

**DARK
EMERALD**

THE
key OF
THE **fey**



A Mercenary Adventure for Levels 1-3

Todd Crapper

THE key OF THE fey

**EMERALD
PRESS** 

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In Memory of
Wanda I. Robles Ortiz
1953-2009

INTRODUCTION

Connected to the world like an unseen umbilical cord rests the magical realm of the fey. A brilliant, vibrant contrast to the reality of the ordinary terrain of mortal worlds, the Feyrealm is a godsend of landscape and beauty. For every plateau on the World, there stands its empowered brother reaching above the grasp of the sun's rays and peaking above the clouds of the faerie plane. The ocean is a shimmering gold to the deep blues of our waters and the breeze is as soft as silk across the cheek in the home of the feyfolk. There is no place like the Feyrealm.

So why can't someone make a little money from it?

THE KEY OF THE FEY is an introductory mercenary adventure for the 4th Edition of the **Dungeons & Dragons™** roleplaying game. While most adventures focus on saving lives and thwarting the plans of any villain in sight, mercenary adventures take a different perspective: get the mark and get paid. These adventures stray from the typical fantasy episodes and offer a peek at the dark side of the game.

Players in this adventure will be hired on to do someone else's dirty work: steal the purported portal key to the Feyrealm, a connected plane that is home to the elves and eladrin of the World. The key is currently in the possession of a paladin and his entourage of devout followers who are intent on unraveling the mysteries of their god's long ruined temple. Interested in the power of the key, other parties would like to get their hands on it for their own personal needs, and require the services of mercenaries to retrieve it.

Mercenary adventures, such as this one, offer many of the standards in fantasy adventures but with a twist: they are free from the moral constraints most heroes face. If an innocent civilian stands in his way, not only will a mercenary be free to remove that civilian, but he can even be rewarded for it. A heroic party generally collects a group of like-minded adventurers banded together to complete a mission and save the day, working together and understanding each other's strengths and weaknesses. A mercenary band works together to achieve its goals as well (commonly known as the mark), but only for as long as necessary. Most jobs pay a lump sum to be divided amongst the survivors – the fewer returning band members, the more money for the survivors to keep. Such moments are also considered in this adventure, creating the second difference in a mercenary adventure: betrayal. Private information, secrets, and other scenes that could involve inter-party betrayal are considered, provided, and expected in these types of adventures. These moments can be grand or simplistic, and can also carry over into a continuing campaign.

What it all comes down to is that mercenaries take these jobs for one reason: gold. More coin equals more wine, as the saying goes. Yet some mercs strive for more than mere wealth (while never straying far from that objective) and seek out infamy. A known and feared mercenary carries some clout with him as he travels, allowing him to jack up the price of his services. Some of them wear severed ears around their neck to demonstrate their dedication and thoroughness on a job, while others ensure at least one victim remains alive to spread the word to others. Just like heroes, they wear their names with pride and take great care not to see it tarnished. Reputation is just as important, if not more so, to the bloodthirsty as it is the noble, and a well-done job works towards that reputation. This adventure is designed to introduce a band of mercenaries and begin a mercenary campaign, but it can also work as a stand-alone adventure. Despite all the points mentioned above, there is always room for players to "do the right thing" and that is the key to these campaigns. There is always an option. If a player has a sudden change of heart and can find a way to resolve a situation morally without destroying his reputation, it can be done. If anything, mercenary campaigns frequent anti-heroes who pretend to be cold and heartless, but accomplish good deeds for their own end. On the same side of the coin, there are also just as many brutal bastards on the market caring little for anyone else's needs but their own. Nothing about a merc adventure is written plainly with only one end in mind – anyone can be a merc, no matter how devout or twisted they are.



MERCENARY CHARACTERS (MERCs)

A *merc* is a person who takes jobs for money without question. Heroes take quests to achieve a common goal, fighting oppression and tyranny, rescuing people, and dismantling the plans of powerful individuals bent on personal conquest. A hero must believe in his quest. Mercs have no such burdens – they get paid to do what others would scoff or scowl at.

Playing a merc is different than playing a hero, but the goals between the two characters can be remarkably the same. Most mercenary adventures still involve entering dungeons, slaying monsters, and completing a final goal – they simply take a different direction than a heroic adventure would. The dungeon may be the temple of good-aligned clerics to a god of healing; the monsters could be eladrin servants; and the final goal may be the theft of a holy relic able to cure the sick. As such, characters with an indifference towards alignment are best suited for these jobs, but only those with a purity of heart should truly avoid this line of work.

Any race or class will work in a mercenary adventure, so long as the character is willing to get the job done with no questions asked. There are few, if any, character combinations that will refuse work in this field so long as the character can get the job done. That is why integrity still remains a hallmark in this line of work – you have to fulfill your end of the bargain or else you'll never work again. Or you'll be dead.

Provided below are some options for running a mercenary campaign. In doing so, these rules are designed to utilize published mercenary and non-mercenary adventures or any homebrew adventures.

BADGES: Most mercs try to avoid shouting their names in to wn, but there are times when you need to drop your name and let the right people know without tipping the authorities. Just as most guilds and families have crests, mercs have badges. Nowhere near like an actual badge in the traditional sense, they are hand carved coins emblazoned with a particular symbol. Each badge is connected to a particular high-profile underworld figure and is generally recognized by those not popular with law enforcement (it takes a **DC 20 Streetwise check** and you must be trained in the skill). A merc with such a badge can show them to others as proof of their past experiences – sometimes, a good pile of badges is enough to get a merc a job without him ever having to open his mouth. There are never any distinguishing marks or labels on the badge to legally connect any crime to a client and they have no monetary value. They are precious to other mercs looking to gain larger bragging rites and stolen badges are common. Badges are also wagered in games of chance, like the *halfling's coin* (see Chapter One).



Badges

Any merc in possession of a badge gains the following benefits:

- automatic +1 bonus per badge to all Diplomacy checks in a skill challenge designed to gain a job, garner a higher salary, or other tactics of negotiation between the merc and a potential client;
- for every five badges a merc has, he gains an additional 10% to the initial fee offered by a client;
- if captured and interrogated by any member of law enforcement (or any appropriate character) with any badges in his possession, the merc suffers a -4 penalty to all Charisma-based rolls as his guilt leaves him unable to talk his way out.

Certain badges can provide additional benefits, even powers, to be used to the merc's advantage as per the GM's discretion.

BITE THE HAND...: Mercs think of themselves first and foremost. If they allow someone else to stay alive, it is because they need them to live for their own purposes. This includes other band members as well. Betrayal is a common occurrence in merc bands, so it is expected for such characters.

Mercs receive an additional 100 XP per tier to story- and quest- based XP at the end of an adventure if they are able to keep a secret related to the job for themselves without any other members knowing. Other players could be aware of the deception, but their characters must not. As soon as any other character in the band discovers it during the course of the adventure, the XP bonus is nullified and cannot be given at the end of the adventure. If any character discovers the ruse at any point after the conclusion of the adventure, the XP bonus will remain and cannot be taken away.

Furthermore, **the merc's XP bonus increases to 200 XP per tier if he was able to get paid for the job without actually completing it.** For example, if the merc was contracted to kill someone and instead put him in hiding, faked his death, and was paid for murdering him, the merc gets a 200 xp bonus to the standard adventure completion award (or 400 XP at the paragon tier and 600 XP at epic). As soon as the ruse is uncovered, however, the merc suffers a -25% penalty to all XP collected from that point on until the job is truly finished. This means that a merc caught cheating a client out of the job will have his reputation suffer until he is able to pull through and get it done like he should have the first time. This penalty kicks in as soon as the character finds out he has been caught – this information can come from any character at any time in the campaign.

BRUTALITY: Twisted mercs with a penchant for the dramatic tend to spread their names through acts of brutal violence. Should this be the path you choose, **you can receive a 10% bonus to XP awards from creatures you kill.** The level of brutality does vary and awarding the bonus is solely at the discretion of the GM. You cannot use a signature kill (see below) to gain a 10% XP bonus and the benefit of your signature kill – you can only have one or the other (player's choice).

Once you do begin using brutal violence, you become easy to track. **Any character attempting a History or Streetwise check to track you over any distance gains a +5 bonus.**

RUTHLESS APPEARANCE: Many mercs use their bloody reputations to intimidate others, on the job or during negotiations. If a merc adorns himself in anything gruesome or in a way to clearly suggest his identity (and the reputation that proceeds it), he gains a **+2 bonus to all Diplomacy, Intimidate, and Streetwise skill checks.** This bonus increases to +3 at the paragon tier and +4 at the epic tier.

These benefits have a flip side, however. When captured by an opposing force (such as local law enforcement), you suffer a penalty rather than a bonus. Once you've been busted, those very aspects that spread your infamy and give you sway over others will only hold you back – the law doesn't care how you got that scar, but they'll use it as evidence to throw you in jail.

Signature Kill: All mercs have to make a name for themselves, that much is certain, and there are plenty of opportunities in this shady line of work. A signature kill is a particular delivery of death used to clearly mark the target as a victim of a merc. For example, Pyro got his tag by setting his victims on fire after they died. Many say it's to burn all trace evidence on the body, while others say that only those who don't piss him off are killed before they burn.

MERC BENEFITS & THEIR COST

While it may seem that mercs have a greater advantage and can increase in level faster than their noble counterparts, there is a serious drawback to being a merc: the law. These benefits are generally only useful when dealing with the underworld and inflict penalties in the "real world" of kingdoms and law enforcement. There may be times when it doesn't feel that way and the players need a lesson in subtlety.

If your players are ever caught, sent to trial, or face any form of punishment, inflict the full force of the law on them. If most characters would only face time in prison, threaten to execute them. Fines can be increased by 10%-50%, or can be added up based on the number of XP awards and bonuses received based on their crimes.

More importantly, it can be easy to forget that mercs have a hard enough time dealing with the scum of society and can be betrayed at a moment's notice. Honor goes only as far as someone's needs and the contract can be changed in a heartbeat. Some mercs have even been tailed by other mercs sent to kill them should they fail and that is the biggest risk mercs face: even if they escape the job with their lives, their clients will likely want them dead. There is no peace of mind for a merc.

RUNNING KEY OF THE FEY WITH HEROES

Overlooking all the concepts of a mercenary adventure, it is still possible to run Key of the Fey with noble, honorable heroes. The Key of the Fey is written as an alignment-neutral adventure and there are chances for PCs to “do the right thing” and save the day rather than just get paid. It should be noted that good, neutral, and evil characters were used in the same party during playtesting. While many options and considerations are provided throughout the adventure, you may still need to modify these events to suit your party.

Signature kills can also relate to distinguishing marks, labels, or signs left at the scene when a person has been killed, caught, or any other action committed by the merc. Murder and mayhem are not the only requirements for a signature kill.

Signature Kills

When you have completed a signature kill, you gain one of the following benefits. Each of these is provided as additional uses of the standard type, just like bonus hit points. Once they have been used, they are gone and they do not increase your listed maximum number.

- one bonus healing surge
- 1d6 temporary hit points
- roll initiative twice at the start of your next encounter and use the highest result

You cannot gain any additional benefits if you have yet to use your previous reward for a signature kill. Not matter the circumstances, you can only have one of the above benefits at a time, and it will only last until your next extended rest.

MERCENARY TAGS

Committing murder, theft, and any number of crimes for the sake of money can create problems if someone goes by their given name. Most mercs use aliases known as “*tags*” to maintain some form of secrecy of their previous life and to aid in their reputation. In almost all cases, a merc’s tag refers to one of his more famous jobs and can be regaled with an origin of the name.

For example, Headstrike is a dwarven merc particularly regarded for his penchant to behead his marks. Bowel has a habit of using foul interrogation techniques, including running a hot dagger along a mark’s midsection. Thunderhoof is a minotaur mercenary who gained his name after charging an elf encampment during a thunderstorm and killing all seven elves single handedly – as the story goes, each elf was killed at the exact moment lightning struck the ground, concealing their cries from their comrades until there were none left.

First-level mercs are never expected to have a tag (since having one without a reputation is almost useless, but can be forward-thinking if they are able to gain a reputation later on). Most tags are gained from reputation and come from others who tell the story rather than the person who is the source of the story. Most mercs learn about their tag from others and eventually take it as their own.

DEALING WITH MERCENARIES

There is an interesting challenge ahead of you, the GM of this campaign. Your players are going to be expected to lie, cheat, and betray their fellow band mates for their own objectives. They will be rewarded for doing something on their own without the attention of others and you may even run the adventure without certain players knowing anything about other players’ machinations behind the scenes. Through all of this, there has to be cohesion and teamwork to get through these difficult encounters.

Mercenary adventures (and campaigns) are challenging games to run and are best suited for experienced DMs. Knowledge of the rules are not required as much as a sense of decency and fairness with other players. More importantly, you have to have mature, responsible players seeking to enjoy themselves in a game. When you know your players have the best intentions of the campaign in mind, you can roll with them and encourage their devious actions while winding them back into place when the time is right. If you know your players, you can run an incredible mercenary campaign.

Before the first encounter begins, sit down with your players and discuss intentions and limitations of the campaign. Tell them what you have envisioned and how you intend to portray the world and listen to their concerns and desires in turn. Certain players will be uncomfortable with extreme situations, so it should be made clear from the very beginning which subject matters are off limits. No matter what. In doing so, anything left on the table can be toyed with endlessly and safely. A poorly chosen situation can offend a player deeply and cause him or her to leave the group permanently.

To assist in this pursuit, **THE KEY OF THE FEY** is written as open-ended as possible to allow each mercenary band its own means to the end. There is just as much of a chance for the party to be ruthless as to be traditional and experiment with more aggressive tactics later on. So long as the main goal of the game is having fun, it will all work out.

THE CANT

Mercs walk a darker side of life and generally frequent less-than-savory locations to relax. Since most of their work is illegal – wherever law exists – they have created their own flavor of language, sometimes for secrecy, and other times just to add some local color to their dialogue. A sampling of this “*cant*” is provided below as a starting point. GMs are encouraged to use additional words suitable to their campaign.

Bag: Protect a mark. Even mercs can be hired to keep someone alive (though these marks are normally less than moral characters). This term is normally used as: “Keep him in the bag.”

Bank: To guarantee something. Clients will say “this job’s in the bank” to imply how simple it would be to finish.

Clean: To kill someone. When used in the sentence “Baren has to clean up his act,” it means Baren has to be killed.

Client: The person paying the merc.

Farc: An orc curse, originally used to describe an orc having sex with cattle. Can be used as a verb, pronoun, or any fashion. This is an extremely common curse within mercenary circles.

Gleen: To steal from someone without their knowledge. Swapping a valuable item for a fake is a standard gleen.

Going on a trip: Disappear. Most mercs are left to their own discretion on exact details of the disappearance, so long as the mark is never heard from again. Murder is optional, but encouraged.

Jingle: Coin. Also known as “jink” in some bands, though this is not widely used.

Job: The work a merc was hired for, or what heroes would call a “quest.”

Larf: An idiot, imbecile, or ignorant person. Always used as an insult.

Mark: The target of a job. It can be a person or an object, and must be eliminated, taken, or protected.

Purse: A person holding or guarding the mark, a term generally used for someone holding an object.

Riding a person: To get information from them. This usually refers to befriending someone with booze and getting the information while the mark is drunk, but physical abuse and dismemberment are also allowed in this context.

Shined: Roughed up. Shining someone normally means beating them up and leaving them for dead with a warning expressly worded by the client.

Slate: A tab or amount of money owed to a client. This term is commonly used when a client hires a merc to do something to pay off outstanding debts, generally spoken as “wiping the slate clean.”

Snatch and grab: To sneak into a place and steal something, with secrecy optional. Generally used for jobs in which the victim is expected to find out the mark is missing the next morning.

Swift: To do the job quickly without any witnesses. Once again, whether or not the witnesses are still alive is left to the merc.

Tag: A merc’s nickname or “professional name.” Usually the name he is known by in underground circles. This term is not used to specifically address a person (e.g. “Hey, what’s your tag?”) but to assert someone as a merc when explained to someone else (e.g. “...goes by the tag o’ Bloodline.”) See the section on tags above.

Tip: A bonus fee for going the extra distance on a job. For example, if a merc is told to “send Baren on a trip” and comes back with a severed head, the client will give a tip for the extra effort.

Waddle: Break someone’s kneecaps.

Wink: Steal.

THE JOB

Six months ago, a tribe of orcs called the Harad'adak took control of Bloomten, a logging village located deep within Harrington Woods. In a last ditch effort to scare off the orcs, the villagers set fire to the mill and hoped the destruction would make their town less viable. It didn't work and the raging fires fueled the rage of the tribe. By dawn, every villager was dead or hidden in the mud of the Sann River waiting for their break to flee.

Since then, the orcs have made themselves comfortable and taken advantage of nearby trading roads to raid and burn. While their actions have caught the attention of the local Marshall, it is only because of one orc in particular, a scoundrel named Stump, that soldiers have not been dispatched. Stump is a merchant by name, but crime lord in deed, and has made arrangements with the Harad'adak to set up operations in Bloomten for co-ordinating stolen shipments and distributing weapons in exchange for some donations of drink and steel to the orcs. But Stump has his eye on a bigger prize – expansion.

Half-a-day's walk from Bloomten is a tucked-away camp belonging to the Faithful of Anamupet, followers of a long-lost god of evolution and change from the Feyrealm. Lead by a noble paladin called Jarod Highswater, the Faithful have access to a portal to the land of the fey and a portal key. Every day, they open the portal and make the march to the forbidden Temple of Anamupet in the hopes of strengthening their prayers to raise their god from decay. Stump has learned about the Faithful and wants their key, and he needs someone to take it.

THE KEY OF THE FEY is broken down into four chapters, each detailing major turns and events in the course of this job, the first for the PCs to take on. Making their way through Harrington Woods in **Chapter One: First Job**, they meet with Stump and discuss the nature of the job. They are hired to take the portal key at any cost, without bringing attention to Stump, and then get paid.

But it's a lot more complicated than that.

The portal key of the Faithful is a young half-eladrin boy named Key... and the mercs don't know this. Stump doesn't even know this. Stealing a key turns into kidnapping as the mercs make their way into the Faithful camp in **Chapter Two: Lost and Found**. There are three options provided for running this chapter: laying siege to the camp, sneaking in undetected, or infiltrating their numbers and convincing Key to come with them. Failure will bring down the wrath of the entire camp and the threatened Faithful are not known for mercy.

Should the mercs complete the job and arrive back in Bloomten with Key, they now face **Chapter Three: Reclamation**. Strange creatures from the Feyrealm, along with a legion of eladrin archers and surviving Faithful, attack the Harad'adak head on to rescue Key. The mercs face danger as well and can either survive the battle or make sure their target remains in paying hands.

With Key taken back to his proper family, there's only one way for the mercs to get paid: **Chapter Four: The Temple of Anamupet**. Infiltrating the Feyrealm, the mercs must follow the trail of the Faithful and take back Key one more time... for good. They must follow the signs and survive the trials before encountering the guardian of the Temple themselves.



All things must have a beginning and all mercs need that first job. Your name means nothin' without it and you can talk all you want, but it's a body count you need to make your mark. Fresh blood has to start somewhere and you can't be picky about the work, but if you're lucky, you get to have a sweet one for your first time out.

You'll find your way to Bloomten, an old village that's been taken over by a tribe of orcs. Fair 'nuff that it's been run to the ground and nowhere near what it used to be, but there's a bloke named Stump who's set up shop there and he's looking for some hoods to wink a portal key. Get out in the open and introduce yourself to the crowd, because you're going to meet some interesting faces and there's nothing like a brawl or two to get the blood pumpin'.

STARTING POINT...

At the beginning of the adventure, **hand each player one of the six Player Introduction cards provided in the Appendix.** Each card provides the player with a brief list of events on how they came to learn about Bloomten, their reason for going there, how they arrive, and any other connections which may (or may not) come into play later on. These cards are optional and GMs are encouraged to roleplay any events listed on the cards or to make up their own backstory for PCs starting this adventure.

"THEY CALL HIM... HATCHET!"

Read the following passage to the players as the adventure begins:

As the wagon slowly winds its way across this overgrown trail running through Harrington Woods, you understand now why the fare was so cheap: the ride is bumpy, there are no decent seats, and there are too many people crammed back here. And from what you can smell, the driver appears drunk. He interchanges from whistling a tune to singing a drinking song with words mixed together from various jingles, broken up by the occasional hocking wad of phlegm spat out the side.

There is little of interest to see and hear in the forest. Few birds chirp and a faint mist in the distance prevents you from seeing much past the overgrowth. There is a dank smell in the air, moldy and foul. It's not until you pass by a small clearing that you can see why – an overturned cart rests in a ditch, barely concealing the rotting bodies of its previous owners. Arrows stick out their backs and heads, leaving no mistake as to what happened here weeks ago.

Use this time for the PCs to meet each other and establish connections in the party before they reach the first encounter.

Shortly after passing the overturned cart above, the PCs see a group of six orcs surrounding a single human male with a recently deceased human lying on the ground. His battle-ready posture reveals he is more than equipped to deal with this threat, but the orcs seem oblivious to this. He has a thick brown cloak draped over his shoulders and a **DC 15 Perception check** can reveal the shadowed chainmail armour and sword scabbard tucked underneath it, none of which has yet been spotted by the orcs. One distinguishing mark is the man's right hand: it has been replaced by an axe attached at the wrist. A **DC 18 History check** reveals this is a merc known as Hatchet (see the Hatchet NPC stats in Appendix I for his infamy).

Once a fight breaks out, the orcs will be quick to use deadly force. The PCs are free to step in and offer a hand at any point, but it is likely not needed or expected.

Once the orcs have been dispatched, Hatchet expresses his thanks to the PCs for whatever help was provided and offers to buy them a drink in town and introduce them around. As they travel, they converse. When asked about any jobs he may know about or be working on, Hatchet says *"Yeah, I've got one at the moment, but the pay's just enough to cover me, if you know what I mean."* He says nothing more about it and deflects the conversation away to other topics.

Chapter 1: FIRST JOB

Setting the Stage

THE KEY OF THE FEY takes place in late summer: trees are at their thickest, the sun is at its highest peak at midday, and the forests of the world and the Feyrealm overflow with life. Many descriptions and details will need to be modified should you choose to run this adventure during any other season, so be sure to watch out for them.

Much of the terrain is bright and pleasant but muted by the violence of the past few years. There have been many fires here with seedlings barely able to grow before they are burnt to cinders like their kind before them. An air of tragedy lingers here, mostly in the deepest corners of the woods.

ENCOUNTER A: HATCHET

Encounter Level 1 (500 XP)

Sure, you could sit back and watch this pro make quick work of those orcs, but then your blade would be dry, wouldn't it?

SETUP

The PCs makes their way to Bloomten and discover an upcoming fight between the infamous merc Hatchet and six rookie orcs. The orcs are aware of the PCs arrival (unless they makes a **passive DC 15 Perception check** prior to walking onto the scene and remain hidden for its initial rounds) and care little for them but will gladly take them down with as much effort as they would with Hatchet.

This encounter occurs within the quarter-mile zone around Bloomten using the map provided below.

This encounter includes the following creatures;

Hatchet (H)

5 Bloomten orc patrollers (O)

1 Bloomten orc archer (A)

Read or paraphrase the following to the PCs at the start of the encounter:

It is hard to make out who these six orcs are standing around, but their posture tells you that they don't intend to give him much of a fighting chance. Standing on the other side of a fallen log, foaming at the mouth and eager for bloodshed, five of them have encircled a cloaked human and taunt him with their wretched speech while a sixth one stands ready with his longbow cocked and ready next to a pile of large rocks.

Place the PCs' miniatures anywhere on the map. If they makes a **DC 15 Perception check** prior to starting this encounter, they can hear the conversation between Hatchet and the orcs. Otherwise, they stumble onto the scene and the orcs spot them immediately.

FEATURES

Illumination: Dim light, unless the PCs are traveling by night (then no light).

Road: The road is made of dirt, crushed rock, and tiny tree roots sticking out of the ground. Nothing on the road hinders movement or affects visibility.

Forest: The forest provides cover and becomes very thick as soon as anyone steps off the road. Anything off the road is considered difficult terrain.

Fallen Log: This was placed here by the orcs to force any wagons to stop and be searched by them. Providing total cover to anyone standing adjacent to it, the log can be jumped or climbed over with a **DC 10 Athletics check**. All Medium or larger characters have line of sight over the log. The log can be moved with a **DC 35 Strength check**.

Rocks: A pile of large rocks rest next to the Bloomten orc archer (A). They are not tall enough to provide cover or concealment, but they can be picked up and thrown as a ranged attack with 1d6 plus Strength modifier damage.

Dead Body: This human male was Hatchet's guide, struck down by an arrow from the Bloomten orc archer (A). He is dead and was only considered a minion. Hatchet is upset that his guide was killed, but it also means he doesn't have to be paid any more. On the body is a quarterstaff, leather armor, a short sword, and a backpack containing standard supplies, a map of Harrington Woods, and a teddy bear (see The Importance of the Bear below).

Orc Booty: If they are victorious, the PCs will only find the weapons carried by the orcs, some morsels of bread, and 2d6 chits (see the Halfling's Coin sidebar in Chapter One).

TACTICS

Hatchet will attempt to downplay any combat skills until the first round of combat, using his higher Initiative modifier to act first and strike fast. Once the orcs realize the human can fight, they will attempt to swarm over him and beat him down to the ground – they will attempt to gain combat advantage over Hatchet and knock him prone.

Hatchet will drop one orc at a time rather than attack each of them in turn and make as much space around himself as possible. He will use his Fury of Swings power when surrounded then return to his singular focus on his current foe. If any orc tries to escape, Hatchet uses his Sliced Escape power to slow them down.



Hatchet

Level 4 Solo Skirmisher

Medium natural humanoid (human)

XP 875

Initiative +5 **Senses** Perception +9
HP 224; **Bloodied** 112
AC 22, **Fortitude** 18, **Reflex** 19, **Will** 18
Saving Throws +5
Speed 5

Action Points 1

⊕ **Double Strike** (standard; at-will) • **Weapon**
+10 vs AC; 1d8+5 damage

Secondary Attack: +10 vs AC; 1d6+5 damage

⚡ **Return the Favor** (immediate interrupt, when a flanking opponent misses) • **Weapon**
+8 vs AC; 1d4+4 damage

Secondary Attack: +7 vs Reflex; 2d4+4 damage

⚡ **Fury of Swings** (standard; encounter) • **Thunder, Weapon**

Close burst 1; +10 vs AC; 2d8+7 damage plus 2 thunder damage

⚡ **Wink** (minor; encounter) • **Gaze**

Close blast 3; +10 vs Will; target is marked

Violent Thrash (immediate reaction, when bloodied; encounter)

Can use either Double Strike or Fury of Swings.

Sliced Escape

Hatchet reduces the target's speed by 2 with opportunity attacks.

Unaligned **Languages** Common, Elven, Giant

Skills Athletics +9, Acrobatics +10, Nature +8, Intimidate +7

Str 16 (+5) **Dex** 14 (+4) **Wis** 12 (+3)

Con 14 (+4) **Int** 10 (+2) **Cha** 11 (+2)

Equipment chainmail, longsword (w/scabbard), handaxe (attached), adventurer's pack, brown cloak

Bloomten Orc Patroller

Level 1 Brute

Medium natural humanoid (orc)

XP 100

Initiative +3 **Senses** Perception +5; low-light vision
HP 30; **Bloodied** 15
AC 17, **Fortitude** 16, **Reflex** 14, **Will** 12
Speed 6

⊕ **Spear** (standard; at-will) • **Weapon**
+6 vs AC; 1d8+2 damage

↘ **Longbow** (standard; at-will) • **Weapon**
Range 20/40; +5 vs AC; 1d10 damage

Chaotic evil **Languages** Common, Giant

Str 17 (+4) **Dex** 14 (+3) **Wis** 15 (+3)

Con 17 (+4) **Int** 12 (+2) **Cha** 13 (+2)

Equipment hide armor, spear, longbow, 20 arrows

Bloomten Orc Archer

Level 1 Artillery

Medium natural humanoid (orc)

XP 100

Initiative +3 **Senses** Perception +5; low-light vision
HP 32; **Bloodied** 16
AC 17, **Fortitude** 13, **Reflex** 15, **Will** 12
Speed 6

⊕ **Longbow** (standard; at-will) • **Weapon**
Range 20/40; +7 vs AC; 1d10 damage

Chaotic evil **Languages** Common, Giant

Str 17 (+4) **Dex** 14 (+3) **Wis** 15 (+3)

Con 17 (+4) **Int** 12 (+2) **Cha** 13 (+2)

Equipment hide armor, spear, longbow, 20 arrows

FIGHT! FIGHT!

ENCOUNTER A:

HATCHET provides the first combat encounter for the adventure and can be found on page 10.

NO HELP, NO XP: If the PCs simply watch the fight, they cannot collect any XP for the orcs. Also, Hatchet will feel no sense of gratitude toward the PCs and will head into Bloomten without them, chiding them as he leaves.

ELADRIN GENEROSITY: If there are any eladrins in the soon-to-form band, they could stand to benefit the most from this encounter. Having someone like Hatchet at your side can easily cause the Harad'adak to forgive such intrusions.

THE IMPORTANCE OF THE BEAR: A DC 12 **Perception check** reveals the teddy bear is heavier than it looks and it feels like something else is inside. There is a slit in the back of the toy, allowing it to be easily opened and closed without tearing it apart. There is an *amulet of protection +2* stuffed inside. Stitched on the back of the toy are the scriptive words *"For a special boy."*

Metagamers can see a possible link between the key engraved on the bear and the title of this adventure and take the bear based on that fact alone. Allow this to happen and play up on the stitched emblem as much as possible – they will be on the right track but will not be close either.

If the PCs do not take the bear, there is no loss. The teddy bear is a hint, but it is not crucial for them to discover the truth.

THE VILLAGE OF BLOOMTEN

Read or paraphrase the following to the players as they arrive in Bloomten:

You can smell thick smoke through the trees and everything around you seems musty and dank. There is a foul odor lingering, like a severed foot in a wet boot left out for days. Following the path, you see a pair of orcs standing on a trail leading into a village. While one of them pisses in a bush, the other simply nods and waves you through.

You've heard the stories of villages, farmhouses, and wagon lines sacked by vicious creatures, left to burn under the noon sun... but the thought of such sieges never prepared you for the fate of this once prosperous village. Every building is scorched with burns. Windows are shattered, and doors are bashed in and crudely replaced with hunks of wood and debris. Smoke lingers in the air, as if this place had only been raided days ago. Hooting and hollering is all that can be heard, the same sounds you could make out in the distance during your approach to Bloomten, as orcs, goblinoids, and humanoid of all kinds revel with drink and smoke in hand.



Lining the cartways of the village are executed villagers, long since rotted, with birds pecking at the meager remaining flesh. The area is still well guarded by patrols, but you are allowed to pass without question, sized up and down by all.

A lone church sits in the midst of it all, surrounded by tattered tents and crude huts that has become a massive complex of orcs, all wearing the red and gold hues of their tribe. The bulk of commotion seems to center around a barn. Reasonably intact, it has been modified into a tavern where music and even louder shouting can be heard coming from inside.

The barn does indeed function as a tavern for Bloomten. Called the Hungry Orc, it acts as the central watering hole for every orc in the tribe. Any PC can make a **Streetwise check** to remember any facts or rumours regarding the Hungry Orc, as given below.

The Invasion of Bloomten - Streetwise check

DC 12: The Hungry Orc was built after the fall of Bloomten to feed and water the orc tribe, known as the Harad'adak (or Bloody Heart Tribe in Common). Conceived and cared for by a self-proclaimed orc merchant called Stump, this place is considered a neutral meeting ground for many savage races.

DC 17: Stump is not linked to the Harad'adak, but struck a deal with them after they sacked Bloomten. Stump is rumored to have several other hidden locations and munitions dumps throughout the savage lands with similar deals amongst other tribes.

DC 20: Aside from being an orc, there have been rumours as to how Stump came into the fortune to make such deals with various orc tribes, leading many to believe that he is funded by a powerful crime lord within one of the major cities of the land. If this is true, then Stump is nothing more than an errand boy for a much bigger fish.

Give the PCs some time to explore Bloomten on their own as they enter the village. Use this time to give them the lay of the land before they settle into the Hungry Orc and onto the next scene.

EXPLORING BLOOMTEN

Consult the map of Bloomten for the following locations:

1. THE HUNGRY ORC

The bulk of the PCs' visit to this village will center on the Hungry Orc, the main watering hole and place of business in Bloomten. Filthy and disgusting, this is where they must go to find a job.

The Hungry Orc is situated in a typical barn. Orcs with any money left can pay to sleep on the hay while the rest are kicked onto the street to sleep in tents (see Area 2). There are various rooms in the cellar that are currently being used as prisons and food storage.

2. ORC TENTS AND THE CHURCH

Sleeping in a burned out farmhouse may be fine for some, but there aren't enough proper living conditions for everyone to sleep in... including orcs. These tents were brought by the orcs when they invaded and are used by any number at any given time. Each tent is nothing more than a cloth supported by poles, leaving them open and exposed with mats and worn blankets to sleep on. If nothing else, the tents protect the orcs from rain and bitter wind.

The church resting at the center of the village has been gutted out and converted into a giant apartment/restroom for the Harad'adak – all religious symbols inside have been defecated on, urine soaks the carpets, and windows have been smashed out in drunken rage. In some cases, it is enough to cause sickness and disease to those without the constitution to handle it.

ADAPTING THE CHURCH TO YOUR CAMPAIGN

While there is very little evidence indicating to whom the church was once dedicated, feel free to embellish and decorate its remains to suit any commonly worshipped deity in your campaign. Bloomten, as it once was, could have existed as a logging town or a waypoint for merchants on the road to a larger town or city, making the church a general stop for many passersby. If there is a follower of a good or neutral deity in the party, you may choose to select their god as the former host of this church and roleplay their arrival inside the church for a unique scene.



No single orc owns a tent, room, or house in Bloomten – it's every orc for himself. Many fights break out in the early hours of the morning as the nocturnal warriors seek to find a better bed than the previous day. Many of these fights spill onto the street and in the open, where a massive melee will break out among any nearby orcs. Any orc caught trying to take the same bed twice is found dead in the woods by the second night.

3. STUMP'S MANOR

Still singed from the invasion, this three-storey manor remains intact enough for Stump to call home. Many other orcs frequent here and act as his bodyguards, but there is little quality of life to be found here save for the master bedroom, where fine paintings, florals, and clean silk sheets on a four-poster bed can be found. Stump spends the majority of his time in the Hungry Orc and only comes here to sleep during the day.

4. THE HARAD'ADAK HOTEL

Cleverly named, this wasted inn barely holds twenty orcs simultaneously, but they are the elite commanders of the tribe. They keep themselves separated from Stump's affairs and care not for the type of clientele he attracts, but he does keep the liquor flowing in Bloomten and that gives the orc commanders plenty of time to come up with a new village to sack, keeping the tribe from getting bored and restless.

THE HUNGRY ORC

Read or paraphrase the following text to the players as they enter the Hungry Orc:

The entrance is nothing more than barn doors with the right one left open. Hay spills out of the doorway and as you look inside, it covers the entire floor too. Torches lining the walls of each stall barely illuminate the tables scattered about; only a few of them are available for seating. A crude looking bar has been erected ahead of you and stairs to the right lead to a loft above.

There is a disgusting and pervasive aroma of urine, and there is no question that the buckets and barrel beside the door are filled with vomit – the unquestionable mixture of orcs and ale. There is music playing, but it is soft compared to the shouts, grunts, and hollers from inside. The hay on the floor is damp, sopped with beer, and covered in crumbs. Many orcs are passed out in all directions: on the floor, on tables, and under chairs. Arm wrestling, mug smashing, and other benign tests of strength carry on here, but all gazes shift to you as you enter. You are unwanted, but luckily you are tolerated.

Surrounded by bloodthirsty orcs and other savage races, the PCs are best to tread carefully or they will find it easy to break into a fight. There is no weapon check at the door and it is understood that everyone has a weapon of some kind on them, displayed or concealed. Drinks are frequent and cheap with very little edible food to be found.

FINDING A JOB: A simple **DC 10 Streetwise check** can point them towards Stump (or anyone noticing the only table in the tavern with a rug, plush chairs, and several empty plates).

HATCHET'S APPRECIATION: The PCs who aided Hatchet in the forest can enter with the famed mercenary and have a few drinks with him, engaging in conversation and exchanging stories of their most recent jobs (though the PCs will likely have to make Bluff checks to fake Hatchet out).

If the PCs mention finding a job, Hatchet will take them to see Stump personally and introduce them, thereby ensuring the PC's involvement in the adventure. For the rest of this scene, the PCs gain a +2 bonus to any Charisma-based skill checks through their association with Hatchet.

After a while, Hatchet goes to leave and wishes the PCs all the best.

MEETING WITH STUMP

When the PCs are able to meet up with Stump, read, or paraphrase the following text to the players:

There is no mistaking which table you're looking for, when you stop and think about it. It is the largest table placed atop a finely woven rug. Hopefully, those stains are just mud. Many torches and candles illuminate the table and a board game of scattered pieces centers it all.

Seated between two orc females, the one known as Stump pays no heed to your approach, but the two hobgoblins do. Massive hammers cradled in their arms, the hobgoblins stand in front of you and block your path towards the merchant. Leering down at you and snarling their lips to reveal sharp, jagged teeth, one of the hobgoblins speaks with a guttural voice.

"He's busy. Come back later."

Considering the affection Stump is receiving from the orc females, it should be obvious to the PCs that he will be busy for some time. If they want to get his attention, they'll have to find a way past his goons.

TAKE THEM DOWN: If the PCs decide to take out the hobgoblin bodyguards by force, this will incite a brawl to break out. Any number of orc minions equal to the total level of the PCs involved will join in the ruckus.

TALK IT THROUGH: The PCs can also try negotiating their way through (which includes bribery, as do all types of negotiations). A simple skill challenge can be used or the hobgoblins will move aside for no less than 10 gp.

GET THE MESSAGE DIRECT: Stump has already partaken of several drinks and has no problem drinking some more. If the PCs order a drink for him, Stump will immediately allow them past the hobgoblins and speak with them.

SNEAK PAST THEM: This is the most difficult option as Stump is seated in a very open area of the Hungry Orc, but it is still possible. If another PC distracts the hobgoblins, use the aid another rule to grant the sneaking PC a bonus to his Stealth check.

Once seated with Stump, the PCs learn of a job he is recruiting for:

The squat little orc leans forward and drops his voice slightly. It is loud enough for you to hear but not enough for the crowd to pick up on.

"I've got a little snatch-and-grab I need done. There's a pot of believers just northeast of here they say has a portal to the Feyrealm. Something about a connection to some ancient god who dwells with the elves or some such spat, but it's a portal no one's got working before. My ears tell me they have a key to open it, so that's where you lads come in if your price is right. I want that key.

"Thing is, these believers have a bit of sway in the civilized world. Human by the call of Jarod runs things in their world and he's related to a Marshall just five days from here. Gossip is that Jarod and the Marshalls ain't exactly on speaking terms on account of his beliefs, but the Marshall'll raise all nine Hells if something happens to his brother. So I needs this key gone quietly.

"Here's the offer: you get the key and bring it back here, to my hands, and I'll throw 500 gold amongst the lot of you to split. But I like to provide incentives, so I'm adding a little extra if you can do it without anyone knowing you did it. Pile an extra 100 on there for that. Keep its owner attached and I'll double it."

This is something Stump is known for: making multiple offers with sweeter prizes. In his twisted mind, Stump is looking to see just how far these mercs are willing to go for some gold and perhaps serve a purpose in the future. No matter which option they choose, he wins and can find more use for the party later on (should he feel the need for it). If they don't kill the entire community, he still has the key. If they do, he has the key and more enemies are out of his mind...and he has decoys to draw the Marshall's attention should the need arise.

FIGHT! FIGHT!

Use **ENCOUNTER B: MEETING WITH STUMP** on page 16 if the PCs choose to get into a scrap with Stump's bodyguards... and other companions.

ENCOUNTER B: MEETING WITH STUMP

Encounter Level 2 (500 XP)

If you wanna talk to that orc behind the table, then you're have to get past his bodyguards. Would be a shame to spill your drink, though...

SETUP

The PCs wish to talk to Stump, the local underboss, about a job, but the hobgoblin bodyguards surrounding his table are not inclined to let anyone pass without an invitation. Choosing to use violence to get the orc's attention, they will fight with the hobgoblins and break their way through.

The Peaceful Approach: There are always options in any encounter (some of which are provided above) and so there are always multiple ways to collect XP. If the band can meet with Stump without resorting to violence, they can gain 100 XP each instead of the encounter award given at the top of the page.

This encounter takes place in a corner of the Hungry Orc tavern in Bloomten.

This encounter uses the following creatures:

Stump (S)

2 hobgoblins bodyguards (H)

2 orc prostitutes (F)

Any number of orc minions (O)

FEATURES

Illumination: Dim light with various pockets of darkness, particularly under the stairs on the first floor.

Furniture: There are various pieces of tavern furnishings, each of them practical in a fight, that can be used as an improvised melee weapon (see the Weapons Tables in the 4E Player's Handbook).

If anyone stands adjacent to a piece of furniture while in combat, they must make a save throw at the end of combat to avoid tripping and falling prone at the beginning of the next round.

Assorted Cutlery: There is any number of cutlery pieces within reach of a table or the bar and they can be used as improvised ranged weapons (see the Weapons Table in the 4E Player's Handbook).



TACTICS

The hobgoblin bodyguards have no problem going for the killing blow with the PCs and will use their massive hammers to prove the point. Staying within two squares of Stump to gain their guardian pose bonus, they will swing and try to use their knee break power early on.

They are not alone however. After gauging the PCs' abilities for the first round, the orc prostitutes pull out their knives and jump in, using their leg wrap to bind them and allowing the hobgoblin bodyguards to crack their skulls open. The prostitutes are only as good as they are paid and they will flee when bloodied.

Hobgoblin Bodyguard (2) Level 3 Soldier Medium natural humanoid (orc) XP 150

Initiative +7 **Senses** Perception +3; low-light vision
HP 44; **Bloodied** 22

AC 20, **Fortitude** 18, **Reflex** 16, **Will** 16

Speed 5

⊕ **Heavy Hammer** (standard; at-will) • **Weapon**
+8 vs AC; 1d10+4 damage, the target is marked

⊕ **Knee Break** (standard; encounter) • **Weapon**
+7 vs Reflex; 1d10+7 damage plus target is slowed

Sturdy Stance (immediate interrupt, when an opponent attempts to shift him)

Can resist being shifted up to 3 times in an encounter.

Guardian Pose

The hobgoblin bodyguard gains a +2 bonus to AC while standing at least two squares from Stump.

Evil **Languages** Common, Giant

Skills Athletics +10, History +8

Str 19 (+5) **Dex** 14 (+3) **Wis** 14 (+3)

Con 15 (+3) **Int** 11 (+1) **Cha** 10 (+1)

Equipment scale armour, heavy hammer

Orc Prostitutes (2) Level 1 Skirmisher Medium natural humanoid (orc) XP 100

Initiative +2 **Senses** Perception +2; low-light vision
HP 21; **Bloodied** 10

AC 17, **Fortitude** 14, **Reflex** 15, **Will** 15

Speed 6

⊕ **Curved Knives** (standard; at-will) • **Weapon**
+5 vs AC; 1d4 damage

✂ **Knife Toss** (standard; encounter) • **Weapon**
+7 vs AC; 1d4 damage and the orc prostitute loses the use of one curved knife

✂ **Leg Wrap** (standard; encounter)
+6 vs Reflex; target is wrapped up in the orc prostitute's legs and is restrained (save ends)

Secondary Attack: +4 vs Fortitude; 2d6+1 damage

Evil **Languages** Giant

Skills Athletics +5, Acrobatics +5

Str 11 (+0) **Dex** 14 (+2) **Wis** 12 (+1)

Con 13 (+1) **Int** 8 (-1) **Cha** 15 (+2)

Equipment curved knife (2)

Orc minions are scattered throughout the bar to liven up the scene as needed. If the PCs make quick work of the former opponents, the minions may choose otherwise. Stump will remain still, drinking his ale, confident of the PCs' intent behind this scuffle. Just in case, however, he has his wand of magic missiles at the ready under the table and will fire off a wand blast to cause the table to explode at the PCs.

Stump Level 7 Controller Medium natural humanoid (orc) XP 300

Initiative +3 **Senses** Perception +5; low-light vision
HP 79; **Bloodied** 39

AC 20, **Fortitude** 18, **Reflex** 16, **Will** 20

Speed 4

✂ **Wand of Magic Missiles** (standard; at-will)

• **Arcane, Force, Implement**

Range 10; +12 vs Reflex; 2d4 force damage

⊕ **Short Sword** (standard; at-will) • **Poison, Weapon**
+10 vs AC; 1d6 damage and 1 ongoing poison (save ends)

✂ **Wand Blast** (standard; encounter) • **Arcane, Force, Implement**

Close blast 5; +12 vs Reflex; 2d6 damage

Secondary Attack: +8 vs Fortitude; target is dazed (save ends)

Evil **Languages** Common, Giant

Skills Bluff +10, Diplomacy +10, Intimidate +5, Thievery +5

Str 10 (+3) **Dex** 8 (+2) **Wis** 15 (+5)

Con 12 (+4) **Int** 17 (+6) **Cha** 16 (+6)

Equipment padded armour, wand of magic missiles, short sword

Bloomten Orc Minion Level 1 Minion Medium natural humanoid (orc) XP 25

Initiative +0 **Senses** Perception +2; low-light vision
HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion

AC 16, **Fortitude** 14, **Reflex** 11, **Will** 10

Speed 6

⊕ **Bash** (standard; at-will) • **Weapon**
+4 vs AC; 1d6+2 damage

Evil **Languages** Giant

Str 15 (+2) **Dex** 10 (+0) **Wis** 10 (+0)

Con 14 (+2) **Int** 8 (-1) **Cha** 9 (-1)

Equipment assorted weapons (clubs, short swords, spears)

Criminals Don't Trust Nice Guys...

While this line of work tends to draw seedier characters than your typical heroes, it still features a wide variety of people calling themselves mercs. If Stump is approached by good-aligned or clearly naïve and inexperienced mercs, he will want a test performed to prove their willingness to get the job done.

“You think ye can work for me? Fine, prove it. See those two orcs at the table with their backs turned to us? Kill ‘em. Now.”

Stump carries no grudge against these particular orcs (in fact, you can even select the table at random or use orcs who may have been particularly harassing to the PCs) and needs to make sure he can find help that won't get bogged down with morals and ethics. Now the characters have a choice and a chance to make an impression strong enough to overshadow their inexperience.

With all of this going through his mind, reading his expressions will be much harder. Any opposed Insight check against Stump's Bluff skill will normally meet with failure and the orc has done an excellent job of covering up any botched jobs or betrayals to protect his reputation. While the PCs may be wary of trusting this orc, they need the work and the money is a very tempting offer for characters of their level.

Stump will give them some time to think about his offer and even buys them a few rounds of drinks while they discuss business amongst themselves. When they accept, he provides them with a sealed scroll case holding a map to the community.

DESCRIBING THE KEY: Truth be told, Stump doesn't know for a fact what the key looks like, but they did capture a Faithful some weeks back and the most they got out of him was *“The Master keeps it close to him at all times.”* That leaves Stump to believe it's the holy symbol worn around Jarod's neck. Jarod is the paladin leader of the Faithful, a very reverent human with a charismatic following of 25 humans, halflings, and half-elves. Stump will tell the PCs that is the key they must steal.

HALFLING'S COIN

One way for the PCs to interact and bond is a good game of halfling's coin (which is often confused for “beggar's change” for those who refuse to follow anything to do with halflings). Word has it that the game was conceived impromptu by a halfling to cover up his outright theft of money at the table during a game of cards, but the game has caught on in seedier circles regardless of its origin.

Halfling's coin is a betting game where the best player wins solely by bluffing, deceiving, and especially cheating. There are no cards, dice, or other playing aids other than the hand carved coins piled on the table. Each player plays with up to fifty coins inside a sack, which is generally the size of an average coin purse. The exact amount of coins at the start of the game is generally agreed upon by all players at the table, meaning a high priced table can have each player with a large sack of coins at the start. Each bag of halfling coins are collected from various sources, so it is rare for any significant number of coins to look the same and easily allows any other players to sneak in their own coins to their piles to increase their value.

After the piles are made, each player takes turns negotiating with other players to exchange piles of coins. Offers and counteroffers are made between players, each one trying to bluff their way to collecting a higher value of coins from another player and passing off their worthless pile as equal or greater (although passing it off as greater is a sure way to scream out your bluff). At the end of each round, players are allowed to rearrange their piles and continue bluffing until a winner has been declared.

Winning a game of halfling's coin is fairly simple, but sometimes arduous to get there. Any player without any dark coin at the end of a turn wins. Some tables preset a number of rounds before a winner can be determined – if no single player is without the dark coin by the end of these specified number of rounds, then the game continues until only one player is without the dreaded coins.

PLAYING THE GAME

The whole of the game is the coin. Any numbers of different coins exist in the underworld, backwoods taverns, and side alleys where the game is played, but they all have these characteristics in common in order to be considered “fair use.” They have one of five colours on its edge: red, blue, yellow, green, and black. Each coin has a number written on it, ranging from 1 to 25, but some have been greedy enough to make coins going as high as 100. These values are added up when the winner is declared and that amount is divided amongst the losers and awarded in gold to the winner. Therefore, the best aim in a game of halfling's coin is to have a high value of coins.

Five of these coins are dark coins. Their edge can be any of the five standard colours for coins in the game, but their face is a carving of a skull rather than a number. If a player has any dark coins in his pile, he cannot win the game. Each player must confirm they are playing five dark coins at the start of each game, meaning they can be freshly carved for a specific game or the same ones an old player has been stuck with for months. Since coins can be of any mixed collection, the dark coins are generally able to stand out amongst others or can be made to look very similar to others in the pile. The goal of each player is to get rid of his or her dark coins and avoid keeping any dark coins from other players. As soon as a player gets rid of the last dark coin currently in their pile, they announce this and spread out their remaining coins to collect that amount from the remaining players.

Before the game begins, the players determine any number of rounds that must be played before a winner can be declared or choose to play until the winner ditches his last dark coin. Players must reveal the face edge of their dark coins to a third party who is impartial to the game (generally a server, barmaid, or bartender, as these games generally occur in taverns and pubs) before the game can begin. Each player reaches into their bag and blindly pulls out a coin: the player with the highest number goes first with the player to his right going next and so forth. From this point on, all coins are kept face down and their value kept hidden from other players until a coin is in the possession of another player. Players can look at their own coins any time they choose, but they cannot noticeably switch them around in any way until after a round has passed. At the end of a full round, players can switch their coins around however they choose.

Each player must trade any number of coins with another player on his turn. Players can pile their coins in any fashion they choose, but the general method is to sort the coins into smaller piles. A player makes an offer to any player on his turn, suggesting any number of coins in his pile to a certain number of coins from the other players. At this point, the two players negotiate until a deal is reached. Once a player makes an offer, it cannot be ignored. Any means of negotiation can be used to sweeten the deal, including offers outside of the table or even threats. At no point and time can a player make physical contact with another player, meaning a player cannot attack another player and take his coins away by force. Physical contact results in forfeit and the player must leave with all the coins currently in his possession. Some bad players have refused to follow this rule and have been killed for their ignorance and rudeness to the game.

As soon as a player has removed the last dark coin in his pile after the designated number of played rounds, he announces his victory and counts his total in the pile. The remaining players must pay the winner this amount, to be divided however the losing players see fit.

ROLEPLAYING THE GAME

While it may be rewarding and worthwhile for a GM to actually set up a game of halfling's coin for his players, this is not always feasible. Provided below are guidelines for playing halfling's coin with just dice and character stats.

After each player is informed of the rules of halfling's coin (in character and at the table), they each have five dark points in their pool. These dark points replace the dark coins used in halfling's coin and the first player to get rid of his last dark point wins.

Each player starts the game by rolling 1d20 and the highest roller goes first with the next player seated to his right going next and so forth. The player chooses another player and rolls his Bluff or Negotiation skill against the opposing player's Intuition skill. Whoever rolls the higher number wins the round and collects the difference in gold coin (to be paid in full after the game). If the winning player beats the losing player's skill check by five or more, the winning player loses a dark coin and collects the difference in gold coins – the dark coin is passed on to the losing player.

Players are encouraged to invent or utilize other aspects of the rules to gain favor on their turn. So long as their character abide by the few rules of the game (e.g. no physical contact), the GM may allow any number of tools for a player to collect more coins from the other players.

THE FINE ART OF CHEATING

Cheating is encouraged and expected in this game, for it is what gives halfling's coin its charm – that is why this game is played by thieves, scoundrels, and mercenaries. The goal of the game is to screw over as many players as possible to come out on top and collect money. To meet that goal, players cheat.

There are any number of means by which a player can cheat, so long as he is not caught and he does not make physical contact with another player. For example, a player can pocket a dark coin and remove it from his piles. When he gets rid of his last coin, he announces his victory while one of the dark coins sits secretly in his pocket. So long as the player isn't caught, it's all good. If he's found out after the game, there is no harm done. If it turns out that the player snuck the dark coin into another player's pocket, that counts as physical contact and the fouling player is dealt with... accordingly.

Pocketing coins is a tried-and-true method of cheating in halfling's coin and is commonly done with a **Theivery skill check against opposing Perception checks with the thieving player gaining a +4 bonus to the roll** with the table blocking the view of his hands. Switching coins on the table in play, however, is reserved for master thieves at work. The player must make a **Theivery check with a -5 penalty** as all players will be expecting sleight of hand. Players can attempt to distract other players with **an opposed Bluff check**, but any action taken in direct view of other players generally results in a -4 penalty because cheating is widely expected in a game.

Players can attempt to intimidate another player and make him nervous when he attempts to cheat. **An Intimidate check against another player's Will defense** can inflict a -2 penalty to the affected player's Bluff, Thievery, and Negotiation skills (save ends). Targeted players can use any utility power which can boost their Will defense during a game of halfling's coin to increase their defense against these intimidation tactics, but only so long as the power can be activated appropriately at the table (GM's discretion). For example, activating a power that requires shifting does not make sense during a game where the player is seated in a chair.

Hidden pockets, particularly in the sleeve of a shirt, are popular means of cheating in halfling's coin and grant a **+2 bonus to any Thievery check** made during the game.

When it comes down to it, lying is the best form of cheating in this game. A player's Bluff and Negotiation skills are the most valuable skills to a player and using them successfully can make all the difference between owing money and collecting it. At the start of a round, each player makes a **Bluff check** and uses that result for the entire round. Using their **passive Insight check** at the beginning of the round, a player can sense if another player is lying during their negotiations and gain a **+2 bonus to any rolls** when they do succeed until the next player's turn. In an attempt to turn the coin in their favor, a player who originated the offer can make a Bluff or Negotiation check and convert the new result as a minor action into the difficulty for a passive Intuition checks made against them. This new roll replaces any previous rolls used for the round, but this can only be done once per round at the table.

Finally, **players can use their action points to re-roll any skill check** related to the game. (Since players will not be adventuring in this time, this means they can only use their action point once throughout the entire game for this effect.) Regardless of the result of their re-roll, the player must stick with the result of the new dice roll and suffer the consequences if need be.

EXPERIENCE POINTS IN HALFLING'S COIN

Players who use their wits and imagination to pull off an upset in halfling's coin could even win some XP for their efforts, if the GM allows this. A player can win half his gold value winnings as experience points. As time goes on, the player's skill at the game increases his infamy and can lead to a little more infamy than most. A good game of halfling's coin can also count as an encounter towards collecting milestones.

BEHIND THE SCENES

This section details events far out of range for the players and is provided for the GM's sake to reveal upcoming plot points, character motivations, and other story-based considerations so the GM can cover unusual events or spontaneous plot killers. Potential player impact is provided in each detail below.

WATCHFUL EYE: Hatchet has been hired on by the Faithful to protect them from potential attacks, suspecting that if anyone were to make a strike against the Faithful, it would be with mercs. Scoping out the "competition" and getting a gauge for anyone looking to steal the key (though Stump was already high on his list), Hatchet actually remains in the Hungry Orc to learn about the PCs' new job. Allow PCs to spot Hatchet within the Hungry Orc from time to time, but make these fleeting appearances. Once the PCs have been hired on, Hatchet makes for the Faithful camp.

THE BODY HAS A NAME...: The dead body found in "They Call Him... Hatchet" is not just a guide. His name is Hagard, a member of the Faithful charged with meeting Hatchet in town and leading him safely back to the Faithful camp. Unfortunately, things did not proceed as planned.



TWO HEADS, ONE COIN: Stump is planning to betray the PCs and that's the reason why he's hiring outside help rather than calling on any number of mercs, orcs, or other lowlifes to do the job for him. The Marshall is not a believer or member of the Faithful, but his loyalty to his "mad brother" is firm. He will rain his full wrath on the region if the key goes missing and something should happen to Jarod. Having that kind of heat on Stump is not good for business and the occupation of Bloomten is only mildly tolerated (the fat orc has bribed a magistrate into filing false reports on orc numbers and activities) but the offer from Stump's other employer is just too good to pass up. When the key is in his hands, Stump will need some decoys to take the fall.

In all honesty, there is no reason to believe Stump will not betray the PCs and the players should be more than aware of that possibility... but that is the risk of their particular line of work. Taking jobs from seedy characters is the price you pay for high payoff jobs doing bad things. Feel free to make this point to the players, but their characters may not be able to pick up any strong clues – Stump's Bluff skill is rather high for 1st-level character to counter with their Insight skill.



Chapter 2 LOST & FOUND

S'not as easy as it looks, sneaking into a religious enclave and stealing something. It's one thing to just pop in and out of a troll cave with some booty – they're not too bright and can be easily distracted. Still sucks to be caught, but it's doable. Snatching from the Faithful is different – they believe in their purpose and stay alert for it. They know that they're not making that celestial journey they've been promised if something happens to that key and they'll fight tooth and nail to keep it. 'Specially if some low-life mercs are gonna try and steal it.

There's more than a few ways to take the key, but you gotta use the skills you've been given. Sneak in and take it without anyone knowing. Barge in and take it by force. Or just fake another key and give that to Stump, whatever works. But what's going to work with the reputation you're trying to set down? That's why the first job's the hardest: everything that other mercs, crime bosses, and underlings hear about you from here on in will be based on what you do right here. That means there's only one way to do this job: Properly.

INFILTRATING THE FAITHFUL

Using the map provided by Stump, the PCs can easily find their way through the heavily forested terrain and quickly pick up clues as to the whereabouts of the Faithful camp. Use the provided skill challenge (**Encounter C1**) for the group's search through the woods.

GETTING PAST THE PATROLS: There are four Faithful patrols circling the camp, each of them working along a set path laid out by Jarod himself. Each patrol consists of two archers and a warrior, but all of these Faithful are simply poorly trained believers and will attempt to alert others to the attack rather than take invaders down completely. Each warrior carries a whistle with a 150' (30 squares) range, allowing the nearest patrol to hear the call and alert others. A whistle call from the last patrol can be heard in the Faithful camp as much as 25% of the time.

Sneaking past the patrols requires a Stealth vs. Perception check. The Faithful are, however, on high alert and any failed Stealth check against them will spring them into action. They will not blow the whistle until they have clearly sighted intruders.

BLENDING IN WITH THE CROWD: Disguising themselves as Faithful is relatively easy: each Faithful is simply distinguished by the holy symbol carved out of wood worn around their neck. Each holy symbol appears as an **eight-armed dragon with four wings**, hand carved by the wearer, and does not carry any function as an implement (save for Jarod's, which does work as a true holy symbol). If the PCs use this tactic, a simple Bluff check against a Faithful's Insight check will suffice. If they masquerade themselves as new followers, one of the patrols will even escort them to camp.

SCREW QUIET, KILL THE PATROLS: This is the more direct means of entering the camp and will likely result in the PCs laying siege and taking the camp by force. Patrols are changed every eight hours, giving the PCs plenty of time to dispatch them without worrying about a new set of Faithful finding bodies and alerting the rest of the camp. Assume the patrols change 1d4 hours after the PCs arrive on the scene.

Move straight to **Encounter C2** for any direct combat with a Faithful patrol.

RANDOM ENCOUNTERS: Aside from armed patrols, there are various Faithful picking berries, hunting deer, and performing other duties in the woods around the camp. Most of them are unarmed (aside from hunters), but each of them carry a whistle capable of sounding an alert up to 150' away which they blow at the start of the next round after spotting any intruders.

For each round where the PCs sneak around the camp, **roll 1d10**. In the outer, unmarked section of the map of Harrington Woods, they encounter a wandering Faithful of a result of 1. Within the blue range, they encounter a Faithful on a result of 1 or 2. Once they reach the red section of the map, the PCs will encounter a wandering Faithful on a result of 1, 2, or 3.

FIGHT! FIGHT!

As soon as Chapter Two begins, go straight to **Encounter C1: Finding the Faithful** for a skill challenge to track down the Faithful camp. If the PCs are able to avoid any Faithful patrols, go straight to *The Faithful Camp* on page 26 but use **Encounter C2: Fighting the Patrol** if the skill challenge fails and they are discovered.

ENCOUNTER C1

FINDING THE FAITHFUL

Encounter Level 2 (500 XP)

Don't expect a bunch of wailers and screamers standing in a clearing waiting to be found. They're hidden. And deep.

SETUP

The PCs must find their way through Harrington Woods to find the camp of the Faithful of Anamupet while avoiding wandering patrols of well-armed cultists. They must complete a skill challenge, as provided below.

SKILL CHALLENGE

This skill challenge guides the PCs through the forest, giving them clues to the precise location of the Faithful camp while dodging patrols of swordsmen and archers.

Setup: This skill challenge begins as soon as you begin playing

Chapter Two: Lost and Found.

Level: 1

Complexity: 2 (requires 6 successes before 3 failures).

Primary Skills: Nature, Perception, Religion

Nature (DC 10): The PCs find tracks in the mud: three humanoid males, fully armed in marching order. If the PCs choose to follow it, they can encounter the patrol and gain surprise (go to encounter C2).

As they get closer to the Faithful camp, additional Perception checks can reveal other footprints in the ground ranging in size – there are women and children within the camp.

Perception (DC 15): Evidence of the Faithful's attempts to cover their tracks show a level of cunning, but a hint of ignorance as well. A small area around this discovery shows berries picked, bark scraped, and other signs of gatherers from a small community.

Religion (DC 10): Scratched into the dirt or crudely carved into tree roots are various symbols made by the Faithful: an eight-armed dragon standing atop its legs with four bat-like wings spread behind him. This is the symbol of Anamupet, the long-forgotten god of evolution worshipped by the Faithful. This information is important as it proves how close they are to the camp.

Success: The PCs find the Faithful camp while avoiding any patrols (at their choice, there's nothing to stop them from confronting a patrol or two willingly).

Failure: Lost and unable to find their way through the woods, the PCs are discovered by a nearby patrol and attacked. Use **Encounter C2: Fighting the Patrol** for the attack.

ENCOUNTER C2

FIGHTING THE PATROL

Encounter Level 1 (300 XP)

Eh, so you're not that good at sneaking. Just back it up with your sword, would ya?

SETUP

Scouring the Harrington Woods in search of the Faithful of Anamupet, the PCs encounter a wandering patrol of Faithful. This encounter can occur one of three ways:

- The PCs fail their skill challenge in **Encounter C1: Finding the Faithful** and are discovered by the patrol; the Faithful have the element of surprise and are able to mount a surprise attack against the PCs, as given below;
- A patrol's tracks are discovered during the course of **Encounter C1: Finding the Faithful** and the PCs elected to follow them and confront the patrol themselves; the PCs have the element of surprise and can launch a surprise attack against this patrol as they choose;
- The patrol is treated as a random encounter; the GM must choose if this random encounter will be treated as a surprise attack (meaning the PCs were not exactly subtle about their approach) or a standard encounter (putting either side on equal footing at the start). Have all PCs in the party make a **passive DC 15 Perception check**; if at least two PCs make this roll, they will notice the patrol before the patrol finds them.

This encounter occurs within Harrington Woods and uses the encounter map provided here.

This encounter uses the following creatures:

2 Faithful archers (A)

Faithful warrior (W)

Read or paraphrase the following to the PCs at the start of the encounter:

Nothing more than poorly trained infantry, these scouts are no match for you. Their armor is assembled from older pieces of leather and the blades on their swords are worn down from too much practice and not enough sharpening.

FEATURES

Illumination: Bright light, unless the PCs travel by night, then it is darkness.

Foliage: There are several large trees in Harrington Woods, each of them perfect for granting total cover for any Medium creature. The undergrowth is very thick and induces a **-4 penalty to all Stealth checks** and is considered difficult terrain.

Loose Branches: Several strong and sturdy branches have fallen from these trees over the years and each one can be used as a weapon. Treat any fallen branch as a quarterstaff with a **-1 penalty to damage**.

TACTICS

The main goal of the Faithful is to alert everyone else to the intrusion and the patrol will only need one round to do it. As soon as a Faithful has a move action available, they will blow the whistle and call for aid. If they are bloodied, they will run back to the camp, but will turn back and fight if the PCs pursue them toward the camp.

Surprise Attack: If the patrol gains the element of surprise, they will hide behind large trees for total cover and wait for the PCs to come out into the open. On the surprise round, the Faithful warrior will blow his whistle to alert other patrols while the Faithful archers will fire at the PCs, aiming to take down any archers in the party.



Faithful Archer (2) Level 1 Artillery
Medium natural humanoid XP 100

Initiative +1 **Senses** Perception +2
HP 25; **Bloodied** 12
AC 16, **Fortitude** 15, **Reflex** 14, **Will** 14
Speed 6

☞ **Shortbow** (standard; at-will) • **Weapon**
 Range 15; +8 vs AC; 1d8 damage

↓ **Dagger** (standard; at-will) • **Weapon**
 +6 vs AC; 1d4+2 damage

Whistle (move; encounter)

The Faithful Archer blows his whistle and alerts any other Faithful within 150' to the danger, bringing another patrol within five minutes. There is also a 25% chance of the entire camp hearing this whistle.

Lawful good **Languages** Common

Skills Nature +5; Religion +5

Str 14 (+2) **Dex** 13 (+1) **Wis** 12 (+1)

Con 13 (+1) **Int** 10 (+0) **Cha** 11 (+0)

Equipment leather armour, shortbow, 40 arrows, dagger, whistle

Faithful Warrior Level 1 Skirmisher
Medium natural humanoid XP 100

Initiative +3 **Senses** Perception +2
HP 30; **Bloodied** 15
AC 17, **Fortitude** 16, **Reflex** 14, **Will** 14
Speed 6

⊕ **Short Sword** (standard; at-will) • **Weapon**
 +8 vs AC; 1d6+2 damage and shift 1 square

↓ **Short Sweep** (standard; at-will) • **Weapon**
 +6 vs AC; 2d4+4 damage

Secondary Effect: The target slides 1 square

Whistle (move; encounter)

The Faithful Archer blows his whistle and alerts any other Faithful within 150' to the danger, bringing another patrol within five minutes. There is also a 25% chance of the entire camp hearing this whistle.

Lawful good **Languages** Common

Skills Nature +5; Religion +5

Str 15 (+2) **Dex** 13 (+1) **Wis** 12 (+1)

Con 15 (+2) **Int** 10 (+0) **Cha** 11 (+0)

Equipment leather armour, short sword, torch, whistle

THE FAITHFUL CAMP

The only means for the PCs to get an overhead view of the camp is by climbing a tree. Otherwise, there is too much foliage in the area to get a proper view of the camp.

When the PCs enter the Faithful camp, read the following to them:

Encircling the camp is a crude fence of wooden planks nailed together to create a six-foot high wall. Each board has the symbol of the Faithful engraved on it: a six-armed dragon with four wings fanned behind its back. Beyond the fence, you can see the various colored tents in mixed condition just past the wall, and a central courtyard covered in granite stones and pebbles. Benches encircle the courtyard and a red-painted Faithful symbol rests at its centre.

There is no sign of anything that resembles a magic portal or even an altar. All that can be seen are the tents where the Faithful live and the central courtyard. There are roughly 35-40 people living in the camp at any one time.

While there isn't much to the camp, there are important locations to investigate or discover in this chapter.

1. MAIN GATE

Two Faithful warriors stand guard at the gate, which is nothing more than an opening in the fence. Piled beside the gate, along the inner side of the fence, is a pile of wood, hinges, and hammers – it appears the Faithful are about to undertake the building of an actual gate.

2. JAROD'S TENT

The largest tent in the camp is the sleeping quarters for Jarod and Key, as well as the central office for all Faithful activities within the camp. A dog, Fel Drake, stands guard outside the tent when not accompanying Jarod elsewhere, including the Feyrealm.

Jarod has a desk with a detailed map of the area laid out, including the exact location and layout of Bloomten. A **DC 18 Perception check** reveals a list of supplies such as rope, chain, locks, and pulleys found under the right corner of the map; a **DC 15 Dungeoneering check** informs the PCs this list contains parts used in building traps, with various red marks on the map confirming Jarod's plans to booby trap the area around the camp to dissuade potential intruders.

3. THE CENTRAL COURTYARD

This is the heart of all religious activity within the camp and is detailed in *The Ritual of the Faithful* below.

THE ROLE OF THE CAMP: This camp is a literal highway to the Feyrealm for worshippers of the newly discovered god, Anamupet. Established as a base of operations around the portal, Jarod uses this as a central dispatch for various charismatic Faithful willing to travel to the big towns and communities to preach the word of Anamupet. Once a month, some of these preachers arrive with new followers looking to enter the Feyrealm (while admittedly some of these new followers are more interested in the work and experience in the mystical realm than a pure belief in Anamupet) and are put in line behind those who came before them to pass through the portal.

Because of the dangers between the portal and the temple of Anamupet in the Feyrealm (which the PCs will see for themselves in Chapter Four), only a small party of a dozen Faithful, including Jarod, Key, and two archers/warriors, make the trip. The new arrivals remain in the camp to prepare for their journey and crucial role in the ceremony to reincarnate their god.

PCs sneaking about the camp will find each family has a packed sack or bag to take with them on their trip to the Feyrealm, just as those passing through the portal did. Inside each sack is a five-leafed clover that is needed to infiltrate the Temple of Anamupet in Chapter Four.

THE RITUAL OF THE FAITHFUL: Once per day, during the highest peak of the sun (1 PM), the Faithful gather around the central courtyard for a sermon by Jarod as he opens the portal to the Feyrealm and enters with a small band of followers. If the PCs arrive at the right time or remain within eyesight of the camp in time for the ceremony, they will witness this event.

Read the following to the players as the ceremony begins:

There is no call or audible whistle to mark the time, but the Faithful all begin to hustle out of their tents and gather near the courtyard, taking their seats on the benches surrounding it. A hushed murmur of anxious chatter is all that can be heard until their leader steps out from his tent with a small boy seated on his shoulders.

The man wears a large holy symbol of the Faithful over his hide and leather armour and a two-handed sword at his side. He carries himself with the dignity and pride of a priest, and the sturdy and chiseled demeanor of a warrior. Clearly human, you can see the rounded ears past the long, flowing hair caught in the breeze as he steps out before his subjects. The boy on his shoulders is elven judging by the pointed ears lifting out from behind his long, golden frock of hair. A bashful smile on his face, the boy holds onto the man by his forehead as he is paraded into the midst of the courtyard. Popping into view is their faithful dog, once standing watch at their tent, and now marching forward with them. The gathered Faithful watch the procession with pleasant smiles on their faces, devout and attentive. Everyone falls silent as the armed man gently lowers the boy to the ground, away from the circle, and steps forward to preach.

“Fellow believers, we begin this day with praise to Anamupet.” All bow their heads in silent prayer and lift their arms to the sky. “He has given another clear sun so that we may yet again open his door and step forward to the world beyond ours and seek his path. It is the path given to us by the voice of the wind, the fury of the trees, and the fortune of the dragon foretold in scriptures that have lead us to our destiny. We have followed the word of Anamupet and open his door to once again return his followers to his breast.”

Two men, armed with bows, arrows, and short swords, approach from the crowd and stand beside their leader. Simultaneously, a handful of men, women, and children approach and join the party in the courtyard. Holding his symbol high, the leader begins to chant while extending his other hand toward the elven boy in the corner. Reluctantly moving forward, the boy enters the courtyard as the crowd mimics the chant.

For a long while, nothing happens as the chant carries into the forest. It is not until you feel a tingling through the hairs on your arms that something appears amiss. The pebbles of the courtyard begin to turn and rise from their place on the ground, eventually turning into a whirlwind around the Faithful. Soon, the painted dragon at their feet glows in the husk of a twirling mass of stones and pebbles.

A **DC 15 Perception check** reveals the dozen figures in the courtyard step forward and disappear in a flash of blinding light. Otherwise, one minute after the portal opens, the flash rips across the campsite and the pebbles fall back into place, with nothing but a thin plume of smoke to announce anything ever happened.

The remaining Faithful wait in the courtyard, seated eagerly, for four hours, which is when the process repeats in reverse and Jarod, his son, and the two armed followers return – the other eight Faithful have not returned. From there, activity in the camp returns to normal and everyone goes back to their lives.

INVESTIGATING THE PORTAL: A **DC 15 Arcana check** reveals a powerful magical aura emanating from the area immediately around the red symbol on the courtyard.

The pebbles are actually floating on a thin pool of water at the centre of this courtyard and it is the pool which acts as the portal. When the portal opens, the pebbles swirl around in the air around it and allow access to anyone within range of the portal key to step into the pool and enter the Feyrealm. Other than that, there is nothing to discern from the portal itself.

However, one of the PCs may be able to pick up on the fact that the portal did not begin to open until the boy walked up to it. This is something a player should pick up on their own, but anyone with a **passive DC 18 Arcana check** can pick up on this minute detail: the elven boy is the portal key. Failure tells that the portal key is indeed the holy symbol around Jarod’s neck.

KEY'S HERITAGE: Despite the description given above, Key is actually half-eladrin. Since there are few of these half-breeds known to exist, it is very common to assume he is half-elven. Any PC actively paying attention to the boy can make a **DC 18 Nature check** to notice this.

SPOTTING HATCHET: During the ceremony, Hatchet stands off to the side of the courtyard and watches the events from afar. Any characters making note of activity outside of the courtyard will easily spot him (**DC 10 Perception check**).

TAKING THE KEY...

There are three dominant options to taking Key: storming the camp and taking the boy by force, sneaking in at night and quietly slipping him away, or infiltrating the camp as a Faithful recruit and convincing the boy to come with them... and all of this is done with the assumption the PCs are aware that the half-eladrin boy is actually the portal key.

The three possibilities are provided below with options for events that could occur if the PCs take the holy symbol around Jarod's neck and for taking Key himself. There are also options for PCs having to return and kidnap Key after realizing the half-eladrin boy is the real portal key.

GRABING THE KEY BY FORCE: This option is the least likely to succeed, but is provided for two reasons. One, in the event the players attempt a full-out assault regardless and two, as a fall back to any other effort's failure. In case any other plan should fail, this section should be referred to if the PCs are caught trying to steal the key.

While the majority of the Faithful camp will launch a direct defense against the PCs and take the fight to them, Jarod and Hatchet will take Key through the portal to escape, knowing that without Key, the PCs will be unable to get through the portal (unless they jump through the portal simultaneously – proceed to Chapter Four and modify as needed should the PCs pull the rug out from under you). Once Jarod and Key are through the portal, Hatchet will remain and lead the defense against the PCs.

The Faithful will fight to the death, so affirmed in their belief and dedicated to protecting Jarod and Key at all costs that they will give their lives for them. Some of the women and children will flee into the forest, but those who can fight will.

If the PCs succeed in this endeavor, they can receive 5000 XP for their efforts, plus any additional XP for killing various Faithful, Jarod, Hatchet, and any other obstacles. Use *Encounter D1: All-Out Assault* for this scenario.

SNEAKING INTO THE CAMP: This is perhaps the best option for the PCs at their current level. They will have high enough skill ranks in Stealth and large amounts of cover from the surrounding Harrington Woods and scattered tents in the camp. Consult the map of the camp in *Encounter D2: Infiltration* for listed cover and concealment bonuses.

Key sleeps in the same hut as his adoptive father, who removes his armour at night but keeps his weapon close at hand and a dagger under the pillow. The holy symbol is worn around the paladin's neck at all times and, as any trained warrior should be, he is sensitive to the slightest touch while asleep. If there has already been some activity in the camp, regardless of the PCs known involvement or not, then Jarod has a +2 bonus to waking up if the PCs enter the tent, especially if they attempt to remove the holy symbol from around his neck. If Jarod is taken out before they try to take Key, then they will have a greater chance for success.

Key will not go quietly and will cry out for help if awakened by anyone other than his father. Even a muffled cry could be loud enough to alert Jarod or any Faithful guards/believers, so the PCs will have to find way to keep him silent. If they show Key the teddy bear with the key sewn on the belly (taken from the corpse in the "They Call Him... Hatchet" scene of Chapter One – it is his old childhood toy), then Key will go quietly, believing he is being taken back to his village where his mother died, although he will be full of questions. Once he has been taken outside the camp and realizes his father is not coming with them, he will shout for help. Use *Encounter D1*.

If the PCs must return to the camp and kidnap Key after stealing Jarod's holy symbol, there will be additional and unexpected guards within the tent: centries. These invisible creatures have been summoned from the Temple to guard over Key when it becomes clear to Jarod that his camp is in danger. They are awake throughout the day and night, watching over Key no matter what he does. As soon as the PCs enter the tent for a second time, the centries

project light into the hut and awaken everyone – skip to Taking the Key by Force above at this point. If the PCs were able to steal the holy symbol from Jarod without alerting him by next morning, then the centries will not be present. This ruse will only be possible for as long as Jarod does not use one of his powers.

Should the PCs escape the camp with Key and without alerting the Faithful, they receive full XP as if they defeated them in battle (5000 XP). If they had to flee from the camp with the Faithful on the hunt, they only receive half.

MASQUERADING FOR THE KEY: This option is trickier, but can reward the PCs with a clean getaway and no bloodshed. As such, pulling it off this way rewards the PCs with 5000 XP.

The first step to pulling it off is making the Faithful believe the PCs are fellow members. Upon encountering any Faithful for the first time, they must make an opposed Bluff or Diplomacy check (player's choice) against the Faithful's Insight skill – this is always an active check. Once made, the PCs will never have to make a similar check again with that particular Faithful (unless they slip up in some way, then a repeated check is required – GM's discretion). If they fail with any Faithful, they will be asked to utter the Faithful chant (see the Faithful Chant sidebar). If the chant is not flawless, the Faithful will draw weapons and attempt to hold the PCs prisoner for interrogation by Jarod. Any attempt to succeed will now require an all-out assault, as given above.

Any human, half-elf, or halfling within the party suffers no penalties to their ruse, but any other race has a **-2 penalty to their Bluff and Diplomacy checks** against other Faithful. An eladrin PC will automatically win in the event of a tie with a Faithful's Insight check. Humans, half-elves, and halflings are numerous within the Faithful and draw little suspicion.

This option will require some time as they will be put to work within the Faithful camp, but the PCs will gain a clear view of the portal ceremony when it is performed each day. Each PC can make a Streetwise check once per day to determine the following information:

Learning About the Faithful of Anamupet (Streetwise check)

DC 15: Jarod started the Faithful three years ago when he unlocked a scroll containing information on a long-lost fey god named Anamupet. Once worshipped by the eladrin and elves, Anamupet fell out of favor within the pantheon as his aspect was progress and evolution. Falling into ignorance amongst the fey, who were deep in traditions, the scroll claims Anamupet's ashes lie in a temple deep within the Feyrealm and that a mortal from the Known World would come to awaken him. Jarod is that man.

DC 20: The scroll contained co-ordinates to the portal around which their camp is situated, known simply as the Door of Anamupet. It was said the Door could only be opened by a descendent of a priest of Anamupet, whose followers were known as the Faithful.

DC 25: Key is a descendent of a priest of Anamupet. Born to an eladrin mother and human father, Jarod found him in an orphanage after a raid killed his mother the year before. Taking in the child as his own, Key is the only means to open the portal from the mortal side.

Since there is any number of new recruits within the camp, it is quite easy for PCs to ask such questions regarding the origins of the Faithful – many newcomers are not even true believers at first. Overly curious or aggressive PCs could garner too much attention and force a re-roll on their Bluff or Diplomacy checks.

If the PCs have pieced together finding Hagard's body and the camp, they can use a story about traveling with Hagard as a means to gain favour with the Faithful – they gain a **+2 bonus to their Bluff, Diplomacy, and Streetwise checks** within the camp.

Key does not leave the camp unless escorted by Jarod, but he has been told that if something should happen and Jarod cannot take him out of the camp, he is to go with Hatchet and escape through the Door.

ENCOUNTER D1: DAYTIME ASSAULT

Encounter Level Special (5000 XP)

Hey, there's finesse in a full-scale attack on a compound with ten-to-one odds. It's alright when heroes do it to goblins, so why not when mercs do it to some fanatical humans?

SETUP

The PCs have chosen to attack the Faithful camp with a blunt assault, charging over the fence and killing anyone who gets in their way. Doing so will still take some planning for this encounter to succeed as the target (either Jarod's holy symbol or the young boy, Key) have a very quick and efficient escape route to the portal.

If the PCs are able to make it to the camp without being spotted or alerting any patrols (see *Encounter C1*), they will only have to contend with the Faithful warriors standing post on the opposite side of the fence. Should they have failed in their intrusion and any Faithful warriors or archers blew their whistle and the camp was able to hear it, one patrol will arrive on scene every five rounds to add to the difficulty. The base XP for this encounter does not account for these reinforcements.

This encounter takes place within the Faithful camp in Harrington Woods and uses the encounter map provided here.

This encounter uses the following creatures:

Jarod Highswater (J)

Hatchet (H)

Key (K)

Faithful archers (FA)

Faithful warriors (FW)

2 Faithful guardians (FG)

30 Faithful believers (FB)

Feldrake the dog (F)

NOTE: While this encounter is not suited for an introductory party and is nowhere near the appropriate level for this adventure, it is provided should it come down to it. In all likelihood, this is what awaits the PCs if they fail in any of their other attempts to infiltrate and steal the portal key.

FEATURES

Illumination: Depends on the time of day. This encounter assumes a daylight assault, in which case they are in bright light.

Tents: Each tent is pitched to the ground in a typical fashion and provides total concealment (they are not solid enough to provide cover). With a minor action, a PC can slice one of the ropes and bring the whole tent down. Anyone inside the tent is considered restrained (save ends).

Trees: Four large oak trees are spread out within the campsite and provide total cover for any Medium sized or smaller creatures hiding behind them.

Central Courtyard: The outer edge of the courtyard consists of pebbles and stones, but the centre is a deep, waist-high pool of water and is considered difficult terrain. Only when the portal is activated can this hindrance be removed. (See Opening the Portal below)

TACTICS

Each Faithful warrior in the camp has a whistle and will quickly use it. Once sounded inside the camp, everyone will be alerted to the danger and will rush out to the scene, weapons in hand. All Faithful warriors will charge the PCs, while Jarod and Key use the portal to escape to the Feyrealm under the protection of the Faithful guardians, Feldrake, and Hatchet. Hatchet will remain behind to help take care of the PCs.

Most of the Faithful believers will run for the forest as they are not trained for battle, but some will remain to fight the PCs and kill them with their daggers – use at least two

Opening the Portal: The ceremony originally seen earlier in this chapter is not essential – the portal will open as soon as Key stands on the outer edge of the central courtyard. One round after Key activates it (minor action), the portal is ready and can be used. Jarod will grab Key and jump through the portal with Feldrake right behind them; the Faithful guardians will enter on the next round.

The portal will only remain open for four rounds after it opens and the PCs will have exactly that much time to race in after them or else it will close and they will be currently unable to give pursuit.

Any power or ritual affecting a portal can be used on the Door of Anamupet.

Jarod Highwater Level 4 Elite Soldier
Medium natural humanoid (human) XP 350

Initiative +9 **Senses** Perception +10
HP 110; **Bloodied** 55
AC 21 (24 with shield), **Fortitude** 20, **Reflex** 20, **Will** 18
Saving Throws +2
Speed 6
Action Points 1

⊕ **Greatsword** (standard; at-will) • **Weapon**
+12 vs AC; 1d10+5 damage

↘ **Longbow** (standard; at-will) • **Weapon**
Range 20/40; +10 vs AC; 1d10 damage

Divine Challenge (minor; at-will) • **Divine, Radiant**
Close burst 5; target is marked and suffers 10 radiant damage if he attacks another target than Jarod

Lay on Hands (minor; at-will) • **Divine, Healing**
Grants a healing surge to a target he touches.

Arcing Smite (standard; encounter) • **Divine, Weapon**
+10 vs AC; 1d10+5 damage and target is dazed

Divine Strength (minor; encounter) • **Divine**
Personal; +5 to damage on next attack

Anamupet's Gift (immediate reaction, when reduced to 10 hit points or less; daily) • **Teleportation**
Jarod is teleported to the Temple of Anamupet; must have access to the holy symbol of Anamupet.

Lawful good **Languages** Common, Draconic
Skills Nature +8, Religion +5
Str 16 (+5) **Dex** 15 (+4) **Wis** 14 (+4)
Con 16 (+5) **Int** 13 (+3) **Cha** 18 (+6)
Equipment hide armour, greatsword, longbow, 40 arrows, *holy symbol of Anamupet* +1

Key Level 1 Minion
Small fey humanoid XP -

Initiative +0 (Key acts on the same initiative as an adjacent ally) **Senses** Perception +1; low-light vision
HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion
AC 10, **Fortitude** 9, **Reflex** 10, **Will** 11
Speed 4

⊕ **Shin Kick** (standard; at-will)
+2 vs Reflex; 1 damage and target is slowed for one round

Step of Anamupet (move; encounter) • **Teleportation**
Key can teleport 10 squares.

Unaligned **Languages** Common
Str 6 (-2) **Dex** 10 (+0) **Wis** 12 (+1)
Con 8 (-1) **Int** 10 (+0) **Cha** 8 (-1)

Hatchet Level 4 Solo Skirmisher
Medium natural humanoid (human) XP 875

Initiative +5 **Senses** Perception +9
HP 224; **Bloodied** 112
AC 22, **Fortitude** 18, **Reflex** 19, **Will** 18
Saving Throws +5
Speed 5
Action Points 1

⊕ **Double Strike** (standard; at-will) • **Weapon**
+10 vs AC; 1d8+5 damage
Secondary Attack: +10 vs AC; 1d6+5 damage

↓ **Return the Favor** (immediate interrupt, when a flanking opponent misses) • **Weapon**
+8 vs AC; 1d4+4 damage
Secondary Attack: +7 vs Reflex; 2d4+4 damage

↶ **Fury of Swings** (standard; encounter) • **Thunder, Weapon**
Close burst 1; +10 vs AC; 2d8+7 damage plus 2 thunder damage

↶ **Wink** (minor; encounter) • **Gaze**
Close blast 3; +10 vs Will; target is marked

Violent Thrash (immediate reaction, when bloodied; encounter)
Can use either Double Strike or Fury of Swings.

Sliced Escape
Hatchet reduces the target's speed by 2 with opportunity attacks.

Unaligned **Languages** Common, Elven, Giant
Skills Athletics +9, Acrobatics +10, Nature +8, Intimidate +7
Str 16 (+5) **Dex** 14 (+4) **Wis** 12 (+3)
Con 14 (+4) **Int** 10 (+2) **Cha** 11 (+2)
Equipment chainmail, longsword (w/scabbard), handaxe (attached), adventurer's pack, brown cloak

Feldrake Level 2 Skirmisher
Small natural beast XP 125

Initiative +5 **Senses** Perception +7; low-light vision
Scent aura 10; Feldrake makes a Perception check against any target's Stealth check as an immediate reaction
HP 38; **Bloodied** 19
AC 16, **Fortitude** 14, **Reflex** 14, **Will** 13
Speed 8

⊕ **Bite** (standard; at-will)
+7 vs AC; 1d6+2 damage, or 2d6+2 damage against a prone target

Drag Him Down
If Feldrake has combat advantage against the target, the target is also knocked prone on a hit.

Unaligned
Str 13 (+2) **Dex** 14 (+3) **Wis** 13 (+2)
Con 14 (+3) **Int** 2 (-3) **Cha** 10 (+1)

Faithful Guardian (x2) Level 3 Soldier**Medium natural humanoid (half-elf) XP 150****Initiative** +8 **Senses** Perception +7**HP** 45; **Bloodied** 22**AC** 19, **Fortitude** 17, **Reflex** 15, **Will** 14**Speed** 6⊕ **Short Sword** (standard; at-will) • **Weapon**

+10 vs AC; 1d6+5 damage

↓ **Longbow** (standard; at-will) • **Weapon**

Range 20/40; +9 vs AC; 1d10 damage

↓ **Disarming Blow** (standard; encounter) • **Weapon**

+8 vs Reflex; 1d6+5 and target is disarmed of their primary weapon

↓ **Snap Reaction** (immediate reaction, at the end of a surprise round; encounter) • **Weapon**

+7 vs AC; 2d6+6 damage and shift 2 squares

Serve and Protect (immediate interrupt, when an adjacent ally is attacked; encounter)

The Faithful guardian trades places with the ally and the attack is made against his defences instead.

Lawful good **Languages** Common, Elven**Skills** Dungeoneering +5, Nature +5**Str** 17 (+4) **Dex** 15 (+3) **Wis** 13 (+2)**Con** 16 (+4) **Int** 12 (+2) **Cha** 12 (+2)**Equipment** studded leather armour, short sword, longbow, 40 arrows, holy symbol of Anamupet**Faithful Warrior****Level 1 Skirmisher****Medium natural humanoid****XP 100****Initiative** +3 **Senses** Perception +2**HP** 30; **Bloodied** 15**AC** 17, **Fortitude** 16, **Reflex** 14, **Will** 14**Speed** 6⊕ **Short Sword** (standard; at-will) • **Weapon**

+8 vs AC; 1d6+2 damage and shift 1 square

↓ **Short Sweep** (standard; at-will) • **Weapon**

+6 vs AC; 2d4+4 damage

Secondary Effect: The target slides 1 square**Whistle** (move; encounter)

The Faithful Archer blows his whistle and alerts any other Faithful within 150' to the danger, bringing another patrol within five minutes. There is also a 25% chance of the entire camp hearing this whistle.

Lawful good **Languages** Common**Skills** Nature +5; Religion +5**Str** 15 (+2) **Dex** 13 (+1) **Wis** 12 (+1)**Con** 15 (+2) **Int** 10 (+0) **Cha** 11 (+0)**Equipment** leather armour, short sword, torch, whistle**Faithful Archer (2)****Level 1 Artillery****Medium natural humanoid****XP 100****Initiative** +1 **Senses** Perception +2**HP** 25; **Bloodied** 12**AC** 16, **Fortitude** 15, **Reflex** 14, **Will** 14**Speed** 6⊕ **Shortbow** (standard; at-will) • **Weapon**

Range 15; +8 vs AC; 1d8 damage

↓ **Dagger** (standard; at-will) • **Weapon**

+6 vs AC; 1d4+2 damage

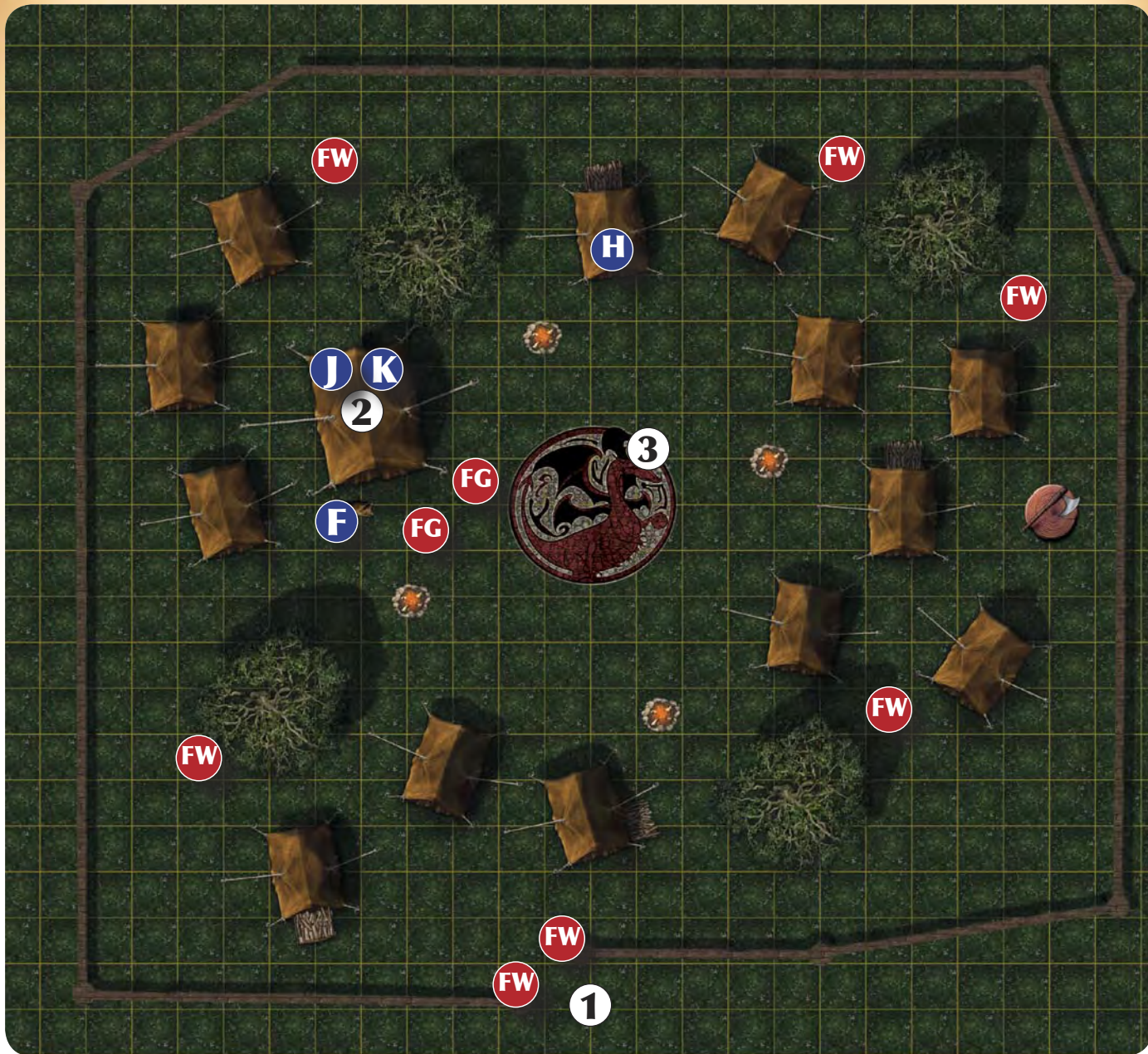
Whistle (move; encounter)

The Faithful Archer blows his whistle and alerts any other Faithful within 150' to the danger, bringing another patrol within five minutes. There is also a 25% chance of the entire camp hearing this whistle.

Lawful good **Languages** Common**Skills** Nature +5; Religion +5**Str** 14 (+2) **Dex** 13 (+1) **Wis** 12 (+1)**Con** 13 (+1) **Int** 10 (+0) **Cha** 11 (+0)**Equipment** leather armour, shortbow, 40 arrows, dagger, whistle**Faithful Believer (x30) Level 2 Minion****Medium natural humanoid****XP 25****Initiative** +1 **Senses** Perception +4**HP** 1; a missed attack never damages a minion**AC** 15, **Fortitude** 13, **Reflex** 14, **Will** 16**Speed** 6⊕ **Desperate Beating** (standard; at-will)

+4 vs AC; 1d4+1 damage

Unaligned **Languages** Common**Skills** Religion +3**Str** 10 (+1) **Dex** 10 (+1) **Wis** 12 (+2)**Con** 10 (+1) **Int** 11 (+1) **Cha** 10 (+1)**Equipment** holy symbol of Anamupet



ENCOUNTER D2

MOONLIGHT INFILTRATION

Encounter Level Special [5000 XP]

Ah, the fine art of the sneak. Will it be a quick in-and-out or an all-nighter? However you do it, always remember the first rule of stealth: never let them know you were there 'til the next morning.

SETUP

Rather than embarking on a suicidal assault, the PCs have chosen to break into the camp, sneak past the guards, and steal the portal key. This option still contains two possibilities: they can simply slip past everyone and take the mark without waking anyone up or they can slit some throats and make sure these people never come back to finish them off.

If the PCs have not tried any earlier attempts to infiltrate the camp and if the Faithful are not on high alert for any future intrusions, there will be no modifiers to their efforts. Should the Faithful be extra wary due to a failed attempt earlier by the PCs, each Faithful warrior, guardian, and believer can re-roll their Perception checks and use the higher of the two rolls.

This encounter takes place within the Faithful camp in Harrington Woods and uses the map provided. Each Faithful warrior marked on the map is not stuck in that position and will wander a 5 square perimeter around that spot.

This encounter uses the following creatures:

Jarod Highwater (J)

Hatchet (H)

Key (K)

Faithful archers (A)

Faithful warriors (W)

2 Faithful guardians (G)

30 Faithful believers (B)

Feldrake the dog (F)

SILENT VICTORIES: Due to the nature of this encounter, PCs receive full XP for sneaking past any target without alerting them. They do not gain additional rewards for killing the same target(s) later in the encounter.

FEATURES

Illumination: This encounter assumes the PCs are entering the camp at night and are therefore in darkness, gaining total concealment in all areas in shadows. Any square bordering this darkness grants concealment, but a PC can make a **DC 17 Stealth check** to use total concealment in that square. Anything in the illuminated centre of the map is considered dim light and grants concealment.

Tents: Each tent is pitched to the ground using spikes and rope, providing total concealment to anyone inside (they are not solid enough to provide cover). With a minor action, a PC can slice one of the ropes and bring the whole

tent down. Anyone inside the tent is considered restrained (save ends), but this will automatically alert all Faithful warriors in the area.

Trees: Four large oak trees are spread out within the campsite and provide total cover for any Medium sized or smaller creatures hiding behind them.

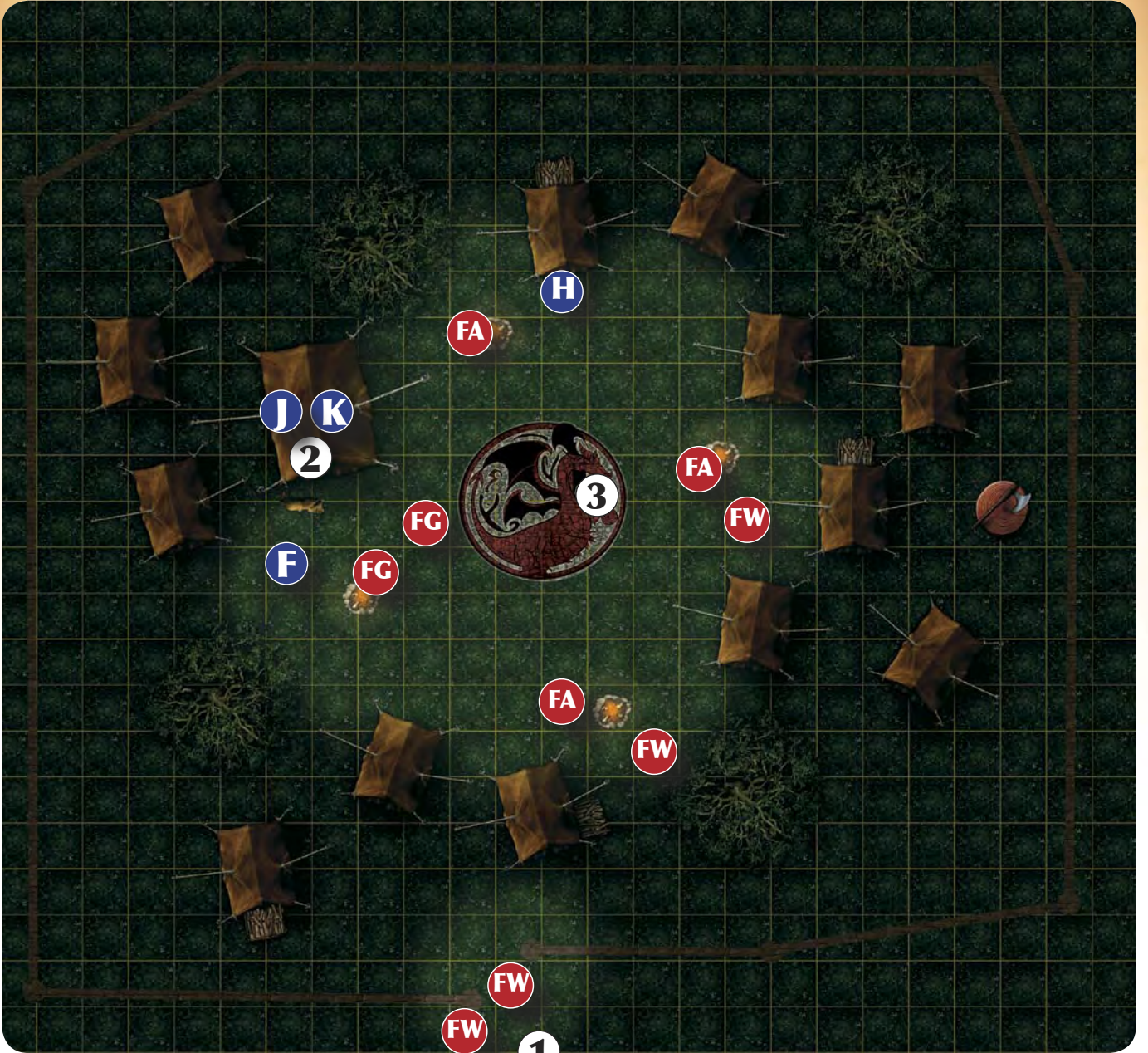
Central Courtyard: The outer edge of the courtyard consists of pebbles and stones, but the centre is a deep, waist-high pool of water and is considered difficult terrain. Only when the portal is activated can this hindrance be removed.

TACTICS

The trick to completing this encounter is silence. So long as the PCs do not make any noise or lose their Stealth checks, everything should go according to plan. If they fail to do so and the stationed Faithful warriors are alerted to their presence, switch to **Encounter D1: All-Out Assault**.

The PCs can get a lucky break if Feldrake the dog notices their arrival with his scent aura. Because he barks at any wild game entering the camp, any Faithful in the

area will disregard his initial bark at the PCs. If the PCs have been spotted by Feldrake's scent aura, they must make a **DC 15 Nature check** to stay downwind or take a move action to get out of his scent's range before the start of Feldrake's turn. Feldrake will bark when he first detects an intruder, but waits for the command from Jarod or a Faithful guardian before attacking. If combat does break out, Feldrake charges into the fray without a command.



One final obstacle remains for the PCs: Hatchet. He has seen the PCs in the Hungry Orc and knows they are hired to steal the portal key, particularly any PCs who entered Bloomten with him. Hatchet will play along for a while, particularly if the PCs have gone to the trouble of disguising themselves, but he will work on taking out the PCs slowly, one by one, if he has to. Exposing them before the Faithful is a second option as well, but he relishes the idea of dispatching them behind the scenes. If the PCs kill Hatchet or do open battle with him, they have to bluff their way out of this scenario as Hatchet's reputation gives him credibility to Jarod over these newcomers.

SCREW THE KEY, TAKE THE HOLY SYMBOL: Conflicted characters still have a valid option – Stump believes the key is a holy symbol worn by Jarod. If the orcs can still believe it is the source of the portal, they can stick with petty theft instead of kidnapping. Nothing changes the course of the adventure, however, and the camp's defenses will remain the same regardless of the mercs' target. See *Behind the Scenes* on the following page for details.

JAROD'S SURVIVAL: There is ample possibility the PCs will be aiming for Jarod in any of these scenarios and his survival is important for the end of the adventure. Aside from his personal bodyguards and the 100 followers in the campsite, Jarod is a powerful paladin compared to the PCs. He does have a failsafe: the holy symbol will teleport Jarod to the Temple of Anamupet when he is reduced to 10 hit points or less. The PCs will never have a chance to kill him until Chapter Four.

REACTIONS AND CONSEQUENCES

How this chapter ends will determine the following events to come and the order in which the next two chapters will unfold.

If the PCs were able to successfully abduct Key, move on to *Chapter Three: Reclamation* and replace any deceased NPCs as necessary.

If the PCs were unable to abduct Key and the boy was able to escape into the portal, skip to *Chapter Four: The Temple of Anamupet*. Once Key has been taken from the Feyrealm, you can then use *Chapter Three: Reclamation* as a follow-up to conclude the adventure and set the stage for any final battles in Bloomten. If the players are keen to go back into the Feyrealm, they can go back and get Key again with very little time for the Faithful to repair any damaged traps or refill troops.

If the PCs were unable to abduct Key but did escape from the Faithful camp alive, you can still run *Chapter Three: Reclamation* with some minor adjustments as the fey guardians of the Temple of Anamupet follow Jarod in a retaliatory strike against Stump and the PCs.

ROLLING WITH THE PUNCHES: OPEN-ENDED ROLEPLAYING

Much of this scene runs with a lot of options for the players to choose from or using others they come up with that defy expectation and preparation. In a scene where the PCs have a number of possibilities, it can be difficult for a GM to be prepared.

Let the players make some mistakes and allow the scene to play out as it will. Mercs who fail on the first go are never the type to take defeat lying down and there are plenty of chances for a return effort. Another consideration for a GM is the intensity of the campaign, particularly how evil and misguided the players choose to play. This actually creates new problems for a GM, but it all comes down to the same factors as running a mercenary adventure. Mercs are not expected to do the right thing every time and there are many non-traditional methods to wrapping up an adventure and even getting paid for it. With this in mind, there are any number of means to attempt success here, but the three options given in this chapter are the most likely to work out. Other situations such as taking Key hostage, destroying the ground around the portal to make it useless, and even killing the boy just to resurrect him back in Bloomten are possible routes too, but have not been considered here so that this adventure meets the needs of as many mercenary campaigns as possible.

A good GM should also consider the frustrations of the players. Having the ability to choose from any number of possibilities is fine, but if their failure leads to disappointment and boredom, then feel free to step in and give them a helping hand. Most players for this adventure are likely experienced roleplayers and can easily adapt to any strategy or roleplaying demands, so it likely won't take much to push them in the right direction.

PAYDAY

Upon arriving back in Bloomten with either Key or Jarod's holy symbol, they will be well rewarded. Use the appropriate section below to begin this scene.

WITH KEY: If they march Key into the village, they will quickly alert the attention of many orcs circling around them curiously. They utter threats and cry out foul shrieks to scare the boy, but never touch or endanger him. Not with the PCs – the orcs will insult them for “bringin’ back the wrong prize” and belittle them as failures.

Stump will be furious and demand an answer for bringing an elven child before him and will appreciate it even less if he is corrected as to Key's half-eladrin heritage. It will take a lot of explaining to convince the orc they speak the truth and it will be difficult to prove. Unless they are standing atop the portal back at the Faithful camp, Key is nothing more than a cowering pup fit for slavery as far as Stump is concerned.

No amount of convincing, or intimidation, will make Stump change his mind. If the PCs kill him, there is an army of orcs waiting outside the door to finish them off – they won't go far. On top of that, the Hungry Orc is filled with more orcs, and a pair of lethal hobgoblin bodyguards stands at the ready to drop them. If the PCs are able to prove Key's power, he will pay them as described in the next section. Otherwise, the PCs get nothing without Jarod's holy symbol. See Resale Value in *Behind the Scenes* if the PCs decide to take Key back to the Faithful in exchange for Jarod's holy symbol. Stump tells them they are free to remain in Bloomten to rest before heading back to get what he really wants.

WITH THE HOLY SYMBOL: The Harad'adak pays no heed to the PCs entry, though it's not too long before hushed rumours of their job spread and the orcs gather around the Hungry Orc. Leering through every crack and knothole, they observe Stump eagerly paying the PCs for a job well done. He pays out to everyone as promised and offers to put them up for the night in the Harad'adak Hotel. Continue on to *Chapter Three: Reclamation*.

If Stump and any PCs make a separate, private deal for more coin, the orc may be inclined to reward the devious PC(s) in front of the others. He flaunts the purpose of the bonus before the rest of the party and makes it very clear this was an agreement the PC(s) entered into with him while no one else was around. This is at the GM's option, as revealing such information requires experienced and mature roleplaying with an understanding of this betrayal as a story element.

BEHIND THE SCENES

JAROD'S HOLY SYMBOL: While it is not the portal key needed to enter the Feyrealm, the true symbol of Anamupet remains essential to the return of the ancient deity. Jarod's holy symbol is a key to open the Temple of Anamupet. If the mercs steal the holy symbol, the paladin and his forces will attack Bloomten to retrieve it and the events of Chapter Three will occur almost exactly as written to recover the boy.

HATCHET'S TRUE EMPLOYER: We've said it before. A merc's reputation can go a long way and Hatchet's counting on his rep getting him in the midst of the Faithful to serve his real employer. Hatchet is infiltrating the cult on behalf of Key's mother – his job is to find and return the half-eladrin boy to his eladrin mother in the Feyrealm. After an attack by drow four years ago, Key was captured and was in the midst of being transported to the depths of the Undercity when Jarod rescued him. Taking the boy under his wing (as Key believed his village wiped out in the attack), Jarod is unaware of the boy's mother but is likely unwilling to return the boy to his rightful home.

This information is critical and can be helpful to the PCs in the latter half of the adventure. No matter what happens, Hatchet will ensure the boy's survival. If the mercs provide obvious signs of reluctance in kidnapping Key, Hatchet can use them as allies.

RESALE VALUE: Without any reward for Key, the PCs may be inclined to take him back to the Faithful and negotiate an exchange: the boy for the holy symbol. Jarod willingly agrees and offers up the holy symbol (and himself, should they demand it) to get Key away from them. By the time the PCs would return, the Faithful have already begun plans to set Chapter Three in motion to retrieve the holy symbol.



RECLAMATION

Chapter 3

Now you've done it. The job's done and all, but you're far from finished. That's the problem with worshippers and followers – they don't give up easily. You may have taken the boy, but there's no way the Faithful are just going to stand for it and pout about how their miracle doorknob got snatched from 'em. Nope, they're coming to get him back.

The choice is up to you. Do you fight back and hold onto your prize for the sake of saying you completed the job, even above and beyond the call and the pay you were offered? Or do you allow them to take the boy back with them and hold out for more jink to line your purse with? Or do you decide to make it personal and wipe those cultists off the map for good? Either way, a fight's coming and you better have a good grip on your sword, 'cause those fey are a clever bunch.

Now it's time for the Faithful to bring it back to the orcs. At the very least, Jarod and those Faithful closest to him know about Stump's efforts to have his holy symbol taken and that makes Bloomten their first stop the following morning. Waiting for the orcs to doze off as the sun rises, the Faithful launch a large-scale, unexpected assault with creatures brought back from the Temple of Anamupet.

This chapter's most important element is that the PCs remain within or around Bloomten to experience these events. If they were successful in stealing the holy symbol, they will be put up in the Harad'adak Hotel and start with Encounter E1 and work their way outside until Encounter E5. Should they remain outside in the woods, they can start with Encounter E5 and battle towards Encounter E1 to retrieve Key, check on Stump, or any other suitable reason for the PCs to head back into Bloomten.

This entire chapter is a complete battle broken up into individual encounters. These encounters are by no means the only possible encounters, but they are the likeliest. Use the map of Bloomten to stage any other encounter of any design you like. The provided encounters can be run in any order and may even be repeated in various buildings throughout the village.

WHERE'S JAROD? The paladin will not participate in this attack, having to prepare the ceremony that will return the Temple of Anamupet to its former glory. The eladrin have taken the lead on this assault.

THE BATTLE OF BLOOMTEN

This chapter presents a unique challenge for heroic characters, particularly at 1st and 2nd level as the PCs should be. Each encounter takes place surrounded by hundreds of other creatures at war with each other, meaning it is incredibly easy for the PCs to enter additional encounters in the course of this battle. For the purpose of this chapter, and the adventure as a whole, the battle serves as an evocative background for the players.

Numerous events take place over the course of the battle, affecting events and particular NPCs' involvement in these encounters. For example, while the PCs are defending themselves against the centries in Encounter E1, Hatchet will make his way to Stump manor's and lead an assault team inside to retrieve Key and/or Jarod's holy symbol. The length of time it takes for the PCs to get through their encounters will determine whether or not they reach the manor in time to stop Hatchet or watch him escape through the back window with his targets in tow. To accomplish this with as little tracking and paperwork as possible, a timeline of the battle is given below.

TIMELINE OF THE BATTLE: Give the players 3 hours in real time to complete this chapter. This allows the players to take turns in combat throughout their own designated encounters and move as quickly as possible to reach Stump's manor. There are two options you have in presenting this battle to the players. First, you can openly inform them of their time limit and have them work towards reaching their goal within the timeframe as the clock ticks away in front of them; or you can keep this time limit a secret and simply follow the events according to the timeline given below. A combination of the two can also work (for example, you can inform the players of their time limit after they survive their first encounter and realize what is going on).

This timeline begins in the first surprise round of combat in Encounter E1. Use the check boxes below to mark off each event as they occur in this order. Should you need to modify events, you may switch their order as needed, but stop tracking time once the PCs arrive at Stump's manor – they will be able to directly influence those events in Encounter E4 and will likely alter the timeline as given.

- 0:00** – All Faithful and their allies are in position. Sneaking into the village, they have positioned themselves to attack the orcs while they sleep and start the battle. Hatchet and his platoon move towards Stump's manor.
- 0:30** – The battle is under way now. Hatchet and his platoon arrive at the front door of Stump's manor. While the merc works on picking the locks, the other eladrin surround the building and force their way inside quietly. Stump has barricaded himself in the main lobby with his hobgoblin bodyguards.
- 1:00** – Hatchet and his platoon are now inside Stump's manor, fighting with the hobgoblin bodyguards. Fires have been set and all of the intact buildings, except Stump's manor, are burning.
- 2:00** – The hobgoblin bodyguards are dead. Hatchet works on releasing Key from the iron cage. Stump is left to defend himself, wearing Jarod's holy symbol of Anamupet around his neck.
- 2:15** – Realising they are outmatched and losing, many orcs retreat for the woods and save themselves. Hatchet picks the lock and frees Key.
- 2:30** – Stump loses his wand of magic missiles and has been reduced to 20 hp. Defeated, he cowers behind the bronze statue. Hatchet takes the holy symbol from his neck and pockets it. The surviving eladrin split up to search the manor for any evidence of their existence and burn it. They start setting fires upstairs and find no evidence linking anything back to them.
- 2:45** – Hatchet escapes from the manor with Key and the holy symbol. Signaling to the Faithful in the woods, they unleash the baylog to cover the merc's escape. They then begin to pour lamp oil on the ground and prepare torches.
- 3:00** – The lamp oil is set alight and massive fires block the PCs and any orcs from following them. Hatchet plus any surviving eladrin and Faithful pull back and make their way towards the Faithful camp. The baylog remains to deal with any survivors.



ENCOUNTER E1

UNDER COVER OF DAWN

Encounter Level 2 (625 XP)

Oh, in case no one's told you before, you'll never have a good night's sleep again. Not in this line of work. You make too many enemies and they're mostly scum. Sneaking up on a guy and stabbin' him ain't a big deal when you don't have a conscience. But a lot of people, even the good ones, won't think you deserve the dignity of being awake when they try and kill you. Get used to it.

SETUP

Creeping their way into the Harad'adak Hotel, several centries use their natural invisibility to enter while everyone's asleep and prepare to eliminate anyone they see inside except for Key. The centries search for the boy and clear the room before making their attack. Key has seen them before and will not panic, willingly escaping with them.

The PCs are woken just as the centries prepare to launch an attack and a struggle breaks out. The surprise round is crucial for the PCs to gain the upper hand in this encounter, but it is still survivable should none of the PCs become alerted to their presence.

This encounter occurs in a single room in the Harad'adak Hotel. There are no additional orcs in this room, but they can be added at the GM's leisure to add favor to the PCs at the cost of an experience point reduction for the encounter.

This encounter uses the following creatures:

2 centries (C)

Eladrin infiltrators (I)

Eladrin sniper (S)

Fey rat swarm (R)

WAKE UP, SLEEPYHEADS!: All sleeping PCs can make a **Perception check with a -5 penalty** against their enemies' Stealth check. Any PCs alerted to the intrusion are immune from the surprise round or may choose to attack first (without gaining a surprise round for themselves – their attackers are at the ready).

Read the following aloud to the players when they first enter this room prior to the start of this encounter:

Simple beyond measure, this "room" is nothing more than some pillows on the floor, a hammock strapped to the wall, and the previous door to this room shattered on the floor. Giant cracks in the floor offer a slight breeze which actually freshens the room...in comparison to the rest of the building. If you only light a candle or two, you'll never notice the various stains on the wall or the contents of the pots in the corner.

FEATURES

Illumination: Dim, unless additional illumination is provided by the PCs prior to this encounter.

Wooden Floor: Solid wood with a couple of rough patches. Any person who moves over these cracks on the floor must make a **DC 10 Athletics check** to avoid tripping and falling prone until the start of their next turn.

Door: Recently hammered into place, this door is actually quite sturdy (stats here). The lock is next to useless (except if the PCs took any measures to address this) and easy for the sniper to pick (Break DC 16, Unlock DC 15).

Walls: Solid masonry walls with little significant damage (Break DC 32).

Window: Opening outwards from the center, nothing more than a latch keeps this window closed. It is a 40-foot drop to the ground (4d10 damage) and any person thrown out the window can make a **DC 17 Athletics check** as an immediate reaction to grab hold of the window ledge and avoid the fall.

Buckets, Pots, and Sacks: These various items contain little treasures collected by the orcs and abandoned the next morning. Nothing but soiled junk, they can be used as improvised weapons.

Broken Door on the Floor: Stepping on any of the bottom right squares marked on the map is difficult terrain.

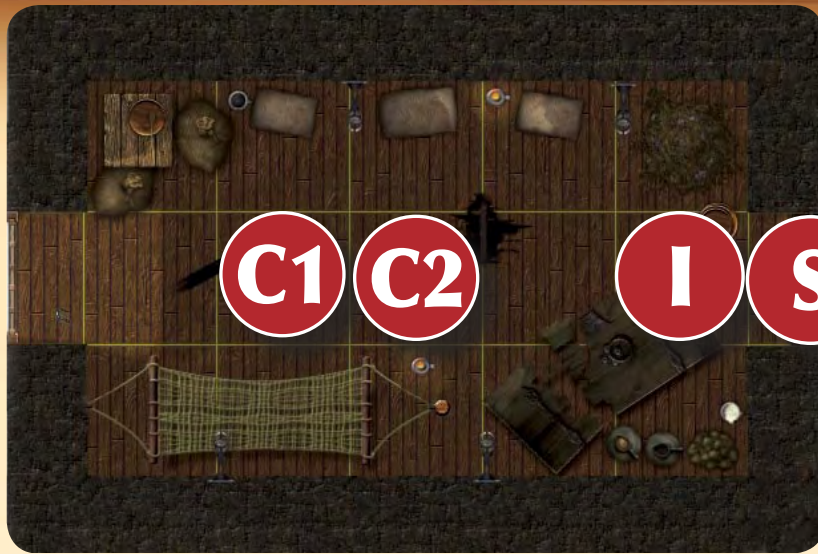
Hammock: Any square with the hammock is considered difficult terrain.

TACTICS

The eladrin sniper easily picks the lock on the door and allows the centries to enter with their illuminant eyes closed. Checking for any sign of Key, they will not position themselves for attack until they have cleared the room. They will stand over the PCs, one by one, and attack in the surprise round by opening their eyes and

blinding their targets. From there, they beat on the PCs until dead. The sniper remains at the door, picking off any targets when they get past the centries.

On the second round, a fey rat swarm enters the room and attacks the closest PC.



Centry (2) Level 3 Controller
Medium fey humanoid XP 150

Initiative +5 **Senses** Perception +5
Tingling Throb aura 10; +7 vs. Fortitude; target suffers -2 penalty to attacks (save ends)
HP 42; **Bloodied** 21
AC 21, **Fortitude** 16, **Reflex** 19, **Will** 17
Speed 6
 Ⓡ **Rippling Touch** (standard; at-will) • **Thunder**
 +9 vs AC; 1d4+1 thunder damage
 ⚡ **Eyebeam** (immediate interrupt, when attacked by any character directly facing it, at-will) • **Radiant**
 Close blast 5; +11 vs Reflex; 1d6+2 radiant damage.
Secondary Attack: +7 vs Fortitude; target is blind (save ends)
Partial Invisibility
 The centry has concealment at all times. If it closes its eye, it becomes invisible but cannot attack.
Lawful good **Languages** Common (not spoken), special (clicking noises)
Skills Athletics +8
Str 12 (+2) **Dex** 17 (+4) **Wis** 14 (+3)
Con 10 (+1) **Int** 15 (+3) **Cha** 14 (+3)

Eladrin Infiltrator Level 1 Skirmisher
Medium fey humanoid XP 100

Initiative +5 **Senses** Perception +5; low-light vision
HP 31; **Bloodied** 15
AC 17, **Fortitude** 16, **Reflex** 15, **Will** 15
Saving Throws +5 against charms
Speed 6
 Ⓡ **Short Sword** (standard; at-will) • **Weapon**
 +8 vs AC; 1d6+3 damage
 ⚔ **Eladrin Darkbow** (standard; at-will) • **Weapon**
 Range 10; +8 vs AC; 1d8 damage
Fey Step (move; encounter) • **Teleportation**
 The eladrin infiltrator can teleport 5 squares.
Subconscious Slide (immediate reaction, when a target you hit is bloodied by your attack; encounter)
 The eladrin infiltrator can slide up to 2 squares.
Lawful good **Languages** Common, Elven
Skills Nature +7, Stealth +7
Str 17 (+3) **Dex** 14 (+2) **Wis** 14 (+2)
Con 17 (+3) **Int** 13 (+1) **Cha** 15 (+2)
Equipment Scale mail, short sword, darkbow (treat as longbows coated in black ochre paint), 40 arrows, black cloak

Eladrin Sniper Level 1 Artillery
Medium fey humanoid XP 100

Initiative +1 **Senses** Perception +6; low-light vision
HP 24; **Bloodied** 12
AC 14, **Fortitude** 14, **Reflex** 15, **Will** 13
Saving Throws +5 against charms
Speed 6
 Ⓡ **Eladrin Darkbow** (standard; at-will) • **Weapon**
 Range 10; +8 vs AC; 1d8 damage
 ⚔ **Flaming Arrow** (standard; at-will) • **Fire, Weapon**
 Range 7; +8 vs AC; 1d6 damage plus 2 ongoing fire (save ends)
 ⚔ **Poison Gas Arrow** (standard; at-will) • **Poison, Weapon**
 Range 7; +8 vs AC; 1d6 damage plus 2 ongoing poison (save ends)
Fey Step (move; encounter) • **Teleportation**
 The eladrin infiltrator can teleport 5 squares.
Perfect Camouflage (move; encounter) • **Illusion**
 The eladrin sniper can become invisible until the end of his next turn.
Lawful good **Languages** Common, Elven
Skills Nature +7, Stealth +7
Str 14 (+2) **Dex** 17 (+3) **Wis** 16 (+3)
Con 14 (+2) **Int** 14 (+2) **Cha** 15 (+2)
Equipment Black leather armor, darkbow (treat as longbows coated in black ochre paint), 40 arrows (including flaming and poison gas arrows), black cloak

Fey Rat Swarm Level 2 Skirmisher
Medium fey beast (swarm) XP 125

Initiative +7 **Senses** Perception +10; darkvision
Swarm Attack aura 1; the fey rat swarm makes a *swarm of teeth* attack as a free action against each enemy that begins its turn in the aura
HP 37; **Bloodied** 18
AC 16, **Fortitude** 14, **Reflex** 14, **Will** 15
Resist half damage from melee and ranged attacks;
Vulnerable 5 against close and area attacks
Speed 4, climb 2
 Ⓡ **Swarm of Teeth** (standard; at-will)
 +6 vs. AC; 1d6+3 damage, and ongoing 3 damage (save ends)
Unaligned
Str 12 (+2) **Dex** 17 (+4) **Wis** 10 (+1)
Con 12 (+2) **Int** 2 (-3) **Cha** 9 (+0)

ENCOUNTER E2

AMBUSH IN THE HALLWAY

Encounter Level 2 (600 XP)

Damn! The place's surrounded. Like my momma always said, "Kill as many as you can before you hit the door."

SETUP

Eladrin infiltrators guard the upper hallway outside of the Hotel's rooms (Encounter E1) while eladrin snipers pump arrows into anyone sneaking past them from the lower foyer. They have orders to kill anyone who is not an eladrin (with exceptions to any eladrin who attack them in return; an eladrin PC spotted by any living Faithful in Chapter Two will be recognized and attacked on sight).

This encounter takes place on the upper hallway leading to the guest rooms and the main foyer below in the Harad'adak Hotel. The PCs start at the door marked E1 (the location of the previous encounter).

This encounter uses the following creatures:

2 eladrin infiltrators (I)

4 eladrin snipers (S)

Read or paraphrase the following to the PCs at the start of the encounter:

No sooner do you race past the doorway, a cloaked figure with a curved sword lunges at you. Another stands behind him finishing off an orc and arrows stick out of the railing, walls, and two other orc carcasses on the floor and stairs.

FEATURES

Illumination: Torches line the walls of the upper balcony bathing it in bright light. The main foyer only uses a few scant candles and counts as dim light to grant the eladrin snipers below concealment.

Wooden Floor: Solid wood with a couple of rough patches. Any person who moves over these cracks on the floor must make a **DC 10 Athletics check** to avoid tripping and falling prone until the start of their next turn.

Door: Aside from the door to Encounter E1, the other doors in this hallway barely exist. It only takes a minor action to force one open.

Walls: Solid masonry walls with little significant damage (Break DC 32).

Wooden Stairs: Steep, but sturdy and count as difficult terrain.

Railing: Running along the entire length of the upper hallway, the railing is in poor shape and only takes the slightest push to topple it completely. Any character stepping on the same square as the railing suffers a +6 vs Reflex attack and falls 20 feet to the main foyer (2d10 damage and character is prone)

Potties: There are two urine-filled pots in the hallway. They act as improvised weapons and cause a secondary attack of +5 vs Will and the target is stunned (save ends).

TACTICS

The infiltrators make sure to stand between doors at all times, leaving the snipers room to fire at orcs and the PCs as they barrel out of their rooms. Infiltrators will push anyone toward the railing and send them falling. They will all fall back outside if they become outnumbered quickly or drop to less than three eladrin.

A Human Ain't An Orc: For an extra challenge, throw in a pair of orcs to the mix. Unaware or uncaring of the PCs' true purpose here, the orcs only see a set of non-orcs with weapons covered in blood. Use any of the orc minions from Encounter B and add their XP to the encounter total.



Eladrin Infiltrator (2) Level 1 Skirmisher
Medium fey humanoid XP 100

Initiative +5 **Senses** Perception +5; low-light vision
HP 31; **Bloodied** 15
AC 17, **Fortitude** 16, **Reflex** 15, **Will** 15
Saving Throws +5 against charms
Speed 6

⊕ **Short Sword** (standard; at-will) • **Weapon**
+8 vs AC; 1d6+3 damage

↘ **Eladrin Darkbow** (standard; at-will) • **Weapon**
Range 10; +8 vs AC; 1d8 damage

Fey Step (move; encounter) • **Teleportation**

The eladrin infiltrator can teleport 5 squares.

Subconscious Slide (immediate reaction, when a target you hit is bloodied by your attack; encounter)

The eladrin infiltrator can slide up to 2 squares.

Lawful good **Languages** Common, Elven

Skills Nature +7, Stealth +7

Str 17 (+3) **Dex** 14 (+2) **Wis** 14 (+2)

Con 17 (+3) **Int** 13 (+1) **Cha** 15 (+2)

Equipment Scale mail, short sword, darkbow (treat as longbows coated in black ochre paint), 40 arrows, black cloak

Eladrin Sniper (4) Level 1 Artillery
Medium fey humanoid XP 100

Initiative +1 **Senses** Perception +6; low-light vision
HP 24; **Bloodied** 12
AC 14, **Fortitude** 14, **Reflex** 15, **Will** 13
Saving Throws +5 against charms
Speed 6

⊕ **Eladrin Darkbow** (standard; at-will) • **Weapon**
Range 10; +8 vs AC; 1d8 damage

↘ **Flaming Arrow** (standard; at-will) • **Fire, Weapon**
Range 7; +8 vs AC; 1d6 damage plus 2 ongoing fire (save ends)

↘ **Poison Gas Arrow** (standard; at-will) • **Poison, Weapon**
Range 7; +8 vs AC; 1d6 damage plus 2 ongoing poison (save ends)

Fey Step (move; encounter) • **Teleportation**

The eladrin infiltrator can teleport 5 squares.

Perfect Camouflage (move; encounter) • **Illusion**

The eladrin sniper can become invisible until the end of his next turn.

Lawful good **Languages** Common, Elven

Skills Nature +7, Stealth +7

Str 14 (+2) **Dex** 17 (+3) **Wis** 16 (+3)

Con 14 (+2) **Int** 14 (+2) **Cha** 15 (+2)

Equipment Black leather armor, darkbow (treat as longbows coated in black ochre paint), 40 arrows (including flaming and poison gas arrows), black cloak

ENCOUNTER E3

TAKE IT OUTSIDE!

Encounter Level 2 (550 XP)

What're ya doing looking to see what I'll say? Fight!

SETUP

Use this encounter for any outdoor setting within the grounds of Bloomten. While any location in the village will suffice, there are particulars written for the orc tents (Area 2 on the map of Bloomten).

The following creatures are used in this encounter:

Barlak (B)

3 eladrin infiltrators (I)

Stumbling Into a Fight: This encounter may also be used as a “wandering monster” check of sorts. Have the PCs roll a **DC 18 Stealth check** every round they move around Bloomten. Failure results in the PCs spotted by a mob of orcs, eladrin, and other mysterious creatures who bring the fight to them. Use this encounter sparingly: it should be avoided if each PC has already become bloodied at some point during this chapter. It can also be used to delay the PCs should they race through these encounter too far quickly on their way to Encounter E4.

Read or paraphrase the following to the PCs at the start of the encounter:

Swords and axes clash, their clangs echoing in a simultaneous burst of steel as the entire village appears under attack. Fires have been started in all the buildings left standing, soaked by the heavy quantities of alcohol within the orc village. Several small skirmishes take place within the tents.

Read this description of the barlak when the players first gain a clear sight of it:

This sleek, sinewy mass of bark and vines crouches down on its four clawed legs. Two long tentacles rising out of its back wave from side to side like a cat's tail before it pounces and a head shaped from a feline skull has soft glowing eyes of amber. Before it lunges once more, you hear a low growl.

FEATURES

Illumination: Bright light. The sun has risen high enough in the sky to partially blind the orcs for a short period of time and give these Faithful the leg up.

Tents: Held erect with nothing more than wooden poles slammed into the ground, they are brittle and not particularly secure. A **DC 15 Strength check** yanks one from the ground or smashes it to splinters, plus any melee, burst, blast, or area attack will damage it (AC 4, 6 hp).

Breaking or removing at least two poles on a tent causes the tent to collapse and anyone caught inside is restrained and their movement is reduced to half until they move out of any square designated for a tent.

Signs of Battle: Debris, weapons, and bodies are littered across Bloomten's courtyard (and not just from the battle). Any creature taking a double move action or pushed back at least one square must make a **DC 15 Acrobatics check** or fall prone.

Wagons, Crates, and Other Forms of Cover: Various scattered items lie about to offer cover (crates, barrels, chests) and superior cover (wagons, carts).

Improvised Weapons: Countless items lie everywhere, each of them available as an improvised weapon. At the start of his or her turn, a PC can make a **DC 15 Perception check** as a free action to spot an improvised weapon and a 25% chance of it being on fire, causing 2 ongoing fire damage per round (save ends). On a roll of 20 or higher on a Perception check, the PC finds a weapon (GM's choice) with a 25% chance of the weapon being on fire, causing 2 ongoing fire damage per round (save ends).

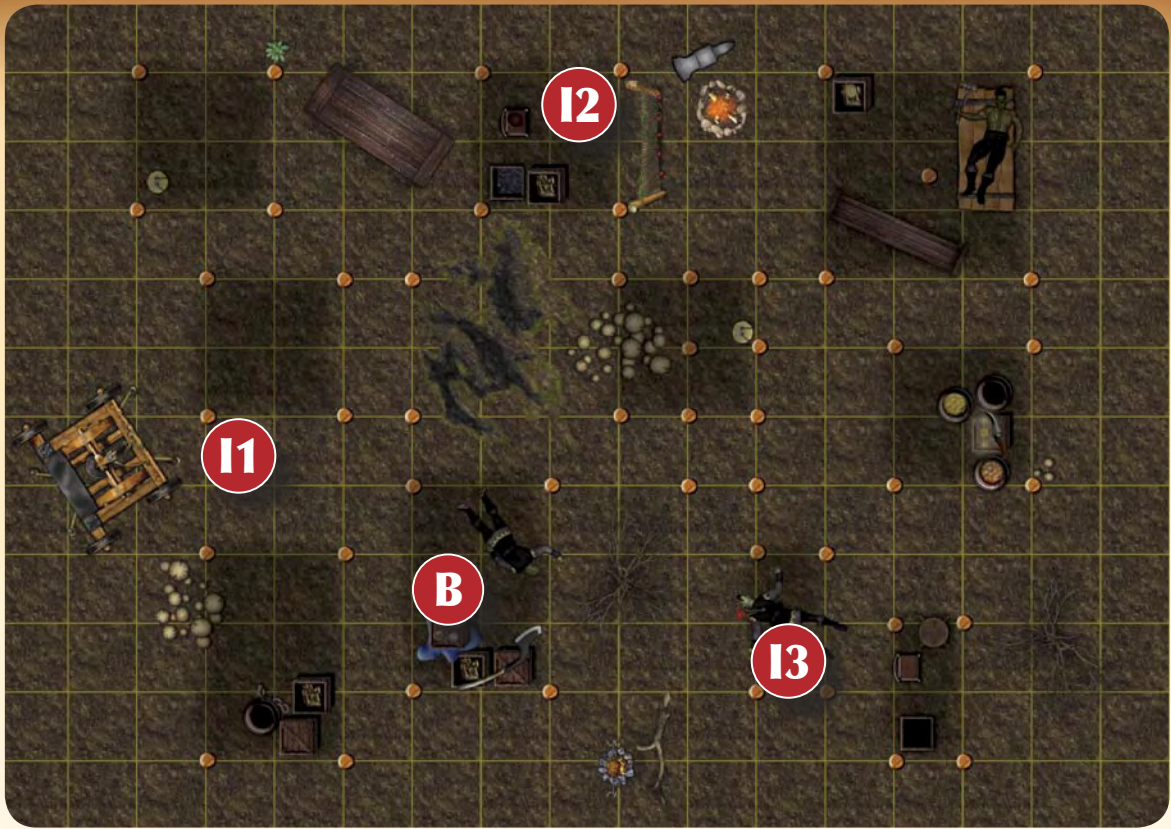
TACTICS

This is a no-holds barred battle and the only rule is “take no prisoners.” The eladrin infiltrators will be in combat with various orc minions at the start of the encounter and will turn to the PCs when they come within 5 squares of any infiltrator.

The barlak pounces on any non-eladrin from behind collapsed tents or wagons with a tentacle fury attack. Its attention will turn to the last character to inflict damage on during the previous round.

If the PCs begin to fair too well, throw in some orc minions swinging their weapons wildly to increase the difficulty.





Barlak Level 2 Elite Lurker
Medium fey beast XP 250

Initiative +5 **Senses** Perception +8; darkvision
Snapping Tentacles aura 2; make a *tentacle fury* attack against any target when they first enter the aura in an encounter

HP 62; **Bloodied** 31
AC 17, **Fortitude** 14, **Reflex** 14, **Will** 16
Saving Throws +2
Speed 6

Action Points 1

⊕ **Tentacle** (standard; at-will)
Reach 2; +7 vs AC; 1d8+2 damage

‡ **Tentacle Fury** (standard; at-will)
The barlak makes two tentacle attacks. If both tentacle attacks hit the same target, the barlak makes a secondary attack against the target.

Secondary Attack: +7 vs AC; the target is grabbed (until escape)

‡ **Claws** (standard; at-will)
+6 vs AC; 1d6+4 damage

Barreling Charge (immediate reaction, when bloodied; encounter)

The barlak takes a double move action and pushes any target in its path back one square.

Secondary Attack: +6 vs Will; the barlak does not grant line of sight until the start of its next turn

Unaligned

Skills Stealth +8
Str 20 (+6) **Dex** 13 (+2) **Wis** 14 (+3)
Con 15 (+3) **Int** 12 (+2) **Cha** 12 (+2)

Eladrin Infiltrator (3) Level 1 Skirmisher
Medium fey humanoid XP 100

Initiative +5 **Senses** Perception +5; low-light vision
HP 31; **Bloodied** 15
AC 17, **Fortitude** 16, **Reflex** 15, **Will** 15
Saving Throws +5 against charms
Speed 6

⊕ **Short Sword** (standard; at-will) • **Weapon**
+8 vs AC; 1d6+3 damage

‡ **Eladrin Darkbow** (standard; at-will) • **Weapon**
Range 10; +8 vs AC; 1d8 damage

Fey Step (move; encounter) • **Teleportation**
The eladrin infiltrator can teleport 5 squares.

Subconscious Slide (immediate reaction, when a target you hit is bloodied by your attack; encounter)
The eladrin infiltrator can slide up to 2 squares.

Lawful good **Languages** Common, Elven
Skills Nature +7, Stealth +7

Str 17 (+3) **Dex** 14 (+2) **Wis** 14 (+2)
Con 17 (+3) **Int** 13 (+1) **Cha** 15 (+2)

Equipment Scale mail, short sword, darkbow (treat as longbows coated in black ochre paint), 40 arrows, black cloak

ENCOUNTER E4: RECLAMATION

Encounter Level 3 (700 XP)

Just hope you made it in time to get in the middle of this nice scrap...

SETUP

Key and Jarod's holy symbol of Anamupet are kept with Stump in his manor (Area 3 on the map of Bloomten). When the PCs arrive, they encounter the remnants of the attack on the manor and make an effort to keep what they worked so hard to retrieve. Stump's bodyguards are dead, along with several other orc minions dragged in from the battle outside. Stump himself cowers behind the bronze statue at the other side of his desk (DC 17 Perception check), wounded and his wand of magic missiles stripped from him.

This encounter occurs within the main hall of Stump's manor using the following creatures:

Hatchet (H)

Stump (X)

Key (K)

4 eladrin infiltrators (I)

2 eladrin snipers (S)

Centry (C)

Read or paraphrase the following to the PCs at the start of the encounter:

Smoke pours out of the battered front doors and the crackling of flames can be heard from upstairs. Pushing inside, you see more eladrin inside gathered around an iron cage. Hatchet stands there, turning to face your intrusion, and the boy's hand gripped firmly in his. The merc whistles and launches the eladrin forward to attack as he turns to make a break for the large picture windows in the back.

FEATURES

Illumination: Bright light.

Floor: Once a polished marble, there is garbage, filth, and dirt covering it..

Front Doors: They are already forced open when the PCs arrive and offer full entry to the manor inside.

Windows: Large picture windows rise 20' from the floor with tattered silk curtains still hanging. There are bear traps (see below) at the base of each window.

Stairs, circular: These lead up to the second floor, which is currently on fire and impassable.

Bear Trap: Clearly placed on the inside of each window are working bear traps, placed to ensnare anyone leaping through the window to attack, yet they are fully visible from inside. Full stats for these traps are provided below.

Cage: A 2-by-2 cage rests just behind Stump's desk. Depending on the timeline of the battle (see page 39 for details), Key may still be locked inside or released by Hatchet. The cage automatically relocks when closed. (Break DC 30, Unlock DC 18)

Bronze Statue: A rather bland art object, Stump had it brought into the manor to make his "office" appear more regal (thought that does not explain the dirty clothes and sheets thrown over it). Stump hides here when the fight breaks out and can be found here at any time in the encounter. The statue provides superior cover.

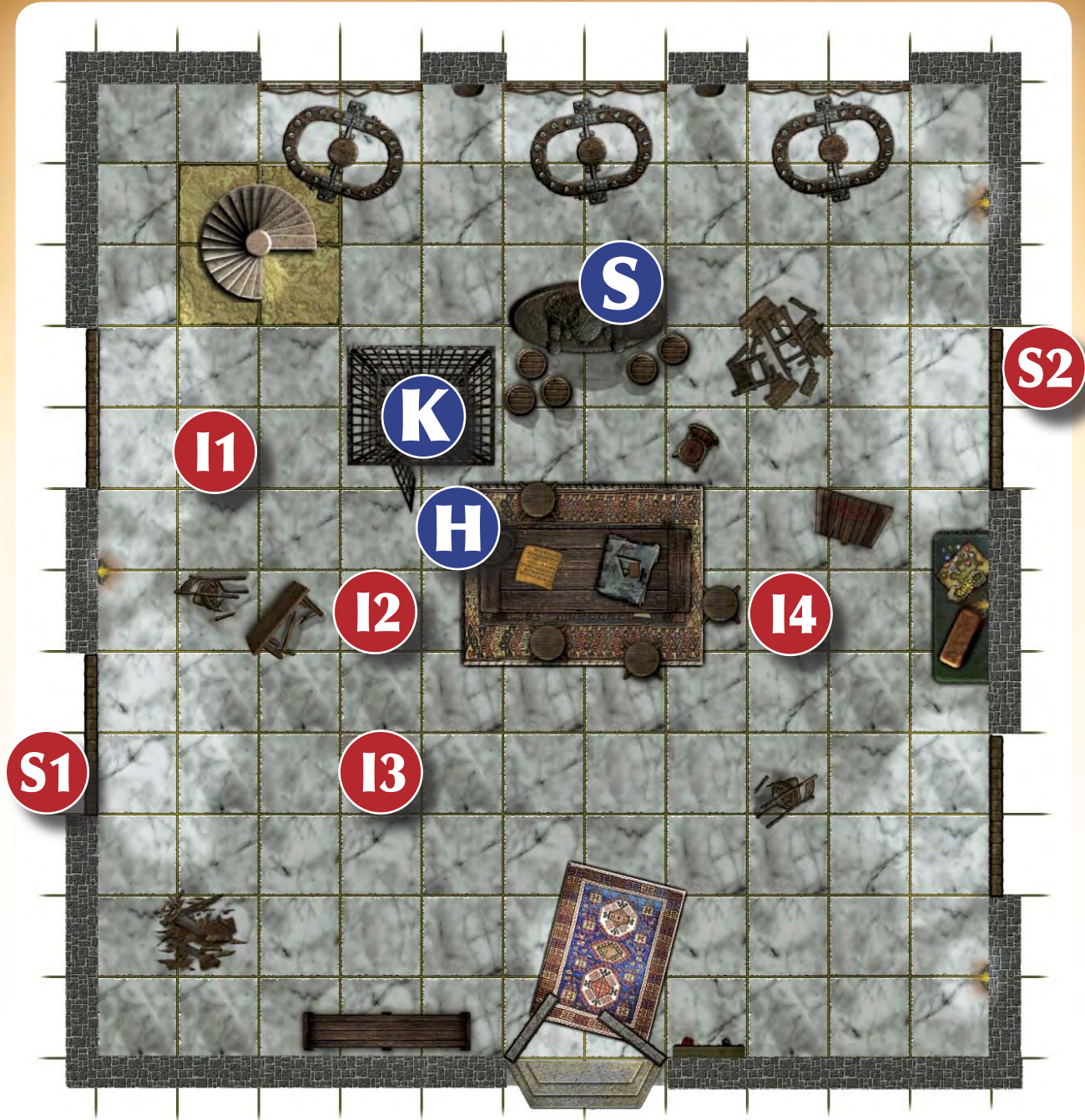
Resting on the base of the statue is a simple cloth sack containing two potions of healing and 100 gp.

Desk/Table: Centered in the front lobby, this table functions as a desk for Stump during his few moments in the manor. Ledgers, documents, and inventories of stolen goods stashed in Bloomten are kept here in no particular order. It provides cover.

Fireplace: To the far right of the lobby is a fireplace with a significant stash of gold, jewels, and other valuable trinkets spread across the mantle. In an intricately carved wooden box lined with silver, a dagger +1 rests tucked under a red felt cloth. There is 90 gp in coin and two gems worth 100 gp each.

Makeshift Dartboard: In an attempt to master the use of his newfound +1 dagger, Stump had an impromptu dartboard made from a barn door. There are two daggers and a handaxe embedded in the wood. It also provides cover.

Broken Furniture: While useless for its original purpose, broken pieces of wood can be used as improvised weapons.



TACTICS

If Hatchet is still present with Key when the PCs arrive, he will send the eladrin forward to attack while he shatters a window with a chair, grabs the boy, and leaps over the bear trap and through the broken window. With enough time from the infiltrators and snipers, he will be able to reach the snipers waiting outside and launch the baylog attack (see Encounter E5). Play out the scene as needed according to the battle timeline.

Stump remains cowering behind the bronze statue until the fight is over. He will defend himself if confronted and uses Hatchet's escape after the window has been shattered.

Hatchet Gives the Slip: This encounter is not intended to include Hatchet as he is expected to make an escape with the possessions he seeks. If the PCs are more than a match for this encounter, he will escape out the window without Key and/or the holy symbol and signal the baylog to attack the manor (see Encounter E5). Hatchet's stats are provided here for convenience.

Hatchet Level 4 Solo Skirmisher

Medium natural humanoid (human) XP 875

Initiative +5 **Senses** Perception +9

HP 224; **Bloodied** 112

AC 22, **Fortitude** 18, **Reflex** 19, **Will** 18

Saving Throws +5

Speed 5

Action Points 1

⊕ **Double Strike** (standard; at-will) • **Weapon**
+10 vs AC; 1d8+5 damage

Secondary Attack: +10 vs AC; 1d6+5 damage

↓ **Return the Favor** (immediate interrupt,
when a flanking opponent misses) • **Weapon**
+8 vs AC; 1d4+4 damage

Secondary Attack: +7 vs Reflex; 2d4+4 damage

↶ **Fury of Swings** (standard; encounter) • **Thunder, Weapon**

Close burst 1; +10 vs AC; 2d8+7 damage
plus 2 thunder damage

↶ **Wink** (minor; encounter) • **Gaze**

Close blast 3; +10 vs Will; target is marked

Violent Thrash (immediate reaction, when bloodied;
encounter)

Can use either Double Strike or Fury of Swings.

Sliced Escape

Hatchet reduces the target's speed by 2 with
opportunity attacks.

Unaligned **Languages** Common, Elven, Giant

Skills Athletics +9, Acrobatics +10, Nature +8,
Intimidate +7

Str 16 (+5) **Dex** 14 (+4) **Wis** 12 (+3)

Con 14 (+4) **Int** 10 (+2) **Cha** 11 (+2)

Equipment chainmail, longsword (w/scabbard),
handaxe (attached), adventurer's pack, brown cloak

Key Level 1 Minion

Small fey humanoid XP -

Initiative +0 (Key acts on the same initiative as an
adjacent ally) **Senses** Perception +1; low-light vision

HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion

AC 10, **Fortitude** 9, **Reflex** 10, **Will** 11

Speed 4

⊕ **Shin Kick** (standard; at-will)

+2 vs Reflex; 1 damage and target is slowed
for one round

Step of Anamupet (move; encounter) • **Teleportation**
Key can teleport 10 squares.

Unaligned **Languages** Common

Str 6 (-2) **Dex** 10 (+0) **Wis** 12 (+1)

Con 8 (-1) **Int** 10 (+0) **Cha** 8 (-1)

Stump Level 7 Controller

Medium natural humanoid XP 300

Initiative +3 **Senses** Perception +5; low-light vision

HP 79; **Bloodied** 39

AC 20, **Fortitude** 18, **Reflex** 16, **Will** 20

Speed 4

☞ **Wand of Magic Missiles** (standard; at-will)

• **Arcane, Force, Implement**

Range 10; +12 vs Reflex; 2d4 force damage

⊕ **Short Sword** (standard; at-will) • **Poison, Weapon**

+10 vs AC; 1d6 damage and 1 ongoing poison
(save ends)

☞ **Wand Blast** (standard; encounter) • **Arcane, Force, Implement**

Close blast 5; +12 vs Reflex; 2d6 damage

Secondary Attack: +8 vs Fortitude; target is dazed
(save ends)

Evil **Languages** Common, Giant

Skills Bluff +10, Diplomacy +10, Intimidate +5,
Thievery +5

Str 10 (+3) **Dex** 8 (+2) **Wis** 15 (+5)

Con 12 (+4) **Int** 17 (+6) **Cha** 16 (+6)

Equipment padded armour, wand of magic missiles,
short sword

Eladrin Infiltrator (4) Level 1 Skirmisher

Medium fey humanoid XP 100

Initiative +5 **Senses** Perception +5; low-light vision

HP 31; **Bloodied** 15

AC 17, **Fortitude** 16, **Reflex** 15, **Will** 15

Saving Throws +5 against charms

Speed 6

⊕ **Short Sword** (standard; at-will) • **Weapon**

+8 vs AC; 1d6+3 damage

☞ **Eladrin Darkbow** (standard; at-will) • **Weapon**

Range 10; +8 vs AC; 1d8 damage

Fey Step (move; encounter) • **Teleportation**

The eladrin infiltrator can teleport 5 squares.

Subconscious Slide (immediate reaction, when a target
you hit is bloodied by your attack; encounter)

The eladrin infiltrator can slide up to 2 squares.

Lawful good **Languages** Common, Elven

Skills Nature +7, Stealth +7

Str 17 (+3) **Dex** 14 (+2) **Wis** 14 (+2)

Con 17 (+3) **Int** 13 (+1) **Cha** 15 (+2)

Equipment Scale mail, short sword, darkbow (treat
as longbows coated in black ochre paint), 40 arrows,
black cloak

Eladrin Sniper (2) Level 1 Artillery Medium fey humanoid XP 100

Initiative +1 **Senses** Perception +6; low-light vision
HP 24; **Bloodied** 12

AC 14, **Fortitude** 14, **Reflex** 15, **Will** 13

Saving Throws +5 against charms

Speed 6

⊕ **Eladrin Darkbow** (standard; at-will) • **Weapon**

Range 10; +8 vs AC; 1d8 damage

⚡ **Flaming Arrow** (standard; at-will) • **Fire, Weapon**

Range 7; +8 vs AC; 1d6 damage plus 2 ongoing fire (save ends)

⚡ **Poison Gas Arrow** (standard; at-will) • **Poison, Weapon**

Range 7; +8 vs AC; 1d6 damage plus 2 ongoing poison (save ends)

Fey Step (move; encounter) • **Teleportation**

The eladrin infiltrator can teleport 5 squares.

Perfect Camouflage (move; encounter) • **Illusion**

The eladrin sniper can become invisible until the end of his next turn.

Lawful good **Languages** Common, Elven

Skills Nature +7, Stealth +7

Str 14 (+2) **Dex** 17 (+3) **Wis** 16 (+3)

Con 14 (+2) **Int** 14 (+2) **Cha** 15 (+2)

Equipment Black leather armor, darkbow (treat as longbows coated in black ochre paint), 40 arrows (including flaming and poison gas arrows), black cloak

Centry (2) Level 3 Controller Medium fey humanoid XP 150

Initiative +5 **Senses** Perception +5

Tingling Throb aura 10; +7 vs. Fortitude; target suffers -2 penalty to attacks (save ends)

HP 42; **Bloodied** 21

AC 21, **Fortitude** 16, **Reflex** 19, **Will** 17

Speed 6

⊕ **Rippling Touch** (standard; at-will) • **Thunder**

+9 vs AC; 1d4+1 thunder damage

↔ **Eyebeam** (immediate interrupt, when attacked by any character directly facing it, at-will) • **Radiant**

Close blast 5; +11 vs Reflex; 1d6+2 radiant damage.

Secondary Attack: +7 vs Fortitude; target is blind (save ends)

Partial Invisibility

The centry has concealment at all times. If it closes its eye, it becomes invisible but cannot attack.

Lawful good **Languages** Common (not spoken), special (clicking noises)

Skills Athletics +8

Str 12 (+2) **Dex** 17 (+4) **Wis** 14 (+3)

Con 10 (+1) **Int** 15 (+3) **Cha** 14 (+3)

Bear Trap Level 1 Warder Trap XP 100

Rusty, fierce points stick out from the half arcs connected to the massive hinge in the center.

Strategically placed at the inner base of the window, they are a deadly warning to anyone who should come in the back way.

Trap: A 2-by-2 section contains a bear trap with a pressure sensitive plate at its center.

Perception

• DC 10: The character notices the bear trap.

Anyone looking through the window from the outside has a -5 penalty to their check.

Trigger

The trap attacks when a creature enters one of the trap's four squares.

Attack

Immediate Reaction **Melee**

Target: The creature that triggered the trap

Attack: +4 vs Reflex

Hit: 1d10 damage and target is immobilized

Miss: The target grants combat advantage until the start of his next turn.

Effect: The teeth close together around the creature's leg.

Countmeasures

• DC 10 Thievery: An adjacent character can trigger the trap as a standard action. The bear trap will close and remain locked until reset.

• DC 20 Strength: A character can unlock the bear trap and reset it (standard action).

ENCOUNTER E5: WRATH OF THE BAYLOG

Encounter Level 3 (750 XP)

Hmm, maybe these guys aren't kooks after all...

SETUP

After Hatchet secures Key and/or the holy symbol and escapes from the manor, he gives the signal to unleash the baylog. Crashing from the tree line of the forest behind Stump's manor with a small contingent of Faithful believers, this monitor from the Temple of Anamupet tosses aside orcs like flies and clears an escape for the eladrin.

This encounter takes place in the above location but can be relocated to suit the events prior to this moment. If Hatchet has to grab Key from the Hungry Orc, he will set his escape to the woods closest to there.

This encounter uses the following creatures:

Baylog (B)

6 Faithful believers (G)

Read or paraphrase the following to the PCs at the start of the encounter:

The sudden rupture of trees cracking apart under a powerful gust bursts across the village and you can barely help but turn towards it. Everyone stops, startled by this new turn of events: while the orcs stand helplessly in shock, the eladrin grin as the final phase of their assault begins.

Bursting through the tree line is a mass of wood, vines, and leaves standing on four trunks, the animated beast tosses back a pair of orcs and crushes another under the weight of its foot. Hatchet runs under its legs and the beast lunges in for another attack.

FEATURES

Illumination: Bright light.

Forest: The forest provides cover and becomes very thick as soon as anyone steps in. Anything in the forest is considered difficult terrain. The baylog must remain adjacent to or be standing in the forest to gain its *forest link* benefits.

Scattered Debris: Spread across the battlefield are bits of debris, corpses, and fallen chunks of wood from the baylog as it battles the PCs and other orcs in the fray. While not truly difficult terrain, any character who shifts must make a **DC 14 Acrobatics check** or fall prone.

TACTICS

The baylog was created in the area to which it stands and defends its position to the very end. If Hatchet requires assistance in reaching Key or the holy symbol, it will command the baylog to attack the building where either one is kept. The baylog will fight until destroyed.

Faithful believers wait in the forest behind the baylog, picking off enemies should they get past it.

There Are More Than Just PCs: Any surviving orcs within range of this encounter may also be used to attack the baylog should the fight turn against the PCs. If all the PCs have been bloodied at any point in the encounter, an equal number of orcs to PCs arrive to buy them some time to use their second wind and regroup.

Baylog Level 3 Solo Brute
Large elemental animate (earth) XP 600

Initiative +3 **Senses** Perception +2; low-light vision
HP 236; **Bloodied** 118

Regeneration 5 (when bloodied, see *forest link*)

AC 19, **Fortitude** 20, **Reflex** 18, **Will** 16

Immunity disease, poison; **Resist** force 5;

Vulnerable fire 10

Saving Throws +4 (see *forest link*)

Speed 4

Action Points 1

⊕ **Wooden Slam** (standard; at-will)

Reach 2; +8 vs AC; 1d10+6 damage

Secondary Attack: +8 vs Fortitude; target is stunned (save ends)

↵ **Charge** (standard; at-will)

Close blast 3; +7 vs Reflex; 2d8+6 damage; targets are knocked back 2 squares

Secondary Attack: +8 vs Fortitude; target is prone

✦ **Rustle** (move; encounter)

Close burst 1; +7 vs Reflex; 1d8+4 damage and the baylog shifts one square

Tumble Recovery (when bloodied; move; encounter)

The baylog rolls on any natural terrain (such as a field or forest bed) and recovers 36 hit points.

Forest Link

When standing on or adjacent to the forest wall, the baylog gains a +4 bonus to saving throws, and regeneration 5 when bloodied.

Unaligned **Languages** Primordial (not spoken)

Skills skill name +#; skill name +#

Str 20 (+6) **Dex** 15 (+3) **Wis** 10 (+1)

Con 19 (+6) **Int** 10 (+1) **Cha** 10 (+1)

Faithful Believer (x6) Level 2 Minion
Medium natural humanoid XP 25

Initiative +1 **Senses** Perception +4

HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion

AC 15, **Fortitude** 13, **Reflex** 14, **Will** 16

Speed 6

⊕ **Short Sword** (standard; at-will)

+4 vs AC; 1d6+1 damage

Unaligned **Languages** Common

Skills Religion +3

Str 10 (+1) **Dex** 10 (+1) **Wis** 12 (+2)

Con 10 (+1) **Int** 11 (+1) **Cha** 10 (+1)

Equipment holy symbol of Anamupet, short sword

DEALING WITH THE AFTERMATH

While the fires burn and the scant remains of Bloomten crackle in flames, the PCs remain. Watching the shadows of Hatchet and his troops fleeing deeper in the woods with young Key in hand, or confidently hollering their victory as the Faithful are scared off, the plot has just become a little thicker. Nothing is left in Bloomten and the fires set by the Faithful will quickly engulf the entire area two hours after the first encounter began.

A furious Stump stumbles to the PCs, apparently forgetting and disregarding his own terror when the Faithful attacked.

“Get him back!! Get him back!! Now!! I want those bastards strung up and their bones carved into chits.

You mercs! Get him back. I’ll double what I offered before when you bring back what’s mine and that damned paladin too. Dead!”

Stump’s anger is enough to overshadow his common senses and he will easily agree to almost any demands by the PCs. He will even increase his offer by another 25% if negotiated in a skill challenge. If the orc has already paid them for their initial work, they will be given an equal payment as before (not double on top of their original payment). They will be expected to leave immediately, giving them only a short while to gather their remaining belongings and rest along the way.

BACKUP: Stump will order a number of orc minions (two per PC) to go with the PCs to the Faithful camp. These minions are told to follow the mercs’ orders as if they were Stump’s own, granting each player two additional minions to plow through the final chapter. The PCs control their minions as if they were their own character (use the stat blocks below for each minion). These particular minions will always attack last in a round and cannot gain bonuses to their initiative roll.

BEHIND THE SCENES

THE FAITHFUL’S RETREAT: Hatchet and the rest make their way toward the Faithful camp with Key (if they rescued him) and head towards the Temple of Anamupet. Without Key, they will rush to the camp and regroup, resting before they complete the rest of the journey to the Faceless Door (see Chapter Four). A contingent of eladrin snipers stays behind to deal with the inevitable PCs and orcs looking to take the boy back.

USING KEY AND THE HOLY SYMBOL TOGETHER: If Hatchet has to retrieve Key and Jarod’s holy symbol, he will hand the holy symbol to Key. This will allow the boy to activate the holy symbol’s daily power to teleport to the Temple of Anamupet as an emergency resort, instantly escaping from Bloomten. The other Faithful survivors will then head to the Faceless Door after the battle.



So what do you do? If you were one o' those heroes, getting the boy back would be the obvious answer, except those eladrin would have to be orcs... kind of like the orcs you're taking orders from. But yer not one of those heroes, are ya? No matter your personal thoughts and feelings on the matter, ethics don't exist this deep in the woods. If you really cared enough about the boy, you probably wouldn't have kidnapped him in the first place, right?

Here's what you need to know to get through this business. Pay attention, 'cause it's likely the only real advice you're gonna get. There are many sides to the same story. There are none more right than another, but you feel better about some sides than others. The catch is that the side that feels good pays nothing while the other side that sounds bad pays a lot. Which side do you choose? Both. You can get paid a lot and do a little something to make yourself feel better. But it's never going to be good as long as you're well paid.

A PORTAL WITHOUT A KEY

As the party returns to the Faithful camp they find it has been deserted. All remaining tents have been folded up, no barrels or crates remain, and there is nothing but broken stakes and large squares of dead grass on the ground to mark what once stood there. Only the central courtyard remains with everything exactly as it was before. More importantly, the portal to the Feyrealm is intact, but the party does not have a key.

A **DC 25 Arcana check** on the portal reveals that it was used recently, but only through a divination ritual will they learn anything more. Either way, they are missing Key and the portal cannot be opened without him. A Search check around the portal reveals information of a deadly nature (see Waiting in the Bushes below).

SIFTING THROUGH THE LEFTOVERS Only scraps and items deemed unnecessary for the Temple have been left behind, but some items have been dropped and abandoned in the rush. A **DC 20 Perception or Nature check** reveals a five-leaved clover on the ground near the portal. Multiple characters can find these clovers, but only one check per player is allowed.

WAITING IN THE BUSHES

Luckily, the PCs are not alone.

A small band of eladrin snipers hides in the trees surrounding the campsite, expecting the orcs to send a troop to the campsite. While the eladrin are likely outnumbered, they have a surprise in store to even the odds.

Eladrin snipers watch silently from the treetops and will activate the trap as soon as at least six or more PCs (or their orc minions) stand within 3 squares of the portal's edge or it becomes apparent the trap has been discovered. The closest eladrin sniper (marked as E1 on the battle map) launches a flaming arrow at the pebble-covered pool, igniting the oil, and springing the trap. Not only is the portal destroyed, but they can also take out some orcs at the same time. All of the snipers will attack the surviving party members and teleport down from the tree to make a quick escape once they are spotted.

DISARMING THE TRAP: Only by draining the pool of oil or preventing the fiery arrow from striking the ground can this trap be avoided. Running away before the explosion or avoiding the courtyard altogether are also viable options, but there is almost no chance for the PCs to disarm this trap before it is too late.

FIGHTING BACK: The eladrin will put up a significant fight and will stand and fight more than run until their numbers drop to less than half or the PCs and their orc minions outnumber them far too greatly. This battle becomes the link for the PCs to reach the Feyrealm.

If they capture at least one eladrin sniper, a **DC 18 Search check** reveals they all carry a single dark brown leaf with deep red veins in immaculate condition. A **DC 15 Arcana check** reveals that the item is magical in nature and a likely portal key for another portal nearby. Tracking the other snipers using a skill challenge (see below) will locate the portal for the PCs and grant them a backdoor entrance to the plane of faeries.

ENCOUNTER F1: UP IN FLAMES

Encounter Level 2 (625 xp)

Nothing puts out an oil-lit fire. Nothing.

SETUP

Upon arriving at the Faithful camp, the PCs find it deserted... but not abandoned. A small party of eladrin archers has prepared a trap to simultaneously cut off the portal and inflict some serious harm on any mercs and orcs who followed them.

This encounter takes place at the Faithful campsite from Encounter D1 (or use D2 if the PCs arrive under cover of darkness). Combat begins as soon as at least six interlopers stand within 3 squares of the portal's pool or if it becomes apparent the trap has been detected (see Tactics).

This encounter uses the following creatures and traps:

5 Eladrin snipers (S)

Exploding oil puddle trap

Read or paraphrase the following to the PCs at the start of the encounter:

You know by the time you reach the fence: they're gone. Tents remains, but some pegs have been knocked down in the rush to escape. Piles of wood and various stores of food remain and loose sheets blow in a light breeze. Around the central courtyard, the portal still stands untouched as it was during the ceremony to open it.

FEATURES

Aside from a few embellishments, everything is exactly as it was for Encounter D1 and/or D2. There are two distinguishing features yet undiscovered...

Hidden Snipers: The eladrin snipers are marked accordingly on the map. Any PC can spot them with a **DC 19 Perception check**. The snipers can only use their perfect camouflage for a limited time and will save it for the appropriate time in combat.

Portal: The rocks and holy symbol have not been touched. The wading pool of the water has been mixed with explosive oil, also treated around the benches and leaking out through buckets of oil buried along the edges of the courtyard.

TACTICS

As described above, the eladrin snipers will spring the trap by launching a flaming arrow into the portal's pool of water and igniting the combustible oil poured over it. This triggers the exploding oil puddle trap in the surprise round – the eladrin snipers will wait until the first full

round of combat before opening fire to aim at living targets. The snipers continue to attack the PCs and their orc minions with arrows, retreating from the trees as needed. If they are outnumbered 2 to 1, the survivors will head towards the Faceless Door (Encounter G).



Exploding Oil Puddle Trap

Level 2 Warder
XP 125

The arrow struck the side of the rocks, sending up a spark and igniting the oil mixed in the cool waters of the portal's pool. The flames rise so fast, they leap towards your face, spraying across the oil soaked benches as the blast knocks you back.

Trap: A 10-by-10 section of the campsite (the portal leading to the Feyrealm) has been doused with flammable oils.

Perception

- DC 20: The character detects the oil's scent.
- DC 25: The character finds buckets of oil buried underneath the benches.

Trigger

An eladrin sniper fires a *flaming arrow* at the pool.

Attack

Standard Action **Melee**

Target: All creatures on the trap when the trap activates

Attack: +5 vs Reflex

Hit: 1d8+3 fire damage; ongoing 2 fire damage (save ends)

Secondary Effect: All squares of the trap are now covered in flames. Any character ending their turn on these squares takes 1d4+2 fire damage.

Countermeasures

- DC 19 Perception: A character can spot an eladrin sniper and not be surprised when the trap activates. The same character can attempt to stop the sniper's arrow or take a move action and get off the trap's squares.
- An adjacent character can activate the trap by igniting the oil themselves (action varies according to the ignition source). The trap is activated.

Eladrin Sniper (5) Medium fey humanoid

Level 1 Artillery
XP 100

Initiative +1 **Senses** Perception +6; low-light vision
HP 24; **Bloodied** 12

AC 14, **Fortitude** 14, **Reflex** 15, **Will** 13

Saving Throws +5 against charms

Speed 6

☞ **Eladrin Darkbow** (standard; at-will) • **Weapon**

Range 10; +8 vs AC; 1d8 damage

☞ **Flaming Arrow** (standard; at-will) • **Fire, Weapon**

Range 7; +8 vs AC; 1d6 damage plus 2 ongoing fire (save ends)

☞ **Poison Gas Arrow** (standard; at-will) • **Poison, Weapon**

Range 7; +8 vs AC; 1d6 damage plus 2 ongoing poison (save ends)

Fey Step (move; encounter) • **Teleportation**

The eladrin infiltrator can teleport 5 squares.

Perfect Camouflage (move; encounter) • **Illusion**

The eladrin sniper can become invisible until the end of his next turn.

Lawful good **Languages** Common, Elven

Skills Nature +7, Stealth +7

Str 14 (+2) **Dex** 17 (+3) **Wis** 16 (+3)

Con 14 (+2) **Int** 14 (+2) **Cha** 15 (+2)

Equipment Black leather armor, darkbow (treat as longbows coated in black ochre paint), 40 arrows (including flaming and poison gas arrows), black cloak

ENCOUNTER F2

TRACK 'EM DOWN

Encounter Level 2 (600 XP)

You've got them running now. If they work with the Faithful, they've got a way to get to them and they'll lead you straight there.

SETUP

Any survivors of Encounter F1 will retreat through the fey crossing and the Faceless Door towards the Temple of Anamupet. The PCs follow their tracks or keep up with the fleeing snipers in a high speed chase.

SKILL CHALLENGE

Use this skill challenge to track down the eladrin snipers or pursue them on foot or by steed.

Setup: The PCs are chasing the remaining eladrin snipers from Encounter F1 through the woods. This skill challenge lets them keep up and follow them to the fey crossing or get close enough to nab them.

Level: 2

Complexity: 2 (requires 6 successes before 3 failures)

Primary Skills: Athletics, Endurance, Nature, Perception

Perception (DC 14): To spot the running snipers through the thick canopy of the forest. All PCs involved in the chase must make another Perception check after the first failure of this skill challenge.

Nature (DC 12): The characters find the snipers' tracks and have a direction they are headed. The snipers will attempt to ditch the PCs every time they succeed on an Athletics check to keep up, who will then have to make another Nature check to find their new bearing.

Athletics (DC 14): The characters are able to keep pace with the eladrin snipers. If a minimum of 50% of the band rolls a 19 or higher, they gain an additional success.

Endurance (DC 16): In order to keep up the pace and not fall behind gasping for breath, at least 50% of the band must succeed this Endurance check. When they have made at least one Perception, Nature, and Athletics check, they should make an Endurance check.

Success: The characters are able to keep up with the eladrin snipers. They may choose to overtake the snipers and confront them in further combat. They may grab a sniper as per the standard rules.

Failure: The snipers disappear into the woods and the characters are not able to keep up. They can continue making DC 12 Nature checks to follow tracks as normal, but the snipers will be too far ahead before the character can return to a faster pace.

THE FACELESS DOOR

Read the following as the PCs arrive on the scene just northeast of the Faithful camp (marked D on the Bloomten forest map).

There is a thick canopy of trees and dark green bushes spread out before you, too thick to peer through and without any evidence of direction available. Every tree, shrub, and patch of grass appears identical to the other, making it increasingly difficult to find a pathway through the weeds. Forcing your way through the foliage disorients you even further and you quickly find yourself standing exactly where you stood before; at least you think it's where you stood before.

This small 100-foot radius area is incredibly deceptive and reeks of powerful arcane energies. The PCs may feel an overwhelming sensation of vertigo while galloping through the bush, hacking their way to the centre. All Nature and Perception checks automatically fail while inside the canopy and 5 squares around it. Only by holding up the red-veined leaf can a PC navigate his way through the brush to find the portal at the centre and make all skill checks as normal.

A perfect circle of long grass grows before you and at its center stands a single, scrawny tree. Only one leaf hangs from its many dead branches: dark brown with deep red veins running through it.

You catch sight of a figure in your peripheral vision and turn sharply with weapon in hand to face it. Six stone statues are spaced along the inner rim of this stretch of forest, each of them seeming to stare at the dead tree. There are few visible features other than a stern lean to the eyes, everything else blended away into noseless, mouthless faces. Various bizarre symbols adorn the headdresses, and there are numerous Elven scribbles around their necks. Past the neck, the heads morph into ornate stone pillars buried in the soil. Carved leaves fall in a chain down each pillar, each link carved with minute elven symbols.

When translated, the inscriptions on the necks read: To protect the power of Anamupet, bless those who shall remain faceless. The remaining symbols can be deciphered as traditional fey runes and divine markings.

The statues are more than just decoration. They are Faceless golems, animating to life when non-Faithful enter this hidden portal, launching into a sudden attack with their surprise stone fist attack.

As soon as the PCs reach this area, they have passed into the Feyrealm without any obvious signs of teleportation. No sooner do they step into the central area around the dead tree, they are in the Feyrealm while all others witness only their comrade stepping deeper into the brush and disappearing. If any character steps back out of the circle, they are transported back to the world and so forth. Any creature entering the canopy with the leaf-holder, regardless of which side they enter from, will gain entry through this fey crossing.

FOLLOWING THE TRAIL: Once the faceless golems have been dispatched, it is only a matter of following tracks left by the surviving eladrin snipers (and various other creatures who passed through the Faceless Door in Chapter Three) towards the Temple of Anamupet. Use the same skill challenge provided earlier.

THE MAJESTY OF THE FEYREALM

Stepping out of the portal's incredible canopy, the PCs can get a complete view of the Feyrealm's fantastic landscape and beauty.

Read the following description as this scene begins:

As you break past the leaves of the portal's trees, a perfect gust of paradoxically warm and cool air brushes across your cheek. You feel instantaneous refreshment similar to the sense of laying back in a field with the sound of the ocean in the distance. You can even smell the ocean waters in the air as you stand in the midst of the Feyrealm.

continued on page 59

FIGHT! FIGHT!

When the PCs find their way into the heart of this fey crossing, use Encounter G: The Faceless Door as the next encounter.

ENCOUNTER G

THE FACELESS DOOR

Encounter Level 3 (750 XP)

See? That's your first big clue this is a bad idea – magical guardians made entirely of stone.

SETUP

The PCs pass through the fey crossing used by the eladrin snipers from Encounter F1 and F2 and enter this sacred passage to the Feyrealm. Guarded by the Faceless Protectors of Anamupet, they are to be punished for their intrusion.

This encounter begins after the PCs pass through the fey crossing for the first time to enter the Feyrealm.

This encounter uses the following creatures:

5 Faceless (F)

FEATURES

Illumination: Bright, dim, or no light, depending on the time of day in which the PCs arrive.

Grass: While covered in multi-colored leaves, the grass is perfectly trimmed without any roots growing out of the ground or rocks scattered about.

Forest: Anywhere marked on the map with trees, bushes, or other forms of natural growth is difficult terrain. All Perception and Nature checks fail without entering with

an ally holding the red-veined leaf. The Faceless do not suffer this disadvantage and can move through the forest without any movement penalties. Standing in the forest grants superior cover.

Dead Tree: While it appears dead, it is very strong and has double the hit points of a regular tree. It can be used for cover.

TACTICS

The Faceless will attack any non-believers entering the fey crossing and will attack once all intruders have entered the clearing (or before they attempt to pass through the canopy of trees again to explore the Feyrealm). If the PCs have entered with a captive eladrin sniper, Faithful, or even carry a holy symbol of Anamupet, the Faceless will attempt to block them from leaving the fey crossing without attacking. As soon as a PC throws the first attack, the Faceless will defend themselves and fight back.

Fooling the Faceless: The PCs may attempt to trick the Faceless into believing they are believers in Anamupet by proving their knowledge of the ancient god. They must make three successive DC 20 Religion checks while speaking to the Faceless, even during combat. This will satisfy the Faceless and they will immediately return to their original positions (until attacked again). If the character speaks in Primordial, only two successive checks are required.



50

Faceless (5)

Level 3 Soldier

Medium natural animate

XP 150

Initiative +5 **Senses** Perception +6; low-light vision
HP 54; **Bloodied** 27

AC 18, **Fortitude** 18, **Reflex** 17, **Will** 15 (see *forest link*)

Immune disease, poison

Speed 6

Ⓣ **Stone Fist** (standard; at-will)
+8 vs AC; 1d8+3 damage

Pound the Ground (immediate reaction, after hitting a target with *stone fist*; recharge Ⓜ, Ⓜ)

The faceless makes another stone fist attack and the target is prone.

Forest Link

When standing within the fey crossing, the faceless gains a +2 bonus to Fortitude and Reflex defenses (already added) and is immune to any forced movement.

Unaligned

Languages Common, Primordial
(not spoken)

Str 16 (+4)

Dex 15 (+3)

Wis 11 (+1)

Con 19 (+5)

Int 6 (-1)

Cha 8 (+0)

Where the forest appears identical to the Known World, trees are more than merely better. Roots rise out of the ground and stretch out in all directions five times the height of a man; the bark shines with a golden aura, almost as polished and pristine as the day the gods created them; the leaves cast a yellow-green hue upon the forest, tinged by the ochre autumn colors of the oaks towering above them all. The songs of the birds, crickets, and other creatures harmonize in a fascinating white noise, massaging your senses until you are no longer consciously aware of them. When it seems nothing else could top this moment, thick beams of sunlight snake through the trees that part their branches to allow them passage.

As this is likely most PCs' first time on another plane, let alone the Feyrealm, they may wish to explore the forest further or enjoy a more leisurely rest in the forest. Explore and enjoy the Feyrealm's other sites and wonders for as long as you wish before getting back to the job at hand.

UNDER A WATCHFUL GAZE: Their entrance to the Feyrealm will not go undetected. A lone owl perched on a thick branch overlooking the fey crossing watches for any newcomers and will follow them to determine their destination. It may even fly down closer and openly land in the PCs' campsite if a ranger or druid exists in the band, traveling with them until they clearly head towards the Temple of Anamupet. When this has been established, the owl flies directly to the Temple to warn the eladrin (see The Temple of Anamupet – Area 9: The Tower of Clouds for the owl's alert).

If the PCs sneak out of the fey crossing, the owl can make Perception checks with a +6 bonus to find them.

ORCS DON'T PARTICULARLY LIKE THE FEYREALM: If anyone should care to notice, the orc minions are obviously uncomfortable in the Feyrealm. Fearing to touch anything, they feel remarkably out of place (and will attribute it to nothing more than the "bright lights" of the forest and their dislike of sunlight) and huddle as close to each other as possible. They're just looking to get the key back and go home... fast!

THE TEMPLE OF ANAMUPET

Read or paraphrase the following to the players when they reach the outer reaches of the Temple grounds;

You first see the Temple through a gap in the trees: a looming mass of stone. As tall as a wizard's tower, the fraction you can see could be as wide as the base of a castle. But that cannot be. You shrug it off as the trickery and deception of the plane itself, a symptom of passing through a fey crossing, until the forest stands back to present a rolling hillside with a clear view.

The Temple is a pyramid flipped upside down to point its tip into the forest floor. An impressive shadow spreads over most of the trees beneath it, heightening the impact of the Temple's design on your rational mind. Arched tunnels run along scattered sections of the Temple walls with hundreds of birds flying in and out en masse. A black mist surrounds the "peak" as the escaping birds swirl around their home, the sound of their flapping wings reaching your ears even at this distance.

At the base of the hill is a raging river, its path running all around the Temple; the white spray revealing its total reach.

Abandoned nearly thousands of years ago, the Temple of Anamupet was once a sprawling expanse of smaller ziggurats linked together through exterior pathways, bridges, and underground tunnels leading towards the main temple at its centre. What exists now is a husk of its former self – only the overgrown ground floor of these chambers remains standing with the walls collapsed to create massive piles of moss-covered debris. Today, Jarod seeks to change all that.

By the time the PCs arrive at the Temple, so long as all events have gone as planned, the Faithful have already begun to gather inside and begin the ceremony to resurrect the priest of Anamupet through the sacrifice of Key. Eladrin guards are posted throughout the grounds, aided by mystical creations and magical contraptions of Anamupet's past. This chapter leads up to the conclusion of the adventure.

ANCIENT HOLY GROUND

Once they pass the river, the PCs can begin to discover scattered ruins, markings, and other unique sites around the outer Temple grounds. Whenever a player makes a Perception check over 20, roll 1d8 and reveal the appropriate random discovery below:

1. ROPE BRIDGE

You can just make out the taut and bound vines wrapped together for a rope bridge in the trees high above you. It doesn't appear usable any more, as the one side leans heavily towards the ground.

2. BOAR CARVING

The face of a boar-like creature is carved out of the side of a tree. Created to appear as if the creature were morphing out of the tree, the skill and craftsmanship are impeccable.

3. WAYSTOP

A single wall, its stone and wood structure barely visible past the vines and moss, stands alone in the forest. The opening for a window is what gave the wall away, now the home for a tremendous, dew-covered spider's web. There is no sign of the rest of the building.

This building was once a way-stop for weary travelers looking to rest their feet before completing the rest of the journey to the Temple.

4. BURIED SIDEWALK

Your foot steps on marble. Brushing aside the natural debris at your feet, you find a 10'x 10' marker buried in leaves, twigs, and mud and the symbol of the Faithful at its center.

The top of the symbol points directly towards the Temple – these markers were used to guide Faithful to their destination.

continued on page 60

5. FALSE WILDLIFE

A deer grazes over 100' feet away. Motionless, the doe's head never leaves the ground and you can soon see why – it is a statue, carved from stone and covered in a thin coating of a brown moss to give it an incredibly life-like appearance.

6. THE PROPHECY

A 5'-high marker of rotten wood, lined with multicolored vines, sticks out of the ground, and is engraved with elven words. Most of it remains illegible with the passage of time, yet one section remains intact: "... Fear not, my brethren, for time is but a measurement of the past. My return shall be a glorious revolution to the world and my resurrection given by its future."

This is an ancient prophecy from the clerics of Anamupet concerning their deity's return.

7. GRAVEYARD

Tiny sticks tied together to form humanoid figures hang from the trees around a clearing, while gravestones rise out of the ground in this 50'x 40' clearing.

This is the ancient graveyard of the Temple. A DC 17 Perception checks reveals it has recently been cared for and cleaned up by several humanoids. The stick figures are meant to keep evil spirits at bay.

continued on page 61

EXPLORING THE TEMPLE GROUNDS

Place the PCs' miniatures on the X marked on the map. Unless they have intentionally deviated course, this is where they enter the Temple of Anamupet.

Without any proper reference regarding Anamupet, it is nearly impossible for the PCs to make a History check for anything other than generic architectural knowledge of ancient fey temples – even this will result in little as the ancient Faithful adapted even the most advanced engineering and magical constructions to suit their unique build. Much can be learned about the architecture, and the people behind it, through the power of simple observation.

Read the following descriptions provided below under the appropriate section. If the players express any interest in the designs on the walls or the structural mystery behind the Temple's unusual shape, a read-aloud description is provided for each facet as they explore with DC 15 Perception checks. At the GM's discretion, the skill checks can be voided in exchange for a player's direct expressed intent to observe the component given below.

WALLS (ALL BUILDINGS SAVE THE TEMPLE): *Carved out of sandstone, these bricks are mortared together in a matching hued grid, giving these buildings the appearance of a solid wall. The bricks are long since overgrown, darkened with green and red moss, draped over with vines. There is a great feeling of antiquity standing in the midst of these chunks of buildings that once were whole thousands of years ago.*

WALLS (TEMPLE ONLY): *Just as overgrown as the other meager buildings, the weeds strain to reach the full height of the Temple looming overhead. Raw sunlight, unhampered by the trees, give the shining bricks of sand an aura of gold reflecting down upon the woodlands around you. When the sun shines, the forest shines with the essence of Heaven.*

TREES: *The closer you get to the Temple, the more you notice the trees changing. At first, they are nothing more than a pair of trees sprouted too close together and grown to wrap around in each other, but they become numerous as the Temple becomes larger. By the time you approach the clearing, massive oaks and pines spread across great distances are wrapped around each other, merging into a single husk of a tree. Their massive roots rise out of the ground and create archways to travel beneath.*

LEAVES: *More than just the colors of autumn, these leaves reveal shades of purple, deep blue, silver, gold, and white. Darker leaves hang in the back, granting the illusion of a fuller, deeper plume.*

STONE TILES: *While tiny bits and pieces of the tiles can be found scattered across the terrain, significant chunks of the Temple pathways remain. They are faded and scarred, having suffered through many harsh seasons without tending. Smaller paths exist in the midst of brushes and puddles, offering a faint clue to the incredible number of passageways once here.*

MURALS: *Terribly faded paintings drawn on the stone walls remain, yet only in corridors with significant sections still standing. They picture families standing beside such legendary creatures as unicorns, dragonborn, and minotaurs, but they also depict bizarre and unique creations. Wings upon massive swine, horns of the ram holding back the plush leaves of a treant, and a long-tailed mer-creature with three faces around its head and six arms down its torso – all premonitions and dreams of the Faithful.*

GROUND: *It looks as if an earthquake hit this site thousands of years ago and the ground has never recovered. You begin to lose count of the number of gouges, crevasses, and natural pits found throughout the Temple grounds. New grass has never grown over them and the soil has never reset in all this time, leaving you to believe everything happened only recently or something unnatural caused this devastation.*

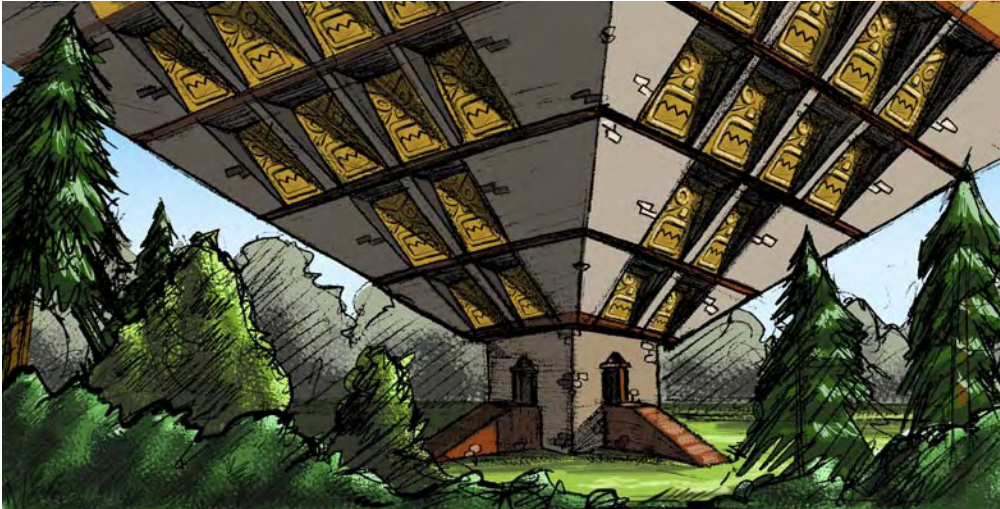
RANDOM ENCOUNTER: FAITHFUL PILGRIMS

Nearly 200 Faithful are gathered inside the Temple of Anamupet to witness the return of their ancient faith. They have waited for this moment to come, when the ancient Priest of Anamupet will return to lead them into a new future. No longer will they have to observe their world as peasants; now they can shape it by evolving. For the ceremony, all Faithful encountered on Temple grounds wear a red robe with the symbol of their deity sewn in gold.

At the start of every encounter, roll percentile dice. There is a 10% chance of Faithful pilgrims, once part of the community in the Known World, making their way from their homes to the Temple for the final ceremony. Use the stats provided in the appendix or treat them as ordinary minions without any modifiers.

These pilgrims can be interrogated for information about the Temple grounds, events inside, and other details related to other Faithful, their faith, and the Temple itself. A **DC 15 Intimidate check** provides the PC with a single answer to a question; anyone with a natural 20 will grant a bonus, unrequited answer as the Faithful pilgrim cowers in extreme fear.

They will reluctantly travel with the PCs if forced, but will alert guards as soon as they have a chance. Grant a 10% bonus to any encounter's XP reward if the PCs have Faithful captives who are still within their control at the end of the encounter. They do not gain this bonus XP if all their Faithful captives are dead or have escaped by the end of the encounter.



8. SCHOOLYARD

Several blankets and several books lie across a tiny field of grass under a powerful oak tree. Blown open by the wind, the pages of the books calmly flip from one page to the next, as if read by an invisible specter. The tree features a large, deep engraving of the transformed dragon of Anampuet hovering over these items.

This is a classroom for Faithful children to learn more about their faith. Based on the condition of the books, this area has been used recently – a **DC 17 Nature check** reveals it was only yesterday when children sat out here. Each book is nothing more than a notebook with only rudimentary lessons on Anampuet and his teachings.

THE TEMPLE OF ANAMUPET - AREA 1

GUARD TOWER

Encounter Level 3 (800 XP)

There ain't much here, but what stands can still provide a lot of cover.

SETUP

The southwestern corner of the grounds features the main guard tower and the only one in decent condition. A small platoon of eladrin stand guard here: snipers peer through arrow slits in Tower A while guardians shelter in Tower B. Each guard wears a tiny crystal around their neck, granting a special bonus to their fey step.

The encounter uses the following creatures.

4 eladrin guardians (G)

3 eladrin snipers (S)

Read the following description aloud to the player at the start of this encounter:

A 40-foot tall sandstone wall peers out from behind the trees, appearing unexpectedly. The curve distinguishes it as a tower wall, its roof caved in long ago. Further back, a much smaller wall barely stands, large chunks of stone scattered beneath the gaps.

Smell the Campfire: Each PC can make a **DC 17 Perception check** to smell the faint smell of campfire and cooking meat coming from the direction of the towers.

FEATURES

Illumination: Depends on the time of day: bright, dim, or no light.

Walls: Carved from sandstone, they were built to last, despite the devastation that toppled them thousands of years ago. Tower A's walls have arrow slits, providing superior cover. (Break DC 35)

Trees: A character can use any tree for cover. If a tree covers four or more squares, it provides superior cover.

Fissure: A large tear in the earth runs along the north corner of Tower B. Standing on or adjacent to one of these squares requires a **DC 12 Athletics check** or fall prone. If the character rolls a natural 1, they fall in the fissure and suffer 1d8 damage.

Campfire: Falling on the campfire results in 1d6 fire damage and 1 ongoing fire damage (save ends). A well-cooked duck turns on a spit over the fire.

TACTICS

Eladrin snipers in Tower A stand guard and keep an eye through the arrow slits for intruders – they make active Perception checks every round. Choose any sniper for the check based on their position and the PCs'. The eladrin guardians in Tower B are preparing to eat, but will still make a single Perception check every third round.

When the PCs are spotted, the snipers open fire and the guardians charge out to engage in melee.

Each eladrin wears a tiny crystal necklace, or a *feygrab amulet*, granting them an enhancement to their fey step. Once per encounter, the wearer can use their *fey step* to teleport to an ally's side.

SOUND THE ALARM!!

If the eladrin had to rescue Key from the orcs at Bloomten, then all guards will be on full alert without having to be aware of the PCs' presence. To alert other to the intruders' exact whereabouts, all eladrin carry a *flare wand*, each firing a single red flare (similar to the wizard's prestidigitation spell). Any eladrin involved in an encounter can fire their flare wand as a standard action.

Various sidebars matching this one appear through all encounters on the Temple grounds. They provide alterations to encounters based on previous events.

For example, if the eladrin in this encounter fire off their flare wand, the eladrin snipers in Area 2 are in position to ambush the PCs. Check these sidebars at the start of every encounter for any appropriate modifications. These will conclude with a XP bonus when the PCs survive the encounter under these conditions.

Standard Alert: These eladrin are posted farthest from the Temple than any other. They remain the same in this encounter should the PCs enter from a different area.



Eladrin Guardian (4)

Level 2 Soldier

Medium fey humanoid

XP 125

Initiative +4 **Senses** Perception +5; low-light vision

HP 36; **Bloodied** 18

AC 18, **Fortitude** 14, **Reflex** 14, **Will** 15

Saving Throws +5 against charm effects

Speed 6

Ⓢ **Longsword** (standard; at-will) • **Weapon**

+7 vs AC; 1d8+4 damage

⚔ **Eladrin Darkbow** (standard; at-will) • **Weapon**

Range 10; +7 vs AC; 1d8 damage

Fey Step (move; encounter) • **Teleportation**

The guardian can teleport 5 squares or adjacent to any ally within sight (see *feygrab amulet*).

Back to Back

The eladrin guardian has 2 temporary hit points per adjacent ally at the start of its turn.

Lawful good **Languages** Common, Elven

Skills Nature +7, Stealth +7

Str 17 (+3) **Dex** 14 (+2) **Wis** 14 (+2)

Con 17 (+3) **Int** 13 (+1) **Cha** 15 (+2)

Equipment Scale mail, short sword, darkbow (treat as longbows coated in black ochre paint), 40 arrows, black cloak, *flare wand*, key (to Area 5: Armory), *feygrab amulet*

Eladrin Sniper (3)

Level 1 Artillery

Medium fey humanoid

XP 100

Initiative +1 **Senses** Perception +6; low-light vision

HP 24; **Bloodied** 12

AC 14, **Fortitude** 14, **Reflex** 15, **Will** 13

Saving Throws +5 against charms

Speed 6

⚔ **Eladrin Darkbow** (standard; at-will) • **Weapon**

Range 10; +8 vs AC; 1d8 damage

⚔ **Flaming Arrow** (standard; at-will) • **Fire, Weapon**

Range 7; +8 vs AC; 1d6 damage plus 2 ongoing fire (save ends)

⚔ **Poison Gas Arrow** (standard; at-will) • **Poison, Weapon**

Range 7; +8 vs AC; 1d6 damage plus 2 ongoing poison (save ends)

Fey Step (move; encounter) • **Teleportation**

The eladrin infiltrator can teleport 5 squares.

Perfect Camouflage (move; encounter) • **Illusion**

The eladrin sniper can become invisible until the end of his next turn.

Lawful good **Languages** Common, Elven

Skills Nature +7, Stealth +7

Str 14 (+2) **Dex** 17 (+3) **Wis** 16 (+3)

Con 14 (+2) **Int** 14 (+2) **Cha** 15 (+2)

Equipment Black leather armor, darkbow (treat as longbows coated in black ochre paint), 40 arrows (including flaming and poison gas arrows), black cloak

THE TEMPLE OF ANAMUPET - AREA 2

THE CROSS

Encounter Level 2 (700 XP)

Standing in the center is a bad idea. Perfect place for a trap.

SETUP

Once a typical hallway in the massive complex, all which remains is a piece shaped like a cross. The walls are perfectly intact like the remainder just disappeared into a void and eladrin snipers prefer this point for positioning. Offering a clear view of the entire grounds, this vantage point is a necessary base for the snipers just north of Area 1.

Under high alert for orcs to claim their bounty, the snipers have kept a pair of centries at their side, particularly if the PCs arrive at night.

The encounter uses the following creatures.

4 eladrin snipers (S)

2 centries (C)

Read the following description aloud to the player at the start of this encounter:

The floors are dirty, yet pristine, and the walls are as sturdy as they were in the Temple's youth. There is little sign of overgrowth or damage over thousands of years until you turn back to the edge. The walls come to a sudden stop with small piles of debris at their feet: something was ripped away from here.

FEATURES

Illumination: Depends on the time of day: bright, dim, or no light.

Walls: Carved from sandstone, they were built to last, despite the devastation that toppled them thousands of years ago. From the corners, they provide cover. (Break DC 35)

Pillows: Snipers sleep here on their off shifts. If the PCs are able to sneak this far, they will find a sniper asleep there.

TACTICS

Eladrin snipers stand guard close to the walls, one at each opening. Centries remain on patrol, their spotlights shining into the darkness at night or creeping around the area no more than 10 squares away from the nearest sniper.

They have a passive Perception check of 15 and will open fire as soon as they spot intruders. They will not allow any Faithful captives to come to harm and will lower their weapons to spare any innocent lives.

SOUND THE ALARM!!

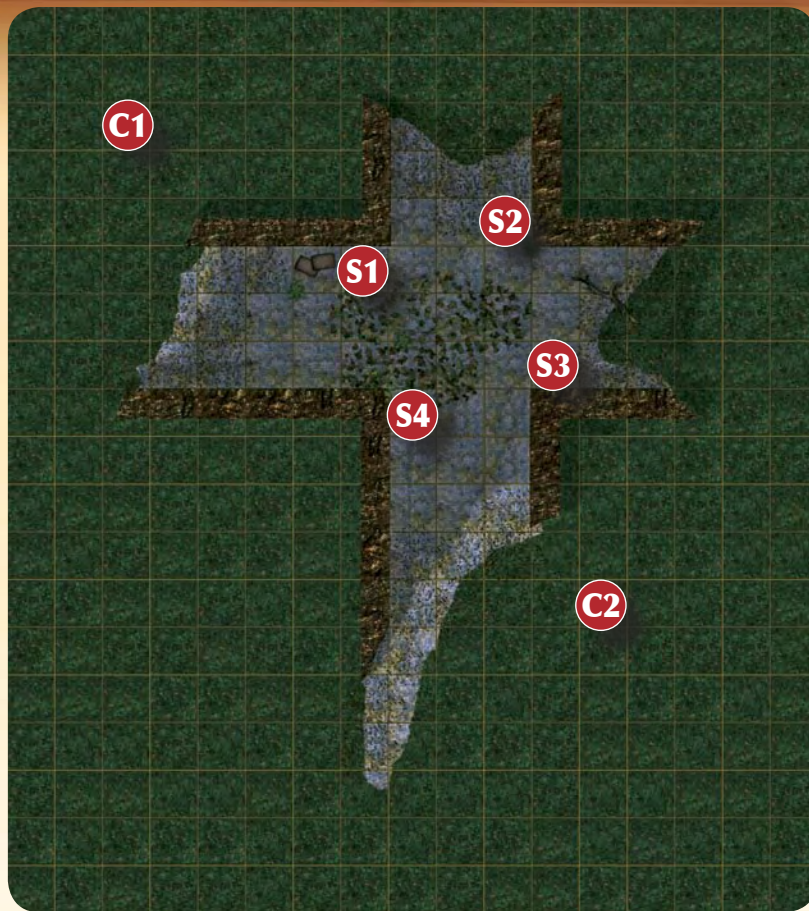
The snipers will not use their flare wands immediately, waiting until the intruders breach their position or the centries both fall. This will alert everyone in Areas 1, 3, and 4.

Flare Wand: The snipers will be prepared for this encounter. Each of them has a hidden bunker in the ground before any openings to the ruins (marked on the GM's copy of the map). Each bunker's door is covered in grass and requires a **DC 20 Perception check** to find – it can also support up to 250 pounds of weight for no more than a single round before it collapses and crushes the sniper

(2d6 damage and the sniper is helpless). They can peer by lifting the bunker door slowly, but it grants the PCs a +2 bonus to their Perception checks.

The centries have climbed on top of the walls (gaining higher ground) and leave their eyes closed to remain perfectly invisible. As soon as the intruders are in position, they will attempt to blind any PCs, thereby giving the signal to the snipers to open fire.

When the PCs are standing within the ruins, the snipers will stand up and open fire when the centries blind the intruders with their eyebeams. **XP Bonus:** 150



Eladrin Sniper (3) Level 1 Artillery
Medium fey humanoid XP 100

Initiative +1 **Senses** Perception +6; low-light vision

HP 24; **Bloodied** 12

AC 14, **Fortitude** 14, **Reflex** 15, **Will** 13

Saving Throws +5 against charms

Speed 6

⊕ **Eladrin Darkbow** (standard; at-will) • **Weapon**

Range 10; +8 vs AC; 1d8 damage

↘ **Flaming Arrow** (standard; at-will) • **Fire, Weapon**

Range 7; +8 vs AC; 1d6 damage plus 2 ongoing fire (save ends)

↘ **Poison Gas Arrow** (standard; at-will) • **Poison, Weapon**

Range 7; +8 vs AC; 1d6 damage plus 2 ongoing poison (save ends)

Fey Step (move; encounter) • **Teleportation**

The eladrin infiltrator can teleport 5 squares.

Perfect Camouflage (move; encounter) • **Illusion**

The eladrin sniper can become invisible until the end of his next turn.

Lawful good **Languages** Common, Elven

Skills Nature +7, Stealth +7

Str 14 (+2) **Dex** 17 (+3) **Wis** 16 (+3)

Con 14 (+2) **Int** 14 (+2) **Cha** 15 (+2)

Equipment Black leather armor, darkbow (treat as longbows coated in black ochre paint), 40 arrows (including flaming and poison gas arrows), black cloak

Centry (2) Level 3 Controller
Medium fey humanoid XP 150

Initiative +5 **Senses** Perception +5

Tingling Throb aura 10; +7 vs. Fortitude; target suffers -2 penalty to attacks (save ends)

HP 42; **Bloodied** 21

AC 21, **Fortitude** 16, **Reflex** 19, **Will** 17

Speed 6

⊕ **Rippling Touch** (standard; at-will) • **Thunder**

+9 vs AC; 1d4+1 thunder damage

↔ **Eyebeam** (immediate interrupt, when attacked by any character directly facing it, at-will) • **Radiant**

Close blast 5; +11 vs Reflex; 1d6+2 radiant damage.

Secondary Attack: +7 vs Fortitude; target is blind (save ends)

Partial Invisibility

The centry has concealment at all times. If it closes its eye, it becomes invisible but cannot attack.

Lawful good **Languages** Common (not spoken), special (clicking noises)

Skills Athletics +8

Str 12 (+2) **Dex** 17 (+4) **Wis** 14 (+3)

Con 10 (+1) **Int** 15 (+3) **Cha** 14 (+3)

THE TEMPLE OF ANAMUPET - AREA 3: LIVING QUARTERS

Encounter Level 2 (650 XP)

Looks like personal chambers, apartments, or something. Where the Faithful used to live. Wonder if it's still deserted...

SETUP

This used to be a hallway for living quarters in the Temple's past. It sustained a lot of damage when the Temple fell and there is very little left for a Medium or large creature to hide behind... but it's more than enough for a Tiny one.

Wisps have come to pay their respects and have also formed an alliance with the Faithful, recognizing their bond with Anamupet long ago. Cashing in on their stature and the leadership of their most famous warrior, they hope to bring down a couple of intruders or, at the very least, draw attention to their schemes.

This area is west and slightly north of **Area 2: The Cross**.

The encounter uses the following creatures.

Jolt, wisp warrior (J)

5 wisps (W)

Read the following description aloud to the player at the start of this encounter:

Scattered fragments of chair legs, feather stuffing, and bed frames line the floor of this devastated hallway. A thick overgrowth of vines and leaves cover most of the hall with debris from the walls and chunks of stone visible in the open area around it. It was as if this section of the old Temple was literally torn asunder. Remaining doorways reveal essences of dorm rooms where the original Faithful must have slept and called their homes. Now, all that remains a memory buried within the heart of the Feyrealm.

FEATURES

Illumination: Depends on the time of day: bright, dim, or no light.

Walls: Carved from sandstone, they were built to last, despite the devastation that toppled them thousands of years ago. A character will have to crouch to gain cover in this area, granting combat advantage to any adjacent enemies. (Break DC 17)

Trees: A character can use any tree for cover. If a tree covers four or more squares, it provides superior cover.

Grate: In the northeast corner, a rusted metal grate marks the entrance to a secret, underground bunker that is now collapsed. A ladder leads down 20 feet before it

arrives as nothing more than dirt; the hinges on the grate holler a loud screech when opened and alert any unaware creatures in the area.

Any character on the ladder has superior cover and total concealment but they grant combat advantage to any enemy standing adjacent to the grate using ranged attacks.

Broken Furniture: Various pieces of rotted wood resembling furniture remain, but there is nothing solid enough to be useful anymore. Any of these pieces shatter harmlessly if used as improvised weapons.

TACTICS

As this section was not claimed by snipers or other eladrin for defensive positions, Jolt and his wisps have marked it as their own base of operations. Recognizing the unstable walls, they devised a small pile of explosive bombs fired from their slings. Combined with Jolt's *pick of shocking*, the wisps will blast the PCs into submission, flying off when they have run out of bombs or when their numbers are less than half.

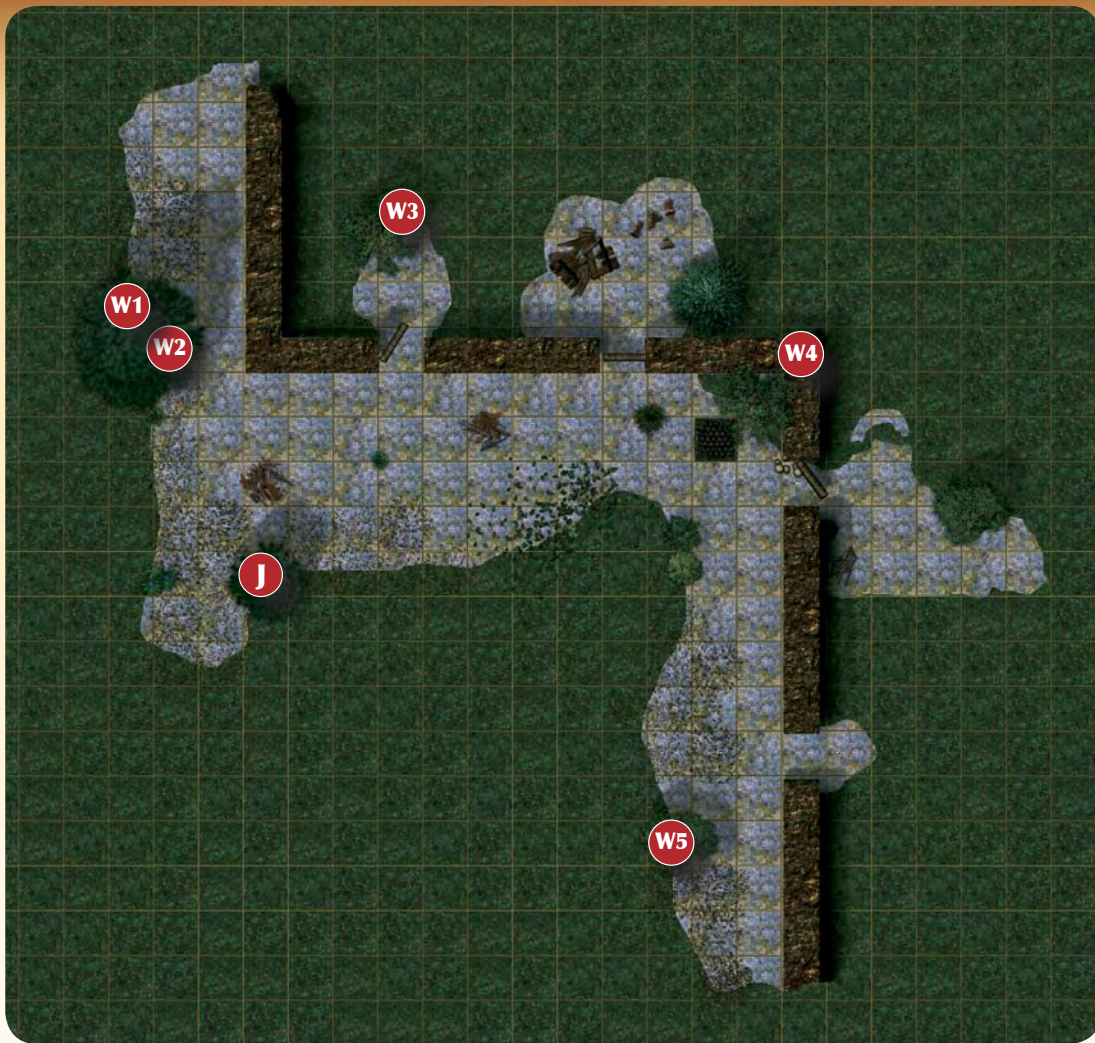
SOUND THE ALARM!!

The wisps' bombs will be more than enough to alert others to the PCs approach, particularly in Areas 1, 2, 4, and especially the treehulks in Area 10.

If There Are Surviving Snipers in Area 2: Two eladrin snipers will race to the scene to investigate and arrive four rounds after the first bomb explodes. **XP Bonus:** 200 XP, or 100 per sniper

While his loyal wisps throws bombs at the PCs and the walls, Jolt flies down and confronts them in melee, flying between cracks in the walls. Each wisp starts the encounter by hiding in a tree or on top of the wall (**DC 20 Perception** to spot).

Flare Wand: When the PCs arrive, the grate is open. Two wisps hide inside and toss bombs when the PCs are within 2 squares of the grate (DC 15 Perception to spot them). The others hide on the other side of the walls and use their bombs to blast the walls. Jolt swoops down and uses his *pick of shocking* as given above. **XP Bonus:** 100



Jolt, Wisp Warrior Level 3 Lurker
Tiny fey humanoid (wisp) XP 150

Initiative +8 **Senses** Perception +8; low-light vision
HP 40; **Bloodied** 20
AC 17, **Fortitude** 15, **Reflex** 15, **Will** 15
Speed 4, fly 8 (hover)

⊕ **Pick of Shocking** (standard; at-will) • **Lightning, Weapon**

+7 vs AC; 1d6+1 lightning damage

⚡ **Lightning Blast** (standard; encounter) • **Lightning, Weapon**

+8 vs Reflex; 2d8+2 lightning damage and target is stunned

Swoop (move; recharge Ⓛ, Ⓜ, Ⓝ)

Jolt charges an enemy using his *pick of shocking* attack.

Powerful Grip

Jolt can wield one-handed versatile weapons with both hands.

Good **Languages** Common, Elven

Skills Nature +9, Stealth +8

Str 12 (+2) **Dex** 17 (+4) **Wis** 14 (+3)

Con 16 (+4) **Int** 16 (+4) **Cha** 16 (+4)

Equipment *pick of shocking* +1 (see Appendix)

Wisp (5) Level 1 Skirmisher
Tiny fey humanoid XP 100

Initiative +3 **Senses** Perception +5; low-light vision
HP 26; **Bloodied** 13
AC 16, **Fortitude** 13, **Reflex** 14, **Will** 15
Speed 4, fly 8 (hover)

⊗ **Bombs** (standard; at-will) • **Fire, Weapon**

Area 2 within 5 squares; +7 vs Reflex; 1d8 fire damage

Wisp Fade (move; encounter) • **Illusion**

The wisp can magically blend into the background until the end of its next turn and gain +4 bonus to all Stealth checks.

Wall Collapse

A wisp may choose to target a section of wall using its *bombs* attack. An enemy must be adjacent to the wall. Target suffers double damage and is prone.

Good **Languages** Common, Elven

Skills Nature +9, Stealth +8

Str 4 (-3) **Dex** 13 (+1) **Wis** 17 (+3)

Con 10 (+0) **Int** 14 (+2) **Cha** 18 (+4)

Equipment sling, 6 bombs

THE TEMPLE OF ANAMUPET - AREA 4

TOWER OF ROBES

Encounter Level 3 (775 XP)

This room looks eerie, like it should be haunted.

SETUP

Though the roof is collapsed, a good portion of this old chamber remains. Eight columns of shelves are filled with red robes of various sizes, enough to cover any shape and origin. A squadron of four centries lurk here, waiting to spring their trap and wait for help to arrive.

This area occurs to the northeast of **Area 2: The Cross** and southeast from **Area 5: The Armory**.

The encounter uses the following creatures.

2 centries (C)

2 armored centries (A)

Falling shelves trap

Read the following description aloud to the player at the start of this encounter:

You can barely see the walls past the incredible number of shelves touting a limitless supply of red robes. While the rubble has been cleared away on the floor, a large section of the roof is missing and shows this building sustained damage, just nowhere near as much as the rest of the complex you've seen so far. A damp odor lingers, the higher shelves clearly originals from the olden days, yet the lower shelves appear clean and cared for.

Two suits of armor, each crested with the mutated dragon of Anamupet, stand on either corner, and a chest sits to the north. Circular stairs rise from the middle, but do not go far before ending in mid air.

FEATURES

Illumination: There is little provision for sunlight in this area, making it dim light during the daytime, early morning, or early evening, or darkness at night.

Walls: Carved from sandstone, they were built to last, despite the devastation that toppled them thousands of years ago. From the corners, they provide cover. (Break DC 35)

Circular Stairs: Without any support from the ceiling, these metal stairs barely remain steady. Any character on the stairs must make a **DC 16 Athletics check** at the start of their turn or be slowed. They rise up 30 feet before coming to a dead end.

Suits of Armor: Full plate mail suits stand on wooden platforms, each one worn by a centry. When the visor on the helmet is raised by a PC, the centry uses the eyebeam to blind them and lash out with the spikes on the armor. See the full plate of Anamupet in the appendix for details.)

Chest: A DC 20 Thievery check opens the lock. The chest contains a *mace of resounding +1*, an *orb of inevitable continuance +1*, and a light shield adorned with the symbol of Anamupet.

Campfire: The fire is barely hot, nothing more than a warm glow from being unattended for too long. A **DC 13 Nature check** reveals it has been two hours since someone watched it.

Net: Various robes are hung to dry from cleaning. It provides cover.

Robes: There are enough robes to fit anyone of literally any shape and size. Some robes do not have sleeves for those without natural arms and limbs or those not comfortable with such restrictions.

TACTICS

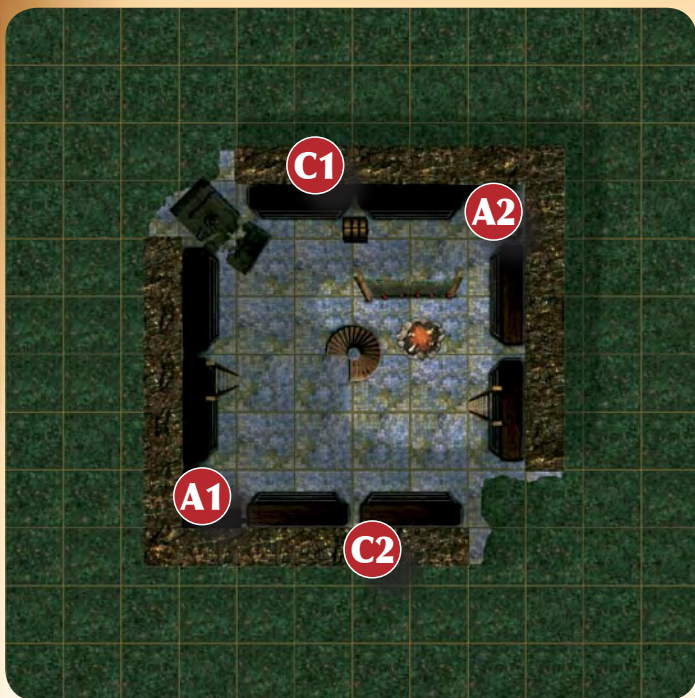
The centries are on alert for any intruders; while the two loose centries stand watch along the top of the walls, the two armored centries remain at their post waiting for anyone to enter the room.

Curious PCs who explore the room will be allowed to do so for a time; if they check out the armor, the armored centries will launch the attack and the centries will spring the falling shelves traps. Both sets of centries will step forward and pick off the survivors.

SOUND THE ALARM!!

There is little the centries can do to sound an alarm other than retreat further into the Temple grounds and get help. If the falling shelves trap is sprung, the eladrin snipers in Area 2 will hear it and be ready.

Flare Wands: The centries will remain unseen and spring the falling shelves trap as soon as enough PCs enter. The remainder of the encounter will occur as given above.



Falling Shelf Trap Trap

Level 4 Blaster
XP 175

The shelves suddenly topple over simultaneously, closing down on you and leaving little room to run.

Trap: The shelves are connected to a snap hook on the wall. When pulled by someone on top of the walls, they all fall to the ground and crush anyone in the middle of the room.

Perception

- DC 22: Thin cords run between these shelves, connecting them together.

Trigger

A centry on top of the wall pulls the cord.

Attack

Standard Action **Melee**

Target: All characters in the room.

Attack: +9 vs Fortitude

Hit: 3d6+4 damage and the character is prone (DC 17 Strength check ends)

Secondary Effect: The floor is now difficult terrain.

Miss: Two shelves collide during the fall, creating a pocket around the target.

Countermeasures

- Any character detecting the trap with a move action remaining in the round can run out of the room.
- DC 17 Strength: A shelf can be caught if the target has a standard action remaining in the round.

Centry (2)

Level 3 Controller

Medium fey humanoid

XP 150

Initiative +5 **Senses** Perception +5

Tingling Throb aura 10; +7 vs. Fortitude; target suffers -2 penalty to attacks (save ends)

HP 42; **Bloodied** 21

AC 21, **Fortitude** 16, **Reflex** 19, **Will** 17

Speed 6

⊕ **Rippling Touch** (standard; at-will) • **Thunder**
+9 vs AC; 1d4+1 thunder damage

↔ **Eyebeam** (immediate interrupt, when attacked by any character directly facing it, at-will) • **Radiant**
Close blast 5; +11 vs Reflex; 1d6+2 radiant damage.

Secondary Attack: +7 vs Fortitude; target is blind (save ends)

Partial Invisibility

The centry has concealment at all times. If it closes its eye, it becomes invisible but cannot attack.

Lawful good **Languages** Common (not spoken), special (clicking noises)

Skills Athletics +8

Str 12 (+2) **Dex** 17 (+4) **Wis** 14 (+3)

Con 10 (+1) **Int** 15 (+3) **Cha** 14 (+3)

Armored Centry (2)

Level 3 Brute

Medium fey humanoid

XP 150

Initiative +3 **Senses** Perception +3

Tingling Throb aura 5; +7 vs. Fortitude; target suffers -2 penalty to attacks (save ends)

HP 52; **Bloodied** 26

AC 18, **Fortitude** 15, **Reflex** 14, **Will** 16

Speed 6

⊕ **Spiked Gauntlets** (standard; at-will)
+6 vs AC; 1d10+2 damage

↔ **Eyebeam** (immediate interrupt, when attacked by any character directly facing it, at-will) • **Radiant**
Close blast 5; +11 vs Reflex; 1d6+2 radiant damage.

Secondary Attack: +7 vs Fortitude; target is blind (save ends)

Lawful good **Languages** Common (not spoken), special (clicking noises)

Skills Athletics +8

Str 12 (+2) **Dex** 17 (+4) **Wis** 14 (+3)

Con 10 (+1) **Int** 15 (+3) **Cha** 14 (+3)

THE TEMPLE OF ANAMUPET - AREA 5:

THE ARMORY

Jackpot!

SETUP

Settled to the south of Area 10 and north of Area 2, this tower is the only intact structure other than the Temple itself. The doors remain closed and locked securely, but the payoff upon getting inside is worth the wait.

Read the following description aloud as the characters stand outside the tower:

Solid as ever, this tower could either be new or a blessed construction of the ancient Faithful. Red flags hang at full mast on either side of the two doors; the eastern door still flaunting most of a pathway while the stairs on the west lead straight into grass. The doors match the stairs, carved from stone by dwarves.

Read the following description aloud once they get inside:

Cabinets on the walls hold a variety of weapons, each primed and polished for combat. Arranged in groups, all hammers, bows, blades, maces, and polearms hang from pegs in their own cabinet, glass doors revealing the goods inside. There appear to be no locks on them.

A large stone table sits at the center of the room with a sky blue blanket tossed aside to hang from the corner. A longsword stretches across next to an emerald orb and a set of shackles round out the other side. A small chest waits at the feet of a statue to the northeast.

FEATURES

Illumination: Depends on the time of day: bright light, dim light, or darkness for outside the tower. Once inside, it is dim light.

Walls: Carved from sandstone, they were built to last, despite the devastation that toppled them thousands of years ago. From the corners, they provide cover. (Break DC 35)

Stone Doors: Thick and heavy stones paired together to keep thieves out with a single keyhole on the right door. (DC 20 Thievery to open, Break DC 30, Hardness 10, hit point 25)

The key from any slain eladrin from an earlier encounter will open the lock.

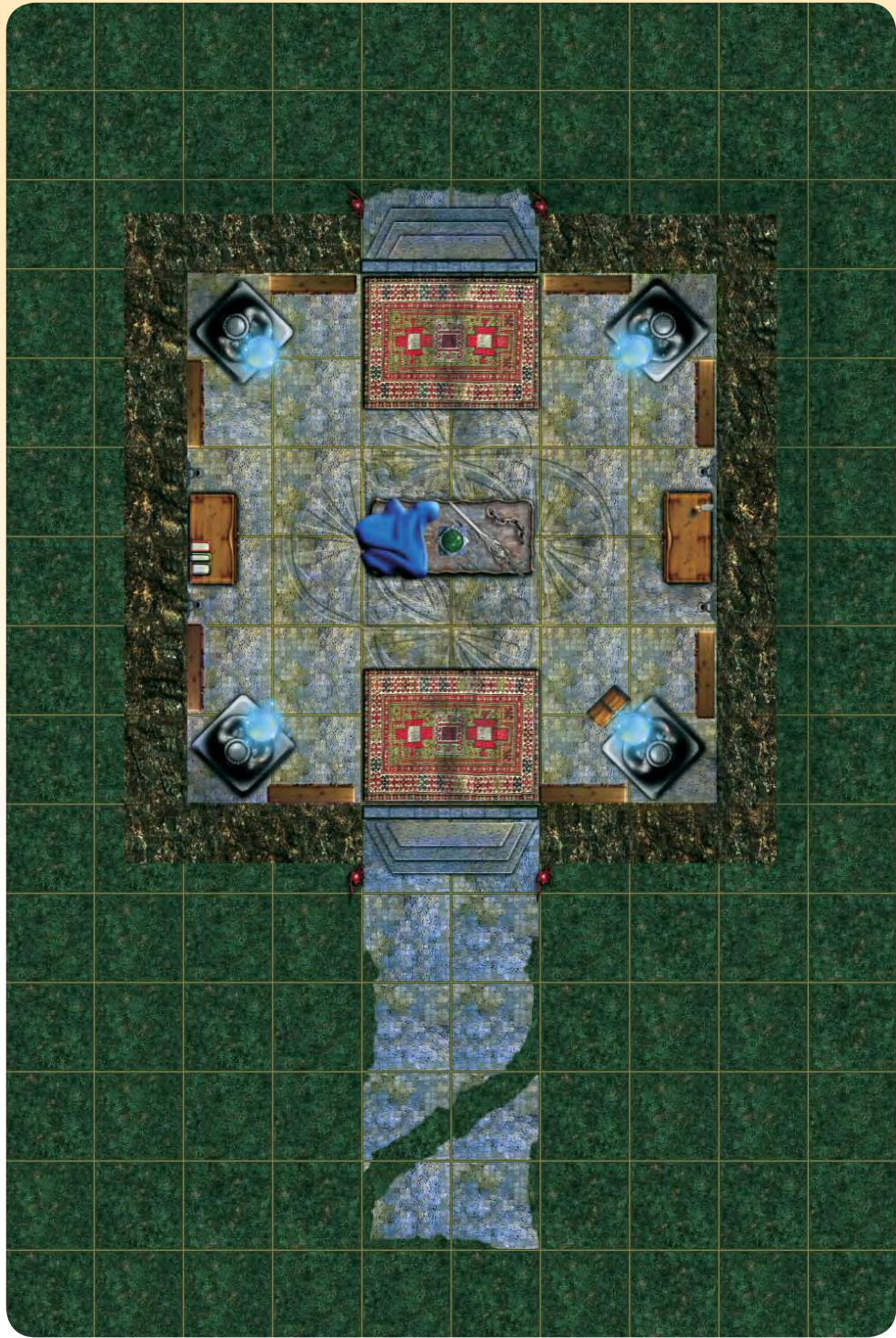
Statues: Each statue depicts a humanoid holding a bowl holding a glowing blue orb as a light source. The orbs are firmly secured to the statues and cannot be removed without breaking the statues. (Break DC 35, Hardness 10, hit point 15)

Stone Table: On the table is a longsword, a *magic orb +1*, and shackles (Break DC 20, Open Lock DC 24). The blue blanket is also available for anyone to take.

Cabinets: There are eight cabinets holding up to six weapons in the following sets (in order from the top left, clockwise): hammers, light blades, flails, bows, heavy blades, picks, spears, and polearms. There are no magic weapons here.

Desks: These are not used by the current Faithful and exist here for decoration only. The vials of ink have long since dried out, but the quills are still good. The books are ancient logs of the armory and will disintegrate as soon as they are touched, unless handled properly. There is nothing in either drawer.

Chest: It is unlocked and contains twelve whetstones.



THE TEMPLE OF ANAMUPET - AREA 6: AN UPHILL BATTLE

Encounter Level 3 (825 XP)

That whole set up looks like it could fall with just a breeze... but look at the size of that crystal!

SETUP

This tunnel, connected with Area 9, acts as a conduit for flying creatures arriving through the Gate of Clouds. This particular section remains, standing as a mere portion of the sloped tunnel at a sharp turn. Jammed at the intersection is a massive crystal ball once adorned on the tip of the Gate of Clouds, now wedged here. The eladrin guardians have found a way to use its arcane properties to their advantage.

This area is located to the west of the main Temple, south of **Area 9: The Gate of Clouds**, and northeast of **Area 5: The Armory**.

The encounter uses the following creatures.

5 eladrin guardians (G)

Giant energy crystal trap

Read the following description aloud to the player at the start of this encounter:

A sandstone tube curved from the peak to the north and turning towards the Temple has only a piece remaining, still standing firmly on a single column. The lower opening hovers 40 feet above the ground while the highest point is nearly 100 feet above your head.

FEATURES

Illumination: Depends on the time of day: bright light, dim light, or darkness at night.

Walls: Carved from sandstone, they were built to last, despite the devastation that toppled them thousands of years ago. From the corners, they provide cover.
(Break DC 35)

Tunnel: Constructed at a steep 60 degree angle and making a sharp left turn from the top, the tunnel is 20 feet wide. Stuck in the turn is a large 20-foot diameter crystal ball. See Crystal Ball for detail on this mysterious object. There is a rope ladder constructed by the eladrin at either end of the tunnel; if the guardians have not been alerted, the rope ladder will be lowered at the lowest opening.

It is a 40 foot fall from the lower end and 100 feet from the top. Characters must make a **DC 17 Athletics check** each round to move half their speed each round.

Crystal Ball: Originally standing atop the Gate of Clouds, this giant crystal augments energy it comes into contact with. During the conception of the Temple, the crystal would absorb lightning from nearby storms and harness the energy throughout the Temple. When everything collapsed, the crystal fell down the tunnel and became wedged at this point.

The crystal augments the following energy sources: cold, fire, force, lightning, necrotic, and radiant. If a creature uses a melee attack on the crystal, it will create a burst of 1 square inflicting 2d8 damage of the energy source used; if a creature uses a ranged attack, the crystal will redirect the attack using its energy source (range 10; +5 vs AC; same damage as the original ranged attack).

Any light source contacted with the crystal will double in strength. Casting a light spell or similar effect on the crystal can blind a target instead of another condition associated with an existing attack.

TACTICS

The five eladrin guardians are perched on the high point of the tunnel and are aware of the crystal's properties. As soon as combat begins, they will launch fiery arrows at the crystal and use it to propel fireballs below.

Each guardian is tied to a safety harness strapped to the walls of the tunnel; if they are knocked off or need to escape, the rope harness will stop their fall just 5 feet from the ground. They can use a minor action to cut themselves loose and land safely on the ground.

SOUND THE ALARM!!

Giant flares of fire, lightning, and radiant energy are sure to attract attention and will alert the guards stationed at the main doors of the Temple, including the treehulks.

The Thunderous Pounding of the Treehulks (Area 10: Wrath of the Trees): If the PCs already battled the treehulks in Area 10, these guardians are ready for an approach. Both rope ladders have been pulled up and they attack as soon as the first PC steps in range of the crystal's reflective attack. **XP Bonus:** 150

Giant Energy Crystal Trap

Level 5 Blaster
XP 200

A blast of fire heads straight for your head, responding to the flaming arrow fired at the crystal.

Trap: The crystal launches a ranged or close blast attack to targets when struck by a ranged or melee attack using a specific energy source.

Arcana

- DC 22: The crystal appears to be a conduit, able to reflect direct submissions of energy against an approaching target.

Trigger

The crystal is struck by a ranged or melee attack. For a melee attack, the crystal uses a close burst attack; for a ranged attack, the crystal responds with a ranged attack mimicking the energy source used against it.

Attack (Melee)

Immediate Reaction Close burst 1

Requirement: The crystal must be struck with a melee attack.

Target: Any enemies in the burst

Attack: +5 vs Fortitude

Hit: 2d8 cold, fire, force, lightning, necrotic, or radiant damage

Attack (Ranged)

Immediate Reaction Close blast 3

Requirement: The crystal must be struck with a ranged attack.

Target: Any enemies in the blast

Attack: +5 vs Reflex

Hit: The target is hit with equal damage from the originating ranged attack as cold, fire, force, lightning, necrotic, or radiant damage.

Countemeasures

- After dispersing 50 points of damage to all targets on either side of the fight, the crystal will start to un lodge and unroll in the PCs direction at a rate of 1 square per round. This speed increases by an additional square until it rolls down the tunnel at 8 squares per round. Anyone caught in its path can run or wedge themselves into large cracks in the tunnel with a DC 16 Athletics check as a minor action. If they succeed, the crystal rolls past them harmlessly and they can now engage the eladrin guardians directly. If they are run over by the crystal, they suffer 3d6 damage, fall prone and are pushed a number of squares equal to the crystal's current rate of travel. On their next turn, they must use two move actions: one to stand from prone and another to move away from the crystal.

Eladrin Guardian (5) Medium fey humanoid

Level 2 Soldier
XP 125

Initiative +4 **Senses** Perception +5; low-light vision
HP 36; **Bloodied** 18

AC 18, **Fortitude** 14, **Reflex** 14, **Will** 15

Saving Throws +5 against charm effects

Speed 6

Ⓢ **Longsword** (standard; at-will) • **Weapon**
+7 vs AC; 1d8+4 damage

☞ **Eladrin Darkbow** (standard; at-will) • **Weapon**
Range 10; +7 vs AC; 1d8 damage

☞ **Fey Step** (move; encounter) • **Teleportation**

The guardian can teleport 5 squares or adjacent to any ally within sight (see *feygrab amulet*).

Back to Back

The eladrin guardian has 2 temporary hit points per adjacent ally at the start of its turn.

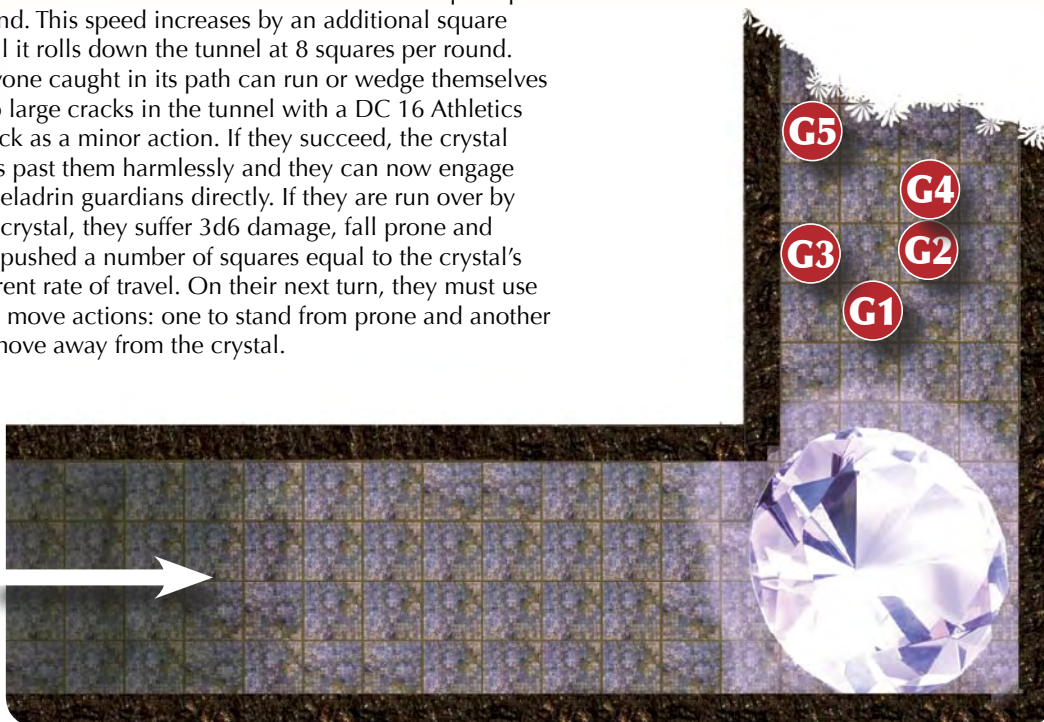
Lawful good **Languages** Common, Elven

Skills Nature +7, Stealth +7

Str 17 (+3) **Dex** 14 (+2) **Wis** 14 (+2)

Con 17 (+3) **Int** 13 (+1) **Cha** 15 (+2)

Equipment Scale mail, short sword, darkbow (treat as longbows coated in black ochre paint), 40 arrows, black cloak, *flare wand*, key (to Area 5: Armory), *feygrab amulet*



THE TEMPLE OF ANAMUPET - AREA 7: THE GATE OF OCEANS

Encounter Level 4 (904 XP)

This wouldn't be so bad if it wasn't for the minions. What's the worst a giant, walking well can do?

SETUP

One of four gateways leading inside the Temple, the Gate of Oceans was built for aquatic creatures to enter the Temple. While the true Gate of Oceans exists deep within an underground river, this well was provided to give the mer creatures a means to walk across the ground and swim inside.

To protect this precious entranceway from the PCs and orcs, the Faithful have revived a well elemental to guard the Gate and destroy any interlopers who dare enter holy ground.

This encounter takes place in the middle of a rather barren section of the Temple grounds east of the Temple, northeast of **Area 5: The Armory**, and southeast of **Area 8: The Gate of Stone**

The encounter uses the following creatures.

Well elemental (W)

7 zombie rotters (Z) (see the 4E D&D Monster Manual)

Read the following description aloud to the player at the start of this encounter:

The trees are quickly replaced with long reeds swaying in the wind and the clearing reveals a circle of stone floor and a sparkling well as its focal point. Rising 10 feet off the ground, a single step runs around the diameter to allow easy access to the cool liquid.

Read the following description aloud as the well elemental rises to attack the PCs:

A pair of stone hands - as thick and as solid as castle walls - bursts through the ground and pressed down on the broken flooring. The well shudders and the earth beneath you trembles, revealing an elemental humanoid pushing itself up from beneath, the well of water centered in its chest. Standing at full scale, the water swirls in a vortex as the arcane symbols adorning its stone cavity glow. The well water never pours out, completely within control of this creation. In its wake, the original well remains where the elemental once rested.

FEATURES

Illumination: Depends on the time of day: bright light, dim light, or darkness at night.

Trees: A character can use any tree for cover. If a tree covers four or more squares, it provides superior cover.

Well: Filled with cool, refreshing water, a **DC 18 Perception check** reveals a tunnel running at the bottom. The edge is engraved with arcane and divine symbols – a **DC 17 Arcana check** reveals them to be summoning runes.

After the well elemental rises, the well remains as it was before except the summoning runes are etched around the well at the elemental's chest.

TACTICS

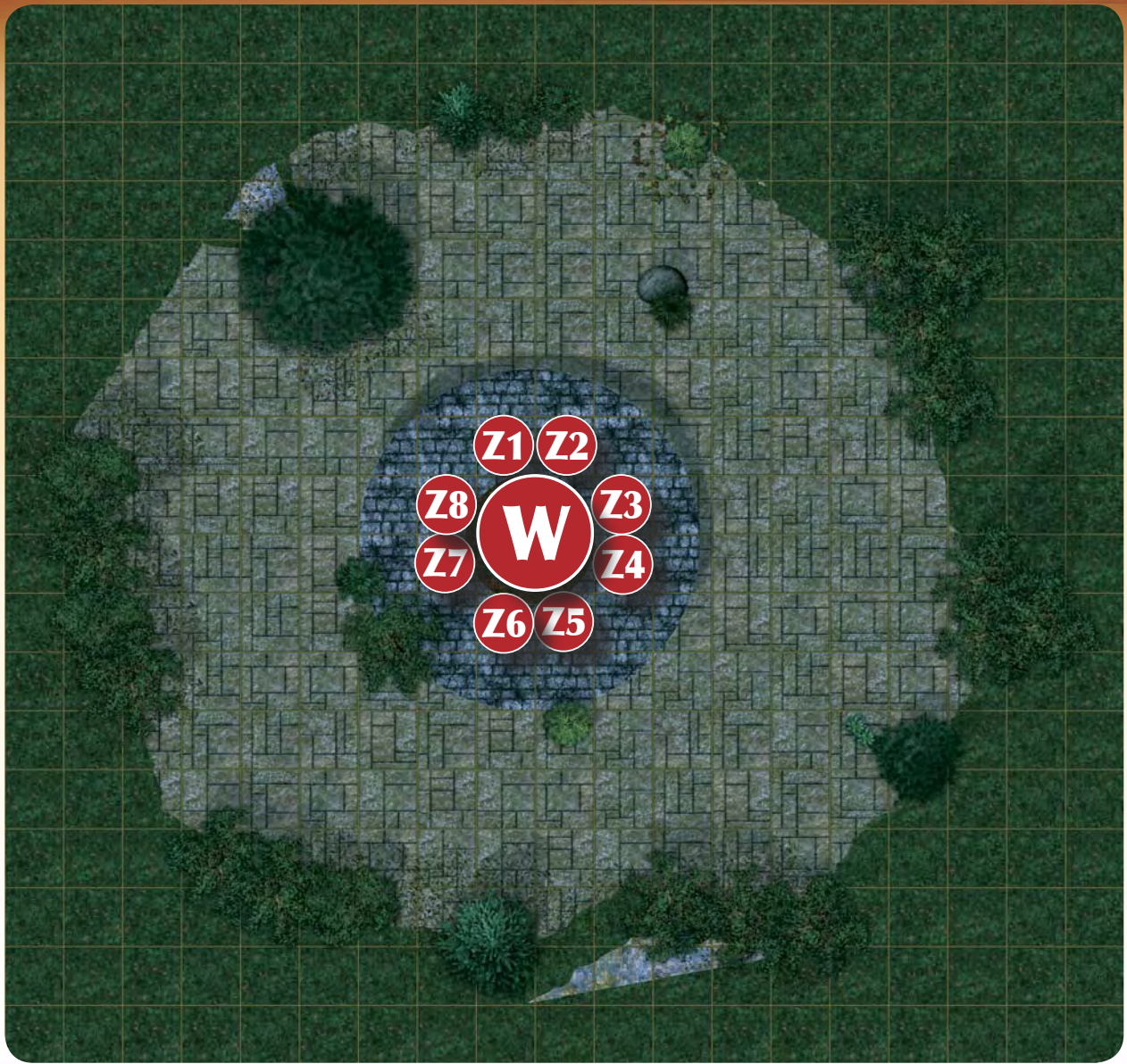
As soon as any non-Faithful step on the surviving stone floor, the well elemental begins to rise. It takes a full round for the monitor to stand and is treated as prone until

the start of its second round. On the third round, zombie rotters climb out of the well and rush forward to attack the well elemental's enemies.

SOUND THE ALARM!!

Since the well elemental is attuned to its environment and will rise to attack any infidels, it makes no difference as to whether or not the PCs have successfully infiltrated

the Temple grounds this far. However, the rise of the well elemental will alert all other encounters to be on full alert - in other words, the jig is up.



Well Elemental Level 3 Solo Soldier

Large elemental animate (earth, water) XP 600

Initiative +4 **Senses** Perception +5

HP 180; **Bloodied** 90

Regeneration 5 (when bloodied, see *water link*)

Immune disease, poison

Resist 5 fire (10 with *water link*)

AC 20, **Fortitude** 20, **Reflex** 15, **Will** 17

Saving Throws +4 (see *water link*)

Speed 4

Action Points 1

⊕ **Rockfist** (standard; at-will)

Reach 2; +10 vs AC; 1d8+5 damage

‡ **Pound to the Ground** (standard; at-will) • **Thunder**

Reach 1; +10 vs AC; 2d8+7 thunder damage

Secondary Attack: Close burst 2; +7 vs Fortitude; target is dazed until the start of the well elemental's next turn

‡ **Well Drop** (standard; encounter) • **Thunder**

+8 vs Reflex; 2d8+4 damage and target is thrown 20 feet down into the well. The target must make a DC 15 Athletics check to swim to the surface or suffer 1d8 points of damage from drowning.

↩ **Douse** (immediate reaction, when bloodied; encounter)

Close blast 3; +7 vs Reflex; target is prone

Water Link

When standing on or adjacent to the well, the well elemental gains a +4 bonus to saving throws, resist 10 fire, and regeneration 5 when bloodied.

Unaligned

Languages Primordial (not spoken)

Str 20 (+6)

Dex 14 (+3)

Wis 15 (+3)

Con 19 (+5)

Int 6 (-1)

Cha 10 (+1)

THE TEMPLE OF ANAMUPET - AREA 8: THE GATE OF STONE

Encounter Level 5 (1050 XP)

Hopefully, the creature that dug this hole isn't in there...

SETUP

Destroyed during the fall of the Temple, the Gate of Stone has recently been reopened thanks to the dedicated labor of Obliterator, the self-proclaimed guardian of the Gate of Stone.

Used by dwarves and other subterranean creatures to enter the Temple, the Gate of Stone quickly falls into total darkness to leave surface dwellers stumbling in the dark. Obliterator and his lackeys stand guard at the entrance to the Gate, eagerly looking forward to any intruders trying to get past him.

This encounter takes place at the northern entrance to the Temple.

The encounter uses the following creatures.

Obliterator, the were-bulette (O)

3 faceless (F)

2 Faithful archers (A)

Read the following description aloud to the player at the start of this encounter:

A sandy marble tiled floor unfolds before you, littered with dirt from the gaping hole in the side of the hill. Massive claws were used to hollow out the hillside and dig down into the earth, creating a tunnel possibly headed inside the Temple. A pair of gazebos stand to either side of the tunnel, each preceded by a single row of bushes.

Read the following description of the were-bullete, Obliterator, as soon as he comes into view:

Out of the shadows, a massive hulk of a creature emerges with the heavy head of a maul rested across its shoulder. The deep rumble of its boots against the packed ground and marble floor cannot hide its approach and you hear a wicked chuckle. When it comes into full view, the bastard creature bears the head of a landshark - its sharp teeth displayed through a sneer - and the body of a heavysset man. The claws of a burrowing creature are wrapped around the handle of an insanely large hammer. Covering it all is one of the largest suits of chain mail you've ever seen on one creature. Bringing yourself back to your senses, you can feel the sweat from your palms and the tingle of goosebumps running down your back.

FEATURES

Illumination: Depends on the time of day: bright light, dim light, or darkness at night. 20 feet inside the tunnel, there is only darkness.

Trees: A character can use any tree for cover. If a tree covers four or more squares, it provides superior cover.

Gazebos: Ornately decorated, they provide cover and concealment to anyone inside. They are vulnerable to fire and will lose these benefits if left on fire for one round.

TACTICS

Obliterator wants revenge for the death of his good friend, the barlak (**Encounter E3: Take It Outside!**) during the attack on Bloomten and will be damned if he's going to allow any intruders to get past his Gate. The were-bulette wants the fight to be on even terms and will not allow a surprise attack, calling them out into battle and

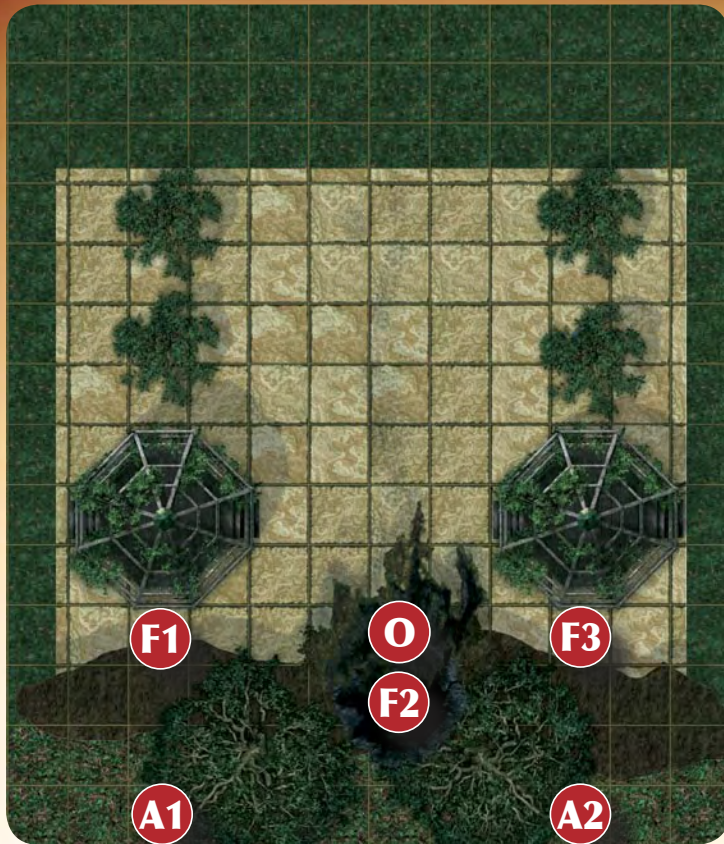
luring them into the tunnel to use the darkness to his advantage.

The faceless will herd the PCs towards Obliterator while the Faithful archers will stand above the Gate launching arrows.

SOUND THE ALARM!!

Unless the PCs' attack has become incredibly apparent, Obliterator will not be aware of any specific attack but will keep himself and his troops at the ready during

the ceremony inside the Temple. If Obliterator falls, any surviving Faithful archers will run to Area 10 or the Temple to alert others.



Faceless (3) Level 3 Soldier Medium natural animate XP 150

Initiative +5 **Senses** Perception +6; low-light vision
HP 54; **Bloodied** 27

AC 18, **Fortitude** 18, **Reflex** 17, **Will** 15 (see *forest link*)

Immune disease, poison

Speed 6

⊕ **Stone Fist** (standard; at-will)
+8 vs AC; 1d8+3 damage

Pound the Ground (immediate reaction, after hitting a target with *stone fist*; recharge Ⓢ, Ⓢ)
The faceless makes another stone fist attack and the target is prone.

Forest Link

When standing on the marble stone floor of the Gate of Stone, the faceless gains a +2 bonus to Fortitude and Reflex defenses and is immune to any forced movement.

Unaligned **Languages** Common, Primordial (not spoken)

Str 16 (+4) **Dex** 15 (+3) **Wis** 11 (+1)
Con 19 (+5) **Int** 6 (-1) **Cha** 8 (+0)

Faithful Archer (2) Level 1 Artillery Medium natural humanoid XP 100

Initiative +1 **Senses** Perception +2

HP 25; **Bloodied** 12

AC 16, **Fortitude** 15, **Reflex** 14, **Will** 14

Speed 6

☞ **Shortbow** (standard; at-will) • **Weapon**

Range 15; +8 vs AC; 1d8 damage

⚔ **Dagger** (standard; at-will) • **Weapon**

+6 vs AC; 1d4+2 damage

Whistle (move; encounter)

The Faithful Archer blows his whistle and alerts any other Faithful within 150' to the danger, bringing another patrol within five minutes. There is also a 25% chance of the entire Temple hearing this whistle.

Lawful good **Languages** Common

Skills Nature +5; Religion +5

Str 14 (+2) **Dex** 13 (+1) **Wis** 12 (+1)

Con 13 (+1) **Int** 10 (+0) **Cha** 11 (+0)

Equipment leather armour, shortbow, 40 arrows, dagger, whistle

Obliterator Level 3 Elite Skirmisher Medium natural humanoid (shapechanger) XP 300

Initiative +5 **Senses** Perception +6; darkvision

HP 108; **Bloodied** 52

AC 18, **Fortitude** 15, **Reflex** 14, **Will** 14

Saving Throws +2

Speed 6, 8 when charging

Action Points 1

⊕ **Erupting Maul** (standard; at-will) • **Thunder, Weapon**
+9 vs AC; 1d8+4 damage and 2 ongoing thunder (save ends)

⚔ **Unstoppable Charge** (move; recharge Ⓢ, Ⓢ, Ⓢ)

Obliterator charges, avoiding opportunity attacks, and makes an attack against the target: +6 vs Fortitude; on a hit, the target is knocked prone

⚔ **Rendering Claws** (immediate reaction, when Obliterator makes a critical hit against a target; at-will)
+8 vs AC; 1d4+4 damage

↶ **Full Circle Swing** (standard; encounter) • **Weapon**
Close burst 1; +7 vs AC; 1d8+6 damage and target is pushed one square

Cavern Collapse (standard; encounter)

Obliterator must stand adjacent to the tunnel wall; +6 vs Fortitude; 2d8+4 damage and target is restrained (save ends)

Complete Transformation (move; encounter)

• **Polymorph**

Obliterator transforms into a medium bulette and can burrow its speed plus gains the bulette's *earth furrow* power on its next turn as an at-will power (see the D&D 4e Monster Manual). Obliterator drops any weapons and breaks out of his chain mail armor.

Unaligned **Languages** Common, Primordial

Skills Athletics +6; Nature +5

Str 19 (+6) **Dex** 15 (+3) **Wis** 12 (+2)

Con 17 (+4) **Int** 10 (+1) **Cha** 8 (+0)

Equipment Obliterator's maul of the bulette +1, chain mail



THE TEMPLE OF ANAMUPET - AREA 9

THE GATE OF CLOUDS

Encounter Level 4 (800 XP)

Nothing good comes out of climbing so high. My advice: keep your eyes on the sky, not on the ground.

SETUP

Built as the second highest building on the grounds (after the Temple, of course), the Gate of Clouds is an impressive tower of four-solid walls. A gaping hole at its peak allows large flying creatures, as large as a dragon, to fly through the Gate and enter the central chamber of the Temple. Today, the tower remains, but the ramp used to gain access to the top from the ground has been ruined.

The Gate of Clouds is the main access to the Temple for Ygtardil and his nest. Perched atop the Temple, he has been watching the PCs make their gradual approach and will use the awkward height of the Gate to his advantage: he will ram into the tower and topple it over while the PCs remain at the top.

This encounter occurs just northwest of the Temple. Anyone standing on top of the Gate can see the entire Temple grounds.

The encounter uses the following creatures.

Ygtardil (Y)

Read the following description aloud to the player at the start of this encounter:

Clearly the tallest building here after the Temple itself, this simple stone tower rises above all the trees to provide a clear view of the valley. Every twenty feet of this 200-foot tall behemoth, a thin railing of extended stone juts out – there are no windows or openings at any point in this tower save for a massive portion of eastern wall. As luck would have it, only a few stones hang from the top of what must have been a long, steep ramp or stairs leading to the ground. Knotted ropes run up the side of the tower and torches have been lit at the peak.

Read the following description when the players reach the top of the tower:

Howling wind crashes out all other sounds as you heave yourself over the top edge of the tower. The first, and nearly only, thing you find up here is a 20-foot wide hole leading straight down. Dried bones and rotted animal flesh lies strewn about, some draping over the edge of the hole and there is an iconic odor remaining – a chill races down your spine as your instinct tells you what your mind cannot comprehend.

FEATURES

Illumination: Depends on the time of day: bright light, dim light, or darkness at night. 20 feet inside the tunnel, there is only darkness.

Walls: Carved from sandstone, they were built to last, despite the devastation that toppled them thousands of years ago. From the corners, they provide cover. (Break DC 35)

Climbing these walls is fairly simple: they can scale the walls themselves (**DC 15 Athletics check** as per the standard rules) or use the knotted ropes (**DC 10 Athletics check**). For simplicity's sake, the GM can assume the PCs make it to the top without any skill checks.

Knotted Ropes: Sturdy, yet exposed to the elements, these ropes have been assembled and knotted to allow a simple, through extended, climb to the top of the Gate. They can support up to 500 pounds at a time per rope and withstand a decent amount of punishment (Hardness 2, hp 15)

The Gate of Clouds: The Gate itself consists of the vertical tunnel leading down the remaining portion of the tower. The missing wall on the eastern side connected with the tower and allowed any flying creature to enter through the Gate and pass directly into the Temple (if any flying creatures attempts to do so, they will simply fly out the eastern gap). The inner walls of the tower are smooth with very little to grab hold of during a fall. Otherwise, it is a 150-foot fall for anyone who cannot fly.

SOUND THE ALARM!!

Make no mistake, if this encounter unfolds as written, every area of this dungeon will know the PCs have arrived and will be prepared in each encounter hereafter.

Ygtardil will only make passive Perception checks to notice the PCs if they have not caused any reason for

alarm. Because of his perch on the roof of the Temple, he will make active Perception checks should the PCs have triggered any alarm or attention in any previous encounter.

If the owl from the fey crossing spotted the PCs, it will fly directly towards Ygtardil and alert him to their arrival.

TACTICS

This is not a combat encounter so much as a skill challenge designed to introduce the PCs to Ygtardil prior to the final encounter in the Temple. Watching from the Temple's roof under cover of his haze aura, the green dragon waits for the majority of PCs to reach the Gate and makes a flying charge at the midsection of the tower wall. Knocking out a large chunk of the Gate, the PCs must race back down to the bottom or else fall to their doom.

Start the encounter once the PCs reach the top. Have them roll initiative and fire upon the charging Ygtardil with ranged attacks for two rounds before the green dragon makes impact with the tower wall halfway down. From this point, the party has 3 rounds to make it down to at least halfway before the top half of the tower collapses and sends the mercs spiraling to a world of hurt.

Consult the various options below as there are multiple tools and resources available to the PCs:

Using the Rope: The PCs can jump off the tower and grab hold of the knotted rope (**DC 15 Athletics check**). They can fall at a rate of twice their base movement per round, meaning the average, unencumbered PC will fall 12 squares, or 60 feet, per round. They must fall at least 100 feet to avoid plummeting with the tower, so they can make their Athletics check to catch the rope at the end of their second turn. It will take 4 rounds for any PC to strike the ground from the top.

Using the Ledges: If the player rolls at least a 12 on their Athletics check to grab the rope, they can use the ledges running along the tower walls to brace their fall. As an immediate reaction, the PC can now roll a **DC 15 Athletics check** and grab one of the ledges instead, stopping their fall.

Before the Dragon Strikes...: If the PCs act as soon as they spot Ygtardil's charge, they have a 2 round advantage and can make it halfway down before the dragon makes contact with the tower wall.

Sliding Down the Gate: A PC can jump inside the Gate with enough momentum to slide down the inner wall of the Gate harmlessly without a skill check required.

Leaping on the Dragon's Back: This is incredibly difficult, but can be accomplished with a **DC 24 Athletics check**. Ygtardil will attempt to shake off any PC holding on and the two combatants will enter a grapple – if the dragon wins a grapple check in a round, he tosses the PC off and leaves him or her to fall to the ground.

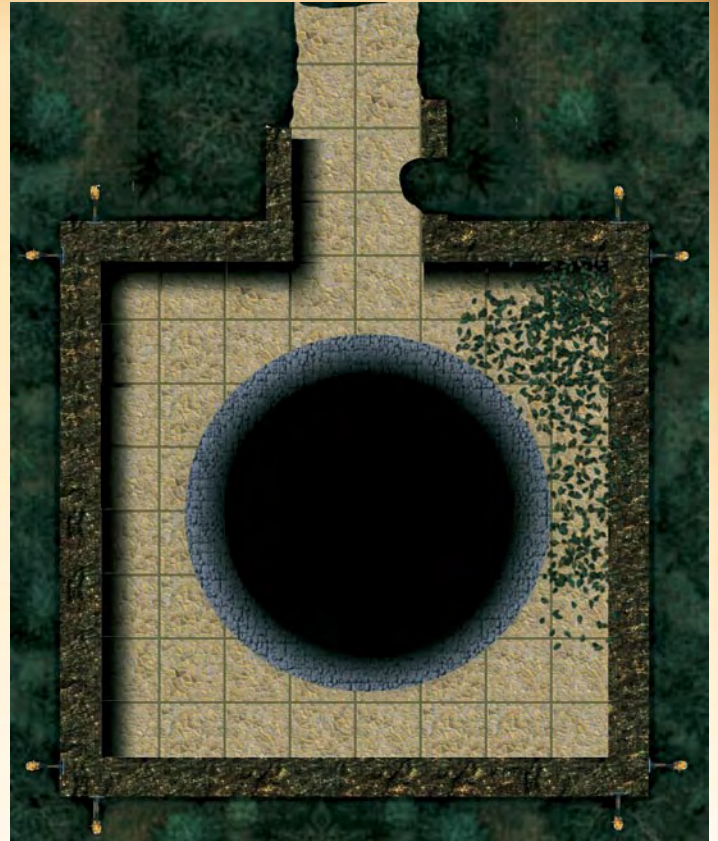
Powers: Any power, such as the wizard's feather fall spell, can be used to survive this encounter so long as all conditions of the power are met.

Falling Debris: Once the PCs make it safely (or bruised and battered) to the ground, there is a final challenge: debris. Make a +8 vs AC ranged attack for 3d6 damage from falling debris for each character as soon as they reach the ground.

The GM may choose to forego this attack if the PC lands on the ground long after the dragon has come and gone. On the flip side, the GM may also choose to make this attack on any PC suspended safely from the rope within range of the attack.

Ygtardil will not stay and fight the PCs any further than he has to for this encounter. His duties are needed inside the Temple and he will only attempt to disrupt their progress or kill as many as possible by smashing out the Gate of Clouds. The full XP is awarded to any survivors of this encounter.

Use the full stats for Ygtardil found on page XX.



THE TEMPLE OF ANAMUPET - AREA 10: WRATH OF THE TREES

Encounter Level 4 (900 XP)

This is what they call a simple knock job – just bash in the guards' heads and walk right through the front door. Course, most guards aren't walking trees armed with swords, but the premise is the same.

SETUP

A series of four ramps lead inside the Temple from the ground level, evenly spread across a small area as the looming form of the flipped pyramid narrows down to a tiny point anchored in the soil. This perimeter is well guarded by treehulks, loyal monitors of the Temple sworn to prevent all non-believers from entering. Complicating matters are the sacred doors, each requiring a chunk of bark from a treehulk to open.

Massive oak trees encircle the Temple. Every time a treehulk falls defending the Temple's doors, another will step out of the trees to take its place. This encounter can offer more XP than listed above, depending on how many treehulks the PCs choose to fight.

This encounter occurs immediately outside the main Temple doors and leads to **Area 11: The Gate of Forests**.

The encounter uses the following creatures.

2 treehulks (T)

Read the following description aloud to the player at the start of this encounter:

The sky is blotted out by the rising form of the Temple walls, angling over you to create a dizzying effect. You can make out the ancient engravings in the stonework now, depicting a forgotten language recanting legends long since wiped from memory. Thick oak trees, one-quarter the size of the Temple, are spread evenly around the structure and covered ramps rise steeply towards a set of stone doors leading inside.

Standing in plain view with beady eyes gazing across the Temple grounds are humanoid trees, armed to the teeth with bulky stone swords and chunks of sandstone forged into their bark hides.

FEATURES

Illumination: Depends on the time of day: bright light, dim light, or darkness at night.

Walls: Carved from sandstone, they were built to last, despite the devastation that toppled them thousands of years ago. From the corners, they provide cover. (Break DC 35)

Trees: These two large oak trees provide superior cover and are the source for all treehulks in this encounter. If a tree is destroyed (Hardness 15, hp 50), no more treehulks will appear. If the tree is set on fire, any treehulk rising from it will start with half its hit points and be considered bloodied. Flaming treehulks can also cause 2 ongoing fire damage with any melee attack.

Ramp: Steps lead up the ramps to the Temple. At the top of each ramp is a sacred temple door (see below).

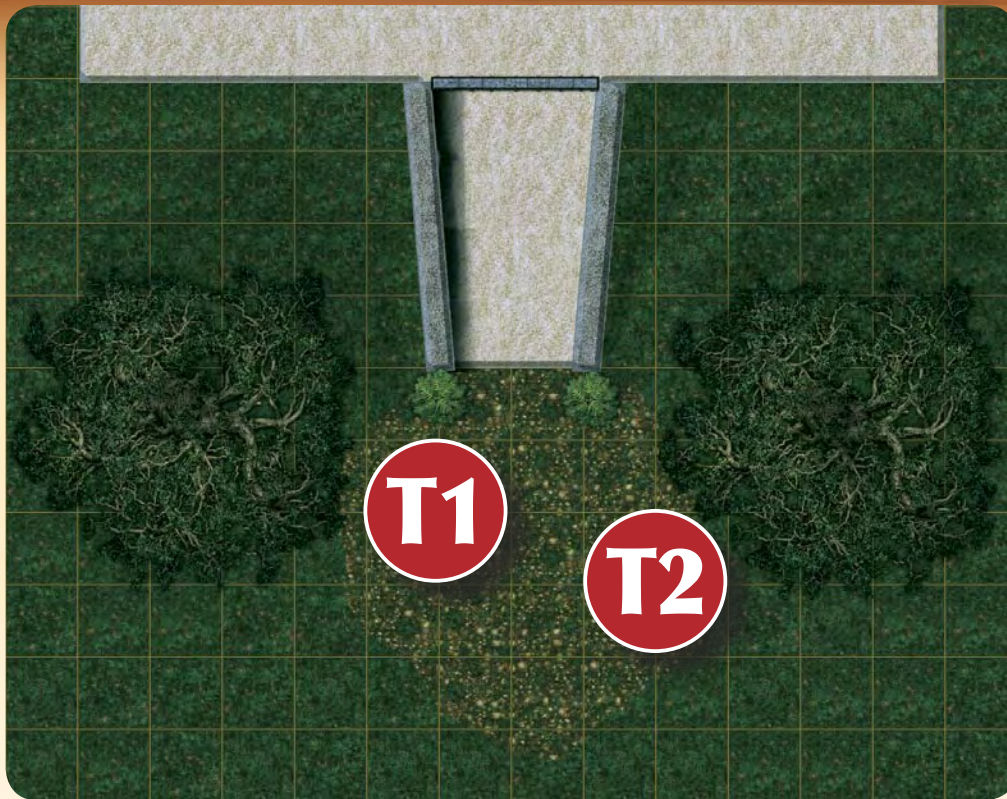
Sacred Temple Door: Built of solid stone, each door radiates an aura of powerful magic making it resilient to any form of damage. A single, round keyhole rests in the middle. By inserting a chunk of bark from a treehulk (whether it is given willingly or taken by force), the doors will open and allow anyone entry inside. Continue on to **Area 11: The Gate of Forests**.

TACTICS

The treehulks attack any intruder on sight unless they are shown a holy symbol of Anamupet, at which point they stand before the "believers" and hand them a piece of bark from their own hides for opening the sacred temple doors. The holy symbol must be clearly presented to the treehulks for this to happen, otherwise they will pound the PCs into the ground. The treehulks have been ordered by Jarod to only allow Faithful with a holy symbol entry and forego their standard procedure of testing new arrivals as per the prophecy.

Treehulks in combat remain close to the Temple to gain their temple link benefits and will not chase the PCs into the woods. They use stone toss when their attackers stand out of range and never break formation to aid another. If a treehulk is set on fire, it can allow itself to burn to death, thereby prompting a new treehulk to emerge and continue the battle.

Whenever a treehulk falls, another one steps forth from an oak tree at the start of the treehulks' next turn.



Treehulk (2) **Level 3 Elite Soldier**
Large elemental animate (earth) **XP 300**

Initiative +4 **Senses** Perception +8; low-light vision
HP 180; **Bloodied** 90

Regeneration 5 (when bloodied, see *temple link*)

AC 20, **Fortitude** 19, **Reflex** 16, **Will** 18

Immune disease, poison

Resist 5 lightning (10 with *temple link*)

Saving Throws +4 (see *temple link*)

Speed 5

Action Points 1

⊕ **Temple Blade** (standard; at-will) • **Weapon**

Reach 2; +10 vs AC; 1d8+6 damage

↘ **Stone Toss** (standard; recharge Ⓚ, Ⓚ, Ⓚ)

Range 10; +9 vs AC; 2d6+5 damage and target is pushed two squares

↶ **Shake the Earth** (standard; encounter)

Close blast 4; +8 vs Fortitude; 1d8+4 and target is stunned

Take Out the Legs (immediate reaction, when bloodied; encounter) • **Weapon**

Close wall 3; +7 vs Reflex; 1d4+2 damage and target is prone

Temple Link

When standing on or within 5 squares of the Temple of Anamupet, the treehulk gains a +4 bonus to saving throws, resist 10 lightning, and regeneration 5 when bloodied.

Unaligned **Languages** Primordial (not spoken)

Skills skill name +#: skill name +#

Str 20 (+6) **Dex** 14 (+3) **Wis** 15 (+3)

Con 19 (+5) **Int** 6 (-1) **Cha** 10 (+1)

Equipment stone sword

SOUND THE ALARM!!

The treehulks never leave their post and stand amidst a clearing in the forest – they have no need to investigate any suspicious activity and exist as automatons on constant alert. There are no advantages or disadvantages for the treehulks, regardless of the previous actions by the PCs.

THE TEMPLE OF ANAMUPET - AREA 11: THE GATE OF FORESTS

You can hear the rumble of the crowd above, can't you? You're almost there, just one more door to go before it's showtime.

SETUP

Located directly beneath the central chamber of the Temple, the Gate of Forests is the preferred means of entry to the Temple for humanoids traveling by ground. As the grand moment for the final ceremony nears, the Gate stands empty and unguarded.

This encounter occurs just after Area 10: The Wrath of Trees and takes place directly beneath **Area 12: The Cathedral of Change**.

Read the following description aloud to the player at the start of this encounter:

Rising before you, in the centre of this 20-foot squared chamber, is a massive statue of a six-fingered hand with a door built into the palm. Engraved in the stone door is the symbol of Anamupet, the multi-armed and -winged dragon. Burning torches line the walls, revealing a line of stone trees carved into the walls. Before the hand lies a bowl of water on a wooden column, filled to the halfway mark with four-leafed clovers.

When a single four-leafed clover is placed in the bowl of water, the stone door slides downwards into the wrist and reveals a 10' by 10' chamber inside the hand. When the chamber is full (only one clover is required to open the door and is not restricted to the number of characters entering), the door closes again.

Read the following description aloud as the PCs enter the Gate of Forests:

When the door slams shut, the Gate shudders and you instantly feel the alien hand rising towards the ceiling. Heavy stone outside the hand scrapes against heavy stone and you must lean against the adjacent wall to remain standing as this device lifts you higher into the Temple. The roar of a crowd chanting feverishly begins to moan, lead by the prayers of a familiar voice. As suddenly as it began, the rise of the Gate halts and everything stops dead in its tracks... including the chanting.

Proceed to **Area 12: The Cathedral of Change** and the conclusion of the adventure.

FEATURES

Illumination: Dim light. Only torches provide illumination in this room.

Walls: Carved from sandstone, they were built to last, despite the devastation that toppled them thousands of years ago. From the corners, they provide cover. (Break DC 35)

Bowl of Water: This is the key to opening the Gate of Forests. If the PCs have a five-leafed clover (as seen in the possession of every Faithful in Chapter Two), they may place it in the water and the door will open. The door will not open if a character removes a clover already in the

bowl and places it back inside. See Opening the Gate of Forests above.

Torches: Each torch can be removed from its sconce and carried. It provides the standard amount of light for a torch.

The Gate of Forests: The detailing on the Gate is incredibly impressive and appears to have been carved from a single chunk of stone. Directly above the hand is a circle running the full radius of the Gate – when the Gate is activated, this circle opens and the Gate rises upwards to Area 12.

THE TEMPLE OF ANAMUPET - AREA 12

THE CATHEDRAL OF CHANGE

Encounter Level 5 (1000 XP)

What happens when you place a green dragon in a room of cultists? The final battle, that's what. No holds barred, it's time to draw some blood and make some cash.

SETUP

The entire Temple of Anamupet is a single chamber known as the Cathedral of Change. With enough seats to hold over 5000 people, there are nearly 400 active Faithful filling the stands, eyes glued to the actions of the altar. Set in the middle of a pit of sand, this is where the final battle takes place.

The PCs can enter the Cathedral through the Gate of Forests (Area 11), the Gate of Stone (Area 8) or the Gate of Oceans (Area 7). They start at the area marked "X" on the map (unless they enter through the Gate of Stone; see below for details).

This encounter uses the following creatures:

Ygtardil (Y)

Jarod Highswater (J)

Hatchet (H)

Key (K)

2 Faithful guardians (G)

400 Faithful believers (not participating)

Read the following description aloud to the player at the start of this encounter:

The door opens and Jarod stands before you, dressed in ceremonial plate mail armor and armed to the teeth. Behind him, an altar of marble holds an engraved tome, a ceremonial knife, a small chain, and a pot of incense all gazed upon by the hundreds of Faithful gathered in the pews. Giant flaming urns rest on either corner of the podium lifting thick plumes of smoke into the air.

The size of the chamber is immense and beyond the scope of its exterior. Past the podium you stand upon, sand reaches out to the edge and the ceiling to the chamber is nigh invisible, barely illuminated by the dozens of open windows and doorways spread in all directions. Three stone platforms are spread throughout the chamber: one to the north with a burrowed cave leading down, another to the east with a shaft and the wisp of cool ocean breeze, and a third to the west underneath a round hole in the side of the Temple wall.

FEATURES

Illumination: Bright light. The open windows and torches scattered throughout the Cathedral provide more than enough illumination for this encounter.

Walls: Carved from sandstone, they were built to last, despite the devastation that toppled them thousands of years ago. From the corners, they provide cover. (Break DC 35)

Sand: Any square marked with sand is considered difficult terrain.

Platforms: Each of the three platforms spread throughout the chamber are entrances from the other three Gates: the northern platform connects to the Gate of Stone (Area 8), the eastern one leads to the Gate of Oceans (Area 7), and the western platform is part of the Gate of Clouds (Area 9). When Ygtardil enters the Cathedral, he will land on the platform for the Gate of Clouds.

Each platform is raised 10' off the sand and requires a **DC 15 Athletics check** to climb on, but inflicts no damage if a character jumps off.

Altar: There is a tome of rituals dedicated to Anamupet (see the Divine Rites of Alteration in Appendix II: Magic Items), a ceremonial knife (treat as a dagger with the high crit feature), a 10-foot long chain, and a small pot filled with burning incense.

Statues: Surrounding three sides of the main platform, these statues of humanoids hold plates filled with gold and jewels. Each statue holds 6d10 + 50 gp in coin and jewelry.

Chest: This chest holds the ceremonial robes of the ancient Priest of Anamupet. It is not locked.

TACTICS

See pages 86-88 for all tactics and reactions in this final encounters.

Jarod Highwater Level 4 Elite Soldier
Medium natural humanoid (human) XP 350

Initiative +9 **Senses** Perception +10
HP 110; **Bloodied** 55
AC 21 (24 with shield), **Fortitude** 20, **Reflex** 20, **Will** 18
Saving Throws +2

Speed 6

Action Points 1

⊕ **Greatsword** (standard; at-will) • **Weapon**
+12 vs AC; 1d10+5 damage

↘ **Longbow** (standard; at-will) • **Weapon**
Range 20/40; +10 vs AC; 1d10 damage

Divine Challenge (minor; at-will) • **Divine, Radiant**
Close burst 5; target is marked and suffers 10 radiant damage if he attacks another target than Jarod

Lay on Hands (minor; at-will) • **Divine, Healing**
Grants a healing surge to a target he touches.

Arcing Smite (standard; encounter) • **Divine, Weapon**
+10 vs AC; 1d10+5 damage and target is dazed

Divine Strength (minor; encounter) • **Divine**
Personal; +5 to damage on next attack

Anamupet's Gift (immediate reaction, when reduced to 10 hit points or less; daily) • **Teleportation**
Jarod is teleported to the Temple of Anamupet; must have access to the holy symbol of Anamupet.

Lawful good **Languages** Common, Draconic
Skills Nature +8, Religion +5

Str 16 (+5) **Dex** 15 (+4) **Wis** 14 (+4)

Con 16 (+5) **Int** 13 (+3) **Cha** 18 (+6)

Equipment hide armour, greatsword, longbow, 40 arrows, *holy symbol of Anamupet* +1

Key Level 1 Minion
Small fey humanoid XP -

Initiative +0 (Key acts on the same initiative as an adjacent ally) **Senses** Perception +1; low-light vision
HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion
AC 10, **Fortitude** 9, **Reflex** 10, **Will** 11

Speed 4

⊕ **Shin Kick** (standard; at-will)
+2 vs Reflex; 1 damage and target is slowed for one round

Step of Anamupet (move; encounter) • **Teleportation**
Key can teleport 10 squares.

Unaligned **Languages** Common

Str 6 (-2) **Dex** 10 (+0) **Wis** 12 (+1)

Con 8 (-1) **Int** 10 (+0) **Cha** 8 (-1)

Ygtardil Level 5 Solo Skirmisher
Large natural magical beast XP 1000
(young green dragon)

Initiative +7 **Senses** Perception +10; darkvision
Haze aura 10; gains a +10 bonus to Stealth checks while standing still, hovering, or shifting

HP 260; **Bloodied** 130; see also *bloodied breath*
AC 21, **Fortitude** 18, **Reflex** 19, **Will** 17

Saving Throws +5

Speed 8, fly 10 (hover), overland flight 15; see also *flyby attack*

Action Points 2

⊕ **Bite** (standard; at-will) • **Poison**
Reach 2; +10 vs AC; 1d8+5 damage, and ongoing 5 poison damage (save ends)

⊕ **Claw** (standard; at-will)
Reach 2; +10 vs AC; 1d6+5 damage

⊕ **Ramming Horns** (standard; at-will)

Reach 2; +8 vs AC; 1d8+5 damage and target is pushed 2 squares

Double Attack (standard; at-will)

The dragon makes two claw attacks.

Flyby Attack (standard; recharge ☼, ☼)

The dragon flies up to 10 squares and makes a ramming horns attack at any point during the move without provoking an opportunity attack from the target; inflicts double damage

⊕ **Tail Sweep** (immediate reaction, if an adjacent enemy does not move on its turn; at-will)

+8 vs Reflex; 1d8+5 damage, and the target is knocked prone

↘ **Luring Glare** (minor 1/round; at-will) • **Charm, Gaze**
Ranged 10; +8 vs Will; the target slides 2 squares

↘ **Breath Weapon** (standard; recharge ☼, ☼) • **Poison**
Close blast 5; +8 vs Fortitude; 1d10+3 poison damage, and the target takes ongoing 5 poison damage and is slowed (save ends). *Aftereffect*: The target is slowed (save ends)

Bloodied Breath (free, when first bloodied; encounter)
The dragon's breath weapon recharges, and the dragon uses it immediately.

Frightful Presence (standard; encounter) • **Fear**

Close burst 5; targets enemies; +8 vs Will; the target is stunned until the end of the dragon's next turn.

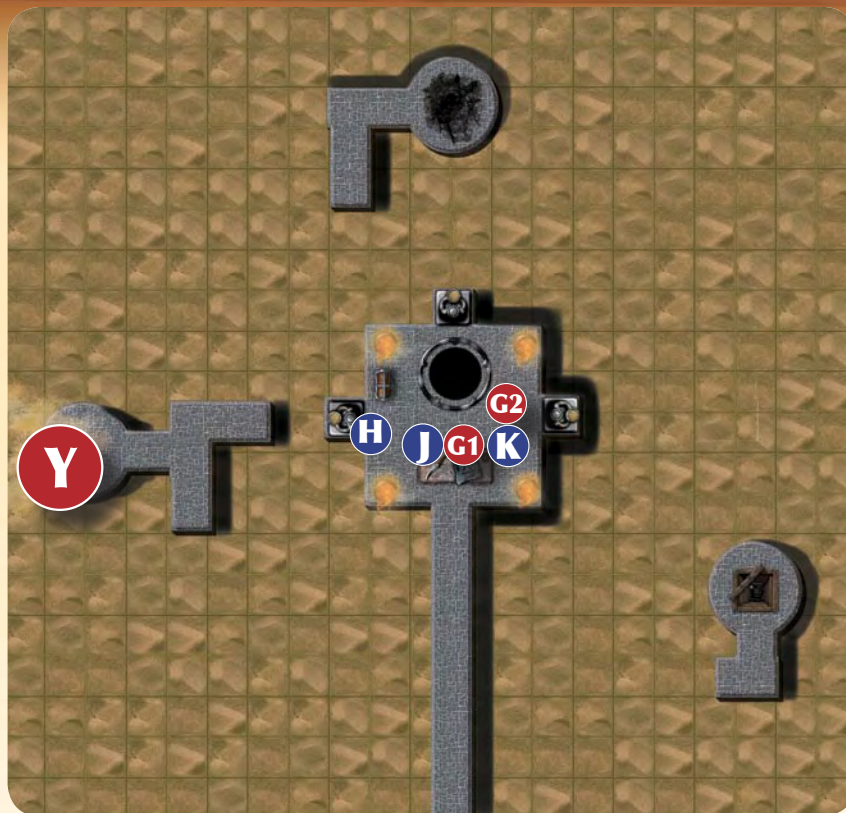
Aftereffect: The target takes a -2 penalty to attack rolls (save ends)

Evil **Languages** Common, Draconic

Skills Bluff +15, Diplomacy +10, Insight +15, Intimidate +10

Str 15 (+4) **Dex** 20 (+7) **Wis** 16 (+5)

Con 17 (+5) **Int** 15 (+4) **Cha** 17 (+5)



Hatchet

Level 4 Solo Skirmisher

Medium natural humanoid (human)

XP 875

Initiative +5 **Senses** Perception +9

HP 224; **Bloodied** 112

AC 22, **Fortitude** 18, **Reflex** 19, **Will** 18

Saving Throws +5

Speed 5

Action Points 1

⊕ **Double Strike** (standard; at-will) • **Weapon**
+10 vs AC; 1d8+5 damage

Secondary Attack: +10 vs AC; 1d6+5 damage

↓ **Return the Favor** (immediate interrupt, when a flanking opponent misses) • **Weapon**
+8 vs AC; 1d4+4 damage

Secondary Attack: +7 vs Reflex; 2d4+4 damage

↶ **Fury of Swings** (standard; encounter) • **Thunder, Weapon**

Close burst 1; +10 vs AC; 2d8+7 damage plus 2 thunder damage

↶ **Wink** (minor; encounter) • **Gaze**

Close blast 3; +10 vs Will; target is marked

Violent Thrash (immediate reaction, when bloodied; encounter)

Can use either Double Strike or Fury of Swings.

Sliced Escape

Hatchet reduces the target's speed by 2 with opportunity attacks.

Unaligned **Languages** Common, Elven, Giant

Skills Athletics +9, Acrobatics +10, Nature +8, Intimidate +7

Str 16 (+5) **Dex** 14 (+4) **Wis** 12 (+3)

Con 14 (+4) **Int** 10 (+2) **Cha** 11 (+2)

Equipment chainmail, longsword (w/scabbard), handaxe (attached), adventurer's pack, brown cloak

Faithful Believer (x400)

Level 2 Minion

Medium natural humanoid

XP 25

Initiative +1 **Senses** Perception +4

HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion

AC 15, **Fortitude** 13, **Reflex** 14, **Will** 16

Speed 6

⊕ **Desperate Beating** (standard; at-will)
+4 vs AC; 1d4+1 damage

Unaligned **Languages** Common

Skills Religion +3

Str 10 (+1) **Dex** 10 (+1) **Wis** 12 (+2)

Con 10 (+1) **Int** 11 (+1) **Cha** 10 (+1)

Equipment holy symbol of Anamupet

THE FINAL ACT

These events occur the moment the PCs enter the Cathedral of Change. They have wandered into the central chamber of worship for the Faithful just as their ceremony to resurrect their ancient priest begins – starting with a marathon chant that is part of the opening ceremony to summon the green dragon, Ygtardil to the Temple.

There are several possibilities for this scene, each based on the previous actions, decisions, and counteroffers of the PCs. While the core events already set in motion remain the same, the reactions and intentions of the core NPCs – Jarod, Hatchet, Key, and Ygtardil – will vary according to these choices, each of which is detailed below.

OFFER #1: STEAL THE PORTAL KEY

The mercs are sticking to their initial offer – steal the portal key from the Faithful. By this time, the PCs should be retrieving it from the eladrin’s victorious attack on Bloomten in Chapter Three. Whether they still seek Jarod’s holy symbol or choose to take Key with them as the true portal key, they will have to fight for them: the holy symbol and Key are crucial to the resurrection of their priest.

Jarod commands Ygtardil to attack the PCs and kill them, even attacking them by himself. Ygtardil will take every step to keep the PCs away from the main podium, forcing them onto the sand, hovering over them to avoid sinking into the loose ground. Jarod will now attempt to rush the ceremony before any other interruptions interfere with his destiny.

This will be Hatchet’s cue to step in and snatch Key: the PCs’ arrival will be the ultimate distraction the merc needs to get the boy out of harm’s way. This leads to a fight between Jarod and Hatchet (see the Jarod vs. Hatchet sidebar for handling this side plot of the adventure) while the PCs continue to battle the young green dragon.

Once Ygtardil has been slain, Jarod will attempt to retreat with Key and kill anyone who gets in his way. Faithful believers rage in a frenzy, leaping down from their pews to swarm those who have killed the avatar. If Jarod can grab Key, he will head for the door to Area 11 and make his escape into the forest, calling on any surviving guards outside the Temple (especially the treehulks) to cover his escape. He will head for the fey crossing, racing for his brother’s estate as a last ditch attempt to salvage his religion. No matter what occurs, Jarod will give his life to keep Key at his side.

PAYMENT: Unless further negotiations were involved, Stump pays the PCs 200 gp plus any bonus amounts. If the adventure ends with a full-out confrontation in the Temple, the orc will not pay an additional 100 gp for deceiving the Faithful, but he doubles their payment if they kill Jarod.

Eager to get revenge for their attack on his village, Stump will also pay an additional 100 gp if they kill Ygtardil.

OFFER #2: BETRAYING STUMP

If the PCs accepted Jarod’s offer to take care of Stump and the Harad’adak by leading the eladrins to Bloomten, then they have likely arrived to witness the ceremony unfold. From here, it becomes a matter of supporting or resisting the nature of the ceremony: young Key is to become a vessel for the resurrection spirit of the Priest of Anamupet.

As the ceremony begins, read the following aloud to the players:

The paladin lifts his hands to the followers and the chanting ceases instantly. A calmed hush no louder than a warm breeze falls over the crowd that eagerly lean forward as their vision of renewal begins. Jarod lowers his hands again and rests them down on either side of the stone slab before him.

To the right, Key stands in front of the two eladrin soldiers charged with his protection. Their hands cupped around either shoulder, reminding the frightened child of his entrapment. On the left, Hatchet stands as far back as possible, his eyes darting back and forth until he catches sight of you again. Staring back at him, you see his remaining hand gripped on the handle of his sword.

“My brothers and sisters, our moment has come. At this time, in this place, where history was once the future, we shall witness the return of our faith. The prophecy has come true; everything, as it was predicted, shall pass into memory. Anamupet has shown us the Key to our salvation and the door to more than just our Temple, but to our god.”

Picking up the ceremonial knife resting on the slab with one hand and gripping his holy symbol tight in the other, Jarod waves his arm towards the eladrin guards and they direct Key forward.

At this moment, Hatchet realizes there is no better time to seize Key and save his life. Once Key is retrieved and the entire Faithful camp retreated to the Temple, the merc has not been able to get clear access to the boy – this is the first he has seen of Key since they marched through the fey crossing. From here, it now becomes a matter of the PCs’ dealing with Hatchet. See **Offer #3: Save Key** from this point on.

PAYMENT: Regardless of how matters with Hatchet turn out, Jarod (or the surviving Faithful, should anything happen to Jarod) will give the PCs access to a single weapon each from the Armory (see Area 5). If they kill Hatchet and allow the ceremony to conclude, they will receive an incredible opportunity. See **The Rise of the Priest** below for details.

OFFER #3: SAVE KEY

Hatchet bargained a deal with the PCs in Chapter Two, explaining his real job was to rescue Key from the Faithful for his cladrin family. While he will never disclose the amount, it’s more than enough to counter any other offer Hatchet might have – he will attempt to save the boy.

If the PCs choose to honor that offer, they can launch forward with Hatchet and attack Jarod and the Faithful guardian or they can act sooner. Ygtardil will leap into the encounter in the first round and combat will occur as described in Offer #1 with Hatchet and Jarod dueling over Key’s salvation.

If not, the PCs can remain loyal to the Faithful and Jarod will order them to kill Hatchet. The encounter now becomes a fight between the PCs and Hatchet. As an added flip, the PCs may elect to pretend to fight Hatchet and may use a **DC 16 Diplomacy check** to send a visual signal to Hatchet of their ploy. If Hatchet notices the ploy, he will roll with it and work with the PCs to rescue Key – the encounter then carries on as in Offer #1.

PAYMENT: Since the only agreement between Hatchet and the PCs was to steal the holy symbol instead of the boy, there is no additional financial incentive for Hatchet to offer helping him defeat Jarod. But he will recognize the significant aid the PCs gave him and match Stump’s offer if they help Key escape.

JAROD VS. HATCHET

As dealing with Jarod and the green dragon, Ygtardil, simultaneously in the early stages of the heroic tier are almost guaranteed to fail, Hatchet is available to step in and spare the PCs from being overwhelmed.

There are two means of handling this side plot. The simplest involves tucking these two NPCs in the background and have them fight it out without keeping track, slipping in the occasional narrative of their struggle while the PCs continue to take on the dragon. Once the PCs have removed Ygtardil from the equation, consider both characters to be bloodied and commence the encounter from there – the PCs can step in at any point to finish off whichever character they wish.

The second option is provided in detail below and contains a round-by-round summary of the fight between Jarod and Hatchet. Read the details of each action to the players at the end of each round or simply use the table below as a guideline for whenever the PCs are able to turn their attention towards the pair on the main stage. Any attacks by neighboring Faithful are listed under Jarod’s actions.

See the round-by-round chart on page 88.

NOTE: If Hatchet was killed in an earlier encounter, sometime around Chapter Three, the merc can be replaced with Stump. Eager to get blood on his own hands, it is very conceivable for the orc merchant to use his wand of magic missiles on the paladin.

ROUNDS	JAROD (INITIATIVE = 26)	HATCHET (INITIATIVE = 20)
1	Jarod uses divine challenge on Hatchet and the two Faithful guardians charge forward, missing with both their attacks. Jarod swings his greatsword and hits for 8 points of damage. (End of round HP = 89)	Hatchet uses fury of swings to hit all three targets and inflicts 21 points of damage plus 2 ongoing thunder. Jarod makes his save, the Faithful guardians do not. Suffers 20 radiant damage from Jarod's divine challenge. (End of round HP = 196)
2	Jarod hits with arcing smite and inflicts 12 points of damage, plus Hatchet is dazed; Faithful guardians miss with disarming blow. (End of round HP = 89; both Faithful guardians are bloodied)	Uses katar parry on a Faithful guardian and deals 6 damage to the first then 11 damage to the second, but suffers 20 radiant damage from divine challenge. Misses Jarod with double strike (End of round HP = 164)
3	Uses greatsword on Hatchet for 9 points of damage and sets divine strength for next round; Faithful guardians inflict 8 damage. (End of round HP = 89; one Faithful guardian dead, other bloodied)	Hatchet uses double strike on Jarod, which is deflected by a Faithful guardian's serve and protect, killing him; suffers 10 radiant damage (End of round HP = 154)
4	Jarod rolls a crit and deals 15 damage to Hatchet then uses lay on hands for surviving Faithful guardian, who misses his attack; Jarod shifts back one square. (End of round HP = 89, speed reduced by 2; remaining Faithful guardian bloodied)	Uses sliced escape on Jarod, reducing his speed by 2; double strike on Faithful guardian removes all benefits of lay on hands. (End of round HP = 129)
5	Jarod hobbles back to Key and grabs hold of him, using the boy as cover; Faithful guardian misses. (End of round HP = 89; both Faithful guardians dead)	Kills remaining Faithful guardian with double strike. (End of round HP = 119)
6	Holds initiative and waits for Hatchet to approach; deals 12 damage to Hatchet, now bloodied. (End of round HP = 76)	Uses violent thrash for a double strike, dealing 13 damage to Jarod. (End of round HP = 107, bloodied)
7	Swings with greatsword, misses. (End of round HP = 65)	Hits Jarod with double strike for 11 damage; positions himself between Jarod and the door. (End of round HP = 107, bloodied).
8	Tosses Key at Hatchet, who catches the boy, then lunges with greatsword at Hatchet for 9 damage. (End of round HP = 65)	Hatchet catches Key and cannot attack. Makes a run for the door, but is hit by an opportunity attack for additional 7 damage. (End of round HP = 91, bloodied)
9	Gains combat advantage over Hatchet, inflicts 10 damage and grabs hold of Key, moving towards the door. (End of round HP = 55, now bloodied)	Uses opportunity attack, inflicts 10 damage. Moves to catch up, leaving Jarod standing adjacent to the door. (End of round HP = 81, bloodied)
10	Misses with greatsword attack, steps inside statue, door closes, and escapes. (End of combat HP = 55, bloodied)	No action; bangs on door as Jarod escapes with Key. (End of combat HP = 81, bloodied)

CONCLUSION: Jarod has escaped and makes his way out of the Temple, leaving behind a bloodied and battered Hatchet to chase after him. The paladin may even use lay on hands to restore hit points during his escape, but the -2 penalty to his speed remains from Hatchet's sliced escape attack.

ALTERNATE ENDING: THE RISE OF THE PRIEST

Events may unfold allowing the ceremony to continue and begin the return of Anamupet through his fallen priest.

Read the following description to the players once combat has ended and the ceremony continues as planned:

Quickly brought before the stone slab, Key is held firmly in place by his guards. Picking up the ceremonial knife, Jarod sets his holy symbol into the incense pot and holds his exposed wrist above both. Taking the knife to his own flesh, the paladin slices deep and directs the flowing blood into the pot. Dripping across the golden edges of the mutated dragon, the pot soon overflows with deep crimson. Grabbing the mixture, his hand covered in his own blood, Jarod pick up the small pot and stirs his concoction in Key's direction.

Gently tilting his head back, the guards open his mouth and the nervous youngster complies. Removing the blood soaked holy symbol from the pot, Jarod hovers the end over the boy's mouth as drops of blood fall on Key's tongue. After only a few drops, Key begins to gag and he is released by the guards.

The boy suddenly falls forward and begins to cough violently, his back twitching in a frenzy of convulsions until he leans onto his side. Eyes rolled back in his head, fingers clenched to slide his nails through the skin, the boy ceases convulsing as quickly as he began and lies motionless on the podium. His arm falls to his side, a tiny hand dangling over the ledge of stone.

The crowd is silent and a murmuring chant slowly hums to full volume. The crowd of Faithful rocks back and forth obsessively while Jarod stands behind the stone slab dripping blood at his feet. When the chanting becomes more than you can stand, the tiny hand of the boy twitches once. Then a second time.

His eyes open and a long exhale pours from his mouth. The chanting halts and nothing happens for a long moment. Blinking repeatedly, Key shakes his head and slowly pushes himself to his feet. There is no reaction from Jarod or the crowd as the young half-eladrin boy steadies himself and looks out upon his followers. There is a sternness to his gaze – the eyes have narrowed, crowd's feet marking their edges, and a sneer of satisfaction rolls over his lips. Opening his mouth to speak, the voice you hear next bears the cracked tones of an elderly man, supernaturally presented to echo across the entire cathedral.

"I am returned, my children. Rise and give thanks to Anamupet!"

The chant continues and Jarod rushes to the chest at the left of the podium, slipping out the dark red robes of the priest. The boy who was once Key extends his arms and allows the paladin to place the robes over his shoulders with the hem dragging on the stone behind him.

The ceremony is over: Key is now possessed by the spirit of the Priest of Anamupet, a warden called Hamom'tep and immediately assumes command of the Temple. As part of his return to power, he calls for the mercenaries who aided in his return (or demands to see those who failed to keep him in the realm of the dead), thanking them for their efforts in his resurrection.

In reward for their service, he offers them a special opportunity: to feel the power of Anamupet and transform into a more powerful form. For this, Ygtardil must still be alive and the young green dragon is crucial to the transformation ritual (see below) overseen by Hamom'tep. Any willing PCs may have the ritual performed on them and gain the benefits (and potential disadvantages) granted through the blessing of Anamupet. After the ritual, the PCs are free to leave of their own accord with full payment as previously agreed.



THE END...?

Non-Player Characters (NPCs)

Of all the unique and interesting characters presented in this adventure, four stand out as crucial supporting elements to the job: Hatchet, Jarod Highwater, Key, and Stump. This section provides their complete stats along with mild background information for GMs to embellish on for extended roleplaying. Feel free to adjust these elements as you see fit, especially if they happen to live long enough to play a factor in future jobs.

Hatchet

Infamy comes in strange ways. Hatchet was a simple merc, taking on odd jobs here and there without much glory or recognition (most of his jobs were credited to others). It wasn't until gnolls caught him in the act of killing their elder that he roared into mercenary legend. Tortured for days, during which his hand was amputated and hung over the door to his cell, Hatchet bided his time and waited for the gnolls to finish him off in a promised ceremony. As they lead him out of his cell, he lunged into action and slowly, methodically, took out every remaining gnoll. His name came from the gruesome means by which he killed the tribe - each of them had their left hand chopped off with the same handaxe used to maim Hatchet and remains attached to this day.

Hatchet is a quiet, calculating mercenary and his accomplishments have reached many ears. He carries no preference for one side over another and has taken on work for gnolls after his scarred history - he knew the risks of his particular line of work when he started and when he does refer to his missing hand (which is not often), it's simply "an industry hazard."

Six weeks ago, Hatchet was approached by an eladrin family after he successfully retrieved a precious ritual component from a human baron... by getting arrested and breaking out of prison with the component. Relating Key's plight at the hands of the Faithful of Anamupet, the merc accepted the job and quickly learned of Stump and the Harad'adak of Bloomten.



Hatchet Level 4 Solo Skirmisher

XP 875

Medium natural humanoid (human)

Initiative +5 **Senses** Perception +9

HP 224; **Bloodied** 112

AC 22, **Fortitude** 18, **Reflex** 19, **Will** 18

Saving Throws +5

Speed 5

Action Points 1

⊕ **Double Strike** (standard; at-will) • **Weapon**

+10 vs AC; 1d8+5 damage

Secondary Attack: +10 vs AC; 1d6+5 damage

‡ **Return the Favor** (immediate interrupt, when a flanking opponent misses) • **Weapon**

+8 vs AC; 1d4+4 damage

Secondary Attack: +7 vs Reflex; 2d4+4 damage

↵ **Fury of Swings** (standard; encounter) • **Thunder, Weapon**

Close burst 1; +10 vs AC; 2d8+7 damage plus 2 thunder damage

↵ **Wink** (minor; encounter) • **Gaze**

Close blast 3; +10 vs Will; target is marked

Violent Thrash (immediate reaction, when bloodied; encounter)

Can use either Double Strike or Fury of Swings.

Sliced Escape

Hatchet reduces the target's speed by 2 with opportunity attacks.

Unaligned **Languages** Common, Elven, Giant

Skills Athletics +9, Acrobatics +10, Nature +8, Intimidate +7

Str 16 (+5) **Dex** 14 (+4) **Wis** 12 (+3)

Con 14 (+4) **Int** 10 (+2) **Cha** 11 (+2)

Equipment chainmail, longsword (w/scabbard), handaxe (attached), adventurer's pack, brown cloak

Jarod Highwater **Level 4 Elite Soldier**
Medium natural humanoid (human) **XP 350**

Initiative +9 **Senses** Perception +10
HP 110; **Bloodied** 55
AC 21 (24 with shield), **Fortitude** 20, **Reflex** 20, **Will** 18
Saving Throws +2
Speed 6

Action Points 1

⊕ **Greatsword** (standard; at-will) • **Weapon**
+12 vs AC; 1d10+5 damage

↘ **Longbow** (standard; at-will) • **Weapon**
Range 20/40; +10 vs AC; 1d10 damage

Divine Challenge (minor; at-will) • **Divine, Radiant**
Close burst 5; target is marked and suffers 10 radiant damage if he attacks another target than Jarod

Lay on Hands (minor; at-will) • **Divine, Healing**
Grants a healing surge to a target he touches.

Arcing Smite (standard; encounter) • **Divine, Weapon**
+10 vs AC; 1d10+5 damage and target is dazed

Divine Strength (minor; encounter) • **Divine**
Personal; +5 to damage on next attack

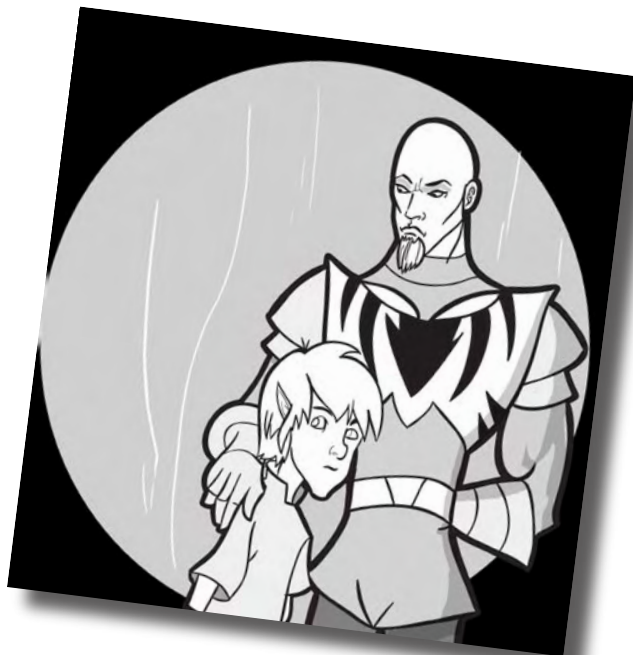
Anamupet's Gift (immediate reaction, when reduced to 10 hit points or less; daily) • **Teleportation**
Jarod is teleported to the Temple of Anamupet; must have access to the holy symbol of Anamupet.

Lawful good **Languages** Common, Draconic
Skills Nature +8, Religion +5

Str 16 (+5) **Dex** 15 (+4) **Wis** 14 (+4)

Con 16 (+5) **Int** 13 (+3) **Cha** 18 (+6)

Equipment hide armour, greatsword, longbow, 40 arrows, *holy symbol of Anamupet* +1



Jarod Highwater and Key

Jarod was summoned to the life of devotion from an early age. While he and his older brother Jacob shared their father's passion for swordplay and the military, young Jarod sought out more and attended temple with his mother frequently. When she fell ill during the winter months, Jarod never left her bedside and prayed to the gods. Her sudden revival gave Jarod cause to believe his words were heard and sought out the missionary's life.

His two worlds collided when Jarod's father, a tax collector, was ambushed by orcs and murdered. Returning to his homeland, Jarod took up arms with his brother and tracked the orcs down, killing them all. From there, he could no longer deny his skill with both the sword and his link to the gods - he became a paladin.

While on reprieve at a temple, Jarod discovered a long buried scroll in their archives detailing the Door of Anamupet and the history of the forgotten god of evolution. After his inquiries led to harsh punishment, Jarod had a dream in which Anamupet appeared before him as a man with a pig's head and angelic wings beckoning him to follow his instincts. Jarod stole the scroll and set out to rebuild the Faithful of Anamupet.

In his early days of building up the Faithful's numbers, the paladin encountered an orphanage battered by low supplies and an incessant troll problem. After dispatching the trolls, Jarod saw young Key in the background aglow with an aura of brilliant, everchanging hues. Jarod adopted the young eladrin boy and took him under his wing. Key's eladrin mother had been killed by the trolls and the infant was found covered in her blood, hiding behind a tree. Upon further study, Jarod came to believe the boy was destined to lead the Faithful to their propriety - the Temple of Anamupet.

Jarod is a commanding and direct leader of his people. He tells no lies and prefers followers with free will than disillusionment. Despite his best attempts, Key remains silent and distant though he respects the paladin and his Faithful entourage, taking on his role with a mixture of pride and confusion.

Key **Level 1 Minion**
Small fey humanoid **XP -**

Initiative +0 (Key acts on the same initiative as an adjacent ally) **Senses** Perception +1; low-light vision
HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion
AC 10, **Fortitude** 9, **Reflex** 10, **Will** 11
Speed 4

⊕ **Shin Kick** (standard; at-will)
+2 vs Reflex; 1 damage and target is slowed for one round

Step of Anamupet (move; encounter) • **Teleportation**
Key can teleport 10 squares.

Unaligned **Languages** Common

Str 6 (-2) **Dex** 10 (+0) **Wis** 12 (+1)

Con 8 (-1) **Int** 10 (+0) **Cha** 8 (-1)



Stump

There's an old saying in the underground: "The best way to climb to the top is on a pile of bodies." Stump has another one. "Why get your hands dirty when you could be counting coins?" While most orcs of his insignificant height and girth would have died long ago, Stump learned how to manipulate others in his tribe from an early age. Where he lacks bloodlust and skill with a weapon, he excels in greed and plotting. When he was suspected of killing the chieftain, Stump fled and sought out riches amongst others and soon found himself in the employ of the Fallen Shadows, an assassin's guild with a need for creatures who knew how to get things. Displaying incredible resourcefulness for an orc, Stump (that is his birth name - he keeps it as a reminder of his accomplishments) was given an opportunity to stake out a career amongst the Harad'adak shortly after they conquered Bloomten. Never one to do only what he is told, Stump soon learned of the Faithful and their mission and thought a portal to the Feyrealm would lead to his next step up.

Stump is just as disgusting and vile as he looks but that crusted layer of filth hides a devious mind. In truth, he hates two kinds of people: those who are taller than him and those with more power. While he might not be able to take their size (yet), he has plenty of ambition to seize their power.

Bloomten Orc Minions

If you don't mind the smell, you too can have your very own orc minions! PCs are granted access to a pair of orc minions apiece at the end of Chapter Three: Reclamation - use the stats provided below for any players interested in this minor advantage.

Bloomten Orc Minion Level 1 Minion Medium natural humanoid (orc) XP 25

Initiative +0 **Senses** Perception +2; low-light vision
HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion
AC 16, **Fortitude** 14, **Reflex** 11, **Will** 10
Speed 6

⊕ **Bash** (standard; at-will) • **Weapon**
+4 vs AC; 1d6+2 damage

Evil **Languages** Giant
Str 15 (+2) **Dex** 10 (+0) **Wis** 10 (+0)
Con 14 (+2) **Int** 8 (-1) **Cha** 9 (-1)

Equipment assorted weapons (clubs, short swords, spears)

Stump Level 7 Controller Medium natural humanoid XP 300

Initiative +3 **Senses** Perception +5; low-light vision
HP 79; **Bloodied** 39
AC 20, **Fortitude** 18, **Reflex** 16, **Will** 20
Speed 4

☞ **Wand of Magic Missiles** (standard; at-will)

• **Arcane, Force, Implement**

Range 10; +12 vs Reflex; 2d4 force damage

⊕ **Short Sword** (standard; at-will) • **Poison, Weapon**
+10 vs AC; 1d6 damage and 1 ongoing poison (save ends)

☞ **Wand Blast** (standard; encounter) • **Arcane, Force, Implement**

Close blast 5; +12 vs Reflex; 2d6 damage

Secondary Attack: +8 vs Fortitude; target is dazed (save ends)

Evil **Languages** Common, Giant

Skills Bluff +10, Diplomacy +10, Intimidate +5, Thievery +5

Str 10 (+3) **Dex** 8 (+2) **Wis** 15 (+5)

Con 12 (+4) **Int** 17 (+6) **Cha** 16 (+6)

Equipment padded armour, wand of magic missiles, short sword

Magic Items and Special Equipment

The Temple of Anamupet and its Faithful have crafted more than bizarre creatures and half-breeds. In their heyday, the Faithful were magnificent artificers of both magical and mundane items far beyond the reach of even dwarves, elves, and most races of the Known World or beyond. This section provides new magic items and items of particular interest available for discover in this adventures. Two items in particular, the darkbow and the flare wand, are unique inventions crafted by the ancient Faithful and do not function as typical magic items.

Darkbow

Level 1

Dipped in dark ochre, this bow helps conceal its user in darkness before he can fire a shot.

Lvl 1 150 gp

Weapon: Any bow

Property: While holding a darkbow in your hands, you gain a +2 item bonus to Stealth checks.

Flare Wand

Level 1

A stubby shaft of wood sparkling in the moonlight, this wand launches a white flare into the sky.

Wondrous Item 200 gp

Power (Consumable): The flare wand launches a single white flare up to 200 feet and explodes in a burst visible up to 1 mile away. It provides bright light for 3 rounds before fading away.

Holy Symbol of Anamupet

Level 3+

A medallion adorned with a six-armed dragon and four wings returns its wearer to the Temple.

Lvl 3 +1 680 gp Lvl 18 +4 85,000 gp
Lvl 8 +2 3,400 gp Lvl 23 +5 425,000 gp
Lvl 13 +3 17,000 gp Lvl 28 +6 2,125,000 gp

Implement (Holy Symbol)

Enhancement: Attack rolls and damage rolls

Critical: +1d6 damage per plus

Power (Daily * Teleportation): Move Action.

You can teleport to the Temple of Anamupet by spending a healing surge so long as you have been there before.

Maul of the Bulette

Level 4+

The head of this massive hammer is carved to look like the charging brow of a bulette.

Lvl 4 +1 840 gp Lvl 19 +4 105,000 gp
Lvl 9 +2 4,200 gp Lvl 24 +5 525,000 gp
Lvl 14 +3 21,000 gp Lvl 29 +6 2,625,000 gp

Weapon: Any hammer

Enhancement: Attack rolls and damage rolls

Critical: +1d6 thunder damage per plus (+1d12 thunder damage per plus against prone targets)

Power (Daily): Standard Action. You create a close burst 3 of difficult terrain on any natural terrain (e.g. soil). Any target attempting to leave the burst must make a saving throw or fall prone.

Level 14 or 19: Close blast 5

Level 24 or 29: Close blast 7

Full Plate of Anamupet

Level 3+

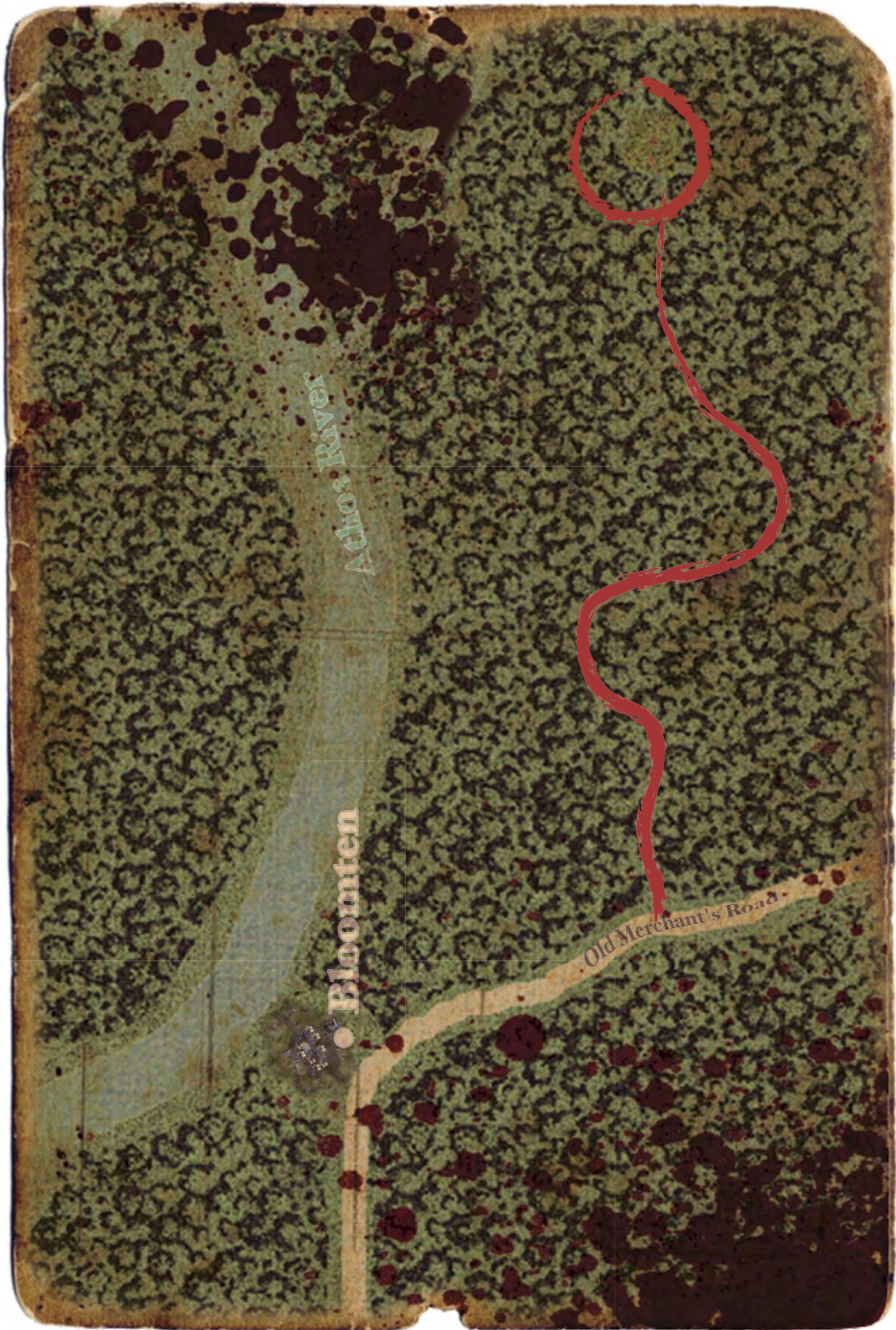
Gleaming plates of steel emblazoned with the multiple arms of Anamupet's dragon.

Lvl 3 +1 680 gp Lvl 18 +4 85,000 gp
Lvl 8 +2 3,400 gp Lvl 23 +5 425,000 gp
Lvl 13 +3 17,000 gp Lvl 28 +6 2,125,000 gp

Armor: Plate

Enhancement: AC

Property: When you use a healing power granting bonus hit points or temporary hit points on any Faithful of Anamupet, roll twice and use the highest result.



Athos River

● Bloomten

Old Merchant's Road

This is your Character Introduction card. Keep it to yourself and don't let other players see it. If you complete the bonus objective by the end of this adventure, you gain bonus XP.

Broke and down to your last coppers and stuck in a dead-end port town, you picked some pockets and swiped a ticket for a wagon headed through Harrington Woods. Taking the ride for yourself, you quickly engaged in conversation with some of the other passengers and heard about work in a town called Bloomten. It might not be much, but having some clink is better than none.

Bonus XP: The ticket was originally purchased by someone named "Thug." If you are able to successfully pretend to be this "Thug" until the end of the adventure, you gain a 200 XP bonus. This includes the other players.

This is your Character Introduction card. Keep it to yourself and don't let other players see it. If you complete the bonus objective by the end of this adventure, you gain bonus XP.

Spell components are hard to come by and some are more disgusting than others. You've been hired by a wizard called Fisdan to retrieve "orc amber," a unique material crafted by ancient orcs. Word has it that an orc named Stump in the town of Bloomten has a piece he's willing to sell but Fisdan needs this kept quiet - orc amber is illegal in many kingdoms as it's a crucial element in many necromantic rituals.

Bonus XP: If you can negotiate with Stump for his piece of orc amber without any of the other players knowing about it, you'll gain a 200 XP bonus for your troubles. There is one condition: you must negotiate with Stump while the other players are present. No emails or outside communication will qualify.

This is your Character Introduction card. Keep it to yourself and don't let other players see it. If you complete the bonus objective by the end of this adventure, you gain bonus XP.

Three weeks ago, you were hired by a blacksmith by the name of Ural looking for information on his daughter's whereabouts. During your research, you've come to believe she's joined with a cult calling themselves the Faithful camped just a couple of days outside of Bloomten. Ural can't pay much but if you can get a message to her that her mother's very sick and convince her to come home, he'll offer his services to you free of charge. Her name is Bethany dos'Ural.

Bonus XP: If you can find Bethany in the Faithful camp and tell her about her mother, you'll gain a 200 XP bonus. However, it's best if none of the other Faithful know about this as they might get a bit defensive about having one of their members leaving so you'll only get this bonus if you can sneak her out of the Faithful camp without anyone else knowing.

This is your Character Introduction card. Keep it to yourself and don't let other players see it. If you complete the bonus objective by the end of this adventure, you gain bonus XP.

Curse the dwarves and their magnificent ale! It's gotten you nothing but trouble and now you've piled a big heap of it on your back. Seems that you made some promise of a ring to some barmaid back in town and when you woke up with a blank slate for a brain, she got rather pissed and threatened to get her father... the Town Marshall. Now you've got one week to bring her back something pretty before she unleashes her father on you... and he finds out about your line of work and that nasty incident with the cleric by the docks. Maybe that job in Bloomten can help out.

Bonus XP: You must swipe a single piece of treasure (jewelry, gems, etc.) without the other players knowing and gain a 200 XP bonus. If the other mercs find out you're stealing booty for a girl, they'll never let you forget.

This is your Character Introduction card. Keep it to yourself and don't let other players see it. If you complete the bonus objective by the end of this adventure, you gain bonus XP.

Who knew that guy from the tavern would have such a soft spine? When you woke up from a drunken haze, you seem to recall snapping some guy's neck and the fact that local lawmen are looking for you after waking up behind old barrels at an abandoned mill solidifies that. Needing a way out of town fast, you caught the first wagon out. Just your luck, it's headed to some craphole called Bloomten and everyone else on board is looking for some dirty work there. Sounds fun!

Bonus XP: The best thing to do right now is lay low and make sure no one recognizes you just yet. If you complete this adventure without using your real name or mercenary tag (see page 6 of the adventure), you'll get a 200 XP bonus for your troubles.

This is your Character Introduction card. Keep it to yourself and don't let other players see it. If you complete the bonus objective by the end of this adventure, you gain bonus XP.

Hobgoblins make you sick so when an eladrin calling himself Bowmaker offered to pay off your gambling debts in exchange for killing just one hobgoblin, it was a hard offer to refuse. This one in particular calls itself Retch and works as a personal bodyguard for an orc named Stump in Bloomten. You've found yourself a wagon headed there and caught a ride with some mercs looking for work. Looks like you've caught yourself a two-fer.

Bonus XP: If you kill the hobgoblin bodyguard by the end of the adventure, you'll gain a 200 XP bonus. You must deal the killing blow yourself and cannot let Stump find out about this job. If you fail to complete either condition, you do not gain the XP bonus.

This is your Character Introduction card. Keep it to yourself and don't let other players see it. If you complete the bonus objective by the end of this adventure, you gain bonus XP.

You are a very devout follower of your god and that's a bit rare in your line of work - not too many mercs pray to a higher power. You had a dream three nights ago about a bronze statue of a winged horse buried under the rubble of a church and its been haunting you ever since. So when a cleric approached you with a ticket to Bloomten and a request to retrieve the bronze statue of a winged horse from his old church that was burned to the ground by orcs, there was no denying how destined this was.

Bonus XP: The statue is buried under the altar inside the church. If you can retrieve it and complete the adventure without any orcs in Bloomten knowing you took it, you gain a 200 XP bonus.

This is your Character Introduction card. Keep it to yourself and don't let other players see it. If you complete the bonus objective by the end of this adventure, you gain bonus XP.

Two months ago, you stole a gold ring from a baron's chambers and its cursed you ever since. There isn't a single fence who'll buy it because of its personalized markings - everyone will know it's the baron's ring! The bounty on your head is too high to be ignored for long (last you heard, it was at 500 gold) and you need to dump this ring fast!

Bonus XP: If you can plant this ring on another PC by the end of the adventure, you'll gain a 200 XP bonus. The catch is that this character cannot find the ring before the end of the adventure or else this XP is null and void.

Character Introduction



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Character Introduction



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