**Components:** V, S

**Casting Time:** 1 standard action

**Range:** Long (400 ft. + 40 ft./level)

**Area:** 20-ft. radius spread

**Duration:** Instantaneous

**Saving Throw:** Reflex half

**Spell Resistance:** Yes

Hungry flames sear creatures in the area you target. Their fire deals 1d6 points of fire damage per level (maximum 15d6), but the flames feed on antimagic and energy wards, and actually become stronger in their presence.

In addition to its damage, *Gabal's viral flame* functions similar to the area dispel option of *greater dispel magic*, except that it can only dispel effects that provide resistance or immunity to energy damage. For each effect that is dispelled, *Gabal's viral flame* deals an additional 2d6 points of fire damage per level of the defensive spell to the creature or object that the ward was on.

If someone attempts to counterspell *Gabal's viral flame*, your spell attempts to transform the counterspell into additional evocation magic. Make an opposed caster level check with the caster of the counterspell. If you succeed, the counterspell is itself countered, and *Gabal's viral flame* deals an additional 2d6 points of fire damage per level of the counterspell to that spell's caster. (For inquisitors, their rebuke magic ability counts as a spell of the highest level they can cast.)

For both these effects, your caster level check caps at 1d20+15.

### Overmaster

Abjuration

**Level:** Clr 5, Sor/Wiz 5

**Components:** V, S

**Casting Time:** 1 standard action

**Range:** Medium (100 ft. + 10 ft./level)

**Target:** One spellcaster

**Duration:** Instantaneous

**Saving Throw:** None

**Spell Resistance:** No

This spell functions like *dispel magic*, except that it can only counter spells as they are being cast. Make a dispel check, 1d20 + caster level (maximum of +20) against DC 11 + caster level of the spell you're trying to counter. If you succeed, the spell is countered, and you can choose to cast the spell yourself as a free action. The spell functions as if cast by its original caster, except that it originates from you, and that you control it and make all choices regarding its effects and targeting.

Since this spell takes a standard action to cast, you must either ready an action to cast it in response to a spell, or must be able to counter spells reactively.

For example, Katrina (sorcerer 9) casts a *fireball*, but the inquisitor Kreven (cleric 17) uses *overmaster* to counter it. He may then immediately cast *fireball*, though its caster level will only be 9.

## APPENDIX THREE: THE TORCH OF THE BURNING SKY

The Torch was created approximately sixty years ago by chance. It is a bone devil's thigh bone that was used as a club to slay a trumpet archon in the presence of a very young Trilla, the psionic gold dragon now known as the Mother of Dreams, who plays a pivotal role in adventure ten, *Sleep, Ye Cursed Child*. The Torch combined the teleportation powers of the devil, the divine energy of the archon, and the ability of Trilla to create souls from her dreams, and thus the Torch could devour those souls for a limitless supply of power.

Normally the Torch just looks like a somewhat jagged and fire-cracked femur, 40 inches long, wrapped in eerily smooth white skin around one end, marking the handle. The item appears primitive, and Coaltongue often adorned it with tiny ceramic beads on leather cords. When the heroes acquire it, the Torch possesses no magical powers, though it detects as possessing overwhelming conjuration, evocation, and necromantic magic. Once the heroes complete the trial of the Temple and recreate a sliver of Trilla's soul, the Torch gains a fraction of its former power, but even this power is hard to wield.

Any creature who tries to pick up the Torch must roll 1d20, and adds his base attack bonus, his Charisma modifier, and the number of Leader feats he possesses (see the *Player's Guide*). If he beats DC 30, the Torch accepts him as a wielder. Otherwise it inflicts a negative level on him. One day later, the creature must make a Fortitude save (DC 34) to avoid permanent level loss.

Additionally, if another creature succeeds in getting the Torch to accept it, the Torch attempts to consume the soul of its former wielder. The former wielder feels flames bathing him, wracking him with pain. Each round he gains a negative level, and must succeed a Fortitude save (DC 20) to take any actions because of the overwhelming agony. Once the Torch has inflicted ten negative levels it stops, but one day later the creature must make a Fortitude save (DC 34) for each negative level to avoid permanent level loss.

### POWERS OF THE TORCH

The Torch functions as a +5 *ghost touch vicious morningstar*.

#### Lesser Powers

As a free action, the wielder can cause flame to emerge from the head of the Torch, which lasts until dismissed. This flame can be as dim as a normal torch, or bright enough to illuminate a mile in every direction (and to be seen out to the horizon).

The wielder can instead have the Torch conjure a single-headed axe of flame as a free action, which glows as brightly as a normal torch. While so activated, the Torch functions as a +5 *flaming burst ghost touch keen vicious battleaxe*.

The wielder and anyone who travels with him takes no fire damage from teleportation.

#### Greater Powers

To activate the Torch's greater powers, the wielder first must use the Torch to slay a living creature with a minimum number of Hit Dice (the exact number depends on the power). Whenever he does, the Torch draws in the creature's soul, and the wielder becomes aware of what powers are now available. If he does not activate any of the Torch's powers within a minute, the Torch releases the souls it has captured, and it cannot use a greater power until the wielder slays someone else.

All of these abilities have a caster level of 25.

**Minimum HD 5.** Teleport the wielder up to 150 feet as a swift action.

**Minimum HD 10.** Cast *greater teleport* as a full-round action (Will DC 29 negates). This effect can only be used within sight of the sky. This ability can only be used three times per day.

**Minimum HD 15.** Cast *widened enlarged empowered flame strike* as a standard action (Reflex DC 27 for half damage). This ability can only be used once per day.

The greatest power of the Torch, to teleport an entire army at once, will not be available until the heroes bring the Torch to the Mother of Dreams in adventure ten.

#### Destroying the Torch

Like any artifact, the Torch is not easy to destroy. It is thematically connected to the myth of the Aquiline Heart, representing the dragon which devours souls in order to gain power. Thus, it can be destroyed by using it to consume the source of its own soul, Trilla, the dragon known as the Mother of Dreams (see adventure ten, *Sleep, Ye Cursed Child*) or by bathing it in the blood of the Aquiline Heart, which satisfies its one unfulfilled conquest (see adventure twelve, *The Beating of the Aquiline Heart*). Just which condition you use depends on which order you play the last three adventures of this campaign saga.

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# Trial of Echoed Souls

by Ari Marmell and Ryan Nock

The heroes stand poised to seize control of their fates and the ongoing war, but only if they are first to claim the Torch of the Burning Sky.

Seeking the legendary artifact of Emperor Coaltongue, the heroes explore a haunted forest and must face its dangers while contending with patrols sent by two armies, who are racing to capture it. From there, the heroes must travel to a sentient psionic temple, where they face shadows of their past in a physical and mental trial that could alter their very beings.

Can the heroes locate the Torch of the Burning Sky, and do they have what it takes to undergo the Trial of Echoed Souls?

A fantasy adventure for 13th-level characters

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