

Ket4-05

# Oracle

## A One-Round D&D LIVING GREYHAWK<sup>®</sup> Ket Regional Adventure

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A reclusive sage wants the adventurers to seek out a long lost oracle, located deep under the roots of the mountains, and consult its ancient knowledge. An adventure for APLs 6-12.

Based on the original DUNGEONS & DRAGONS<sup>®</sup> rules created by E. Gary Gygax and Dave Arneson and the new DUNGEONS & DRAGONS game designed by Jonathan Tweet, Monte Cook, Skip Williams, Richard Baker, and Peter Adkison.

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## Introduction

This is an RPGA® Network scenario for the Dungeons & Dragons® game. A four-hour time block has been allocated for each round of this scenario, but the actual playing time will be closer to three and a half hours. The rest of the time is spent in preparation before game play, and scoring after the game. The following guidelines are here to help you with both the preparation and voting segment of the game. Read this page carefully so that you know and can communicate to your players the special aspects of playing an RPGA scenario.

### Preparation

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First you should print this scenario. This scenario was created to support double-sided printing, but printing it single sided will work as well. There is enough room along the inside margin to bind the adventure, if you desire.

Read this entire adventure at least once before you run your game. Be sure to familiarize yourself with any special rules, spells, or equipment presented in the adventure. It may help to highlight particularly important passages.

When you run an RPGA D&D adventure we assume that you have access to the following books: the *Player's Handbook*, the *Dungeon Master's Guide*, and the *Monster Manual*. We also assume that you have a set of dice (at least one d4, d6, d8, d10, d12, and d20), some scrap paper, a pencil, an RPGA scoring packet, and your sense of fun. It is also a good idea to have a way to track movement during combat. This can be as simple as a pad of graph paper and a pencil, as handy as a vinyl grid map and chits, or as elaborate as resin dungeon walls and miniatures.

Instruct the players either to prepare their characters now, or wait until you read the introduction, depending on the requirements of the scenario as described in the introduction.

Keep in mind that you must have at least four players (not counting the DM), for the game session to be a sanctioned RPGA event. As well, you cannot have more than six players participating in the game.

Once you are ready to play, it is handy to instruct each player to place a nametag in front of him or her. The tag should have the player's name at the bottom, and the character's name, race, and gender at the top. This makes

it easier for the players (and the DM) to keep track of who is playing which character.

The players are free to use the game rules to learn about equipment and weapons their characters are carrying. That said, you as the DM can bar the use of even core rulebooks during certain times of play. For example, the players are not free to consult the *Dungeon Master's Guide* when confronted with a trap or hazard, or the *Monster Manual* when confronted with a monster.

Some of the text in this scenario is written so that you may present it as written to the players, while other text is for your eyes only. Text for the players will be in gray boxes. It's strongly recommended that you paraphrase the player text instead of reading it aloud. Some of this text is general and must be adapted to the specific situation or to actions of the player characters.

### Reporting

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After the players have completed the scenario or the time allotted to run the scenario has run out, the players and DM fill out a reporting form. After the form is filled out it should be given to the senior DM.

### Living Greyhawk

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This is a LIVING GREYHAWK Adventure. As a LIVING adventure it is expected that players bring their own characters with them. If players do not have a LIVING GREYHAWK character generated, get a copy of the current LIVING GREYHAWK character generation guidelines, and a character sheet from your convention coordinator or the RPGA Web site, and then have any players without a character create one. Once all players have a LIVING GREYHAWK character, play can begin.

Along with the other materials that you are assumed to have in order to run a D&D game, it is also recommended that you have a copy of the *LIVING GREYHAWK Gazetteer*.

### Living Greyhawk Levels of Play

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Because players bring their own characters to LIVING GREYHAWK games, this adventure's challenges are proportioned to the average character level of the PCs participating in the adventure. To determine the Average Party Level (APL):

1. Determine the character level for each of the PCs participating in the adventure.

2. If PCs bring animals that have been trained for combat (most likely being war horses, dogs trained for war), other than those brought by virtue of a class ability (i.e. animal companions, familiars paladin's mounts, etc) use the sidebar chart to determine the number of levels you add to the sum above. Add each character's animals separately. A single PC may only bring four or fewer animals of this type, and animals with different CRs are added separately.
3. Sum the results of 1 and 2, and divide by the number of characters playing in the adventure. Round to the nearest whole number.
4. If you are running a table of six PCs, add one to that average.

By following these four steps, you will have determined the APL. Throughout this adventure, APLs categorize the level of challenge the PCs will face. APLs are given in even-numbered increments. If the APL of your group falls on an odd number, ask them before the adventure begins whether they would like to play a harder or easier adventure. Based on their choice, use either the higher or the lower adjacent APL.

APL also affects the amount of experience you may gain at the end of the adventure. If your character is three character levels or more either higher or lower than the APL this adventure is being played at, that character will receive only half of the experience points awarded for the adventure. This simulates the face that either your character was not as challenged as normal, or relied on help by higher-level characters to reach the objectives.

Note: LIVING GREYHAWK adventures are designed for APL 2 and higher. Four or sometimes even five 1<sup>st</sup>-level characters may find difficulty with the challenges in a LIVING GREYHAWK adventure. If your group is APL 1 there are three things that you can do to help even the score.

5. Attempt to create a table of six 1<sup>st</sup>-level characters, or try to enlist higher-level characters to play at that table.
6. Advise characters to buy riding dogs to help protect them, and fight for them. All riding dogs are considered trained to attack. PCs who want their dogs to attack must succeed at a Handle Animal or Charisma check (DC 10). Failure indicates that the animal will not attack that round. This is a free action (spoken command) that may be attempted each round. If an animal

loses half or more hp in a single round it flees, unless another check is successful.

	Mundane Animals Effect on APL	# of Animals			
		1	2	3	4
CR of Animal	1/4 & 1/6	0	0	0	1
	1/3 & 1/2	0	0	1	1
	1	1	1	2	3
	2	2	3	4	5
	3	3	4	5	6
	4	4	6	7	8
	5	5	7	8	9
	6	6	8	9	10
	7	7	9	10	11

## Time Units and Upkeep

This is a standard one-round Regional adventure, set in Ket. Characters native to Ket pay one Time Unit per round, all others pay two Time Units per round. Adventurer's Standard Upkeep costs 12gp per Time Unit. Rich Upkeep costs 50gp per Time Unit. Luxury Upkeep costs 100gp per Time Unit.

## Adventure Background

### Ancient History and a Hidden Cabal.

This story, and the two that follow it, rest on the premise that some ancient, powerful, and hostile prehistoric beings still exist in the world, lingering on aeons after the majority of their kind have vanished. Although these beings declined before civilization arose, there was still some interaction between them and the early humanoid races, who saw traces of their dwellings. These sites were revered and feared by the ignorant people of the time, and fanatical cults sprang up around them, especially those sites that were still occupied by the last few of the great races.

The first cults died out as the last of the prehistoric beings became dormant, or otherwise withdrew from this world, and the cults' traditions and knowledge faded. However, from time to time one of the ancient beings would become active for a period, and new cults would spring up around it. This cycle of forgetting and

re-emergence has happened many times. Only the faintest fragments of knowledge survive from one cycle to the next, to tantalize students of old lore with hints of ancient power.

Seventy five years ago the hints were seen and recognized by a group of learned, amoral, and ambitious men, who call themselves the Black Cabal. They have managed to gather enough evidence to predict the upcoming re-emergence of one of these ancient inimical beings. Seeking to partake of its power, they composed a plan which would see them present at the beast's awakening, where they would take the role of its agents, priests, and worshippers. Having thus demonstrated their devotion to the ancients, they believed the creature would surely cast down existing powers, reward the cabal with positions of authority, elevate them above other men, and place them at the helm of nations. (Or so they reasoned...)

Unfortunately, the members of the cabal were unable to determine the precise location and date of the re-emergence. Their best estimate only gave them a decade-long period of greatest probability, along with a location that was somewhere "in the skirts of the mountains that divide east from west". Accordingly, the cabal undertook the long and painstaking process of researching the re-emergence, while placing great emphasis on secrecy and stealth. Their plans would be utterly ruined if they were exposed to good aligned forces, so the cabal dispersed its members, limited contact between them, and conducted its business with utmost discretion. Each step was made at a snail's pace, and every eye was on security.

### **Research in Lopolla.**

Radic Ránladsson grew up in the City of Greyhawk, where he learned the trade of a scholar, examining the history and geography of ancient lands, before he undertook the study of wizardry as a diviner. His new studies exposed him to fascinating mysteries of the ancient arcanum, and he soon became deeply involved in the scholarly quest for pieces of lost lore. His interest was noted by the Black Cabal, who recruited him into their organization. They set him the task of digging deeply into the most obscure documents and records, to find new sources of information about the re-emergence of the prehistoric beings.

Six years ago Radic moved to Lopolla, in the hope that the city's position as a crossroads between east and west would have brought useful information to rest in its libraries and archives. He set himself up as a minor bookseller, joined the Archons, and began quietly and

discretely gathering information. His gamble was successful, and he found several fragmentary documents alluding to a strange oracle buried deep under the Yatil mountains to the north. Although the evidence was incomplete, the surviving records suggested that the Oracle specialized in answering arcane questions, and hinted that the Oracle was only used by the least savory wizards of the time. The records also mentioned that the Oracle demanded payment, in the form of one wise living mind, for each question asked of it. Unfortunately, the most recent mention of the Oracle was in a document that is over a thousand years old, and no documents mentioned what manner of being or object the Oracle was, or the setting or structure in which it was situated.

Radic was pleased with his find, and presented it to the Black Cabal as a potential source of valuable information. The cabal concurred. The predicted time of re-emergence was nearly upon them, and they still didn't have the vital information they needed. Therefore, the cabal ordered Radic to press ahead aggressively with his investigation, abandoning stealth if necessary, and directed him to ask the Oracle about the re-emergence of the ancient beings.

### **Towards the Oracle.**

Following the meeting Radic sent prospectors and miners into the mountains, ostensibly to seek out an old silver lode which had been abandoned prematurely, but actually to find the entrance to the Oracle's tunnel. Three months ago a prospector returned with word of a series of abandoned tunnels that matched Radic's description. Radic immediately dispatched a small mining crew to the site, to clear out the tunnels and investigate. One month ago the crew reported that the tunnels were open again, and that they had found evidence of strange constructions inside, including a shaft leading down into the mountain.

Now Radic has summoned the PCs to take the final step in the investigation. He wants them to travel into the tunnels, overcoming any difficulties along the way, and to ask questions of the oracle. He does not intend to warn the PCs about the oracle's price: he intends them to pay it with their lives. He will secretly scry on them, and learn the oracle's answers before they die. If his plan works, the death of the adventurers will ensure that the cabal's secret is kept safe, but the betrayal will make him a hunted man should any of the PCs survive. Accordingly, he is prepared to flee the city and rejoin the cabal as soon as he scrys the answers.

## The Unknown.

Although Radic has gathered an impressive amount of information, given his limited sources, there are still several things he is not aware of.

The Oracle itself is a unique undead abomination which resembles an aboleth. Like aboleths, the Oracle retains its ancestor's memories, but these alone are not enough to give it its vast knowledge. It has also imprisoned the spirits of a large number of learned and experienced people, who were sacrificed to it as payment, and it draws on their pooled knowledge to answer questions. This repugnant practice led to several attempts to destroy the Oracle and free the imprisoned spirits. None succeeded, but the last attack managed to destroy the Oracle's servants, topple its shrine, and wound the Oracle itself, before being defeated. Parts of the access tunnels were collapsed in the fighting, and the Oracle hid to nurse its wounds. Most people assumed that the Oracle had been destroyed, but the Invoked Devastation and the Rain of Colourless Fire ruined the East before any subsequent expedition could be mounted to confirm the situation. In the aftermath of the twin catastrophes, the survivors and their neighbors had far more immediate concerns to deal with, and the Oracle lay lost and forgotten in the turbulent times that followed.

The Oracle's lair is on a bare island in a large subterranean lake, contained in a chamber deep under the mountains. The chamber is accessed by a long vertical shaft that leads down from the mine tunnels above. A potent dimensional barrier surrounds the chamber, trapping the spirits that give the Oracle its knowledge, and defending the Oracle from spying and unexpected attack by teleportation. The only way through the barrier is via the shaft, which once had several defense mechanisms of its own. The PCs will have to fight their way through the remaining defenses in order to reach the Oracle.

### Questions or Comments?

If you have any questions, comments, suggestions, or other feedback about this adventure, you can contact the author at [jaremkow@sympatico.ca](mailto:jaremkow@sympatico.ca).

## Adventure Summary

**Introduction:** The PCs are contacted by Radic, and asked to meet him at his shop. The PCs have a short time to make preparations before the meeting.

**Encounter 1: Radic the Sage:** The PCs meet with Radic, and learn what he wants them to do. Some PCs will take this at face value and leave for the mountains immediately. PCs who investigate can learn that Radic is evil, and take steps to capture him. If that happens the Archons will become involved, and ask the PCs to investigate the Oracle on their behalf.

**Encounter 2: Into the Mountain:** The PCs journey to the mountains, where they meet Radic's mining crew. The miners show the PCs evidence that this is not really a mine, and take them to the strange, frightening shaft they found, which leads straight downwards into the mountain.

**Encounter 3: Descending Into the Shaft:** The PCs begin the descent into the eerie shaft, either using a rope-lift built by the miners, or their own magical abilities.

**Encounter 4: The Fight in the Shaft:** The PCs fight past the spirits that guard the shaft, and continue downwards.

**Encounter 5: The Fixed Defenses:** The PCs force their way through obstacles in the shaft, and push onward to the cavern below.

**Encounter 6: The Cavern:** The PCs emerge from the shaft and arrive on a rocky island in the middle of a subterranean lake. There they see the trapped souls that are the source of the Oracle's knowledge.

**Encounter 7: The Oracle:** The Oracle arrives shortly thereafter, answers the questions brought by the PCs, and demands their spirits as payment. The PCs naturally refuse, and a great battle ensues.

**Aftermath:** The PCs are gifted with knowledge by the trapped souls, who are now freed of the Oracle, and return home with the hard-won answers to Radic's questions.

## Introduction

Before play begins the players should prepare spell lists, and indicate whether they have any special preparations to make. Their PCs are assumed to be at home, in the households of friends and relatives, or, most likely, in the inns and hostels that are frequented by the adventuring community. Remind the PCs that in Lopolla, nobody except nobility, the mullahs, and officials (Threshers, etc.) are permitted to carry weapons. You can assume that the PCs have found a safe place to stow their gear while they are not carrying it.

Once everything is ready, the adventure begins at four and a half hours after noon on a late fall day in Lopolla...

*Late fall days can be the most beautiful of all, in Lopolla, but when the autumn winds drive storm clouds through the gap in the mountains, and wet rain-soaked leaves are driven through the streets, life can be truly miserable. Most sensible folk find business to conduct indoors, on days like this, where the chill rain and the blustering winds can't reach them.*

*Alas, for the poor messenger at your door, whose business forbids him any shelter! His cloak is sodden, his boots are soaked through, and the wind must have carried off his hat long ago. His short dark hair is plastered to his head like a skull-cap, and water drips with pitiful regularity from his chin and nose. He proffers a rain-spattered scroll tube of waxed leather, and, with a mournful sniffle, turns and trudges sadly off into the storm.*

The scroll tube, as might be expected, contains the invitation to adventure. All of the PCs receive one, and all of the messages are identical. The tube and note are mundane in all respects. The writing is in a clear open hand, suggestive of a trained scribe, but there are no other idiosyncrasies or identifiable features upon the message.

*The scroll tube has withstood the weather well, and the parchment inside is still dry. Its message is short and to the point.*

**I WISH TO HIRE ADVENTURERS FOR A JOURNEY. DISCRETION IS ESSENTIAL. MEET AT DUSK AT MY SHOP ON THE STREET OF CARPENTERS.**

#### **RADIC RANLADSSON, BOOKSELLER.**

Dusk is a little under two hours away, although the storm-clouds overhead mean the skies will be fully dark before then. The PCs may use that time to make further preparations, such as casting spells, purchasing equipment, or attempting to find out more about the person who is hiring them. Bear in mind that the storm and the relatively late hour of the day mean that few businesses are open, and acquiring specialty items may be difficult.

#### **Initial Inquiries.**

If the PCs wish, they can make some initial inquiries to find out more about Radic. There isn't much time to

gather information before dusk, so the PC's won't learn much at this stage of the game.

Bardic Knowledge: Although Radic has kept a low profile to date, and is not one of the truly notable people in town, his business in books sometimes piques a bard's interest. A successful check [DC 10] reveals that Radic is a known bookseller, but certainly not one of the better ones. A successful check at [DC 20] reveals that he tends to sell books on history, and magical and natural philosophy, but his stock is considered low grade.

Knowledge (Local, VTF): A successful check [DC 15] reveals that Radic is indeed a bookseller, and confirms the location of his shop. A successful check [DC 20] reveals that he only set up shop five or six years ago, and was not in town before that point.

Knowledge (Local, VTF) – Archons: If any of the PCs are members of the Archons they may make a further check [DC 20] (or an untrained Intelligence check if they do not have the Knowledge skill) to remember that Radic became a member of the Archons three or four years ago, as a diviner. He does not participate extensively, but spends time quietly in the libraries.

Divination: Scrying spells directed against Radic will be detected by his magical defenses (see the section on "Radic's Magical Precautions" below), and quickly shut down. Other predictive divinations function normally, although they won't provide much information at this point, since the PCs don't know what to ask.

Gather Information: Since the meeting with Radic is less than 2 hours away, there is no time to use this skill, which takes 1d4+1 hours.

Little else can be learned in the short time before the scheduled meeting.

## **Encounter 1: Radic the Sage.**

Running the interaction between the PCs and Radic is one of the trickiest parts of the adventure. Normally, when the PCs meet their "boss" at the beginning of a scenario, the players are inclined to take what is said at face value, in order to get to the actual adventure as quickly as possible, and minimize the amount of precious playing time and in-game resources spent on the introduction.

In this case, however, the "boss" is one of the enemy, and the players need a fair chance to realize this. Your

goal, as DM, is to present a plausible job offer from a villain who is doing his best to seem like a good person, at the same time as you plant seeds of doubt, due to inadequacies in his performance.

Radic's cover has several weak points which you can use to plant suspicions:

- He cannot reveal the questions he wants to ask the Oracle, and he doesn't really have a good reason why.
- He insists upon secrecy, and only for personal reasons, which is suspicious in itself.
- He takes careful precautions, which suggest he's protecting himself from something.
- He is a foreign immigrant, with no known background, and no trusted local references.
- He has no adequate explanation for his source of funds to hire miners and an adventuring party
- His manner is, superficially, friendly and cordial, but there's something cruel and fanatical under the surface.

Putting all this into play without making it patently obvious is not easy!

The players do not need to realize what is going on in order to have an enjoyable time, and the story works whether or not the PCs recognize the deception. (The adventure becomes quite dramatic indeed, when the betrayal is discovered hundreds of feet underground in the lair of the beast!) But the PCs should not be railroaded into the adventure without any chance to detect the deception, and influence their own fate.

### **Radic Ranladsson.**

Radic is a 47 year old human male, originally from the City of Greyhawk, who now resides in Lopolla. He is of medium height (5'7") and wiry build. His pale gray eyes are set in a lined angular face, with a prominent nose, and a sparse beard on the point of his chin. What remains of his dark blonde hair is cut short, and shot with gray. His features and complexion are not Baklunish, and it is evident that he traces his ancestry to Oeridian roots. His statistics are described in Appendix 1.

Radic is not a friendly and outgoing person by nature. His personality tends to be secretive, and his natural inclination is to treat other people with suspicion, and deal with them briefly, formally, and, indeed, in an almost hostile fashion. However, this has not helped

him attain his goals of information gathering, and over the years he has trained himself to appear more friendly, approachable, and persuasive, in order to get the information he needs from people he would otherwise ignore. (In game terms, this is represented by his selection of feats such as Charlatan, Negotiator, Persuasive, and Trustworthy, and by skill points spent on Bluff, Diplomacy, and Gather Information.) This artificial public personality allows him to do reasonably well in interpersonal relationships, when he concentrates on it, but not as well as someone like a bard with a true gift for the interpersonal arts.

### **Radic's Magical Precautions.**

Radic is well aware that he is in great danger if the PCs (or other interested parties) manage to see through his deception, and he has taken several magical precautions to reduce the chance of being exposed by magical spying.

His first action in every day is to cast *detect scrying*, which lasts 24 hours, and will alert him to any attempts to scry upon him. Radic has a chance to trace the scrying back to the source and determine who is watching him. He will immediately use *dispel magic* to remove any magical sensor which is being used to observe him.

Once he has had the messages delivered to the PCs, Radic casts a pair of *alarm* spells (mental ping) on the front and back of his premises. He follows this with *misdirection* and *nondetection*, both of which last 7 hours. The *nondetection* spell prevents any detection spells (*detect evil*, *detect thoughts*, *detect magic*, etc.) and most scrying spells from functioning on him, unless the PC succeeds at a caster level check [DC 22]. If the PC manages to succeed, and their spell is one of those that reveals auras (*detect evil*, *detect magic*, *discern lies*, etc.) they will have to make a further Will save [DC 14], or the *misdirection* spell will reveal the aura of the floorboards instead. The floorboards are neutral, non-magical, and not lying. (It is best if you can resolve these rolls secretly and discretely, so as not to alert the players unless the PCs actually notice something.)

When the PCs arrive for the meeting, Radic casts *see invisibility* (70 min), *tongues* (70 min), *protection from law* (7 min), and *detect magic* (max 7 min) before going to the door. He scrutinizes the party through the grating in the door, looking for any hidden surprises, and only then will he admit them to his shop.

These precautions consume most of the Radic's spell slots, and leave little for offense or defense. Nonetheless, he feels this is his best strategy since he has very few combat spells to begin with, and can easily be overwhelmed by a party of five or six determined adventurers, even if he stands and fights.

### **Radic's Shop.**

Radic's shop is a rather small facility, set up in the ground floor of a two story brick and plaster dwelling in one of the mid-grade commercial areas of Lopolla. The shop is in a cul-de-sac, rather than a well-trafficked route, and its appearance is somewhat shabby. The basic layout of Radic's shop, and the surrounding buildings, is shown on **Map #1**.

**Street plan:** Radic's building is located near the end of a cul-de sac, and is flanked by a carpenter's workshop on one side, and the rear of a rich merchant's warehouse on the other. The building has a nearly flat tiled roof, and two chimneys. There are no alleys on either side of his premises, since the building butts up against the adjacent structures. The front door is made of sturdy timber with iron strapping, and is currently barred (DC 25 break, hardness 6, hp 30). There is a back door of similar make on the rear of the building, exiting into a narrow alley running east and west behind the shop.

**Room #1: The Public Shop.** This low ceilinged (7'), cramped, and stuffy room contains the merchandise Radic keeps for sale. A quick glance shows that it's not kept particularly clean or organised. Radic uses the bookshop as an explanation for his presence in Lopolla, rather than as a true means to support himself, since it provides an excuse to explore library shelves, and rifle through the stock of other book-traders.

The works here are of limited value, and are stored haphazardly on a variety of cheap mismatched wooden shelves. A quick glance shows a variety of traditional works by a variety of unremarkable authors, none of which have any great value. Blank notebooks, unbound paper and parchment, and various writing supplies make up the rest of the wares.

The room has a single window, which is shuttered and locked, and a single door leading into the next room. There is a plain bronze lamp standing on a desk in one corner of the room, full, but unlit, and the room is currently quite dark.

**Room #2: Radic's Library.** This low (7') room contains the bulk of Radic's research material, which is spread in bewildering confusion across a range of shelves and

a series of tables, stacked on the floor, and piled where it's stable. The books are in all shapes, sizes, and states of repair; small and thick, or large and thin; bound with leather, or bound with string; feathered with bookmarks, or lying open to the air. His work is lying everywhere, and the candles' soot stains on the ceiling prove he finds it difficult to remove himself from his work, no matter how late he burns the midnight oil.

Radic's personal library includes works on a bewildering variety of subjects; old histories of the lands that became Ket and surrounding countries; books of creation from no less than seventeen different religions; texts that are translations of translations of summaries of long lost studies; tomes on divinations; tomes on spells of opening and summoning; obsolete atlases, and ancient gazetteers; wildly speculative accounts of religions, pantheons, and rites of minor tribes; six different calendrical systems; treatises on natural and magical philosophy (many of them now considered obsolete, and inaccurate); tables of astronomical observations; and more beside. Some of the books have extensive marginalia, and others are in nearly pristine condition. While some are authoritative titles, many are commonly acknowledged to be inaccurate, or even almost fictional.

Radic also has an extensive collection of primary source documents, like old diaries, bundles of letters, centuries-old ledgers of defunct trading companies, and collections of papers, receipts, and vouchers from long-forgotten minor noble houses that once had an interest in this region.

Other than the books, the room also contains a small fireplace, the wooden stair leading up to the second floor, and a single sturdy wooden door, which is actually carefully unlocked and unlatched, and leads out to the back alley. There is also a single window, currently shuttered and locked (DC 20 break, hardness 5, hp 12). Radic has cleared his desk, pulled four extra chairs into the room, spread a map of Ket on a low table in front of the chairs, and placed four lit triple-wicked lamps around the room to provide a bit of light for his visitors.

**Room #3: The Kitchen.** The stair leads up to Radic's kitchen, which contains all the gear one would expect for its task. There is a modest brick stove and hearth, a table for preparing food, cabinets to store cutlery and utensils, and a mundane selection of foodstuffs. The room is in mild domestic disarray, but is otherwise unremarkable. There are two shuttered windows (barred) in the back wall, and a single door leading to the bedchamber.



**Room #4: Radic's Bedchamber.** Again, there is nothing remarkable in this chamber, which is wholly utilitarian. It contains a bed, some clothes presses, a worn rug, and a comfortable chair, as well as typical ablutionary amenities (chamber pot et. al.) and a small fireplace. A single window (shuttered and locked) looks onto the street, and another door leads into the next room.

**Room #5: Scrying Chamber and Study.** This was once another bedchamber, but Radic uses it as his study and scrying chamber, and has nailed the shuttered window closed for additional security. A locked iron-bound lead-lined casket, carefully stowed inside a locked desk drawer, contains Radic's *crystal ball*. A large well-made scrying mirror hangs on one wall, and a variety of augury devices, astrological charts, and numerological tables are neatly stowed on a shelf beside it.

Other shelves, on either side of Radic's desk, contain some of the books he has been using lately, and his collected notes. Radic has bound his research notes into eight thick books, and has five more boxes of loose notes awaiting similar treatment. The notes are written in draconic, in a very complex, cryptic, and abbreviated fashion, with each entry heavily cross-referenced with other entries and texts. The notes seem to cover numerous tiny, almost trivial, mundane details, of minor people and insignificant events, spread over a period of at least 1500 years. It would be a multi-week full-time project to make sense of Radic's researches, and derive any conclusions from them.

Radic has not written any of his conclusions down in a convenient document that gloats about his discoveries. Instead, he has committed all of them to memory. No matter how long the PCs search, they will not find any revelations in the short time they have available in this adventure.

### The Meeting Itself.

Now that you're familiar with Radic's situation, let's move on to the meeting. PCs who show up early will find a "closed" sign on the wall, and Radic will not respond to any knocks at the door before the proper time.

*The stormy autumn winds continue to blow your cloaks around you, but the cold rain has mostly stopped by the time you find the narrow two-story shop of Radic Ranladsson. The plain brick building stands near the far end of a cul-de-sac, jammed between the closed and shuttered front of a*

*carpenter's workshop, and the blank back wall of a rich man's warehouse.*

*A single lit lantern hangs over the sturdy door of Radic's shop, swinging erratically in the blustering wind, and illuminating wet leaves as they are driven in aimless circles across the slick wet pavement at the end of the alley. A peeling wooden sign fastened to the bare wall under the lamp reads: "Radic Ranladsson: Books".*

The door to Radic's shop is made of sturdy timber with iron strapping, and is currently barred. (DC 25 break, hardness 6, hp 30.) When the PCs announce themselves, Radic casts his spells, opens a small grating in the door, and examines the PCs through it, looking for signs of magic or hidden assailants.

*After a minute's wait a narrow hatch slides open in the center of the door, revealing a wrought iron grating, and two cold gray eyes that examine you through the gaps between the bars.*

*"Name yourselves, please" says the owner of the eyes, watching you carefully.*

Assuming the PCs do so, and there are no hidden surprises, Radic continues.

*"Thank you for coming," says the man behind the door. "Before I admit you to my shop, I must ask you all to refrain from the use of magic, or from drawing any weapons, while inside. I'm unaccustomed to violence, and such things make me nervous." The emotionless gray eyes gauge your reaction. "Can we agree on this?"*

This insistence on no weapons, in spite of Lopolla's existing no weapons policy, may raise an eyebrow or two. If Radic has noted any spells in operation on the PCs, and judges them to be divinatory in nature, he will ask them to be turned off.

*"I must also ask you to allow your divinations to lapse. I value my privacy as a matter of principle, and I have trade secrets to protect, you understand."*

He will also object to enchantments and illusions, and certainly won't open up if he notices invisible people lurking around. Otherwise, he will thank the PCs for humoring his requests, and unbar and unbolt the door to admit them.

*The heavy door swings a third of the way open, and a slender stoop-shouldered man of medium height steps into the gap. He looks up and down the street carefully, while the gusts of wind tug at his simple gray robe, and the yellow light of the swaying*

*lantern casts moving shadows on his lean angular face.*

*"I am Radic Ranladsson," he says, turning back to you and tugging thoughtfully on the sparse blonde beard on the point of his chin. He nods, as if coming to a decision, and smiles for the first time.*

*"Please, come in and be welcome in my shop."*

Radic keeps the door held mostly shut, and watches the opening carefully as the PCs come in. This direct observation of an illuminated area without cover makes hide checks impossible, unless bluffs are made or other means are employed.

Once everyone is inside, he carefully re-locks and re-bars the door, and escorts the PCs into his library in the back room.

*"Please, follow me," says Radic, leading you through the small unlit shop, with its dimly visible dusty shelves of books, and into a warm candlelit room filled with an astonishing chaos of written material.*

*"This is my library," he says, waving his hand towards the bewildering confusion of books, tomes, and ledgers, which is leavened with bundles of letters, sheaves of loose documents, and occasional scrolls. The material is stowed on shelves, piled on tables, and stacked on the floor, wherever it's stable. Inkwells and fresh parchment rest on the single desk, and the lamps' soot stains on the low ceiling prove that Radic finds it difficult to remove himself from his work, no matter how late he burns the midnight oil.*

*"You may sit there, if you wish," he continues, gesturing to a group of four [or five or six] mismatched chairs placed around a single low table, which contains a map of Ket. "I think the map may be helpful in a few minutes."*

Once the PCs have seated themselves, Radic takes a position standing behind his desk. (This gives him a direct line of escape to the unlatched door, should he need it, while putting at least one obstacle between the PCs and himself.) He then launches into his pitch.

*"I will now tell you about the journey I wish you to make," says Radic, picking up a sheet of jotted notes from his desk.*

*"I am not from Ket," he continues, smiling briefly as he gestures at his pale face, thinning blonde hair, and cold gray eyes. "I was actually born in the City of Greyhawk. But I am a historian, and I am studying the history of what is now called Ket, and that is why I have come here."*

*"My name isn't well known yet. But it will be. I will bring to light things from the past that are truly amazing. I will be the one to write the learned tomes," he says, pale eyes gleaming, "and when my work is complete, my learned colleagues will be unanimous in their praise."*

*"But old books and papers aren't enough for that. I need a way to ask questions that books can't answer. And," he says, tapping the paper in his hand, "I think I've found a way to do it. I'm prepared to tell you how, and hire you to help me, but you must swear to complete and absolute secrecy until my work is published for the world to see."*

Radic will allow them to attach caveats and conditions if they wish ("I'll have to talk if it's evil / dangerous / immoral. etc."), since he doesn't expect them to survive to talk about it anyway. If they refuse categorically, he'll ask them all to leave – end of adventure. Assuming the PCs eventually agree, he'll continue.

*"Did you know there was once an oracle in what is now Ket?"*

*"No?"*

*"Well," he shrugs, "neither did I. But I found a hint in a book here, and a clue in a letter there, and now I think that there once was an oracle in Ket, and it somehow ceased working, or got forgotten around the time of the twin catastrophes." [The Invoked Devastation, and The Rain of Colorless Fire.]*

*"Now, just imagine," Radic says eagerly, "if it still works! I've found references to it that are hundreds of years apart. That means the oracle lasted a long time back then. And that means it might still be able to answer questions now. And that," he says, his voice rising strongly, "means knowledge and insight that nobody else has, if only I have the courage to reach for it."*

*"So I sent prospectors into the mountains, to look where my research said it should be, and they found old tunnels in the right places. So I sent a mining crew, and they cleaned out the tunnels, and found ancient passages going further."*

*"And now," he nods, "I want to send you, to see if the oracle is still there, in its ancient passages, and ask it my questions about things that once were."*

With that, Radic folds his arms in smug satisfaction, awaiting the questions that are sure to follow. In particular, he expects to be asked about the questions he wants the PCs to ask the Oracle.

*"I have them here," says Radic, reaching into his desk and removing an elaborately sealed copper scroll tube. "They are to be kept completely confidential, at all times. I will not have any of my colleagues finding out the direction of my researches before I am ready. Nobody will beat me to the punch! Nobody will publish before me!"*

*"In fact, I don't want you to open the tube at all, unless you have found the oracle, and can ask it questions. I will not pay you any extra money," Radic says firmly, emphasizing his words with shakes of the scroll tube, "if you return without answers, and the seals are broken."*

In addition to the physical seals, there are also a series of *secret page* and *magic mouth* spells cast on the scroll inside the tube. If Radic opens the tube, and someone has already looked inside, a mouth will say "The questions have already been read, master." If nobody looked inside the tube, a different mouth says "The scroll is undisturbed, master." The copper scroll tube is lined with lead foil, in order to prevent detection spells from noticing the magical auras inside the tube.

Other questions that Radic can answer include:

**Q:** What is the Oracle?

**A:** He doesn't know. None of his sources describe it. (True)

**Q:** Where is the Oracle?

**A:** The ancient passages are located in the mountains on the north-west border of Ket. Radic describes the general region of the map, and will mark it exactly if the PCs accept the undertaking.

**Q:** Who's in charge of the ancient passages now?

**A:** His mining chief is a man named Mossul. He will give the PCs signet rings that Mossul will recognize, to prove who they are.

**Q:** Why does he need adventurers to simply ask questions? Can't Mossul do it?

**A:** Radic doesn't know if the ancient passages are dangerous or not, and wants to make sure the expedition is successful (true) without risking noncombatants like Mossul and his men (false).

**Q:** What are the ancient passages like?

**A:** He thinks they're probably like mining tunnels, but he doesn't know because he won't send the men in. (False. He actually knows it's a sheer shaft straight down, and the miners refuse to descend.)

**Q:** Is there anything dangerous in the tunnels?

**A:** Not that they've seen yet. (True)

**Q:** How much will he pay?

**A:** Radic will pay each person 150 gp in advance at APL 6, 200 gp at APL 8, 250 gp at APL 10, and 300 gp at APL 12. He promises to pay the same again when they return from the Oracle with a detailed description and news of its condition, and the same yet again if they bring back the answers to his questions.

**Q:** What if the Oracle demands payment?

**A:** He'll cover the costs.

**Q:** Will he travel with them?

**A:** Certainly not! He's not suited for adventuring (true) and fears he would only hinder the party. (Somewhat true – but he really fears being found out for what he is, or being sacrificed to the Oracle.)

**Q:** How did you find us?

**A:** Your names are known, your reputation precedes you, the innkeeper said you looked like you needed work, etc. (True.)

**Q:** Could we look through your amazing library before we go?

**A:** No. Perhaps after he publishes, but not now.

Once the PCs have finished asking questions (and assuming they have accepted the mission), Radic makes sure they have the scroll tube, the signet rings (one each) to show to Mossul, their initial payment, and the marked map showing the location of the mining tunnels that lead to the Oracle.

He will then usher them out politely, but quickly, since he wants to get them away from him as quickly as possible. He will remain in Lopolla for the night, but flee the city the following morning, once the gates are open.

### **If things get hostile.**

If the PCs get suspicious, and actually act on their suspicions, then Radic is in trouble. If he has time, he will try and dissuade the PCs from doing whatever they're starting to do. ("You are *not* to cast spells in my home!", etc.) If this doesn't work, then his sole course of action is to try and get off a spell and bolt for the door.

The back door to the house is currently unlocked and unlatched, although it appears to be closed normally. A person can thus run through the doorway, bashing the door aside as they go through (rather like an overrun or bull rush), without having to stop and open the door. This costs an extra 5 feet of movement, rather than a standard action.

Radic will try and drop a *solid fog* on the party, if he has a chance, in order to block off pursuit, and then use his *invisibility* and *change self* spells to help break contact. He has no intention of entering combat, since he is fully aware that he has no hope of defeating an adventuring party.

Do not make a long drawn-out chase scene out of this. The adventure doesn't have time for that. The PCs will either catch up with him fairly quickly, or Radic will manage to round a corner and get to an intersection, where he can change course unobserved, and make his escape.

### Having Captured Radic.

If the PCs have managed to capture Radic, they have the opportunity to interrogate him, and examine his collection of research resources.

Radic will, initially, try and talk the PCs into letting him go.

***"Release me at once you fools! I am a member of the Archons, not some petty wandering wizard! How dare you treat me like this!"***

But the shouting and bluster isn't likely to last long. His tone soon changes.

***"You know you won't get away with this. If you're lucky the Threshers will heave you into the mines for kidnapping. Otherwise they'll have your heads. You won't make it out of Lopolla unless you release me now!"***

Radic will continue to maintain he's just a historian, even under Intimidation, mild abuse, and threats to call the authorities. (Make hidden die rolls, and the lie about the results if need be.) However, if the PCs read the scroll of questions, they have all the evidence they need to prove Radic's up to no good. Radic shuts up the moment this happens, and maintains a sullen silence thereafter. This is your cue to stop role-playing this encounter, and to segue into interactions with the authorities.

Once again, you don't have time to make a big event of these activities. Instead, simply find out two things. First, does the party intend to hand over Radic to the authorities? Second, and most importantly, do they intend to tell the authorities about the question scroll? If the answer is yes, then you can abbreviate the next few days in the next few minutes.

***Handing Radic over to the authorities, two cold wet nights ago, has lead you from one grim guardroom***

***to the next, across the bulk of Lopolla, giving explanation after explanation to a series of ignorant, suspicious, fanatical, zealots, whose sole purpose has to be the obstruction of any immediate effective action.***

***There's been no sign of Radic since some cold-featured expressionless Archons took him away before dawn yesterday morning, along with the copper scroll-tube of questions he asked you to carry. Now, that same tube lies on the desk before you, in front of the corpulent figure of Shahaf al Fashar, chief enforcer of the Archons. His reception chamber is warm, opulent, and welcoming, but his tiny brown eyes are cold, cruel, and merciless.***

***"Al'Akbar has favored you all," he says, in a gentle voice, "and, therefore, so shall I."***

***"Radic's questions disturb us. We wish to know the answers he sought, and we wish to know what manner of device or being this oracle may be, should it still survive."***

***"The Archons are assembling an expedition to answer these questions. As a favor to you, I will cancel this expedition, if you wish, and allow you to go in its place."***

***"Pray, grant me your answer."***

If the PCs have the temerity to ask questions, Shahaf al Fashar can give the following information.

- Radic's motives and affiliation are not for discussion at this time.
- Radic had no further information about the Oracle, save that it is down a deep shaft, and was reputed to consume souls.
- They need not try to preserve the oracle, if they judge it to be harmful.
- The PCs will be paid the same amount of money as Radic offered. (150 gp in advance at APL6, 200 gp at APL8, 250 gp at APL 10, and 300 gp at APL 12; the same again when they return from the Oracle; and the same yet again if they bring back the answers to the questions.) Note that any money they've already received from Radic has been confiscated, as criminal proceeds.

If the PCs accept (and they're unlikely to refuse), they are dismissed to get underway.

*"Your request is granted," says Shahaf al Fashar, gesturing for you to take the scroll tube. "May Al'Akbar watch over you as you leave to prepare."*

*He turns away from you, grunting with the effort of twisting his massive body, and, with a negligent flick of his fingers, opens a door for you to leave, and dims the lamps around his desk. As your feet cross the lush softness of the fine carpet near the door, the gentle heartless voice speaks out of the darkness*

*"I hope it won't be necessary to remind you that the questions you carry are to be kept... quiet..?"*

The PCs are given the necessary maps and signet rings by servants as they leave, if they do not currently have them.

### **Potential Problems.**

In order for the storyline to function effectively, the PCs either need 1) the map and the questions, or 2) Radic himself.

If Radic got away with the documentation, your best course of action is to direct the PCs towards some of Radic's recent notes, kept in his locked desk drawer, which indicate he has been spying on some Mullahs and merchants with his *crystal ball*. If the PCs take this information to the authorities they will actually get a fairly quick response from the angry clergy. The PCs will be politely "segregated" from society, a hunt will be initiated, and Radic will be captured within two days. You can then proceed with the offer of employment from the Archons.

The PCs may also develop intermediate courses of action, such as catching Radic, dumping him at a guard post, and taking off for the mountains. If so, there's no need to prevent them from succeeding. The only thing that won't work is turning down the Archons, and then trying to find the Oracle anyway. If that happens the PCs find a heavily armed group of Archons, Threshers, and soldiers camped out at the entrance to the mine. The PCs are refused admittance, and the adventure ends at that point.

### **Further PC Investigations.**

The PCs may try to find out more about Radic or the Oracle after the meeting, through magical or mundane means.

#### **Magical Means:**

Attempts to scry the Oracle (*scrying, clairvoyance, crystal ball, etc.*) will fail, due to the lack of information

about the Oracle, and the magical protections which surround its chamber. The PCs will feel their scrying being blocked, and will get brief flickering views of a dimly lit and smoothly curved rock wall, but will be unable to gather any other information, because the contact is too brief.

Scrying against Radic may be foiled by his defensive spells, as detailed in the "Magical Precautions" section above. Radic will recast those spells the morning after he meets the PCs, assuming he has his spell-book, and is free to do so, in case they attempt to scry him before they set out for the mountains. However, he has no real defenses against divination magic that consults divine or extra planar sources, and these may be able to provide useful information.

Use of *augury* will often be disappointing, simply because of its short time of effect. For example, if the PCs use *augury* to decide whether it would be a good or bad idea to accept the sage's job, the spell will simply provide the "Nothing" answer, because the dangerous consequences of accepting the job happen well beyond the half hour predictive ability of the spell. However, a question such as "Woe or weal if we capture the sage and immediately turn him over to the authorities?" would provide the answer "Weal", since the consequences fall within the spell's view.

*Commune, contact other plane, and divination* spells can provide some useful information about the Oracle, although chances of success are halved due to the magical protections around the Oracle's cavern. The spells can reveal that the Oracle is evil, still active, quite dangerous, and located in underground waters. However, Vecna, evil god of secrets, would prefer that this evil secret remain secret, and little other information is forthcoming.

Radic is essentially an open book to these spells, which can reveal that he is evil, intending to betray the party, and searching for sources of ancient knowledge that can speak of ancient evils. They can also reveal that he is part of a cabal, all seeking that same end, although details of the cabal remain hidden.

Casting *legend lore* about the Oracle takes far too long (2d6 weeks) to be useful, since the PCs have only the vaguest information about the Oracle before they leave Lopolla. *Legend lore* will not work on Radic either, since he is not in any way legendary or important.

#### **Mundane Means:**

Mundane means of information gathering provide nothing about the Oracle. It was somewhat of a specialist secret, even in its day, and it never made the transition to song and story. Knowledge DCs (arcana

and history) start around 65 for the most basic information about the Oracle, such as the fact that it exists. Extensive research (such as the 6 years Radic invested in the subject) would drop the DC to accessible levels.

Gathering Information about Radic, however, is more productive. A generic Gather Information check [DC15] tells the PC that:

- Radic has been in Lopolla for about 6 years.
- Nobody is certain where he came from.
- He has no relatives or acquaintances in town.
- He has a polite, distant personality.
- His shop is not very busy.

If the PC states he will concentrate his efforts among other booksellers, a Gather Information check [DC 12] also reveals that:

- Radic's bookstore doesn't seem to encourage business.
- His hours are erratic, and the shop is often closed for a week or more.
- Radic's selection is mundane lightweight works, acknowledged to be of low value.
- Radic buys a fair amount of old travel accounts, personal correspondence, journals, and obsolete papers from hundreds of years ago.

Similarly, if information is being gathered at the Archons, by a PC who is a member of the Archons, then a Gather Information check [DC 12] also reveals that:

- Radic joined the Archons four years ago, paying his dues and obeying the strictures of the order (i.e., he paid his money and joined the meta-org).
- Radic is a diviner.
- Radic has been very private, and is not an active participant in Archon business.
- Radic has made repeated use of library and archive facilities available to members of the Archons.

(The lower DCs indicate that by cleverly specializing their search, the PCs increase their chances of getting good information.)

### All APLs

♣**Radic**; Wiz7/Exp3; hp 23; See Appendix 1.

## Encounter 2: Into the Mountain.

The Oracle's cave lies four days hard ride north north-east of Lopolla, in the Yatil Mountains. The journey is uneventful, and the PCs arrive unmolested on the morning of the fifth day.

*The golden morning sunlight illuminates the last yellow leaves on the small trees in the valley below you, as your horses pick their way across the frosty ground of a faint mining trail that leads higher into the mountains. Autumn is tightening its grasp on the Yatils, and patches of early snow lie in the shadow of boulders here and there. The low peaks around you are already mantled in fresh white snowfalls, and the higher passes, deeper in the mountains, are sure to be filled with snow.*

*Lopolla is four days behind you, far to the south south-west, and your rapid, unmolested progress has been gratifying. Perhaps the bandits and humanoids that are said to infest this region have more urgent things to do on the eve of winter, than indulge in risky attacks on infrequent travelers.*

*Ahead, you can see seven large gray canvas tents, perched on a rocky ledge in the cool morning sunlight. Smoke from a nearby cooking fire rises straight up into the crisp air, and the sound of a man chopping kindling echoes across the valley. A large heap of fresh tailings lies fifty yards to the right of the tents, and a dark opening in the mountainside above suggests that this is the mining camp Radic sent you looking for.*

### The Mining Crew.

This is, indeed, the camp that contains Radic's mining crew. As the PCs approach, the fourteen miners gather to meet them. They are a ragged scruffy lot, unwashed, untrimmed, and uncouth. Fortune has never favoured them. They are a hard-luck crew, perpetually poor, and desperately looking for a good mine, which is why Radic was able to hire them so late in the season. Their leader, a tall bald-headed man named Mossul (moss-SOOL), is actually quite competent and conscientious, as is his assistant Falassin. The remainder of the miners are an assortment of the ignorant and the incompetent.

♣**Mossul**: Male human, Exp5, LG, age 43.

♣**Falassin**: Male human, Exp3, NG, age 38.

Mossul greets the PCs when they arrive, and determines whether they came from Radic.

*"Greetings travelers", says the tallest of the miners, a slender bald man with a prodigious black beard, and a pendulous lower lip. "My name is Mossul. Have you, by chance, been sent from Lopolla by Radic Ramladsson?"*

If the PCs say yes, and show the signet rings Radic gave them, Mossul asks the question that all the miners are anxious to have answered.

*"Then, perhaps, you can explain to us his reasons for sending us here on a quest for silver, where there was never any silver to be found!"*

Radic's story to the miners was that he had found an old silver mine which had been abandoned prematurely, and that he was going to re-open the mine. The miners were glad to sign on to such a project, since it would traditionally mean that they would be retained to mine the silver after the tunnels were re-opened and put in order. This is obviously not going to happen now, since this is not a mine, and the frustrated miners realize their chance for a lucrative future has vanished yet again.

*"Come," says Mossul, "words are not enough!" He turns abruptly and begins striding towards the tunnel entrance. "Come to the 'mine' and I will show you what is there. You shall judge with your own eyes!"*

With that, Mossul leads the PCs into the mine, grabbing a torch to light his way.

**Radic's Scrying:** This is where the PCs begin to come under Radic's surveillance, if he is still at liberty. Radic has been scrying on his miners using his *crystal ball*, waiting for the PCs to show up. He informs other members of the cabal when he detects the miners speaking to the characters, and continues to keep the miners under surveillance as they advance into the tunnels.

### The 'Mine'.

The layout of the Oracle's upper tunnels is not provided in any detail. Since there is no potential combat in the upper levels of the 'mine', there is no need to map it out for the players, or to go into room-by-room descriptions.

The entrance to the mine is a wood-reinforced tunnel mouth, five feet tall and four feet wide.

*"Come," says Mossul, "mind your head as you enter. The tunnel is only five feet tall." He hurries into the darkness, hunching his tall body forward, his torch-flame smoking against the fresh stone of the*

*rough-hewn ceiling. "The entrance had collapsed, so we cleared it out, and then found our way into the old tunnels."*

*"You see? The walls and ceiling are covered in the old marks of picks and hammers. Just like a mine!"*

*"And here, these beams," he calls back, kicking the crumbling remains of some sort of pit-prop lying on the floor, "are fine for a mine. Old, so we replaced them, but fine!"*

*"And then, we come to this.."*

*Mossul stops, and holds his torch near the side of the tunnel, so the smoky orange light shines on a cunningly carved arrow-slit. The stone around the slit is melted and glassy, as though the surface of the rock was heated, and ran.*

*"There are eight more of these," says Mossul. "These are not normal for a mine..."*

Mossul will go on to show them a series of destroyed traps and shattered stone doors, some empty rooms (old barracks), and some severely corroded fragments of weapons and armor. There is evidence of magical damage in several places throughout the facility, like the fire damage around the arrow slits. Nothing of value remains here, but it is readily evident that this was once a properly laid out defensive facility, guarding something deeper inside the mountain. The entire complex is sized for humans, and the construction seems to be in the human style.

Since no encounters happen here, you can quickly move the PCs on to the next section of the 'mine'.

### The Lift Chamber.

The entire defensive complex culminates in a large artificial chamber, roughly forty by eighty feet in size, which holds the entrance to the shaft down to the Oracle, and the capstan, pulleys, and rope rigging for lowering people into the depths below.

*"And this," says Mossul, "is where it all ends."*

*He steps into a long dark chamber, and his torchlight plays on a complicated array of lifting machinery and tackle that fills much of the space. A heavy duty capstan, with a massive iron hub and sturdy wooden bars, occupies the center of the floor. To its left, yards and yards of wrist-thick hawser are carefully coiled in a broad depression in the stone floor. The sturdy cable passes around the drum of the capstan, through a series of wooden clamps and guides, and up over a heavy iron pulley*

*hanging from a thick ring-bolt in the stone ceiling. There, in the shadows of the back of the chamber, you can see the dark black opening of a wide shaft, gaping like a hungry mouth in the floor of the chamber.*

*“Now, visitors,” says Mossul, turning his dark eyes back on you. “Tell us why Radic Ranladsson would have us rebuild this chamber and its machinery. Tell us why he would send a hundred and twenty fathoms of best anchor cable into the mountains. And tell us why he would have us go down into the heart of the mountain, in stone which has never seen silver.”*

The PCs are unlikely to have honest answers which will reassure the suspicious miners!

**The Rope Lift:** The machinery which fills much of the chamber is a rope lift, designed to raise and lower people and cargo within the shaft. The PCs may be somewhat surprised by the good condition of the rope lift and its associated machinery. Most of it is actually quite new.

*“This was all a wreck when we found it”, says Mossul, tugging at his rough black beard and looking around the chamber. “The wood was all rotten, the rope was shreds of fibre, and even the capstan hub had been knocked off its axle. If it wasn’t good dwarven iron it would have been useless too.”*

The system originally used a sturdy cage at the end of the main cable, in order to carry people safely and easily, but this is missing. Mossul and his men have replaced it with a “foot rope”, which is a series of loops spaced roughly five feet apart on a central rope. Miners use them by placing one foot in a loop, standing upright, and holding on to the rope while they ride up or down. This gives a safe and secure ride, as long as the person on the foot rope doesn’t engage in any violent activity. PCs with Profession (miner) may make a check [DC10] to recognize the foot rope as a normal mining tool. [These are historical reality, and were used well into the 1800s in some eastern European mines.]

If the PCs want to modify the foot rope, or tie things to it, Mossul and his men can do it safely for them. However, they will strongly object to any suggestion that the PCs tamper with the main cable in any way (knotting it, tying things to it, splicing into it, getting it dirty, or, gods forbid, cutting it). These things all weaken a rope, and the main cable is an expensive and valuable tool on which their life may depend some day.

**The Shaft:** Although the lifting apparatus is technically interesting, the PCs will probably be most interested in the shaft leading down into the depths.

The mouth of the shaft is a ten foot diameter circular opening in the floor, surrounded by a single ring of worn black marble flagstones inset into the rock. Many of the flagstones are cracked or shattered, and some are missing entirely. The walls of the shaft, below the ring of broken flagstones, are dry and slightly rough, and are carved from a fine-grained gray stone. PCs with any sort of geological knowledge, such as dwarven PCs, or those with mining professions, can tell that the walls of the shaft are made of limestone, and were hewn by hand tools.

There is no light in the shaft, except for what shines in from above. If the PCs throw light sources into the hole they can see them tumbling down for several hundred feet, gradually getting smaller and smaller, until they rapidly blur, fade out, and vanish shortly after four seconds. (This is due to the presence of mist at lower levels of the shaft. Visibility is completely obscured by the 350 foot level.) A superb Listen check [DC 30], made in conditions of absolute quiet, reveals an extremely quiet rushing sound, perhaps like a very faint wind sound, coming from below.

If the PCs take the time to examine the lip of the shaft, they can notice that there are traces of draconic runes on some of the black marble flagstones. Only a few isolated letters are still legible, and there is not enough information left to make out what they once said. If the PCs manage to reconstruct the flagstones somehow (*mending*, or *make whole*) they can discern the draconic phrase “Knowledge is Power”, on the stones which remain. PCs who can convince the stones to speak (*stone tell*) can learn that many people went down, but many fewer came up.

**Scrying Downwards:** Now that the PCs are in close proximity to the Oracle’s chamber, they may be able to make scrying spells work down the open shaft, despite the dimensional barrier which surrounds the chamber and interferes with scrying magic.

The various scrying and observation spells function normally all the way down to the barrier, and the PCs will be able to observe the layers of mist and the roiling vortex of fog (described below) that are located above the barrier, provided the magic can see in the dark. They will not see any of the incorporeal foes that lurk in the walls of the shaft, because those remain inactive unless they notice the presence of intruders.



Spells which allow hearing will detect a strange muttering (described below), as well as the roaring of the vortex, if they are cast far enough down the shaft.

PCs casting scrying spells beyond the barrier will have more difficulty. Images (and sounds and other information) returning through the barrier are violently distorted, constantly shifting and twisting in a very disconcerting fashion. The PCs can get occasional views of curved gray stone, but that is about all. If the PCs persist for more than a few rounds they will become nauseated (as per PHB), due to sensory distress.

However, if the PCs are scrying on a known creature or object beyond the barrier (such as a wizard's familiar gone ahead to scout) then the effect is much less severe. The images are mildly distorted, as if looking through the surface of a flowing stream, but the caster can still get useful information without losing the contents of his stomach. (This is how Radic intends to get his answers. He will scry on the PCs, since they are a known object on the far side of the barrier, and listen in to any conversations with the Oracle.)

## Encounter 3: Descending into the Shaft.

Refereeing the descent into the shaft, and the combat within it, can be difficult, since the situation and setting are rather complex. Let common sense be your guide, but be prepared for situations that lie outside typical two-dimensional dungeoneering.

**Going Downwards:** If the PCs wish, Mossul and his men will agree to lower them into the shaft. That is, after all, what they're there for.

The PCs may suggest sending one person down the shaft alone, as a scout. This is a very dangerous course of action, particularly if they're on the slow-moving rope lift, and you should try and discourage it. Mossul will certainly react with surprise.

*"Alone!", exclaims Mossul. "I would not venture down there with a hundred men, let alone by myself."*

*He leans forward, lowering his voice, and speaking with slow deliberation. "I have worked many mine shafts in my years, with weak stone and crumbling walls that were much more dangerous than these. Yet for all that, this is the one I fear the most, though I cannot say why."*

If that doesn't make the lone PC reconsider, then let him proceed if he wishes. Mossul and the miners

distrust the shaft, and will not enter it in any circumstances.

**Radic's Scrying:** When Radic sees the PCs readying themselves to descend, he will switch his scrying over to one of them. He will initially attempt to scry on a PC with a low Will save, such as a fighter or a rogue, and then move to more difficult targets if that fails. The Will DC to resist scrying from the *crystal ball* is 16. Radic's own scrying spells are DC18, but he has few of those.

Resolve these attempts in secret, and do not inform the players unless their PCs detect a failed scrying attempt.

## Using the Rope Lift.

The simplest way for the PCs to get to the bottom of the shaft is to use the rope lift. While Mossul and his men will do their best to raise and lower the rope in response to the PCs' needs, they are strongly limited by the physical capabilities of the system and the men operating it. This is not a modern elevator. It descends slowly, ascends even more slowly, and takes time to start and stop. Use the following guidelines to determine how the rope lift operates.

**Descent:** The rope descends at a constant rate of 5 feet per round, at the very beginning of every round. This movement is considered a free five foot step, and does not provoke attacks of opportunity.

**Ascent:** It is much more difficult to raise the rope than lower it. The rope ascends five feet at the start of every second round. (This represents a constant speed of two and a half feet per round.)

**Stopping:** The lift cannot be stopped instantly, since it takes time to relay the command to the men, check the momentum of the massive cable, bring everything to a safe halt, and engage the brake. Therefore, the rope will continue to descend for one round after the stop command has been given, before coming to a halt.

**Starting:** Similarly, it takes time to take up slack, disengage the brake, and begin moving the cable again after a halt. The rope will remain motionless for one full round after the command to start is given, before it begins to move.

**Changing Direction:** If the PCs wish to go directly from the descent to an ascent (or vice versa) they must go through a complete stop and start procedure.

**Touching Bottom:** Since the miners cannot see the bottom of the shaft, and do not know how far down it is, they must judge its location by the changes in tension on the line. Mossul will give the stop command any time he feels half the weight of the party leave the line. (This is normal mining procedure to keep the main cable from coiling up on the floor, and getting dirty and damaged.) This will usually leave two PCs suspended above the floor, from which point they must climb down the rope foot loops (Climb check [DC 5]) to reach the ground.

**Free Fall:** If the PCs, for some reason, force the miners to release the capstan while the party is still on the lift, the cable will only drop 120 feet per round, due to drag from the system slowing the cable. The miners will not release the cable voluntarily.

**Rope signals,** using the lift cable, are impractical due to the great weight and thickness of the main cable, and the distances involved. Shaking or tugging on the hefty main cable by hand simply won't transmit a useful signal. It takes a weight change of hundreds of pounds to be detectable. If the PCs rig their own lightweight line they can transmit signals more easily, provided they have sufficient rope of their own for the task.

The lack of responsiveness of the system may come as a rude shock if the PCs do not enquire about it beforehand. Mossul and his gang are fully aware of how the lift works, but they consider it so obvious that they feel no need to volunteer the information. Therefore, you should not describe these rules to the PCs unless they ask. PCs who make a Knowledge (architecture and engineering) check [DC 20], or a Profession (miner) check [DC15] are aware of the general limits of this type of device.

### Using the Foot Rope.

The end of the main cable is attached to the foot rope, which has six foot-loops spliced into it, each of which is five feet above the one below. If the PCs place one foot in a foot-loop and hang on to the central rope with at least one hand, they can ride safely, without any need to make Climb checks. If the PCs take vigorous actions while they are on the foot rope, then there are consequences, but that is described below.

PCs riding the foot rope will be stacked in a vertical column, each person directly above the one below. In reality, there would be a small overlap between the

head of a lower person and the feet of the person above him, but we can ignore this for game purposes, in order to fit the five foot grid.

### Other Ways Down.

The PCs can also get down the shaft by using *fly* and *levitate* spells, climbing the walls, or using dimensional travel of some sort.

**Magical flight and levitation** works normally, and the PCs will have little difficulty getting where they want to go. Bear in mind that people *flying* up the shaft only do so at half speed.

**Aerodynamic flight** can be difficult, due to the small size of the shaft. Creatures with large wingspans simply won't fit, since the shaft is only 10' wide, and has a sturdy rope in the center. Typical birds (such as most flying familiars) have Average maneuverability, and can't fly straight up and down the shaft. They have to maintain a minimum forward speed of half their movement, only turn 45° for every 5 feet they advance, have to spend an additional 5 feet for an extra 45°, and have a maximum turn of 90°. These, and other, restrictions make it quite possible that they will crash into walls, stall and fall. Review the flying rules on page 20 of the DMG for more information.

**Dimensional travel,** such as *teleport* and *dimension door* works above and below the dimensional barrier, but not through it. PCs trying to pass through the barrier stop at the barrier instead.

**Climbing** works normally, and the climb DCs are noted in the descriptions which follow. However, since the vertical distances are so great, the consequences of a fall are likely to be lethal, and you may wish to discourage this type of movement.

### General Shaft Layout.

The shaft is a ten foot wide cylindrical passage bored straight down into the mountain to reach the Oracle's chamber. (See **Map #2.**) The walls are still in very good condition, and there are no convenient cracks to jam pitons into. If the PCs wish to mount pitons they will either have to drill holes (a process which takes two to three hours per hole with a hand-held hammer drill), or use magic to do so. The shaft contains no sources of illumination, and has no natural flora or fauna.

### **The Mundane Shaft: top 250 feet.**

The initial descent into the shaft is uneventful. Assuming the PCs are riding the rope-lift, and have some sources of illumination, you could describe the descent something like this:

*The creaking pulleys of the rope lift fade behind you, as you descend into the cool darkness of the shaft. A quick glance up shows the diminishing circle of light from the miners' lamps at the mouth of the shaft, and Mossul's concerned face looking down at you. He waves briefly, and turns to direct his men.*

*The rope twists slightly from side to side as it continues downwards, and the gray stone walls seem to turn around you. They are bare and featureless, only marked by the bite of the tools that carved the shaft from the mountain.*

*Below you, there is nothing but darkness...*

There is no opposition in this section of the shaft, and it is entirely mundane in nature. The walls of the shaft are the same dry and slightly rough limestone that was visible at the top of the shaft, with occasional gouges and grooves where they were hewn with hand tools. The walls are DC 20 to climb.

Be sure to mention the slight twisting of the rope, if applicable, since it is a clue for later events.

### **Mist and Muttering: 250 feet - 470 feet.**

It takes 5 minutes by rope lift to reach the 250 foot level.

*The air of the shaft gradually chills as the long slow descent continues. Your breath plumes briefly in the air around you now, before being left behind, and small tufts of pale mist hang here and there in the still air of the shaft.*

The walls themselves are still slightly rough, with occasional tool marks, but now they are slightly damp, and sometimes seem to twist under finger and foot. They are now DC 25 to climb.

As the PCs pass the 250 foot level they encounter the first signs of something unusual. Ask the PCs for Listen checks. Whoever gets the highest score, regardless of what it was, is the first to notice a faint sourceless muttering sound.

*Something catches your ear...*

*Not the slow creak of the rope. Not the rhythmic breath of your companions. A faint, whispered muttering; quiet, directionless, and malevolent.*

*The voice comes again, and then once more. A nasty, inarticulate babble, brief and hostile. It seems sourceless, first coming from the right, then the left; sometimes from above, often from below...*

The voices are not speaking articulate words, and the muttering has no meaning, so spells such as *comprehend* languages and *tongues* will not provide any further information. However, there seem to be different tones and cadences of voice, which suggests that more than one thing is doing the muttering.

The other PCs soon notice the muttering, and something else besides. Ask for Spot checks. Once again, whoever gets the highest score is the first to notice something moving in the wall.

*Something just moved in the wall!*

*You only just caught a glimpse of it, over to your left, at the very corner of your eye, like a sudden wrinkling of the stone. There's nothing there now. The cold gray wall is as solid and immobile as ever, behind the misty air of the shaft.*

It is not long before all the PCs can spot motion. The movement is never seen directly, and is always caught out of the corner of the eye. The effect is never major: a lump seems to shift slightly, a pick-mark trembles for a moment, or a vein in the wall seems to twist.

The inarticulate muttering and hidden flickers of motion are continuous throughout this section of the shaft, and actually become more pronounced as the PCs descend further. Mutter nastily, but wordlessly, under your breath, as the players react to the situation. Look hastily to the side now and then, as if something caught your eye. Emphasize the strangeness and uncertainty of the situation. Here the PCs are, dangling in the dark like a string of onions, while something horrible and unknown whispers and mutters around them, lurking at the edges of their vision. Try to give your players that nervous spooky thrill which is so entertaining!

**The Watchers:** As DM, of course, you know exactly what's going on. The muttering and the movements are caused by hundreds of undead spirits that line the walls of the shaft. These spirits are the remains of the lesser victims that were sacrificed to the Oracle over the centuries (typically slaves, petty criminals, and peasants), who were deemed to have no useful knowledge. Instead of being placed in the lake, they were bound in the walls of the shaft, where they

observe anything traveling within it and report it to the Oracle below. The spirits have darkvision and lifesense, which allows them to sense the presence of living beings. They can pass an early warning to forces below, via a limited form of telepathy, but provide little detailed information.

**Turning:** A turning attempt directed at the wall will cause a brief flurry of motion in front of the PC, like mice scurrying under a bed sheet, or minnows fleeing under the surface of a pond. The watchers cannot flee far from the turning, being bound to the rock of the shaft walls, but they can move slightly deeper into it, which causes the apparent motion. There are so many spirits present that others quickly take the place of those that were turned. The muttering will continue, perhaps a shade more angrily, despite the turning.

**Divination:** *Detect evil* and *detect undead* both reveal numerous faint auras in the wall, and *detect magic* and *arcane sight* reveal a faint aura of necromantic magic throughout the walls of the shaft. *Detect thoughts* can pick up basic impressions of unending pain, and an awareness that the PCs are present.

**The Walls:** If anyone observes the walls with *true seeing* they will see ghostly images of bent and broken bodies, packed one on top of the other in the walls of the shaft. The bodies writhe and jerk in agonized spasms, and their twisted mouths groan and wail in pain. There are no actual remains in the wall; these are just spiritual images. However, if a PC somehow takes a chunk out of the wall (chisels a mark into it, drills it for a piton, hacks it repeatedly with a sturdy weapon) the marks will ooze cold sticky blood.

**Communications problems:** now that the PCs are this deep into the shaft, two more communications problems reveal themselves.

**Audible signals,** such as shouted communication, whistle blasts, or horn calls will work normally until the PCs are within the portion of the shaft where the muttering begins. The strange muttering prevents undisturbed sound from traveling up and down the shaft, jumbling the sound and reducing it to a faint inarticulate rumble. (Consider this to be an exceptional ability that is not susceptible to bardic counter-songs.) Loss of audible communication with the surface is complete by the 350 foot level. (This muttering also prevents sounds from below from reaching the top of the shaft.)

**Visual signals,** such as flashed lights, will also work normally, until the PCs enter the misty region of the shaft. One hundred feet of mist completely blocks line

of sight. This means visual communications with the top of the shaft will be lost at the 350 foot level.

This does not mean that the PCs cannot find ways to communicate with the miners at the top of the shaft, particularly with magic devices and spells. Bear in mind, however, that *message* does not have the range to reach the entire length of the shaft, *sending* is rather slow to cast (10 minutes), and *whispering wind* only travels about 50 feet per round.

## Encounter 4: The Fight in the Shaft.

The lower portion of the shaft contains the remaining defenses that survived the fighting many hundreds of years ago. A number of hostile spirits remain in place, but their strength has slowly seeped away with the centuries, and they are not as powerful as they once were (*i.e., they have low hp for their HD*). Even at their prime, they were never intended to be the sole guardians of the shaft, and they served as backups for the Oracle's servants and warriors. Now that the human defenders are gone, the surviving defenses are the sole obstacle to the PCs' progress.

### Yelling: 470 feet - 500 feet.

It takes just over nine and a half minutes to reach this depth by rope lift, assuming the PCs did not stop along the way. By the time the PCs reach this depth the muttering has increased in volume even further, becoming outright yelling. The air is still chill and misty, and the PCs can see signs of battle damage on the walls.

*The vertical walls of the shaft are in constant motion now, writhing and trembling, as frantic voices shriek and wail at you from all sides. Chunks of rock have been blasted out of the walls by some unknown force in the past, and in three places rings of gaping craters have been gouged out of the stone. Contorted faces seem to grimace at you from the cracked rock of the cavities, before vanishing back into the confusion of motion that surrounds you.*

The movement of the watchers is so intense in this section that the walls seem to writhe, and glimpses of contorted faces are visible to the naked eye. The climb DC is now 33, despite the additional handholds, as the watchers actively try to knock climbers loose from the wall, and any pitons the PCs somehow manage to drive

into the rock will be spat back out with great force. (This continues down to the level of the dimensional barrier, below.)

Depending on their light source, the PCs will almost certainly be able to see one of the fixed defenses further below.

*At the edge of your vision, far below your feet, a roaring whirlpool of driven cloud spins furiously, totally filling the shaft from wall to wall. Gusts of fog-laden wind brush against your face, as you continue descending towards the maelstrom.*

This roaring whirlpool of cloud is designed to beat back intruders in gaseous form, stop and disperse noxious gases, and block line of sight deeper into the shaft. However, an ambush lies hidden between the PCs and the clouds!

### **The Fighting! 500 feet – 525 feet.**

At this point the PCs encounter the undead spirits that defend the shaft. (See **Map #2**) Three levels of Bound Ones, as they are known, wait within the stone of the sides of the shaft, ready to reach out and attack the PCs as they approach.

*Abruptly, dark transparent forms lunge out of the writhing walls, groping towards you with deadly intent!*

The Bound Ones (see Appendix 1 for their full statistics) are the incorporeal remains of powerful warriors that were sacrificed to the Oracle. Each spirit is immobile, magically bound to its physical remains, which are embedded inside the stone walls of the shaft.

#### **APL 6 (EL 10)**

☛**Bound Ones (7):** hp 20 each. See Appendix 1.

Upper level: Location 1, 2.

Middle level: Location 1, 2.

Lower level: Location 1, 2, 3.

#### **APL 8 (EL 12)**

☛**Bound Ones (8):** hp 30 each. See Appendix 1.

Upper level: Location 1, 2.

Middle level: Location 1, 2.

Lower level: Location 1, 2, 3, 4.

#### **APL 10 (EL 14)**

☛**Bound Ones (9):** hp 40 each. See Appendix 1.

Upper level: Location 1, 2.

Middle level: Location 1, 2, 3.

Lower level: Location 1, 2, 3, 4.

#### **APL 12 (EL 16)**

☛**Bound Ones (11):** hp 50 each. See Appendix 1.

Upper level: Location 1, 2, 3.

Middle level: Location 1, 2, 3, 4.

Lower level: Location 1, 2, 3, 4.

**Damage:** The Numbing Blow of the Bound Ones causes some physical damage, but also has a powerful scrambling effect on the nervous system. Each successful attack causes one point of temporary ability damage to a randomly determined attribute. (Roll 1d6: 1 = Str, 2 = Dex, etc.). The sensation of the hit varies with the effect; loss of Strength feels like pins and needles, loss of Dex feels like a banged funny bone, loss of Con feels like profound fatigue, and loss of mental stats feels like a dizzying head-rush, combined with confusion and forgetfulness.

This is not negative energy damage, and does not inflict negative levels. The effect is a temporary biological effect, which begins to fade after twenty minutes, and is entirely gone after thirty.

**Movement:** The most obvious limitation of the Bound Ones is that they cannot move from square to square. They are stuck in the same place as their remains, and cannot maneuver to take advantage of the tactical situation. However, the spirits can move *within* their square, and can take advantage of the fact that slightly more than half of their 5' cube is solid stone. A spirit can adopt one of three positions:

**Fully hidden:** The spirit may be fully hidden within the stone, in which case it is out of line of sight and line of effect, and cannot be seen or attacked or turned. A hidden spirit can sense the presence of PCs in the shaft, and pinpoint their location, but if it attacks from this position the PC gains the benefit of total concealment, and the usual 50% miss chance applies.

**Peeking out:** The spirit may peek out of the wall, exposing just enough of its "eyes" to see what's going on. In this condition the spirit gains a +8 cover bonus to AC, a +4 cover bonus to Reflex saves, and gains the improved evasion feat, as well as a +10 cover bonus to Hide checks.

**Exposed:** Half of the spirit's body is outside the wall. It gains a +4 cover bonus to AC, and a +2 cover bonus to Reflex saves. Important: Any Bound One which makes an attack **MUST** end its round in the exposed position. The spirits cannot attack and pull back into the wall in the same round.

**Combat Tactics:** When the PCs approach, the upper rank of spirits will lunge out of cover to attack. In doing so, they hope to provoke responses from clerics and spellcasters, and identify the greatest potential threats. If there is no remarkable capability among the PCs, or the party seems weak, the Bound Ones will emerge and attack one rank at a time as the party descends. However, if the Bound Ones notice clerics with the Sun domain (Ehlonna, Pelor, etc.), or other PCs with exceptional counter-undead abilities, they will wait to make coordinated attacks on them.

The Bound Ones have Dual Strike, which grants an additional +2 attack bonus against flanked opponents, and will take advantage of it to optimize their hit chances. Note that the Bound Ones can make use of diagonal flanking up and down the shaft, as well as across the shaft, and that those that are above PCs will gain the +1 bonus for attacking from high ground.

The Bound Ones are quite smart enough to notice the effect of invisible PCs on the foot-loops they are standing in, and attack into those squares.

**Turning:** If the PCs manage to turn the Bound Ones, then the spirits will flee into the stone, taking up the fully hidden position until the turning expires. The Bound Ones cannot flee deeper into the stone, because they cannot move. Note, however, that the Bound Ones can still sense the position of the PCs, even when they are cowering in the stone. Therefore, if the turning cleric continues advancing towards the spirits, as he will certainly do if he's riding the rope-lift down towards them, he will break the turning when he advances within 10 feet. This may be a very rude surprise to the PCs, when "turned" spirits re-appear shortly after they were driven away.

**Remains:** The remains of the Bound Ones are hidden inside the stone, and there is no external sign that they are present. However, if the PCs manage to destroy or disturb the remains in some way, such as by *disintegrating* a section of wall, using a *shatter* spell on the stone, or *stone shaping* an opening that reaches the remains, they will break the bonds that hold the spirit in place. If this happens, the freed spirit will immediately flee up the shaft, screaming with glee, and fading out as it rushes to its eternal rest.

### Fighting on the Rope.

If the PCs are flying, then all is well, but fighting on the rope brings its own set of challenges.

**Unstable footing:** When the PCs are riding the rope downwards the system remains relatively stable, with

only a mild rotational twisting to disturb the steady descent. However, once the PCs engage in melee combat (or similar vigorous activity) the foot-rope starts to spin and twist and jerk around erratically. This combination of unpredictable movement and lack of leverage causes a -1 circumstance penalty to attack and damage rolls. It also makes spellcasting more difficult. Casters must make a Concentration check [DC 5 + spell level] to cast on the wiggling rope.

**Not enough hands:** PCs who are riding the foot-rope have one hand and one foot free. This means two-handed weapons cannot be used on the rope, and some one-handed missile weapons (slings & hand crossbows) cannot be reloaded. Shields may be used on the rope, provided the shield hand is free. If the PC is holding on to the rope with his shield hand, then the shield grants no AC bonus (much like when climbing).

**Tying on:** If the PCs have already tied themselves to the foot-rope, with a loop around the chest or waist, then they can use both hands in combat. If they wish to tie themselves on while on the rope, then they must take a full round action and make a Use Rope check [DC 15] to do so. (This provokes attacks of opportunity.) Failure indicates the attempt was not successful, and the check may be repeated in following rounds if the PC wishes.

**Hanging on:** Clinging to the rope does not require Climb checks, but weakness may cause problems. If a PC loses enough strength points that their current load exceeds twice their new maximum load, they will be dragged off the rope by their own weight. Of course, PCs who are tied on cannot fall.

**Climbing the rope:** If a PC wishes to climb up or down the foot-rope, with all its easy to grasp loops, the DC is only 5. Climbing the straight main cable is DC 15. If the climber wishes to pass another PC, add 10 to the difficulty class.

**Protecting the rope:** The main cable is a three and a half inch thick rope, with a hardness of 0 and only 7 hit points. It could easily be severed by the slash of an edged weapon! Fortunately, the Bound Ones are incorporeal, and cannot damage the rope, but if the PCs are careless with area effect spells they could destroy the rope, with disastrous consequences. If the PCs are about to blast the main cable, feel free to allow easy Int checks and drop generous hints to save them from their stupidity.

☛ **Main Cable:** 3 1/2 in. thick; hardness 0; hp 7; AC 5; Break DC 28; SQ immune to bludgeoning.

This is, admittedly, a complicated fight. Nonetheless, you should be able to handle it if you use common sense. For example, PCs often change weapons by dropping one and drawing another. Bear in mind that dropped weapons will fall, and get damaged!

## Encounter 5: The Fixed Defenses.

There are three layers of fixed defenses in the shaft. The upper layer is a fierce vortex of fog, designed to block line of sight and stop gases. The middle one is the dimensional barrier, designed to prevent teleportation, hamper scrying, and keep the Spirits of the Wise in the cave below. The lower layer is a massive ring of animated stone arms which acts as a physical barrier immediately below the dimensional barrier.

Like the Bound Ones, these defenses were never intended to stand alone. They were intended to be brief obstacles, delaying attackers, while the Oracle's followers rallied to the defense.

### The Fog: 525 feet – 530 feet.

A roiling vortex of dense white cloud fills a five foot thick section of the shaft immediately under the Bound Ones, spinning furiously, and emitting a deafening roar. The vortex of fog is caused by powerful blasts of wind blowing from six offset bronze nozzles set in the stone wall. Three of the mouth-shaped nozzles have been battered shut in previous fighting, and they only emit modest gusts, but the remaining three still function at full efficiency.

***The roaring winds tear at your clothing and hair, and buffet and batter you like a personal hurricane. It is impossible to hear anything in the howling gale, and the streaming fog hurtles past you in a dizzying spiral. The atmosphere is almost totally opaque, and you can barely see the walls of the shaft around you, where shrieking metal mouths hurl the winds in your direction.***

The fog is opaque, and prevents anyone from seeing through it. Those who are inside the fog can see into adjacent squares, but no further. (The fog grants a 20% concealment miss chance to those inside it, providing their attackers rely on vision. Bear in mind that the Bound Ones have non-visual blindsight, and are not hampered by striking into the fog.)

The nozzles blow obliquely upwards, at a mild angle, creating a powerful vortex that blows things back up the shaft. This functions like a horizontal *wind-wall*, in most respects. Gases cannot pass down through the vortex, nor can creatures who are in *gaseous form* or *wind-walking*. Flying creatures of small or lesser size will be blown back up the tunnel, and PCs *feather falling* towards the vortex will halt in mid-air in the square above the vortex. Light missile weapons, like arrows or bolts, that are fired into the vortex will miss their target, and larger missiles have a 30% miss chance. Open flames are extinguished, and even covered lamps have a 30% chance of going out.

Furthermore, the rotating winds are so fierce that the deafening roar and battering gusts cause damage, depending on the number of nozzle mouths still operating.

### Damage per round (non lethal / lethal)

#	APL 6	APL 8	APL 10	APL 12
3	1 / 3d6	2 / 3d8	3 / 3d10	4 / 3d12
2	0 / 2d6	1 / 2d8	2 / 2d10	3 / 2d12
1	0 / 1d6	0 / 1d8	1 / 1d10	2 / 1d12

PCs normally take non-lethal damage from the winds. However, if a PC in *gaseous form*, or one who is *wind walking*, tries to force himself into the vortex, he suffers lethal damage before being ejected back up the tunnel.

The roar of the winds is so loud that hearing is impossible within the vortex, and anyone inside it is considered deaf. This imposes the normal 20% chance of spell failure for spells with verbal components. In addition, the fierce winds require spell casters to make Concentration checks [DC 5] to cast spells while they are in the vortex. (This gets worse, if they are also standing on the moving floor, described below, and there is an additional check if they are taking non-lethal damage as well.)

The physical statistics of the nozzle mouths are detailed in Appendix 1. A mouth which is reduced to zero hit points is considered to have been bashed shut, and no longer functions effectively, although some air still leaks out. When the final nozzle is bashed shut there are no longer any wind or noise effects, and the dense fog dissipates as well.

The PCs can also neutralize the nozzle mouths with *dispel magic*, or by finding a creative way to plug them. Hastily jamming an object into the nozzle is not

enough, since it will merely be blown out again, but using something like *stoneshape* to cover the opening would work.

### **The Dimensional Barrier: 530 feet.**

The dimensional barrier is an invisible and intangible layer lying along the boundary between the vortex of fog above, and the animated arms below. It is actually composed of three identical layers, each an inch apart, and extends out through the rock, surrounding the Oracle's entire cavern like an enormous bubble. It functions in a manner which is similar to the *dimensional lock* spell, although it is much larger, and it has the additional function of keeping the Spirits of the Wise from escaping over time.

It is quite possible that the PCs will not notice the barrier at all. Those that are on the prime material plane can pass through it at will. As their eyes pass through the barrier they may (Spot [DC 22]) notice a faint green flicker. Those who spotted it may make Spellcraft [DC 25] checks to be reminded of the colours of the *dimensional anchor* and *dimensional lock* spells. However, those on the ethereal plane can clearly see the barrier as a shimmering emerald green wall, as can those using *true seeing*. The dimensional barrier registers as a strong aura of abjuration magic on *detect magic* spells.

Any attempt to cross the dimensional barrier on another plane, such as by *teleportation*, *dimension dooring*, *blinking*, phasing, or traveling through astral, ethereal, or shadow planes, will fail. For example, a PC attempting to *dimension door* from the top to the bottom of the shaft would stop just above the dimensional barrier, in the vortex of fog.

The dimensional barrier may be breached by *dispel magic*, although the barrier has a caster level of 19, and each spell will only breach one layer, which may make breaching difficult. Each breach is ten feet in diameter, and will repair itself in 24 hours. PCs on the ethereal plane may use *disintegrate* to automatically pierce one layer of the barrier in the same fashion.

### **The Animated Arms: 530 feet – 535 feet.**

A battered stone ring of animated arms is the lowest level of fixed defenses. The ring surrounds the entire shaft, and has so many arms (some 65 of them, if they're all deployed), that they seem to form a writhing floor beneath the vortex of fog. The PCs can actually get off the rope lift and stand on the arms if they wish!

*A writhing tangle of clawing, grasping stone arms sprouts from the walls of the shaft, and blocks all progress below. Each thick gray arm blends seamlessly into the stone walls of the shaft, and they emerge and retract in a complicated pattern that makes them almost impossible to count.*

The whole mass of arms is actually one animated object, which was designed to act as a physical valve within the shaft. The largest gaps between the arms are only six inches wide, preventing most creatures from passing. Yet, if heavy objects, such as large boulders, were dropped down the shaft, the arms could quickly retract into the wall, and then emerge undamaged to block the enemy's passage.

**Finding the Arms:** The PCs cannot see the arms from above the vortex of fog, and, if they're riding the rope, their discovery will normally run something like this.

**Round 1:** The lowest PC is riding the rope in the square above the fog, and cannot see the arms.

**Round 2:** The rope descends 5' into the fog. The PC can then see the arms, and may let go of the rope and step onto the arms if he wishes.

**Round 3:** The rope descends another 5'. The lowest PC cannot descend through the arms, and, if he did not step off the rope before, he will be deposited in a prone position as the rope coils up on the arms.

As the rope continues to descend, more and more PCs will be deposited on the arms. You will probably have to bump PCs sideways into unoccupied squares as they arrive. (Bear in mind that the PCs can't shout warnings up through the fog, since the noise from the howling winds makes verbal communication impossible.) More importantly, once half the PCs have left the rope, Mossul will think they've hit bottom, and will give his men the order to stop lowering the rope. The rope will descend for one more round and then stop, usually leaving the last PC of a six person party still hanging on the rope above the fog.

**Balancing:** Footing is treacherous for those standing on the arms, because the floor moves and twists, gaps open up unexpectedly, and the arms deliberately try to trip people who are standing on them. Any PC standing on the arms must make a Balance check [DC = APL +3], at the beginning of their round, in order to remain upright. Those that fail either cannot move, or fall prone if they failed by five or more. Bear in mind that balancing PCs move at half speed, and are flat footed unless they have five or more ranks in Balance. Any PC who takes damage while balancing must immediately make another balance check.



**Concentration:** Casting spells is quite difficult while resting on the moving arms. The vigorous motion requires a Concentration check [DC10] in order to cast a spell. If the winds are still blowing strongly the DC is 15, due to the added effects of the buffeting blast, and the 20% failure chance for a deafening environment may also apply.

**Dropped Items:** If the PCs drop items onto the arms they will either fall through the gaps at the start of the next round, if they are size tiny or less, or be grabbed and flung through by the arms. The items will fall to the island below, landing on solid stone and taking damage.

**Combat:** The arms have a limited combat capability at most APLs. At APL 6, 8, and 10 they can perform one improved trip attack per round in each five foot square. At APL 12 they can also make a single grapple attack in each five foot square, against anybody who is standing or lying on them. The arms are programmed to ignore immobile bodies, and prone PCs may be able to trick the arms into releasing them by remaining completely still (Concentration [DC10]).

**Destroying the Arms:** If the PCs reduce the ring of arms to zero hit points the entire object freezes, and becomes immobile. Then it starts to break away from the wall...

*With a sudden spasm the writhing arms come to a halt, frozen in stony immobility. A brief moment passes, just long enough to feel relief, and then an ominous shudder shakes the web-work of tangled arms. Crunching, grating vibrations build up in the stone, and a terrible groan echoes through the shaft [above the roar of the winds]. Suddenly, a dark crack opens in the stone under your feet, with a sharp snapping sound, and shards of rock begin to fall away from the arms, into the darkness below!*

It is obvious to anyone that the arms are in the process of collapsing. Exactly one (1) round after it was "killed", the entire ring of arms breaks away from the wall and plunges into the shaft below, taking everyone with it. If the PCs haven't grabbed on to the rope or the walls in that time they're either airborne, unconscious, or too stupid for words; they're going to fall. Falling PCs have one chance to grab the foot-rope (Climb DC 5 + 20 = 25), or the narrow stumps of the arms sticking out of the wall (Climb DC 15 + 20 = 35), depending on which square they were in, before they fall into the cavern below.

It's 75 feet down to the island, and the island is solid stone. The impact should be unpleasant.

Note that PCs who were in grapples (APL12 only) when the arms stopped moving can easily wriggle free before they plummet downwards.

### **Beneath the Arms: 535 feet – 545 feet.**

Once Mossul feels the weight of the party on the rope again, after such a brief absence, he will assume they have cleared some sort of blockage, and begin lowering the rope once more.

There is only a ten foot long stretch of shaft beneath the arms. This contains no spirits of either type, but the walls have six large smooth tear-drop shaped swellings on them, each about four feet wide and six feet long. The shaft enters the roof of the cavern immediately below the swellings, amid a ring of slender stalactites, that are 3 to 5 feet long.

The bulges are sealed chambers, or cysts, that contain the Smoldering Souls, which play a role in the final fight. The PCs are unlikely to investigate the cysts at this point, and you should only mention them briefly, as if they are unusual terrain, and nothing more. If the PCs do try and break in now, the walls of the chambers are eight inches thick, have 120 hp and a hardness of 8. If one of the chambers is breached the Oracle will release the other Smoldering Souls, and another fight will ensue.

## **Encounter 6: The Cavern.**

Once the PCs have reached the base of the shaft, and recovered from combat, they have their first chance to examine the Oracle's cave in detail.

### **The Cavern.**

The entire cave is roughly 1700 feet long and 1500 feet wide, and, with the exception of the single central island, is entirely filled by a cold clear lake. The ceiling of the cave peaks roughly 80 feet above the water line, and the lake is approximately 60 feet deep in most places.

*The twisting rope lowers you out of the claustrophobic shaft, through a ring of smooth gray stalactites, and into a vast open space. The air here is cold and crisp, like an evening before the first frost of autumn, and every breath leaves its mark in the air.*

*Distant walls, flecked with faintly phosphorescent minerals, shed a pale blue-gray light over the cavern below. A still dark lake fills the cavern, lying motionless around the shores of a low island of bare*

***rock. The entire subterranean landscape rests in dead immobility, without any light or sound, except what you bring with you.***

The air in the cavern is very cold, and the temperature is only a few degrees above the freezing point. This is not cold enough to harm the PCs, but it will numb their fingers and noses, and make prolonged stays uncomfortable. PCs of subterranean races (dwarves and gnomes), those with Profession (miner), and any who make Knowledge – Dungeoneering [DC 15] skill checks realize that this is unusual, but there is no apparent cause for the low temperature at this point.

Small deposits of phosphorescent minerals are scattered across the walls and ceiling of the cave, in fine veins and localized inclusions. These shed a feeble blue-gray light that is the equivalent of dim starlight. PCs with normal vision can make out the general shape of major terrain features, but few other details, unless they have additional illumination.

The walls and ceiling of the cave are made of relatively smooth gray natural limestone. The stone itself has a rough texture, but there few large handholds or cracks, which makes climbing somewhat difficult, and a Climb check of DC 25 is required to scale the walls. A ring of modest stalactites, three to five feet long, hangs around the mouth of the shaft, but the remainder of the cave roof is smooth and unornamented. Moving across the ceiling is extremely difficult (Climb [DC 40]) without magical assistance.

### **The Island.**

The central island is roughly 450 feet by 350 feet in size, with a slightly amoeboid shape, and a gently rounded profile that slopes smoothly down into the lake. The entire island is made of bare limestone bedrock, with no vegetation or loose material of any kind: no boulders, no rocks, no gravel, no soil, no sand. The sole exception is the shattered rubble that has fallen from the shaft above, and broken into fist-sized chunks on the rock. The smooth stone is largely featureless, and provides clear unobstructed footing for the PCs. There are only two man-made structures on the island.

**The Ruins:** The first structure, which is only fifty feet away from the point where the rope lift touches down, is the shattered ruin of the Oracle's shrine, where its human attendants and guards used to live, process supplicants, and accept tribute. The building was severely damaged in the fighting 1016 years ago, and it

collapsed shortly thereafter. Nothing remains of it now, except for a tumbled heap of stone.

If the PCs take twenty minutes or more to examine the ruins (using decent illumination) they may be able to gather several pieces of information:

- A successful Knowledge (architecture and engineering) check [DC 15] shows that the stone structure had a heavily built central tower, about three stories tall, and two plainly built one-story wings, in a style that is now over a thousand years out of date.
- A Search check [DC 15] reveals that the structure suffered extensive magical damage at one point prior to its collapse, and there are signs of acid scarring, melting due to intense heat, impact craters from a large unknown force or object, and even (Knowledge (arcana) [DC 20]) *disintegration*.
- Another Search check [DC 20] allows the PCs to piece together several fragments of a large relief of the Oracle that was once on the front of the tower. These disconnected pieces show a large section of scales, what may be a piece of a crest, or perhaps a membranous wing or a fin, and what may be a section of a tentacle of some sort, or possibly a snake body. These are the only parts of the sculpture that survived intact, and none of them join up with each other.

Unfortunately, there are no valuables in the ruined building. The few survivors of the last fighting looted the structure before they fled, and nothing of value remains.

**The Lectern:** A faint path, smoothed by the feet of the Oracle's servants, leads away from the ruins, across the stone, and down to the second man-made feature on the island. This is a massive four-foot tall brass lectern, which has corroded to a deep rich green over the centuries.

The lectern is bolted to the stone on a raised spit of rock that juts out from the island, just above a short, but relatively steep, cliff. This is where the servants of the Oracle once summoned their master, and where the supplicants stood to ask their questions. If the PCs examine the lectern (with decent illumination) they may make Spot [DC 25] or Search [DC 20] checks to notice a series of faint curving lines under the thick corrosion on the face of the lectern. If the corrosion is cleaned away, either magically, or with half an hour of manual polishing, the PCs can discern the underlying engraving, which shows an enormous tentacled fish rising from the waves.

However, approaching the lectern is likely to trigger the Rise of the Spirits, described below, so this clue may well go unnoticed.

### The Lake.

The lake in the Oracle's cave is not simply a mundane body of water. It is a sterile lifeless reservoir of negative energy that sustains over two thousand captive spirits, and the Oracle itself. The lake bed slopes away from the island at a 45 degree angle, until it reaches a depth of 60 feet. The water itself is perfectly clear, with no suspended sediment to impede vision.

PCs who approach the lake closely (i.e., enter the 5' square adjacent to the water) can feel the air temperature dropping, and it becomes plainly evident that the lake is the source of the unusual cold in the cavern.

PCs who look into the lake from the shore can see the lake bed sloping steeply down into the darkness. (Again, presuming they have appropriate illumination.) While the first few feet of the lake bed are bare stone, the rest of the bed is covered with thousands and thousands of bones.

*The cold that pours from the lake gnaws at your flesh and makes your bones ache, as you look into the still clear waters that surround the island. The first few feet of the lake bed are bare gray stone, but the stone quickly becomes impossible to see, because it's covered with a tangled jumble of irregular pale white objects.*

*The lake is filled with bones...*

*Hundreds and hundreds of clean, white, perfectly preserved bones lie in the circle of your light, without a trace of mud or silt to dirty their pristine curves. They lie in tumbled disarray, disordered and disarticulated, beneath the smooth glassy surface of the water, and the mute skulls stare blankly in all directions.*

The bone bed extends 50 feet out from the shores of the island, and is largely composed of human bones, with a mild admixture from other humanoid races, animals, and monsters. The bones of every creature ever sacrificed to the Oracle rest here, regardless of whether their spirits proved useful or not, along with the bones of hundreds more who were slaughtered to form the lake in the first place, and thousands of bones collected from graveyards for the same purpose. The bones are all disarticulated and mixed, and none form skeletons in their current condition.

**Lake water penalties:** Touching the water reveals that it is numbingly cold, and any living creature which enters the lake (even as little as ankle deep) suffers an immediate -2 Str penalty (-4 at APL 10 & 12) in any round they spend time in the water. The penalty is cut in half if the affected creature has any form of magical protection against cold or negative energy. If the affected creature has both forms of protection, then the penalty is entirely eliminated. *Water walkers* also suffer no penalties, given their limited contact with the lake, unless they lie prone on the surface of the water.

If someone is foolish enough to drink more than a tiny sip of the water they suffer double the normal penalty, and the effect lasts for 12 hours, during which time it can only be removed by *restoration* or *lesser restoration* type magics. Magical protections offer no benefit in cases of direct ingestion. The use of *water breathing* spells is not considered direct ingestion, since the character is not making the fluid part of his body.

**Divination on the lake:** Because the lake is magical, and suffused with negative energy, it registers on several detection spells. *Detect magic* reveals a strong homogenous aura of necromantic magic, which entirely masks any other magical auras of the same or weaker strength within the lake. *Detect evil* and *detect undead* reveal a massive shifting roiling undead aura of moderate strength, with numerous tiny flecks of varying nature (the spirits) moving in it.

The lake water loses all its magical and negative energy characteristics once it is removed from the cavern, and becomes entirely mundane.

### The Rise of the Spirits.

The undead spirits of the wisest and most knowledgeable victims that were sacrificed to the Oracle are trapped in the waters of lake, where the Oracle can use their minds and memories like a vast "living" library. The Spirits of the Wise lead a bleak and empty existence, subject to the whims of the Oracle, which can command them and rummage through their memories at will. There are somewhat more than 2200 spirits in the lake, accumulated over the 500 year active career of the Oracle, and they move like incorporeal ghosts throughout the waters of the lake.

When the PCs approach the lectern the spirits gather around the spit of land. Once the PCs have had a moment to look at the lectern, the spirits at the surface manifest as vaguely humanoid columns of water.

*As you stand by the corroded brass lectern, slow ripples and waves begin to form on the surface of the lake. Before your eyes, smooth columns of clear water rise from the surface, and after a moment you realize that they have assumed vague shapes, resembling men and women.*

*There are hundreds of them, surrounding the small spit of land in wavering ranks that extend off into the darkness, diminishing in height as they go. Their faces turn towards you, and they wait, in absolute silence.*

The nearest of the spirits are roughly five feet tall, and the furthest, which are about 70 feet off shore, are only a foot high. The PCs can easily move through the columns if they wish; they're only water, after all, and the spirits offer no resistance. The lake under the surface is also packed with spirits, one in each five foot cube, to a depth of 25 feet. Those spirits have not manifested, and are invisible, incorporeal, and quite difficult to detect without magic.

The Spirits of the Wise cannot communicate freely with the PCs, because the Oracle has forbidden them to do so, and most questions will go unanswered. However, if the PCs ask who, or what, they are, the spirits will answer. Each line after the first is delivered by a different spirit, so vary your cadence and tone of voice every time.

*Abruptly, the silent columns speak, in a dull whisperly chorus that hisses like rain on the water.*

*"We are the dead..."*

*For a moment, there is silence. And then, one by one, the columns speak again.*

*"Once, we were rich in knowledge,"*

*"Elevated by our intellect,"*

*"Arrogant,"*

*"Foolish,"*

*"And free..."*

*"Now we are bound here,"*

*"shackled by our learning,"*

*"anchored by chains of lore,"*

*"Sadder,"*

*"Wiser..."*

The spirits will not elaborate any further. If the PCs spend time trying to talk with them, or dither needlessly around the lectern, the spirits begin to chant quietly.

*A gentle rhythmic chant begins to rise from the translucent columns of water that surround you.*  
*"Summon the Oracle..."*

*"Summon the Oracle..."*

*"Summon the Oracle..."*

*"Summon the Oracle..."*

The spirits take no other action at this time, and if the PCs leave the lectern area they will subside, sadly, back into the lake.

**A note on turning:** Individual spirits are fairly easy to turn. They are 2HD creatures with +2 turn resistance, which means the PCs can drive them away in droves. However, because there are so many of them, and they occupy every single 5' cube of water in the vicinity of the lectern, they will tend to soak up turnings before more distant undead, like the Oracle, can be affected!

The effect of turning is only evident on spirits which have already manifested as columns of water at the surface. Those which have been turned sink slowly back into the lake with a reproachful expression. "Destroyed" spirits collapse with a sudden splash, but, like ghosts, they gradually reform over time. Spirits deeper in the lake are indistinguishable from the surrounding water, and the PCs probably won't be able to tell whether they've been turned or not.

When the fighting begins, the Spirits of the Wise stop manifesting, and their columns of water sink back into the lake, but the spirits don't actually leave the area.

## Encounter 7: The Oracle.

**Radic's Scrying:** Radic will be watching intently, at this point, ready to take notes of all that happens, and he will be joined by one of the leaders of the Black Cabal, looking in from as far away as Greyhawk City. His scrying skills are even greater than Radic's, and he makes use of *greater scrying*, with a Will DC of 23. Once again, make any saves discretely, and inform the PCs if they notice anything.

### Summoning the Oracle:

All it takes to summon the Oracle is a formal declaration of some sort, made by a PC at (or near) the lectern. Nearly anything will do: a formal speech, an ominous draconic invocation, or a simple "Oracle, I summon you!" will all suffice. (This is just a chance for a bit of role-playing color.)

Once the summons has been made, the Oracle, which has been listening and observing with great care, uses its *project image* ability to appear before the PCs. The image is positioned 65 feet off shore, just out of range of detection spells and conventional darkvision. (The Oracle itself is in an entirely different place,

submerged somewhere within the 260 foot range of the projection. It can take single move actions while manipulating the *projected image*, and will move to position itself one charge away from the shore as it observes the PCs' deployment. Choose accordingly.)

***As the echoes of your call fade away, a vast gray bulk rises out of the smooth silent waters off shore. It's shape is somewhat like an enormous fish, or a whale, but the obscene coiling of thick tentacles near its head reveal that this is nothing natural.***

The line about the "smooth silent waters" is a deliberate clue that the PCs are dealing with an illusion which makes no ripples in the water, so be sure to include that information, even if you are paraphrasing. If the PCs are humans relying on the natural cavern illumination, that's about all they will see. PCs with better means of seeing will observe more details.

***The creature's gray sagging flesh is covered in a patchwork of mottled scales, and its fins are tattered and torn. Great gaping wounds open like windows in its flanks, revealing massive rib bones, and dark seeping organs further inside. Three wide eyes line the front of its blunt head, but one is a cloudy unseeing white, and three long slime covered tentacles emerge from the beast's shoulders, near the stump of a fourth.***

***It's mouth is hidden somewhere beneath the water, but when it speaks its voice is dark, powerful, and clear.***

***"I am the Oracle."***

If one or two of the PCs open fire immediately, the Oracle will still try and talk. (It's seen knee-jerk reactions before.) If the whole party goes into combat, the Oracle will reply in kind, and nobody will learn the answers to Radic's questions. Otherwise, it's time to talk.

### **Speaking with the Oracle:**

The first thing the Oracle wants to find out is who's in charge. It was not unusual for supplicants to betray one another into captivity, in times past, and it wants to know if this is about to happen again.

***"You are a strange party to come seeking my wisdom. You flaunt no decadent luxuries or stolen treasures. You come with no thralls to serve you, no slaves to suffer your anger, no prisoners to bear your loads.***

***Which of you then is the master, who has dominion over the others, and brings his questions to my cavern?"***

If the PCs are the least bit hesitant about answering the question, or indicate that they are here on Radic's behalf, the Oracle realizes what's going on.

***"Ahhh, I believe I understand," says the Oracle, with a horrible gurgling chuckle.***

***"You carry questions for another, who will not come himself." Its tentacles writhe in the smooth water. 'Come, ask his questions, and I will answer them."***

If the PCs ask whether there is any form of payment or service required, the Oracle replies:

***"You need not fear. Your master will provide both service and payment, when the questions are answered."***

The Oracle doesn't want to get into a protracted discussion with the PCs. After all, it can pick their brains at leisure after it captures their souls. Discourage long conversations, and discourage the PCs from trying to ask their own questions. Instead, press on to Radic's questions. If Radic was not driven away or captured, he will be scrying on the PCs at this point, and you should give them another chance to spot his scrying sensor.

Before the adventure begins, take a moment to remove the question page (Appendix 3) from the back of the module, and fold it up so only one question is visible at a time. When a PC opens the scroll tube, tell them that there is only one question on the sheet of parchment. Then, as each question is read out loud, another question magically appears on the page. (Radic has accomplished this with a variant of the *secret page* spell.) To represent this, the player whose PC is asking the questions should unfold the paper to reveal each question in turn.

When the PCs start reading, the Oracle immediately recognizes what the questions are all about. The ancestral memories that pass from aboleth to aboleth go far enough back to have seen several cycles of emergence of the great ancient creatures, and the aboleths know where and when the emergences are likely to occur. They also know how utterly disinterested the ancient creatures are in working with human followers, and how carelessly destructive they can be. In their view, the best way to deal with the ancient ones, is to not attract their attention in the first place. The Oracle views Radic and the Black Cabal as a group of ignorant greedy fools, who are about to cause

a great deal of trouble with their profitless plan, and its contempt for them is evident in many of its answers.

**Question #1:** When must we be ready to greet the awakening of the great beast of old, that even now sleeps in the skirts of the mountains that divide east from west, and holds the power to shatter reality, to cast down kingdoms, and sunder nations?

**A:** *"You are too late! Already the great beast stirs in its chambers, and the Lesser Children emerge to walk the earth."*

**Fools and the ignorant begin to cleave to them even now...**

Bardic Knowledge, or Knowledge (arcana) [DC15]: These terms are not, to the PCs knowledge, descriptions that have ever been specifically associated with the Tarrasque (thank heavens!), nor any of the other big nasty unique critters of D&D fame.

**Question #2:** Where shall we find the hidden gate, which leads to the dimensionless chamber of the great ancient beast?

**"Where the light of distant Achernar rises on the ruins of forgotten Hadar, there the fate of your dark order shall be decided."**

Knowledge (planes or arcana) [DC 20]: Achernar is a Suliose name for a dim orange star, that lies in a constellation that was known as "The Serpent" in several ancient cultures.

Knowledge (geography or history) [DC 20], or Bardic Knowledge [DC 25]: Hadar is a ruined city that once stood in the foothills of the Barrier peaks, in what is now Durva Province,

**Question #3:** How did the priest-kings of old treat with the great ancient beasts, serve them, gain their favor, and earn their powers?

**A:** *"They did no such thing! The priest-kings were ignorant scavengers, living off scraps of power dropped by colossi. Not even the sleepers, for all their power, were welcomed by what you seek."*

Knowledge (history or arcana) [DC 25]: The priest-kings are agreed to have been ruling wizards in the dim distant past, but almost nothing is known of them today.

The sleepers are a complete mystery to the PCs.

**Question #4:** What manner of reward shall the beast give to us, who become its new priest kings and advocates?

**A:** *"The houses of your questions are built upon the sand of foolish hopes..."*

**Priest kings it never made. Your reward shall be labor. Your prize shall be slavery."**

In other words, that great ancient ones consider humanity to be so inconsequential, that they never bothered to grant any of them power. If some humans gained it inadvertently, so be it, but they displayed the same crushing indifference to them all, unless they annoyed them somehow.

**Question #5:** What are the true compounds of revealing, that may bring the ancient ones to our perception?

**A:** *"Use orpiment and cinnabar, the recement of colcothar, vitriols of blue and white, burned in fires in the night. Yet, do not think the choice was yours, if the ancients briefly pause to seek the source of the stench. Better yet, that you had not seen them at all..."*

Knowledge (arcana) [DC 25] or Craft (alchemy) [DC 20]: These are various pigments and alchemical compounds, many used since antiquity. Burning them would certainly release unpleasant fumes (mercury and arsenic among them), but there is little other apparent function.

**Question #6:** Give to us the order of the four hidden names of opening, concealed in the cyphers of Crypsis, that the ears of the ancient one may be opened to us, and our fates conjoined.

**A:** *"The names you will call are Kuabris, Defrabax, Rexulon and Reisabrax, but you will damn the countryside to ruin if you voice them, and the ancient one attends your call, for Crypsis did not know them all, and the unutterable fifth name knows no breath."*

**"That missing name may be your death..."**

Knowledge (arcana) [DC28]: Crypsis was an ancient historiographer, who lived some 3,200 years ago, and recorded many mystical legends of the time. In his declining years he also wrote three books full of paranoid gibberish, which were claimed to contain occult knowledge, if one knew how to decode them. The books are considered lost.

Once it has reached the sixth question, the Oracle will answer no more. It normally costs one soul per answer, and now it's time for the party to pay up. (In the case of parties of four or five, the Oracle has been unusually lenient.)

*"I will speak no more," says the Oracle.*

*"It is now time for your master to make payment. I have delivered six answers; six pieces of ancient knowledge; six services you could find nowhere else."*

*"And now", it continues, as its tentacles coil around each other in the still black water, "for each question, you will deliver into my power one intelligent, experienced, sane, soul..."*

*"Such as your souls..."*

The PCs will either go straight to combat, or make a protest. Unfortunately, there's no way to negotiate their way out of this. The Oracle has no interest in fair play, and it doesn't care if the PCs have been betrayed, or were simply ignorant. It will initiate combat shortly after the PCs refuse to pay.

### Other Options.

The PCs may look at the first question and decide then and there that they aren't going to show any of them to the Oracle. The Oracle will be amused if this happens, and taunt the PCs mildly for their "intellectual cowardice".

But, whether they ask questions or not, the Oracle has no intention of letting them leave. Its hunger has grown vast over the centuries, and it intends to have their souls by fair means or foul. Its *projected images* are running out, so it won't delay too long.

If the PCs try and *teleport* out immediately, in order to escape, or to capture Radic, they're going to run afoul of the dimensional barrier, and remain in the cavern.

### Fighting with the Oracle.

This is another complicated fight, with several interesting sequencing issues, a number of illusions, and the possibility of underwater combat. (It's worth reviewing the swimming rules on p.84 of the PHB, the water combat rules on pp.92-93 of the DMG, and the drowning rules on p.304 of the DMG.)

#### Creatures:

##### APL 6 (EL 10)

- ✚The Oracle; hp 52; See Appendix 1
- ✚Bonecoils (4); hp 42 each; See Appendix 1
- ✚Smoldering Soul; hp 45; See Appendix 1

##### APL 8 (EL 12)

- ✚The Oracle; hp 65; See Appendix 1
- ✚Bonecoils (2); hp 60 each; See Appendix 1
- ✚Smoldering Souls (2); hp 54 each, See Appendix 1

##### APL 10 (EL 14)

- ✚The Oracle; hp 78; See Appendix 1
- ✚Bonecoils (2); hp 90 each; See Appendix 1
- ✚Smoldering Souls (4); hp 54 each; See Appendix 1.

##### APL 12 (EL 16)

- ✚The Oracle; hp 91; See Appendix 1.
- ✚Bonecoils (2); hp 105 each; See Appendix 1.
- ✚Smoldering Souls (4); hp 81 each; See Appendix 1.

**The Oracle's Plan of Attack:** When the Oracle begins to fight it signals its subordinates with a single deep groaning noise, rather like a whale's call, that echoes sourcelessly throughout the cavern. This call triggers a pair of *programmed images*, summons the Smoldering Souls from their cysts in the shaft, and commands the Bonecoils to advance.

The Oracle then bombards the PCs with ranged spells via its *projected image*, for the first three rounds of combat, while the Smoldering Souls and the Bonecoils close in and attack from the second round onwards. On the fourth round the Oracle itself advances into combat, attempting to tackle spellcasters who are staying out of the fight.

Round 1: Oracle bombards, Smoldering Souls and Bonecoils advance, Spirits of the Wise subside.

Round 2: Oracle bombards, Bonecoils attack, Smoldering Souls advance into view.

Round 3: Oracle bombards, Bonecoils and Smoldering Souls attack.

Round 4: Oracle enters combat.

Whether the plan survives contact with the enemy remains to be seen.

**Terrain around the Lectern:** The fight with the Oracle is almost certain to happen at the Lectern, which is detailed on **Map #3**.

The Lectern is located on a raised spit of land that juts out into the lake from the main island. The flat top of the spit is roughly fifteen feet wide and twenty five feet long, and is surrounded by steep slopes leading down to the water. The furthest end of the spit is nearly vertical, and is, essentially, a five foot high cliff emerging from the water. PCs can easily hop down the short cliff without taking damage, but if they wish to climb up out of the lake it will take a Climb check [DC 20] to do so.

The banks to either side of the lectern are quite steeply sloped, and somewhat crumbly. It takes a Climb check [DC 5] to move on these slopes, which most PCs can

accomplish quite easily. However, to do so the PC must actually climb, which means using two hands, losing Dex bonuses, and moving at one quarter speed. If a PC enters these slopes without using the Climb skill, then they automatically slide down into the lake.

The narrow isthmus between the lectern and the main island is low lying, and nearly submerged. There is a single five foot wide dry path, but the five foot squares on either side are awash in six inch deep water. PCs can walk through this water without penalty, but they will have to make a Balance check [DC10] if they run or charge. The strength penalty from the magically frigid water applies to anyone passing through these squares.

The lake bed around the island slopes away at a 45 degree angle. As a general rule of thumb, a medium sized PC would stand waist deep in the first square out from shore, and be fully submerged in the second.

**The Programmed Images:** The Oracle has cast a pair of *programmed images* on either side of the spit of land that holds the lectern. These are triggered by the deep booming call of the Oracle. (This is the same call that triggers all the other combatants.)

Each image operates in a thirty foot wide, fifty foot long, and ten foot high rectangle, roughly centered on the shoreline (see **Map #3**). They show a group of five skeletons (four “warriors” and one “wizard” per image) assembling among the bones on the lake bed, advancing out of the lake, and casting preparatory buff spells.

The images are designed to distract the PCs, hopefully causing them to waste combat spells and turning attempts, and to separate the fighters from the supporting classes.

When the call is given the *programmed images* operate in the following sequence:

**Round 1:** Bones assemble themselves into skeletons beneath the surface of the lake.

**Round 2:** The skeletons stand up, look around and advance onto the island.

**Round 3:** The skeletal mage in each group casts buff spells on its warriors.

**Round 4-16:** The skeletons “ready” themselves to deal with attackers.

The *programmed images* have sound, smell, and even thermal properties, and the Oracle has used them all to make the illusion as detailed and threatening as

possible. Take advantage of this when you’re describing what the PCs see.

For example:

***Suddenly, a pallid gray light flickers in the water just offshore, and the naked bones that cover the lake bed begin to pull together into fully formed skeletons of men!***

And then:

***The cold lake water surges noisily through their bones as they stand upright, a bitter green light flickering in their eye sockets, and a vicious hissing laugh comes from their ever-grinning mouths.***

Continue using non-visual and environmental details to help convince PCs the illusion is real. When the skeletons advance out of the water, leaving ripples behind them, make their bony feet grate on the rock, and let rivulets of water stream off their bodies, and trickle across the stone floor.

The four “warriors” in each group have armor formed from jagged plates of bone, and wield wickedly sharp two-handed blades of curved and hooked bone. The “wizards” smoke and steam, and smell of sulfur (but only to those PCs in the area of effect). When they cast “buff spells” coils of luminous warm red smoke wrap around the “warriors”.

Remember that *programmed images* are figments, and not mental effects. The PCs do not automatically get saving throws against an illusion, unless “they study it carefully or interact with it in some fashion” (PHB, p173). Careful study requires at least a full round action, or more at your discretion. If a PC swats a skeleton with a sword, feel free to secretly roll a die, shake your head, and only then tell the player that the sword went straight through it; the implication being that the skeleton is incorporeal, like the undead they’ve already seen.

However, if someone points out the discrepancies of noise and splashes in the water, which incorporeal creatures cannot possibly produce, then it’s saving throw time. Similarly, if the skeletons wander through a *wall of force*, in their mindless pre-programmed advance, then it’s going to be pretty obvious that something’s not right.

**The Bonecoils:** The Bonecoils resemble the skeletons of enormous constrictor snakes, with a massive three-fingered gripping claw in place of the head. Although their skeletal nature makes them look undead, these are actually constructs made out of bone, and they



cannot be turned or destroyed like undead. Fortunately, the Bonecoils are very old, and they have weakened somewhat and become brittle over the ages

The Bonecoils lie 60 feet offshore (and, therefore, 60 feet down), on either side of the spit, inactive, and covered in the bones that line the bed of the lake. (See **Map #3**). They are extremely difficult to spot in this condition (Spot [DC 30]), and the PCs probably won't have line of sight or illumination which can reach them unless they leave the island and enter the water.

When the Oracle signals the attack, the Snakes "run" towards the island (i.e., take a x5 move), ending their first round ten feet offshore, and bursting out of the water on the second round, and grabbing at the PCs.

***With a roar of spray, an enormous snake-like creature bursts out of the lake water, and lunges towards you! Wet yellow bone gleams in your lights, and water drips from the massive skeletal three-fingered claw that sits where the snake's head should be...***

The Bonecoils are programmed to begin by tackling heavily armed fighter types, in preference to sorcerers and wizards. (The Oracle is reserving those for itself.) At APL 6 the Snakes aren't very big, and they have to advance onto the island to grapple the PCs. At higher APLs the Snakes are big enough that they have reach, and they can grab people and pull them into the water, retiring back into the depths with their prey. Be very careful with this tactic! Once a PC is underwater, in the strength-draining waters of the lake, the probability of escape is low, and the possibility of drowning is very real. Only use this on strong parties, at APL 12 and (maybe) APL 10.

**The Smoldering Souls:** Smoldering Souls are the undead spirits of evil men who died by fire, and returned as malevolent creatures of searing smoke. The Oracle has control of several Smoldering Souls, which are currently in the cysts that line the walls of the shaft beneath the ring of arms.

When the Oracle gives its call, and orders the fight to begin, the Smoldering Souls are magically released from their cysts, and descend from the shaft to join the fight.

***A fierce crackling sound echoes through the cavern, coming from far overhead, and a glance upwards reveals dazzling bolts of lightning dancing among the stalactites around the mouth of the shaft. Glowing droplets of molten rock rain downwards, and thick dark plumes of smoke rush***

***out of the shaft, turning in midair, and heading for you...***

The Smoldering Souls are a deep black colour, and are very difficult to see in the dark, gaining a +8 racial bonus to hide when they are not in bright light. The Smoldering Souls rapidly vanish into the darkness after they leave the light around the shaft, and advance unseen until the end of their second round of combat, when they enter the edge of the PCs vision. The Smoldering Souls will not be able to attack PCs near the lectern until the third round.

The Smoldering Souls concentrate on flying creatures, ganging up on them and attacking them in preference to earthbound foes. The Smoldering Souls will attack ground targets if nothing is in the air, but they will not enter the lake under any circumstances.

The Smoldering Souls are made of searingly hot smoke, and are "quasi-incorporeal". This means that the creature is considered incorporeal for purposes of melee or missile combat (50% miss chance, immune to non-magical weapons, ignores armor, moves silently), but it cannot enter or pass through solid objects, and it suffers spell damage normally. Smoldering Souls normally fight with fiery touch attacks, or by enveloping and choking their foes with their smoky bodies.

**The Oracle:** The PCs have already had a good look at the Oracle, or, rather, its *projected image*, by the time the fight erupts. The Oracle was seriously wounded in the last bout of fighting, taking bodily damage as well as brain damage. The weapons used against it were imbued with positive energy, and, as a result, the Oracle has never been able to fully heal its wounds. Its spell and spell-like abilities are limited, which will force it into melee combat sooner than would normally be the case.

After it gives the call to begin the fight, the Oracle will remain hidden underwater, and use the *projected image* to bombard the PCs with its area effect spells. Unfortunately, the Oracle's brain damage limits the power of its damaging spells, and they only do 2/3 of the normal amount. Once these spells are exhausted, in a mere three rounds, the Oracle will abandon the *projected image*, and lunge up onto shore to tackle the PCs itself. It hopes, by this time, that the spellcasters in the party will have removed themselves from the melee, and will be isolated, and vulnerable to a surprise attack.

The Oracle's main melee attack comes from its remaining three tentacles, which secrete a thick gray slime. Any living creature struck by a tentacle is

covered with a disgusting smear of the goo, and every smear bestows a negative level, so long as the slime is left on the victim. The Oracle may deliver the slime attacks as part of a powerful slam attack, or as part of a touch attack which does no other damage.

The slime is very sticky, and strongly hydrophobic, and it takes a full minute to remove a single smear by washing in water, wine, or something similar. However, it only takes a full round action to wash off a smear of slime using a flask of oil. (*Anyone who has cleaned thick grease off their hands by using WD-40 knows how this works.*) The negative levels bestowed by the slime never become permanent, unless a PC takes enough hits that he dies.

The Oracle won't back off. It will fight furiously, trying to kill or disable as many of the PCs as it can, but it won't retreat into the lake if it's losing. Centuries of continuous pain and isolation take their toll, even on undead psyches. Whether the Oracle consciously realizes it or not, it wants a conclusion. If the end comes, it will be a relief.

***"Strike," says the vast broken creature, as it lies helpless on the rock by the shore. "Strike now, and end it..."***

## Conclusion: The Cavern

### Victory:

When the PCs destroy the Oracle, the force that holds the entire collection of undead in captivity is removed. If the PCs have been sufficiently challenged, the remaining foes immediately dissipate, or collapse into pieces. If the PCs still need a workout, then keep the fight going until all of their opponents have been destroyed.

The Bound Ones, Watchers, and Smoldering Souls flee immediately after the Oracle's death, going to their eternal rest. The Dimensional Barrier begins to slowly fade away, and the Spirits of the Wise also take their leave, but before they do so, some of the wisest stop to speak with the PCs.

***Tall columns of water form near the shore, gleaming in your lights as they turn to face you, and their faces and features are more detailed than ever before.***

***"You have destroyed the Oracle,"***

***"Broken our chains,"***

***"Shattered our shackles,"***

***"And set us free..."***

***Each of the spirits bows in turn, their tired and aged faces relaxing into expressions of peace and tranquility, as they deposit a few glittering objects on the cold gray stone.***

***"We bring you such small baubles,"***

***"-And trinkets-"***

***"as have survived the ages,"***

***"as a measure of thanks..."***

***They pause a moment, and then speak in unison. "But, more, we bid you drink" they say, raising cupped hands full of their own substance, "and accept our gift of knowledge."***

If the PCs accept the offer and drink, they feel a gentle tingling in their minds, as if an almost forgotten memory is trying to work its way to the surface. They receive the Gift of Knowledge on their AR. Those that refuse, or cannot drink, do not receive the gift.

After the PCs have drunk their fill the spirits bow once more, and sink back into the lake, never to be seen again.

### Treasure:

**APL 6:** L: 0 gp; C: 0 gp; M: *Brooch of shielding* (125 gp), *Elemental Gem – Water* (187), *Ring of Swimming* (208 gp)

**APL 8:** L: 0 gp; C: 0 gp; M: *Brooch of shielding* (125 gp), *Chime of Opening* (250 gp), *Elemental Gem – Water* (187), *Ring of Climbing* (208 gp), *Ring of Swimming* (208 gp)

**APL 10:** L: 0 gp; C: 0 gp; M: *Bead of Force* (250 gp), *Bottle of Air* (604 gp), *Brooch of shielding* (125 gp), *Chime of Opening* (250 gp), *Elemental Gem – Water* (187), *Ring of Climbing* (208 gp), *Ring of Counterspells* (333 gp), *Ring of Swimming* (208 gp)

**APL 12:** L: 0 gp; C: 100 gp; M: *Bead of Force* (250 gp), *Bottle of Air* (604 gp), *Brooch of shielding* (125 gp), *Chime of Opening* (250 gp), *Dark Blue Rhomboid Ioun Stone* (833 gp), *Elemental Gem – Water* (187), *Ring of Climbing* (208 gp), *Ring of Counterspells* (333 gp), *Ring of Swimming* (208 gp), *Strand of Prayer Beads, Lesser* (800 gp).

### Defeat:

If the PCs are defeated, and decide to retreat, they may have a problem. Teleportation is not an option if the dimensional barrier is still operating, and Mossul will not raise the rope unless there is at least half a party's weight on it, which the surviving PCs may not be able to provide. Even if they can, the ascent is slow (5 feet

every other round), and PCs on the rope will be vulnerable to any remaining Smoldering Souls as they ride upwards. Fortunately, the Smoldering Souls will be blocked by the vortex of fog, if it is still operating. Unfortunately, any surviving Bound Ones will make their presence known when the PCs reach their location.

Fallen PCs will be taken by the Oracle. If the PCs are not resurrected at the end of the event, from body scraps taken by retreating comrades, the Oracle will have time to complete a long dark ritual, and the spirits of the fallen will be added to the pool of knowledge, to dwell there until freed by adventurers to follow.

## Conclusion: Back in Lopolla

Radic fled Lopolla days ago, before the PCs even reached the mine, unless he was captured before the PCs left. The PCs get no additional rewards or information from him.

If the PCs were already working for the Archons, they can now get paid. The Archons will give each person 25 gp x APL for information about the Oracle, and 25 gp x APL for the answers to Radic's questions, in addition to the advance they already have (another 25 gp X APL).

If the PCs were working for Radic they may keep their advance (25 gp x APL), but they're not going to get any more pay from him. Radic has fled the city, taking his money and information with him. However, if the PCs give their information to the authorities, it will eventually wind up in the hands of the Archons. The PCs will each be awarded 20 gp x APL for information about the Oracle, and 20 gp x APL for the answers to Radic's questions.

In both cases, the Archons will be concerned about potential trouble in the next few years, and they will move to enhance the party's capabilities, in case they are needed as investigators in the future. Accordingly, the Archons will make their armouries and workshops available to the PCs, in order to upgrade some of their equipment.

### The End

## Experience Point Summary

To award experience for this adventure, add up the values for the objectives accomplished. Then assign the experience award. Award the total value (objectives plus roleplaying) to each character.

### Encounter 4: The Fight in the Shaft.

Defeat the Bound Ones:

APL6 300 xp; APL8 360 xp; APL10 420 xp;

APL12 480 xp;

### Encounter 5: The Fixed Defenses.

Penetrate the Fixed Defenses

APL6 120 xp; APL8 180 xp; APL10 240 xp;

APL12 300 xp;

### Encounter 7: The Oracle.

Defeat the Oracle

APL6 300 xp; APL8 360 xp; APL10 420 xp;

APL12 480 xp;

### Story Award

Detecting Radic's deception:

APL6 35 xp; APL8 45 xp; APL10 50 xp;

APL12 55 xp;

Capturing Radic:

APL6 30 xp; APL8 40 xp; APL10 45 xp;

APL12 50 xp;

Return with answers:

APL6 70 xp; APL8 90 xp; APL10 110 xp;

APL12 130 xp;

### Discretionary roleplaying award

APL6 45 xp; APL8 50 xp; APL10 65 xp;

APL12 80 xp;

### Total possible experience:

APL 6	900 xp
APL 8	1,125 xp
APL 10	1,350 xp
APL 12	1,575 xp

## Treasure Summary

During an adventure, characters encounter treasure, usually finding it in the possession of their foes. Every encounter that features treasure has a “treasure” section within the encounter description, giving information about the loot, coins, and magic items that make up the encounter’s treasure.

The loot total is the number of gold pieces each character gains if the foes are plundered of all their earthly possessions. Looting the bodies takes at least 10 minutes per every 5 enemies, and if the characters cannot take the time to loot the bodies, they do not gain this gold. If you feel it is reasonable that characters can go back to loot the bodies, and those bodies are there (i.e., not carted off by dungeon scavengers, removed from the scene by the local watch, and so on), characters may return to retrieve loot. If the characters do not loot the body, the gold piece value for the loot is subtracted from the encounter totals given below.

The coin total is the number of gold pieces each character gains if they take the coin available. A normal adventuring party can usually gather this wealth in a round or so. If for some reason, they pass up this treasure, the coin total is subtracted from the encounter totals given below.

Next, the magic items are listed. Magic item treasure is the hardest to adjudicate, because they are varied and because characters may want to use them during the adventure. Many times characters must cast *identify*, *analyze dweomer* or similar spell to determine what the item does and how to activate it. Other times they may attempt to use the item blindly. If the magic item is consumable (a potion, scroll, magic bolts, etc.) and the item is used before the end of the adventure, its total is subtracted from the adventure totals below.

Once you have subtracted the value for unclaimed treasure from each encounter add it up and that is the number of gold pieces a characters total and coin value increase at the end of the adventure. Write the total in the GP Gained field of the adventure certificate. Because this is a Regional scenario, characters may spend additional Time Units to practice professions or create items immediately after the adventure so this total may be modified by other circumstances.

L = Looted gear from enemy; C = Coin, Gems, Jewelry, and other valuables; M = Magic Items.

L: Looted gear from enemy

C: Coin, Gems, Jewelry, and other valuables

M: Magic Items (sell value)

### Encounter One: Radic the Sage

APL 6: L: 0 gp; C: 150 gp; M: 0 gp

APL 8: L: 0 gp; C: 200 gp; M: 0 gp

APL 10: L: 0 gp; C: 250 gp; M: 0 gp

APL 12: L: 0 gp; C: 300 gp; M: 0 gp

### Conclusion: The Cavern

APL 6: L: 0 gp; C: 0 gp; M: *Brooch of shielding* (125 gp), *Elemental Gem – Water* (187), *Ring of Swimming* (208 gp)

APL 8: L: 0 gp; C: 0 gp; M: *Brooch of shielding* (125 gp), *Chime of Opening* (250 gp), *Elemental Gem – Water* (187), *Ring of Climbing* (208 gp), *Ring of Swimming* (208 gp)

APL 10: L: 0 gp; C: 0 gp; M: *Bead of Force* (250 gp), *Bottle of Air* (604 gp), *Brooch of shielding* (125 gp), *Chime of Opening* (250 gp), *Elemental Gem – Water* (187), *Ring of Climbing* (208 gp), *Ring of Counterspells* (333 gp), *Ring of Swimming* (208 gp)

APL 12: L: 0 gp; C: 100 gp; M: *Bead of Force* (250 gp), *Bottle of Air* (604 gp), *Brooch of shielding* (125 gp), *Chime of Opening* (250 gp), *Dark Blue Rhomboid Ioun Stone* (833 gp), *Elemental Gem – Water* (187), *Ring of Climbing* (208 gp), *Ring of Counterspells* (333 gp), *Ring of Swimming* (208 gp), *Strand of Prayer Beads*, *Lesser* (800 gp).

### Conclusion: Back in Lopolla

APL 6: L: 0 gp; C: 300 gp; M: 0 gp

APL 8: L: 0 gp; C: 400 gp; M: 0 gp

APL 10: L: 0 gp; C: 500 gp; M: 0 gp

APL 12: L: 0 gp; C: 600 gp; M: 0 gp

### Total Possible Treasure

APL 6: 800 gp

APL 8: 1,250 gp

APL 10: 2,100 gp

APL 12: 3,000 gp

## Special

☛ **Gift of Knowledge:** Ancient prescient spirits have implanted four pieces of helpful knowledge into the PC's mind. The PC may use this gift four times, to gain a +20 circumstance bonus to a Knowledge skill check. This may even be used untrained. Unfortunately, the knowledge does not include developments within the last 1000 years! Once the four pieces of information are used, the Gift of Knowledge should be crossed off the AR. [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ]

☛ **Archon workshop access:** The Archons have agreed to allow their artisans to upgrade some of the PCs items. One simple or martial weapon AND one armor or shield, may be upgraded by +1, to a maximum of +2. These upgrades may be done at different times. Cross each upgrade off as it is used. (Regional)

☛ **Archon library access:** The Archons have agreed to allow the PC limited research access to their library. The PC may spend 1 time unit and add 1 wizard spell from the PHB of up to 5<sup>th</sup> level to their spell book, at no additional cost. Cross this favor off when it is used. (Regional)

# Appendix One: NPC and Monster Stat Blocks

## Encounter 1: Radic The Sage.

### All APLs

☛ **Radic Ranladsson:** Male human W7 (Diviner) Exp3; Medium Humanoid; HD 7d4-7 + 3d6-3; hp 23; Init +0; Spd 30 ft.; AC 10 (touch 10, flat-footed 10); Atk +4 melee (dagger 1d4-1, 19-20/x2, piercing/slashing); SA spells; AL LE; SV Fort +2, Ref +3, Will +11; Str 8, Dex 10, Con 8, Int 15 Wis 13, Cha 12. Height 5'7". Weight 130 lb.

*Skills and Feats:* Bluff (+10), Decipher Script (+6), Diplomacy (+14), Forgery (+6), Gather Information (+10), Knowledge—arcana (+12), Knowledge—geography (+15), Knowledge—history (+15), Knowledge—local (+7), Knowledge—planes (+12), Languages (Common, Baklunish, Oeridian, Seul, Flan, Draconic, Elven, Dwarvish), Sense Motive (+8), Spellcraft (+9); Charlatan, Greater Spell Focus (Divination), Iron Will, Negotiator, Persuasive, Scribe Scroll, Spell Focus (Divination), Trustworthy.

*Possessions:* Dagger.

*Spells Prepared:* 4+1/4+1/3+1/2+1/1+1; base DC = 12 + spell level (14 for divination): 0— *arcane mark*, *detect magic* ~~x2~~, *read magic* x2; 1<sup>st</sup> - ~~alarm~~ ~~x2~~, *disguise self*, *obscuring mist*, ~~protection from law~~; 2<sup>nd</sup> - *detect thoughts*, *invisibility*, ~~misdirection~~, ~~see invisibility~~; 3<sup>rd</sup> - *dispel magic*, ~~nondetection~~, ~~tongues~~; 4<sup>th</sup> - *detect scrying*, *solid fog*.

## Encounter 4: The Fight in the Shaft.

### APL 6

☛ **Bound Ones:** CR 3; Medium Undead (Incorporeal); HD 4d12; hp 20; Init +2; Spd 0 ft.; AC 12 (touch 12, flat-footed 10) [+2 Dex]; Atk +5 melee (1d4 plus Numbing Blow, incorporeal touch); SA Numbing Blow; SQ turn resistance +2, life sense, darkvision 120 ft., undead traits; AL N; SV Fort +1, Ref +3, Will +5; Str -, Dex 14, Con -, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 10.

*Skills and Feats:* Hide +9, Intimidate +7, Listen +7, Spot +7; Combat Reflexes, Dual Strike, Weapon Focus (incorporeal touch).

**Numbing Blow (Su):** Each successful melee attack causes the temporary loss of 1 point from a randomly chosen attribute, due to numbing and scrambling of the nervous system. This is not a negative energy attack. The ability damage heals 30 minutes after it was inflicted.

**Life Sense (Su):** Bound Ones can see the life force of living creatures within 60', as if using blindsight, and can judge their condition as if using *deathwatch*.

**Undead Traits:** immune to critical hits, non-lethal damage, ability damage or drain, poison, paralysis, stunning, necromancy, mind affecting effects, most Fort saves, etc. See MM, p. 317.

### APL 8

☛ **Bound Ones:** CR 5; Medium Undead (Incorporeal); HD 6d12; hp 30; Init +2; Spd 0 ft.; AC 13 (touch 13, flat-footed 11) [+2 Dex, +1 Deflection]; Atk +6 melee (1d4 plus Numbing Blow, incorporeal touch); SA Numbing Blow; SQ turn resistance +2, life sense, darkvision 120 ft., undead traits; AL N; SV Fort +2, Ref +4, Will +6; Str -, Dex 14, Con -, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 12.

*Skills and Feats:* Hide +11, Intimidate +10, Listen +9, Spot +9; Combat Reflexes, Dual Strike, Weapon Focus (incorporeal touch).

**Numbing Blow (Su):** Each successful melee attack causes the temporary loss of 1 point from a randomly chosen attribute, due to numbing and scrambling of the nervous system. This is not a negative energy attack. The ability damage heals 30 minutes after it was inflicted.

**Life Sense (Su):** Bound Ones can see the life force of living creatures within 60', as if using blindsight, and can judge their condition as if using *deathwatch*.

**Undead Traits:** immune to critical hits, non-lethal damage, ability damage or drain, poison, paralysis, stunning, necromancy, mind affecting effects, most Fort saves, etc. See MM, p. 317.

### APL 10

☛ **Bound Ones:** CR 7; Medium Undead (Incorporeal); HD 8d12; hp 40; Init +2; Spd 0 ft.; AC 14 (touch 14, flat-footed 12) [+2 Dex, +2 Deflection]; Atk +7 melee (1d6 plus Numbing Blow, incorporeal touch); SA Numbing Blow; SQ turn resistance +2, life sense, darkvision 120 ft., undead traits; AL N; SV Fort +2, Ref +4, Will +10; Str -, Dex 14, Con -, Int 10, Wis 14, Cha 14.

*Skills and Feats:* Hide +13, Intimidate +13, Listen +11, Spot +11; Combat Reflexes, Dual Strike, Iron Will, Weapon Focus (incorporeal touch).

**Numbing Blow (Su):** Each successful melee attack causes the temporary loss of 1 point from a randomly chosen attribute, due to numbing and scrambling of the nervous system. This is not a negative energy attack. The ability damage heals 30 minutes after it was inflicted.

**Life Sense (Su):** Bound Ones can see the life force of living creatures within 60', as if using blindsight, and can judge their condition as if using *deathwatch*.

**Undead Traits:** immune to critical hits, non-lethal damage, ability damage or drain, poison, paralysis, stunning, necromancy, mind affecting effects, most Fort saves, etc. See MM, p. 317.

#### **APL 12**

☛**Bound Ones:** CR 8; Medium Undead (Incorporeal); HD 10d12; hp 50; Init +3; Spd 0 ft.; AC 15 (touch 15, flat-footed 12) [+3 Dex, +2 Deflection]; Atk +9 melee (1d8 plus Numbing Blow, incorporeal touch); SA Numbing Blow; SQ turn resistance +2, life sense, darkvision 120 ft., undead traits; AL N; SV Fort +3, Ref +8, Will +11; Str -, Dex 16, Con -, Int 10, Wis 14, Cha 14.

*Skills and Feats:* Hide +16, Intimidate +15, Listen +13, Spot +13; Combat Reflexes, Dual Strike, Iron Will, Lightning Reflexes, Weapon Focus (incorporeal touch).

**Numbing Blow (Su):** Each successful melee attack causes the temporary loss of 1 point from a randomly chosen attribute, due to numbing and scrambling of the nervous system. This is not a negative energy attack. The ability damage heals 30 minutes after it was inflicted.

**Life Sense (Su):** Bound Ones can see the life force of living creatures within 60', as if using blindsight, and can judge their condition as if using *deathwatch*.

**Undead Traits:** immune to critical hits, non-lethal damage, ability damage or drain, poison, paralysis, stunning, necromancy, mind affecting effects, most Fort saves, etc. See MM, p. 317.

### **Encounter 5: The Fixed Defenses.**

#### **APL 6**

☛**Nozzle Mouths (1/2 inch thick magical bronze, caster level 3):** Hardness 12; hp 25; AC 5; Break DC 26; SQ: object qualities, vulnerable to bludgeoning; Saving throws: F +3, R -2, W na.

**Object qualities:** Half damage from electricity and fire, one quarter damage from cold. Full damage from acid and sonic. Half damage from ranged weapons. Immune to non-lethal damage and critical hits.

**Vulnerable to bludgeoning:** The nozzle mouths are vulnerable to being crushed shut by blows from blunt objects, and thus take double damage from bludgeoning weapons. (Damage is doubled before hardness is subtracted.)

**Break DC:** The Break DC of the nozzle mouths represents the PC's chance to bend the nozzle shut through pure strength of grip. The PC must have both hands free and take a full attack action to attempt this.

☛**Ring of Arms:** Large construct; HD 4d10+30; hp 60; Init +0; Spd 0 ft.; AC 15 (touch 9, flat-footed 16) [+6 natural, -1 size]; BAB/Grapple +3 / na; Atk +5 melee (trip only (+10), no damage); Face/Reach 10 ft. / 5 ft.; SA: One attack in each 5 ft. square; SQ: Construct traits, blindsight 60 ft., tremorsense 60 ft.; AL N; SV Fort +1, Ref +1, Will -4; Str 14, Dex 10, Con -, Int -, Wis 1, Cha 1.

*Skills and Feats:* Improved Trip (B)

**Construct traits:** immune to critical hits, non-lethal damage, ability damage or drain, poison, paralysis, stunning, necromancy, mind affecting effects, most Fort saves, etc. See MM, p. 307.

#### **APL 8**

☛**Nozzle Mouths (3/4 inch thick magical bronze, caster level 5):** Hardness 12; hp 32; AC 5; Break DC 26; SQ: object qualities, vulnerable to bludgeoning; Saving throws: F +4, R -1, W na.

**Object qualities:** Half damage from electricity and fire, one quarter damage from cold. Full damage from acid and sonic. Half damage from ranged weapons. Immune to non-lethal damage and critical hits.

**Vulnerable to bludgeoning:** The nozzle mouths are vulnerable to being crushed shut by blows from blunt objects, and thus take double damage from bludgeoning weapons. (Damage is doubled before hardness is subtracted.)

**Break DC:** The Break DC of the nozzle mouths represents the PC's chance to bend the nozzle shut through pure strength of grip. The PC must have both hands free and take a full attack action to attempt this.

☛**Ring of Arms:** Large construct; HD 6d10+30; hp 75; Init +0; Spd 0 ft.; AC 16 (touch 9, flat-footed 16) [+7 natural, -1 size]; BAB/Grapple +5/na; Atk +8 melee (trip only (+11), no damage); Face/Reach 10 ft. / 5 ft.; SA: One attack in each 5 ft. square; SQ: DR 5/ metal bludgeoning weapons or picks, resistance to energy (all types) 5, construct traits, blindsight 60 ft., tremorsense 60 ft.; AL N; SV Fort +2, Ref +2, Will -3; Str 16, Dex 10, Con -, Int -, Wis 1, Cha 1.

*Skills and Feats:* Improved Trip (B)

**Construct traits:** immune to critical hits, non-lethal damage, ability damage or drain, poison, paralysis, stunning, necromancy, mind affecting effects, most Fort saves, etc. See MM, p. 307.

#### **APL 10**

☛**Nozzle Mouths (1 inch thick magical bronze, caster level 7):** Hardness 12; hp 40; AC 5; Break DC 26;

SQ: object qualities, vulnerable to bludgeoning; Saving throws: F +5, R +0, W na.

**Object qualities:** Half damage from electricity and fire, one quarter damage from cold. Full damage from acid and sonic. Half damage from ranged weapons. Immune to non-lethal damage and critical hits.

**Vulnerable to bludgeoning:** The nozzle mouths are vulnerable to being crushed shut by blows from blunt objects, and thus take double damage from bludgeoning weapons. (Damage is doubled before hardness is subtracted.)

**Break DC:** The Break DC of the nozzle mouths represents the PC's chance to bend the nozzle shut through pure strength of grip. The PC must have both hands free and take a full attack action to attempt this.

◆ **Ring of Arms:** Large construct; HD 8d10+30; hp 90; Init +0; Spd 0 ft.; AC 18 (touch 9, flat-footed 18) [+9 natural, -1 size]; BAB/Grapple +6/na; Atk +10 melee (trip only (+12), no damage); Face/Reach 10 ft. / 5 ft.; SA: One attack in each 5 ft. square; SQ: DR 5/ metal bludgeoning weapons or picks, resistance to energy (all types) 10, construct traits, blindsight 60 ft., tremorsense 60 ft.; SR 13; AL N; SV Fort +2, Ref +2, Will -3; Str 18, Dex 10, Con -, Int -, Wis 1, Cha 1.

*Skills and Feats:* Improved Trip (B)

**Construct traits:** immune to critical hits, non-lethal damage, ability damage or drain, poison, paralysis, stunning, necromancy, mind affecting effects, most Fort saves, etc. See MM, p. 307.

#### APL 12

◆ **Nozzle Mouths (1 1/2 inch thick magical bronze, caster level 9):** Hardness 12; hp 65; AC 5; Break DC 26; SQ: object qualities, vulnerable to bludgeoning; Saving throws: F +6, R +1, W na.

**Object qualities:** Half damage from electricity and fire, one quarter damage from cold. Full damage from acid and sonic. Half damage from ranged weapons. Immune to non-lethal damage and critical hits.

**Vulnerable to bludgeoning:** The nozzle mouths are vulnerable to being crushed shut by blows from blunt objects, and thus take double damage from bludgeoning weapons. (Damage is doubled before hardness is subtracted.)

**Break DC:** The Break DC of the nozzle mouths represents the PC's chance to bend the nozzle shut through pure strength of grip. The PC must have both hands free and take a full attack action to attempt this.

◆ **Ring of Arms:** Large construct; HD 10d10+30; hp 105; Init +0; Spd 0 ft.; AC 20 (touch 9, flat-footed 20)

[+11 natural, -1 size]; BAB/Grapple +8/+17; Atk +13 melee (trip (+13) or grapple (1d4+5) only); Face/Reach 10 ft. / 5 ft.; SA: One attack in each 5 ft. square; SQ: DR 10/ metal bludgeoning weapons or picks, resistance to energy (all types) 15, construct traits, blindsight 60 ft., tremorsense 60 ft.; SR 19; AL N; SV Fort +3, Ref +3, Will -2; Str 20, Dex 10, Con -, Int -, Wis 1, Cha 1.

*Skills and Feats:* Improved Grapple (B), Improved Trip (B),

**Construct traits:** immune to critical hits, non-lethal damage, ability damage or drain, poison, paralysis, stunning, necromancy, mind affecting effects, most Fort saves, etc. See MM, p. 307.

### Encounter 7: The Oracle.

#### APL 6

◆ **The Oracle:** CR 6; Huge Unique Undead Aberration (Aquatic); HD 8d12; hp 52; Init +5; Spd 10 ft., swim 60 ft.; AC 16 (touch 9, flat-footed 15) [+1 Dex, +7 natural, -2 size]; BAB/Grapple +4/+19; Atk +11 melee (1d6+7 plus slime, 3 tentacles); Face/Reach 15 ft./10 ft.; SA: Slime, psionics, spell-like abilities; SQ: DR 5/slashing, turn resistance +2, resistance to cold 5, darkvision 120 ft., enfeebled spell; SR 9; AL NE; SV Fort +2, Ref +3, Will +9; Str 24, Dex 12, Con -, Int 14, Wis 16, Cha 16.

*Skills and Feats:* Concentration +11, Knowledge (arcana) +13, Knowledge (history) +13, Knowledge (planes) +13; Spellcraft +13, Spot +14, Swim +8 (racial); Combat Casting, Combat Reflexes, Improved Initiative.

**Slime (Su):** each hit from the Oracle's tentacles leaves sticky slime on its target, which bestows one negative level per hit. The slime may be delivered as a touch attack, if desired. Each slime hit takes one minute to wash off with water, or one full round to wash off with oil. Removal of the slime removes the negative level.

**Enfeebled Spell (Su):** The Oracle is incapable of properly channelling the full amount of magical energy into its spell-like abilities. All damaging spells cast by the Oracle do only 2/3 of their normal damage, before any saving throws are rolled.

**Undead Traits:** immune to critical hits, non-lethal damage, ability damage or drain, poison, paralysis, stunning, necromancy, mind affecting effects, most Fort saves, etc. See MM, p. 317.

**Psionics (Sp):** 3 times per day – *programmed image* (DC 19), 5 times per day – *project image* (DC 20). Effective caster level 16.

**pell-Like Abilities (Sp):** Once per day as wizard: *Fireball* (DC 15), *Magic Missile*, *Melf's Acid Arrow* (DC 14). Effective caster level 6.



☛**Bonecoils:** CR 3; Medium construct; HD 4d10+20; hp 42; Init 0; Spd 30 ft., swim 15 ft.; AC 17 (touch 10, flat-footed 17) [+7 natural]; BAB/Grapple +3/+11; Atk +7 melee (1d4+6, claw); SQ DR 5/blunt, resistance to cold 5, darkvision 60 ft., construct traits; AL N; SV Fort +1, Ref +1, Will -4; Str 18, Dex 10, Con -, Int -, Wis 1, Cha 1.

*Skills and Feats:* Improved Grapple (B)

**Construct traits:** immune to critical hits, non-lethal damage, ability damage or drain, poison, paralysis, stunning, necromancy, mind affecting effects, most Fort saves, etc. See MM, p. 307.

☛**Smoldering Soul:** CR 5; Medium undead (quasi-incorporeal, fire); HD 5d12; hp 45; Init +6; Spd fly 60 ft. (good); AC 14 (touch 14, flat-footed 12) [+2 Dex, +2 Deflection]; Atk +5 melee (1d6 fire, incorporeal touch); SA envelop; SQ undead traits, quasi-incorporeal, darkvision 120 ft., life sense, immune to fire, resistance to lightning 5, vulnerable to cold (+50% damage); AL CE; SV Fort +1, Ref +4, Will +4; Str -, Dex 14, Con -, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 14.

*Skills and Feats:* Hide (+10, +18 in dark conditions), Intimidate (+9), Listen (+8), Spot (+8); Combat Reflexes, Improved Initiative (B), Weapon Focus (touch).

**Envelop (Su):** A Smoldering Soul can envelop medium or smaller opponents by moving into their square, without provoking an attack of opportunity. A creature inside a Smoldering Soul cannot see out, automatically takes 1d6 points of fire damage, and may suffer severe smoke inhalation and heat prostration. Each round a creature is enveloped it must make two Fort saves (DC 12) or be blinded for 1 round after they leave the smoke, and be exhausted (1/2 speed, -6 Str, -6 Dex, no running or charging) for 2 rounds after leaving the smoke. The victim recovers completely after those times. A full round action spent washing out the eyes will cure the blindness, and various spells will cure the blindness and exhaustion sooner.

**Quasi-Incorporeal (Su):** Smoldering Souls are made of searingly hot smoke, and are “quasi-incorporeal”. This means that the creature is considered incorporeal for purposes of melee or missile combat (50% miss chance, immune to non-magical weapons, ignores armor, moves silently), but it cannot enter or pass through solid objects, and it suffers full spell damage normally.

**Life Sense (Su):** Smoldering Souls can see the life force of living creatures within 60', as if using blindsight, and can judge their condition as if using *deathwatch*.

**Undead Traits:** immune to critical hits, non-lethal damage, ability damage or drain, poison, paralysis,

stunning, necromancy, mind affecting effects, most Fort saves, etc. See MM, p. 317.

## **APL 8**

☛**The Oracle:** CR 8; Huge Unique Undead Aberration (Aquatic); HD 10d12; hp 65; Init +5; Spd 10 ft., swim 60 ft.; AC 17 (touch 9, flat-footed 16) [+1 Dex, +8 natural, -2 size]; BAB/Grapple +5/+20; Atk +12 melee (1d6+7 plus slime, 3 tentacles); Face/Reach 15 ft./10 ft.; SA: Slime, psionics, spell-like abilities; SQ: DR 5/slashing, turn resistance +2, resistance to cold 10, darkvision 120 ft., enfeebled spell; SR 11; AL NE; SV Fort +3, Ref +4, Will +10; Str 25, Dex 12, Con -, Int 14, Wis 16, Cha 16.

*Skills and Feats:* Concentration +13, Knowledge (arcana) +15, Knowledge (history) +15, Knowledge (planes) +15; Spellcraft +15, Spot +16, Swim +8 (racial); Blind-Fight, Combat Casting, Combat Reflexes, Improved Initiative.

**Slime (Su):** each hit from the Oracle's tentacles leaves sticky slime on its target, which bestows one negative level per hit. The slime may be delivered as a touch attack, if desired. Each slime hit takes one minute to wash off with water, or one full round to wash off with oil. Removal of the slime removes the negative level.

**Enfeebled Spell (Su):** The Oracle is incapable of properly channelling the full amount of magical energy into its spell-like abilities. All damaging spells cast by the Oracle do only 2/3 of their normal damage, before any saving throws are rolled.

**Undead Traits:** immune to critical hits, non-lethal damage, ability damage or drain, poison, paralysis, stunning, necromancy, mind affecting effects, most Fort saves, etc. See MM, p. 317.

**Psionics (Sp):** 3 times per day – *programmed image* (DC 19), 5 times per day – *project image* (DC 20). Effective caster level 16.

**Spell-Like Abilities (Sp):** Once per day as wizard: *Fireball* (DC 15), *Ice Storm* (DC 16), *Melf's Acid Arrow* (DC 14). Effective caster level 8.

☛**Bonecoils:** CR 6; Large construct; HD 9d10+30; hp 60; Init 0; Spd 30 ft., swim 15 ft.; AC 19 (touch 9, flat-footed 19) [+10 natural, -1 size]; BAB/Grapple +7/+21; Atk +13 melee (1d6+9, claw); Face/Reach 10 ft./5 ft.; SA constrict, improved grab; SQ DR 5/blunt, resistance to cold 5, darkvision 60 ft., construct traits; AL N; SV Fort +3, Ref +3, Will -2; Str 22, Dex 10, Con -, Int -, Wis 1, Cha 1.

*Skills and Feats:* Improved Grapple (B)

**Improved Grab (Ex):** a bonecoil which hits with its claw may attempt to start a grapple as a free action,

without provoking an attack of opportunity, pulling the opponent into its space and wrapping it in its coils.

**Constriction (Ex):** a bonecoil's coils cause 1d4+6 points of constriction damage while holding a grappled opponent.

**Construct traits:** immune to critical hits, non-lethal damage, ability damage or drain, poison, paralysis, stunning, necromancy, mind affecting effects, most Fort saves, etc. See MM, p. 307.

☛**Smoldering Souls:** CR 6; Medium undead (quasi-incorporeal, fire); HD 6d12; hp 54, Init +7; Spd fly 60 ft. (good); AC 16 (touch 16, flat-footed 13) [+3 Dex, +3 Deflection]; Atk +7 melee (1d10 fire, incorporeal touch); SA envelop; SQ undead traits, turn resistance +2, quasi-incorporeal, darkvision 120 ft., life sense, immune to fire, resistance to lightning 5, vulnerable to cold (+50% damage); AL CE; SV Fort +2, Ref +7, Will +6; Str -, Dex 16, Con -, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 16.

**Skills and Feats:** Hide (+12, +20 in dark conditions), Intimidate (+11), Listen (+10), Spot (+10); Combat Reflexes, Improved Initiative (B), Lightning Reflexes, Weapon Focus (touch).

**Envelop (Su):** A Smoldering Soul can envelop medium or smaller opponents by moving into their square, without provoking an attack of opportunity. A creature inside a Smoldering Soul cannot see out, automatically takes 1d10 points of fire damage, and may suffer severe smoke inhalation and heat prostration. Each round a creature is enveloped it must make two Fort saves (DC 14) or be blinded for 2 rounds after they leave the smoke, and be exhausted (1/2 speed, -6 Str, -6 Dex, no running or charging) for 4 rounds after leaving the smoke. The victim recovers completely after those times. A full round action spent washing out the eyes will cure the blindness, and various spells will cure the blindness and exhaustion sooner.

**Quasi-Incorporeal (Su):** Smoldering Souls are made of searingly hot smoke, and are "quasi-incorporeal". This means that the creature is considered incorporeal for purposes of melee or missile combat (50% miss chance, immune to non-magical weapons, ignores armor, moves silently), but it cannot enter or pass through solid objects, and it suffers full spell damage normally.

**Life Sense (Su):** Smoldering Souls can see the life force of living creatures within 60', as if using blindsight, and can judge their condition as if using *deathwatch*.

**Undead Traits:** immune to critical hits, non-lethal damage, ability damage or drain, poison, paralysis, stunning, necromancy, mind affecting effects, most Fort saves, etc. See MM, p. 317.

## APL 10

☛**The Oracle:** CR 10; Huge Unique Undead Aberration (Aquatic); HD 12d12; hp 78; Init +5; Spd 10 ft., swim 60 ft.; AC 19 (touch 9, flat-footed 18) [+1 Dex, +10 natural, -2 size]; BAB/Grapple +6/+22; Atk +14 melee (1d6+8 plus slime, 3 tentacles); Face/Reach 15 ft./10 ft.; SA: Slime, psionics, spell-like abilities; SQ: DR 5/slashing and magic, turn resistance +2, immune to cold, darkvision 120 ft., enfeebled spell; SR 14; AL NE; SV Fort +4, Ref +5, Will +11; Str 26, Dex 12, Con -, Int 15, Wis 16, Cha 16.

**Skills and Feats:** Concentration +15, Knowledge (arcana) +17, Knowledge (history) +17, Knowledge (planes) +17; Spellcraft +17, Spot +18, Swim +8 (racial); Blind-Fight, Combat Casting, Combat Reflexes, Empower Spell, Improved Initiative.

**Slime (Su):** each hit from the Oracle's tentacles leaves sticky slime on its target, which bestows one negative level per hit. The slime may be delivered as a touch attack, if desired. Each slime hit takes one minute to wash off with water, or one full round to wash off with oil. Removal of the slime removes the negative level.

**Enfeebled Spell (Su):** The Oracle is incapable of properly channelling the full amount of magical energy into its spell-like abilities. All damaging spells cast by the Oracle do only 2/3 of their normal damage, before any saving throws are rolled.

**Undead Traits:** immune to critical hits, non-lethal damage, ability damage or drain, poison, paralysis, stunning, necromancy, mind affecting effects, most Fort saves, etc. See MM, p. 317.

**Psionics (Sp):** 3 times per day – *programmed image* (DC 19), 5 times per day – *project image* (DC 20). Effective caster level 16.

**Spell-Like Abilities (Sp):** Once per day as wizard: *Empowered Fireball* (DC 17), *Fireball* (DC 15), *Ice Storm* (DC 16). Effective caster level 10.

☛**Bonecoils:** CR 8; Huge construct; HD 14d10+40; hp 90; Init 0; Spd 30 ft., swim 15 ft.; AC 19 (touch 9, flat-footed 19) [+11 natural, -2 size]; BAB/Grapple +10/+29; Atk +17 melee (1d8+10, claw); Face/Reach 15 ft./10 ft.; SA constrict, improved grab; SQ DR 5/blunt and magic, resistance to cold 10, darkvision 60 ft., construct traits; AL N; SV Fort +4, Ref +4, Will -1; Str 24, Dex 10, Con -, Int -, Wis 1, Cha 1.

**Skills and Feats:** Improved Grapple (B)

**Improved Grab (Ex):** a bonecoil which hits with its claw may attempt to start a grapple as a free action, without provoking an attack of opportunity, pulling the opponent into its space and wrapping it in its coils.

**Constriction (Ex):** a bonecoil's coils cause 1d6+7 points of constriction damage while holding a grappled opponent.

**Construct traits:** immune to critical hits, non-lethal damage, ability damage or drain, poison, paralysis, stunning, necromancy, mind affecting effects, most Fort saves, etc. See MM, p. 307.

**Smoldering Souls:** CR 6; Medium undead (quasi-incorporeal, fire); HD 6d12; hp 54, Init +7; Spd fly 60 ft. (good); AC 16 (touch 16, flat-footed 13) [+3 Dex, +3 Deflection]; Atk +7 melee (1d10 fire, incorporeal touch); SA envelop; SQ undead traits, turn resistance +2, quasi-incorporeal, darkvision 120 ft., life sense, immune to fire, resistance to lightning 5, vulnerable to cold (+50% damage); AL CE; SV Fort +2, Ref +7, Will +6; Str -, Dex 16, Con -, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 16.

**Skills and Feats:** Hide (+12, +20 in dark conditions), Intimidate (+11), Listen (+10), Spot (+10); Combat Reflexes, Improved Initiative (B), Lightning Reflexes, Weapon Focus (touch).

**Envelop (Su):** A Smoldering Soul can envelop medium or smaller opponents by moving into their square, without provoking an attack of opportunity. A creature inside a Smoldering Soul cannot see out, automatically takes 1d10 points of fire damage, and may suffer severe smoke inhalation and heat prostration. Each round a creature is enveloped it must make two Fort saves (DC 15) or be blinded for 2 rounds after they leave the smoke, and be exhausted (1/2 speed, -6 Str, -6 Dex, no running or charging) for 4 rounds after leaving the smoke. The victim recovers completely after those times. A full round action spent washing out the eyes will cure the blindness, and various spells will cure the blindness and exhaustion sooner.

**Quasi-Incorporeal (Su):** Smoldering Souls are made of searingly hot smoke, and are "quasi-incorporeal". This means that the creature is considered incorporeal for purposes of melee or missile combat (50% miss chance, immune to non-magical weapons, ignores armor, moves silently), but it cannot enter or pass through solid objects, and it suffers full spell damage normally.

**Life Sense (Su):** Smoldering Souls can see the life force of living creatures within 60', as if using blindsight, and can judge their condition as if using *deathwatch*.

**Undead Traits:** immune to critical hits, non-lethal damage, ability damage or drain, poison, paralysis, stunning, necromancy, mind affecting effects, most Fort saves, etc. See MM, p. 317.

## APL 12

**The Oracle:** CR 12; Huge Unique Undead Aberration (Aquatic); HD 14d12; hp 91; Init +5; Spd 10 ft., swim 60 ft.; AC 21 (touch 9, flat-footed 20) [+1 Dex, +12 natural, -2 size]; BAB/Grapple +7/+24 Atk +16 melee (1d6+9 plus slime, 3 tentacles); Face/Reach 15 ft./10 ft.; SA: Slime, psionics, spell-like abilities; SQ: DR 10/slashing and magic, turn resistance +2, immune to cold, darkvision 120 ft., enfeebled spell; SR 16; AL NE; SV Fort +4, Ref +5, Will +12; Str 28, Dex 12, Con -, Int 16, Wis 16, Cha 16.

**Skills and Feats:** Concentration +17, Knowledge (arcana) +20, Knowledge (history) +20, Knowledge (planes) +20; Listen +20; Spellcraft +20, Spot +20, Swim +8 (racial); Blind-Fight, Combat Casting, Combat Reflexes, Empower Spell, Improved Initiative.

**Slime (Su):** each hit from the Oracle's tentacles leaves sticky slime on its target, which bestows one negative level per hit. The slime may be delivered as a touch attack, if desired. Each slime hit takes one minute to wash off with water, or one full round to wash off with oil. Removal of the slime removes the negative level.

**Enfeebled Spell (Su):** The Oracle is incapable of properly channelling the full amount of magical energy into its spell-like abilities. All damaging spells cast by the Oracle do only 2/3 of their normal damage, before any saving throws are rolled.

**Undead Traits:** immune to critical hits, non-lethal damage, ability damage or drain, poison, paralysis, stunning, necromancy, mind affecting effects, most Fort saves, etc. See MM, p. 317.

**Psionics (Sp):** 3 times per day – *programmed image* (DC 19), 5 times per day – *project image* (DC 20). Effective caster level 16.

**Spell-Like Abilities (Sp):** Once per day as wizard: *Chain Lightning* (DC 19) *Empowered Fireball* (DC 18), *Ice Storm* (DC 17). Effective caster level 12.

**Bonecoils:** CR 10; Huge construct; HD 17d10+40; hp 105; Init 0; Spd 30 ft., swim 15 ft.; AC 20 (touch 9, flat-footed 19) [+12 natural, -2 size]; BAB/Grapple +13/+33; Atk +21 melee (1d12+12, claw); Face/Reach 15 ft./10 ft.; SA constrict, improved grab; SQ DR 10/blunt and magic, resistance to cold 10, darkvision 60 ft., construct traits; SR 16; AL N; SV Fort +5, Ref +5, Will +0; Str 26, Dex 10, Con -, Int -, Wis 1, Cha 1.

**Skills and Feats:** Improved Grapple (B)

**Improved Grab (Ex):** a bonecoil which hits with its claw may attempt to start a grapple as a free action, without provoking an attack of opportunity, pulling the opponent into its space and wrapping it in its coils.

**Constriction (Ex):** a bonecoil's coils cause 1d8+8 points of constriction damage while holding a grappled opponent.

**Construct traits:** immune to critical hits, non-lethal damage, ability damage or drain, poison, paralysis, stunning, necromancy, mind affecting effects, most Fort saves, etc. See MM, p. 307.

☛ **Smoldering Souls:** CR 8; Medium undead (quasi-incorporeal, fire); HD 9d12; hp 81, Init +7; Spd fly 60 ft. (good); AC 17 (touch 16, flat-footed 13) [+3 Dex, +4 Deflection]; Atk +9 melee (2d6 fire, incorporeal touch); SA envelop; SQ undead traits, turn resistance +2, quasi-incorporeal, darkvision 120 ft., life sense, immune to fire, resistance to lightning 10, vulnerable to cold (+50% damage); AL CE; SV Fort +3, Ref +8, Will +9; Str -, Dex 17, Con -, Int 10, Wis 13, Cha 18.

*Skills and Feats:* Hide (+15, +23 in dark conditions), Intimidate (+15), Listen (+13), Spot (+13); Combat Reflexes, Improved Initiative (B), Iron Will, Lightning Reflexes, Weapon Focus (touch).

**Envelop (Su):** A Smoldering Soul can envelop medium or smaller opponents by moving into their square, without provoking an attack of opportunity. A creature inside a Smoldering Soul cannot see out, automatically takes 2d6 points of fire damage, and may suffer severe smoke inhalation and heat prostration. Each round a creature is enveloped it must make two Fort saves (DC 17) or be blinded for 3 rounds after they leave the smoke, and be exhausted (1/2 speed, -6 Str, -6 Dex, no running or charging) for 6 rounds after leaving the smoke. The victim recovers completely after those times. A full round action spent washing out the eyes will cure the blindness, and various spells will cure the blindness and exhaustion sooner.

**Quasi-Incorporeal (Su):** Smoldering Souls are made of searingly hot smoke, and are "quasi-incorporeal". This means that the creature is considered incorporeal for purposes of melee or missile combat (50% miss chance, immune to non-magical weapons, ignores armor, moves silently), but it cannot enter or pass through solid objects, and it suffers full spell damage normally.

**Life Sense (Su):** Smoldering Souls can see the life force of living creatures within 60', as if using blindsight, and can judge their condition as if using *deathwatch*.

**Undead Traits:** immune to critical hits, non-lethal damage, ability damage or drain, poison, paralysis, stunning, necromancy, mind affecting effects, most Fort saves, etc. See MM, p. 317.

## Appendix Two: New Creatures.

The new creatures presented in this adventure are summarized here. Since they have different statistics at each APL, they have multiple entries in many categories. Where there are four values in a category, separated by commas, they represent the value at APL 6, 8, 10, and 12 respectively. If there is only a single entry, the value does not change at different APLs.

### **Bonecoils: Medium / Large / Huge Construct - Neutral.**

<b>Hit Dice</b>	4d10+20 (42 hp), 9d10+30 (60 hp), 14d10+40 (90 hp), 17d10+40 (105 hp).
<b>Initiative</b>	+0
<b>Speed</b>	30 ft., Swim 15 ft.
<b>Armor Class</b>	17, 19, 19, 20
<b>BAB / Grapple</b>	+3/+11, +7/+21, +10/+29, +13/+33.
<b>Attack</b>	Claw, +7 melee (1d4+6), +13 melee (1d6+9), +17 melee (1d8+10), +21 melee (1d12+12)
<b>Full Attack</b>	Claw, +7 melee (1d4+6), +13 melee (1d6+9), +17 melee (1d8+10), +21 melee (1d12+12)
<b>Space / Reach</b>	5 ft./ 5 ft., 10 ft./ 5 ft., 15 ft./ 10 ft., 15 ft./ 10 ft.
<b>Special Attacks</b>	<u>APL 6</u> none; <u>APL 8, 10, 12</u> Constrict, Improved Grab
<b>Special Qualities</b>	<u>DR</u> 5/blunt, 5/blunt, 5/blunt and magic, 10/blunt and magic; <u>Resistance</u> to cold 5, 5, 10, 10. <u>SR</u> -, -, -, 16; Darkvision 60 ft., Construct traits.
<b>Saves</b>	<u>Fort</u> +1, +3, +4, +5; <u>Ref</u> +1, +3, +4, +5; <u>Will</u> -4, -2, -1, +0.
<b>Abilities</b>	<u>Str</u> 18, 22, 26, 26; <u>Dex</u> 10; <u>Con</u> -; <u>Int</u> -; <u>Wis</u> 1; <u>Cha</u> 1.
<b>Feats</b>	Improved Grapple (B)

**Background:** The Bonecoils are specially built bone constructs, designed to hold down victims while the Oracle consumes their souls. They resemble the skeletons of large constrictor snakes, with an enormous 3-fingered gripping claw where the head should be. The bonecoils were manufactured by the same people who created the Oracle, over 1500 years ago, and their bones are yellowed with age. They crawl as fast as a man on land, and can actually swim slowly, by flattening their bones together and using them like inefficient fins, but they sink if they stop. At APL 6 the bonecoils are only medium-sized constructs, which advance and grapple using their Improved Grapple feat. At higher APLs they have Improved Grab, and can initiate grapples after a normal hit.

Knowledge skills will not reveal much about the Bonecoils. Constructs can be made with almost any shape and capability you desire, as can skeletons (if the PCs assume they are undead). These are not “standard” designs, that the PCs have heard of before. If the PCs do wish to make a Knowledge (religion) check anyway, a DC 25 will tell them that these may not be undead, but it is not obvious either way, and you should not prompt them for the check.

**Improved Grab (Ex):** a bonecoil which hits with its claw may attempt to start a grapple as a free action, without provoking an attack of opportunity, pulling the opponent into its space and wrapping it in its coils.

**Constriction (Ex):** At APL 8 or more, a bonecoil's coils cause 1d4+6, 1d6+7, or 1d8+8 points of constriction damage while holding a grappled opponent.

**Construct Traits:** Bonecoils are immune to critical hits, non-lethal damage, ability damage or drain, poison, paralysis, stunning, necromancy, mind affecting effects, most Fort saves, etc. See MM, p. 307.

### **Bound Ones - Medium Undead (Incorporeal) – Neutral**

<b>Hit Dice</b>	4d12 (20 hp), 6d12 (30 hp), 8d12 (40 hp), 10d12 (50 hp).
<b>Initiative</b>	+2, +2, +2, +3.
<b>Speed</b>	0 ft. Immobile.
<b>Armor Class</b>	12, 13, 14, 15.
<b>Attack</b>	Incorporeal touch, +5 melee (1d4 plus Numbing Blow), +6 melee (1d4 plus Numbing Blow), +7 melee (1d6 plus Numbing Blow), +9 melee (1d8 plus Numbing Blow).
<b>Full Attack</b>	Incorporeal touch, +5 melee (1d4 plus Numbing Blow), +6 melee (1d4 plus Numbing Blow), +7 melee (1d6 plus Numbing Blow), +9 melee (1d8 plus Numbing Blow).
<b>Space / Reach</b>	5 ft./5 ft.
<b>Special Attacks</b>	Numbing Blow
<b>Special Qualities</b>	Turn resistance +2, Life Sense, Darkvision 120 ft., Undead Traits.
<b>Saves</b>	<u>Fort</u> +1, +2, +2, +3; <u>Ref</u> +3, +4, +4, +8; <u>Will</u> +5, +6, +10, +11.
<b>Abilities</b>	<u>Str</u> -; <u>Dex</u> 14, 14, 14, 16; <u>Con</u> -; <u>Int</u> 10; <u>Wis</u> 12, 12, 14, 14; <u>Cha</u> 10, 12, 14, 14.
<b>Skills</b>	Hide +9, +11, +13, +16; Intimidate +7, +10, +13, +15; Listen +7, +9, +11, +13; Spot +7, +9, +11, +13.
<b>Feats</b>	<u>APL 6 &amp; 8</u> : Combat Reflexes, Dual Strike, Weapon Focus (incorporeal touch); <u>APL 10</u> : + Iron Will; <u>APL 12</u> + Lightning Reflexes.

**Background:** The Bound Ones are the incorporeal remains of powerful warriors that were sacrificed to the Oracle. Each spirit is immobile, magically bound to its physical remains, which are embedded inside the stone walls of the shaft. When the Bound Ones emerge from the stone they resemble dark amorphous stains in the air, rather like dark glass, which stretch and twist as they reach towards their foes. If their remains are disturbed, such as by *shattering* the stone they are in, or *stoneshaping* or *disintegrating* it, they are freed from their bondage and immediately flee to their eternal rest.

Although the Bound Ones are rather rare, they are not completely unheard of, and PCs with Knowledge (religion) may recognize them. A check at DC18 tells the PCs the Bound Ones are motionless, DC23 tells the PCs they cause some sort of damage to the nerves, DC 28 reveals that they may be freed by magically breaking up the stone they are in, and DC 33 reveals that the nerve damage is temporary.

**Numbing Blow (Su):** The touch of the Bound Ones has a powerful scrambling effect on the nervous system. Each successful touch attack causes one point of temporary ability damage to a randomly determined attribute. (Roll 1d6: 1 = Str, 2 = Dex, etc.). The sensation of the hit varies with the effect; loss of Strength feels like pins and needles, loss of Dex feels like a banged funny bone, loss of Con feels like profound fatigue, and loss of mental stats feels like a dizzying head-rush, combined with confusion and forgetfulness. This is not negative energy damage, and does not inflict negative levels. The effect is a temporary biological effect, which begins to fade after twenty minutes, and is entirely gone after thirty.

**Life Sense (Su):** The Bound ones can see the life force of living creatures within 60 feet, as if using blindsight, and can judge their condition as if using the *deathwatch* spell.

**Undead Traits:** The Bound ones are immune to critical hits, non-lethal damage, ability damage or drain, poison, paralysis, stunning, necromancy, mind affecting effects, most Fort saves, etc. See MM, p. 317.

**Cover (Ex):** The Bound Ones cannot move from square to square, but they can move *within* their square, and can take advantage of the fact that slightly more than half of their 5' cube is solid stone. A spirit can adopt one of three positions:

Fully hidden: The spirit may be fully hidden within the stone, in which case it is out of line of sight and line of effect, and cannot be seen or attacked or turned. A hidden spirit can sense the presence of PCs in the shaft, and

pinpoint their location, but if it attacks from this position the PC gains the benefit of total concealment, and the usual 50% miss chance applies.

**Peeking out:** The spirit may peek out of the wall, exposing just enough of its “eyes” to see what’s going on. In this condition the spirit gains a +8 cover bonus to AC, a +4 cover bonus to Reflex saves, and gains the improved evasion feat, as well as a +10 cover bonus to Hide checks.

**Exposed:** Half of the spirit’s body is outside the wall. It gains a +4 cover bonus to AC, and a +2 cover bonus to Reflex saves. **Important:** Any Bound One which makes an attack **MUST** end its round in the exposed position. The spirits cannot attack and pull back into the wall in the same round.

The armor class bonuses and save bonuses have not yet been applied to the Bound Ones’ stats. You will have to do so yourself. For example, at APL 6 the Bound Ones have a base armor class of 12, but they have at least a +4 bonus when they are fighting, so their AC is actually 16 in most cases.

### **The Oracle: Huge Undead Aberration (aquatic) – Neutral Evil - Unique.**

<b>Hit Dice</b>	8d12 (52 hp), 10d12 (65 hp), 12d12 (78 hp), 14d12 (91 hp).
<b>Initiative</b>	+5
<b>Speed</b>	10 ft., Swim 60 ft.
<b>Armor Class</b>	16, 17, 19, 21
<b>BAB / Grapple</b>	+4/+19, +5 /+20, +6 /+22, +7/+24.
<b>Attack</b>	Tentacle, +11 melee (1d6+7 plus slime), +12 melee (1d6+7 plus slime), +14 (1d6+8 plus slime), +16 (1d6+9 plus slime)
<b>Full Attack</b>	3 Tentacles, +11 melee (1d6+7 plus slime), +12 melee (1d6+7 plus slime), +14 (1d6+8 plus slime), +16 (1d6+9 plus slime)
<b>Space / Reach</b>	15 ft./ 10 ft.
<b>Special Attacks</b>	Slime, Psionics, Spell-like abilities.
<b>Special Qualities</b>	<u>DR</u> 5/slashing, 5/slashing, 5/magic and slashing, 10/magic and slashing; <u>SR</u> 9, 11, 14, 16; <u>Resistance</u> to cold 5, resistance to cold 10, immune to cold, immune to cold; Enfeebled spell, Turn resistance +2, Darkvision 120 ft., Undead traits.
<b>Saves</b>	<u>Fort</u> +2, +3, +4, +4; <u>Ref</u> +3, +4, +5, +5; <u>Will</u> +9, +10, +11, +12.
<b>Abilities</b>	<u>Str</u> 24, 25, 26, 28; <u>Dex</u> 12; <u>Con</u> -; <u>Int</u> 14, 14, 15, 16; <u>Wis</u> 16; <u>Cha</u> 16.
<b>Skills</b>	Concentration +11, +13, +15, +17, Knowledge (arcana) +13, +15, +17, +20, Knowledge (hist.) -, +15, +17, +20, Knowledge (planes) +13, +15, +17, +20, Spellcraft +13, +15, +17, +20, Spot +14, +16, +18, +20, Swim +8 (racial)
<b>Feats</b>	<u>APL 6:</u> Combat Casting, Combat Reflexes, Improved Initiative; <u>APL 8</u> + Blind-Fight; <u>APL 10 &amp; 12</u> + Empower Spell.

**Background:** The Oracle is a specially altered undead aboleth. It was created over 1500 years ago, to become the keeper of great arcane secrets, in a special lair under the Yatil Mountains. It is not known for certain who is responsible for the scheme which lead to the Oracle’s creation, although it is believed that the priests of Vecna, dark god of secrets, were somehow involved. The Oracle had an active career of some 500 years, before its practice of imprisoning the souls of the innocents prompted good aligned forces to try and destroy it. The Oracle was seriously wounded in the fighting, and never fully recovered. In particular, it suffered severe damage to its brain when a spear was driven through its eye, and its magical and psionic capabilities were greatly reduced. Since the Oracle is unique, and has been carefully hidden away for centuries, knowledge skills do not reveal anything about it.

**Slime (Su):** Each hit from the Oracle’s tentacles leaves sticky slime on its target, which bestows one negative level per hit. The slime may be delivered as the result of a normal damaging attack, or as a touch attack, if desired. The slime is

very sticky, and strongly hydrophobic, and it takes a full minute to remove a single smear by washing in water, wine, or something similar. However, it only takes a full round action to wash off a smear of slime using a flask of oil. Removal of the smear of slime removes the negative level. The negative levels bestowed by the slime never become permanent, unless a PC takes enough hits that he dies.

**Spell-Like Abilities (Sp):** The Oracle's spell-casting ability was greatly reduced by its wounds. It may use the following spell-like abilities once per day:

APL 6: *Fireball* (DC 15), *Magic Missile*, *Melf's Acid Arrow* (DC 14).

APL 8: *Fireball* (DC 15), *Ice Storm* (DC 16), *Melf's Acid Arrow* (DC 14). Caster level 8

APL 10: *Empowered Fireball* (DC 17), *Fireball* (DC 15), *Ice Storm* (DC 16). Caster level 10.

APL 12: *Chain Lightning* (DC 19) *Empowered Fireball* (DC 18), *Ice Storm* (DC 17). Caster level 12.

**Enfeebled Spell (Su):** The Oracle's brain damage makes it incapable of properly channeling the full amount of magical energy in its spell-like abilities. All damaging spells cast by the Oracle do only 2/3 of their normal damage, before any saving throws are rolled.

**Psionics (Su):** The Oracle may use the following psionic abilities 3 times per day: *programmed image* (DC 19), and 5 times per day: *project image* (DC 20). The effective caster level is 16.

**Undead Traits:** The Oracle is immune to critical hits, non-lethal damage, ability damage or drain, poison, paralysis, stunning, necromancy, mind affecting effects, most Fort saves, etc. See MM, p. 317.

### **Smoldering Souls - Medium Undead (quasi-incorporeal, fire) – Chaotic evil.**

The Smoldering Souls are the same at APL 8 and APL 10, so there are only three entries in most categories.

<b>Hit Dice</b>	5d12 (45 hp), 6d12 (54 hp), 9d12 (81 hp).
<b>Initiative</b>	+6, +7, +7.
<b>Speed</b>	Fly 60 ft. (good)
<b>Armor Class</b>	14, 16, 17
<b>Attack</b>	Incorporeal touch, +5 melee (1d6 fire), +7 melee (1d10 fire), +9 melee (2d6 fire).
<b>Full Attack</b>	Incorporeal touch, +5 melee (1d6 fire), +7 melee (1d10 fire), +9 melee (2d6 fire).
<b>Space / Reach</b>	5 ft./5 ft.
<b>Special Attacks</b>	Envelop
<b>Special Qualities</b>	Immune to fire, Resistance to Lightning 5, 5, 10, Vulnerable to Cold (+50% damage), Turn resistance +0, +2, +2, Quasi-Incorporeal, Life Sense, Darkvision 120 ft., Undead Traits.
<b>Saves</b>	<u>Fort</u> +1, +2, +3; <u>Ref</u> +4, +7, +8; <u>Will</u> +4, +6, +9.
<b>Abilities</b>	<u>Str</u> -; <u>Dex</u> 14, 16, 17; <u>Con</u> -; <u>Int</u> 10; <u>Wis</u> 10, 12, 13; <u>Cha</u> 12, 14, 16.
<b>Skills</b>	Hide +10, +12, +15; Intimidate +9, +11, +15; Listen +8, +10, +13; Spot +8, +10, +13. Racial bonus of +8 to hide in dark conditions.
<b>Feats</b>	<u>APL 6:</u> Combat Reflexes, Improved Initiative (B), Weapon Focus (touch); <u>APL 8:</u> + Lightning Reflexes; <u>APL 12</u> + Iron Will.

**Background:** The Smoldering Souls are the undead spirits of evil men who died by fire, and returned as malevolent creatures of searing smoke. They look like thick plumes of opaque black smoke, and fight with burning touches, or by surrounding people with their choking vapors. The PCs may recognize the Smoldering Souls, with Knowledge (religion) checks. DC 16 reveals what they are, DC 21 reveals that they do damage by fire, DC 26 reveals they can envelop and exhaust people, and DC 31 reveals that they are vulnerable to cold.



**Envelop (Su):** A Smoldering Soul can envelop medium or smaller opponents by moving into their square, without provoking an attack of opportunity. (The Belker, described on page 27 of the Monster Manual, can move in a similar fashion.) A creature inside a Smoldering Soul automatically takes fire damage, and may suffer severe smoke inhalation and heat prostration. Each round a creature is enveloped it must make two Fort saves (DC 12, 14, or 17) or be blinded for 1, 2, or 3 rounds after they leave the smoke, and be exhausted (1/2 speed, -6 Str, -6 Dex, no running or charging) for 2, 4, or 6 rounds after leaving the smoke. PCs with the Endurance feat may add +4 to their save vs. the exhaustion, but not the blindness. The victim recovers completely after the recovery time has elapsed. A full round action spent washing out the eyes will cure the blindness, and various spells will cure the blindness and exhaustion sooner. It is difficult to see out of an enveloping Smoldering Soul, and an enveloped PC suffers a 20% miss chance while inside.

**Quasi-Incorporeal (Su):** Smoldering Souls are made of searingly hot smoke, and are “quasi-incorporeal”. This means that the creature is considered incorporeal for purposes of melee or missile combat (50% miss chance, immune to non-magical weapons, ignores armor, moves silently), but it cannot enter or pass through solid objects, and it suffers full spell damage normally.

**Life Sense (Su):** The Smoldering Souls can see the life force of living creatures within 60 feet, as if using blindsight, and can judge their condition as if using the *deathwatch* spell.

**Undead Traits:** Smoldering Souls are immune to critical hits, non-lethal damage, ability damage or drain, poison, paralysis, stunning, necromancy, mind affecting effects, most Fort saves, etc. See MM, p. 317.

### Appendix 3: The Scroll of Questions:

When must we be ready to greet the awakening of the great beast of old, that even now sleeps  
in the skirts of the mountains that divide east from west, and holds the power to shatter  
reality, to cast down kingdoms, and sunder nations?

Where shall we find the hidden gate, which leads to the dimensionless chamber of the great  
ancient beast?

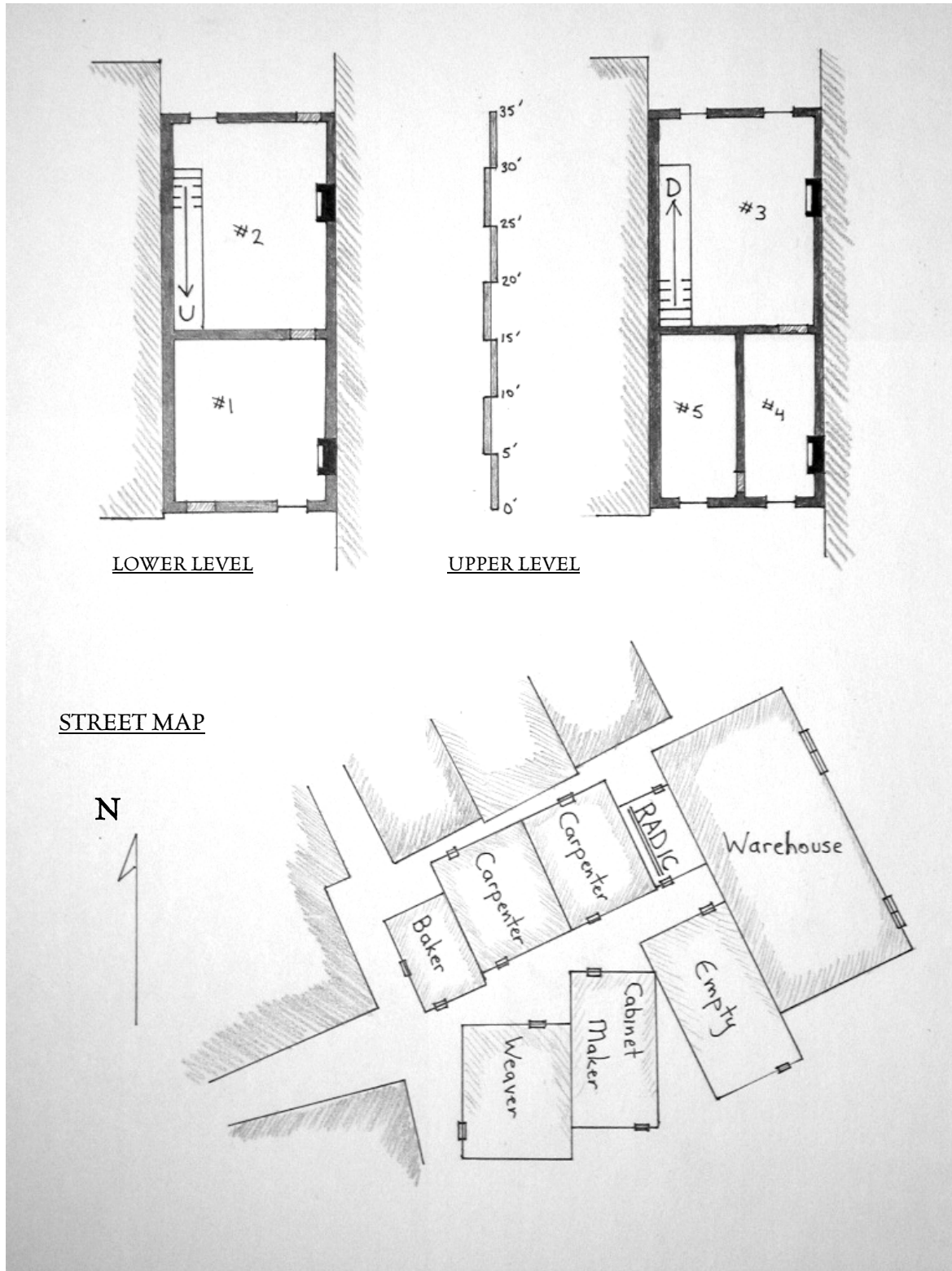
How did the priest-kings of old treat with the great ancient beasts, serve them, gain their  
favor, and earn their powers?

What manner favored shall the beast give to us, who become its new priest kings and  
advocates?

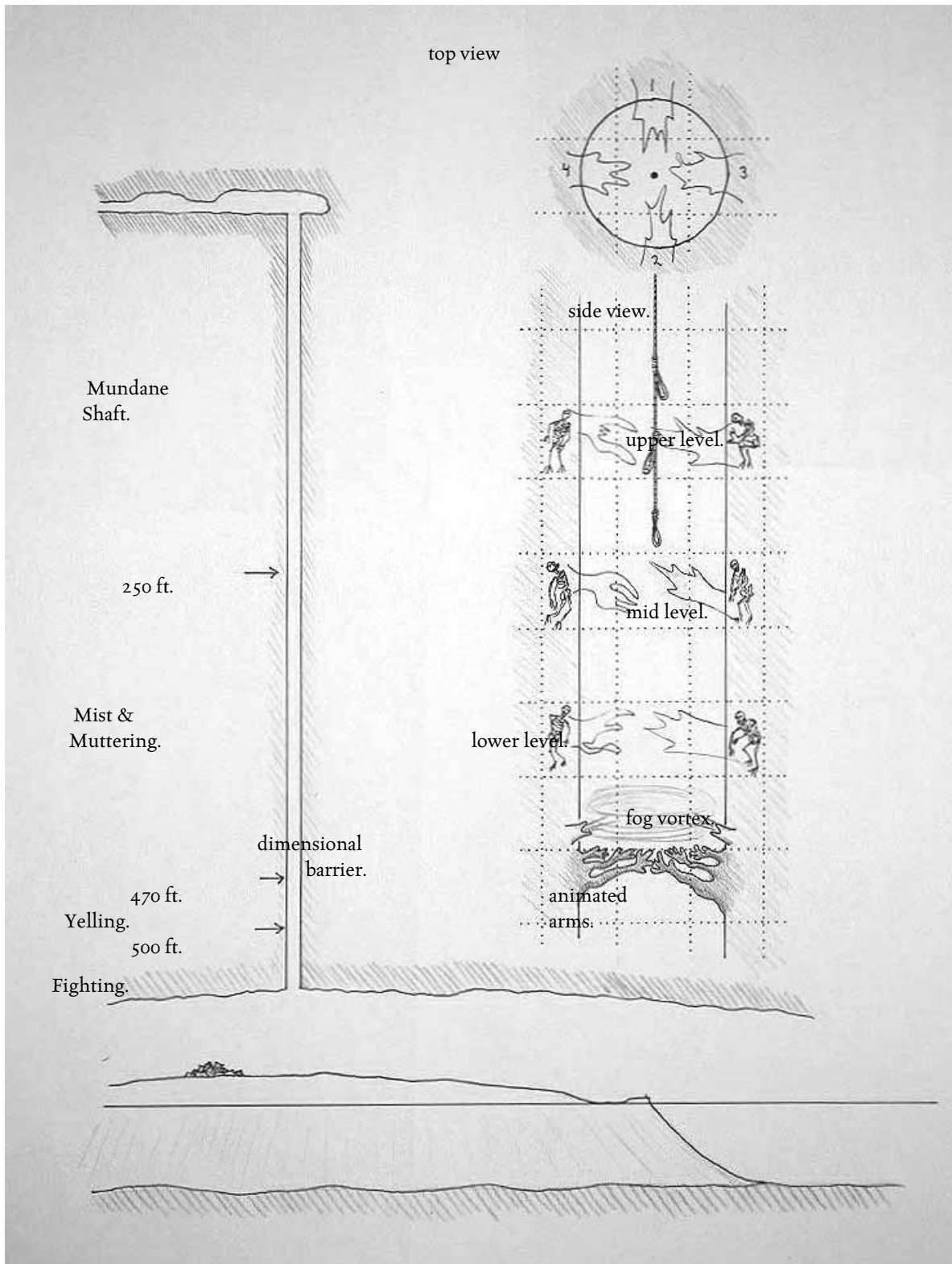
What are the true compounds of revealing, that may bring the ancient ones to our  
perception?

Give to us the order of the four hidden names of opening, concealed in the cyphers of  
Crypsis, that the ears of the ancient one may be opened to us, and our fates conjoined.

## Map #1: The Shop Of Radic Ranladsson.



## Map #2: The Shaft.



### Map #3 The Spit.

