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FANE OF THE WITCH KING

By Steve Montano

Fane of the Witch King is a d20 fantasy adventure
designed for 4-6 characters of 10th level and beyond



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Fane of the Witch King

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Introduction

An ancient temple in a long-dead evil city has been discovered. While many adventurers see the discovery of this city as an opportunity for exploration and adventure, they are not the only ones who want in: a small but powerful army of evil creatures also desires to plunder the remnants of the dreaded City of Skull & Shadow, and through their actions they might unleash evil forces that even they cannot imagine. Ultimately, it is up to the PCs to stop them.

In the *Fane of the Witch King*, Player Characters (PCs) have the chance to explore ancient and lost underground depths, battle an evil crime lord bent on exploiting a source of evil magic, and prevent corrupted creatures from opening a gate to the Abyss.

This module is an epic D20 fantasy adventure designed for a party of 4-6 PCs of 4th to 6th level. If played in its entirety, *Fane of the Witch King* should take PCs from 4th to 10th level.

PREPARATION

The Dungeon Master (DM) needs copies of all three Core Rulebooks, published by Wizards of the Coast, in order to run this adventure.

Bolded text is to be read aloud or paraphrased to the players. Monster and Non-Player Character (NPC) statistics are provided in the body of the adventure, while the full statistics for new magic items are detailed in the Appendix.

ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

THE CITY OF SKULL & SHADOW

Ages ago, in a time so lost that even the eldest elves have no recollection of it, the world was a much darker place. Armies of fiends and hordes of undead swept across the landscape in unending waves. Dark generals, many of whom claimed to be direct descendants of terrible Gods, ruled from the Doomspires — towering fortresses of burning skulls and calcified human remains. The good people of the world held up inside of fortified fortress-towns, ever ready to repel the next wave of dark attackers.

In a time when little of the world was good, the dark city of Krezzel Dul was the worst. A metropolis of fear and pain, Krezzel Dul was erected to honor Osenkej, a powerful and twisted fiend prince who was the result of crossbreeding — his father was a balor, his mother a terrifyingly powerful red wyrm. Osenkej, also known as the Witch King, granted his followers vast quanti-

ties of dark knowledge and terrible power. From the dreaded City of Skull & Shadow, as Krezzel Dul would later come to be known, the followers of the Witch King waged terrible wars on the surrounding lands. In the center of the evil city stood a powerful temple devoted to their deity: the Ebon Fane. In this dark citadel was spilled the blood and cries of hundreds of innocents subjected to horrifying rites and dark rituals that ensured they not pass into the afterlife without knowing the full extents of pain, suffering and humiliation. The foul priests of this temple found no deed too horrifying and no taboo so inviolate that it could not be broken: such was the black love they showed for their King. Eventually, with the aid of the Gods of Good, the evil centers of power on the world began to fall. Powerful armies led by celestials and gold dragons slowly reclaimed the world, inch by inch — though many died in this series of terrible conflicts, the forces of darkness were eventually routed. The Doomspires were toppled, and the various necromantic armies and chaotic cultists were forced into hiding once more. Though it would take centuries before the land and its people were restored to a normal state, the renaissance had begun.

Meanwhile, the city of Krezzel Dul was torn from within by internal strife. While the city was gripped in the tight control of the Brotherhood of the Black Sun — a powerful cult wholly devoted to the Witch King — many of its citizens detested their dark lord, and secretly desired that he be destroyed. A small, militant group of monks called the Veiled Ones thus began acting in secret against the Brotherhood's seat of power: the Veiled Ones sabotaged the Brotherhood's necromantic experiments and quietly freed many of the order's condemned prisoners. As the move against evil began in other parts of the world, the Veiled Ones took this as a sign, and launched a full revolt upon the leadership of Krezzel Dul.

Whether or not their coup would have been successful will never be known. The Witch King, outraged that any of his followers could turn against his "benevolent" rule, released a horde of fiends upon the city. In less than a day, Krezzel Dul was reduced to a lifeless shell, its inhabitants slaughtered by the demonic armies of the Witch King. Still not content with his revenge, Osenkej released a wave of necromantic gas crafted by the Brotherhood's twisted imaginations — soon, the City of Skull & Shadow truly earned its name, for its inhabitants were twisted undead monstrosities.

When the armies of good & light arrived to sack Krezzel Dul, they found it a much more formidable target than they ever would have imagined. Soldiers captured by the dark city's inhabitants were subjected to horrifying experiments, only to return to haunt their former comrades as undead horrors. Aided by the fiends

that faithfully served the Witch King, the undead legions of Krezzel Dul seemed unstoppable. At the last, the forces of good called upon the power of their deities, and wiped the black city from the face of the earth in an enormous maelstrom of holy power. Not even dust remained.

THE DWARVES OF KOTH

Centuries later, when the dark war had faded into legend and myth, the enterprising dwarves of the Koth clan were expanding their already formidable underground city of Tarec Non. The dwarves of Koth, whom had been entrusted by their God, Crugas, to protect a number of holy relics, scouted out isolated areas, far away from their grand city, in which to bury both these relics and other items of great import to their clan (mainly their finely crafted weapons). These weapons storage facilities and reliquaries were to be placed in scattered, sealed vaults, each with a full dwarf garrison stationed nearby to defend it.

Little did the Kothian dwarves realize that one such vault was built directly over the last remains of Krezzel Dul, an area protected from destruction and detection by powerful magic. It was only too late that the Kothian dwarves discovered they had built a vault directly over the Ebon Fane – the only vestige of the City of Skull & Shadow to have survived the wrath of the holy armies.

Soon, after the dwarves breached the Fane during the vault's construction, malign spirits and entrapped demons began to pour out and prey upon the dwarf workers and soldiers. Kothians disappeared in the dark caverns, only to return as undead hunters and fiendish monstrosities.

But worse was what the dwarves discovered even deeper, beneath the Ebon Fane: the Black Vault. Before they were destroyed by the Witch King's wrath, the elder members of the Brotherhood of the Black Sun crafted a vault that contained their most powerful relics, weapons and items of foul presence, including such horrifying items as the Hungerstone, the Blood Grail, the Bone Cross and the Soulflame. Also located in this Vault were the key and the door to a place called the Kiss of Doom, a magical gate that led directly to a region of the Abyss controlled by the Witch King. The Brotherhood had never opened this gate: even they feared what might come out. Though the gate had been opened when the Witch King punished the city of Krezzel Dul, it had been sealed upon the city's destruction.

Desperate to seal the place up again, the Kothian dwarves used magic and engineering to collapse the mine shafts about the weapons vault, and therefore the entrance into the last temple of the City of Skull & Shadow. The undead and trapped fiends that guarded the temple sensed what the Kothians were up to, and

attempted to stop them; many dwarves were trapped inside of the collapsed and cursed place, among them the bearer of a magic key that could open the inner vault doors themselves. The Kothian dwarves placed powerful enchantments and runes about the entire area, hoping to keep out foolish intruders. But the dwarves of Koth thought the best defense for this foul place was secrecy: if no one knew of the Ebon Fane, none would come to disturb it.

And, for several hundred years, they were right.

THE GHUL LEGION

A powerful, secret army known as the Ghul Legion recently discovered the Kothian weapons vault. The Ghul Legion is a formidable group of dark elves, gnolls, and powerful monsters that have all bound together beneath the common banner of a cadre of evil stone giants called the Ravagers and their black dragon leader, Ghul Lacronus. This group ultimately seeks to launch a full invasion of the surface world for plunder and conquest; since that goal is a long-time off, the Legion currently occupies itself with searching for ways to increase its influence and power, all in secret.

Recently, the Legion has made a number of surface-world contacts willing to aid them, among them a powerful wizard crime lord named Crithian Raine. Raine, who has been forced away from his native city of Tanith due to one too many indiscretions in regards to other organized crime figures, has found that the deal suits him nicely: in exchange for providing information and magic to the Legion, he has been rewarded with a great deal of money and authority within their ranks. It was the Ghul soldiers under his command that uncovered the Kothian vault, and it was under his authority that the exploration of the full area has begun. Raine is well aware of the history of Krezzel Dul, just as he knows of the Brotherhood of the Black Sun and the great advances they made in the fields of magic and magic item creation. Raine specifically would like to recover the *Blood Grail* (an item that bequeaths the powers of undeath without an actual undead state) or the *Bone Cross* (which is rumored to be useful in slaying beings of celestial blood).

To facilitate exploration, the Legion has helped Raine convert an old Kothian watchtower located near the vault into a fortified stronghold. From here, Raine and his forces continue to explore the area. As of yet, the Legion has not managed to penetrate very far into the vault, due to the formidable traps and an unbreakable door that seals the way forward. Raine correctly suspects that the key to unlock the door is located somewhere in the area surrounding the vault, but he has thus far not been able to retrieve it.

The Ghul Legion shall remain a constant thorn over the course of this adventure. Their symbol is a flam-



ing, horned skull, which all members wear upon their person, usually as a brand, scar or tattoo in a prominent area (such as the forehead).

ADVENTURE SYNOPSIS

This is a site-based adventure. At their own whim, or at the behest of outside authorities, the PCs investigate the remote Kothian excavation site, only to discover that some sort of organized force of creatures has taken control of the area. This force is obviously intent on penetrating the Kothian vault. It won't take much investigation for the PCs to discover that these creatures are members of the Ghul Legion, and that the item they need to accomplish this task – a key – has been taken by a powerful red dragon that lairs in an area near the vault.

Eventually, either the PCs or the Legion get their hands on the key, and the full weapons vault can be explored. The vault is protected by powerful dwarven traps, and is populated by a few of minions of Krezzel Dul.

Either the PCs or the Ghul Legion are likely to move past the vault and into the Ebon Fane itself. The Ebon Fane proves to be a most dangerous place, filled with undead, dangerous traps, and a few of the Witch King's more diabolic servants. By this point, the PCs are battling not only with Raine's soldiers of the Ghul Legion, but they must also contend with more powerful agents sent by the Ravagers, who through their actions may inadvertently open the way to the Kiss of Doom. With careful investigation, the PCs might learn of exactly where they are, and of why it is so important that the Fane be sealed once more.

At some point, the PCs likely take the fight to Crithian Raine and assault the Ghul Keep. A dangerous proposition, at best, this course of events not only remove the major enemy from the scope of the adventure, but also places in the PCs hands a number of useful items that could potentially help them survive their time in the Black Vault.

Once the PCs are able to reach the Black Vault, they must face the terrifying traps and guardians placed there by the Witch King and his bride, Kytarra Bane. The last confrontation with the Ravagers should occur here, and, with any luck, the PCs can even learn how to seal the Ebon Fane forever, using the defensive magic left behind by the Brotherhood of the Black Sun.

Things could go wrong, however. If they're not careful, the PCs may find that the Kiss of Doom has been opened (either by themselves or the Ravagers), and the only way to stop a horde of fiendish enemies from swarming the world is to pass through to a place called the Stone of Fears and seal the gate. To do this, they must face Kytarra Bane, the Witch Queen.

Of course, the PCs in your game may choose a completely different path – despite its site-based orientation, there are any number of outcomes to Fane of the Witch King.

HOOKS

The easiest way to involve the PCs in Fane of the Witch King is to place the excavation site directly in the PCs path. If your PCs are already partaking in an adventure in underground ruins or the like, the excavation area could literally be uncovered over the course of another adventure. Once the PCs investigate the area and learn of the Ghul Legions involvement, they likely are sufficiently motivated to undertake the events detailed in the adventure.

Alternatively, the DM could present an item of some value or important to the PCs, and then reveal it to be either in the hands of Crithian Raine or else buried somewhere deep inside of the Ebon Fane.

The PCs might already be enemies of the Ghul Legion or Crithian Raine, and, through investigation or a short introductory adventure, they learn of their enemies' interest in the remains of Krezzel Dul.

Finally, the PCs might know the story of Krezzel Dul. A powerful Good-aligned Church or a similar organization may have seen telling signs that a great evil is going to be released if events in and around the Ebon Fane are allowed to unfold at their present course. The PCs, as recognized agents of good, could be hired to investigate and to ensure that no such evil is released. (It would be particularly ironic if, through such a mission, the PCs are the ones who actually open the Kiss of Doom – a self-fulfilling prophecy, of sorts, could come to pass.)

Naturally, an evil party may be drawn into Krezzel Dul's remains by the promise of wealth, power and magical secrets, just as Crithian Raine has been. Evil PCs may also be enemies of Crithian Raine – he is not known for his ability to win friends, but for his ability to kill them off...

RUNNING THE ADVENTURE

This adventure is a mixture of site-based, "dungeon crawl" elements mixed with floating encounters. While site-based areas wait for the PCs (or NPCs) to happen along, the floating encounters can occur whenever the DM wishes within the framework of the adventure. Each chapter details an event or area that the PCs could potentially explore or undertake; specific events to occur within the framework of an area are detailed near the beginning of each chapter.

This adventure should not be run in a linear manner.

FANE OF THE WITCH KING

While the layout of the Krezzel Dul complex necessitates that some areas (such as the Weapons Vault) be explored before others (such as the Ebon Fane), the PCs should have ample time to branch out, retreat and rest, hunt down the Ghul Legion, or even embark on side adventures. The events in any given chapter aid the DM in keeping the plot and flow of the action rolling.

SETTING

The Kothian excavation site, and the resultant dungeons that lie beneath, can be set in any remote wilderness area, though they would most likely reside in a barren mountainous region. This adventure assumes that there is no sign of civilization for many, many miles – this is

how the Ghul Legion has acted in secret up to this point. Place this adventure in any remote wilderness area you choose.

There is no reason, however, that the dungeon could not lay near a civilized area – or even directly underneath one. The Kothian dwarves told no one of the vaults existence, in the hopes that no evil creatures would come and seek it out. This plan may have backfired, however – unaware that anything evil lay beneath, settlers could have built a town or even a small city over the area. Because it was, until recently, so well hidden, there is no reason that the dungeons described herein couldn't lie beneath any civilized area of your choice, whether it is a small village or a sprawling metropolis.



Chapter One: Excavation

This section details the excavation site dug by the Kothian dwarves so long ago. Now it serves as the main staging area from which the Ghul Legion makes its forays into the Kothian weapons vault, and it also houses the lairs of several formidable underground creatures – including one that holds the only means of truly penetrating the Ebon Fane.

Crithian Raine's personal agents first discovered the Kothian excavation site quite by mistake. After assassinating a rival crime lord named Thestrul Blackrock, a dwarven slave-trader, Raine needed a proper place to dispose of the body, while at the same time pinning Blackrock's death on someone else. Blackrock was known for making excursions into the Underdark, where he would sell his slaves to various evil creatures for higher prices than he could fetch on the surface. Thus, logically, Raine believes that if Blackrock's body were found in the Underdark, everyone would presume that he asked for one price too high and met his end.

During a battle with a group of fierce grimlocks, Raine's apprentice and lover, Resaana, accidentally blasted away a wall that had been weathered by time and the passage of a number of purple worms. Beyond this newly destroyed wall lay a sizable cavern that had obviously been dug out by intelligent hands, but that had been left relatively undisturbed for many years. After further digging, Resaana discovered the magical dwarven runes that protected the weapons vault.

Now, just a few weeks later, the Ghul Legion has settled into the area to a small degree – they plan on moving more forces in once they penetrate deeper into the vault. Most of the Legion's time here has been spent fortifying the abandoned Kothian fortress of Yor-Kath, located northeast of the weapons vault. Small teams of Ghul agents have ventured into the weapons vault and cleaned out what they can, but the presence of powerful traps, guardians and impenetrable doors has made extensive exploration difficult. The Legion also recently came across the lair of a young red dragon named Hellstorm, who has not taken kindly to intruders in "her" domain. Raine would rather avoid any confrontation with the beast, but through magical research he has come to the conclusion that the magical key that allows further access to the weapons vault most likely lies in Hellstorm's possession. Raine's one attempt at bribery utterly failed – Hellstorm has no desire to enter into any dealings with "lesser" creatures. For the moment, Raine must wait until he has more forces available, which the Ravagers shall be sending shortly (see Part Three for more details).

In the meantime, the Legion's relatively lax grip on

the area should make initial exploration by PCs a fairly straightforward affair.

CAVERN FEATURES

Unless otherwise noted, all areas are unlit: PCs have to provide their own light source to explore the excavation site. The ceilings of the caverns reach up to 200 feet in height (100 feet from the more elevated areas). All walls are unworked stone.

Unworked Stone Walls: thickness varies; Hardness 8; hp 900 per 5-foot-square section; Break (DC 65); Climb (DC 22).

I: CAVERN ENTRANCE

The tunnel depicted on the map leads back to a greater series of caverns that connect to the Underdark. At the DMs option, the entrance tunnel could lead up into a civilized area or directly to the surface.

The narrow tunnel is some 20 feet wide – the upper reaches stretch well out of sight, possibly going up as far as 100 feet or more. Thick drops of green water drip from the ceiling at a constant rate, and form in deep pools that line the cavern floor like open wounds.

The tunnel comes to an abrupt end at a massive cavern, the complete depths of which are well beyond your ability to discern. A nearly vertical slope, about 15-foot long, dips downward to the cavern floor at an eighty-degree angle; the slope is composed of loose sediment and cracked gray stone. The smell of meat and decay wafts upward on an unnatural wind that sweeps through the cavern.

The slope dips 100 feet; characters that attempt to descend without the aid of ropes or magic are in for a dangerous fall (10d6 damage). The slope is DC 15 to climb or descend. PCs who make too much noise may attract the attention of the sentries in Area 2 (see below).

2: THE GREAT CAVERN (EL 4)

This cavern is enormous, and stretches to the northwest and straight up for as far as your eyes can see. A great deal of rubble, refuse and stone lies about in haphazard piles. Here and there are mining implements and digging tools, half-buried in the loose sediment and obviously very, very old. Every step sends vibrant echoes through the great cavern.

Due to the presence of loose rocks and the acoustic qualities of this cavern, all Move Silently checks are made at a –5 penalty. The mining tools and implements

are effectively worthless, but they are scattered about the chamber, many of them broken and all of them several hundred years old. Many are marked with an image of a burning grail, the symbol of the Koth dwarf clan.

The Rift (EL 1): Running down the center of the cavern, to a length of about 65 feet, is a 30 foot deep rift in the stone floor. This rift was created by the great tremors that resulted when the Kothian dwarves sealed this area off so long ago. The walls of the rift are difficult (DC 20) to climb, and any that falls take 3d6 damage.

Creatures: Lurking near the central rock structure are **3 gnolls**, the bottom of the command chain in the Ghul Legion. These gnolls are kept in line by the more powerful bugbears and dark elves, and are assigned every unenviable task imaginable, such as keeping watch here on both the entrance to the excavation area (Area 1) and Hellstorm's lair (Area 4). More than one gnoll has lost its life to the young dragon, and these gnolls are none-too-excited about being posted so close to the area. They are keen sentries, and attempt to take the PCs by surprise should they detect their approach. These gnolls are armed with a ballista on a swivel mount, which they keep at the "X" marked on the map.

Gnoll (3): CR 1; hp 13, 10, 9; see the *MM*.

Tactics: Two of the gnolls initiate combat with missile fire and try to draw the PCs closer. The gnoll manning the ballista fires as soon as the PCs come near the rift in the center of the room. The ballista makes a ranged touch attack roll at +1, inflicting 3d6 damage (x3 on a crit), and has a range increment of 120 feet. Reloading the ballista requires 3 full-round actions. The gnolls have only 5 ballista bolts.

Treasure: Each of the gnolls carries a suit of scale mail, a large steel shield, a battleaxe, a longbow, 10 arrows and 5 gp.

Development: If any of these gnolls escapes, it retreats to Area 6 and warn the other gnolls there, that are ready for the PCs when they approach.

3: CLOAKER DEN (EL 5)

The two entrances to this area rise back up to the level of Area 1, about 100 feet below the surface of the rest of the excavation complex. These slopes are DC 15 to climb. The entrances and the center of Area 3 are dark and cold.

The steep tunnel empties into an area deathly cold and thick with shadows. The floor is littered with bone and refuse. A low moan emanates from somewhere in the darkness up ahead, resounding to a thunderous scope in this deep cavern.

The Ghul Legion avoids this area, for they have already lost a few of their number to its inhabitant. The narrow tunnel in the back of the area winds steeply

downward towards Area 4. The tunnel is DC 20 to Climb down, and those who fail fall and tumble all of the way down suffering 10d6 falling damage.

Creatures: Waiting in the darkness is a dangerous and cruelly sadistic subterranean hunter: a **cloaker**. This particular cloaker has only arrived in this area recently, drawn to an area where it knew that fresh food and victims to torture and kill would be arriving shortly.

Cloaker: CR 5; hp 53; see the *MM*.

Tactics: Unless the PCs are traveling without any form of light source, the cloaker is aware of their approach. It uses its shadow shift ability to create a mirror image effect for itself (on an average roll, this generates 4 mirror images). Due to its colorization, the PCs must make a Spot check against the cloaker's Hide check (+12) to even see it.

When the PCs are in the room, the cloaker emits its moan, producing a nausea effect. After this, it deals with any PCs that are not bent in pain, using its engulf attack to take down one victim while lashing out at others with its tail.

Treasure: Besides the remains of two gnolls, each of which still wears a suit of scale mail, the remains of a dwarf rogue who accidentally wound up in the area is shoved haphazardly in the back corner of the room, its body riddled with bites and rot. On the dwarf's body are a white emerald (worth 1,300 gp), a red spinel (worth 80 gp), a bloodstone (worth 40 gp), and a small obsidian (worth 9 gp).

4: HELLSTORM'S LAIR (EL 6)

This tall, wide cavern smells of smoke and decay. The charred remains of 3 hyena-headed humanoids lie near the southern entrance into this chamber, their armor smelted and forever a part of their dead forms. Numerous stalagmites hang down from the ceiling, and a large pool of bubbling hot water, about 20-feet in diameter, lies near the rear of the cavernous chamber. The glitter of a pile of coins is seen within the bubbling pool. A wide cave mouth, about 40 feet above the level of the floor, lies within the large rock formation that occupies the southwestern corner of this chamber. A heavy, hot air, like the breath of some great beast, seems to emanate from the cave.

The Ghul Legion soldiers avoid this area as if it were plagued. To date, the inhabitant of this room is the primary reason why further exploration of the Kothian weapons vault has progressed so slowly.

A pair of small tunnels leads to Areas 3 and 5.

Creature: Hellstorm is a **young red dragon**, fiendishly intelligent and highly enterprising. She moved into this area roughly a year ago, having found a small ventricle that leads up to the surface; this particular area has a pool of water that is heated by a subterranean lava stream that runs down from the northeast (though

it is far from the ruins of Krezzel Dul), so she has adopted it as her lair. Prior to coming here, Hellstorm had terrorized a large community of subterranean gnomes, who paid homage (and gold) to her in exchange for her sparing their lives. When Hellstorm was run out of that area by a group of powerful paladins, she fled here, and she was content to rest and prepare for her triumphant return when the Ghul Legion came and woke her up.

Hellstorm has her suspicions about what the Legion is looking for, and she wouldn't mind gaining access to the magic of the Ebon Fane herself. Truth be known, Hellstorm's acquisition of any of the more powerful items in the Black Vault would be just as dangerous, if not more so, than if they were to land in the hands of Raine or the Ravagers.

Hellstorm, Young Red Dragon: CR 7; SZ L Dragon (Fire); HD 13d12+39; hp 140; Init +4 (Improved Initiative); Spd 40 ft., fly 150 ft. (poor); AC 21 (-1 size, +12 natural), touch 9, flat-footed 21; BAB/Grapple +13/24; Atk +19 (+13 BAB, +7 Str, -1 size) melee (2d6+7, bite); Full Atk +19 melee (2d6+7, bite), +14 (+13 BAB, +7 Str, -1 size, -5 secondary attack) melee (1d8+3[x2], 2 claws), +14 (+13 BAB, +7 Str, -1 size, -5 secondary attack) melee (1d6+3[x2], 2 wings), +14 (+13 BAB, +7 Str, -1 size, -5 secondary attack) melee (1d8+10, tail slap); Space/Reach 10 ft./5 ft. (10 ft. bite); SA breath weapon (once every 1d4 rounds, 40-foot cone of fire, 6d10 damage, Reflex Save half [DC 19]), spells; SQ blindsense (60 feet), fire subtype, keen senses; AL CE; SV Fort +11 (+8 Base, +3 Con), Ref +8 (+8 Base), Will +9 (+8 Base, +1 Wis); Str 25, Dex 10, Con 17, Int 12, Wis 13, Cha 12.

Skills: Bluff +17, Concentration +11, Diplomacy +15, Jump +19, Knowledge (Arcana) +11, Listen +16, Search +14, Spellcraft +14, Spot +16. **Feats:** Alertness, Cleave, Hover, Improved Initiative, Power Attack

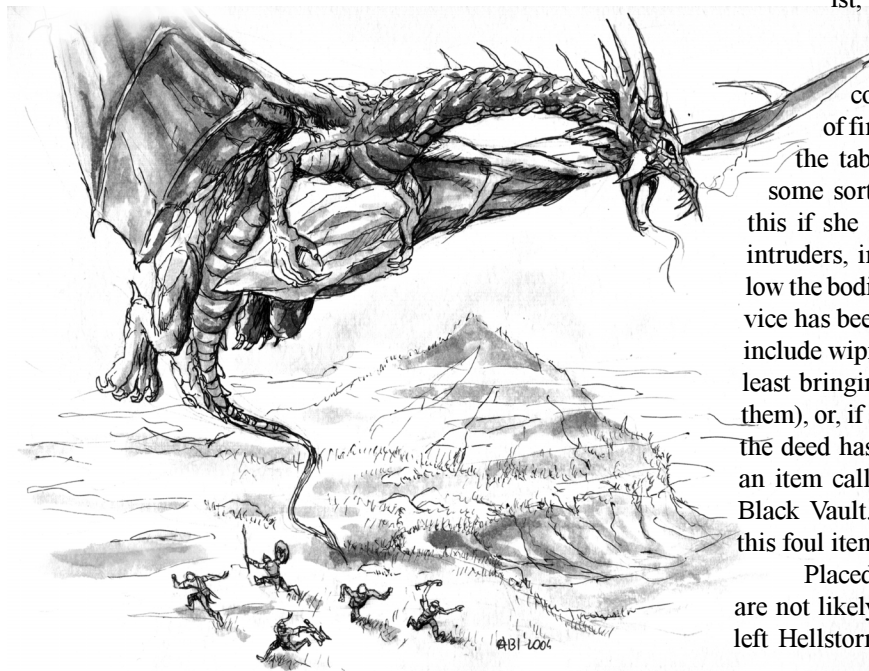
Arcane Spells Known (cast per day 5/4; Base Save DC = 11 + spell level): 0 – daze, detect magic, mage hand, read magic; 1st – shield, true strike. All spells are cast as if by a 1st level sorcerer.

Tactics: Hellstorm does not play fair. If she detects the PCs, she flies from her cave and uses her breath weapon in an attempt to catch as many intruders as possible in its fearsome path. Hellstorm also has 6 large rocks (treated as a giant's throwing rocks) in her cave, which she retrieves and drops on intruders from above (inflicting 2d8 damage w/each, at an attack bonus of +13). Before entering any combat, Hellstorm casts *shield*, raising her AC to 25.

Treasure: Hellstorm's small hoard consists of 3,765 sp, 1,259 gp, four small black pearls (worth 50 gp each), a *wand of shocking grasp* (29 charges), a *potion of truth*, and a *+1 dwarven waraxe*. Also buried within the pile is a large circular disc, one end of which is fashioned in the likeness of a handle, as if the rest of the disc were a rounded blade: this is the key that allows access to Area 11 of the Kothian weapons vault (see Part Two), and the item that Crithian Raine so highly covets. The boiling water inflicts 1d6 points of heat damage per round to any who touch it, so retrieving the treasure may be difficult.

Development: This promises to be a very difficult encounter; luckily, the PCs do not necessarily have to deal with it in a straightforward fashion. While Hellstorm is not highly tolerant of lesser (i.e. non-red dragon) races, she is ever the opportunist, and sees advantage and enterprising situations where others do not. If she has the PCs cornered and is all but assured of finishing them off, she may turn the tables and demand a service of some sort. (She especially likes doing this if she has slain one or more of the intruders, in which case she does not allow the bodies to be removed until the service has been performed.) Services might include wiping out the Ghul Legion (or at least bringing back some information on them), or, if she is extremely confident that the deed has been performed, demanding an item called the *Blood Grail* from the Black Vault. (See Part Six for details on this foul item.)

Placed in such a situation, the PCs are not likely to cooperate after they have left Hellstorm's dangerous lair, and she's



counting on this. At the very least, she'll demand all of the magic items the PCs carry on them before she allows them to go. Retaining possession of both their magical equipment and one or more of their fallen comrades is, in Hellstorm's mind, a sure way to assure that they'll do what she wants. Of course, she'll still expect to be double-crossed, and she'll be prepared to deal with the PCs in a most brutal fashion if and when they return, but the fact that they will have time to realize how helpless they are against her will make the entire experience worthwhile.

Note that, eventually, Hellstorm will be dealt with in one way or another, if not by the PCs then by the Ghul Legion command team later in the adventure (see Part Three).

5: THE FALLS (EL 3)

This otherwise bare cavern ends at its northeastern corner at a stony ledge; the ledge overlooks a 10-foot diameter hole about 10 feet below your feet. The rest of the chamber is a small, concave affair – water runs freely from a series of holes in the northeastern wall, where it sluices down into the awaiting hole in the semblance of a small waterfall. The heavy noise of the water in this area all but drowns out the possibility of conversation.

Despite appearances, the hole that begins 10-feet below is only 10 feet deep itself – dozens of small holes in the walls of the pit allow the water to run freely through it.

A fall all of the way down the hole inflicts 2d6 damage. The slope of the lower room is slippery, and requires a Climb check (DC 20) to maintain balance if a PC should drop into the area.

Small side-passages in this area give off to Areas 4 and 6.

Creature: The hole is the lair to a **grick**, though the creature is usually out stalking prey (it has not yet come into conflict with the gnolls).

Grick: CR 3; hp 13; see the *MM*.

Tactics: The grick tries to pull PCs off of the ledge, which causes a hapless faller to take damage as noted above. The PCs must make a Spot check against the grick's hide modifier (Hide +12) to see the creature; otherwise, it gains a partial surprise action.

Treasure: In the grick's cavernous lair (the pit) are the remains of a dwarven rogue the grick managed to ensnare many weeks ago (the partner of the dwarf found in Area 3). In a pouch at the dwarf's belt are 35 gp and a *potion of cure light wounds*.

6: WATCH POST (EL 5)

A 20-foot by 40-foot cave holds a well-worn loose gravel path – this area has obviously seen heavy use. Two large crates lie stacked against the eastern wall, over a 5-foot wide passageway that burrows east into the natural rock. The north wall and the passageway beyond are not the rough-hewn cave rock you have seen elsewhere here, but finely carved stone, obviously crafted by skilled hands. The tunnel runs north beyond an open portcullis; a large steel lever lies in the eastern wall just inside of the northern passageway. A second, smaller area, also of finely carved stone, rests on the northeastern wall between this passage and the natural cavern to the east. A sealed portcullis seals this door off; inside of the 10-foot square chamber is a large, misshapen beast of enormous proportions, as large as a bear but covered with dark feathers in addition to its fur. Its head is like that of a predatory bird, tipped with a ferocious beak.

In addition to crafting the weapons vault located to the west, the Kothian dwarves also constructed a powerful fortress, Yor-Kath, to the northeast of the vault, to protect the relics from those who would invade. This cavern entrance is the first line of defense to this stronghold, which the dwarves were forced to abandon when they fled the area.

The crates contain common foodstuff (nothing of real value).

Portcullises: The lever located in the northern passage controls the portcullises. The portcullises work together – when one is raised, the other drops. The gnoll sentries here use this device to release the hostile owlbear when intruders approach. Each portcullis is 2 inches thick, hardness 10, 60 hp, lift DC 25 and Break DC 28. Activating the portcullis mechanism is a move-equivalent action.

Creatures: The **owlbear** was captured by the gnolls some time ago. It has never been fully trained or domesticated – indeed, it is just as likely to attack any of them as it is intruders, which is why the **2 gnolls** who are stationed just inside of the northern passage stay behind the portcullis and use their longbows and glaives to full advantage to attack those on the other side.

Owlbear: CR 4; hp 49; see the *MM*.

Gnoll (2): CR 1; hp 14, 9; Attack +3 melee (1d10+3/x3, glaive), or +1 ranged (1d8/x3, longbow); see the *MM*.

Treasure: Each of the gnolls carries a suit of scale mail armor, a glaive, a longbow, 10 arrows and 5 gp.

Development: If either of the gnolls is slain, the other retreats north about 1,000 feet to the Ghul Keep (see Part Five for more details). Such an event brings a considerable number of troops to bear on the PCs within the next hour (the number of troops is left to the DMs discretion, based on the creatures found in Part Five of



this adventure or the Ghul Legion strike teams detailed in Part Three).

At the DMs option, Kresh from Area 7 might also become involved in this melee, catching the PCs in a potentially deadly EL 7 crossfire.

7: VAULT ACCESS (EL 5)

The wide cavern comes to a stop where the excavation of this area apparently ended, evidenced by the dozens of old and discarded digging tools. A solid stone plug of black stone, about 5-feet in diameter, rests against the northern wall; the hole in the floor which it covered is near the center of the chamber, surrounded by ancient and faded runic markings.

Also covered in runic markings, though of a decidedly wicked variety, is a 9-foot tall humanoid of blistered black flesh and hideous warts. The creature's misshapen humanoid skull is covered in a mass of gray hair, and its large eyes and wickedly sharp claws are ebon. The beast wears an enormous suit of black half-plate armor, and what little of its flesh is discernible is layered in ritualistic scars and tattoos.

This area was where the Kothian weapons vault was created – the dwarves dug straight down through the thickest and most formidable rock sheet they could find

and constructed the vault beneath it. Since Crithian Raine and the Ghul Legion have arrived, this area has always been carefully watched.

A Spellcraft check (DC 18) can identify the runes around the plughole as warding magic, albeit magic that has long-since been deactivated.

Creature: Kresh is a troll, albeit a slightly more intelligent and trained one. He stalks through this area menacingly, quite bored and hungry, though too afraid of the Legion's wrath should he disobey his order to prevent any non-Legionnaires from entering the Kothian vault. He attacks viciously, and pursues any that flee.

Kresh, Troll: CR 5; hp 64; Speed 20 ft.; AC 23 (-1 size, +7 half-plate, +7 natural); see the *MM*.

Treasure: Kresh wears a large suit of half-plate armor.

Development: At the DMs option, Kresh may join the guardians in Area 6, presenting an EL 7 encounter. Once Kresh is defeated, the PCs have open access to the weapons vault: the hole in the floor drops straight down 40 feet to Area 1 of the vault. See Part Two for details.



Chapter Two: The Weapons Vault

Construction of the Kothian weapons vault was completed, and the vault was partially trapped and stocked, before the dwarves realized that they had unwittingly breached the foul city of Krezzel Dul. While the Ghul Legion have explored parts of the northern sections of the vault, much of it remains unexplored, especially the southeastern region that grant access to the Ebon Fane. Access to those areas is impossible without the key in Hellstorm's possession.

The Kothian dwarves were not renowned for their stone working – this arcane clan was much better known for their magical research and devout crafting of magical armor and weapons. Regardless, they were dwarves, and the weapons vault, which was never properly warded to prevent access, is still a highly impressive piece of architecture. The vault lies forty feet beneath the plug in the excavation area; like the other Kothian vaults, it was intended to be as much of a testimony to the clan and their great deeds as it was a storage area for some of their prized possessions. Typically, the Kothians would select a few of their number who would undergo a ritual called The Undying, which would grant the dwarves eternal life so long as they never left the vault – these dedicated dwarves would remain behind to guard the clan relics if the guardians in Yor-Kath and the various traps placed on the vault failed. Though this never happened, the Kothians left behind some formidable defenses that still make exploring this area dangerous.

After Raine's agents discovered the vault, he immediately dispatched teams of gnolls and explorers to clear it out, fully aware that these lesser minions would serve more to "disarm" the various traps than to gather much treasure. After the first two teams met their untimely ends at the hands of the Kothian defenses, Raine ordered everyone out, at least until he could determine what agents would be best to send inside. Raine also suspected that he would not be able to get far – his agents reported a locked door (Area 11) that they could not breach no matter what they tried. It was after Raine discovered that the key to this area lay in the hands of Hellstorm that he decided to consult his authorities in the Ghul Legion to see what should be done next; their answer is arriving shortly (see Part Three). It is during this brief period of rest on Raine's part that the PCs arrive.

THE GHUL TEAM (EL 6)

While the PCs are busy exploring the weapons vault, Raine sends a second team of explorers into the vault – though he knows they cannot gain access to the Fane, he decides that there is no reason not to clear out what magic there is that can be reached through conventional means. By the time Raine gets around to sending in this team, he likely knows of the PCs presence (through the presence of any slain gnolls, and especially if Hellstorm has been disposed of). That being the case, this team is charged as much with destroying any intruders as they are with recovering more magical equipment from the area.

The DM should stage this encounter at any point when the PCs are exploring the weapons vault for the first time; if the PCs have not taken undo care in concealing their presence here (and, most likely, even if they have), this team is on the lookout for them, and do their best to set up an ambush to take the PC party by surprise.

The team consists of **Taren Soth**, a somewhat-crazed dark elf rogue and barbarian. Soth is both a masochist and a sadist – she would be a beautiful woman, with her full figure and snowy white hair, if not for the thousands of tiny scars that she has cut into her own flesh. She is a cold and sadistic woman, and the rest of the team obeys her out of fear. **K'rak** (a bugbear mercenary who yields a massive two-handed morningstar) and **2 gnolls** round out the team.

Taren Soth, Drow Rog2/Bbn1: CR 4; SZ M; HD 2d6+4 (rogue) and 1d12+2 (barbarian); hp 25; Init +8 (+4 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative); Spd 40 feet; AC 18 (+4 Dex, +4 studded leather), touch 14, flat-footed 14; BAB/Grapple +2/+4; Full Atk +5 (+2 BAB, +1 weapon, +2 Str) melee (2d6+4, +1 *greatsword*, 19-20); SA rage (1/day), sneak attack (+1d6), spell-like abilities; SQ evasion, trapfinding, darkvision 120 feet, +2 Will SV vs. Enchantment, light blindness, immune to magic sleep, SR 14; AL CE; SV Fort +4, Ref +7, Will +4; Str 15, Dex 19, Con 14, Int 12, Wis 11, Cha 14.

Skills: Climb +8, Disable Device +6, Escape Artist +8, Hide +9, Jump +5, Listen +7, Move Silently +9, Open Lock +9, Search +8, Spot +7. *Feats:* Improved Initiative, Iron Will.

Spell-Like Abilities: 1/day – dancing lights, darkness, faerie fire. These abilities are as the spells cast by a Sor3 (Save DC = 12 + spell level).

Possessions: +1 *greatsword*, +1 *studded leather armor*, thieves' tools.

K`rak, bugbear: CR 2; hp 22; AC 19 (+5 chain, +1 Dex, +3 natural); Atk +5 melee (2d6+3, large morningstar), or +3 ranged (1d6+2, javelin); see the *MM*.

Possessions: chain mail, large masterwork morningstar, *potion of bull's strength*, *potion of haste*, *potion of cure light wounds* (caster level 2, 2 doses), 52 gp.

Gnoll (2): CR 1; hp 16, 8; see the *MM*.

Possessions: scale mail, greatsword, longbow, 10 arrows, 15 gp.

Tactics: If the Ghul Team is able to get themselves in a position to ambush the PCs, Taren Soth enters a rage as K`rak drinks his potions of bull's strength and haste. This changes Soth's stats as follows: hp 31, AC 16, Atk +7 melee (2d6+7, greatsword, 19-20); SV Fort +6, Will +4; Str 19, Con 18. K`rak's stats change as follows: AC 23; Atk +7 melee (2d6+6, large morningstar); Str 19; +1 partial action (5 rounds).

Taren casts *darkness* before any attack begins (and before she rages). Taren and K`rak focuses first on arcane spell casters or clerics while the gnolls pin their foes down with their greatswords or bows. As soon as Taren's rage ends (if any of her enemies are still standing), she withdraws and allows her enemies to come to her, hoping to gain flank on them. So long as Taren is alive, none of the rest of the group retreats; as soon as she is gone, K`rak makes a tactical withdrawal. If both he and Taren are lost, the gnolls flee as quickly as possible.

VAULT FEATURES

Unless otherwise noted, all areas of the vault are unlit; PCs have to provide their own light sources. All walls are wrought of superior masonry, while all doors are wrought of stone. All ceilings are 10 feet high.

Superior Masonry Walls: 1 foot or more thick; Hardness 8; hp 10 per 5-foot square section; Break (DC 45); Climb (DC 15).

Stone Doors: 4 inches thick; Hardness 8; hp 60; Break (DC 28); Open Locks (DC 25).

I: ACCESS

The hole in Area 7 of the excavation area drops down 40 feet before it empties into this chamber; a small metal ladder allows access all the way down to the floor. The sturdy ladder descends down 40 feet before the floor opens into a large, semi-circular chamber of masterfully carved stone. Two thin stone pillars stand at the northwest and southwest edges of the flat western wall; a squat stone door lies at the wall's center. A large bass-relief of a blazing grail is inscribed upon the door, which looks as if it were recently forced. Blackish bloodstains mar the floor of the room, which is other-

wise bare and silent.

The door is unlocked.

2: ENTRANCE (EL 3)

Four torches set on pillars in the corners of the room blaze to life. The torches reveal a 50-foot square chamber with a 10-foot high ceiling. The familiar bass relief of a blazing grail is inscribed all across the room's floor, though the center of the relief is charred with an X-shaped scorch mark. A second door, which stands slightly ajar, stands opposite the entrance on the west wall of the room.

The entrance is where the first of Raine's soldiers that dared the weapons vault met their untimely end.

Trap (EL 3): When any non-dwarf crosses this chamber, the four magical pillars in the corners of the room glow hot white. A moment later, a cross of lightning emanates between the pillars, scorching anyone standing in the center of the room or in the path of any of the lightning arcs.

Lightning Cross Trap: CR4; magic device; proximity trigger; automatic reset; spell effect (Four 5-foot wide, 10-foot long *lightening bolts*, 5th level wizard, 3d6 electrical damage, Reflex Save DC 13 for half damage); Search (DC 29); Disable Device (DC 29).

Treasure: The four torches are *everburning torches*, but they lose their magical properties if removed from the weapons vault.

Development: After the Ghul Team passes through this area (whether they are ahead of or behind the PCs), Taren Soth have disabled this trap.

3: MURAL HALL

This 30-foot wide hall stretches for some distance. The familiar bass relief of the blazing grail is set out across both the floor and ceiling, but the rest of the available wall space is decorated with finely carved murals of magic-yielding dwarves doing battle with great dragons, giants and trolls. Even the passage of time has not deteriorated the efficacy of the murals. Closed stone doors lie in the north, west and south walls of this room. A smashed lever lies in the northwest corner.

The lever once deactivated the traps in Area 5, but the fleeing dwarves intentionally destroyed it so that the trap would affect any creatures trying to escape.

4: EMPTY ROOMS

These rooms are devoid of furnishings or features of any kind, save the occasional bloodstain or discarded arrow. When Raine's agents first entered the vault, these rooms held magic that summoned celestial guardians. While the gnolls and other Ghul Legion agents managed to destroy some of these beasts, they received

better than they gave, and these guardians were the primary reason that so many of them had to flee; regardless, the magic that summons the guardians functions only once per room, so there is no longer anything to fear in any of these areas.

5: TRAPPED HALL (EL 6)

This otherwise featureless hall contains a number of deadly traps, evinced by the heavy bloodstains on the floor (Spot check DC 12 to notice).

Trap (EL 6): At the areas marked on the map, a solid steel plate with a razor-sharp edge flies out of the wall to seal the way forward; the trap activates whenever anyone attempts to pass down the hall, and the mechanism to disable the trap (located in Area 3) has long since been destroyed. After sealing, the wall remains closed only for 1d4 rounds, after which time it slides back into its hiding place in the wall.

Razor Wall Trap (3): CR 5; mechanical; location trigger; automatic reset; never misses (6d6 slashing damage; Reflex Save DC 20 avoids; Search (DC 25); Disable Device (DC 25)).

6: CELESTIAL GUARDIAN (EL 6)

This empty room is identical in appearance to Area 4, save that a tiny, magical rune is inscribed on the door. This rune is a summon monster V spell trap, which can be identified with a Spellcraft check (DC 25).

Trap & Creature: If anyone tampers with the door to either this area or Area 7, a magical portal inside of the room summons a **celestial dire lion**. This lion leaps out and viciously attacks any in the hall for the duration of the spell; after the spell trap is triggered once, it can never again be activated.

Summon Monster V Trap: CR 6; magic device; touch trigger; automatic reset; spell effect (*summon monster V*, 9th level wizard); spell effect (summons celestial dire lion [see below]; Search (DC 31); Disable Device (DC 31)).

Celestial Dire Lion: CR 6; SZ L Magical Beast; HD 7d8+21; hp 61; Init +2 (Dex); Spd 40 ft.; AC 17 (-1 size, +3 Dex, +5 natural), touch 12, flat-footed 14; BAB/Grapple +5/+16; Full Atk +12 (-1 size, +7 Str, +5 BAB) melee (1d6+7, 2 claws), +6 (-1 size, +7 Str, +5 BAB, -5 secondary attack) melee (1d8+3, bite); Space/Reach 5 ft. by 10 ft./5 ft.; SA pounce, improved grab, rake (1d6+3), smite evil 1/day (+7 damage); SQ scent, darkvision (60 feet), acid/cold/electricity resistance (5), DR (5/magic), SR (12); AL NG; SV Fort +9, Ref +9, Will +3; Str 25, Dex 17, Con 17, Int 3, Wis 12, Cha 10.

Skills: Balance +9, Hide +11, Jump +11, Listen +4, Move Silently +9, Spot +4.

<2>7: WEAPON VAULT NORTH

The door to this chamber is locked. Tampering with the door in any way sets off the summoning trap in Area 6 (above).

The stone door swings open silently. Inside is a large chamber, exquisitely carved and barely touched by the passage of time. Nearly two-dozen alcoves line the room, almost every one of which serves as a home to a finely crafted weapon. The familiar blazing grail is carved in bass relief upon the floor.

This is one of the Kothian weapons vaults. While ultimately the Kothian dwarves planned to place a grand amount of masterwork and magical items in here, the area was only partially stocked before the evil minions of Krezzel Dul made it necessary for them to abandon their work.

Treasure: A number of items reside here, all of them crafted by the Kothian dwarves and their cousins, the Krazzadaks. In the various alcoves are a masterwork dwarven urgosh, a masterwork battleaxe, a masterwork large steel shield, 10 masterwork arrows, 40 normal arrows, 2 dwarven waraxes, a dwarf-sized suit of chain mail, and a +1 *short bow*.

8: LOOTED WEAPONS VAULT

This area is effectively identical to Area 7, except that the Ghul Legion has already sprung the nearby, trapped room, and there is no longer anything of value to be found here.

9: LAUNCHING TRAP (EL 4)

This empty room is identical in appearance to Area 4, save that a tiny, non-magical rune is inscribed on the door. A Knowledge (Arcana) check (DC 15) determines that this symbol is non-magical, while a Decipher Script check (DC 20) determines that this simple symbol means “Danger” in the Kothian rune script.

Trap: If anyone tampers with the door to this area or Area 10, the door to this area swings open, revealing a strange stone apparatus within. The apparatus is a 5 foot tall rectangular block of stone connected to the eastern wall – a 2 foot diameter hole rests about $\frac{3}{4}$ of the way up its height. A moment after the door opens, a 1 foot diameter-spiked ball launches out of the hole with the force of a catapult. The mechanism fires 4 such missiles in rapid succession, striking whoever is closest to the door. After these four shots are fired, the mechanism is out of ammunition, and is no longer a threat.

Spiked Ball Launch Trap: CR 4; mechanical; proximity trigger; manual reset; onset delay (1 round); Atk +15 ranged (2d6, 4 spiked balls); Search (DC 25); Disable Device (DC 25).

10: WEAPONS VAULT SOUTH

With the exception of its differing dimensions, this chamber is effectively identical to Area 7. Like Area 7, the Ghul Legion has not yet been able to loot this vault, as they suffered too many casualties after looting Area 8.

Treasure: This partially stocked weapons vault contains a masterwork bastard sword, a masterwork greataxe, 2 repeating crossbows, 40 crossbow bolts, and a +1 *warhammer*.

11: SEALED CHAMBER (EL 5)

The door to this room is locked by formidable Kothian magic. It can be opened by no means short of a *wish*, or the key found in Hellstorm's lair (Area 6 of the excavation area). The door itself has been scorched by flame, and the Kothian symbol of the blazing grail has burned away.

The door opens to reveal a chamber that reeks of brimstone and sulfur. The 30 foot square room has been blackened and scorched, as if something terrible detonated within. Four empty weapon racks flank the room on the east and west walls, while another scorched door lies in the south wall.

When the Kothians fled the weapons vault, their most powerful wizards used an ancient Kothian ritual called

the Golden Veil to seal this door – only powerful magic can dispel it, and any evil outsider who touches it turns to dust. Even ethereal or gaseous travel is not permitted through the door. Try as they might, neither the undead members of the Brotherhood of the Black Sun nor their demonic masters could penetrate the door.

Every door has a key, however, and therein lay the drawback to even this powerful magic. Just as the door was enchanted to prevent anything from passing through, the door's original key was likewise automatically enchanted to allow the door to be breached through its use. Though the Kothians managed to seal the majority of the invading evil beings behind the sealed door, many still roamed in the other areas of the vault and beyond. As the Kothians fled, the bearer of the key was slain, and the key lost in the caverns. In spite of this, the Kothians managed to escape, and they sealed the entire area surrounding the vault, thinking that no one would ever be able to find it. After a great deal of time passed, the dragon Hellstorm discovered the key.

Once opened, the door to this area cannot again be sealed. The only way to re-seal the way to the Ebon Fane lies deep inside of it, in the very reliquary that Crithian Raine seeks: the Black Vault. The key vanishes after being used.

Creatures: Lurking inside of the shadows of the empty weapon racks are 3 **vargouille**, stranded here since the room was re-sealed and eager to attack anything they see.

Vargouille (3): CR 2; hp 7, 7, 3; see the *MM*.

12-15: TELEPORT LOCKS (EL 3)

The passageway turns north and then ends at a stone dais set into the wall. Upon the dais is a raised relief of the now-familiar blazing grail, apparently designed so that it might be pushed into the dais.

Originally, the Kothian dwarves intended for their more important relics to be buried in a second (never constructed) vault below. This complex lock system would allow only those that knew the right combination to proceed to the guard area (Area 16), from which access to the intended relics vault would be granted. The discovery of the Ebon Fane effectively halted any actual use of this complex mechanism. Access to this area from Area 16 is simple, but



access back to Area 16 is not – it can be downright dangerous.

A number of decayed, long-rotted bodies lie in this area. Though they carry nothing of value, some of them wear thick black and silver cloaks that bear the symbol of a claw covered in writhing maggots. A Knowledge (Arcana) or Knowledge (History) check (DC 20) can identify this as the symbol of the Brotherhood of the Black Sun, a cult of necromancers and demonologists dedicated to the worship of the long-dead demon prince Osenkej.

Trap: In order to make one's way to the isolated expanse of Area 16, the four lock mechanisms on the areas noted on the map (Areas 12-15) must be pressed simultaneously. Pressing any of the mechanisms on its own releases a stream of electricity that emanates from all four mechanisms and travels throughout this hallway complex (though any standing in the northernmost north-south stretch of hall marked on the map is safe from this effect). This trap automatically resets, though it may be disabled. The demons and undead that became trapped in this area eventually figured out how to work the mechanism (the demons' electricity immunity helped), though a few lesser undead were destroyed in the process.

Electrical Hall Trap: CR 4; magical device; proximity trigger; automatic reset; lock bypass (Open Locks DC 30); spell effect (*lightning bolt*, 5th level wizard, 3d6 electrical, Reflex save DC 13 half damage) Search (DC 29); Disable Device (DC 29).

Development: If all four mechanisms are activated simultaneously, all creatures within 5-feet of each creature to activate the mechanisms are teleported (no Save) to Area 16.

16: FANE ACCESS (EL 5)

Without the use of powerful magic, the only means of reaching this isolated area is via the teleporter mechanism located in Areas 12-15.

The air shifts and turns, and in a moment your vision turns blood red, then pale gray. When all is said and done and the brief sensation of nausea has passed, the PCs find themselves standing in a simple, 30-foot square chamber. An archway of scorched stone stands against the eastern wall; a sheet of shimmering red light, like a waterfall of blood, swirls within its frame. In the northwest corner of the room is a 5-foot wide hole in the floor. A circle of black skulls has been placed around the hole.

The skulls were placed by the demons that escaped (temporarily) from the Ebon Fane; they are all of dwarf origin. This chamber was to serve as a guard chamber to prevent anyone who actually managed to decipher the teleport mechanism in Areas 12-15 from gaining access to the relics vault down below. Though a tunnel was magically dug to the area the Kothians intended to build this vault in, they ran into unexpected trouble – the Ebon Fane.

The Gate: Any who steps through the crimson gate in the eastern wall of the room is automatically teleported (no Save) to Area 11. This effect may be dispelled (caster level 16), but unless subjected to a *morden's disjunction* or *break enchantment* spell the gate regains its magical properties in 1d4 hours.

Creature: Lurking in this chamber, writhing incorporeally among the circle of black skulls, is one of the many undead denizens of the Ebon Fane – a **wraith**. It greedily assaults any who enter this area.

Wraith: CR 5; hp 37; see the *MM*.

Development: The hole leads down 100 feet to Area 1 of the Ebon Fane, detailed in Part Four. The PCs may wish, at this point, to return to the surface to restock on supplies or sell off some of what they have found in the weapons vault; at the very least, they are likely to want to rest before they venture any further. Outside of the vault, however, things are heating up, and Crithian Raine and the Ghul Legion are making full preparations to plunder the ruins of Krezzel Dul – see Parts Three and Four for more details.



Chapter Three: Against the Ghul Legion

Over the course of the PCs adventures in the weapons vault, the Ebon Fane and possibly even the Black Vault, the Ghul Legion does not idly sit by. While another team of explorers eventually are dispatched to explore the Ebon Fane, reinforcements for Crithian's forces have arrived, and they intend to secure the various areas detailed in this adventure – and cause no small degree of problems for the PCs.

After a couple of ill-fated forays into the weapons vault and a dangerous meeting with Hellstorm, Crithian Raine alerts the Ravagers (heads of the Ghul Legion) and told them that he needs more powerful soldiers, both to secure possession of the area and to deal with Hellstorm. This section of the adventure details a portion of the formidable forces that the Ravagers sent – those that the PCs are most likely to encounter first.

HOW TO USE THE STRIKE TEAMS

Four strike teams are detailed below, each charged with a specific task and place in the hierarchy of the small army that the Ghul Legion had dispatched to assist Crithian Raine. These are certainly not all of the forces – a significant portion of the Legion soldiers is actually located inside of the Ghul Keep (see Part Five).

If the PCs have not yet recovered the key from Hellstorm, then its acquisition is the priority for the Reavers and the Command Team, who destroy Hellstorm with only a minimal amount of difficulty; at that point, the key is handed over to Raine, who gives it to either Ghul Team 1 (described in Part Two) or, if that team has been destroyed, Ghul Team 2 (detailed in Part Four).

If the PCs have the key, Strike Team 1 (described below) is charged with recovering it from them if they have not already used it.

While each of the three teams described below has their own set agenda and purpose, the DM should feel free to use these teams to keep the action flowing and to impart on the PCs the severity of the Legion's interest in the Ebon Fane. Generally speaking, Strike Teams 1 & 2 could encounter the PCs anywhere in the excavation area or the weapons vault; neither team ventures into the Fane (another team has been assembled for that purpose, as described in Part Four). The Command Team and the Reavers hang back in the shadows, "advising" (i.e. commanding) Raine and allowing events to unfold – due to the powerful nature of this third and

fourth group, it is recommended that the DM not make use of this team until close to the end of the adventure, possibly even after (and if) the PCs decide to storm Ghul Keep itself. Or, for a greater challenge, the various teams can be combined (two, three or all four) to present the PCs with a small but powerful army of foes to overcome. Strike Team 1 and Strike Team 2 combined make an EL 9 encounter; these two teams combined with the Reavers make for a dangerous EL 11 encounter, while combining all four groups makes for a potentially deadly EL 13 battle.

In any case, none of these teams arrive until after the PCs have had a chance to make at least an initial exploration of the weapons vault.

STRIKE TEAM 1 (EL 6)

This small but powerful strike team is charged with hunting down and eliminating those who have intruded into the excavation site, the weapons vault, or the Ebon Fane. While Strike Team 2 is charged with holding and controlling these areas so that the Ghul Teams can move in and explore, Strike Team 1 has a decidedly more straightforward objective: search & destroy.

The team's primary strength stems from its leader, an uncharacteristically intelligent minotaur warrior named **Crylos**. Crylos is a hulking but surprisingly nimble creature adorned in black chain mail and armed with his favorite weapon, a huge greataxe that he has dubbed "Heartstripper". His team consists of **4 elite gnoll warriors**, all of who are quite used to working with Crylos and that follow his commands without question.

This team is likely to be the first team the PCs encounter. If the PCs have not taken especially great care in concealing their presence in the excavation area or in the weapons vault, Crylos and his gnolls set a trap for them, and strike hard and fast. They aren't interested in taking prisoners, only in killing.

Like the other teams, this team reports directly to the Command Team; should the Command Team be destroyed, they defers to Crithian Raine's authority.

Crylos, Minotaur War1: CR 4; SZ L Monstrous Humanoid; HD 6d8+12 and 1d8+2; hp 51; Init +2 (Dex); Spd 30 ft.; AC 21 (-1 size, +1 Dex, +5 chain mail, +6 natural), touch 10, flat-footed 20; BAB/Grapple +7/+18; Full Atk +16/11 melee (2d8+10/x3, huge greataxe), +9 melee (1d8+3, gore); Space/Reach 10 ft./10 ft.; SA charge (4d6+10); SQ Darkvision (60 ft.), scent, natural cunning; AL CE; SV Fort +10, Ref

+7, Will +7; Str 24, Dex 14, Con 15, Int 10, Wis 14, Cha 13.

Skills: Intimidate +9, Jump +5, Listen +9, Search +7, Spot +9, Survival +4. *Feats:* Cleave, Great Fortitude, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (huge greataxe).

Possessions: masterwork huge greataxe, large chain mail, *potion of haste*.

Elite Gnoll War1 (4): CR 1; SZ M; HD 2d8+2 and 1d8+1; hp 23, 20, 16, 14; Init +2 (Dex); Speed 20 ft.; AC 17 (+2 Dex, +1 natural, +4 scale), touch 12, flat-footed 15; BAB/Grapple +3/+8; Full Attack +8 melee (1d12+7/x3, greataxe), or +5 ranged (1d8/x3, longbow); SQ darkvision (60 ft.); AL CE; SV Fort +5, Ref +2, Will +1; Str 21, Dex 14, Con 13, Int 9, Wis 13, Cha 9. *Skills:* Intimidate +1, Listen +3, Spot +3. *Feats:* Cleave, Power Attack.

Possessions: scale mail, greataxe, longbow, 10 arrows, 15 gp.

Tactics: Strike Team 1 ambushes whenever possible. Crylos loves ballistae, and the group is usually armed with two, which they set up discreetly if they know that their enemies are going to be passing into a certain area. The four gnolls then lie in wait, hiding, while Crylos tries to draw attention to himself. The ballista makes a ranged touch attack roll at +1, inflicting 3d6 damage (x3 on a crit), and has a range increment of 120 feet. Reloading the ballista requires 3 full-round actions. The gnolls have 5 ballista bolts per weapon. Crylos drinks his *potion of haste* while the ballistae fire, increasing his AC to 25 and granting him an extra partial action for 5 rounds. He then charge into melee, accompanied by all four of the gnolls. Both Crylos and his gnolls are disciplined enough that they do not retreat under any circumstances.

STRIKE TEAM 2 (EL 8)

This somewhat larger strike team has an entirely different task from Strike Team 1 – this team, led by the amply named **Brute**, is responsible for maintaining control over an area that the Ghul Legion has interest in. These soldiers occupy and control, and destroy any that intrude on territory that has been deemed “Ghulian”.

Brute, a hill giant that enjoys yielding his massive warhammer as much as he likes bossing around others, leads this large and formidable force. Brute is a capable leader so far as ordering about soldiers and organizing defenses and strikes goes (though in other regards he’s as sharp as a round rock). **Blood**, his pet hellhound, and a squad of 6 orcs al-

ways accompany him. Like Crylos from Strike Team 1, Brute loves siege weapons. His orcs always have at least 3 ballistae on hand, with 10 bolts apiece.

Brute is a brown-haired giant bound with massive muscles and a tailor-crafted suit of chain mail armor.

Brute, Hill Giant: CR 7; SZ L Giant; HD 12d8+72; hp 131; Init –1 (Dex); Spd 30 feet; AC 22 (-1 size, -1 Dex, +5 chain, +9 natural), touch 8, flat-footed 22; BAB/Grapple +8/+20; Full Atk +17/12 (-1 size, +8 BAB, +8 Str, +1 weapon, +1 Weapon Focus) melee (2d8+13, 19-20 x3, +1 huge warhammer), or +8/3 ranged (2d6+9, rock); Space/Reach 10 ft./10 ft.; SA rock throwing; SQ rock catching; AL CE; SV Fort +14, Ref +3, Will +5; Str 26, Dex 8, Con 22, Int 8, Wis 12, Cha 9.

Skills: Climb +6 (4 ranks, +6 Str, Jump +6 (4 ranks, +6 Str, Listen +5, Spot +4. *Feats:* Cleave, Improved Critical (Warhammer), Improved Sunder, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (Warhammer).

Possessions: +1 huge warhammer, masterwork large chain mail, 12 throwing rocks.

Blood, Hellhound: CR 3; hp 30; see the *MM*.

Orc (6): CR 1/2; hp 8, 8, 7, 6, 6, 5; see the *MM*.

Possessions: scale mail, greataxe, heavy crossbow, 10 bolts, 15 sp.

Tactics: As mentioned above, this group has at least 3 ballistae with them at all times, which they set up in 3 defensible positions in whatever area they are holding (such as the excavation area, or the Kothian weapons vault itself). 2 orcs man each ballista, while Brute and Blood roam about between the three, sniffing out intruders. Brute is not a subtle combatant by any stretch of the imagination, but he lets the ballistae fire first, at which point one of the two orcs manning the weapon rush out and aid him in melee while the other reloads. If possible, Brute likes to place the ballistae so that all three can survey the same area, catching intruders in a deadly crossfire.



If the DM chooses to place Strike Team 2 in the excavation area, the ballistae might be positioned near Areas 1, 2 and 6, where they can cover the breadth of the cavern. If the DM would rather establish this group inside of the weapons vault, they might take up position in Area 2 or area 5 and the two empty rooms (areas marked 4) nearest the entrance, to catch any passing through the entry hall in a dangerous crossfire.

THE REAVERS (EL 9)

The largest of the strike teams is an elite squadron of ogre warriors, armed to the teeth and charged with taking out particularly troublesome foes. This group fills essentially the same niche as Strike Team 1, but the Reavers are surprisingly even less subtle than Crylos and his force – the Reavers are used to clear out areas, destroy large and cumbersome foes (like dragons or giants), or to form an impenetrable line of defense around an area that needs to be secured at all costs.

Unlike the other teams, the 10 ogres of the Reavers don't have a "leader" to speak of – rather, this group is given specific instructions by the Command Team, and they follow said orders to the best of their abilities. If ordered to destroy something, the Reavers do just that;

if ordered to defend an area, they fight to the last ogre or until a member of the Command Team tells them otherwise.

Each of these **10 ogres** wears chain mail and yields a greataxe in combat. Each bears the symbol of the Ghul Legion proudly as a scar sliced into their cheek or forehead.

Reaver, Ogre War1 (10): CR 3; L Giant; HD 4d8+8 and 1d8+2; hp 42, 37, 36, 35, 35, 34, 33, 31, 31, 30; Init -1; Spd 30 ft.; AC 18 (-1 size, -1 Dex, +5 chain, +5 natural), touch 8, flat-footed 18; BAB/Grapple +4/+13; Full Attack +10 melee (2d8+9/x3, huge greataxe), or +4 ranged (2d6+6/x3, huge longspear); Space/Reach 10 ft./10 ft. (15-20 ft. with longspear); AL CE; SV Fort +9, Ref +0, Will +1; Str 22, Dex 8, Con 15, Int 6, Wis 10, Cha 7.

Skills: Climb +4, Listen +2, Spot +2. *Feats:* Power Attack, Point Blank Shot, Weapon Focus (greataxe).

Possessions: large chainmail, huge greataxe, 2 huge longspears.

Tactics: None to speak of. The Reavers greatly fear spellcasters of all sorts, and typically try to concentrate their efforts on such beings first (unless commanded to do otherwise). They never retreat (unless



magically compelled to do so).

THE COMMAND TEAM (EL II)

A trio of fearsome and formidable commanders – elite lieutenants of the Ravagers and the Ghul Legion – lead all of the strike teams. When Crithian Raine informed the Ravagers on the possibility of recovering the Bone Cross (as well as other evil items) from Krezzel Dul, the Legion decided not to spare any effort. While Raine is still technically in charge of the exploration mission here, this trio has made it very clear that they are representing the interests of the Ravagers – if Raine wants to maintain his standing, or his life, he had best do what they say.

To that effect, the Command Team moves about frequently. At times they are in the areas secured by the Strike Teams or the Reavers, while at other times they remain at Ghul Keep. If the PCs manage to penetrate all the way to the Black Vault and have destroyed Raine's other exploration teams, the Command Team might even scrap together the remnants of the three other teams (and possibly some of Crithian's other forces from the Ghul Keep, detailed in Part Five) and try to take the Bone Cross themselves.

The three individuals of the Command Team share authority, and they work surprisingly well together.

Mezaana is a formidable medusa fighter, adorned in black full plate armor; she is an expert tactician and careful planner. **Jar'rod** is a dark elf vampire wizard, a student of arcane lore, and a master torturer. **Tusk** is a powerful stone giant and member of the Ravagers; his gray flesh is heavily scarred and tattooed, and he yields an enormous black iron greataxe.

Mezaana, Medusa Ftr1: CR 8; SZ M Monstrous Humanoid; HD 6d8+24 and 1d10+4; hp 68; Init +4 (Dex); Spd 20 feet; AC 23 (+1 Dex, +9 full plate, +3 natural), touch 11, flat-footed 22; BAB/Grapple +9/+12; Full Atk +11/+6 melee (1d8+3/19-20, longsword), snakes (1d4+1 & poison), or +13/8 ranged (1d8+4/x3, composite longbow), +5 snakes (1d4+1 & poison); SA petrifying gaze, poison; AL LE; SV Fort +8, Ref +9, Will +7; Str 16, Dex 19, Con 19, Int 16, Wis 15, Cha 15.

Skills: Climb +1, Bluff +9, Disguise +7, Listen +7, Move Silently +4, Spot +12, Swim +0. *Feats:* Point Blank Shot, Precise Shot, Rapid Shot, Weapon Focus (Longbow).

Possessions: +1 composite longbow (3), masterwork longsword, +1 full plate, silver ring (worth 35 gp), 40 arrows.

Jar'rod, Drow Vampire Wiz5: CR 8; SZ M Undead; HD 5d12; hp 39; Init +8 (+4 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative); Spd 30 feet; AC 21 (+4 Dex, +1 ring of protection, +6 natural), touch 14, flat-footed 17; BAB/Grapple +2/+6; Attack +6 melee (1d6+4 & energy drain,

slam); SA spells, spell-like abilities, domination, energy drain, blood drain, children of the night, create spawn; SQ darkvision (120 feet), +2 Will SV vs. spells & spell-like abilities, +2 Will SV vs. Enchantment, light blindness, SR (16), DR (10/silver and magic), turn resistance (+4), cold/electricity resistance (10), gaseous form, spider climb, alternate form, fast healing (5); AL CE; SV Fort +1, Ref +8, Will +7; Str 19, Dex 19, Con -, Int 18, Wis 15, Cha 13.

Skills: Alchemy +12, Bluff +9, Concentration +12, Hide +20, Knowledge (Arcana) +15, Knowledge (History) +12, Listen +12, Move Silently +12, Search +10, Sense Motive +10, Spellcraft +12, Spot +12. *Feats:* Alertness, Combat Casting, Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Improved Initiative, Lightning Reflexes, Scribe Scroll, Skill Focus (Knowledge [Arcana]), Spell Focus (Evocation).

Arcane Spells Prepared (4/4/3/2; Base Save DC = 14 + spell level, 16 + spell level for Evocation* spells): 0 – detect magic, mage hand, read magic, resistance; 1st – mage armor, magic missile*, shield, true strike; 2nd – flaming sphere*, mel's acid arrow, resist elements; 3rd – displacement, lightning bolt*

Arcane Spells Known (Spellbook): 0 – all; 1st – charm person, chill touch, feather fall, identify, levitate, mage armor, magic missile, shield, shocking grasp, true strike; 2nd – bull's strength, flaming sphere, mel's acid arrow, mirror image, resist elements; 3rd – displacement, lightning bolt, vampiric touch

Possessions: +1 ring of protection, +1 cloak of resistance, scroll of haste, scroll of vampiric touch, scroll of obscuring mist (2).

Tusk, Stone Giant: CR 8; SZ L Giant (Earth); HD 14d8+56; hp 125; Init +5 (+5 Dex); Spd 30 feet; AC 29 (-1 size, +4 Dex, +11 natural, +5 chain shirt), touch 13, flat-footed 26; BAB/Grapple +12/+24; Full Atk +22/17 melee (2d8+17/x3, +1 huge greataxe), or +18/13 ranged (2d8+10, rock); Space/Reach 10 ft/10 ft; SA rock throwing; SQ Darkvision 60 ft., rock catching; AL NE; SV Fort +13, Ref +9, Will +7; Str 31, Dex 20, Con 19, Int 13, Wis 12, Cha 14.


Skills: Climb +21, Hide +22, Jump +14, Listen +8. *Feats:* Blind-Fight, Cleave, Combat Reflexes, Improved Sunder, Power Attack.

Possessions: +1 huge greataxe, +1 large chain shirt, 15 throwing rocks.

Tactics: When readying themselves for combat, Jar'rod casts *mage armor*, *shield*, *resist elements* (fire) and *displacement* upon himself, and *haste* (from his scroll) on Mezaana. This changes Jar'rod's AC to 32 and grants him a 50% miss chance against all attacks and fire resistance 12; Mezaana's AC changes to 27, and she gains an extra partial action.

When fighting on their own, the Command Team uses straightforward tactics. Jar'rod does his best to

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soften up the enemy with a well-placed *lightning bolt*, then assumes *gaseous form* to get closer to his foes. Mezanna moves forward to capture as many enemies with her gaze attack as possible, but for the most part she hangs back, using her extra partial action to coat an arrow with her venom as she plugs away with her powerful bow. Tusk, as one might expect, wades into melee fearlessly (always keeping his back to Mezanna), assisted by Jar'rod, who uses his slam and pin attacks. He uses *vampiric touch* if damaged badly; if seriously pressed, he casts *obscuring mist* from his scroll and then assumes *gaseous form*, making him all but impossible to detect.

Even if forced to retreat, the Command Team returns later – they would only be rewarded with death if they were to return to Ghul Lacronus and the Ravagers unsuccessful. The DM should feel free to place these formidable foes where appropriate – they would even make good long-term villains for once the adventure has concluded.

Chapter Four: The Ebon Flame

The exploration of the Witch King's temple constitutes the heart of this adventure. The PCs may be exploring the Fane to plunder its riches or, after they learn a bit more about where they are, in order to penetrate to the Black Vault so that they can isolate and seal the dark temple eternally. In the meantime, Crithian Raine still intends to get his hands on the dark artifacts coveted by the Ghul Legion. Both the PCs and Raine's forces has to deal with the horrifying defenses and creatures that still inhabit the Fane – forces that, now that the way is clear, shall be eager to escape!

The Witch King was a decadent and vile entity, one that demanded constant obedience and sacrifice from his considerable body of followers. These followers, however, lived as rich and decadent of an existence as their King. At its height, Krezzel Dul – the city of Skull & Shadow – was a great metropolis, with a population of over 30,000 people. Krezzel Dul was populated with great schools of lore & magic, and its standing army was a ferocious amalgamation of humans, trolls, bugbears and evil dragons. Even before the Doomspires became a threat, everyone knew that Krezzel Dul was a force that eventually had to be reckoned with – but no one was prepared to stage such a large and extensive military invasion, which was the only apparent solution.

When the Veiled Ones led the revolt that eventually called down the Witch King's wrath, Krezzel Dul, an already frightening locale, became even worse. After the Witch King's demonic servants wiped out the population, these same hideous demons became the masters of the city, while many of the former inhabitants were animated as undead shock troops and servants. When the armies of good finally came to lay siege to Krezzel Dul, they found a force defending the city that, while not altogether surprising (considering the nature of the Witch King's followers), was still enough to fill them with despair. So fierce was this force that, eventually, the attacking army had to resort to more divine means of eliminating their target.

But the Ebon Fane, the primary temple of worship to Osenkej and the base of operations for the Brotherhood of the Black Sun, remained, protected by a powerful ritual laid long ago by the Brotherhood. This ritual drained the life of over 100 powerful spell casters, but, in the end, it proved effective – the Fane survived the blast that destroyed the rest of the city and was magically secreted even deeper underground, beyond most any form of detection. (The irony that the very spell casters to have laid this defensive enchantment were

now dead was, alas, lost on the Fane's few remaining inhabitants.)

After the Kothians breached and then re-sealed the Ebon Fane, most of the Witch King's followers fled back through the permanent gate known as the Kiss of Doom to the Abyss, only to meet with a most unfortunate fate: other demon lords coveted Osenkej's power, and after his fall they had seized his domains and resources for themselves. When the Kothians breached the Fane, these demon lords found out about it's existence, and they sent their own servants to destroy or imprison the Witch King's followers and seal the Kiss of Doom. Now, the Witch King's few remaining followers are trapped either inside of the Fane or the Crimson Isle, an isolated prison island of flesh and disease beyond the Kiss of Doom. Other demons – servants of the Witch King's rivals – stand vigil on those demons trapped on the Crimson Isle, prisoners that are subjected to an eternity of torment. Among the forces of the Abyss, there is still some concern that the Witch King yet remains, either as a vestige of power and consciousness in one of his many dark artifacts (which even these demons were afraid to touch), or else trapped with his other servants in some disguised form inside the Crimson Isle. The demons that usurped Osenkej's power are taking no chances.

But the means to open this gate, and to free the prisoners from the Isle, lie inside of the Black Vault. If they're not careful, either the Ghul Legion or the PCs may discover it, and then the Witch King's evil servants shall return.

BLACK SUN (EL 8)

The Ebon Fane is populated with many creatures, primarily undead. While these creatures move around quite frequently (they are bored, and have nothing to torture or destroy aside from one another – and it's hard to torture other undead), at the time the PCs or the Ghul Legion enters the Ebon Fane these undead are found in the areas detailed in this chapter. But not all of the Fane's denizens are content with their current habitat, and move around frequently, possibly even out of the Fane.

In this particular instance, three former members of the Brotherhood of the Black Sun, now **3 wraiths**, roam about freely, passing through the walls of the Fane in search of something to alleviate their boredom. Once the Fane has been breached, these undead may, at the DMs option, leave the Fane and cause trouble topside,

either in the vault, the excavation area, Ghul Keep, or even in whatever area surrounds these sites.

This event may occur multiple times, either with another group of wraiths or with other creatures of the DMs choice (based on the monsters detailed in this section). Indeed, this encounter should be staged multiple times to make it clear that whatever lies in the Fane is eager to make its escape – even if the escape occurs one creature at a time.

Wraith (3): CR 5; hp 39, 30, 28; see the *MM*.

GHUL TEAM 2 (EL 9)

This second team, considerably more powerful than the first, is sent in to explore the Kothian weapons vault and the Ebon Fane if and when Ghul Team 1 fails (see Part Two). This group's ultimate aim is to penetrate to the Black Vault, where they are to recover the various evil relics that Crithian Raine and the Ravagers covet. While the Ghul Legion's strike teams concentrate on securing the area surrounding the Fane and dealing with any rivals or intruders (such as the PCs), this team, which reports directly to Raine, is concerned only with obtaining access to the Black Vault.

When and where to stage the encounter with Ghul Team 2 is entirely up to the DM. If the PCs have used Hellstorm's key and gained access to the Ebon Fane, this team (as well as any surviving members from Ghul Team 1) enter the Fane after the PCs, hoping to gain access to the Vault and to destroy the PCs (possibly with the aid of Crylos' strike team – see Part Three). If the PCs failed to obtain the key from Hellstorm, it eventually is recovered by the Ghul forces described in Part Three and handed over to this team, that uses it to open the Fane and proceed inside to explore.

The Ghul Team doesn't exactly know where the entrance to the Black Vault is (it lies in Area 20), so they must explore the dungeon before they can uncover its location. Interesting places to stage this encounter might be in Area 5 (the retriever trap might trip the Ghul Team up), Area 10 (a battle near the black fruit could be extremely dangerous), Area 22 (one of the team members might swing from the Chain Gallows), or even in Area 28 (the PCs could stumble upon the team as they do battle with Mallachar, or vice versa). Some signs of the groups passing would be appropriate, and some areas might even be bereft of treasure because the Ghul Team came upon it first.

If the PCs do not deal with the Ghul Team in this chapter, they could be encountered even deeper in, perhaps in the Black Vault itself (see Part Six).

The team consists of **Molochai**, **Blackhammer**, **Resaana** and her mount, **Guntar**. Molochai is a powerful half-orc barbarian fighter of a tall, muscular frame. His hair is long and dark, his armor is black and silver, and he wears an iron face-mask that covers his hid-

ously scarred face from just below the eyes to the neck; he yields a wickedly curved orc double-axe. Blackhammer is a powerful ogre warrior – he has an enormous girth and wears armor nearly as pitch black as his putrid skin. He has large silver eyes, a wicked laugh, and a formidable steel greataxe. Resaana, Crithian Raine's apprentice and occasional lover, is a beautiful human woman with a thin frame and dark red hair. She wears tight black leather set with metallic studs, straps and shoulder plates, and a magical gauntlet of silver covers her right arm. She rides about on Guntar, a powerful giant stag beetle that the Legion beast handlers have raised since birth.

Molochai, Half-Orc Brb4/Ftr2: CR 6; SZ M; HD 4d12+16 and 2d10+8; hp 69; Init +2 (Dex); Spd 40 feet; AC 18 (+2 Dex, +6 chain shirt), touch 12, flat-footed 16; BAB/Grapple +6/+10; Full Atk +11/6 melee (1d8+6/x3, orc double axe), or +9/4 melee (1d8+4/x3, orc double axe), +9 melee (1d8+2/x3, orc double axe); SA rage (2/day); SQ uncanny dodge (Dex bonus to AC), darkvision (60 feet); AL CE; SV Fort +11, Ref +3, Will +1; Str 18, Dex 15, Con 18, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 11.

Skills: Climb +12, Intimidate +7, Intuit Direction +7, Jump +12. *Feats:* Cleave, Exotic Weapon Proficiency (Orc Double-Axe), Power Attack, Two-Weapon Fighting, Weapon Focus (Orc Double-Axe).

Possessions: +1/+1 orc double axe, +2 chain shirt, *potion of jump*, 30 gp.

Blackhammer, Ogre War5: CR 6; SZ L Giant; HD 4d8+20 and 5d8+25; hp 98; Init +5 (+1 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative); Spd 30 feet; AC 20 (-1 size, +1 Dex, +5 breastplate, +5 natural), touch 10, flat-footed 19; BAB/Grapple +8/+18; Full Attack +15/10 melee (2d8+10/x3, huge greataxe), or +9/7 ranged (2d6+6/x3, huge long spear); Space/Reach 10ft./10 ft.; SQ darkvision (60 feet); AL CE; SV Fort +13, Ref +3, Will +3; Str 22, Dex 13, Con 21, Int 6, Wis 13, Cha 7.

Skills: Climb +6, Listen +3, Spot +3. *Feats:* Combat Reflexes, Improved Initiative, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (Greataxe).

Possessions: +1 huge greataxe, masterwork large breastplate, huge long spear (4), 44 gp.

Resaana, Human Sor4: CR 4; SZ M; HD 4d4+12 and +3; hp 25; Init +7 (+3 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative); Spd 30 feet; AC 14 (+3 Dex, +1 bracers), touch 13, flat-footed 11; BAB/Grapple +2/+3; Full Atk +3 melee (1d4+1/19-20, dagger), or +5 ranged (1d4+1/19-20, dagger); SA spells; AL NE; SV Fort +4, Ref +4, Will +6; Str 13, Dex 16, Con 16, Int 14, Wis 15, Cha 18.

Skills: Concentration +14, Knowledge (Arcana) +9, Ride +10, Spellcraft +9. *Feats:* Combat Casting, Improved Initiative, Toughness.

Possessions: +1 bracers of armor, scroll of mirror

FANE OF THE WITCH KING



image, *scroll of knock* (2), *gauntlet of fireballs II* (treat as *minor circlet of blasting*), gold ring (worth 50 gp), dagger.

Arcane Spells Known (per day 6/7/4; Base Save DC = 14 + spell level): 0 – detect magic, mage hand, open/close, ray of frost, read magic, resistance; 1st – color spray, magic missile, shield; 2nd – *mel's acid arrow*

Guntar, Giant Stag Beetle: CR 4; hp 56; see the *MM*.

Possessions (in *saddlebags*): *potion of cure light wounds* (10), *potion of levitate* (2).

Tactics: If prepared for combat, Resaana always casts *shield* and *mirror image* on herself, granting her AC 21 and 1d4+1 duplicate images. Molochai rages as soon as possible, changing his stats to: hp 81; AC 16; Attack +13/8 melee (1d8+6/x3, orc double axe), or +11/6 melee (1d8+6/x3, orc double axe), +11 melee (1d8+3/x3, orc double axe); SV Fort +13, Will +3; Str 22, Con 22. When possible, Resaana begins combat with a blast from her gauntlet, followed by a *color spray*. She then casts *mel's acid arrows* while Guntar, Molochai and Blackhammer melee (Blackhammer hates spellcasters of all sorts, and typically focuses his attention on them when he can). The team rarely retreats (due to Molochai's rage), but Resaana is not above sacrificing the other two to allow herself enough time to escape. She makes judicious use of *color spray* and her gauntlet to cover her back.

FEATURES OF THE EBON FANE

Unless noted otherwise, all areas inside of the Ebon Fane are dark. PCs (and NPCs) need to provide their own light sources. All walls are constructed of magically reinforced masonry. All doors, unless noted otherwise, are made of stone. All ceilings are 20 feet high.

Reinforced Masonry Walls: thickness varies; Hardness 8; hp 360 per 10 ft. square section; Break (DC 65); Climb (DC 15).

Stone Doors: 4 inches thick; Hardness 8; hp 60; Break (DC 28); Open Locks (DC 25).

MAGICAL EFFECTS

A number of permanent enchantments protect the Ebon Fane, though many of them are only active so long as the door to the Fane (Area 11 of the weapons vault) remains sealed. None of these magical effects can be dispelled, though they may be disrupted by a *mord's disjunction* or similar magic.

- *Unhallow* protects the entirety of the Fane. While there is no additional effect attached to the spell, there is a constant –4 profane penalty to turn any undead in the Fane. This effect remains whether the door has been unsealed or not.

- Ethereal, astral and gaseous travel to and from the

Fane is impossible. This effect goes away once the door in Area 11 of the weapons vault is breached, but it may be re-established once the locks in the Flesh Pits (Area 6 of the Black Vault) are re-sealed.

- Summoning spells of all kinds fail.

Teleport and similar spells cannot bring someone into the Ebon Fane; only a well-worded *wish* or *miracle* spell can grant access, and even then the perpetrator could not leave unless the door in Area 11 of the weapons vault were breached. This effect goes away once the door in Area 11 is opened.

I: ENTRANCE CHAMBER (EL 5)

A hole in the ceiling leads straight up 100 feet to Area 16 of the weapons vault. This hole was expertly dug with magic, but there is no easy means of descending; the Climb check to ascend or descend the hole is DC 20. The hole ends at a short set of steep steps that lead down from what is an apparently ruined and blasted area (the former entrance arch, destroyed by the explosion that devastated *Krezzel Dul*) to the main entry.

This area is a shambles. Loose chunks of stone and mortar lie about this large chamber, which is otherwise decorated with long-faded frescoes of horrifying images: seas of boiling liquid in which swim naked, melting humans; great dragons that ignite the sky in smoke and flame; a skull-shaped moon that bleeds throughout the sky. A cloaked figure armed with a wickedly curved sword dominates this entire scene, his cruel visage the clearest thing discernible in the timeworn images. A torture rack, mostly decayed from the passage of time, sits against the east wall, and an altar of sorts, complete with ancient black candles and a set of barbed chains affixed to the floor before it, stands near the south wall.

A Knowledge (Arcana, History or Religion) check (DC 25) identifies the cloaked figure as *Osenkej*, the Witch King, a powerful demon prince that commanded a formidable army of followers, but was destroyed by powerful armies of good champions and celestial creatures. The torture rack and altar have lost any value or functional abilities they may have once possessed.

All of the exits from this chamber are secret doors (DC 25 to locate).

Creatures: The PCs won't have to find two of the doors, however. 1d4 rounds after anything enters this chamber, the doors to Areas 2 and 3 open, revealing 2 **mummies** (one from each Areas 2 and 3) that emerge and attack anything in the room. Both of these mummies were monks of the Black Claw, a small cloister dedicated to the Witch King and controlled by the Brotherhood of the Black Sun.

Mummy (2): CR 3; hp 54, 50; see the *MM*.

Development: If Ghul Team 2 came through this area prior to the PCs, all of the secret doors lie open and

the treasure from Area 3 has been seized; the mummies remains lie on the floor.

2: MUMMY VAULT 1

A stone sarcophagus lies in the western end of this chamber. The room smells of sumac and hemlock. A number of glass jars rest in a shelf against the south wall, and a pair of long-decayed bodies, whose heads were evidently caved in by some blunt object, lie propped up against the now-open door.

Members of the Black Claw often volunteered to become undead guardians of the Ebon Fane upon their deaths – the canopic jars on the shelf are the mummy's internal organs, carefully preserved through a blend of special fluids and spices. Unfortunately for the rest of the Black Claw, when Osenkej took his revenge on Krezzel Dul, all undead in the city became his thralls – in this case, the mummified Black Claw brothers turned on their former comrades.

There is nothing of value in the room.

3: MUMMY VAULT 2

This room is essentially identical to Area 2, though there are no bodies and there is some reward to be found investigating the area.

Treasure: One of the canopic jars is actually filled with a special solution that acts as a *potion of bull's strength* – the solution is mixed in with the preserved heart. While putrefying to the taste and senses, the substance is non-poisonous, and there is enough liquid in the jar to provide 4 doses of the potion. The PCs will likely have to use *detect magic* to determine that there is anything unique about the horrible-tasting liquid in the jar.

4: SLOPE (EL 3)

This 40-foot long corridor is made of incredibly slick, polished steel, and requires a Climb check (DC 25) to safely navigate without falling and sliding down the 45-degree angled slope to Area 5.

Trap: Worse, a number of small but incredibly sharp shards of steel, like razors, jut out towards Area 3 near the end of the slope, potentially causing a good deal of damage to anyone who slides down without using proper precautions.

Razor Slope Trap: CR 4; mechanical; proximity trigger (slide); automatic reset; Climb check DC 25 avoids; 40 ft. slide down razor blades (2d6 damage); pit trap at end of slide; Atk+10 melee (1d4 spikes for 1d4+2 points of damage each, crit 18-20); Search (DC 25); Disable Device (DC 25).

5: GUARDIAN (EL 10)

The slope empties into a wide, round chamber covered in ancient and congealed black ichors. Then room is suffused by an eerie green glow, which emanates from a triangular structure that rests in the center of the room and which occupies most of the room's available space. The points of the triangle are tall, ebon pillars wrought of tightly packed black skulls; each pillar has but a single, 1-foot square iron plate on its face, adorned with dials and switches. A good number of skeletons lie about the room, many of them in pieces. The walls of the triangle are made up of green walls of energy, which extend all the way to the ceiling.

Lurking inside of the triangle is a monstrosity of oddly joined metal plates, eyes and entirely too many claws. The creature stands some 10-feet tall, and resembles nothing so much as a massive mantis, its eyes solid red gems of unholy light, its claws still covered in what must be ancient bloodstains. The construct becomes visibly agitated as the room is entered, but it seems incapable of leaving the triangle.

This room is and always has been the primary defensive area of the Ebon Fane. Getting through this area is difficult, not the least because the foul-minded Brotherhood of the Black Sun never saw any point to making survival in this area easy.

The Circular Room: Only one exit exists from this room, the open doorway that, when the PCs (or Ghul Team 2) arrive leads up through Area 4. In order to gain access to the other halls (located to the east, west and south), the entire circular room must be rotated. This can only be done by properly manipulating the dials on one of the three skull pillars, but operating the mechanism incorrectly brings a most unfortunate consequence.

Each panel can be successfully deciphered with a Decipher Script check (DC 20) or a read magic spell. A Disable Device check (DC 25) or a knock spell causes the controls of one pillar to be successfully used. Each time the controls are tampered with, the combination of locks, gears, dials and buttons completely changes, so a new check or spell is required.

Each time the PCs successfully manipulate the controls of one of the pillars, the entire chamber shifts loudly and rotates quickly; anyone standing in the room must make a Balance check (DC 15) or be knocked prone. Anyone standing in the open doorway when this occurs must make a Reflex Save (DC 20) or be crushed when the room rotates away from the open hall, suffering 10d6 points of crushing damage (a successful Save means they have leapt to safety in either direction, their choice).



When successfully manipulated, the room rotates $\frac{1}{4}$ of a turn in either direction (roll 1d6, 1-3 = to the left, 4-6 = to the right). It remains in this new position until manipulated again.

Access from the Outside: If the PCs are behind Ghul Team 2, the chamber may already be rotated. Luckily on the outside of the circular chamber in each open passageway is a similar panel layered with flat controls (mainly buttons and flat dials). These panels are manipulated the same as the panels on the pillars, but there is a 2 in 6 chance that the walls of force drop when the room rotates about (see below). Of course, depending on which direction the room shifts, this action may not be enough to actually grant access to the room, but the new set of controls can always be manipulated until the open wall appears.

The Triangle: The glowing sheets are *walls of force*. If a set of controls is incorrectly manipulated, these walls immediately drop, releasing the creature. The walls stay down for 10 rounds, after which time the creature is forced back into the triangle, and the walls are again raised. (This can be extremely unfortunate if a PC is grappled by the creature when it returns.)

Trap (EL 4): In addition to releasing the creature, if the Disable Device check is failed in regards to any particular panel the perpetrator is also blasted with a powerful electric shock.

Electric Shock Trap: CR 4; magical device; touch trigger; automatic reset; spell effect (*lightning bolt*, 5th level wizard, 5d6 electricity damage, Reflex Save DC 14 for half); Search (DC 29); Disable Device (DC 29).

Creature (EL 10): The beast held in the center of the room is a **retriever**, magically bound and controlled by the Brotherhood long ago. It fights viciously, though it always returns to its proper place after 10 rounds have elapsed (unless destroyed).

Retriever: CR 10; hp 55; see the *MM*.

Development: Both the PCs and Ghul Team 2 (and perhaps later Ghul Legion creatures) may be forced to deal with this creature, a daunting task for lower-level characters. If Ghul Team 2 is ahead of the PCs, the PCs arrive to find the room already shifted, the retriever free or destroyed, and possibly one or more members of the team already dead. The specifics are left to the speed at which the PCs have descended into the Fane, and the imagination of the DM.

6: NECROVATS

This long and wide chamber reeks of rot and decay. A long table rests against the south wall, atop of which are a good deal of wicked-looking cutting devices, as well as a small iron box and a number of vials. Several dried, withered things that look like fruit but that must in actuality be an internal organ lie along the table. Eight wide, round pits dominates the western end of the room,

each filled with a briny black and green fluid. The tip of a humanoid head protrudes from the fluid in each of the vats; the flesh of their skulls has long withered and turned sickly purple. The fluid bubbles, but the room is freezing cold.

This room was used to create undead. The fluid inside of the vats was once capable of casting a create undead spell on any corpse placed within, which would then rise to be controlled by anyone bearing a Black Sun Amulet. The magic of the Necrovats was corrupted when the Witch King took revenge on Krezzel Dul, and the bodies here are simply that: bodies. There are just over 20 between all of the vats. The cutting tools and other items on the table are essentially worthless.

7: BODIES (EL 3)

The corridor empties into a wide, bloody chamber filled with shredded cloaks and flattened bodies. The already dark stone of the walls has been rendered darker by the presence of powerful scorch marks and congealed blood stains. The bodies that cover the floor like a festering rug – there are too many, their states too devastated to determine how many – all seem to huddle about a central point in the room, which is oddly clear of debris or blast marks. Somewhere in the chamber, impossibly distant and near at once, is a faint, pained moaning.

This chamber was one of many where members of the Brotherhood took a last stand against the Witch King's angry demonic enforcers. The bodies have been thoroughly destroyed and looted.

Creature: Lurking in the central cleared area is the mad vestige of one of the Brothers slain in this battle, a mad incorporeal undead called an **allip**. It manifests from the cleared space of floor and attacks any that come through this area.

Allip: CR 3; hp 27; see the *MM*.

Treasure: Made permanently invisible in the center of the floor is the allip's "treasure", a *Black Sun Amulet*. This item is detailed in the Appendix.

8: THE PIT (EL 5)

This wide hall is nondescript, but that isn't because it is at all safe.

Trap (EL 3): The central 10 foot wide, 40-foot long strip of this hall is a pit trap, placed by the Brotherhood both to throw sacrifices to Osenkej and to dispatch would-be intruders. Anyone stepping upon the area marked on the map may plummet down and land upon the sharp, barbed stone spikes that wait at the bottom.

Spiked Pit Trap: CR 4; mechanical; location trigger; automatic reset; Reflex save DC 20 avoids; 40 ft. deep (4d6, pit); Atk +10 melee (1d4 spikes for 1d4+4

damage each); Search (DC 20); Disable Device (DC 20).

Creature (EL 3): Lurking in the bottom of the pit, amidst about a dozen long-decayed, is a **shadow**. It attacks anyone unlucky enough to plummet down to the bottom relentlessly.

Shadow: CR 3; hp 23; see the *MM*.

Treasure: Several of the victims' remains at the bottom of the pit contain some treasure – these victims are a combination of Brotherhood members and holy invaders of the Fane. Among the bodies are a *wind fan*, a *potion of darkvision*, and a *wand of charm person* (19 charges).

9: THE SLEEPERS (EL 6)

The door to this chamber is locked. The key to the room has long since been lost. This small room was apparently a workshop of some sort in ages past, likely one dealing with horticulture – large planting pots line the west and north walls, and a large table on the south wall contains dozens of long-decayed seed packets and a bed of elevated black soil, in which lie the dried husks of some sort of foul-smelling plant. The room is suffused with the smells of decay and brimstone, which rise from every pore of the area. A blood-colored from the gap beneath the eastern door covers the floor. Three cadavers, each adorned in a black and silver cloak, are set near the center of the room in one of three pentagrams drawn in black chalk.

This room was once the area used to create the black fruit that is still in abundance in the abutting chamber (Area 10). Among other uses, the black fruit was used to corrupt prisoners and to ensure the loyalty of Brotherhood members. The seeds and equipment in this room have been smashed beyond any usefulness.

The Mist: At this diffused level, the *crimson mist* is only somewhat dangerous. Any living being exposed to it must make a Fortitude Save (DC 15) or be *slowed*, as the spell, for 5 rounds. Once someone successfully Saves against the mist, they are forever immune to its effects.

Creatures: The three bodies, unsurprisingly enough, are far from harmless. In life, this trio of women were called the Sleepers – addicts of the black fruit, they constantly tended to its growth. Though alive, they were eternally in a dreamlike trance, and some whispered that their addiction to the necrotic fruit had even granted them limited abilities of foresight and precognition. Now, they are **3 wights**, and they attack any intruders.

Wight (3): CR 3; hp 33, 30, 27; see the *MM*.

Tactics: If the PCs take more than 1 round opening the door, the wights are ready for them, and use their wands (see below). This means each start combat *invisible*, with 1d4+1 points of additional Strength, and +4 AC.

If the Sleepers are capable of rendering themselves *invisible* before the PCs enter, they wait until the *crimson mist* takes effect before launching their attack.

Treasure: Each of these wights – in life a sorceress – carries a wand. One carries a *wand of invisibility* (15 charges), one has a *wand of mage armor* (16 charges), and one has a *wand of bull's strength* (10 charges).

10: BLACK FRUIT

The floor of this large chamber is covered in thick, black soil; numerous bones visibly jut up from the loamy floor, and the room carries the pungent odor of a cemetery. A thick crimson mist hangs in the air, originating from a pair of small, bleeding trees. Upon each of the trees dangles a dozen or so ripe, black fruit, about the size of plums and covered in glistening black slime. The two trees in the room are fragile and easily destroyed.

Trees: Hardness 1; 7 hp; Break (DC 16).

Once, these trees produced the powerful *black fruit*, a narcotic plant that rendered the imbiber susceptible to suggestion, an evil disposition, and, ultimately, madness (though those addicted to the fruit claimed sustained dosages granted them prophetic visions). With the passage of time, the Sleepers (Area 9) have forgotten anything they once knew about tending to the trees; now, the fruit is incredibly dangerous to imbibe, though it may still grant some limited degree of power to those brave enough to take it.

The Fruit: Eating a piece of the fruit requires an immediate Fortitude Save (DC 20). Failure results in the permanent drain of 1 point of Constitution. Success means that the imbiber gains a permanent 1 point bonus to (roll 1d6) Intelligence (1-2), Wisdom (3-4) or Charisma (5-6). In its current state, an individual can only ever gain the benefits of the fruit once (though they may suffer the penalties as often as they are willing to take the fruit). The fruit loses any efficacy within 1d4 hours after being removed from the trees.

All records on the caring of the evil trees have long since been destroyed, though, at the DMs option, the PCs might be able to transplant the trees to grow black fruit on their own (though this should require a Knowledge [Arcana] check of at least DC 25 to do properly).

11: NECROMANCY LAB

The bloody light in this foul chamber stems from a number of black skulls, all bound with barbed chains to a pair of pillars in the eastern end of the room. Hundreds upon hundreds of parchments lie scattered about, most of them so aged and weathered that they crinkle like old bones. A short table lies smashed between the two pillars, and its contents – a preserved cadaver that was evidently being dissected for study, lies in two neat

halves on the floor. A number of unpleasant looking cutting and slicing implements hang from ancient, rusted hooks on the walls, and a short stack of extremely brittle books is stacked just north of the door.

This was a research and instruction chamber in the arts of necromancy, where lesser acolytes of the Brotherhood of the Black Sun would learn on the whys and wherefores of undeath from the more senior members. The writing is all in Krezzelian, and covers all manner of necromantic lore and information. While the parchments are almost uniformly anatomical breakdowns of over a dozen different known (and unknown) creatures, the stack of books is much more interesting. Deciphering the books is difficult (Decipher Script check DC 20), and reading the books would require at least 1d4 days of uninterrupted study, but doing so would grant the Skill Focus (Knowledge [Necromancy]) Feat to the reader for free. The books weigh just over 30 pounds altogether.

12: INTERROGATION ROOM

The eastern door to this chamber is locked. This small chamber is cluttered with shadows, corpses and unpleasant apparatus. A small well lies in the center of the chamber, its interior edges lined with razor-sharp spikes. An iron maiden rests in one corner, a rack lies along the north wall, and a small chair with a hood attached to the back and strong leather straps placed at wrist and ankle level is against the northwest corner. A weapons rack along the south wall contains a number of whips, a cat-o-nine-tails, a set of short razors and many pairs of leather gauntlets. An iron file, coated in what could only be centuries-aged blood, rests on the edge of the well, next to one of the several corpses that litter the area.

Enemies of the city of Krezzel Dul and the Brotherhood of the Black Sun were “re-educated” here, though, truthfully, few survived their ordeals at the hands of the Inquisitors – the Brotherhood’s torture and interrogation specialists. The whips and torture devices are in fair working order, but there is nothing of actual value in this room.

13: GRAND INQUISITOR’S CHAMBER

This small, sparse chamber was evidently someone’s quarters. A small shrine to a hooded being with maggot-covered claws dominates the chamber, which is otherwise taken up by a small cot, a leather mat on the floor, a writing desk with long-faded parchments, and a small chest. Also noticeable in the chamber are a set of manacles attached to the north wall, and a small bowl placed between them on the floor, which even still contains a small bit of foul, black fluid, dry and paste-like.

This room was the personal chamber of Mallachar, the Grand Inquisitor of the Brotherhood of the Black Sun. In life, Mallachar was an evil, spiteful, and vengeful creature, his only redeeming quality (if it can be called such) his utter faith and devotion to the Witch King. Mallachar was one of the only servants of Osenkej spared his wrath in the wake of the Veiled Ones’ rebellion, though he was still “blessed” with eternal existence as an undead being. Mallachar spends almost all of his time in his current “life” in the Screaming Place (Area 28), though he returns here time and again – at the DMs option, he may be encountered here rather than in Area 28.

Treasure: Mallachar carries all of his magical equipment on his person, though the unlocked chest contains the bulk of his monetary wealth: 1,205 gp and 4 ambers (120 gp each).

Development: Also in the chest is Mallachar’s journal. Though written in Krezzelian (and therefore requiring a DC 20 Decipher Script check to read), the journal briefly details the rise and fall of the City of Skull & Shadow, as well as numerous rants about his imprisonment here in the Ebon Fane. He also makes brief mention of the demons guarding the way to the Black Vault, and makes clear that they are enemies of the followers of the Witch King. Mallachar knows that most of Osenkej’s demonic servants are bound and imprisoned somewhere within or beyond the Black Vault, and he makes mention that he believes the Witch King’s champions can be released if the proper artifact is recovered from the Vault.

If the PCs have been able to interrogate Ghul Team 2, or if they have already ventured into the Ghul Keep, they may have already discovered that penetrating the Black Vault is exactly what Crithian Raine intends to do.

14: TRAPPED HALL (EL 5)

Mallachar and his remaining Inquisitors (see Area 15) have enchanted this otherwise innocuous hallway to destroy intruders (especially the fiends sent here to prevent any of the Witch King’s followers from penetrating into the Black Vault). A single, very difficult to spot (and worthless) black gem waits at the southern end of the hall. Once per round, it fires an enervation ray towards any living occupants of the hall.

Enervation Ray Trap: CR 5; magical device; proximity trigger; automatic reset; spell effect (*enervation*, 7th level wizard, +10 ranged touch [1d4 negative levels]); Search (DC 29); Disable Device (DC 29).

15: INQUISITORS (EL 6)

This small chamber was once someone's quarters, but the room is now layered in black cloth that is draped across the doorway and covers every inch of the walls. The contents of the room – tables, chairs, a pair of cots – lie in splinters all about the floor, commingled with yellowed bones and questionable stains.

Creatures: This room was once the living quarters for a pair of Inquisitors, who have since been “blessed” with eternal existence as undead. These Inquisitors have not mentally fared with their newfound state quite as well as Mallachar, and so they destroyed most of the vestiges of their former lives. The 2 **vampire spawn** are normally found here, and they happily attack anything living that enters the Fane – they have been deprived of blood for far too long.

Vampire Spawn (2): CR 4; hp 27, 26; AC 16 (touch 12, flat-footed 14); *bracers of armor +1, Black Sun amulet* (see Appendix), key to Area 16; see the *MM*.

Tactics: The vampires likely hear the PCs approach down the hall, especially if the enervation trap in Area 14 is set off. If this is the case, both assume gaseous form and lie about the floor in a blue-gray mist, hoping to catch intruders by surprise.

Development: Tiny holes drilled into the northern wall (Search check DC 25) lead to a 5 foot square hollow that serves as the “coffin” for these vampire spawn; they make every attempt to escape and regenerate if defeated. Accessing this hollow is incredibly difficult, and essentially requires that the wall covering the area be destroyed.

Wall: Hardness 8; hp 64; break DC 28.

16: FORCE HALL

The normal door to this area is locked. At the point where the corridor turns straight east, an invisible and permanent *wall of force* blocks the way forward. A small, carefully hidden keyhole bored into the northern wall (Search check DC 25) controls this wall. Mallachar and each of the vampire spawn in Area 15 hold a key to the wall and to the normal locked door leading into this area.

Development: If the PCs do not possess the key, the wall must be destroyed, which is difficult or impossible for low-level characters. In the event that the PCs possess neither the key nor the means to destroy the wall, they must circumvent it using the rotating chamber (Area 5), and possibly facing the retriever there.

17: SMOKE (EL 6)

The chamber to the south is filled with charcoal-colored smoke. The heavy fumes reek of burning flesh and bone, and billow forth at an incredible rate.

The smoke is the last vestige of a permanent guards and wards spell cast long ago; only the fog effect of the spell remains. The effect can be dispelled (Caster Level 15) or dispersed with a *gust of wind* spell (or the *wind fan* from Area 8, if the PCs have managed to locate it). This chamber was once a storage area for weapons and goods, but these goods were all destroyed in the Veiled Ones' uprising.

Creature: Lurking inside of this chamber of endless fog is a **belker**, an elemental of smoke and evil cunning. The belker was summoned by the Brotherhood long ago (and brought into Area 25), and has found that it enjoys the corrupt air and nature of this place, as well as the relative peace it is afforded. It knows of the vampires in Area 15, the retriever in Area 5 and the fiendish girallon in Area 19, but thus far it has managed to avoid conflict with all of these creatures. It is quite upset at being disturbed, and attacks viciously, gaining a +10 circumstance bonus to its Hide check due to its smoky nature (unless the smoke of the room is dispersed).

Belker: CR 6; hp 45; see the *MM*.

Tactics: The belker begins the conflict in smoke form, and attempts to use its smoke claws attack on whoever enters the room. It attempts to do this as many times as possible, turning to its physical form only once it knows it has the upper hand.

18: CROSSROADS

This wide, cold room is filled with refuse, rubbish and bones. A good deal of broken blades and weapon shafts are strewn about the area, as well as a good deal of old cloaks and bits of clothing, though no sign of the clothing's former inhabitants remains. Stone doors lead away to the north, east and west.

Despite its forbidding appearance, this room is quite harmless.

Development: This would be an ideal place to stage an encounter with Ghul Team 2, who might have slipped in this direction after facing the retriever in Area 5.

19: GUARDIAN (EL 6)

If anyone tampers with the door to this chamber or that to Area 20, the trap is triggered. This small chamber is home to a grisly scene. A small pyramid of humanoid skulls lies in the middle of the room, soaked in a pool of still-fresh blood. Able hands did not construct the pyramid – indeed, it is crude and misshapen, and it appears that the skulls were hammered into place to make the pyramid retain its form. Protruding from the center of the pyramid is a sharp metal stake, upon which are impaled a cluster of human and dwarf heads, eyes wide open and mouths leaking their oozing fluids. The heads are pressed one above the other, as if on a spit.

The walls of the chamber are coated in a thick lair of slimy blood. A pentagram, made of jagged and bloodied humanoid teeth, is etched into the west wall.

When the Witch King's demonic enemies took over the Black Vault, they posted a number of fiendish guardians to ensure that the artifacts buried within would never be used (primarily for fear of his power being rekindled through the use of these items); additionally, the Witch King's allies lie prisoner on the Crimson Isle, which is accessible through the use of one the artifacts, the Bone Cross. These demonic minions aren't overly concerned with maintaining vigil over the entire Fane – only the way forward to the Black Vault.

A special enchantment on this room prevents any decay of organic material, which is why the blood in this chamber seems so fresh. Numerous people died in this chamber, both before and after the Veiled Ones launched their revolt (prior to that time, this area was used for particularly hideous executions).

Creature & Trap: Anyone who tampers with the door to this chamber or that to Area 20 activates a *summon monster V* spell trap – specifically, a nameless **fiendish girallon** comes lurching out of the pentagram of teeth. This girallon has been here before. It fashioned the pyramid of skulls during its initial extended stay, though now it only comes when summoned. This trap does not go away: though the girallon only remains for 9 rounds, if either of the doors is tampered with (opened, shut, etc.), it can return again for 9 additional rounds, so long as it has not been killed.

Summon Monster V Trap: CR 6; magical device; touch trigger; no reset; spell effect (*summon monster V*, 9th level wizard, summons fiendish girallon (see below); Search (DC 31); Disable Device (DC 31).

Fiendish Girallon: CR 6; SZ L Magical Beast; HD 7d10+14 + 6; hp 73; Init +3 (Dex); Spd 40 ft., climb 40 ft.; AC 16 (-1 size, +3 Dex, +4 natural), touch 12, flat-footed 13; BAB/Grapple +7/+19; Full Atk +14 melee (1d4+8, 4 claws), +9 melee (1d8+4, bite); Space/Reach 10 ft./10 ft.; SA rend (2d4+12), smite good (1/day, +7 damage vs. good creature); SQ scent, darkvision (60 feet), cold/fire resistance (5), DR (5/magic), SR (12); AL CE; SV Fort +7, Ref +8, Will +7; Str 26, Dex 17, Con 14, Int 3, Wis 12, Cha 7.

Skills: Climb +16, Move Silently +8, Spot +6. Feats: Iron Will, Toughness x2.

Development: Once the fiendish girallon is destroyed, it cannot return.

20: VAULT ACCESS/CHAMBER OF EYES

This room is as black as night. The walls of this corridor are layered with humanoid eyes, thousands of them, embedded in the stone from floor to the ceiling,

barely an inch apart. The thousands of bloodshot eyes make no sound, seem to follow anyone moving about the room. A 10-foot square alcove rests in the northeast corner, noticeably devoid of eyes.

The Eyes: The eyes in this area are undead animations, though they cannot be turned. They are magically attuned to Crinn, a demon who guards the Crimson Isle. The eyes alert him when anyone attempts to enter the Black Vault – if the eyes are not deactivated, all of the creatures in the Black vault are ready for intruders. Otherwise, the eyes function as a permanent *prying eyes* spell. The effect may be dispelled (Caster Level 11).

The Alcove: Anyone that steps into the alcove is automatically *teleported* to Area 1 of the Black Vault. See Part 6 for details on this dangerous place.

21: CELL

The door to this room is locked. This chamber was apparently a holding cell – at least a half-dozen sets of shackles line the dirty, decaying walls, most of them with skeletal figures still attached. One skeleton is of a prisoner who apparently escaped from his shackles, but was unable to flee. The skeleton lies prone at the doorway, and the inside of the door is marked with scratch marks made by fingernails.

This was a cell for prisoners of the Brotherhood; such unlucky souls were held here before being sent to the Inquisitors or to the Chain Gallows for execution (Area 22). The skeletons are harmless.

22: THE CHAIN GALLOWES (EL 7)

Long black chains dangle from the ceiling of this hexagonal chamber; an unseen wind carries through the area, wafting the strong smell of decay and causing the chains to chink nervously against the bloodied stone walls. There are at least two-dozen chains, black and barbed and many of them still coated in some greasy substance. The chains stop about 7 feet short of the floor – most of them end at a body, wrapped about the throat and clenched with barbed hooks. The bodies are largely skeletal, though bits of black, dried flesh continues to cling to the husks. A strange wind rises in intensity, as if something very cold were breathing in the room.

This chamber has one simple, obvious purpose: execution. Enemies of the Brotherhood and Krezzel Dul who were not through fit for torture were brought here and summarily executed. There are 30 chains and 18 bodies, most of which have been here for quite some time. The chains themselves are not harmful, and the “invisible wind” is a side-effect of the presence of a most unpleasant being in this chamber.

Creature: In life, the woman who now resides here was a ruthless and fanatical member of the Brotherhood of the Black Sun. Though even she has now forgotten her true name, she was known as the **Reaper Dame** due both to her position as executioner and the apparent zeal and joy she experienced at her duties. In death, as an unholy ghost, she is still committed to executions – in this case, she attempts to destroy any and all creatures that enter her unholy realm.

The Reaper Dame, Ghost Rog5: CR 7; SZ M Undead (Incorporeal); HD 5d12; hp 47; Init +8 (+4 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative); Spd fly 30 feet (perfect); AC 20 (+4 Dex, +1 ring, +5 deflection); Atk +7 touch (1d4, corrupting touch); SA sneak attack (+3d6), manifestation, corrupting touch, horrific appearance, telekinesis; SQ evasion, uncanny dodge (Dex bonus to AC), undead, incorporeal, rejuvenation, turn resistance (+4); AL CE; SV Fort +1, Ref +8, Will +1; Str 11, Dex 18, Con -, Int 12, Wis 11, Cha 21.

Skills: Bluff +13, Diplomacy +13, Disable Device +5, Escape Artist +12, Hide +20, Intimidate +13, Listen +12, Move Silently +12, Search +13, Sense Motive +8, Spot +12, Use Rope +12. **Feats:** Dodge, Improved Initiative, Weapon Finesse (Rapier).

Possessions: *ring of protection +1*, rapier, leather armor.

Tactics: The Reaper Dame opens combat with her *telekinesis* ability, and animates 12 chains (each chain is considered to weigh 25 pounds). She strikes with these chains at a +4 bonus for 1d6 damage each (or she may use them to grapple). If this line of attack seems unsuccessful, the Dame uses her horrific appearance attack and then strikes and retreats, using her sneak attack to inflict as much damage as possible. The Reaper Dame is a wily opponent, and is likely to cause the PCs quite a bit of frustration.

If faced on the ethereal plane, the Dame's AC is 17, and she attacks with her rapier: Atk +7 melee (1d6/18-20, rapier).

Treasure: Several of the bodies here were not of those executed in the normal sense, but of the holy invaders who attempted to take Krezzel Dul by force. A Search check (DC 20) reveals a suit of +2 *studded leather*, a +1 *short sword*, and 36 gp. If the PCs can somehow battle the Dame ethereally, they might also acquire her ring.

Development: The Reaper Dame cannot leave the confines of this chamber. Though it is unlikely that the PCs discover how to prevent the Dame's rejuvenation, all that needs to happen is for her to receive a command from a Brotherhood member to desist, and that her work here is done.

23: LIVING QUARTERS

This long chamber was once a living quarters, but the passage of time and an apparent combat that once took place here has left the numerous cots and wardrobes in shambles. A number of flayed black cloaks lie about, some filled with blackened and moldered skeletons.

This area was indeed once the primary living quarters for the Brotherhood of the Black Sun, who were a small organization in spite of the great power they yielded in Krezzel Dul. Battles between they and the Witch King's demonic servants destroyed those who resided in this chamber.

24: DEMONOLOGY

Profane glyphs and images scar this room – not an inch of space of wall, floor or ceiling is untouched by demonic symbols or images of massive, deformed spiders and insects tearing great cities asunder. The ceiling is dominated by a visage of a great eye, much like that of a reptile; other images on the ceiling depict humans, elves and dwarves being drawn toward the eye, as if into a vacuum. A pentagram made of woven hair and flesh dominates the floor; the interior of the pentagram is a soft bed of black soil.

What little furnishings there are in the room consist of a table covered with ancient and yellowed parchments and weathered books, an open wardrobe filled with tattered black and silver cloaks, and a brazier that has long since run cold.

Just as the Brotherhood was fascinated with necromancy, they were dedicated to demonology – which only makes sense, considering that the patron lord of their city was a powerful demon prince. In this chamber, research was conducted on the behavior and of the various types of demons that served the Witch King, some minor sacrifices were made in his name, and doomed souls (or willing martyrs) who were to be sent to the Abyss to satiate Osenkej's appetite were transported away via the pentagram of hair and flesh.

The pentagram has lost its magical properties.

Development: Most of the tomes cover the various topics of demonology, including demonic anatomy, the hierarchy (chaotic though it is) of the Abyss, and various treatises on the glories and powers of the Witch King. Among these treatises is a tidbit of interesting information: a personal journal kept by a man named Valahomt, apparently an elder in the Brotherhood. Though the journal (as well as the rest of the documents) is written in Krezzelian (Decipher Script check DC 20), it contains the following bits of information: *The prize possession of the Brotherhood is the Black Vault, a reliquary of powerful relics of evil. The Brotherhood crafted these items under the direct guidance

of the Witch King's words and servants – they would one day bring great glory to the Witch King and to Krezzel Dul, and through their power many helpless beings would suffer and perish. Also located in the Vault is the locking mechanism that can seal the Ebon Fane off from invaders and make it nearly impenetrable.

*Other demons of the Abyss covet the Witch King's power – should he ever fall, they would likely strike at Krezzel Dul, but they could never use or even touch the artifacts of the Black Vault, for they contain within them some vestige of the Witch King himself – a small bit of his power that would be released whenever the relics were used.

*The greatest threat to Krezzel Dul is the Veiled Ones, an order of insane monks who defy the Witch King's power and glory. Their numbers are being purged, but they may yet cause some trouble before they are dealt with permanently, that is certain.

While this information is not definitive, it should give the PCs some idea of the inherent dangers of exploring the Black Vault, or in allowing the Ghul Legion to do so. The hint that the means to seal the Ebon Fane lies within the Black Vault will also become important later in the adventure.

25: MINOR GATE

The door to this chamber has been blasted off of its hinges by some force from within. The small chamber beyond is a seething mess – whatever explosion detonated in this area destroyed at least one living creature along with it, as long dried and putrid entrails and bodily ooze coats the wall in a thick lair. Barely visible beneath the plasma is a solid iron door, about 4-feet in diameter, set upon the southern wall.

The “door” is actually a sealed portal to the Abyss (requires a *gate* spell to reactivate). Its ability to bring in demonic creatures was removed after the Witch King's rivals took over the Black Vault.

26: SHRINE

A tall altar, disturbingly covered by stretched human faces, elongated masks of preserved flesh, sits squarely in the center of the room. Bones and other detritus are scattered about the chamber, and a number of wicked looking black spikes, each easily 2-feet long, protrude from the ceiling. A single skeleton is tangled within the spikes; its bony fingers still clutch the stake through its torso.

A tall stone door stands in the northeast corner of the room.

Dark rites and blasphemies were performed here – ritualistic slayings, mutilations, and disgusting but creative applications of the human flesh and spirit. Despite their pragmatic roles as the political leaders and

police of Krezzel Dul, the Brotherhood of the Black Sun was, above all else, a religious order, and they expressed their dark devotion with fervor.

This smaller shrine was used for private or quiet ceremonies – rituals that involved more people were conducted in the massive chamber known as The Screaming Place (Area 28).

Treasure: The skeleton bears a single golden tooth, which only rot was able to reveal. The tooth is worth 40 gp.

Development: The secret door in the south end of the chamber (Search DC 20) leads to the Screaming Place.

A secret panel beneath the altar (Search check DC 25) leads to a 10-foot square hollow area, in which lies Mallachar's coffin. (See Area 29 for more details on Mallachar.)

27: BURNT OFFERINGS (EL 7)

The door to this room is *arcane locked* (Caster Level 10, Open Locks DC 35). All keys that once led to this chamber have been lost.

This chamber, quite simply, was the treasure vault for the Brotherhood of the Black Sun. It is a simple stone area, unfurnished but for the several chests that lie within.

Creatures: Naturally, such an area is not unguarded. A pair of special undead beings, **2 flamewights**, have been left to stand guard here. Flamewights are similar to normal wights, but they are tougher and can automatically wreath themselves in flames as a free action. Naturally, the flamewights are immune to fire, but any creature that they strike (or that touches them) runs the risk of catching aflame.

Flamewight (2): CR 5; SZ M Undead; HD 6d12; hp 43, 37; Init +1 (Dex); Spd 30 ft.; AC 15 (+1 Dex, +4 natural); Attack +6 melee (1d4+3 & 1d6 fire & energy drain, slam); SA energy drain, create spawn, flame shroud, flaming burst; SQ undead, fire subtype; AL LE; SV Fort +2, Ref +3, Will +6; Str 16, Dex 12, Con -, Int 11, Wis 13, Cha 15.

Skills: Climb +5, Hide +10, Listen +10, Move Silently +16, Search +7, Spot +8. *Feats:* Blind-Fight.

Energy Drain (Su): Living creatures hit by a flamewight's slam attack receive one negative level. The Fortitude Save to remove the negative level has a DC of 15.

Create Spawn (Su): Any humanoid slain by a flamewight becomes a standard wight in 1d4 rounds. Spawn are under the command of the flamewight that created them and remain enslaved until its death. They do not possess any of the abilities they had in life.

Flame Shroud (Su): Flamewights are encased in flame. Any creature they strike in melee (or that strikes them) suffers 1d6 points of fire damage. A flamewight

can activate or deactivate this shroud as a free action.

In addition, those hit by a flamewight's slam attack must succeed at a Reflex Save (DC 15) or catch fire. The flame burns for 1d4 rounds. A burning creature can take a move-equivalent action to put out the flame.

Creatures that strike a flamewight in melee also catch fire unless they succeed at a Reflex Save.

See the *DMG* for details on catching on fire.

Flaming Burst (Su): If a flamewight strikes a critical hit with its slam attack, it inflicts an additional 1d10 points of fire damage (as a *flaming burst* weapon)

Fire Subtype (Ex): Fire immunity, double damage from cold except on a successful Save. **Undead:** Immune to mind-influencing effects, poison, sleep, paralysis, stunning, and disease. Not subject to critical hits, subdual damage, ability damage, energy drain, or death from massive damage.

Skills: All Flamewights can move silently and receive a +8 racial bonus to their Move silently checks.

Treasure: Located in the four iron chests are 1,832 gp, a jeweled cup (worth 300 gp), an ivory statue of a woman (worth 100 gp), a bag of 10 small rubies (worth 75 gp each), a cloth bag filled with silver dust (worth 50 gp), a *wand of fireballs* (5 charges, caster level 9),

three arcane spell scrolls (*ice storm*, *lightning bolt*, *invisibility sphere*, caster level 11) and wrapped in a well woven purple and gold cloth is a *potion of endurance*.

28: THE SCREAMING PLACE (EL 10)

This room is loud because of the thousands of disembodied mouths affixed into the high stone walls that constantly emit a chorus of bloodcurdling screams. The mouths seem to be made of stone, and are layered side by side along the walls from floor to ceiling, barely an inch apart. Steady streams of putrid blood run from the open f is enormous, and reeks of charnel fires. The central portion of the room is essentially a gigantic pit with no apparent bottom; thick plumes of blue-black smoke waft up from the depths. Two long walkways pass over the pit near the north and south ends, and a 30-foot square platform hangs over the center, upon which stands a crude altar of bones and razor wire mesh and a pair of black iron braziers.

This disgusting chamber was used for large rituals and ceremonies conducted on behalf of the Witch King. Each victim who died in this chamber – whether stabbed by ceremonial blade or cast headlong into the pits – had a bit of her soul and life force trapped in a bodiless void of pain. Now, these tortured souls can only scream, and bleed, for time everlasting.

The Screams: The screaming cannot be heard until one actually enters the area. The screaming mouths are unsettling, and require a Will Save (DC 18) to avoid being shaken (see the *DMG*). In addition, the constant noise makes Listen checks all but impossible (-8 penalty) and Concentration checks extremely difficult (-4 penalty). A character must make a Concentration check (DC 15 + spell level) to cast any spell with a verbal component in this room. Destroying the altar upon the central platform negates the screaming.

The Pits (EL 5): Each of the pits is 100 feet deep and filled with smoke, bodies and bone. Any who fall suffer 10d6 falling damage and 1d6 heat damage, and will be forced to climb back up out of the pit (Climb check DC 25). In addition, a number of foul creatures make their homes in the pits (described below).

The Altar (EL 5): The altar fills this room with a constant counterspell effect – dispel magic is cast to offset any *daylight* spell immediately when it is cast (Caster Level 15). This effect may only be disabled when the altar is destroyed.

Stone Altar: Hardness 5; 100 hp; Break DC of 24. **Creatures:** In life, **Mallachar** was the most powerful Inquisitor of the Brotherhood of the Black



Sun – a strange position for a centaur to occupy, but Mallachar claimed to be half-nightmare. Whatever his origins, he was evil through to the core, and he is even more evil, now.

Mallachar was turned into a vampire after the Witch King's "purge" of Krezzel Dul, but, unlike many other members of the Brotherhood, the evil centaur never lost faith in his demon prince (even if his time here has driven him a bit mad). He valiantly defended the City of Skull & Shadow from the armies of good, and he was among those Brotherhood members who helped erect the defensive magic that kept the Ebon Fane away from the destruction to devastate the rest of the city. In undeath, Mallachar is the undisputed "lord of the Fane", at least as he sees things, though he fears and loathes the demonic guardians that prevent him from reaching the relics in the Black Vault. Mallachar firmly believes that the Witch King, or at least some of his more powerful lieutenants, might be returned to life, if only the proper relic (the Bone Cross) could be removed from its guarded position. Mallachar is not nearly powerful enough to do this, and he knows it.

Since his goal of returning the Witch King is likely to never reach fruition (or perhaps it is – see below), Mallachar would take great delight in killing anything foolish enough to venture into the Fane – he has not drank blood in ages, and is beginning to go a bit mad from hunger.

Mallachar is black-fleshed centaur vampire. His long hair is bone white, his eyes are solid red, his teeth are powerful fangs. His undead muscles are well-honed and powerful, and in combat he yields an enormous greatsword of cold white energy.

Lurking in the pit, in the meantime, are 2 frostwights – more Brotherhood members, eternally wandering through the bones and rot of the pits. These wights are similar to flamewights, except that they can wreath themselves in an aura of numbing cold. The wights may be encountered with Mallachar, or down in the pits, where the vampiric centaur is likely to try and deliver his enemies.

Mallachar, Centaur Vampire Ftr2: CR 7; SZ L Undead; HD 6d12; hp 54; Init +8 (+4 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative); Spd 50 ft.; AC 25 (-1 size, +8 natural, +4 chain shirt, +4 Dex); Atk +14/9 melee (2d6+13 & 1d6 cold/19-20, greatsword), +8 melee (1d6+4, 2 hooves), or +13/8 melee (1d8+8 & energy drain, slam), +8 melee (1d6+4, 2 hooves); Face/Reach 5 ft. by 10 ft./5 ft.; SA domination, energy drain, blood drain, children of the night, create spawn; SQ DR (15/magic), turn resistance (+4), cold/electricity resistance (20), gaseous form, spider climb, alternate form, fast healing (5), undead; AL CE; SV Fort +4, Ref +10, Will +6; Str 26, Dex 18, Con -, Int 10, Wis 15, Cha 20. Skills: Bluff +13, Hide +11, Jump +10, Listen +14, Move Silently

+10, Search +8, Sense Motive +10, Spot +14, Survival +5. Feats: Alertness, Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Improved Bull Rush, Improved Initiative, Lightning Reflexes, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (hoof).

Possessions: +1 frost greatsword, large chain shirt, golembane scarab (stone), masterwork heavy lance.

Frostwight (2): CR 5; SZ M Undead; HD 6d12; hp 40, 39; Init +1 (Dex); Spd 30 ft.; AC 15 (+1 Dex, +4 Dex); Atk +6 melee (1d4+3 & 1d6 cold & energy drain, slam); SA energy drain, create spawn, frost shroud, icy burst; SQ undead, cold subtype; AL LE; SV Fort +2 (+2 base), Ref +3, Will +6; Str 16, Dex 12, Con -, Int 11, Wis 13, Cha 15.

Skills: Climb +5, Hide +10, Listen +10, Move Silently +16, Search +7, Spot +8. Feats: Blind-Fight.

Energy Drain (Su): Living creatures hit by a flamewight's slam attack receive one negative level. The Fortitude Save to remove the negative level has a DC of 15.

Create Spawn (Su): Any humanoid slain by a flamewight becomes a standard wight in 1d4 rounds. Spawn are under the command of the flamewight that created them and remain enslaved until its death. They do not possess any of the abilities they had in life.

Frost Shroud (Su): Frostwights are encased in an aura of cold. Any creature they strike in melee (or that strikes them) suffers 1d6 points of cold damage. A frostwight can activate or deactivate this shroud as a free action.

In addition, those hit by a frostwight's slam attack must succeed at a Reflex Save (DC 15) or become numb, and suffer 1 point of temporary Dexterity damage. The numbness lasts for 1d4 rounds.

Creatures that strike a frostwight in melee also become numb unless they succeed at a Reflex Save. Icy

Burst (Su): If a frostwight strikes a critical hit with its slam attack, it inflicts an additional 1d10 points of cold damage (as an icy burst weapon). Cold Subtype (Ex): Cold immunity, double damage from fire except on a successful Save

Undead: Immune to mind-influencing effects, poison, sleep, paralysis, stunning, and disease. Not subject to critical hits, subdual damage, ability damage, energy drain, or death from massive damage.

Skills: Flamewights receive a +8 racial bonus to Move Silently checks.

Tactics: Mallachar favors charging attacks – his favorite method of combat is to assume gaseous form, then reform in a secure position, from which he can charge and attempt to Bull Rush opponents into the pits. Mallachar's coffin is located in Area 26.

Treasure: Besides Mallachar's weapon, a few loose coins and gems lie amidst the bodies in the pits (search check DC 20): 325 gp, 2 small pearls (worth 50 gp each), and a silver ring (worth 40 gp).

Chapter Five: Ghul Keep

At some point over the course of the adventure, the PCs are likely to want to bring down their “competition” in exploring the Ebon Fane and the vaults beyond – to do this, they have to take the fight to Crithian Raine. This chapter details Raine’s hideout – a former dwarven watchtower now known as Ghul Keep – and the opposition the PCs might face there. The Legions attempts to explore the Ebon Fane and the Black Vault are detailed in Parts 2, 3, 4 and 6. In the meantime, however, Raine holds in his possession some powerful equipment that may help the PCs should they decide to venture into the dreaded Black vault.

When the Kothian dwarves tunneled out what would become the Kothian weapons vault, they did not intend to leave the relics they would place there unprotected. Even though the Vault itself was to be guarded with all manner of magical and mechanical traps, the Kothians believed in being thorough – to that effect, they built Yor-Kath, or “Iron Hand” in the Kothian tongue. Guards stationed at Yor-Kath would dissuade any intruders from entering the Vault – the security measures of the Vault itself were meant to be a “last line of defense”. Like all Kothian architecture, Yor-Kath is a bit unorthodox in its construction, and it utilizes more magical defenses than mechanical, a signature of the Kothians highly magical nature. Construction on Yor-Kath was completed before the Vault itself, and the Kothians were just beginning to move in troops when they were forced to abandon the Vault forever.

After his agents discovered the weapons vault, Crithian Raine sent more scouts to the outlying areas – he presumed that a structure such as Yor-Kath would exist, and he was right. Pleased to find that most of its magical defenses remained intact, and desperately in need of a new base of operations, Raine immediately moved himself and his small body of followers into the small fortress. Initially, Raine fully intended to handle the plunge into the Ebon Fane and the Black Vault on his own – he had more than enough troops (mainly gnolls and bugbears) at his disposal. After initial attempts to breach the Vault failed, however, and especially after the discovery of the nearby dragon Hellstorm, Raine was forced to make contact with the Ravagers and explain the situation to them – he had already promised the artifacts of Krezzel Dul, and it looked as if he wasn’t going to be able to deliver. In response, the Ghul Legion dispatched more troops to

aid in the exploration (and subsequent destruction of Hellstorm and the PCs). The bulk of these forces are described in Part 3 – the rest are detailed here.

Raine keeps sending forces until the relics of the Black Vault are his. Not surprisingly, he doesn’t intend to hand everything over to the Ghul Legion – in particular, Raine covets the Blood Grail and the Bone Cross (the latter of which has the potential to release the Witch King’s servants imprisoned in the Crimson Isle – see Parts 6 & 7 for more details). Even if he wanted to back away (which he eventually would, especially if he was suffering heavy losses), the Ghul Legion demands results – if Raine can’t deliver, he’ll be replaced by someone who can, possibly Jar’rod, Mezaana, or some other foul creature from the Legion’s base of operations much deeper in the Underdark.

The Ghul Keep is unusual in its design – fortified stone passageways connect three hexagonal sections and a smaller, square section. Only the lowest section is visible from the outside – a fortified stone door at the end of a long, featureless hall. Two long halls buried beneath the rock ascend to the other two hexagonal sections, while concealed corridors from each of these join at the command center, a square room filled with magical apparatus. Even once the Black Vault has been plundered, Raine wishes to continue to use this as a base of operations, while the Ghul Legion intends to continue using the fortress as a possible staging point for invasions into other areas of the Underdark or hopefully even areas of the surface world.

FEATURES OF GHUL KEEP

Unless otherwise noted, all walls are 12 feet high and wrought of superior masonry. All doors are wrought of stone.

Superior Masonry Walls: 1 foot or more thick; Hardness 8; hp 10 per 5 foot square section; Break (DC 45); Climb (DC 15).

Stone Door: 4 inches thick; Hardness 8; hp 60; Break DC 28); Open Locks (DC 30).

While many of the Ghul Legion troops have darkvision, Crithian Raine does not, so all interior areas of the Keep are lit by torches located in black iron brackets. Unless otherwise noted, all doors open outwards from the area they are connected to into a corridor or hall.

DEFENSES

As this section primarily deals with how the Ghul Legion responds to an assault made on the Keep, a brief note on how these forces will respond to a direct invasion is in order.

In general, interior defenses are more tightly controlled than exterior defenses. If either of the Strike Teams or the Reavers (see Part 3) remain active, they almost certainly be poised to dissuade an attack on Ghul Keep, possibly even under the direct supervision of the Command Team. These forces, along with the magical defenses of the Keep (detailed below), serve as the first line of defense against intruders.

Interior defenses are, by and large, as described in the following keyed entries. Unless specifically ordered to do so, Ghul Legion troops are disciplined enough not to venture outside the specific area they are guarding, unless the text specifically notes otherwise.

Note that, because of the ever-heightened state of alert, a few things need to be pointed out that apply to adventuring in the Ghul Keep:

- * All sentries receive a +2 bonus to Listen & Spot checks. They are constantly expecting trouble, and they know what punishment awaits them if they grow lax in their duties.

- * If the PCs venture into the Keep and then retreat, do not assume that cleared areas stay emptied, particularly areas near the entrance. Reinforcements should be moved from other areas of the Keep, or cleared areas may be stocked with troops from Strike Team 1 or 2 or the Reavers (if available); if a Strike Team is brought in to defend an area, they most assuredly put their ballistae to effective use. At the DMs option, if PCs retreat and then take an extraordinarily long time to return (2 days or more), the Ghul Legion might have sent entirely new soldiers to reinforce Raine's losses.

- * Similarly, PCs should find it very difficult to rest and recuperate inside of Ghul Keep, at least until they have entirely cleared it of Ghul Legion troops. Strike Teams, the Reavers or sentries launch nighttime raids, attempt to seal intruders between themselves and another force, or, at the very least, steal supplies while intruders rest.

The DM should feel free to extrapolate and expand on the tactics and forces detailed here, depending on how long the PCs take to clear out Ghul Keep and to what extent they choose to try and bring down Crithian Raine.

I: ENTRANCE (EL 4)

The wide cavern stretches north, eventually passing into an area riddled with stone and debris – this area was quite obviously tunneled by intelligent hands, and a few ancient mining implements lie here and there, half buried in the rubble. Up ahead, the cave shortens

and narrows, until it eventually ends at a squat stone door buried behind an iron portcullis. The door is covered with a relief of a blazing grail, though deep scratches have ruined the relief.

This door is the only entrance into Ghul Keep. The portcullis is always lowered – controls inside Area 2 allow the portcullis to be raised. The door beyond the portcullis, which contains a peephole that allows sentries to see out, is also locked.

Portcullis: 2 inches thick; Hardness 10; hp 60; Lift (DC 25); Break (DC 30).

Trap: If the sentries in Area 2 determine that unfriendly forces are attempting to gain access to the Keep, they activate a trap that electrifies the iron portcullis.

Electrified Portcullis Trap: CR 4; magical device; touch trigger; automatic reset; spell effect (*lightning bolt*, 5th level wizard, 5d6 electrical damage, Reflex Save DC 14 negates; Search (DC 29); Disable Device (DC 29).

Development: If the sentries activate the portcullis, their next step is to alert the bugbears in Area 5 and to release the flesh golem from its cage (see Area 2 for details).

2: DEATH TRAP (EL 8)

This sparse, odd-shaped chamber is roughly 50-foot square. Aside from a swivel-mounted ballista located near the back of the room there is, behind a solid iron portcullis, a tall, misshapen being of rotted, patchwork flesh. The creature was apparently held in a small cage in the southeast corner of the room.

Depending on how stealthy the PCs were in gaining access to this room, the above description may need to be modified somewhat. Normally, the gnolls are in the main chamber, and the flesh golem is in the aforementioned cage. If the gnolls are alerted, they move to the ballista, drop the portcullis, and release the golem.

Portcullis: Two levers on the north wall control both the portcullis and the iron cage.

Portcullis: 2 inches thick; Hardness 10; hp 60; Lift (DC 25); Break (DC 30).

Creatures: A small squad of 3 gnolls stands guard here, aided by a ballista on a swivel-mount. By far the room's most dangerous inhabitant is a **flesh golem**, which attempts to destroy pretty much anything it can get its hands on (which is why it is kept caged – the gnolls have never before had to release it).

Gnoll (3): CR 1; hp 15, 12; see the *MM*.

Flesh Golem: CR 7; hp 58; see the *MM*.

Tactics: As mentioned in the passage above, if the gnolls know that trouble is coming, they lock themselves behind the portcullis, arm the ballista, and release the flesh golem, which tears into intruders with abandon. One of the gnolls goes and warns the bugbears in Area 5 while the other two fire on intruders.

The ballista makes a ranged attack roll at +1, inflicts 3d6 damage (x3 on a crit), and has a range increment of 120 feet. Reloading the ballista requires 3 full-round actions. The gnolls have 10 ballista bolts.

Treasure: Each gnoll carries a suit of scale mail, a large steel shield, a battleaxe, a longbow, 10 arrows, and 5 gp.

Development: Even if a gnoll does not escape to raise an alarm, the bugbears in Area 5 are allowed a Listen check (DC 14) to realize that there is fighting going on here, in which case they activate the portcullises in Area 4.

3: CROSSHALL

This well-worn room is littered with loose crossbow bolts and broken axe-blades. Stone doors lead off to the east, west and south, and a pair of diagonal halls affixed with portcullises lead southwest and southeast. The familiar blazing grail symbol is set into the center of the room's floor, but the smell and stains make clear that it has been urinated on.

While not intrinsically dangerous in and of itself, the PCs may find themselves in a very precarious situation here. The portcullises are controlled from Areas 5, while the doors to Areas 6 and 8 lock from the opposite side.

Development: If the sentries in Area 2 have managed to raise the alarm, the bugbears in Areas 5 drop the portcullises and hail the PCs with missile fire. Meanwhile, the gnolls and dark elves from Areas 6 and 8 will prepare to intercept, turning this into a potentially deadly encounter (EL 9 if all of the forces from these areas become involved with the melee).

4: LOCKED HALL

These halls are unremarkable save for the portcullises that can raise or lower at either end. These portcullises are formidable. The controls to raise or lower the portcullises lie in Areas 5 on the map.

Portcullis: 2 inches thick; Hardness 10; hp 60; Lift (DC 25); Break (DC 30).

5: GUARD ROOMS (EL 6)

This triangular chamber is covered with jugs of foul-smelling alcohol and half-eaten legs of beef. A single table sits in the corner, and a weapons rack sports a pair of crossbows. Portcullises block both entrances to this room, and a pair of cots has been pushed against the walls, both of which have apparently seen heavy use, judging from the brownish stains that cover the sheets.

These guardrooms are the first line of defense from the higher areas of Ghul Keep. A trio of levers in the

wall controls the portcullises in Areas 4 as well as the portcullis that blocks the way to Areas 11.

Creature: A total of 4 bugbears, armed with heavy crossbows and morningstars, man these chambers. They are quick to lower the portcullises in Areas 4 at the first sound of trouble.

Bugbear (4): CR 2; hp 23, 20, 18, 18; AC 19; see the *MM*.

Tactics: As noted above, if the bugbears are aware of intruders, they lower the portcullises in Areas 4. Following this, they overturn the tables in the rooms, place them against the portcullises, and use them as cover while they pelt their foes with crossbows. The tables grant them $\frac{3}{4}$ cover, increasing their AC to 26 and granting them a +3 bonus on Reflex Saves.

Treasure: Each bugbear carries a suit of chain mail, a morningstar, a heavy crossbow, 15 bolts, and 10 gp. A small chest in the west room holds 297 gp. A similar chest in the east room holds a suit of masterwork studded leather armor, 7 flasks of acid and a suit of half-plate.

Development: Each pair of bugbears fights until their fellow is slain, at which point the survivor retreats and alerts the sentries in Areas 12 and 17.

6: GNOLL BARRACKS (EL 6)

This large room is covered with broken wood, smashed goblets and loose bits of hay. Broken axe-blades and random straps of metal armor lie haphazardly about the chamber, and all manner of liquids – some of which smell quite foul – permeate the cracks in the floor. The now-familiar blazing grail symbol dominates the western wall, but much of it is covered in what looks and smells like vomit. Otherwise, makeshift cots, all of which are extremely crude and foul smelling, dominate the room.

This area houses the numerous gnolls that serve under Crithian Raine. While as many as two dozen have used this area at once, only a portion of are present when the PCs arrive. These gnolls report directly to the dark elf captains in Area 8.

Creatures: At any given time, 6 gnolls can be found here, usually drinking and fighting amongst themselves. In spite of their unruliness, they are effective combatants, and they will defend the Keep ruthlessly.

Gnoll (6): CR 1; hp 18, 13, 13, 12, 11, 10; see the *MM*.

Treasure: Each gnoll is equipped with scale mail, a large steel shield, a battleaxe, a longbow, 10 arrows, and 5 gp. Stashed about the room in small sacks and makeshift cots are a total of 826 gp and 4 large bloodstones (worth 80 gp each).

Development: These gnolls respond to any sounds of conflict, or to the sound of the portcullises in Areas

4 dropping, in 2d4 rounds. They attack en masse unless ordered to do otherwise by the dark elves in Area 8. These gnolls fight to the death.

7: TRAINING AREA

This odd-shaped room is filled with battered arming dummies, a few broken weapons, and a knife-throwing target. A few old bloodstains mar the floor. There is nothing of value in these training areas.

8: ELF BARRACKS (EL 6)

This large room is sparsely furnished, almost to the point of being sterile. Three small cots lie in various corners of the room, and a small desk stands against the east wall, upon which sit a few small, leather-bound books. A large bass relief of a blazing grail rests on the east wall, but another symbol – that of a flaming, horned skull – has been painted over the bass relief in blood. Like Area 6, the Kothians constructed this area to be a guard barracks, positioned so that guards could flood the only means of entrance into Yor Kath.

Creatures: 3 dark elf warriors – captains in the Ghul Legion, charged with the duty of keeping the gnolls and other humanoid soldiers in line – reside in this area. They dress in blood-red armor and bear wicked two-bladed swords carved of alternating black and white lairs of cold steel. Each wears the symbol of the Ghul Legion as a bloody scar on his forehead.

Dark Elf Captain, Drow Ftr2 (3): CR 3; SZ M; HD 2d10+4; hp 17, 15, 15; Init +2 (Dex); Spd 20 feet; AC 17 (+1 Dex, +6 banded mail), touch 11, flat-footed 16; BAB/Grapple +2/+4: Full Atk +5 melee (1d8+2/19-20, two-bladed sword), or +3 melee (1d8+2/19-20, two-bladed sword), +3 (+2 BAB, +2 Str, +1 masterwork weapon, -2 multiple attacks) melee (1d8+1/19-20, two-bladed sword); SA spell-like abilities; SQ darkvision (120 feet), +2 SV vs. Enchantment, sleep immunity. Light sensitivity, SR (13); AL LE; SV Fort +5, Ref +2, Will +1; Str 15, Dex 14, Con 14, Int 15, Wis 13, Cha 9.

Skills: Climb +2 (5 ranks, +2 Str, -5 armor check penalty), Craft (Weaponsmith) +7 (5 ranks, +2 Int), Jump +2 (5 ranks, +2 Str, -5 armor check penalty), Ride (Monstrous Spider) +7 (5 ranks, +2 Dex). **Feats:** Exotic Weapon Proficiency (Two-Bladed Sword), Two-Weapon Fighting.

Spell-Like Abilities: 1/day – *dancing lights*, *darkness*, *faerie fire*. These abilities are as the spells cast by a Sor2 (Save DC = 9 + spell level).

Possessions: masterwork two-bladed sword, masterwork banded mail, 20 gp.

Tactics: The three dark elves fight effectively together, and always target lightly armored characters first after they lair the combat area with darkness. The elves

make tactical withdrawals if necessary, either to use the numbers of the gnolls in Area 6 to their advantage or else to enlist the aid of Slither in Area 9.

Treasure: The books on the table are tomes on exotic fighting and military and training tactics. While the books have useful knowledge, they are more noteworthy for their age and rarity – in this particular field they are something of collector's items, and the entire set could fetch 100 gp from a collector of such works.

Development: These dark elves respond to any sounds of conflict, or to the sound of the portcullises in Areas 4 dropping, in 2d4 rounds. They try to summon the gnolls from Area 6 as quickly as possible, and may also try and bring Slither into the melee (see Area 9).

9: THE JAILOR (EL 4)

This square chamber is layered with tall stone columns in its corners – otherwise, the room is bare. A formidable looking stone door rests in the south wall, and an empty key-hook rests on the wall beside the door.

This room is the foyer to the single holding cell afforded the Keep. The door to Area 10 is locked; the creature in this area keeps the key on its person at all times.

Creature: Slither was trained from birth to use its natural abilities – extended reach and a natural proclivity for hiding – to steal. Slither's former master eventually sold it to Crithian Raine, who has employed the choker for a variety of purposes – assassin, lackey, and rogue. Now Slither maintains the cell of Ghul Keep, though, truth be known, the Ghul Legion does not take many prisoners.

Slither, Choker Rog2: CR 4; SZ S Aberration; HD 3d8+2 and 2d6+2; hp 28; Init +7; Spd 20 ft., climb 10 ft.; AC 19 (+3 Dex, +1 size, +5 natural), touch 14, flat-footed 15; BAB/Grapple +3/+6; Full Atk +7 melee (1d3+3, 2 tentacle slaps); Space/Reach: 5 ft./10 ft.; SA quickness, improved grab, constrict (1d3+3), sneak attack (+1d6); SQ evasion; AL CE; SV Fort +2 (+1 base, +1 Con), Ref +7, Will +4; Str 16, Dex 16, Con 13, Int 4, Wis 13, Cha 7.

Skills: Balance+8, Climb+16, Escape Artist+8, Hide +8, Jump +8, Move Silently +8, Sleight of Hand +8, Tumble +8. **Feats:** Dodge, Improved Initiative.

Quickness (Su): Although not particularly dexterous, a choker is supernaturally quick. It can take an extra partial action each round, as if affected by a *haste* spell.

Improved Grab (Ex): To use this ability, the choker must hit an opponent of up to Large size with a tentacle attack. If it gets a hold, it can constrict.

Constrict (Ex): A choker deals 1d3+3 points of damage with a successful grapple check against Large or smaller creatures. Because it seizes victims by the neck,

FANE OF THE WITCH KING



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a creature in the choker's grasp cannot speak or cast spells with verbal components.

Possessions: key to Area 10.

Tactics: Slither is never in plain sight – even when all is quiet, he is lurking behind the pillars. Though not highly intelligent, Slither has one basic duty that he performs well – keep the cell door from being opened (it doesn't matter if there is a prisoner in Area 10 or not). Slither attacks whoever appears relatively unprotected, seizing them with its constricting attack and striking as much as possible (allowing it to possibly deal quite a bit of damage, with its sneak attack figured in). The creature is utterly loyal to Crithian Raine but it also frightened by creatures larger and more powerful than itself – if reduced to half of its hit points or less, it flees, hiding as well as possible, and go to Raine himself (in Area 24).

Development: Though its master is Raine, Slither also aids the dark elves in Area 8 (they give it food). It is very possible that it is encountered with them, in which case it grapples foes so that the dark elves can strike them more easily.

10: CELL

The door to this area is locked (Slither, in Area 9, holds the key). The cell is completely featureless. In the event that enemies of the Legion (including PCs) are captured rather than killed, such prisoners are deposited here until Raine can decide what to do with them.

Alternatively, if a PC has been lost, the DM should feel free to place a replacement character here, captured by the Ghul Legion for some cause or another, so that the adventure can continue. All captured beings are stripped of all equipment (magical or otherwise), which will normally be held (or used) by the dark elves in Area 8.

11: SLOPE

An iron portcullis bars each end of these steep, 45-degree passageways, which ascend roughly 60-feet to the upper levels. The controls for the lower portcullises are located in Areas 5, while the upper portcullis controls lie in Areas 12 and 19, respectively.

Portcullis: 2 inches thick; Hardness 10; hp 60; Lift (DC 25); Break (DC 30).

While these featureless halls are no danger in and of themselves, the guardians in Areas 12 and 19 are always alert for intruders. Due to the slope, the giant in Area 12 gains an additional +1 to hit and damage with thrown rocks when he rolls them down these corridors.

It is impossible to run up the slope, and any character that is struck in this hall must make a Balance check (DC 20) or else fall, suffering 1d6 points of damage for every 20 feet fallen (due to the slope).

12: SENTRY (EL 7)

This roughly triangular chamber is unadorned save for a large wooden bench crafted for an extremely large creature. A large bag of smooth rocks sits in one corner, next to a second bag, obviously full but tightly shut to prevent its contents from being seen. Various bones and bits of half-eaten meat litter the room, and the blazing grail is set in bass relief on the wall around the door in the southwest corner.

This chamber is another guardroom, meant to defend this particular tower from intruders.

Creature: Mursh is a hill giant, and a very lazy one, at that. He enjoys guard duty because it means that he only occasionally has to exert himself. Mursh has thick red hair and beard and wears black chain mail; he yields a huge iron mace, but his preferred weapons of choice are his throwing rocks, with which he is quite accurate.

Mursh, Hill Giant: CR 7; hp 110; AC 22; see the *MM*.

Tactics: Mursh tries to fight from a distance whenever possible. If he knows of intruders on the slope (Area 11), he judiciously tosses boulders down at them, only to close the portcullis when they get too close. Mursh cannot throw boulders through the portcullis, but he uses the opportunity to warn Crug, the stone giant in Area 13, before he returns to deal with the intruders first hand.

Treasure: Mursh carries on his person a huge heavy mace, 14 throwing rocks, and a suit of large chain mail. Mursh's bag contains a lot of rubbish, but little of any real value. Inside are three kegs of orcish ale, several hundred pounds of dried and salted pork, 11 skulls (taken from creatures he has killed), and a knife that has been somewhat melted (Mursh used it to carve the Ghul Legion brand onto his chest).

Development: Fighting here alerts Crug in Area 13; if given time, Crug alerts the denizens of the surrounding rooms, and thereby set up a most dangerous ambush for intruders. See Area 13 for details.

13: TROPHY ROOM (EL 8)

This roughly 80 foot square room is lined with thick stone doors and tall braziers, all of which give off a reddish flame. The heads of various beasts – dragons, hydrae, humans, elves, gorgons, and others – are mounted on iron plaques high on the walls – their colorless, dead eyes cast eerie reflections in the blood-colored light. The room itself is tiled in dark stone plates shot through with white veins.

This room was intended to be stocked with trophies and mementos of the various Underdark creatures killed by the Kothians on their numerous hunting expeditions

– while it is still a trophy room, it has become a much more grisly place, used to display the creatures slain by the Ghul reinforcements on their journey to aid Crithian Raine.

Creature: Crug and Ursa are a mated stone giant pair that have been members of the Ravagers for quite some time, earning their prestige and position through remorseless destruction of their foes and a willingness to take whatever steps are necessary to accomplish their goals. Both are bald and pale, with numerous runic markings and scars that litter their pallid flesh. At the time when the PCs invade, **Crug** is encountered in this area, admiring the trophies of the creatures he killed on his journey here, while Ursa is in Area 21 (the suite that Raine had specially prepared for them and Tusk, their fellow Ravager).

Crug has black eyes and sharpened teeth (he files them to a keen edge). He yields a black iron greatsword to great efficiency.

Crug, Stone Giant: CR 8; Stone Giant; SZ L Giant (Earth); HD 14d8+70; hp 144; Init +6; Spd 30 ft.; AC 26 (-1 size, +2 Dex, +4 chain shirt, +11 natural), touch 11, flat-footed 23; BAB/Grapple +10/+22; Full Atk +21/16 melee (2d8+15/19-20, huge greatsword), or +13/8 ranged (2d8+10, rock); Space/Reach 10 ft./10 ft.; SA rock throwing; SQ rock catching; AL N; SV Fort +14 (+9 base, +5 Con), Ref +6 (+4 base, +2 Dex), Will +4 (+4 base); Str 30, Dex 15, Con 20, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 11.

Skills: Climb +20, Hide +10*, Jump +19, Spot +11.
Feats: Cleave, Combat Reflexes, Improved Initiative, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (Greatsword).

Possessions: huge masterwork greatsword, large chain shirt.

Development: If they are not already prepared for the PCs arrival, the sounds of combat here will draw

the residents of Areas 14, 16 & 17 to this area in 2d4 rounds, raising the EL of this encounter to as high as 11.

14: BUGBEAR BARRACKS (EL 6)

This suite of room appears heavily used. Various straps of armor and crossbow bolts lie scattered about on the floor, and the ten cots between the two rooms appear to have been used recently. Aside from a small chest, the room is largely bare.

These two rooms serve as barracks for the various bugbears that operate under Crithian Raine's command. While several of these creatures likely are encountered in Area 5, several also reside here.

Creatures: There are 4 bugbears in this suite of rooms at any given time; unless taken completely by surprise, they are armed, armored and at the ready.

Bugbear (4): CR 2; hp 21, 19, 18, 15; AC 19; see the *MM*.

Treasure: Each bugbear is equipped with chain mail, a morningstar, a heavy crossbow, 15 bolts, and 10 gp. The small, unlocked chest contains 557 gp, a pair of platinum mugs (worth 700 gp each), and an arcane scroll of *detect thoughts*.

15: UNUSED ROOMS

These mostly bare rooms are barracks – aside from a few cots, there is nothing of interest or value to be found within. When they are not in the field, the various Ghul Legion strike teams detailed in Part Three make use of these chambers – at the DMs option, they may be encountered here when the PCs arrive at Ghul Keep.

16: THE SERPENT SISTER (EL 7)

This dark chamber appears to be some sort of temple. It is all but devoid of furnishings – a simple mat is set in the center of the floor, a pair of manacles is attached to the south wall next to a hearth and a hot poker, and a small shrine dedicated to some draconic deity lies in the north wall. Even with the light spilling in from the main chamber, this room seems blanketed in darkness.

This small shrine is to Kremarra, whom the Sisterhood of the Serpent highly reveres. The nature of this shrine may be identified with a Knowledge (Religion) check DC 20.

Creature: The Sisterhood of the Serpent is a small, nihilistic order of female half-dragon monks who worship the



chaotic dragon deity Kremarra. The Sisterhood acts as a powerful group of mercenary assassins – whoever wishes to deal out pain and destruction on a grand scale can often expect to receive their support, for a price. Sisters of the Serpent are afforded quite a bit of notoriety and dark fame among the criminal underworld, and they are as well-known for their twisted codes of honor as they are for their incredible power. To a Sister of the Serpent, combat is a form of both ecstasy and great honor – they take pleasure in both inflicting and receiving pain, and they view such pleasure as a sacred act. Thus, once combat is initiated, a Sister never retreats – only death can break the bond between a Sister and her enemies.

Taerith, the occupant of this chamber, is such a sister, and an exceptionally nasty one. Born to a human and a black dragon, Taerith has served with the Sisterhood for years. After an extended operation involving both Crithian Raine and the Sisterhood — in which Raine provided the order with the opportunity to produce a great deal of carnage at great harm to himself — Raine has forever commanded the Sisterhood's respect. In return for his act, Taerith was assigned to him as his eternal servant. Raine is secretly quite afraid of Taerith – she enjoys killing a little too much, even for his tastes, but she is an effective and dangerous asset that he would never risk losing.

Taerith is tall and dangerously attractive. She has short black hair and a lean face, and dresses in tight purple leather armor with a thick red cape. Her draconic heritage is only barely perceptible in the slight scales on her face and along her arms, legs and torso, and she bears draconic eyes and wicked teeth. In combat, she bears the Sisterhood's trademark weapon, a glaive.

Taerith, Half-Black Dragon Mnk4/War2: CR 7; SZ M Dragon; HD 4d8+12 and 2d10+6; hp 59; Init +8 (+4 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative); Spd 40 feet; AC 22 (+3 Wis, +1 bracers, +4 Dex, +4 natural), touch 17, flat-footed 15; BAB/Grapple +5/+11; Full Atk +13 melee (1d10+10/x3, +1 glaive), or +11 melee (1d8+6, unarmed strike), or +11 melee (1d6+6, bite), +6 melee (1d4+3, 2 claws); Space/Reach 5 ft./5 ft. (10 feet w/ glaive); SA breath weapon, stunning attack (4/day, Fort Save DC 15), flurry of blows, *Ki* strike (magic); SQ acid/sleep immunity, evasion, still mind (+2 SV vs. Enchantment), slow fall (20 feet); AL LE; SV Fort +10, Ref +9, Will +8; Str 22, Dex 18, Con 17, Int 14, Wis 16, Cha 18.

Skills: Balance +13, Climb +11, Hide +9, Intimidate +9, Jump +17, Move Silently +9, Swim +11, Tumble +13. *Feats:* Combat Reflexes, Deflect Arrows, Improved Initiative, Improved Unarmed Strike, Weapon Focus (Half-Glaive).

Breath Weapon (Su): 1/day, line of acid, 5 feet x 5

feet x 60 feet, 6d8 damage, Ref Save half (DC 13).

Possessions: +1 glaive, +1 cloak of resistance, +1 bracers of armor.

Tactics: Despite her draconic heritage, Taerith only uses of her breath weapon as a means of breaking apart a clustered group of foes. She much prefers single combat, and, if at all possible, selects a powerful-looking male opponent and engage him directly.

Development: Taerith responds to fighting in Area 13 in 2d4 rounds.

17: TIGER DEN (EL 5)

This large chamber is layered with neatly stacked bones. Some appear to belong to subterranean creatures, while others are decidedly human. A small cot and a table are the only furnishings in this sizable chamber; a bloodied rag lies upon the table, as if something was freshly devoured there.

The bloody rag is indeed the remains of a recent meal, specifically a young elf girl who became lost in the Underdark and wound up in the possession of the creature that resides here.

Creature: Maldoth, a weretiger mercenary in Raine's service, is here whenever he is not performing duties for Raine or carousing with women in more civilized areas. Maldoth does not actually lair within the Keep – he has a cover as a soldier in a nearby city, but he is here when the PCs launch their assault. Maldoth is cruel and manipulative, but more importantly he is bloodthirsty and psychotic – he is a known rapist and serial killer who slays only women, and he has performed over two dozen such atrocious crimes. He keeps a tooth and a lock of hair from each of his victims in a finely woven necklace about his neck.

In his human form, Maldoth is tall and handsome, with a chiseled face and long black hair he keeps tied back. In weretiger form he is white with black stripes, and his fangs and claws are black as night. He wears red breeches, and always fights in hybrid form.

Maldoth, Weretiger: CR 5; hp 53; AC 18; see the *MM*.

Treasure: Maldoth wears +1 bracers of armor.

Development: Maldoth responds to fighting in Area 13 in 2d4 rounds.

18: CHECKPOINT ONE (EL 2)

The doors to this chamber are arcane locked (caster level 10, Open Locks DC 35). The chamber is bare except for a small stone table and a pair of stone chairs. This room was designed to serve as a guard chamber to defend against intruders who would penetrate into the deepest portions of Yor-Kath. Though it is only nominally staffed now, it still serves essentially the same purpose.

Creatures: 2 elite gnolls defend this chamber. They fight to the death.

Elite Gnoll, Gnoll War1 (2): CR 1; SZ M Humanoid; HD 2d8+2 and 1d8+1; hp 20, 19; Init +2 (Dex); Spd 20 ft.; AC 17 (+2 Dex, +4 scale, +1 natural), touch 12, flat-footed 15; BAB/Grapple +2/+7; Full Atk +7 melee (2d6+7/19-20, greatsword), or +4 ranged (1d8/x3, longbow); SQ darkvision (60 ft.); AL CE; SV Fort +6, Ref +2, Will +1; Str 21, Dex 14, Con 13, Int 9, Wis 13, Cha 9.

Skills: Intimidate +2, Listen +3, Spot +3. *Feats:* Cleave, Power Attack.

Possessions: scale mail, greatsword, longbow, 10 arrows, 15 gp.

19: COLD GUARDIAN (EL 7)

This somewhat triangular chamber is exceptionally cold – every breath you exhale crystallizes almost instantly into a cloud of frozen vapor. Various bones and bits of frozen meat litter the room, and the blazing grail is set in bass relief on the wall around the door in the southwest corner.

This chamber is another guardroom, meant to defend this particular tower from intruders.

Creature: Normally, Raine would station Blackhammer here to watch against intruders (see Part Four), but he instead opted to dispatch his loyal ogre warrior to explore the Ebon Fane. In his stead, Raine chained the somewhat tamed **remorhaz** brought by the Ravagers here, instead. While it is not a particularly reliable sentry, it is a fearsome beast, and it attacks any non-Ravager that enter this chamber fiercely. Despite being chained, the remorhaz is quite comfortable in the area, as it occupies almost the entire breadth of the room.

Remorhaz: CR 7; hp 74; see the *MM*.

Development: If the remorhaz becomes enraged, the dark elves in Areas 20, Ursa in Area 21 and the bugbears in Area 22 are alerted to the PCs approach.

20: DARK CAPTAINS (EL 6)

This chamber is stocked with a trio of beds and a pair of dead human bodies, both chained against the east wall and riddled with wicked slashes. An image of a flaming, horned skull has been carved into the chest of each of the victims, and a similar mark, wrought in blood, is painted upon the floor.

This chamber, like most abutting the empty room at the center of this tower, was intended for use as a guard barracks or equipment storage. The bodies are those of adventurers captured by the inhabitants of this chamber on their journey to Ghul Keep.

Creatures: 3 dark elf fighters – captains of the Ghul Legion – reside in this chamber. They command the

gnolls and bugbears found on the upper levels, but they are fearless fighters themselves. They dress in blood-red armor and bear wicked two-bladed swords carved of alternating black and white lairs of cold steel. Each wears the symbol of the Ghul Legion as a bloody scar on his forehead.

Dark Elf Captain (3): CR 3; hp 18, 16, 16; see Area 8, above.

Tactics: The three dark elves fight effectively together, and always target lightly armored characters first after they lair the combat area with darkness.

Treasure: Each dark elf carries a masterwork two-bladed sword, masterwork banded mail, and 20 gp.

Development: If they are not already alert, the sound of fighting here brings Ursa (from Area 21) and the bugbears (from Area 22) in 2d4 rounds.

21: RAVAGER SUITE (EL 8)

This considerable chamber is dominated by an enormous tiger-skin rug, which must have either been made from one enormous tiger or several smaller ones. A pair of large sacks sits in one corner, and the rest of the room is decorated with a number of black, charred skulls, many of which are shot through with large iron spikes.

This room, originally constructed to be a meeting and tactics hall, has been converted by Raine to receive important visitors. The skulls belong to Ursa, who collects the skulls from the creatures she kills.

Creature: Like her mate, Crug, **Ursa** is a powerful and evil stone giant. She is the dominant member of the pair, and in the ranks of the Ravagers she has not only proven her abilities, but forged them in blood – those other giants that felt a woman should not be a part of their powerful order have all fallen to her wicked, flaming blade. Like her mate, Ursa is bald and pale, and her flesh is layered in ritualistic tattoos and scars. She wears black leather armor, and bears an enormous shield in addition to her magical blade, a flaming long spear.

Ursa, Female stone giant: CR 8; SZ L Giant (Earth); HD 14d8+56; hp 125; Init +2 (Dex); Spd 40 ft.; AC 27 (-1 size, +2 Dex, +3 studded leather, +2 shield, +11 natural), touch 11, flat-footed 25; BAB/Grapple +10/+22; Full Atk +19/14 melee (1d8+9 & 1d6 fire/x3, +1 flaming long spear), or +14/9 ranged (1d8+9 & 1d6 fire/x3, +1 flaming long spear); Space/Reach 10 ft./10 ft. (15 ft. w/ long spear); SA rock throwing; SQ rock catching; AL NE; SV Fort +13, Ref +6, Will +4; Str 27, Dex 15, Con 19, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 11.

Skills: Climb +15, Hide +9*, Jump +11, Spot +8. *Feats:* Combat Reflexes, Far Shot, Point Blank Shot, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (Long spear).

Possessions: +1 flaming long spear, large studded leather armor, large steel shield.

Development: Ursa responds to combat in Areas 20 or 22 in 2d4 rounds; the denizens of those areas respond to combat here in a like amount of time.

22: CHECKPOINT TWO (EL 4)

The doors to this chamber are arcane locked (caster level 10, Open Locks DC 35).

The large chamber is bare except for a small stone table and a pair of stone chairs.

This room was designed to serve as a guard chamber to defend against intruders who would penetrate into the deepest portions of Yor-Kath. Though it is only nominally staffed now, it still serves essentially the same purpose.

Creatures: 2 elite bugbears stand watch here at all times. They respond to combat in Areas 20 or 21 in 2d4 rounds (they can open the doors from this side, but not from the other – so once they pass through they cannot return to this area).

Elite Bugbear, Bugbear War1 (2): CR 2; SZ M; HD 3d8+3 and 1d8+1; hp 27, 24; Init +1 (Dex); Spd 30 ft.; AC 19 (+1 Dex, +3 natural, +5 chain mail), touch 11, flat-footed 18; BAB/Grapple +3/+6; Full Attack +6 melee (1d8+4, morningstar), or +4 ranged (1d10/19-20, heavy crossbow); SQ darkvision 60 ft.; AL CE; SV Fort +4, Ref +4, Will +1; Str 16, Dex 12, Con 13, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 9.

Skills: Climb –3, Hide +3, Listen +4, Move Silently +4, Spot +3. **Feats:** Alertness, Power Attack, Skill Focus (Hide).

Possessions: chain mail, morningstar, heavy crossbow, 15 bolts, 10 gp.

23: ASCENSION (EL 5)

The doors at either end of this long hall are locked. The outer doors leading into these chambers are trapped with *magic mouth* spells to loudly announce “Someone Approaches”, which is more than ample warning to allow Crithian Raine and his bodyguards in Area 24 to activate the trap located in this chamber.

Traps: The afore-mentioned *magic mouth trap* is the first line of defense here. A second trap, which releases a deadly batch of poisonous gas called carrion mist, can be activated from Area 24 – the fumes fill both of these halls and remain for 1d6 minutes, after which they disperse harmlessly. This trap may only be activated once before the fumes need to be replenished (or replaced with a different sort of gas).

Magic Mouth Trap: CR 2; spell; proximity trigger; no reset; spell effect (*magic mouth*, 10th level wizard, announces passage); Search (DC 27); Disable Device (DC 27).

Carrion Mist Release: CR 4; mechanical; location trigger; repair reset; gas; multiple targets (all targets in

both hallways); never miss; onset delay (1 round); poison gas (carrion mist, 2d4 Con/2d4 Con, Fort save DC 18 negates); Search (DC 25); Disable Device (DC 25).

Development: Obviously, if the magic mouth trap is sprung, the denizens of Area 24 are ready for the PCs arrival.

24: COMMAND SUITE (EL 11)

The doors to this chamber are *arcane locked* (Open Locks DC 35). This spacious, 50 foot square room is richly afforded – a four-poster bed is covered with silk sheets, a mahogany writing table bears a pair of leather-bound books, and a tapestry depicting an enormous battle between giants and dragons hangs from the north wall. Another table, located near the center of the room, bears a large, old map, an iron hourglass, a thin metal rod, and a pair of metallic black gloves. A circular valve is on the wall near each of the doors to this chamber.

This chamber was constructed to protect important visitors to the Yor-Kath fortress – clan leaders, powerful smiths, or others who may need to come and make use of the dwarven stronghold or the nearby weapons vault. Naturally, since seizing and converting the tower, Crithian Raine has turned this fortified area into his private suite.

Creatures: Crithian Raine was once a scholar, but he quickly became very bored with the position and managed to use his knowledge to acquire quite a bit of arcane power for himself. Since that time, some 10 years ago, he has been a ruthless and effective criminal, never afraid to cross anyone or anything to acquire what he needs. Raine rose through the ranks of the criminal underworld quite quickly, gobbling up illegal businesses and operations like he was a starving man – once his small criminal empire was established, he turned his eyes towards acquiring more magical secrets and lore.

Recently, Raine began to make a few too many enemies, and he was forced to abandon several of his operations in favor of keeping himself alive. Luckily for him, he had already made the acquaintance of the Ghul Legion by that time – their offer for him to aid their soldiers in return for resources and troops was too good for him to pass up. Someday, Raine intends to continue his “conquest” of the criminal underworld, but for now he is quite happy with his position and power.

Raine seeks the dark relics locked inside of the Black Vault, more for his personal gain for the Ghul Legion – he has done an extensive amount of research on the subject, and is well prepared to recover the items, personally, if need be.

Crithian Raine is tall and lean, with dark skin and a trim beard. He bears a patch over one eye and a monocle

FANE OF THE WITCH KING



over the other, and he wears a long, crimson cloak and leather clothing. His fingers are long and end in black nails, and he speaks with a constant sneer, as if everything in the world were beneath his notice.

Lastara, an ogre mage assigned as an aide by the Ghul Legion, always accompanies Crithian Raine. Her leonine hair is jet black, and she yields a wickedly curved greatsword.

Crithian Raine, Human Wiz10: CR 10; SZ M; HD 10d4+30; hp 56; Init +6 (+2 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative); Spd 30 feet; AC 13 (+1 bracers, +2 Dex), touch 12, flat-footed 11; BAB/Grapple +5/+5; Full Atk +5 melee (1d4/19-20, masterwork dagger); SA spells; SQ spells; AL NE; SV Fort +8, Ref +5, Will +12; Str 10, Dex 14, Con 17, Int 20, Wis 17, Cha 14.

Skills: Concentration +20, Craft (alchemy) +18, Knowledge (Arcana) +18, Knowledge (History) +18, Knowledge (local) +18, Knowledge (Underworld) +18, Listen +6, Profession (Crimelord) +18, Profession (Scholar) +13, Spellcraft +18 (13 ranks, +5 Int), Spot +6 (4 ranks, +3 Wis). **Feats:** Combat Casting, Empower

Spell, Great Fortitude, Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Scribe Scroll, Spell Focus (Evocation), Spell Penetration.

Possessions: *ring of the ram* (36 charges), +1 bracers of armor, +2 amulet of health, scroll of displacement, scroll of protection from elements, masterwork dagger, platinum ring (worth 400 gp).

Arcane Spells Prepared (4/6/5/4/4/3; Base Save DC = 15 + spell level, 17 + spell level for Evocation*): 0 – detect magic, mage hand, open/close, read magic; 1st – color spray, magic missile* (2), ray of enfeeblement, shield, true strike; 2nd – arcane lock, flaming sphere*, invisibility, mirror image, see invisibility; 3rd – dispel magic, haste, lightning bolt* (2); 4th – evar’s black tentacles, ice storm* (2), stonesskin; 5th – cone of cold*, fireball* (empowered), mirror saw (see Appendix)

Arcane Spells Known: 0 – all; 1st – alarm, charm person, chill touch, color spray, grease, identify, mage armor, magic missile, obscuring mist, ray of enfeeblement, shield, shocking grasp, true strike; 2nd – arcane lock, endurance, flaming sphere, invisibility, mel’s acid arrow, mirror image, see invisibility, spectral hand; 3rd – dispel magic, displacement, explosive runes, fireball, haste, lightning bolt; 4th – evar’s black tentacles, dimension door, ice storm, stonesskin, wall of fire, wall of ice; 5th – cone of cold, fireball, mirror saw (see Appendix), prying eyes, wall of iron

Lastara (Ogre Mage): CR 8; hp 45; see the *MM*.

Tactics: Raine, if aware of coming combat, casts *haste*, *shield*, *mirror image*, *stonesskin*, see *invisible*, *invisibility* and *mirror saw*. These spells change his stats: AC 26, DR (10/adamantine), 1 extra partial action for 10 rounds, and 1d4+3 *mirror images*. Lastarev turns *invisible* and floats along the ceiling.

Raine doesn’t like to mess around – he is likely to use his most destructive spells first on selected areas, using *haste* to do as much damage as possible. Lastara opens with her *cone of cold*, after which point she descends and attacks with her formidable blade.

While Lastara does not retreat, Raine may attempt to secure an escape if he feels he is badly outmatched.

Treasure: Next to the map on the table (see below) are three special items: a *chime of opening* (the metallic rod), a pair of *gloves of protection* (these function as a *scarab of protection*, but the gloves have only 2 charges remaining), and a special item called the *ebon glass*. Though they may not appear so at first, these items prove invaluable to the PCs survival in the Black Vault. (The functions of the *ebon glass* are detailed in Area 6 of Part Six: The Black Vault.) The *ebon glass* has Krezzelian writing on its face (Decipher Script check DC 20) that reads: “Should the city fall, the Witch King’s temple must not be breached.” The *ebon glass* radiates strong Evocation magic, but its purpose or function can only be determined with a *legend lore* or

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similar spell, or a Bardic Knowledge check (DC 25). The glass has hardness 5 and 10 hp, and a Break DC of 16.

The tapestries and sheets are worth 500 gp. A secret compartment in the bed (Search check DC 20) contains Raine's spell book, which contains all of the spells noted above.

Development: If Raine escapes, he most certainly returns to haunt the PCs later on, either in this adventure or later in the campaign. If he has enough troops remaining, he may attempt to breach the Black Vault himself (he may join Ghul Team 2), or he may round together what soldiers he has remaining and try to hunt down and destroy the PCs.

Even if Raine is killed, the threat of the Ghul Legion remains, both in this adventure and beyond (as detailed in Part Eight). If any of the Ravagers or the Command Team (see Part Three) remains alive, they take over the exploration of the Ebon Fane once Raine is dead. At the DMs option, if all of the Ghul Legion soldiers have been disposed of, more reinforcements may arrive – reinforcements that might inadvertently open the Kiss of Doom. See Parts Six, Seven and Eight for more details.

Chapter Six: The Black Vault

This section details one of the deadliest portions of this adventure, and the area that Crithian Raine and the Ghul Legion seek – the dreaded Black Vault, where powerful relics of evil power, crafted with the guidance of the Witch King himself, lie in waiting. Even Osenkej’s demonic enemies, who still maintain control of the Vault and the Kiss of Doom beyond, don’t dare to touch the dreaded artifacts he left behind – but that doesn’t mean that the Ghul Legion won’t attempt to take them. The PCs could be drawn here either in an attempt to seal the Ebon Fane for good, to acquire the black relics themselves, or to try and stop the Ghul Legion from doing so.

The Black Vault was the last feature of Krezzel Dul that was constructed, and it was made shortly before the Veiled Ones initiated the events that would eventually lead to the entire city’s downfall. Located directly beneath the Ebon Fane, the Black Vault is well protected and sealed, and was meant not only to serve as a reliquary for Osenkej’s powerful relics – items that he and his followers would one day use in their nihilistic campaign against the peaceful people of the world, and against the celestials who would protect them – but it also meant to serve as a secret base in which the Brotherhood of the Black Sun could hold up if the Ebon Fane were invaded. For that reason, the magical locks that can seal the Ebon Fane from outside intrusion are located here – it is these locks that must be reactivated if the Fane is to remain forever sealed.

Osenkej’s enemies – creatures who do not wish to see the Witch King’s relics recovered or, more importantly, the Kiss of Doom unsealed — heavily guard this area. These creatures do not initiate the locks to seal the Ebon Fane, however, for someday the Ebon Fane may come in useful for launching their own invasion on the world. No amount of reasoning can convince these demonic guardians otherwise – they are here to make sure that the Vault’s powerful relics remain untouched, and that the Kiss of Doom remains closed. But now things have changed.

As soon as the Ebon Fane was breached, Kytarra Bane – the Witch King’s bride and a powerful half-fiend nymph – managed to exert just enough influence to destroy most of the demons protecting the Kiss of Doom. Several of her fellow prisoners have managed to escape into the Black Vault, though the magical seals on Kytarra’s own place in the Kiss of Doom still hold her within – try as they might, her servants do not have the power to free her, both because they lack the necessary arcane power and because several of the demons still intent on keeping the Kiss of Doom sealed are

roaming the Black Vault. Kytarra hopes, however, that this will not last – that someone will penetrate deeply enough into the Vault to activate the Bone Cross, and thereby release her and the rest of her allies from their bonds. Once that happens, she happily makes use of the numerous evil relics in the Vault – relics that contain the last vestiges of the Witch King’s magical power. With time, research, and quite a few sacrifices, perhaps Kytarra can return her demonic lover to form....

FEATURES OF THE VAULT

Unless noted otherwise, an ambient hellish glow illuminates all areas of the Vault. All walls are magically treated reinforced masonry. All doors are wrought of enchanted black iron. Both walls and doors have SR 25 in regards to spells cast against them (such as disintegrate or knock). All ceilings are 20-foot high. All doors of the Black Vault are locked, and re-lock automatically when shut. This effect can be dispelled (caster level 20).

Reinforced Masonry Walls: 1 foot or more thick; Hardness 16; hp 360 per 10-foot square section; Break (DC 65); Climb (DC 15).

Enchanted Black Iron Doors: 2 inches thick; Hardness 20; hp 100; Break (DC 35); Open Locks (DC 40).

I: CHAMBER OF BLACK FAITH (EL II)

Characters arrive here via *teleportation* from Area 20 of the Ebon Fane. The Black Vault is located roughly 500 feet below the Ebon Fane – there are no physical entrances or exits from this place.

The PCs step through a door of swirling red mist. The next moment, they find themselves in a cold tomb suffused with shadows and dust. Two tall statues flank the room at its center, one of a tall, cloaked figure with draconic wings and wicked looking blades, the other of an attractive, barely-clad woman with tall horns and a clawed right hand. Every inch of the old stone in this cold place is layered with images of humans, elves and dwarves being disemboweled, eaten, burned or violated by all manner of demonic beings. The stone walls glow from an unseen source, a flickering, ambient light that almost seems to give the images motion, so that even the act of standing in this room is dizzying. A long, featureless altar stands near the south wall. Behind the altar is a tall stone statue with no face but enormous fists; its featureless eyes seem to watch you, though the statue itself does not move. The door of swirling crimson hangs against the north wall.

This chamber was where the Brotherhood left offerings for the Witch King – it was their most sacred place where they could pay their respects. The Witch King’s enemies never discovered the secret trove, but they did place a powerful guardian here to prevent anyone from trespassing into the Vault.

The portal on the northern wall *teleports* any who steps through it to Area 20 of the Ebon Fane. The other exit from this room is a secret door on the south wall (Search DC 25).

Creature: The faceless statue is a **stone golem**. It attacks any who approach the altar at the southern end of the room.

Stone Golem: CR 11; hp 84; see the *MM*.

Treasure: The altar at the southern end of the room is hollow, though the secret compartment that gives access to this area is difficult to find (Search DC 25). Inside of the hollow are 1,435 pp, a large emerald on a platinum chain (worth 2,400 gp), a golden horn (worth 600 gp), a gold statuette of Osenkej (worth 300 gp), a gold cup (worth 200 gp), a set of black vestments of the Brotherhood inlaid with gold trim (worth 200 gp), and a sacrificial dagger (worth 150 gp).

2: THE DOOMED STEPS (EL 8)

The stairs here are dark red in color, but otherwise bear nothing noteworthy of their appearance. Appearances, however, can be deceiving.

Trap: A series of powerful, 5-foot-long circular blades sweep out at ankle, chest and neck level (for a human) when anyone comes to the bend in the stairs. These blades sweep out and spin quickly (much in the manner of a saw), and are likely to deal quite a bit of damage. The trap resets for every character to pass through the hall.

Spinning Blades Trap: CR 8; mechanical; location trigger; automatic reset; Atk +15 melee (8d6/19-20 (x3), 4 blades); Search (DC 25); Disable Device (DC 25).

3: THE THROAT (EL 8)

The walls, floor and ceiling of this room are as black as night – it is all but impossible to determine the rooms actual dimensions. Stepping into this area is like stepping into a void – it feels as though one could fall or float away with each disorienting step.

The disorienting feeling of this room is not magical, but an effect of the incredibly dark stone. Every round a PC is in this chamber and attempts anything beyond a 5-foot-step, she must make a Concentration check (DC 15) or be unable to do so. The dark nature of the area also makes locating the door to Area 4 difficult (Search check DC 25, as it is the same color as the walls) and it makes locating the trap all but impossible.

Trap: “The Throat”, such as it is, is a deep pit that

occupies the northern portion of the room. Any weight placed upon the area noted on the map leads to a dangerous plunge down a 100-foot-deep pit lined with barbed spikes.

Spiked Pit Trap (100 feet): CR 6; mechanical; location trigger; manual reset; Reflex save DC 25 avoids; 100 ft. deep (10d6, pit); pit spikes (Atk +10 melee, 1d4 spikes for 1d4+5 damage per spike); Search (DC 25); Disable Device (DC 20).

Creature: Also lurking in the pit is a **huge fiendish hunting spider**, which uses the spikes to navigate the area (rather than a web). The spider is a fearsome opponent, and it does not have to wait for the trap to be sprung – it is quite capable of pushing through the concealed trap door and ascending into the room. Indeed, the spider’s presence is the main reason that Kytarra Bane’s henchmen have not been able to escape from Area 4 (see below).

Huge Fiendish Hunting Spider: CR 6; SZ H Vermin; HD 10d8+10; hp 57; Init +3 (+3 Dex); Spd 40 ft., climb 20 ft.; AC 16 (-2 size, +3 Dex, +5 natural), touch 11, flat-footed 15; BAB/Grapple +7/+19; Full Atk +9 melee (2d6+6 & poison, bite); Space/Reach 15 ft./10 ft.; SA poison, web, smite good (1/day, +10 damage); SQ vermin, darkvision (60 feet), cold/fire resistance (10), DR (5/magic), SR (20); AL NE; SV Fort +8, Ref +6, Will +3; Str 19, Dex 17, Con 12, Int -, Wis 10, Cha 2.

Skills: Climb +16, Hide +5, Jump +10, Spot +15.

Poison (Ex): Bite, Fort Save DC 22, 1d8 Str/1d8 Str.

Vermin: Immune to mind-influencing effects.

Treasure: A shallow pool of putrefying liquid awaits at the bottom of the pit. The pool is barely 5-feet across and 2-feet deep, but it is filled with a viscous black fluid. This fluid is *Darkwater*, one of the Witch King’s relics (Darkwater is detailed in the Appendix.)

4: THE BLOOD SCAR (EL 9)

This 40-foot square room is drenched in blood – the scent is so strong that it even makes the air hazy. Thick, sloppy drops run down the walls and drip from the ceiling, and the floor is coated in claret. Barely discernible beneath the muck is a 20-foot long black scar, as if the image was burned there into the floor. A small dark stone, smooth and egg-shaped but deep red in color, sits in the center of the X-shaped scar — it burns with acrid fumes as each drop of blood from the ceiling lands atop it.

This dangerous chamber is another reliquary. The thick coat of blood that permeates this room is a supernatural effect (caster level 20), and the presence of the blood makes this area difficult. Any movement beyond a 5-foot step requires a Balance check (DC 10) or else the character in question falls prone. Use of the Scent

feat is impossible in this room.

Creatures: Marak and Bloodlock – 2 **fiendish ettins** – are trapped in this chamber. These henchmen of Kytarra Bane managed to escape into this room after narrowly slaying one of the bebliliths in Area 6, and they have not been able to breach the doors since (the one time they did, it was to Area 3, and the darkness and the spider there drove them back into this area). Marak and Bloodlock are stupid, arrogant and violent – they don't care who they encounter or what they intend, they just want out.

Marak and Bloodlock resemble normal ettins, but their flesh is pitch black and they have pupilless black eyes. Each yields a pair of magical greataxes to bloody efficiency. Each also wears half-plate armor.

Marak & Bloodlock, Fiendish Ettins (2): CR 7; SZ L Giant; HD 10d8+20; hp 66, 79; Init +3 (-1 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative); Spd 30 ft.; AC 22 (-1 size, -1 Dex, +7 half-plate, +7 natural), touch 8, flat-footed 22; BAB/Grapple +7/+17; Attack +13/8 melee (1d12+7/x3, 2 greataxes); Space/Reach 10 ft./10 ft.; SA superior two-weapon fighting, smite good (1/day, +10 damage); SQ darkvision (90 ft.), cold/fire resistance (10), DR (5/magic), SR (20); AL CE; SV Fort +9, Ref +2, Will +5; Str 23, Dex 8, Con 15, Int 6, Wis 10, Cha 11.

Skills: Listen +14, Search +5, Spot +14. *Feats:* Alertness, Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Power Attack.

Superior Two-Weapon Fighting (Ex): An ettin fights with a club or spear in each hand. Because each of its two heads controls an arm, the ettin does not suffer an attack or damage penalty for attacking with two weapons.

Possessions: +1 greataxe (2), large masterwork half-plate armor.

Treasure: Besides the ettin's personal possessions, the stone on the floor is indeed the *Hungerstone*, another of the Witch King's evil relics. There is a 1 in 6 chance that anyone injured by a bladed weapon within 5 feet of the Hungerstone will lose blood onto the evil artifact, and thereby be affected by its power. The full powers of the Hungerstone are detailed in the Appendix.

5: DARK RELIQUARY (EL 8)

This cold chamber contains frescoes of teeth, eyes and hands, all warped and which emanate from a dark chasm. The "chasm", in actuality, is a 10-foot long depression that occupies the southern portion of this dark gray room. The depression is covered in dark silver glyphs and markings, and sports an exquisitely crafted cup of smooth crimson metal. The cup is filled with blood.

This reliquary holds one of the Witch King's most powerful relics. Naturally, it is carefully guarded.

Trap: An invisible line of razor-sharp wire stretches

across the southern portion of the room; the wire forms a line at the north border of the depression. The line can be seen with a *see invisible* or *true seeing* spell, but even then it must be Searched for normally, for it is incredibly thin and easy to miss against the dark background. The razor wire is highly magical, and animates (much like a snake) to strangle anyone who crosses its path. The wire constricts tightly, and most likely decapitates the victim – even if this fails, the victim is still strangled, cut and constricted for a good deal of damage. The line loses all magical efficacy after the trap is sprung.

Razorwire Trap: CR 8; mechanical; location trigger; no reset; Atk +20 (razorwire decapitates victim, or inflicts 3d6+13 damage with successful Fort Save DC 20); Search (DC 32); Disable Device (DC 32). Small or smaller creatures are unaffected.

Treasure: The cup is the *Blood Grail*, a powerful and dangerous item. See the Appendix for details.

6: THE FLESH PIT (EL II)

The door reveals a vast, deep chamber, some 40-feet by 70-feet and at least 100-feet deep. The room appears not so much as a room at all, but a cankerous wound out of a nightmare – every inch of wall, floor and ceiling is comprised of a sticky, oozing substance not unlike pulsating flesh. Open blisters and sores permeate the living chamber, orifices that reveal foul, noxious vapors every few moments, accompanied by bloody explosions and terrifying, bodiless screams. Here and there in the fleshy walls you catch sight of a humanoid form, buried beneath the muck and writhing painfully.

Set near the center of the chamber is an assembly of five 80-foot tall pillars of black stone, tightly clustered together; the faces of the stone pillars are covered in scratches and cuts. A cold black flame burns in the central pillar; the flame casts shadows across the hideous room. Long strands of thick, iron-like webbing coat the upper walls from the level of the door to the ceiling, in which lurk a pair of spider-like beings with many sharp claws and legs. A third such form floats, impossibly, near the far end of the chamber – next to another door – as do a pair of large, dog-like corpses with reddish fur.

This chamber, the Flesh Pit, is a dangerous area, though not quite as deadly as it may at first appear. Besides yet another relic, this chamber also contains the controls that can seal the Ebon Fane off forever.

The Floor: The floor of this chamber, level with the doors to the east and west, is a permanent *wall of force*. While the pit below is very real (and 100 feet deep), the PCs need not worry about falling unless they unsuccessfully tamper with the locking mechanisms of the Ebon Fane (see below). The *wall of force* may be

dispelled (caster level 20), though doing such is obviously a bad idea unless all of the PCs are equipped with the means to *levitate* or *fly*.

The Pit: The walls, ceiling and floor of the pit are dangerous for living beings to touch, and release a deadly contact poison on each round of contact. Outsiders, naturally, are immune to poison, and so have little to fear here. The humanoid forms are zombies, though they cannot be released from the walls (and therefore have no stats presented here). The poison loses all efficacy if a piece of the wall is cut loose (which is easy enough to do with a mere point of damage from a bladed weapon).

Flesh Walls, Ceiling & Floor: CR 6; mechanical; location trigger; automatic reset; 100 ft. deep (10d6, pit); multiple targets (all targets in the pit); poison (contact poison, 2d12 hp/1d6 Con, Fort Save DC 16 negatives); Search (n/a); Disable Device (n/a).

The Pillars: While the central pillar contains the Treasure (see below), the remaining pillars each bear a small, threaded rod that reaches up only about 2 inches from the top of the pillar. If the *Ebon glass* (the hourglass found in Area 24 of Ghul Keep) is affixed to each of the four rods in any order, then in 10d6 rounds the

Ebon Fane will be sealed with a series of wards and *walls of force* so potent that only a well-worded *wish* or *miracle* spell could ever bring it down, and even then the Fane would remain unlocked for only 10d6 rounds. Magical transportation into or out of the Fane after the initial 10d6 rounds have passed is similarly impossible. Affixing the *Ebon glass* properly requires a Use Magic Device check (DC 20).

Each pillar requires only 1 round to manipulate; however, **EVERY** pillar must be manipulated properly. Any failure means that the entire sequence must be started again. Furthermore, if the *Ebon glass* is unsuccessfully affixed to any pillar, there is a 1 in 6 chance that the *wall of force* that serves as the floor to this chamber is *dispelled* for 1d4+1 rounds, causing anyone not fastened or flying to fall 100 feet (10d6 damage) and to come into contact with the poisonous floor (see above). Naturally, such victims may become trapped beneath the wall if they do not have expedient means of returning to floor level before the wall of force reactivates.

The function of the peripheral pillars is encoded in the scratches and writing on their face, and the function of the *Ebon glass* in regards to the pillars can be discerned with a Decipher Script check (DC 20). Reading enough of the writing to determine the function of the pillar lock-mechanisms takes 10

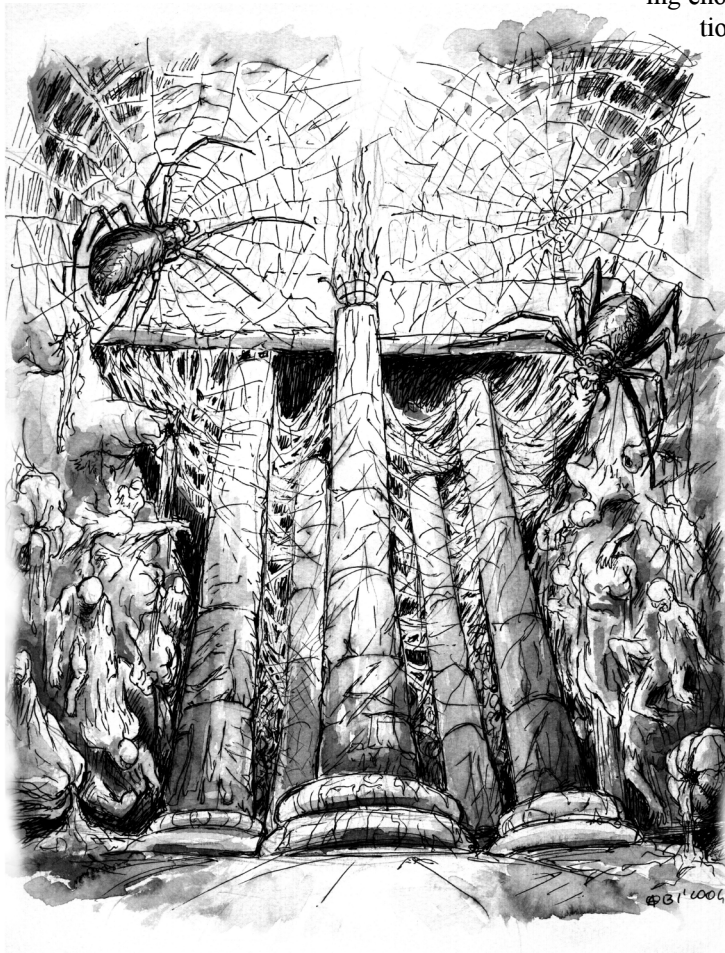
rounds, minus 1 round per 1 point over 20 scored on the Decipher Script check. A comprehend languages spell allows the script to be read in 2 rounds.

Creatures: The bodies on the ground are of a pair of advanced hell hounds that had accompanied Marak & Bloodlock when they passed through this area and forced open the door to Area 4; the hounds were slain by the bebiliths that reside in this chamber. The spider body is the third bebilith, which the ettins (barely) managed to slay before forced to retreat from the room.

There are still 2 bebiliths here, who react rather violently to intruders of any variety.

Bebilith (2): CR 9; hp 111, 103; see the *MM*.

Tactics: Currently, due to their recent engagement with the ettins, the bebiliths each have a *magic circle against chaos* spell active, though they change this if they believe their attackers to be of a different alignment. Both immediately start combat with their webs, preferring to try and trap their opponents against the flesh walls (and therefore subject them to poison dam-



age each round). These bebiliths defend the central pillar violently.

Treasure: The black flame on the central pillar is the *Soulflame*, detailed in the Appendix.

Development: Fighting here alerts Sabar Trug in Area 7. Though Trug will not leave the Bone Cross, he makes ready his combat preparations (see below).

One of the best ways to end this adventure is for the PCs to use the *Ebon glass* to seal off the Fane, though this is a dangerous proposition – doing such, however, effectively halts the Ghul Legion’s activities in regards to the Fane (and will certainly earn their everlasting enmity towards the PCs). A possible conclusion for this adventure is for the PCs to face Ghul Team 2, the Command Team, or even Crithian Raine himself in this area as they try to seal the Ebon Fane.

On the other hand, if the DM has determined that the Ghul Legion is ahead of the PCs, the PCs may not wish to seal the Fane until they have dealt with the denizens of the Crimson Isle (see below and Part Seven for details).

7: THE BONE CROSS (EL 12)

This long chamber is painted stark white. The visage of a great cowl-covered face is done in black against the white wall. Large bloodstains spatter the otherwise pale walls, near the body of a dark-skinned giant whose head was evidently hammered in by some bludgeoning device.

The most notable feature is a long, pale cross of blood-stained bone that occupies the majority of the chamber – each section of the cross is nearly 20-foot long. Iron shackles hang to secure the arms and feet of a humanoid-sized creature; the interior of each shackle is adored with inward-facing razors.

This chamber, the last in this small but dangerous reliquary, houses the most powerful artifact crafted by the Brotherhood of the Black Sun aside from the Blood Grail. This artifact also acts as the gate to the Kiss of Doom, the otherworldly prison in which the demonic followers of the Witch King are imprisoned.

The blood on the wall belonged to a fiendish stone giant named Crabbash, who was killed by the Creature in this area while the fiendish ettins escaped (see Area 4).

Creature: Sabar Trug was born to a marilith and a human – how, no one has ever determined, and those who have dared to ask have been rewarded with a quick and painful death. An adamant enemy of the Witch King and a follower of Dagon, Sabar Trug voluntarily took the duty of protecting the *Bone Cross*, fully aware that by doing so he was also acting as a warden of sorts should the Witch King’s demonic followers (especially Kytarra Bane) ever escape from the Crimson Isle and move through the Kiss of Doom. Sabar spends an eter-

nity here in meditation – his mind is calm despite the chaotic lineage of his demonic mother, Drusaani, and he contemplates the many great evils performed by Dagon and his followers. Sabar Trug appears as an incredibly muscular humanoid in dark breeches, with dark, shaggy hair; he has blood-red eyes and sharp fangs. The most telling feature of his demonic parentage, however, are his six muscular arms, which he puts to efficient and deadly use with his monk’s training.

Sabar Trug, Half-marilith/half-human Mnk9: CR 12*; SZ M Outsider (Lawful, Evil); HD 9d8+45; hp 92; Init +8 (+4 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative); Spd 50 feet; AC 21 (+2 bracers, +1 natural, +4 Dex, +1 monk, +3 Wis), touch 16, flat-footed 13; BAB/Grapple +6/+14; Full Atk +15/12 melee (1d10+6, unarmed strike), +15 melee (1d10+3, 5 unarmed strikes), or +14 melee (1d6+6, bite), +14 melee (1d4+3, 6 claws); SA stunning attack (9/day, Fort Save DC 17), flurry of blows, spell-like abilities, *Ki* strike (magic), feats; SQ darkvision (60 feet), poison immunity, acid/cold/electricity/fire resistance (10), SR (19), improved evasion, still mind (+2 SV vs. Enchantment), slow fall (50 feet), purity of body (immune to normal disease), wholeness of body (18 hp/day), leap of the clouds; AL LE; SV Fort +11, Ref +10, Will +9; Str 26, Dex 19, Con 20, Int 14, Wis 16, Cha 12.

Skills: Balance +18, Climb +20, Concentration +17, Escape Artist +16, Jump +22, Tumble +18. **Feats:** Cleave, Deflect Arrows, Improved Initiative, Improved Trip, Improved Unarmed Strike, Multidexterity, Power Attack, Stunning Fist, Weapon Focus (Unarmed Strike).

Spell-Like Abilities: 3/day – *darkness, poison*; 1/day – *contagion, desecrate, unholy blight*. These abilities are as the spells cast by a 9th level sorcerer (Save DC = 11 + spell level).

Feats: As a half-marilith, Sabar Trug receives the Multidexterity feat as bonus feat. In combination with his natural abilities, these feats allow Trug to attack with all its arms at no penalty.

Possessions: +4 belt of giant strength, +2 bracers of armor.

***Design Note:** Due to his half-marilith abilities and the number of attacks he can make, Sabar Trug is more deadly than a normal human monk with the half-fiend template. Therefore, his CR adjustment for being a half-marilith is +3 (rather than +2 for a half-fiend).

Tactics: If Sabar Trug is aware of intruders, he immediately casts *darkness*, followed by *unholy blight* once the intruders enter the room. Sabar Trug doesn’t hold back – he uses his flurry of blows and lands all of his attacks on one opponent (preferably a spell caster) until they are dead, counting on his Cleave feat to allow him to move to the next opponent after his first falls. He uses his Tumble and Jump skills to the best of his ability to avoid being cornered, and he uses his

CHAPTER SIX: THE BLACK VAULT

poison ability on any particularly troublesome foe.

Treasure: In addition to his personal gear, the cross on the floor is indeed the *Bone Cross*, detailed in the Appendix. Crabbash's huge greatclub and hide armor are still on his body, as well.

Development: Any arcane spell caster who comes within 10 feet of the *Bone Cross* is asking for trouble, as detailed in the Appendix. If the Kiss of Doom is opened as a result of a spell caster's presence, it can-

not again be sealed without first re-sealing the Stone of Fears (Area 4 of the Kiss of Doom). The PCs are very likely to be the cause of the Kiss of Doom opening, but it could just as likely be any number of arcanists from the Ghul Legion (Resaana, Jar'rod, or even Crithian Raine himself).

Chapter Seven: The Kiss of Doom

In this chapter, the PCs learn of the fate of those demons that served the Witch King so long ago and try to prevent their escape. While such an action can almost certainly be handled merely by sealing the Ebon Fane with the Ebon glass, the PCs may not necessarily know this – and, of course, they may not be able to act soon enough to prevent the Kiss of Doom from being breached.

When Osenkej fell from power, his powerful rivals — chief amongst them Dagon — chose not to simply wipe the Witch King’s servants out. The Witch King had many powerful secrets and had discovered many forms of strange but powerful magic — magic that the Witch King’s rival demon lords coveted. Besides, a quick and painless death has never been the way of demons, which is why Kytarra Bane and the others that followed the Witch King have spent the last several hundred years here, in a dark labyrinth called the Stone of Fears, on a dreaded place called the Crimson Isle, beyond the dark gate called the Kiss of Doom. Here, fiends prey upon fiends — master torturers and hunters extract information and pain from those who once followed the so-called Witch King, followers who have spent an eternity suffering. It takes a great deal of skill to torture a demon, but the wardens of the Stone of Fears have made it their goal and pride to master their technique — and they have.

But now, the tables have turned. The magic that seals the Witch King’s former followers inside of the Stone of Fears is linked to the magic that seals the Ebon Fane — when the Fane is breached, many of the prisoners here escaped. Soon, a full-blown demonic prison riot began inside of the Stone, as former prisoners turned on their jailors and subjected them to the same torment and pain they themselves had suffered. By the time the Bone Cross is activated and the Kiss of Doom opened, Kytarra Bane and her minions have all but seized control of the Stone — now, all they need do is make good on their escape.

The Kiss of Doom is not the only means of escaping the Crimson Isle, but it is the only *gate* that actually leads to the PCs world. All other paths lead further into the Abyss, where the Witch King’s followers are still hated and hunted by the demon lord’s rivals. For that reason, Kytarra Bane and her followers seek exit through the Kiss of Doom. Bane and her evil pets will pour through the Kiss of Doom in waves. If the Kiss of Doom or the Ebon Fane are not re-sealed, then very soon a veritable army of angry fiends with hundreds of years of pent-up rage and psychotic aggression come charging through to the PCs own world.

HUNTERS (EL 12)

10d4 rounds after the Kiss of Doom is breached, 2 **retrievers** come through the Kiss of Doom and destroy anything on the other side. These creatures fight in a straightforward and dangerous manner, and should indicate to the PCs that something most terrible awaits on the other side of the gate in the Black Vault.

Retriever (2): CR 10; hp 70, 52; see the *MM*.

THE INVASION (EL 17□)

If the Kiss of Doom has not been re-sealed before 3 days have passed, time is up, Kytarra Bane orders her followers through the gate so that a full invasion of the PCs world can begin. These demons strike at both their demonic enemies and other human prey, and use the Ebon Fane and the surrounding areas as a base of operations. Over time, all of the demons that were formerly held captive inside of the Stone of Fears — some 100 or more fiends and fiendish creatures — will have made good their escape.

This first team consists of some of Kytarra’s most powerful servants — a glabrezu named **Malstravik**, who wears a billowing cape of screaming eyes; a succubus named **Eryenne**, who rides atop her fiendish triceratops mount; a roper called **Destravus**; and the **Skull Twins**, 2 half-fiend hieractosphinxes.

Malstravik, Glabrezu: CR 15; hp 96; *robe of eyes*; see the *MM*.

Eryenne, Succubus: CR 9; hp 34; AC 22; Attack +8 melee (1d8+2 & 1d6 fire/19-20, longsword), or +7 melee (1d3+1, 2 claws); +1 *flaming longsword*, +2 *bracers of armor*; see the *MM*.

Fiendish Triceratops: CR 9; SZ H Magical Beast; HD 16d10+112; hp 210; Init -1 (Dex); Spd 30 ft.; AC 18 (-2 size, -1 Dex, +11 natural), touch 7, flat-footed 18; BAB/Grapple +12/+21; Full Atk +15 melee (2d8+7, gore); Space/Reach 20 ft./10 ft.; SA charge for double damage, trample, smite good (1/day, +16 damage); SQ scent, darkvision (60 feet), cold/fire resistance (10), DR (10/magic), SR (25); AL N; SV Fort +17, Ref +9, Will +6; Str 20, Dex 9, Con 25, Int 1, Wis 12, Cha 7.

Skills: Listen +8, Spot +8.

Trample (Ex): A triceratops can trample Medium-size or smaller creatures for 2d12+5 points of damage. Opponents who do not make attacks of opportunity against the triceratops can attempt a Reflex save (DC 23) to halve the damage.

Destravus, Roper: CR 10; hp 80; see the *MM*.

The Skull Twins, Half-Fiend Hieracosphinx (2): CR 7; SZ L Magical Beast; HD 9d10+27; hp 71 each; Init +4 (Dex); Spd 30 ft., fly 90 ft. (poor); AC 21 (-1 size, +4 Dex, +8 natural), touch 13, flat-footed 17; BAB/Grapple +9/+20; Full Atk +15 melee (1d10+7, bite), +10 melee (1d6+3, 2 claws); Space/Reach 10 ft./5 ft.; SA Pounce, rake (1d6+3), spell-like abilities; SQ darkvision (60 feet), poison immunity, acid/cold/electricity/fire resistance (10), SR (14); AL CE; SV Fort +9, Ref +10, Will +5; Str 25, Dex 18, Con 17, Int 10, Wis 15, Cha 12.

Skills: Listen +13, Spot +14. *Feats:* Alertness, Flyby Attack.

Spell-Like Abilities: 3/day – *darkness, poison*; 1/day – *contagion, desecrate, unholy blight*. These abilities are as the spells cast by a 9th level sorcerer (Save DC = 11 + spell level).

Rake (Ex): Attack bonus +13 melee, damage 1d6+2.

Skills: **Hieracosphinxes gain a +4 racial bonus to Spot checks in daylight.**

Development: This encounter details only the first such wave of creatures – the DM is encouraged to conjure up more demonic shock teams if the situation is not resolved (either by sealing the Ebon Fane or the Stone of Fears on the Crimson Isle).

FEATURES OF THE CRIMSON ISLE

Effects: The Crimson Isle is a demi-plane that abuts the Abyss. As such, a number of unpleasant effects dominate here:

- * Effects that rely on the Ethereal plane (such as *etherealness* or *ethereal jaunt*) do not work here.

- * Spells with the Chaos descriptor are treated as if the caster were 2 levels higher than normal.

- * Spells used to summon fiends are treated as if the caster were 1 level higher than normal.

- * The air is mildly toxic. Non-outsiders must make a Fortitude Save every hour spent on the Crimson Isle or suffer 1 point of temporary Constitution damage. 3 successful Saves in a row makes one immune to the toxic air of the plane.

The Island: The Crimson Isle itself is wrought of calcified bone held together with sinew and marrow. The Isle floats atop a vast sea of poisonous blood, but is itself extremely tall and deep despite its small appearance. The Isle has hardness 15, 100 hp per 10-foot square section, and a Break DC of 25. The Isle has SR 30 in regards to magic meant to affect it in some way.

Any creature that touches the

blood sea suffers 1d4 points of permanent Constitution drain per round (Fort save DC 30).

I: THE KISS OF DOOM (EL 13)

If and when the Bone Cross is activated in the Black Vault, a shimmering, blood-colored gate about 20-feet in diameter forms between Area 7 of the Vault and here. Those that step through the gate arrive in this area. The gate cannot be dispelled unless the breach in the Stone of Fears (Area 4 of the Isle) is sealed.

After a few dizzying moments, the PCs emerge through the dark portal to find themselves in a nightmarish landscape. An island of old, yellowed bone, layered with pulpy fields of oozing flesh, floats in a wide, endless sea of boiling blood as thick as oil. Dark clouds roam the skies like angry predators, and all across the sea and the island itself is a thick layer of crimson fog, in the vapors of which angry inhuman faces writhing in pain can be seen. The air smells of burning blood and acidic slime.

The PCs are deposited in a wide clearing on the isle, which itself is only 300 feet across. Four 20-foot high pillars of black bone mark the clearing. The crimson gate hangs about 20 feet off of the ground, directly over your heads. Closer to the center of the isle are a pair of pools filled with some gray, bubbling substance. By far the most prominent feature of the isle is a deep pit at its north end, about 90 feet across; the pit slopes downward at a steep angle to a 20-foot wide hole at its center, out of which come resonant screams and cackles.

PCs must use flight or other means of air travel to return through the Kiss of Doom, which now hangs over their heads. The four pillars are markers to denote where the Kiss of Doom was to be placed when it was originally created to bring demons from the Ebon Fane to the Crimson Isle for their imprisonment.



Creature: Perched atop one of the pillars is a half-mad vrock named **Crinn**. Crinn was once one of the wardens of the Stone of Fears, but since the magic holding most of the demonic prisoners in their bonds has begun to fade he, like the other wardens, has been on the run. Many of the former jailors are now prisoners – Crinn is one of the few to have escaped, but he is filled with rage and desire to take revenge on those that have upset his world. He is sure that any creature to come through the Kiss of Doom from the other side is responsible for the trouble in the Stone of Fears, but he does not necessarily attack: Crinn knows how to re-seal the entrance to the Stone of Fears (and thereby the Kiss of Doom itself), and, if he can get someone else to do this for him, all the better.

Crinn has dark red and black feathers, and wears a suit of blood red magical plate armor.

Crinn, Vrock: CR 13; hp 67; Speed 20 ft., fly 40 ft. (average); AC 33; +1 *large full plate*; see the *MM*.

Tactics: Crinn casts *mirror image* before entering any combat – he views it as a necessary precaution that he does not fight without. He otherwise opens an attack with *mass charm* and *darkness*, and only engages in melee after he feels his enemies are sufficiently softened up. Crinn will not fight to the death, in spite of his anger and blood craze – he retreats to the blood sea if reduced to 15 hp or less.

Development: As noted above, Crinn does not necessarily attack, chaotic though he may be – indeed, his first course of action is to address any beings that come through and demand to know what they’re doing here. Though the PCs are likely to be wary of any demons they encounter here, Crinn quickly and simply explains the situation – this island is a prison for the Witch King’s former demonic soldiers, and, because of whatever has happened in the Ebon Fane or the Black Vault, these demons are now escaping. The seal to the Stone of Fears itself has been breached, and it must be re-sealed. Crinn (or any demon who has not been a prisoner of the Stone) can do this, but the necessary ritual requires just over a full minute (12 rounds), during which time the demon in question cannot be interrupted.

The problem, then, is that Kytarra Bane, the Witch King’s bride and the leader, of sorts, of the demons detained inside of the Stone, is well aware of this. To defend it, she herself is standing vigil over the breached entrance to the Stone of Fears while her cohorts continue to take over the prison. If the Stone (and the Kiss) are to be re-sealed, Crinn needs the party to keep her busy for 12 rounds while he activates the necessary incantations to close the Stone of Fears.

2: THE GRAY POOLS (EL 10)

Up close, one can see a bubbling morass as gray as dead skin. Large plops explode and echo into the air,

accompanied by a sickening stench and a bloodcurdling scream. Bodiless faces, like melting masks, float about the surface of the miasma.

The gray pools are repositories for pain and suffering, which is provided in the Stone of Fears in great abundance. It is collected here in a liquid form, but over time develops into something else.

Creatures: 2 **bodaks** lie motionless in the two pools. They remain as such unless someone approaches within 10 feet of the periphery of either of the pools, in which case both bodaks rise up and attack.

Bodak (2): CR 8; hp 81, 68; see the *MM*.

3: THE RIFT (EL 14)

The face of the pit is like a freshly opened flank of bloody meat. Dark vapors rise from the face of the pit, and here and there in its fleshy surface is a protrusion of black bone or a humanoid head. A number of large black skulls – six in all – surround the periphery of the pit, half buried in the muck and each laden with a pair of white diamonds in its eye-sockets.

The pit dips at a steep angle down to a wide hole, out of which rises black and red smoke and constant screams.

This sinkhole leads to the only entrance into the Stone of Fears. Though utterly revolting, the pit is not dangerous in and of itself, though its somewhat fluid nature requires any character navigating it by foot to make a Balance check (DC 20) or fall directly into the pit, which carries consequences all its own (see Area 4).

The Skulls: Once, the six skulls placed at the periphery of the pit generated a special wall of force that prevented any prisoners of the Stone of Fears from escaping. The power of the skulls is linked to the Kiss of Doom, however – once the Kiss of Doom is opened, the protective barrier over the Stone of Fears is similarly breached. The skulls are immune to any damage short of a *wish* or *miracle* spell.

In order to reactivate the skulls and the accompanying protective barrier over Area 4, a demon must spend 2 rounds concentrating at each skull – this demon cannot have ever been a prisoner of the Stone of Fears (the skulls are attuned to not respond to such a demon’s presence), and all they need do is touch each skull and concentrate. All six skulls must be attuned in succession. If the demon performing the ritual is struck in combat, it must make a Concentration check as if casting a spell (it cannot “cast on the defensive”). Any break in the chain of the ritual results in failure, and the ritual must be started afresh.

Creatures: **Kytarra Bane** is the unholy result of a union between a balor and a nymph. She is a being of dark beauty and pure malevolence, and as such was selected by the Witch King as his bride when he was at the height of his power. After Osenkej was destroyed,



Kytarra Bane was among those demons sealed away in the Stone of Fears to be tortured and mutilated for eternity. Though not the most powerful of the Witch King's demonic followers, Kytarra Bane is nonetheless regarded as their leader because of her intelligence and former position.

Kytarra Bane and a few others have managed to escape from their bonds (when the Ebon Fane was breached) and eventually from the Stone itself (when the Kiss of Doom is opened). Fully aware that the demonic wardens could re-seal the prison, Kytarra had brought her personal pets – 2 **fiendish dire tigers** – to prevent the skulls that cast the protective barrier over the Stone from being activated until more of the Witch King's former legions are free. She and the tigers lurk near the rear of the pit, ready to destroy anything foolish enough to challenge them.

Kytarra Bane is tall and, in most respects, appears human. She has an impossibly gorgeous figure and face, straight and long blonde hair, and an almost physical aura of beauty and power. Because of her demonic heritage, however, she also has dark red eyes, large goat-like horns and cloven feet. Kytarra doesn't wear much clothing, but that which she does adorn herself with is of dark blue and black metal plate, much of it covered in jagged edges and serrated blades. Her dire tigers are pure black in color, and defend her to the death.

Kytarra Bane, half-fiend/half-nymph Drd4: CR 12; SZ M Outsider (Chaotic, Evil); HD 3d6+12 and 4d8+16; hp 60; Init +4 (Dex); Spd 30 ft., swim 20 ft.; AC 18 (+4 Dex, +3 bracers, +1 natural), touch 14, flat-footed 14; BAB/Grapple +4/+8; Full Atk +8 melee (1d6+4, 2 claws), +3 melee (1d4+2, bite), or +9 melee (1d4+4/19-20, dagger), or +9 ranged (1d4+4/19-20, dagger); SA blinding beauty, unearthly beauty, spell-like abilities; SQ poison immunity, acid/cold/electricity/fire resistance (10), SR (12), nature sense, wild empathy, woodland stride, trackless step, resist nature's lure; AL NE; SV Fort +9, Ref +8, Will +15; Str 19, Dex 18, Con 18, Int 24, Wis 22, Cha 25.

Skills: Concentration +15, Diplomacy +14, Escape Artist +7, Heal +13, Hide +8, Knowledge (Nature) +14, Knowledge (Arcana) +9, Listen +15, Move Silently +7, Sense Motive +9, Spellcraft +14, Spot +15, Survival +13. *Feats:* Ability Focus (Unearthly Beauty), Alertness, Combat Casting, Dodge, Iron Will. *Spell-Like Abilities:* 3/day – *darkness, poison*; 1/day – *desecrate, dimension door, unholy blight*. These abilities are as the spells cast by a 7th level sorcerer (Save DC = 17 + spell level).

Blinding Beauty (Su): This ability operates continuously, affecting all humanoids within 60 feet of the nymph. Those who look directly at the nymph must succeed at a Fortitude Save (DC 18) or be blinded permanently as though by the *blindness* spell. The nymph

can suppress or resume this ability as a free action.

Unearthly Beauty (Su): The nymph can evoke this ability once every 10 minutes. Those within 30 feet of the nymph who look directly at it must succeed at a Will Save (DC 20) or die.

*Unholy Spells Prepared** (6/7/5/5/4/3/1; Save DC = 16 + spell level): 0 – cure minor wounds (2), detect magic, flare, guidance, read magic; 1st – cure light wounds, endure elements, entangle, magic fang (2), obscuring mist, pass without trace; 2nd – barkskin, flame blade, flaming sphere, heat metal, produce flame (2); 3rd – contagion, cure moderate wounds (2), protection from elements, snare; 4th – dispel magic (2), flame strike (2); 5th – cure critical wounds, death ward, wall of fire; 6th – fire seeds (2)

Possessions: major circlet of blasting, bracers of armor +3, masterwork dagger.

* *Design Note:* Kytarra Bane's nymph spell-like abilities stack with her druid levels; therefore, she casts spells as an 11th level druid.

Fiendish Dire Tiger (2): CR 10; SZ H Animal; HD 16d8+48; hp 136, 119; Init +2 (Dex); Spd 40 ft.; AC 16 (-2 size, +2 Dex, +6 natural), touch 10, flat-footed 14; BAB/Grapple +12/+28; Full Atk +19 melee (2d6+8, 2 claws), +13 melee (2d8+4, bite); Space/Reach 10 ft./5 ft.; SA pounce, improved grab, rake (2d6+4), smite good (1/day, +16 damage); SQ scent, darkvision (60 feet), cold/fire resistance (10), DR (10/magic), SR (21); AL NE; SV Fort +13, Ref +12, Will +11; Str 27, Dex 15, Con 17, Int 2, Wis 12, Cha 10.

Skills: Hide +8, Jump +11, Listen +5, Move Silently +11, Spot +5, Swim +11. *Feats:* Alertness, Improved Natural Attack (claws), Improved Natural Attack (bite), Run, Stealthy, Weapon Focus (claw).

Pounce (Ex): If a dire tiger leaps upon a foe during the first round of combat, it can make a full attack even if it has already taken a move action.

Improved Grab (Ex): To use this ability, the dire tiger must hit with its bite attack. If it gets a hold, it can rake.

Rake (Ex): A dire tiger can make two rake attacks (+18 melee) against a held creature with its hind legs for 2d4+4 damage each. If the dire tiger pounces on an opponent, it can also rake.

Tactics: If Kytarra Bane is aware of an approaching combat, she casts *death ward, protection from elements (fire)* and *barkskin* on herself, and *magic fang* on each of her tigers. This changes Kytarra's stats as follows: AC 22, immunity to 132 points of fire damage, and immunity to death attacks and effects. Each of the dire tigers gains a +1 to attack and damage rolls.

After use of her *unearthly beauty* attack, Kytarra favors fire spells, and is not afraid to pepper an entire area with such spells, relying on her spells and fire resistance (and the fire resistance and Spell Resistance

of her dire tigers) to make such attacks effective without having to worry about carefully placing them. Her favorite is *fire seeds*, which she follows with liberal use of *flame strike* and *wall of fire*, as well as her *circlet of blasting*. The dire tigers fight ferociously, but break off whatever they are engaged in to defend Kytarra if she appears seriously threatened.

Kytarra does not retreat – she knows that the Stone will likely be re-sealed if she fails to defend it, and death is preferable to further imprisonment.

Development: If the skulls are properly activated, the adventure is effectively over – and Crinn likely turns on the PCs after he thanks them for their help. (He is a demon, after all.) If the skulls are not activated but Kytarra Bane is killed, the PCs can expect even more demons to come pouring out of the Stone (see the events detailed above or Area 4 for some guidelines on what sorts of creatures might be encountered).

4: THE STONE OF FEARS (EL VARIES)

The hole at the bottom of the slope plunges 100 feet straight down to the topmost level of the Stone of Fears, a gargantuan prison complex designed by demons – not a very nice place at all, to say the least. No maps or detailed description of the area is provided as, truth be told, exploration of such a place is both counter-productive to the adventure and well beyond the scope of 10th level or lower characters. The Stone of Fears is 20 levels of demonic madness – twisted, bleeding walls, pockets of deadly gas, Abyssal torture machines, and powerful demons

that stand watch over more numerous — sometimes even more powerful — demons. If the PCs persist in exploring these areas, the DM will have to generate additional encounters; likewise, if the Stone of Fears remains unsealed, many unsettling things are likely to come pouring out. Some of these forces are detailed earlier in this adventure (the fiendish ettins in the Black Vault, the two open encounters at the beginning of this section, and Kytarra Bane herself); additional possible encounters might include:

- * A **fiendish lernarean 10-headed pyro-hydra** (a “watchdog” used to keep the prisoners in line) (EL 15)
- * An **old half-fiend red dragon** named Vastaran (one of the Witch King’s more powerful generals, and now a prisoner) (EL 21)
- * **3 vroock** prison guards (EL 16)
- * Another general of the Witch King’s armies named Karn, a **balor** (EL 18)
- * The **nalfeshnee** prison warden and his **nightwing** servant (EL 17)
- * A **13th level lich wizardress** named Krylanna, the former leader of the Brotherhood of the Black Sun (EL 15)
- * A **30 HD retriever** war-machine of the Witch King’s army simply known as “Devastator” (EL 14)
- * A small cadre called the Pale Blade (**6 half-fiend cloud giants**), who were given the duty of keeping the Witch King’s generals in line (EL 18)
- * A corrupted **elder fire elemental** known as The Dark Flame (EL 11)
- * A **marilith Rog4** named Drusaani, one of the Witch King’s most trusted aids (and Sabar Trug’s mother) (EL 21)



Chapter Eight: Revenge of the Ghul Legion

If the PCs have successfully thwarted the Ghul Legion's attempts to gain access to the Black Vault, their problems with the dire subterranean army are not over. Indeed, they've just begun. While the full implications of the PCs rivalry with the legion are ultimately left to the DMs imagination, this chapter details a special group that Ghul Lacronus dispatches to deal with those that personally irritated him. This group, the Covenant of the Claw, should be used to display to the PCs that, even with the adventure concluded, the Ghul Legion is still a force to be reckoned with.

The Ghul Legion is a fierce enemy, even if their name is only barely known outside of the large Underdark region that they use as their central base of operations. Ghul Lacronus, a great wyrm black dragon, is as ambitious as he is terrifying. He vies for nothing less than the complete domination of the Underdark and, ultimately, as much of the surface world as he can lay his claws on. This power-hungry dragon is, suffice to say, somewhat mad, but he is also terribly charismatic and extremely intelligent. The Ghul Legion has, rumor holds, several hundred members and even more allies (many of whom are ignorant as to the actual breadth of the Legion), and the numbers are growing every day. He is also incredibly vengeful, which is where the Covenant of the Claw comes in.

Ghul Lacronus only makes use of the Covenant when someone, somehow, has earned his special attention. This elite hit squad is only utilized against those enemies have gone out of their way to earn his ire. The team has never failed in a mission, and their missions are single-minded: the elimination of the enemies of the Ghul Legion. The Covenant acquires information and reconnaissance on their target through stealth, but their attacks are decidedly direct. They eliminate their foes through the use of brutal force, often in very public places and never with any hint of subtlety.

The Covenant of the Claw is an extremely formidable and dangerous group, and should only be employed by the DM a) if the PCs have completely thwarted the Legion's attempts at acquiring the artifacts from the Black Vault, and b) when the PCs are of at least 11th level or higher. Indeed, when the Covenant attacks, the PCs may have already all but forgotten their adventures in the Ebon Fane, but that hardly matters. Ghul Lacronus hasn't...

THE COVENANT OF THE CLAW (EL 16)

Shay'kanna, one of Ghul Lacronus' own offspring and an effective leader, leads the Covenant of the Claw. The remainder of the team consists of several other half-dragon beings (offspring of Lacronus' draconic allies) as well as a **rakshasa** named Kelarra. The other half-dragon spawn include **Rashadar** and **4 white gnolls**.

Shay'kanna is a combat mage through and through. She has short gray hair and black, scaly flesh; from a distance, she is often mistaken for a dark elf. She adorns herself in a thick black cape, and often wears a golden mask (a gift from her father). Rashadar is a hideous and evil creature, born of hate and bred to hate all non-draconic forms. He vehemently promotes and practices the downfall of humanity and the rise of dragonkind. Rashadar is tall and muscular, with long black hair that only barely conceals the green scales on his flesh and his abnormally large mouth and twisted teeth. His yellow eyes burn like angry flames, and his chromatic armor is left stained with the blood of those he has sacrificed in the name of his dragon God. White gnolls are half-white dragon gnolls trained as fighters. White gnolls have frosty blue scales beneath their snow-white fur; their eyes are solid azure, and they typically dress in and use frost-colored equipment. A rakshasa of some considerable power, Kelarra often masquerades as a human mercenary. This it provides her ample opportunity to exercise her sadistic ways and to acquire powerful magical items. Kelarra's assumed form is that of a very frail human woman with perfectly straight auburn hair and sparkling green eyes. She always bears a wicked smile, even when nothing funny is happening. She dresses in a dark purple cloak, with a low-cut bodice underneath. Whether "Kelarra" is the rakshasa's true name, or whether the creature is even truly female, is unknown.

Shay'kanna, half-elf/half-dragon Sor10: CR 12; SZ M Dragon; HD 10d6+10; hp 58; Init +3; Spd 30 ft.; AC 20 (+3 Dex, +3 bracers, +4 natural), touch 13, flat-footed 17; BAB/Grapple +5/+8; Full Atk +8 melee (1d6+3, staff), or +8 melee (1d6+3, bite), +3 melee (1d4+3, 2 claws), or +10 ranged (1d8/x3, masterwork longbow); SA spells, breath weapon; SQ darkvision (60 ft.), lowlight vision, acid/paralysis/sleep immunity (10), SR (15), elf traits; AL NE; SV Fort +6, Ref +8, Will +11; Str 16, Dex 16, Con 13, Int 14, Wis 15, Cha 20.

Skills: Concentration +14, Knowledge (arcana) +15, Listen +4, Search +4, Spellcraft +15, Spot +13. *Feats:* Combat Casting, Empower Spell, Spell Focus (evocation), Still Spell.

Breath Weapon (Su): 1/day, line of acid 5 feet by 5 feet by 60 feet, 6d8 damage, Reflex Save half (DC 16).

Elf Traits: +2 racial bonus against Enchantment spells or effects; immune to magical sleep; automatically allowed to search for secret doors if within 5 feet.

Arcane Spells Known (per day 6/8/7/7/6/4; Save DC = 15 + spell level, 17 + spell level for Evocation spells*): 0 – arcane mark, dancing lights, daze, detect magic, mage hand, open/close, ray of frost, read magic, resistance; 1st – identify, magic missile*, shield, shocking grasp, true strike; 2nd – blur, cat's grace, flaming sphere*, mirror image; 3rd – gust of wind*, haste, lightning bolt*; 4th – fire shield*, ice storm*; 5th – cone of cold*

Possessions: +2 amulet of health, +3 bracers of armor, +2 cloak of resistance, staff of charming (25 charges), spell scrolls (cone of cold, feebleshin, stonewood), masterwork longbow, 20 masterwork arrows, featureless gold mask (worth 750 gp).

Rashadar, half-human/half-dragon Clr10: CR 12; SZ M Dragon; HD 10d10+30; hp 92; Init +3; Spd 20 feet; AC 24 (+7 breastplate, +3 Dex, +4 natural), touch 13, flat-footed 21; BAB/Grapple +7/+11; Full Atk +15/10 melee (1d8+7, +3 morningstar), or +11 melee (1d4+4, 2 claws), +6 melee (1d6+2, bite); SA breath weapon, spells; SQ darkvision (60 ft.), low-light vision, acid/paralysis/sleep immunity, rebuke undead (3/day), spontaneous casting (inflict spells); AL NE; SV Fort+10, Ref +8, Will +10; Str 18, Dex 16, Con 16, Int 16, Wis 17, Cha 10.

Skills: Bluff +5, Concentration +14, Diplomacy +8, Disguise +5, Knowledge (arcana) +11, Knowledge (religion) +13, Spellcraft +12. *Feats:* Combat Casting, Craft Magic Arms & Armor, Lightning Reflexes, Weapon Focus (morningstar).

Breath Weapon (Su): 1/day, cone of gas, 6d8 damage, Reflex Save half (DC 17).

Divine Spells Prepared (6/5+1/5+1/4+1/3+1/2+1; Save DC = 13 + spell level): 0 – detect magic (2), detect poison (2), read magic, resistance; 1st – bane, cause fear, change self*, cure light wounds, doom, shield of faith; 2nd – cure moderate wounds, darkness, death knell, delay poison, hold person, invisibility*; 3rd – contagion*, cure serious wounds, dispel magic, protection from elements; 4th – inflict critical wounds*, neutralize poison, poison (2); 5th – circle of doom*, flame strike, spell resistance

* Domain Spell. *Domains:* Destruction (smite 1/day, +4 attack, +10 damage), Trickery (Bluff, Disguise and Hide are class skills.)

Possessions: +3 morningstar, +2 breastplate of light

fortification, necklace of prayer beads (karma), scroll of antilife shell, potion of bull's strength, potion of blur, gold necklace (worth 750 gp).

Kelarra, Rakshasa: hp 57; AC 23; *ring of protection* +2, *carpet of flying* (3' x 5'); see the MM.

Arcane Spells Known (spells per day 6/7/7/5; Save DC = 13 + spell level): 0 – detect magic, flare, ghost sound, open/close, ray of frost, read magic, resistance; 1st – cause fear, charm person, divine favor, mage armor, shocking grasp; 2nd – blur, locate object, protection from arrows; 3rd – dispel magic, vampiric touch

White Gnoll, half-white dragon/half-gnoll Ftr6 (4): CR 9; SZ M Dragon; HD 2d10+10 and 6d12+30; hp 105, 99, 95, 81; Init +0; Spd 20 ft.; AC 22 (+8 banded mail, +4 natural), touch 10, flat-footed 22; BAB/Grapple +8/+16; Full Atk +19/14 melee (2d6+16/19-20, +2 greatsword), or +16 melee (1d4+8, 2 claws), +11 melee (1d6+4, bite); SA breath weapon; SQ cold/paralysis/sleep immunity, low-light vision, darkvision (60 ft.); AL CE; SV Fort +13, Ref +2, Will +3; Str 26, Dex 10, Con 21, Int 10, Wis 13, Cha 10.

Skills: Climb +12, Jump +12, Listen +6, Spot +6. *Feats:* Alertness, Cleave, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (greatsword), Weapon Specialization (greatsword)

Breath Weapon (Su): 1/day, cone of cold, 6d8 damage, Reflex Save half (DC 16).

Possessions: +2 greatsword, +2 banded mail, 20 gp.

Tactics: Assuming that the PCs are in a civilized area when the Covenant is ready to attack, Kelarra handles the information gathering (as it is easiest for her to blend in to a civilized environment). Before any actual combat begins, the spellcasters make spell preparations on themselves as follows:

* *Shay'kanna:* shield, haste, stonewood, blur, cat's grace, mirror image

* *Rashadar:* shield of faith, protection from elements, spell resistance, blur, bull's strength

* *Kelarra:* mage armor, blur, protection from arrows

The Covenant tries to stage their attack in an area that is both very public and that they know the PCs will be moving into (a favorite inn or tavern, a dungeon they know the PCs will be exploring, etc.) All of the dragons open combat with their breath weapons, preferably striking from different angles to catch the PCs in a crossfire. Once this is done, Kelarra and the white gnolls wade into combat fearlessly, while Shay'kanna and Rashadar use their area-effect destructive spells from a distance (the gnolls are fearless, and Kelarra knows that her immunity to most magic will prevent her from reaching harm). Divine spellcasters (if they can be identified) are the Covenant's first priority – if the PCs have no healing capabilities, the rest fall easily. Arcane spellcasters are the second priority,

CHAPTER EIGHT: THE GHUL LEGION

after the Covenant teams up on remaining PCs one at a time. The Covenant of the Claw does not surrender – death in battle is preferable to what Ghul Lacronus do to those that fail.

Development: If the PCs manage to defeat the Covenant of the Claw, then Ghul Lacronus is even more infuriated with the group than before. More killers and mercenaries are sure to follow – eventually, if the PCs wish to get Ghul off of their backs, they have to take the fight to him. But this detail is left for the DM to devise....

This adventure has numerous twists, turns, and possible outcomes (as well as many possible beginnings). Certainly, not everything will progress as presented here – the PCs may never go to challenge Crithian Raine, or they may decide to not only hunt him down but the entire Ghul Legion, as well. The Black Vault might never be explored (especially if the PCs take out Raine), or the Kiss of Doom may never be breached. Or, the PCs may only make an exploration of the Weapons

Vault and decide it is not wise to poke around in the Ebon Fane, only to return several levels later after the Ghul Legion has caused a great deal of damage, in which case the PCs may find themselves facing a horde of demons that have escaped from the Crimson Isle. The structure of this adventure is meant to allow and expect these many possibilities, and to provide the DM enough tools to deal with them.

Likewise, the possibilities for future adventures are many. The PCs might decide to engage on a long-time campaign to destroy the Ghul Legion, which involves numerous forays into the Underdark as they crawl, in a small military campaign, closer and closer to the Legion's headquarters. Or, the PCs may decide to go and destroy every last demon inside of the Stone of Fears, a similarly lengthy and dangerous possibility. Or perhaps the Witch King is not as dead as everyone would like to imagine he is, or there was more left behind of the dread City of Skull & Shadow than anyone dared to believed. The possibilities are in your hands.



Appendix

SPELLS

MIRROR SAW

Conjuration

Level: Sor/Wiz 5

Components: V, M

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: 0 ft.

Effect: Swordlike blade

Duration: 1 minute/level (D)

Saving Throw: None

Spell Resistance: Yes

This spell creates a jagged, 3-foot-long blade of metal that affixes itself to the back of your arm. You are proficient with this blade, and yield it as if it were a longsword. The blade does not interfere with other spells you may cast, and also carries an added protective boon.

Attacks with the mirror saw are treated as melee touch attacks. The blade inflicts 1d8 points of damage +1 point per two caster levels (maximum +10). Your Strength bonus applies to the damage, and the weapons damage bonus also applies to overcoming damage reduction. The mirror saw threatens a critical on a 19-20, and inflicts double damage with a critical.

Once per round, you may make a Reflex Saving Throw against any ray attack directed at you, even if the ray does not normally allow a Save. If successful, you strike the ray with the mirror saw and send it in another direction – you can target any creature that you can see, and the ray travels up to its maximum distance to strike this creature. If you wish, you can redirect the ray to a harmless location. You must be aware of the ray attack to utilize this function of the mirror saw.

Material Component: A piece of a broken mirror and a drop of your own blood.

WONDROUS ITEMS

BLACK SUN AMULET

This small, ebon amulet, as its namesake, resembles a burning black sun on a silver chain. The amulets were designed by the Brotherhood to afford its members some degree of immunity to the baneful effects of the evil magic that consistently suffused the Ebon Fane, but they were also specifically designed to only function inside of the Fane itself.

While worn, the wearer, if a cleric, can ignore the *unhallow* effects while turning undead in the Ebon Fane. The wearer is also granted continual darkvision to a range of 60 feet. The amulets lose all magical prop-

erties when taken anywhere outside of the Ebon Fane or the Black vault.

Moderate evocation; CL 11th; Craft Wondrous Item, *darkvision*, *hallow*; Price 55,500 gp*; Weight 1 lb.

* *Design Note:* Because of its complete lack of usefulness anywhere outside of the Ebon Fane, the Black Sun Amulet costs only ¼ the amount of gold to create as it normally would.

ARTIFACTS

BONE CROSS

This long cross is crafted from black bone. The cross was specifically designed for the purpose of torturing and killing celestials. If a creature touches the *Bone Cross*, for 1d6 hours she can ignore the DR and SR of any celestial creature. Any celestial bound to the cross also loses all SR and DR benefits, making them much easier to torture and injure.

Furthermore, the *Bone Cross* was enchanted with powerful magic that was linked to the same wards that sealed off the Ebon Fane and the Black Vault. When the Witch King's followers were captured, the lich wizardress Krylanna also managed to impart an additional enchantment – if the *Bone Cross* could acquire sufficient magical power from an outside force, it could generate enough energy to open the Kiss of Doom, the gate that led to the prison dimension of the Crimson Isle. (As the wards placed on the Kiss of Doom were also linked to the magic that sealed the Stone of Fears, the *Bone Cross* could almost effectively free all of the prisoners at once.) The *Bone Cross* essentially holds an almost completed spell that remains to be cast – any arcane spell caster that comes within proximity of the Cross may unwittingly complete the spell, for the magical draw of the Cross to do such is great.

Any arcane spell caster that comes within 10 feet of the *Bone Cross* must make a Will Save (DC 30) or be compelled to cast the spell that breaches the Kiss of Doom. This act drains 4d4 levels of memorized spells or spell slots per day, starting with the highest level spells first; if the caster in question does not have this many spells or spell-slots remaining, they suffer any excess spell levels as temporary Constitution damage. A successful Save means that the spell caster does not cast the spell, and is forever immune to the draw of the *Bone Cross* to do such.

Weight: 50 lbs.

BLOOD GRAIL

This dark cup is covered in blasphemous images of demons and humans engaged in all sorts of inhumane acts of pleasure, as well as a motif of blood, fangs and pain. The *Blood Grail* is constantly filled with blood; even if drunk or poured out, the cup replenishes its supply in 1d4 rounds.

Any living being that drinks from the cup gains the Vampire template, regardless of type – thus, it is possible to create a vampire dragon or vampire shapechanger through use of this artifact. However, the creature continues to live – he retains his Constitution score, does not change his HD to d12s, and does not gain the Undead type. The creature is not vulnerable to effects that are detrimental to undead (he cannot be turned, for example, or affected by an undead bane weapon), but he still suffers all of the weaknesses attributed specifically to vampires (vulnerability to sunlight, garlic, the need for a coffin, etc.). The *Grail* can only create 1 living vampire per day. Creatures that adopt this particular vampire template have a CR adjustment of +3 (instead of +2), but undead creatures that drink from the *Blood Grail* are not affected at all.
Weight: 2 lbs.



DARKWATER

This thick water is found in a dank, foul-smelling pool. The mere touch of this foul substance is poisonous (Fort Save DC 20, 1d6 Con/1d6 Con). Drinking it yields the same effect to living creatures, but to undead beings the water is a source of strength: any undead that drinks *Darkwater* is treated as if under the effects of a *desecrate* spell cast by a 20th level caster. Multiple drinks yield no effect until the effects of the first drink have worn off.

HUNGERSTONE

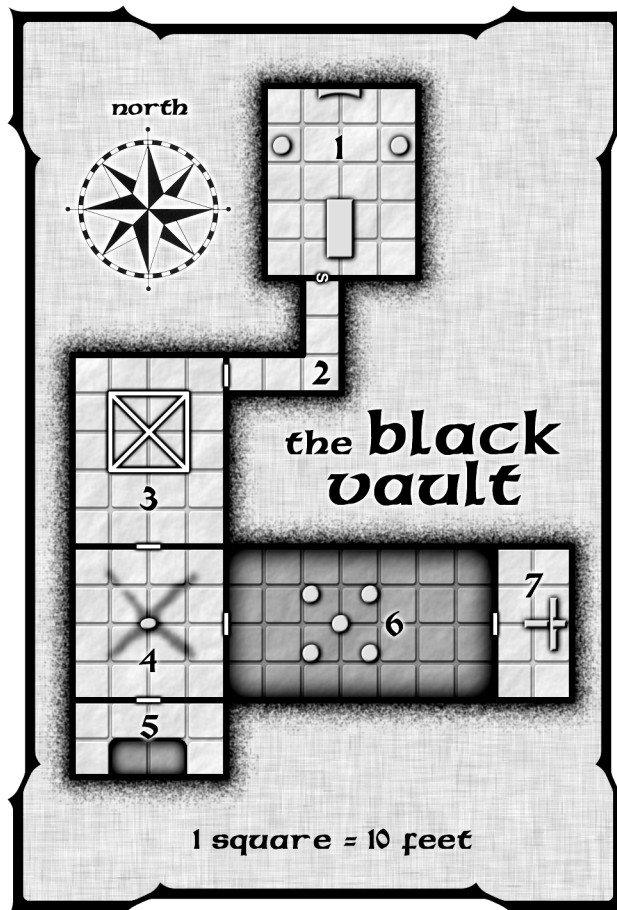
This small, round stone is deceptively dangerous, for it has the power to corrupt a creature's very blood with a frenzying rage. Any creature that bleeds upon the *Hungerstone* must make a Will Save (DC = 10 + ½ character's own level + character's Con modifier). Failure means that the Hungerstone has reached out and suffused the victim with a blood-thirsty rage. The character enters a barbaric rage (identical to the barbarian class feature), and gains +4 Strength, +4 Constitution, a +2 bonus to Will Saves and a –2 penalty to AC. The rage lasts a number of rounds equal to the character's new Con modifier +3. During this time, the character attacks the nearest targets, friend or foe, and continues to attack until they or their selected prey is dead. This effect can be dispelled. If a character bleeds on the *Hungerstone* multiple times, the effects stack (and they may suffer multiple rages). As with a normal rage, when the rage ends the character is fatigued (see the *PHB* for details.)

Weight: 6 lbs.

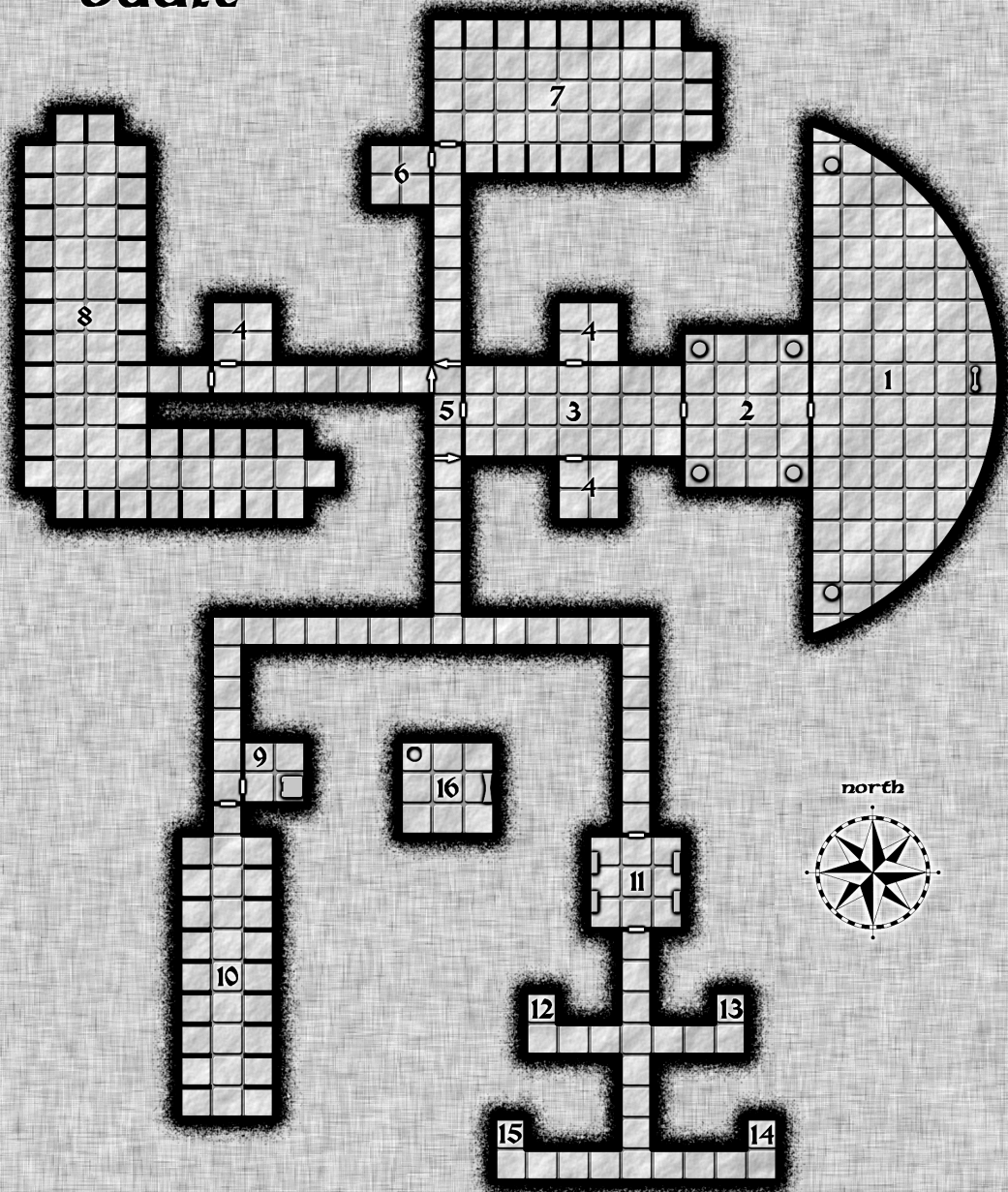
SOULFLAME

This dark fire radiates darkness, and is used to torture living beings. Any living creature that touches the *Soulflame* literally has their soul combust if they fail a Fortitude Save (DC 20). The flames burn for 2d4 rounds, and result in the loss of 1 permanent Con point per round. The victim is allowed to make a new Fort Save every round to shrug off the effects, but the Save DC increases by +1 for every round following the first. The flames can also be dispelled (caster level 20).

Worse still, the flames affect other living beings near the burning victim. Every creature that comes within 5 feet of the victim must make a Reflex Save (DC 20) or else have their soul catch alight as well, with the same results as detailed above. Undead, constructs and other non-living creatures are immune to the *Soulflame*.

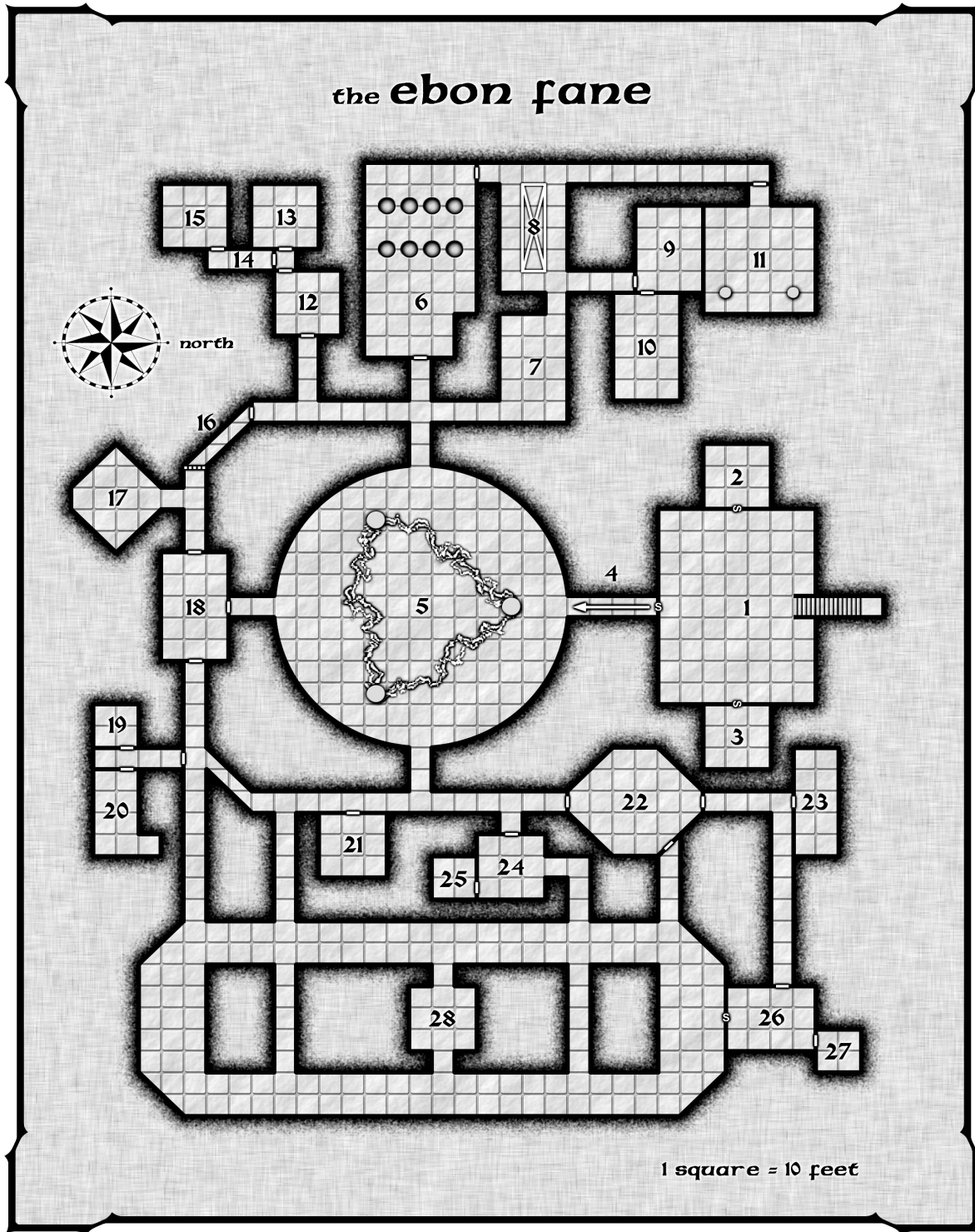


the weapons vault

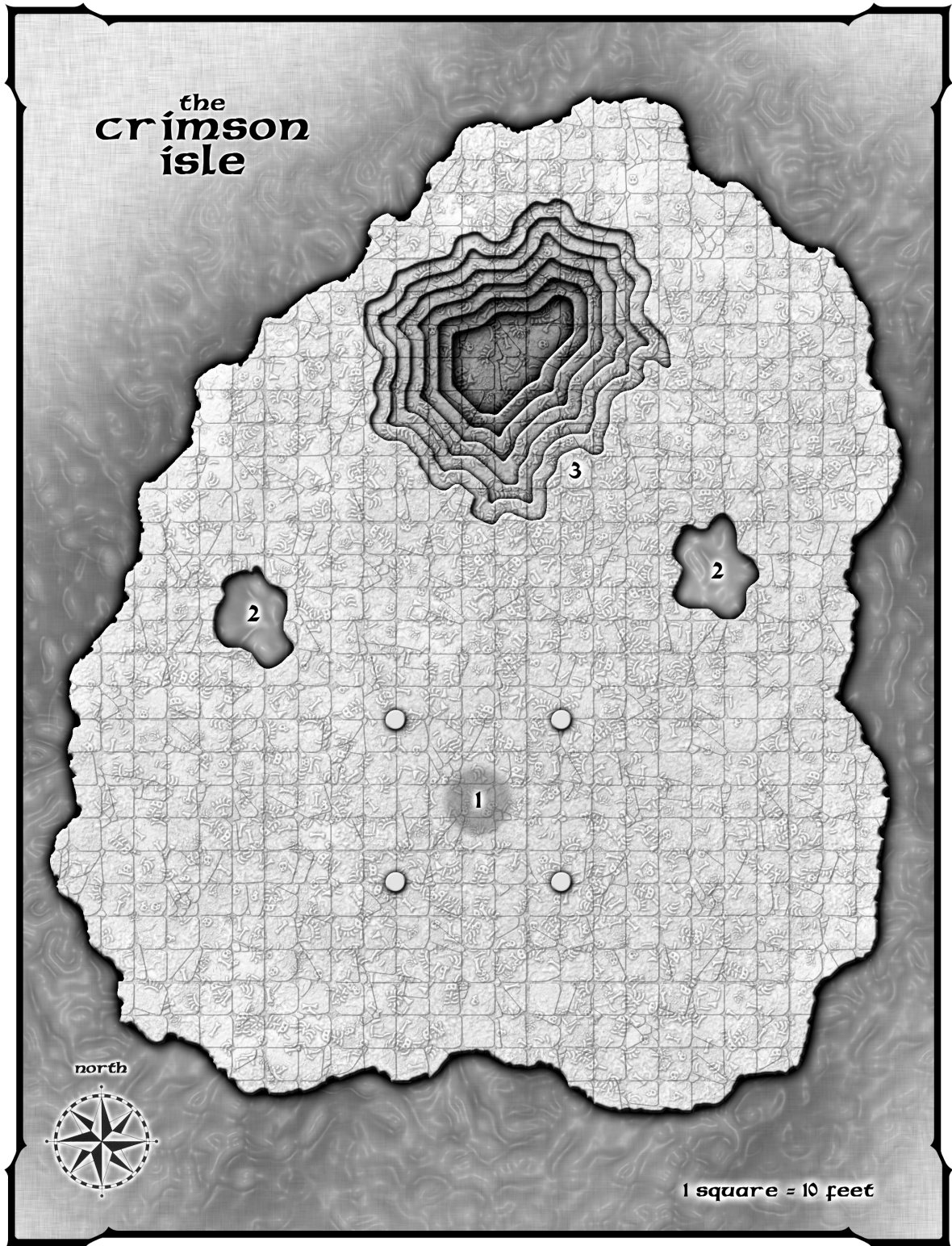


1 square = 10 feet

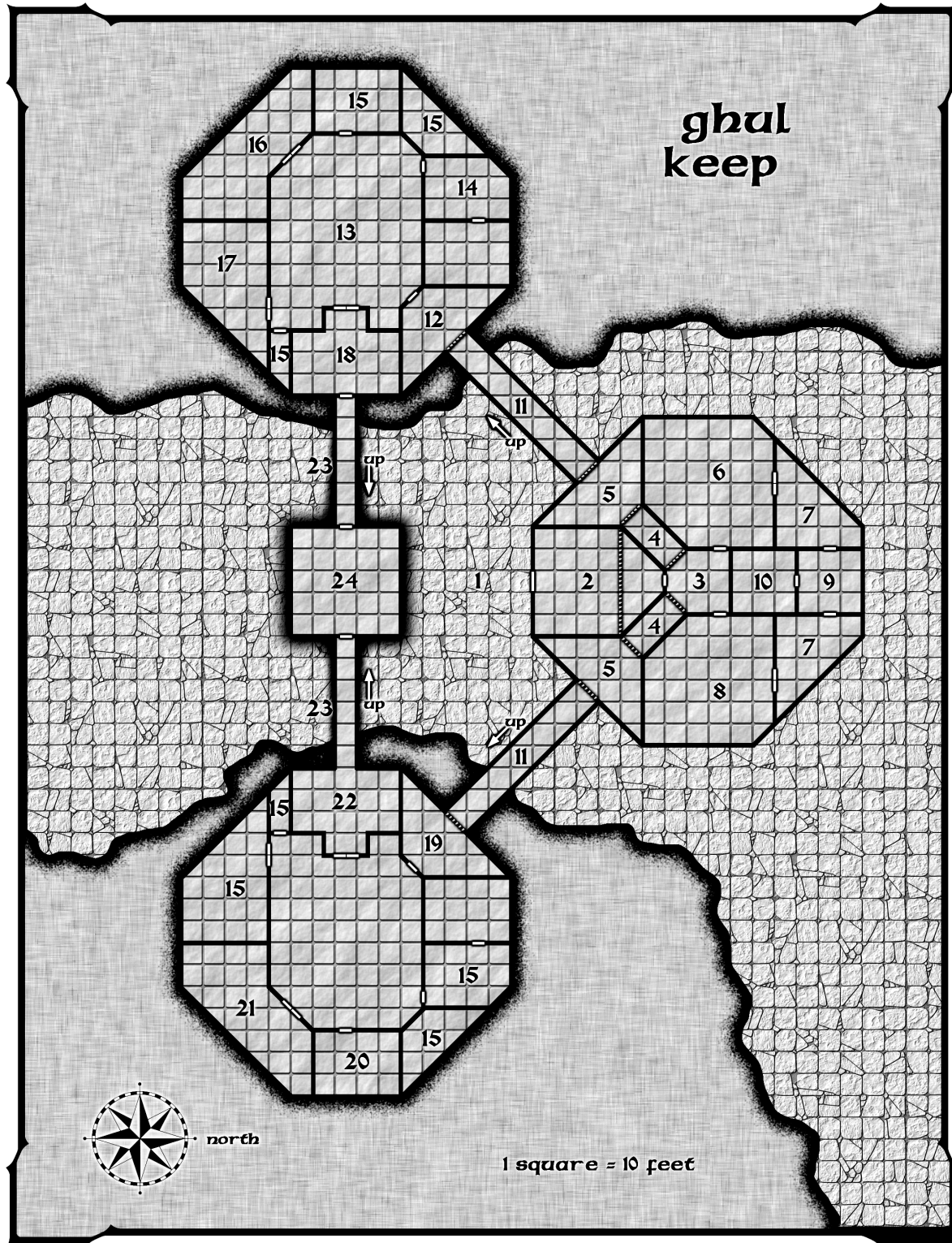
FANE OF THE WITCH KING



the
crimson
isle



FANE OF THE WITCH KING



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