

RISING SHADOWS

Bloodlust tempered

D&D
**ADVENTURERS
LEAGUE**

CCC-BMG-moon5-3

stephen rowe

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BLOODLUST TEMPERED



With the marauders gone, peace returns to northern Alaron, but somebody brought the reavers across the straits of Moonshae to Alaron. They need to be stopped before the recent troubles become nothing more than the vanguard of something worse.

Part 3 of the *Tides of Blood* Trilogy, set in the Moonshae Isles, and brought to you by Baldman Games.

A 4-Hour D&D Adventurers League Adventure for 5th–10th Level Characters.

By Stephen Rowe

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Introduction

Welcome to *MOON5-3 Bloodlust Tempered*, a D&D Adventurers League™ adventure, part of the official D&D Adventurers League™ organized play system, the *Rising Shadows*™ storyline season, and the *Tides of Blood* trilogy.

In this adventure, the characters infiltrate the Guardians of the North's stronghold, a fortress-temple built upon a desolate, storm-weathered island.

This adventure is designed for **three to seven 5th–10th level characters** and is optimized for **five characters with an average party level (APL) of 8**. Characters outside this level range cannot participate in this adventure.

Adjusting This Adventure

This adventure provides suggestions in making adjustments for smaller or larger groups, characters of higher or lower levels, and characters that are otherwise a bit more powerful than the adventure is optimized for. You're not bound to these adjustments; they're here for your convenience.

To figure out whether you should consider adjusting the adventure, add up the total levels of all the characters and divide the total by the number of characters (rounding .5 or greater up; .4 or less down). This is the group's APL. To approximate the **party strength** for the adventure, consult the following table.

Determining Party Strength

| Party Composition | Party Strength |
|----------------------------------|----------------|
| 3-4 characters, APL less than | Very weak |
| 3-4 characters, APL equivalent | Weak |
| 3-4 characters, APL greater than | Average |
| 5 characters, APL less than | Weak |
| 5 characters, APL equivalent | Average |
| 5 characters, APL greater than | Strong |
| 6-7 characters, APL less than | Average |
| 6-7 characters, APL equivalent | Strong |
| 6-7 characters, APL greater than | Very strong |

Some encounters may include a sidebar that offers suggestions for certain party strengths. If a particular recommendation is not offered or appropriate for your group, you don't have to make adjustments.

Before Play at the Table

Before you start play, consider the following:

- Read through the adventure, taking notes of anything you'd like to highlight or remind yourself of while running the adventure, such as a way you'd like to portray an NPC or a tactic you'd like to use in a combat. Familiarize yourself with the adventure's appendices and handouts.
- Gather any resources you'd like to use to aid you in running this adventure—such as notecards, a DM screen, miniatures, and battlemaps.
- Ask the players to provide you with relevant character information, such as name, race, class, and level; passive Wisdom (Perception), and anything specified as notable by the adventure (such as backgrounds, traits, flaws, etc.)

Playing the Dungeon Master

You have the most important role—facilitating the enjoyment of the game for the players. You provide the narrative and bring the words on these pages to life.

To facilitate this, keep in mind the following:

You're Empowered. Make decisions about how the group interacts with the adventure; adjusting or improvising is encouraged, so long as you maintain the adventure's spirit. This doesn't allow you to implement house rules or change those of the Adventurers League, however; they should be consistent in this regard.

Challenge Your Players. Gauge the experience level of your **players** (not the characters), try to feel out (or ask) what they like in a game, and attempt to deliver the experience they're after. Everyone should have the opportunity to shine.

Keep the Adventure Moving. When the game starts to get bogged down, feel free to provide hints and clues to your players so they can attempt to solve puzzles, engage in combat, and roleplay interactions without getting too frustrated over a lack of information. This gives players "little victories" for figuring out good choices from clues. Watch for stalling—play loses momentum when this happens. At the same time, make sure that the players don't finish too early; provide them with a full play experience.

Adventure Primer

“The harder a man feels compelled to be, the weaker his ego is.”
—Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie

Adventure Background

When a small tribe of gnolls began pillaging territory routinely sacked by reavers, the Northlanders decided to remove the competition. As the last bestial warrior fell, a magical ring of yellowed teeth appeared on his hand. The first reaver to claim it was cut down by the second, beginning an hours-long bloodbath as the Northlanders fought over the prize. **Skorri Boarson** emerged as the victor and sole survivor.

The sentient ring contained **Korasch**, an ancient fiend who served the demon lord Yeenoghu. Korasch was unfamiliar with humans, but Skorri’s lust for violence impressed him. The two formed a pact: Skorri gained supernatural power, and the Korasch gained insight into human nature.

At Korasch’s direction, Skorri started the **Guardians of the North** cult. Under the guise of a sect of Tempus worshippers, the cult promotes traditional Northlander values over Ffolk cultural encroachment. They claim to be about ideals, not ancestry, though they clearly assume Northlander culture is superior. The authorities suspect there’s more to the cult than it lets on, but they don’t have enough evidence to confront The Guardians of the North directly.

Location and NPC Summary

The following NPCs and locations feature prominently in this adventure.

Anvil. This small, rocky island is the power center for the Guardians of the North. They’ve claimed a fortress-temple constructed long ago by priests of the war god Tempus for their base of operations.

Korasch (KORE-ash). The powerful demonic spirit possessing Skorri’s ring of mind-shielding. He functions as a direct conduit to the demon lord Yeenoghu.

Skorri Boarson (SCORE-ree BOR-son). The leader of the Guardians of the North is a superficially charming narcissist. He created the cult to feed his ego-driven ambitions.

Yeenoghu (YEE-no-GOO). Also called the Gnoll Lord and the Beast of Butchery, the demon lord Yeenoghu delights in hopelessness and savagery. He pushes his servants to ever-greater atrocities, and only the strongest of them survive.

The cult’s toxic culture appeals to disillusioned youths seeking a sense of belonging or an outlet for unfocused fury. Within an old fortress-temple on the **Island of Anvil**, new acolytes are taught they are strong, but never strong enough. They learn their enemies are weak, but numerous and powerful. They’re told they’ve joined a family but are shown only disdain. Some find out too late there’s no escape. Either their minds become twisted by the cult’s hateful lies, or they become food for Skorri’s hyenas.

Series

MOON5-3 Bloodlust Tempered is the third part in the *Tides of Blood* trilogy. In the trilogy, the characters deal with consequences resulting from Skorri’s alliance with a giantess from the Isle of Oman.

In **MOON5-1 Bloodlust Rising**, the characters learn that a large group of gnolls with demon allies are raiding the jarldom of Gnarhelm. In **MOON5-2 Bloodlust Contained**, the characters deal with the leaders of the gnoll horde, the fomorian shieldmaiden Keolinn Ni Brianin and her lieutenants. In doing so, the characters discover the true culprit behind the trouble on the isle of Alaron.

This adventure assumes that the characters have gathered significant evidence against Skorri by playing both **MOON5-1** and **MOON5-2**. If they haven’t, then send the characters to Anvil to investigate the validity of disturbing rumors and—if the rumors prove true—to bring Skorri back to answer for his actions.

Adventure Overview

The adventure is broken down into four parts:

Part 1. The characters are asked to infiltrate the Guardians of the North cult and arrest their leader, Skorri Boarson. They board a ship captained by a bribed and blackmailed traitor to the cult. They are attacked by the spirits of cursed sea dryads sent by Skorri sends to test newcomers.

Part 2. The characters arrive on the island. They meet other acolytes and might find clues while delivering the ship’s supplies throughout the fortress-temple.

Part 3. The cult seeks to indoctrinate the acolytes. There are many paths to gather evidence and undermine Skorri, but it’s difficult to right every wrong.

Part 4. If the characters don’t confront Skorri on their own terms, the leadership of the cult eventually exposes the traitors in their midst. The balance of power in the inevitable conflict depends on the character’s prior actions.

Adventure Hooks

The basic dogma of the cult is public knowledge. Give the players **Appendix 3A**. Allow the players time to read the handouts and familiarize themselves with what their characters know of Skorri and The Guardians of the North.

The characters board the *Justly Scorned*, a ship carrying the fresh batch of acolytes to Anvil, at the town of Gnarhelm (in the jarldom of the same name). For a map of northern Alaron, see **Appendix 1A**. The Isle of Anvil is purposefully not marked on the map to keep its location vague. If the characters want to buy supplies, prepare different spells, or make other preparations before boarding the ship, allow them to do so within reason. Gnarhelm is a small town, but the characters have the backing of the local authorities.

Swift Request. Northern Alaron repelled a gnoll horde not too long ago. Haldis “Swift Feet” Ulfsdottir, daughter of the Jarl of Gnarhelm, believes the Guardians of the North are responsible, and wishes their leader brought back for a fair trial. A well-placed bribe or threat gains the characters passage to the island under the guise of prospective acolytes. Give the players **Appendix 3B**.

Giant’s Spite. At the end of *MOON5-2*, Keolinn Ni Brianin might have betrayed Skorri to save herself, giving the characters important information. If she died, she leaves behind a note to set her murderers after Skorri. Give the players **Appendix 3C**.



Part 1: Welcoming Committee

Estimated Duration: 60 minutes

The adventure begins on board the *Justly Scorned*, a small sailing vessel transporting supplies and new acolytes to Anvil.

A. Justly Scorned

Haldis Ulfsdottir has given Captain **Dag Colden** amnesty and a bribe to ensure he transports and vouches for the characters. The voyage will take a few days, giving characters ample opportunity to make a plan for apprehending Skorri, ask questions, and meet a prospective acolyte.

Dag Colden is a former Northland reaver and now one of the Guardians of the North. However, he cares only for his own self-interests. The ship's crew are three ex-reaver **bandits**, all nominally loyal to Dag.

The characters are joined onboard by **Ingrid Osmond**, an acolyte desperately hoping to find redemption on Anvil. Ingrid is tormented by nightmares, where the people she's killed arise from the sea to confront her. She sees these manifestations of sorrow and guilt as a weakness, and a betrayal of her proud Northlander heritage.

For a map of the ship, see **Appendix 1B**.

Developments

Ingrid is lonely and deeply depressed. Any character attempting to connect with the distressed acolyte can befriend her, though she remains cautious in revealing her past shame.

Roleplaying Dag (DAG)

Dag is a grizzled, half-elven man with deeply-lined tan skin, short-trimmed gray hair, and care-worn clothing. He is supremely cynical, and truly imagines everyone else is equally self-interested. Though Dag is technically a member of the Guardians of the North, he was never really a believer. He's not evil, but Dag is always willing to turn a blind eye if there's profit in it.

Quote: "People only act noble because it makes it easier to lie later."

Roleplaying Ingrid (eng-GRID)

Ingrid is an intimidating Northlander human woman with fire-red hair, a too-intense stare, and an axe-scar running from her nose to her left ear. Ingrid hates herself, believing she's a worthless deserter who shamed her ancestors. She doesn't understand her desertion was driven by compassion and regret rather than fear. Ingrid believes the Guardians are her last hope and dreads an uncertain future.

Quote: "Stories lie. They're all gold and glory, not blood and begging."

B. Renegotiation

As an optional interaction encounter, Dag might try squeezing the characters for more money by threatening to turn them over to The Guardians of the North. However, Dag can't risk Skorri discovering his betrayal. With a successful DC 15 Wisdom (Insight) check, the characters can logically reason that Dag's threats are empty—he's actually too scared of Skorri to double-cross the characters.

Developments

Dag's threats can be ignored or turned back on him. A successful DC 15 Charisma (Intimidation) scares Dag into betraying the cult further by sharing stories about the cult leader's time as a brutal Northland reaver.

"We were both reavers, but Skorri had a bad reputation—even by our standards. I heard once he beat someone's skull in for laughs and bit another reaver's face off.

There were worse tales. It got whispered he went gnoll-hunting with most of his ship's crew, but only he came back. They said he was covered in blood—like he'd been swimming in it."

If the characters succeed by 5 or more, Dag becomes more afraid of them than Skorri and is determined to gain their favor. He warns the characters that the cult tests new acolytes with ghosts who guard the island. Usually he and his crew abandon ship to avoid the danger, leaving the new acolytes to face the threat alone. However, he's willing to stick it out with them to prove his loyalty. He also becomes willing to testify against Skorri at his trial in Gnarnhelm later.

C. Abandon Ship

Dag knows what's coming and has no desire to face it. Plus, he knows the cult reimburses for any damage to the ship, even if he inflates the cost of repairs.

It has been a short voyage aboard the *Justly Scorned*, but the island of Anvil is now in sight. The shore is ringed by sharp rocks and thick, floating seaweed. The gray walls of the Guardian's temple-fortress taking up most of the land.

Suddenly, without explanation, the crew starts loading themselves into the only available row boats.

If questioned, Dag gives a flippant and well-rehearsed response, saying any "real Northlander" would take the wheel without a second thought. If pressed or threatened, he explains he's only following Skorri's orders and can't raise suspicions. However, the characters can easily tell Dag and his crew are terrified and want to get far away from the ship as possible.

Dag can be convinced to stay with the promise of money or favors and a successful DC 20 Charisma (Persuasion) check, or threats and a successful DC 20 Charisma (Intimidation) check. If the characters already turned Dag against Skorri, they automatically succeed. However, the rest of his crew departs, no matter the threat or offered reward.

Soon after the crew is left behind, the weather rapidly worsens in a clearly unnatural manner.

The overcast sky darkens ominously in mere minutes, showing all the signs of a terrible storm's approach. Sudden, harsh winds whip the sails and ropes. The waves begin to climb, beating against the ship's hull, causing it to lurch violently back and forth. Lightning flashes through the clouds, illuminating the island—and the dangerous jutting rocks ahead.

The storm is of unnatural origin and appears out of nowhere with impossible swiftness. The characters must take control of the ship or risk being slammed into the rocks surrounding the island.

One character can grab the ship's wheel to steer. Sailing is a DC 15 Strength check with Vehicle Proficiency (water). Other characters can use the Help action to give advantage on this check by potentially working the rigging or navigating through the rocks from the crow's nest. Characters with the sailor or similar background automatically succeed. If Dag remains on board, he can sail the ship and automatically succeeds.

Success steers the ship back on course while avoiding the jutting, shallow reef. Failure causes the ship to slam into the rocks, damaging the main (lower) deck and causing it to slowly flood. Everyone on board must succeed on a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw or take 1d6 bludgeoning damage and be knocked prone as the sargassum spirits attack.

D. Sargassum Spirits

The magical storm's winds draw the ship closer to the island, whether or not the characters avoid the rocks on the way.

General Features

The following general features pertain to the *Justly Scorned*.

Terrain. The restless and storm-driven ocean crashes against dark, rocky islands. Thick, green-brown sargassum (seaweed) grows everywhere.

Weather. The weather begins with stiff winds and an overcast sky. Within minutes, the sky darkens, the wind howls fiercely, and large waves threaten to throw the vessel against sharp rocks.

Light. The overcast sky is filled with scattered lightning that provides dim light. The water is murky (10 feet visibility).

Smells and Sounds. The sargassum stinks like rotting plants and dead fish. The air begins to smell of ozone as lightning crashes within the clouds.

Seaweed. As long as the sargassum spirits are attacking, the patches of seaweed around the ship function as if under the effect of the *entangle* spell.

The massive brown-green sargassum floating on the surface ripples with the storm's crashing waves. The ship begins to slow as it enters the thick growth, and a powerful stench of rotting plants and fish fills the air.

Translucent spirits fly effortlessly up through the water and weeds. Their limbs and necks appear to be broken at uncomfortable angles, as if purposefully snapped. The spirits begin singing out in a fey tongue, but instead of being muffled by the storm, their sorrowful voices weave together with the wind and waves into a mournful harmony.

The ship is entrapped and attacked by three **sargassum spirits** (treat as **wraiths** as modified in the statblocks). Each of the spirits commands three **reef sharks** (nine total). The spirits are under orders to humble (not kill) the prospective acolytes.

Any character with a passive Perception of 15 or higher can see the seaweed is growing and moving like a living creature (as if from the *plant growth* and *entangle* spells). If the vessel was damaged by the rocks, anyone on the main deck can automatically see the plants entering through the cracks as the ship takes on water.

Adjusting this Encounter

Here are some suggestions for adjusting this encounter, according to your group. These are not cumulative.

Very Weak or Weak: Reduce to two **sargassum spirits**, each commanding three **reef sharks** (six total).

Strong: Increase the **sargassum spirit's** hit points to 100.

Very Strong: Increase the number of **sargassum spirits** to four. Increase each sargassum spirits' hit points to 100, their attacks with Innate Spellcasting and Life Drain are +7 to hit, and their save DCs with Innate Spellcasting, Life Drain, and Fey Charm are DC 15.

In addition, each command three **hunter sharks** instead of reef sharks (twelve total).

Tricks of the Trade

Consider the following guidance when determining how to best run this combat encounter.

Dag. Dag is a good option for groups with no sailing ability. If Dag is aboard the ship, he automatically succeeds on the check each round to mitigate the weather hazards. If a character uses the Help action to aid him, it functions as if Dag had succeeded on the check by 5 or more.

Ingrid. The NPC acolyte journeying with the characters is a formidable warrior, but the spirits specifically dredge up her trauma. She is unlikely to be of much assistance in direct battle but might lend assistance in other ways. This could include using the Help action, dragging unconscious characters to safety, or diving into the water after individuals at risk of drowning.

Sargassum Spirits. One of the spirits is concentrating on *control weather*. The other spirits activate their innate magic to trap the ship in seaweed. Due to their nature, they try to stay adjacent to the water or weeds. They try luring characters into the water and restraining sargassum. The spirits then float in to attack restrained characters with Life Drain. The spirits flee if their hit points are reduced to 20 hp or less.

Sharks. The sharks work in packs of three, moving in to defend the sargassum spirits or attack characters in the water. The sharks fight until killed.

Fey Spirits

A character who is proficient in the Nature skill can tell the spirits were once aquatic dryads who defended reefs instead of forests. A character proficient in Religion can see they've been cursed with a unique form of incorporeal undeath. Any character damaged by one of the sargassum spirits can automatically tell they are being forced to fight against their will.

A character succeeding on a DC 15 Intelligence (Nature) check as an action recalls "The Tale of the Ocean's Sisters" – a folk tale describing how the dryads became the sargassum spirits. If a character can hear the song and understands Elvish or Sylvan, they have advantage on this check. Characters with the *touched by the fey*, or a similar fey-focused background automatically succeeds. If successful, give the player **Appendix 3D**.

Any character can attempt to communicate with the sargassum spirits in Elvish or Sylvan as an action. A successful DC 15 Charisma (Persuasion) check convinces the spirits that the character can be their ally against Skorri. This check has advantage if a character has a strong connection to the fey (such as the *Touched by the Fey* background). If the character or their allies have killed any of the spirits, the check has disadvantage.

If a character successfully appeals to the sargassum spirits, the fey move away from the water and weeds. This gives them disadvantage to attacks but doesn't violate their orders. If one is still concentrating on the *control weather* spell effect, she ceases concentrating.

Weather Hazards

The storm causes the following hazards.

Aloft. A character in the rigging or crow's nest might lose their grip and be thrown by the wind. Climbing up or down requires a successful DC 15 Strength (Athletics) check with disadvantage. On a failed check, they must succeed on a DC 10 Strength saving throw or be thrown into the water. On a successful save they're instead knocked prone on the deck below and take 14 (4d6) bludgeoning damage from the fall.

Decks. The storm causes the ship to rock wildly, nearly tipping over at times. Either deck functions as difficult terrain. Each creature starting their turn standing on the deck must succeed on a DC 10 Strength saving throw or be moved ten feet toward one side of the ship, plus and additional ten feet if the character failed a saving throw on the previous round. The direction of this movement changes from side to side each round. Characters with the *Sailing* background have advantage on this check.

If this movement would cause characters to go over the edge of the deck, they fall into the water. As an action,

a character can secure themselves by grabbing onto ropes, the ship's wheel, or some other solid surface. A prone, restrained, or secured character automatically succeeds on the Strength saving throw. A secured character ceases being secured if they move.

Overboard. The waves repeatedly slam into anyone attempting to keep their head above water. A character succeeding on a DC 15 Strength (Athletics) check can climb up the side of the ship. A separate DC 15 Strength (Athletics) check allows a character to stay at the surface of the water. A character unable to stay at the surface of the water risks drowning.

Wheel. As an action, any character at the wheel can steady the ship with a successful DC 15 Strength (Water Vehicles) check. If the ship was damaged, this check is made with disadvantage. Other characters can use the Help action to either eliminate disadvantage or give advantage if the ship was not damaged. Characters with a sailing background have advantage on this check. A successful check removes the weather hazards for one round. A character that succeeds on the check by 5 or more can also ram the ship into one sargassum spirit or up to two reef sharks. Reef sharks struck by the ship in this manner take 14 (4d6) bludgeoning damage, and sargassum spirits take 5 (1d10) force damage.

Developments

The spirits are under orders to humble (not kill) the prospective acolytes. If the characters seem outmatched or overwhelmed, they retreat back into the ocean's depths, with the storm ending soon after.

If the sargassum spirit concentrating on the *control weather* spell ceases concentrating, the weather hazards end one round later.

If the ship was damaged, water and seaweed seep in through the cracks. One of the sargassum spirits uses *incorporeal movement* to move through the ship's hull onto the lower deck. She waits until her sisters engage before attacking or drawing a vulnerable character into the lower deck using *thorn whip*.

After the storm ends, the characters can easily direct the ship to the island's wooden docks. The assembled cult waits on the walls above, where they've all watched the fight against the spirits.

The thick stone walls of the temple-fortress take up most of the island, with a sheer cliff to the north and a treacherous-looking stone stairway winding up from the docks to the south. Standing behind the parapets are a mix of people staring down curiously.

Atop the closest tower are three men dressed in fine armor emblazoned with the flaming sword symbol of the war-god Tempus. The obvious leader stands in shining plate, and speaks in a booming voice carrying easily over the waves.

"Welcome, Guardians! You have survived the first of many tests. Understand, there shall be no coddling on Anvil, for our mission demands strength.

"All know the North is not as it was, but many enemies profit from our land's decline. They fight without honor, and trick fools into embracing weakness. The North can take back its birthright, but it must start here, with us. I look at you all, and see heroes who would never take the Coward's Path.

For your bravery, and your wisdom, Tempus thanks you."

His words are followed by a chorus of the assembled acolytes, "And I thank Tempus!"

Part 2: The Isle of Anvil

Estimated Time: 30 minutes

The characters explore the fortress-temple on the Isle of Anvil and meet its inhabitants, thus gaining insight into how they might undermine the cult's power. The information they learn here will help shape the investigation they conduct in **Part 3**.

See **Appendix 1C** for a layout of the Isle of Anvil and **Appendices 1D, 1E, and 1F** for maps of the fortress-temple.

General Features

The fortress-temple of Anvil has the following general features:

Terrain. The floor of the building is made from large, carved stones. The walls and ceilings are composed of smaller rocks, expertly fitted together with mortar. Decorations and furnishings are mostly trophies and weaponry. Hanging banners illustrate famous battle-scenes from past wars.

Weather. The weather is mild and temperate with chilly, foggy nights.

Light. The fortress-temple has bright light during the day and dim light at night.

Smells and Sounds. Smoke from the torches and fires compete with the cloying rot-smell from the surrounding sargassum. The crashing waves can always be heard in the background.

Ceiling. Most of the fortress-temple's ceilings are 10 feet high. The great hall's ceiling (**Area D**) is 20 feet high.

Doors and Locks. The doors to **Areas G, H, and I** are always locked. **Area F** is locked at night. The doors to other areas usually remain unlocked. Unless otherwise specified, all fortress-temple locks require a successful DC 15 Dexterity check with thieves' tools to open, or a successful DC 20 Strength (Athletics) check to break. The cult leaders all have keys.

Secret Doors. Anvil contains many secret doors. Each can be opened or closed (from either side) by pressing a series of nearby stones in the correct order. A character with a passive Perception of 20 or higher automatically notices the doors. Characters performing the Search action can find a secret door with a DC 20 Wisdom (Perception) check or a DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) check. A character succeeding on the check by 5 or more also knows how to open and close the door. Otherwise, learning how to open or close a newly discovered door requires 1 minute and a successful DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) check. Once a specific

door is opened or closed, the characters can open or close the door as an action with no check necessary.

Alternately, the door's mechanism can be bypassed as an action with a successful DC 15 Dexterity check with thieves' tools, but this check must be performed each time the door is opened or closed. A secret door can also be forced and held open with a successful DC 15 Strength (Athletics) check. The door closes 1 round later if the character does not succeed on the check each round or use an object (such as a piton) to prevent it from closing.

A character wearing any of the armors engraved with Tempus' symbol (owned by Elaris, Gorn, and Skorri) can open or close any adjacent secret door in the fortress-temple as an action or bonus action with no check required. The stone blocks this abjuration school magic from detection with the detect magic spell unless the secret door is open.

Yeenoghu's Blessing

All followers of Yeenoghu on the island gain the Rampage trait. The characters can remove the blessing through their actions as discussed in **Parts 3 and 4**.

Rampage. When the cultists reduce a creature to 0 hit points with a melee attack on its turn, the cultist can take a bonus action to move up to half its speed and make a melee weapon attack.

Skorri, as the originator of the blessing, also gains the following ability as a bonus action:

Incite Rampage (Recharge 5–6). One creature Skorri can see within 30 feet of him can use its reaction to make a melee attack if it can hear Skorri and has the Rampage trait due to Yeenoghu's blessing.

Tricks of the Trade

Consider the following guidance when determining how to best run the exploration of the fortress-temple.

Foreshadow. This part allows an opportunity to provide useful clues. Characters with a high passive Perception might notice secret doors or invisible foes. Perhaps they feel drafts where there are no windows or hear strange sounds.

Guided Tour. The task of unloading and delivering the ship's supplies provides an opportunity for the characters to explore the fortress-temple and introduce the NPCs.

Show Don't Tell. While it is tempting to reveal secrets early, it can be more rewarding if everything is only hinted at initially. Try to drop clues indirectly within descriptions.

Armor of Tempus

Worshippers of Tempus sometimes denote their standing within the religion by the armor they wear (similar to a military uniform). The specific suits of armor worn by Gorn, Elaris, and Skorri were stolen from the descendants of the fortress-temple's original builders, rather than rightfully earned. Each was designed to allow the leadership to move easily through the secret passages, should the island be attacked.

The three suits of armor possessed by the cult leaders (Elaris' breastplate, Gorn's studded leather, and Skorri's platemail) all have a minor enchantment that allows the wearer to sense the structure's secret doors and open or close any of them as an action or bonus action when adjacent. This minor magic doesn't function for secret doors off the island. A character can guess at the armor's nature and purpose with a successful DC 15 Intelligence (Religion) check. A worshiper of Tempus has advantage on this check.

ARRIVAL

Two acolytes (**Ohlega Hurnisdottir** and **Terris Deepfurrow**) are sent down to introduce themselves and assist the new acolytes (the characters and Ingrid) in unloading and transporting the ship's supplies. Mundane equipment is sent to the dungeons (**Area A**), and food and ale is delivered to the kitchens (**Area F**). The cult leaders might receive a few personal items in their rooms (**Areas G, H, and I**), such as a new weapon or trophy.

Roleplaying Terris (TER-ris)

Terris is a young and handsome male dwarf, with a well-manicured, chestnut-colored beard. He goes to great lengths to cut a dashing figure, paying particular attention to his colorful clothing. Terris is friendly and charming. If the characters were successful against the spirits, he is complementary. If they fared poorly, he soothes any tattered egos with assurances that everyone faces the spirits, and most arrive half-drowned. His humor is self-deprecating to the point of occasionally revealing his depression. He is curious about the dryad's song, especially if any character understood their language.

Quote: "Sometimes the spirits sing at night from beneath the water. It is the saddest, sweetest sound."

Roleplaying Ohlega (ow-LEG-ab)

Ohlega is a towering Northlander woman, broad in the shoulder, with callouses attesting to a lifetime of hard work. She's initially cautious and shy but soon asks pointed and intelligent questions about the fight against the sargassum spirits. She is especially curious if the characters used unique tactics or magic. Answers to her questions often prompt further questions, and if the character asks her to stop, she becomes embarrassed and quiet.

Quote: "I just had the most amazing ide- ... I'm sorry. I didn't mean to interrupt."

Rumors

Ohlega and Terris are willing to answer any initial questions and share some of the following rumors and clues with new arrivals. They in turn ask the party for news from the rest of the Moonshaes.

- The sargassum spirits sometimes sing out from the ocean after sunset. Most of the acolytes find it disturbing.
- The temple is far older than the cult, and the Guardians of the North only recently claimed it. The original priests of Tempus who built it possessed impressive engineering skills and designed the structure to be an extremely defensible fortress, even when lightly manned.
- Some acolytes claim invisible apparitions lurk in the shadows. Ghost stories about the long-dead priests or their enemies are common. People who spend a long time in the dungeons claim they hear strange, haunting laughter.
- The acolytes follow a daily schedule (see **Appendix 2** for details). There are three meals a day (breakfast, lunch, and dinner). Mandatory training sessions occur in the morning and afternoon before meals. Dinner can sometimes go long if the cult leaders decide to break out a keg of ale or mead. Everyone is expected to perform one of the three (overlapping) eight-hour guard duty shifts every night.
- The rules aren't well-defined. Typically, it is simply best to do as the cult's leadership demands. Punishments include harder training, missing meals, or even getting locked up in the dungeon.
- **Elaris Havalorre** and **Gorn Zweilander** are Skorri Boarson's trusted lieutenants. They handle most of the training and punishments.

Handling Hypocrisy

The cult is inherently bigoted. They claim to be about culture, not ancestry, but clearly view Northlanders as superior. The cultists keep up appearances and never punish or belittle a character or NPC's background, gender, or race, but their leadership is always human or male and usually both. These simple paradoxes between word and deed should be obvious to the characters, but the cult's empty promises attract many gullible recruits.

Developments

Characters interacting with the Ohlega and Terris can befriend them. A successful DC 15 Charisma (Persuasion) check befriends one of the NPCs. Each NPC can also be befriended with an alternate skill check (see below). If the characters defeated the sargassum spirits, they have advantage on these checks.

Ohlega. Anyone who is patient with Ohlega's questioning befriends her with a successful DC 15 Intelligence skill check (Arcana, History, Nature, or Religion).

Terris. Anyone willing to discuss music, poetry, or other art in a non-disparaging fashion with Terris befriends him with a successful DC 15 Charisma (Performance) check.

Deception

The cult is trusting when it comes to their new recruits, all of whom are all screened before arrival. They assume the characters are genuine because Dag vouched for them. The characters shouldn't need to make Charisma (Deception) checks for routine interactions. However, outlandish lies might still require checks.

Area A. Dungeon

Despite the ominous name, the dungeon is primarily used for storage.

The lower level has a faint mildew smell and isn't well-lit. In one corner, sets of iron bars have been built into the walls and floor, resembling large cages. Sleeping mats and chamber pots are their only furnishings. On the other side are disorganized stacks of supplies.

The dungeon has dim light. There are two locked cells. A **secret door** to the east leads to the kennel (**Area B**), and a **secret door** to the west leads to the escape tunnel (**Area C**). A **secret door** in the column enters a shaft leading up to the barracks (**Area E**) and the second floor.

Any character searching the area for at least one minute and succeeding on a DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) check can tell the column is thicker than needed for support. Characters listening at the west wall can hear the ocean with a successful DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check. Characters listening at the east wall can hear strange whooping and laughter coming from the kennel (**Area B**) with a successful DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check.

Area B. Kennel

The original builders kept a hidden room set aside for monsters, which Skorri uses to his advantage.

A cacophony of bestial whooping, growling, and laughter is paired with overwhelming smells of rot, waste, and urine. Spotted hyenas are packed into iron cages, with bars set into the walls and floor. They seem starved and desperate.

The cages are filled with twelve **hyenas** Skorri plans to transform into **gnolls**. A character succeeding on a DC 15 Wisdom (Animal Handling) check can calm the starving beasts and prevent them from attacking. If a character offers at least ten pounds of meat per hyena, they have advantage on the check. This meat can be stolen from the kitchen storeroom (**Area F**).

A **secret door** to the west leads to the dungeon (**Area A**), and a **secret door** to the southwest leads to a hidden hallway with a shaft up to the great hall fireplace (**Area D**) and Skorri's room (**Area I**). A secret door in the column enters a shaft leading up to the kitchens (**Area F**) and the second floor. A pressure plate on the floor and wires in the shaft trigger a **trap**.

Development

If the hyenas are killed or fed, they can't become gnolls. If they are successfully calmed and fed, they attack Skorri if he is present when they are released.

Adjusting this Encounter

Here are some suggestions for adjusting these encounters, according to your group. These are not cumulative.

Very Weak: Reduce the number of **hyenas** (or **gnolls** if Skorri has transformed them) to six.

Weak: Reduce the number of **hyenas** (or **gnolls**) to nine.

Strong: The **hyenas** have 10 hit points each. The **gnolls** have hit points 33 each.

Very Strong: The **hyenas** have 20 hit points each and their Bite attack is +4 to hit. The **gnolls** have 33 hit points each and their Bite (or Spear, if armed) attack is +6 to hit.

Trap. Feeding Time

Complex Trap (Levels 5-10 setback threat)

The eastern secret shaft leading to the kennels has two sensitive wires crisscrossing in the path of a creature ascending or descending the wall's inset ladder. There's also a pressure plate located on the floor leading into the room. Touching the wires or plate causes the handholds to retract into the wall and the cages holding the hyenas to open.

Trigger. A creature ascending or descending the shaft without avoiding the wires or stepping onto the pressure plate triggers the trap.

Effect. When the trap is activated, all handholds within the secret shaft retract into the wall, and the cages open. Any creature within the shaft must make a successful DC 15 Strength saving throw or take falling damage and become knocked prone in the kennels. A creature between the basement and 1st floor takes 3 (1d6) bludgeoning damage, and a creature between the 1st and 2nd floors takes 10 (3d6) bludgeoning damage. The hyenas then attack any creature within the kennel on their initiative. The trap resets after one minute.

Countermeasures. A successful DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check notices the wires or pressure plate. A successful DC 10 Strength (Athletics) check when climbing up or down the shaft bypasses one wire. A character succeeding on the check by 5 or more can bypass both wires. If the wires are cut, the trap triggers, but is then disabled after it resets. The pressure plate can be easily stepped over with no check necessary.

Area C. Escape Tunnel

The original builders of the temple-fortress put in an escape tunnel as a last resort. Fearing pursuit or invasion, they set a **trap** to collapse the tunnel and hid the entrance within the dungeon's iron cell.

The rough-cut rock walls seem more like a natural cavern than the rest of the structure. Arched wooden supports are evenly set down the steep slope.

The tunnel seems to end in a flat, rock wall. This is another **secret door** which opens up on the ocean at the base of the cliff.

At the end of the tunnel are piles of bones. A successful DC 10 Intelligence (Nature) check reveals the bones are from dozens of different humanoids and are covered in

bite marks. A character succeeding on the check by 5 or more can tell the bite marks are from both hyenas and gnolls, with the same hyena's teeth changing to gnoll teeth during the meal.

Stashed close to the escape tunnel exit is a small sailboat and a few weeks' worth of rations. The boat is small enough that a single individual could sail it, but large enough to hold six or seven people in close quarters.

Trap. Collapse

Simple Trap (Levels 5-10 deadly threat)

The escape tunnel leads from the bottom of the rocky cliff-face on the northern side of the island to the western holding cell in the dungeon. Designed to be used as a last resort, the tunnel is set to collapse and prevent pursuit if either secret door at is opened incorrectly.

Trigger. A creature opening either secret door leading into the tunnel using force or attempting to bypass the normal mechanism might cause the tunnel to collapse.

Effect. Any creature in the tunnel when the trap is triggered must succeed on a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw or take 55 (10d10) bludgeoning damage, be knocked prone, and become buried in the rubble, requiring a successful DC 20 Strength (Athletics) check as an action to escape.

On a successful save, the creature takes half as much damage and doesn't fall prone or become buried. If the tunnel collapses, it requires weeks to clear out the rubble before the tunnel is usable again. A creature within the tunnel when this trap is triggered can only exit by whichever end they are closest to when it collapses.

Countermeasures. A creature within the tunnel can see the purposefully weakened and rigged reinforcements with a successful DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check. The trap is not activated if either secret door is opened properly (not being bypassed or forced open). A Dexterity check with thieves' tools can open the secret door without triggering the trap if the character succeeds on the check by 5 or more.

Development

If the characters collapse the tunnel or sabotage the sailboat, then it becomes harder for Skorri to escape the island in **Part 4**.

Characters trapped outside the fortress-temple must sneak back in or convince other acolytes to let them in. This requires a successful DC 15 Dexterity (Stealth) or Charisma (Persuasion) check. On a failed check, the character is likely to be punished.

Punishments

The cult leaders do not have set rules or penalties. This allows them to be as unfair as they like, depending on the individual and their mood. However, most harms they inflict are intended to wear down the acolyte's self-esteem or willpower. To degrade confidence, they might set an impossible or embarrassing task, such as cleaning the great hall with a toothbrush or emptying all the temple's chamber pots. To weaken an acolyte's ability to resist indoctrination, they prefer depriving them of food or sleep. The acolyte might be forced to take two or three guard duty shifts, or to sit unserved during mealtimes while everyone eats around them. The cult leaders sometimes threaten to lock people up in the dungeons, but this is usually an empty threat.

Area D. Great Hall

The great hall of the fortress-temple is a place of feasting and worship. A fireplace before Tempus' symbol serves as a practical altar and tool for roasting great hunks of meat brought in from the mainland.

The flaming sword symbol of Tempus is set into the floor of this large and open dining hall with carefully positioned and ornately colored floor tiles. Long wooden tables with benches are set out for the majority, with one smaller table and three chairs placed in a corner overlooking the room. Racks of meat roast on spits before a huge, roaring fire.

The acolytes eat every meal (breakfast, lunch, and supper) in the great hall, and it's also where the cult leaders gather everyone for any major announcement.

The fireplace conceals a **secret door** leading either down to a hidden hallway and the kennel (**Area B**) or up to Skorri's Room (**Area I**). A creature moving through the fireplace to reach the secret door while the fire is still lit takes 14 (4d6) fire damage. The shaft and hallway contain triggers for a **trap**.

Trap. Where there's Smoke

Complex Trap (Levels 5-10 dangerous threat)

The hidden hallway and the secret shaft leading to Skorri's room are attached to the chimney of the fireplace-altar in the great hall. An individual ascending or descending the shaft or moving through the hallway can activate pressure sensors. This causes the ventilation to seal shut. The area then begins rapidly filling with hot smoke, cooking and suffocating individuals who can't escape.

Trigger. A character touching the pressure plate in the hallway or a levered handhold on the inset ladder used to ascend or descend the shaft (between the first and second floors) activates this trap.

Effect. All open secret doors leading to the hallway and shaft close (if not prevented from closing with a piton or similar object). The hallway and shaft fill with hot, choking smoke like a giant oven. Each round at the beginning of its turn, a creature trapped within the area must succeed a Constitution saving throw or gain 1 level of exhaustion. The DC is 5 + 1 per round the creature continues breathing in the smoke. If a creature has resistance to fire, they only make a saving throw each minute (DC 5 + 1 per minute). If a creature has immunity to fire, then they are immune to this effect. The ventilation returns to normal after 10 minutes.

Countermeasures. A successful DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check notices either pressure sensor. A successful DC 10 Strength (Athletics) check then allows a character to move past the sensor. Opening any two of the three secret doors exiting the area creates sufficient ventilation to end this effect. If the fire in the fireplace-altar is extinguished, triggering the trap only causes the secret doors to seal and does not cause hot smoke to fill the area.

Area E. Barracks

A series of relatively large bunk beds are closely set together, with unlocked chests nearby for personal possessions. Well-used chamber pots give off a strong odor.

The acolytes sleep in the barracks, with several sharing the same bed in shifts. A **secret door** in the column leads to a shaft going down to the dungeon (**Area A**) or up to the second level.

Four **dung quasits** (ordinary quasits with a different appearance – see below) are used by the cult leaders to spy on and manipulate the acolytes. They typically hide invisibly in the barracks or within the secret shaft. While the chamber pots conceal the demons' stench, they can be sensed by a character with a passive Perception of 20 or a character succeeding on a DC 20 Wisdom (Perception) check.

Dung Quasits/Babau

Dung quasits are larger on average than normal, with hyena-like features and a smell as foul as their name implies. Packs of gnolls and fiends follow in Yeenoghu's

wake, taking power from the scraps of his kills. Quasits cannot hope to scavenge even the gnawed shards of leftover bone. Instead, they fight over the dung piles, crawling on them like insects. While mightier than most quasits, their real benefit to the cultists is a manipulative cleverness many of Yeenoghu's servants lack.

Note that if dealing with stronger parties, the quasits morph into babau at the start of any violence as a free action. These dung babau have a hyena-like appearance. It takes minutes for them to change back into their quasit shape afterwards. During the combat they are exactly like babau.

Note that the quasits and babau are followers of Yeenoghu and gain his blessing while on the island.

Adjusting this Encounter

Here are some suggestions for adjusting these encounters, according to your group. These are not cumulative.

Very Weak or Weak: Reduce the number of **dung quasits** to two.

Average: The **dung quasits** have 55 hit points each.

Strong: Use the statistics for **dung babau**.

Very Strong: Use the statistics for **dung babau** and increase the number to six.

Area F. Kitchen

The kitchen is filled with hot smoke. Fresh bread bakes in ovens and thick stews boil in pots on the stove tops. A nearby store room holds glass jars, sacks of flour, and hanging meats.

The kitchen storeroom holds food supplies. The door is locked at night. A **secret door** in the wall leads to a shaft going down to the kennel (**Area B**) or up to the second level.

Area G. Elaris' Room

This bedroom is like a weaponry museum, with almost every available inch of wall space taken up by a dagger, sword, or more exotic weapon. Most seem decorative or ornamental.

Elaris spends his free time meditating or polishing and sharpening his weapon collection. When asleep, his breastplate is carefully hung on the wall. Most of the prized pieces in Elaris' collection are cheap fakes,

but a few are valuable. A successful DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation or History) check can locate the rare items.

Roleplaying Elaris (ELAR-is)

Elaris is a slight and attractive young elven man with a shaven head. He always wears finery and smells strongly of expensive cologne. Elaris insists on always being referred to as "Hardhar," his official title. He is obsessed with weapons and control, using black humor to hide his immaturity and other failings. He is also a coward, rationalizing dishonorable tactics by thinking he is simply smarter than his enemies. While he believes himself a master manipulator, his tactics are always painfully blunt, lazy, and obvious.

Quote: "This blade is one of a kind: single-edged steel, folded a thousand times by a master smith. I wish I'd seen the old owner wielding it, but he was dead before he drew."

Area H. Gorn's Room

This bedroom is a chaotic disaster. A pile of trash and rotting food is stacked up in one corner. A big, foul-smelling bearskin rug lies on the other side of the room. In between are discarded piles of stained clothing and haphazard pieces of dirty splint armor.

When he isn't eating or training, **Gorn** can be found in his room (usually snoring loudly). He hates wearing his armor because it hides his chiseled physique, and often leaves it strewn about here.

Roleplaying Gorn (GORE-nh)

Gorn is a mountain of a Northlander man who sometimes claims to be a half-giant. He's hairy, unwashed, and loves to show off his well-defined physique. Everything Gorn does is a competition. He can't even listen to someone tell a story without telling a more impressive tale...even if it is a total lie. His overbearing attitude conceals a deeply fragile sense of self-esteem. Losses and mockery send him into rages where he must belittle or hurt the source of his embarrassment. While he (loudly) claims to be the least bigoted person in the world (especially toward women or Ffolk), he thinks only traditionally masculine Northlander traits are worthwhile.

Quote: "That's nothing! One time I was surrounded by ten hill giants!"

Area I. Skorri's Room

This large bedroom features an ornate four-poster bed decorated with stylistic carvings of predatory animals, a heavy-looking desk, and an almost throne-like stone chair resting behind it. A walk-in closet in one corner holds clothing for various seasons, while on the opposite side is a warm stone chimney radiating heat from the fireplace below. The walls are adorned with trophies, including rusted weapons, dented helmets, and fierce-looking animal heads.

Skorri is usually either in his room or patrolling the walls, but he does not ever seem to sleep.

Skorri stores the *coral skull* he uses to command the sargassum spirits in a locked drawer (DC 18 Dexterity [Thieves' Tools] to open) in his desk. He has the only key and keeps it on his person at all times. A **secret door** on the eastern wall behind his bed leads to the outside roof opposite the eastern watchtower. A **secret door** in the chimney leads to the shaft down to the grand hall fireplace (**Area D**) and the hidden basement hallway to the kennel (**Area B**).

Roleplaying Skorri

Skorri is a short, broad-shouldered man with braided, black hair and an impressive beard. He dresses like a traditional Northlander, but his olive skin and black hair betray his Ffolk ancestry. Skorri is a malignant narcissist. He's superficially charming, personable, and reasonable. He's capable of lavishing earnest-seeming praise and inspiring true loyalty. However, in his mind, only his own happiness and desires matter. He ruthlessly and viciously does whatever is required to achieve his next goal, rationalizing that anyone who opposes him is evil or weak.

Quote: "No one has ever given up power. It is only taken."

Treasure

Skorri keeps two *potions of greater healing* in the locked drawer next to the *coral skull*.

Area J. Watchtowers

A rope bridge connects the second-level roof to the wall's walkway and a stone tower rising above.

The three towers are set at the fortress-temple's walls. They are designed so the rope bridges can be cut as an action with a slashing weapon, preventing easy access.

Treasure

Each watchtower's lowest level is a reserve armory and storage area containing quivers of arrows, clubs, spears, longbows, hide and leather armor, and shields to outfit dozens of people. While serviceable in an emergency, the quality of this equipment is so low it is not worth selling.

Part 3: Investigating the Cult

Estimated Time: 90 minutes

The characters' primary goal in this adventure is to collect evidence against Skorri, arrest him, and bring him back alive to Gnarhelm for trial. They might have many secondary goals, such as aiding the acolytes or simply see opportunities to do the right thing. Unfortunately, the characters probably can't right all wrongs and save everyone.

This part functions as a sandbox, outlining different ways the characters might act to gain allies, collect evidence, and undermine Skorri's power.

Boot Camp

Most of the encounters in this part are optional and relatively unstructured, depending on the characters taking proactive action. To provide some structure, the encounters in this section require the characters' participation.

All acolytes must attend two training sessions each day, one before lunch, and one before supper. The specific nature of these training sessions varies, but they are always physically grueling competitions. Winners are rewarded and losers are punished.

Each training session requires a successful DC 10 Strength (Athletics) check. Succeeding on the check by 5 or more means a character is one of the winners. They get to skip the next training session, either getting extra free time or watching with the cult leaders. On a failed check, the character is one of the losers and doesn't get served during the following meal. Failing a check by 5 or more also inflicts 1 level of exhaustion. A character can take disadvantage on their check to give advantage to another character. A character can gain advantage on their check by choosing to cheat, always to the detriment of other acolytes. The cult leaders always turn a blind eye to cheating (and subtly encourage it).

The following options can be used, or act as examples when creating training sessions.

Climbing. The acolytes must free climb up the steep cliff on the northern side of the island. While secured ropes and the unstill water below (probably) prevent deaths, it is still dangerous. A cheater might kick loose rocks down on acolytes while claiming it was an accident.

Diving. The acolytes have to dive from the wall on the north side of the island, plunging safely into the ocean without too much harm. A cheater could push to the front or trip someone to get a prime position.

Lifting. The acolytes are expected to create piles of rocks by carrying them from the shore by the docks up the stairs to the courtyard. A cheater can steal a few rocks from other piles.

Swimming. The acolytes are expected to swim a race around the entire island. The waters are cold, the rocks are sharp, and the waves are unforgiving. A lot can happen out in the water, and a cheater can easily use a quick kick to remove competition.

Long Rest

Part of brainwashing the acolytes is keeping them tired and stressed. The cult leaders actively prevent the characters from taking a long rest throughout the adventure. Characters can sneak off to quiet places to avoid being woken, or sleep during mandatory guard duty with trickery. However, the leaders perform cursory checks to see if everybody is present and not shirking their responsibility.

Drinking Contest

The cult leaders regularly hold drinking contests during the evening meal. They open a keg of strong ale or mead, and nobody gets to leave until it's empty. This ultimately performs the same function as the training sessions by encouraging individual competition and weakening the acolytes. It has the added benefits of making them more susceptible to manipulation while drunk, while seeming like a reward or gift rather than a grueling trial. This functions as a training session, except the characters make DC 10 Constitution saving throws instead of Strength (Athletics) checks. Characters failing the save by 5 or more gain the poisoned condition instead of one level of exhaustion. The poisoned condition lasts for one day or until the character finishes a long rest.

Tricks of the Trade

The DM can consider the following guidance when determining how to best run Boot Camp encounters.

Opportunities. These encounters can provide clues or segues to other encounters in or around the island. The characters could speak with the sargassum spirits while diving or swimming, spot the secret door to **Area C** while climbing, or attempt to explore while everyone is distracted by a particularly intense competition or during one of the acolytes' periods of free time (see the schedule in **Appendix 2**).

Selflessness. Each training session is created to encourage malicious self-interest. However, characters might aid their cause through selfless actions. Maybe they gain disadvantage to help another acolyte or sneak food to a loser. Benevolent actions like this should be encouraged and rewarded, though the specifics and outcomes can vary. Maybe it lets the character befriend one of the NPC acolytes, or gives the character advantage on a later ability check. A thankful acolyte might “forget” they saw the character sneaking around after hours or run interference for them so they can long rest on guard duty.

Developments

If a character chooses to cheat, it’s not forgotten by the acolytes hurt in the process. This makes it difficult for the character to later convince the acolytes of Skorri’s guilt when confronting him.

Tests of Character

This section outlines a series of optional interaction encounters that help NPC acolytes escape indoctrination. Success in these interactions will make it easier to convince the acolytes of Skorri’s guilt in **Part 4**.

The leaders of the cult attempt to break down an acolyte’s sense of self. Even if an individual remains unaware of Yeenoghu’s involvement, they still become loyal pawns. There are always stubborn rebels, but Skorri feeds them to the hyenas. He tells everyone they took the “Coward’s Path,” departing for home on Captain Colden’s ship (Dag will verify this lie, for a fee). The characters can counter the brainwashing, but not through simple conversation. It can only be defeated by helping heal the issues making the NPC susceptible in the first place.

Tricks of the Trade

The DM can consider the following guidance when determining how to best run these interaction encounters.

Optional. These interactions are meant to provide hooks and prompts the DM can introduce should the characters run out of ideas. They also serve to humanize the acolyte NPCs and establish the cult leaders as villains.

Checks. These interactions are primarily focused on roleplay and the decisions the characters make. While the DM might feel checks are warranted, it is not recommended that the outcome of the encounter depend a check’s success or failure.

Missed Clues. Each of the allied NPCs has a short story arc which provides clues for other actions the characters can take. This may be useful if the characters haven’t learned much about the cult through separate exploration and investigation. Consider introducing stories which might provide beneficial clues.

Other Acolytes

While the adventure primarily focuses on three named NPC acolytes, there are at least a dozen more on the island (other than the characters). In general, they’re young humans with Northlander, Ffolk, or intermingled heritage. There are more men than women, but not to a grossly significant degree. Most originally come from humble backgrounds, like farming or fishing. They are impressionable, gullible, and experiencing spiritual fulfillment for the first time in their lives. Almost all are relatively innocent – more ignorant than evil.

Unfortunately, the characters cannot hope to save them all on an individual level. They can only help some, and in so doing, try to inspire the rest by example.

Ingrid Osmond

Ingrid is one of the most impressive warriors among the acolytes, but seems to have “gone soft.” The cult leaders elect to break her of her weakness. They favor her with unnecessary punishments, resulting in less food and sleep, and set the demons on her.

Nightmares. The **dung quasits** haunt Ingrid. They wake her from sleep (with scare or as crawling centipedes), and foul her meals. She believes these are delusions but confides in a character who befriended her.

Violence. The cult leaders suggest a sleep- and food-deprived Ingrid show off her experience by facing a character (perhaps one she befriended on the Justly Scorned in Part 1) in a duel to first blood. Ingrid refuses, not wishing to harm her friend and dredge up old horrors. The leaders accuse her of cowardice.

Developments

If the character chooses to fight, Ingrid’s old instincts take over, and she attacks with a berserker’s fury. The cult leaders must gleefully pull her back after either the character or Ingrid draws first blood.

If the character refuses to fight Ingrid despite aspersions on their bravery, they show she isn’t alone or a coward. Their public refusal undermines Skorri’s message and shows the acolytes a different type of courage.

Ohlega Hurnisdottir

Ohlega is exceedingly clever, but the cult, like everyone else, is interested only in her strength. She's been sneaking off to explore the various secret doors, tunnels, and traps in the fortress-temple, but her excitement makes her careless. She gets spotted or overheard talking about it, giving the cult leaders an opportunity to tear down her self-esteem further.

Exploration. Ohlega makes a thin excuse to suspiciously sneak away during free time or while on guard duty. She tries to get a befriended character to come with her. Otherwise, a character might curiously follow after. She excitedly shows them a few of the secret doors and a trap.

Humiliation. The cult leaders publicly belittle Ohlega during a meal or training session for sticking her nose where it doesn't belong. When she tries to explain how she thinks the old mechanisms could be improved, she anxiously stumbles over her words. They proceed to mock her, mostly because they aren't smart enough to appreciate her valid insights.

Developments

If the characters don't intercede, the laughter crushes the last of Ohlega's confidence. She fully retreats into herself, convinced only her brawn is of any use to the world.

If the characters defend Ohlega, it helps her to speak her mind. While her words still fall on deaf ears, she sees the fault is with them, not with her. Ohlega begins to appreciate her cleverness as her true strength, and doesn't need the approval of others to do it. This resonates with other acolytes, many of whom are succumbing to peer pressure.

Terris Deepfuro

Terris is worried for his brothers and saddened by a seemingly passionless future, and his outlet for his feelings is music. He's been using his guard duty to listen for the sargassum spirits' song from the walls and watchtowers. He's been compiling their tragic story, and attempting to translate it from Elvish verse into Common and Dwarven.

Music. Unlike every other acolyte, Terris looks forward to guard duty. If a character befriended him, he tries to convince them to join him. Otherwise, a character might be assigned to the same shift. Most find the spirits' mournful songs terrifying, but it really resonates with Terris. Over the last few weeks, he's been able to piece together their story (see **Appendix 3D**).

Destruction. The cult leaders claim they've gotten an anonymous tip about "contraband," though this is just a lie providing an excuse to look through the acolytes' possessions in the barracks (**Area E**). In the process, they find Terris' notes. They proceed to belittle him for wasting his energy with useless pastimes and rip the papers up.

Developments

If the characters don't intercede, Terris feels his heart break, but swallows down his pain rather than show any emotion. He begins to believe his father is right, and art is nothing but a childish distraction.

The characters can intercede by diverting the cult leader's attention away from Terris and his papers, or later help him recreate what was lost. Regardless, their efforts help him realize he doesn't need to sacrifice his passions in the name of responsibility. He shares his inspiring epiphany with others, which helps many of the impressionable youths see a different type of maturity.

Cult Leaders

All three cult leaders are flawed and can be turned against each other, potentially removing Skorri's most powerful allies prior to the confrontation in **Part 4**.

The leaders' flaws can be deduced through roleplay, investigation, or successful DC 15 Wisdom (Insight) checks during interaction encounters.

Skorri. Skorri appears to trust both Gorn and Elaris, but expects everyone to eventually fail or betray him. The characters can play into Skorri's paranoia, framing Gorn or Elaris.

Gorn. Despite his posturing, Gorn has a truly fragile sense of self-worth. He finds it nearly impossible to refuse any challenge. This can be used to make him look foolish in front of Skorri.

Elaris. For all his big talk, Elaris is a coward. He is nothing more than a lazy bully who only fights when he holds all the power. Skorri feels nothing but contempt for spinelessness.

Tricks of the Trade

The DM can consider the following guidance when determining how to best run these interaction encounters.

Options. Alternatives for manipulating the leaders are purposely vague. Any idea should have a chance of success.

Difficulty. Any plan to undermine the cult leaders should require two successful DC 15 skill checks. For example, challenging and embarrassing Gorn might

require a successful DC 15 Charisma (Persuasion) check followed by a successful DC 15 Strength (Athletics) check.

Advantage. Any attempt capitalizing on a cult leader's flaws should have advantage on at least one of the two checks. For example, a Charisma (Persuasion) check to challenge Gorn should have advantage.

Developments

If Skorri believes either Gorn or Elaris are betraying him, he quietly kills them. He hides their corpses in the secret shaft by the kennels (**Area B**), planning to use it to transform the hyenas into gnolls.

If Gorn or Elaris look foolish or weak, Skorri forces them to sleep in the barracks and take part in training sessions. They resent their punishment and will refuse to defend Skorri in **Part 4**. The characters can use that resentment to convince the leaders to turn on Skorri.

Collecting Evidence

The characters must discover Skorri Boarson's evil and collect evidence of it if he is to be found guilty in a court of law once they return to Å. The island holds many potential avenues for revealing his true nature. However, these secrets are hidden. The characters must investigate, explore, and interact with the island's NPCs to discover the possibilities, as described in **Part 2**.

Tricks of the Trade

The DM can consider the following guidance when determining how to best run these encounters.

Confrontation. The characters should assume Skorri Boarson won't surrender. They should also understand that making public, evidence-backed accusations is the best strategy to turn the cult against him. An ambush is likely to be viewed as an assassination attempt and would cause the acolytes to rally around Skorri.

Secret Passages. Many of the cult's lies are hidden behind the secret doors and traps within the structure. If the characters are not able to discover the secret doors on their own, Ohlega can be used to assist them. Likewise, the characters might steal one of the cult leader's special suits of armor (probably Gorn's) and use it to easily find and open the secret doors.

Weakening Skorri. While collecting evidence, the characters also have opportunities to undermine Skorri by removing his advantages and allies, or even turning his strengths against him. All of the actions the characters choose to make influence the final combat encounter.

Gnawed Bones

Skorri has been dumping the bones of murdered acolytes at the end of the escape tunnel (**Area C**). Each was fed to hyenas after he killed them, turning the innocent beasts into loyal gnoll warriors. While it might have been wiser to destroy the evidence, Skorri enjoys keeping them around as grisly trophies. The characters might discover the bones showing the hyena's transformation. These remains can then be presented as evidence that dozens of people have died on the island (instead of running away, as the cult leaders claimed), and that their deaths led to the creation of gnolls.

Gorn and Elaris

Gorn and Elaris are privy to most of Skorri's secrets. This also makes them culpable. While they are normally unwilling to betray Skorri, if he punishes them, the characters can convince them to turn on their leader.

The characters can either threaten Gorn and Elaris with arrest and trial alongside Skorri or appeal to their desire for revenge. This requires a successful DC 15 Charisma (Intimidation) check for threats or Charisma (Persuasion) for vengeance. Charisma (Intimidation) checks for this purpose have advantage against Elaris but disadvantage against Gorn. Charisma (Persuasion) for this purpose have advantage against Gorn but disadvantage against Elaris.

Hidden Demons

The **dung quasits** spy on and manipulate the acolytes. The dung quasits prefer to remain invisible within the barracks (**Area E**) or use the secret passages. A demon's presence can be discovered through investigation or by befriending **Ingrid Osmond**. Defeating the quasits removes them as a threat, and the fiends' bodies can be used as evidence of Skorri's connection to fiends.

Justly Scorned

Captain **Dag Colden** isn't the most trustworthy witness. However, he's privy to Skorri's dark past as a Northlands reaver and has received a lot of money to help cover up a lot of murders. If the characters already turned him against Skorri, he agrees to publicly reveal what he knows—provided he's guaranteed protection from Skorri. If the characters haven't already turned Dag, they can do so with a DC 15 Charisma (Intimidation) check. If they learn what really happened to the acolytes and share this information with Dag, they have advantage on this check.

Potential Gnolls

Because of his connection to Kosach, Skorri has the ability to transform hyenas into gnolls by feeding them the corpse of a person he's slain. However, they are presently only innocent and tortured animals. Learning about the hyenas requires exploring and discovering the kennel (**Area B**). Killing or feeding them removes a potential threat. Their presence begs the question why Skorri is keeping a secret pack of starving hyenas locked away, and strongly corroborates other evidence.

Gnoll Fang of Yeenoghu

The demon lord Yeenoghu created the first gnolls when hyenas following in his wake scavenged his kills. In much the same way, **gnoll fangs of Yeenoghu** can create new gnolls by having hyenas devour a creature they slay. Through **Korasch**, Skorri possesses this ability. A character can recall this fact about gnolls and the demon lord with a successful DC 15 Intelligence (Arcana or Religion) check

Sargassum Spirits

The shadow-cursed dryads are tragic heroes deserving freedom and peace. The characters can discover the truth by recalling their story or through **Terris'** work translating their song. They can then learn the spirits are bound to a coral skull Skorri has in his possession through investigation or communication with the dryads directly. Skorri keeps the skull in his locked desk (**Area I**).

If the characters have the note left by Keolinn Ni Brianin from MOON5-2, they can use the skull to prove the note's veracity, showing Skorri was in league with the fomorian.

Developments

Each piece of collected evidence makes it easier to convince the acolytes of Skorri's guilt, provided the characters choose to publicly confront him.

If Dag, Gorn, or Elaris agree to act as witnesses against Skorri, they can be called upon to give testimony (each witness counts as one piece of evidence).

Time?

This portion of the adventure is primarily driven by social interaction and character action. The number of encounters, and the time involved can vary widely.

It's likely impossible for the characters to pursue each lead, right every wrong, and undermine Skorri from all possible angles in the time allowed. Whether they are stealing meat from the kitchen, killing demons, or sowing discord, these actions do not go unnoticed and raise suspicions.

Skorri doesn't require evidence or a trial to guess that the impressive newcomers are responsible, and he decides to deal with them. If time is running short and the characters aren't preparing to confront Skorri, he instead confronts them on his own terms. He gains a number of benefits when he is prepared for this fight.

Alternately, the characters might ignore opportunities, avoid exploration, and not see the point in slowly undermining the cult. They might even decide to simply ambush Skorri soon after arriving, without a full understanding of the risks involved. This causes the conflict to become far more dangerous, turning the final part of the adventure into a sprawling, multistage combat. Skorri leads them around the entire fortress-temple, easily staying one step ahead of them, the secret trapped passages, and undiscovered allies.

Part 4: Confrontation

Estimated Duration: 60 minutes

Eventually, either the characters confront Skorri or he exposes them as spies and traitors. This part details the many possibilities and approaches for how this final confrontation might play out.

Yeenogha's Blessing

Don't forget that all followers of Yeenoghu on the island gain the Rampage trait, although the actions of the characters can remove the blessing through their actions as discussed on the Isle of Anvil.

Rampage. When the cultist reduces a creature to 0 hit points with a melee attack on its turn, the cultist can take a bonus action to move up to half its speed and make a melee weapon attack.

Skorri, as the originator of the blessing, also gains the following ability as a bonus action:

Incite Rampage (Recharge 5–6). One creature Skorri can see within 30 feet of it can use its reaction to make a melee attack if it can hear Skorri and has the Rampage trait due to Yeenoghu's blessing.

Court of Public Opinion

The characters can publicly accuse Skorri before the cult. The best time and location for confronting Skorri is during a meal within the great hall (**Area D**).

If the characters confront Skorri in front of the cult then it includes twelve acolytes, the acolyte NPCs (Ingrid, Olhega, and Terris), and Skorri's lieutenants (Gorn and Elaris).

Turning the acolytes against Skorri requires a successful group Charisma (Persuasion) check with the DCs below. This check automatically fails if the party doesn't present any evidence.

Evidence. The characters need at least one piece of compelling evidence to make a convincing accusation. Evidence can take many forms (see Collecting Evidence in **Part 3**). The DC of the check is based on how much evidence is presented. A Charisma (Persuasion) check with only one piece of evidence is DC 20, a check with two pieces of evidence is DC 15, and a check with three or more pieces of evidence is DC 10.

Acolytes. Ultimately, the characters are seeking to convince the acolytes. It's easier if they've helped fight the indoctrination and becomes harder if they made choices supporting the cult's control. If a character cheated during the training sessions or did nothing to aid other acolytes fight their indoctrination, then that

character has disadvantage on the Charisma (Persuasion) checks listed above. If a character acted selflessly during the training sessions or helped the acolyte NPCs oppose the brainwashing, then that character has advantage on the Charisma (Persuasion) check. You can have a mix of advantages and disadvantages among the characters, depending upon play.

Developments

How the NPC Acolytes respond depends upon the success of the group Charisma (Persuasion) check.

- **Success.** None of the acolytes fight to protect Skorri, but they don't attack him.
- **Success by 5 or More.** The acolytes realize they've been betrayed and are willing to fight against Skorri and his allies.
- **Failure.** The acolytes remain loyal to Skorri, but half aren't willing to harm the characters when ordered.
- **Failure by 5 or More.** All the acolytes remain fanatically loyal to Skorri and are willing to die for him.

If the characters fail in their attempt to accuse Skorri, he orders them to surrender. If they do so, Skorri, Gorn, and Elaris escort them down into the dungeon (**Area A**). Skorri brings along one disposable acolyte. The rest of the acolytes are ordered to scour the island for any hidden traitors. Skorri sets Gorn, Elaris, and the **dung quasits** on the characters while he feeds the acolyte to the hyenas.

Surprise Attack

A private ambush may make it easier to cut off Skorri's escape and defeat him, but it also makes the characters enemies of everyone on the island.

The best time and location for ambushing Skorri is in his room at night (**Area I**). However, the demonic spirit Korasch eliminates Skorri's need for sleep. While the characters can potentially attack him here, he is never completely defenseless.

Developments

If the characters ambush Skorri, then all twelve acolytes automatically come to his defense.

If the characters attempt to ambush Skorri in his room, he begins calling for aid and then flees through one of the secret doors.

If Skorri is able to shout an alarm, Gorn and Elaris arrive one round later from their rooms (**Areas G and H**). Most of the acolytes begin in the barracks (**Area E**) but arrive within 1d4 rounds.

Traitors Among Us

If the characters perform too many disruptive actions, they raise the suspicions of the cult's leadership. However, this situation should only occur as time requires. Specifically, if the characters are attempting to perform additional actions, exploration, or investigations when there isn't time.

Skorri prefers to shame them publicly, confronting them within the great hall (**Area D**) during lunch or supper. He calls them out as false, and paints them as traitorous villains with whatever lies he likes.

The characters can still make accusations with presented evidence (see Court of Public Opinion above), but Skorri and his allies are better prepared for battle.

If the public shaming is not sufficient, Skorri and the other cult leaders ambush the party at a time and place that is to their advantage.

Tricks of the Trade

If Skorri instigates the confrontation, he and his allies are better prepared.

- Elaris. Elaris casts *shield of faith* on himself.
- Gnolls. Skorri feeds an acolyte to the hyenas, transforming them into gnolls. He provides the gnolls armor, shields, and weapons from the watchtowers (**Area J**), and they wait in the kennels (**Area B**) to ambush the characters if lured into the dungeons (**Area A**).
- Gorn. Gorn dons his armor.
- Quasits. Skorri orders the **dung quasits** to invisibly hide within the column in the dungeons, ready to attack.
- Skorri. Skorri has the *coral skull* and his two *potions of greater healing* with him. He casts *protection from energy (fire)* on himself.

Balance of Power

The characters' actions from **Parts 1-3** might shift the odds considerably.

Acolyte NPCs

Any befriended acolyte NPCs do not fight against the characters, regardless of circumstances. If the characters opposed their indoctrination, helped them overcome their personal issues, and accuse Skorri, they also provide the following benefits.

Ingrid. Ingrid discovers noble causes are worth fighting for. She fights as the characters direct her, but seeks to attack Gorn, Elaris, or Skorri in the absence of orders.

Ohlega. Ohlega doesn't fight but provides expert advice on the building's mechanisms. The characters gain advantage on any checks to find or open secret doors, and on any checks for countermeasures against the traps.

Terris. Terris doesn't fight, but is inspired to perform his new song. This disrupts Korasch's demonic power (with a little help from Tempus). Yeenoghu's blessing is removed and all antagonists lose the Rampage ability.

Undermining Actions

The other actions the characters can take might influence the encounter in the following ways.

Cult Leaders. If Gorn or Elaris is turned against Skorri (or vice versa) they don't fight in any conflict. They either aren't present, they do not rush to his defense, or are already dead.

Hidden Demons. If the characters defeat the **dung quasits**, Skorri cannot call on them to attack during combat.

Potential Gnolls. If the hyenas were fed, then Skorri cannot transform them into **gnolls**. If the hyenas have been fed and calmed by a character, they attack Skorri if released.

Sargassum Spirits. If the characters recover the *coral skull*, the spirits manifest to cut off Skorri's escape with terrible storms and beasts drawn from the ocean's depths. This makes it impossible for him to escape.

Defeating SKORRI

Skorri Boarson (a **blackguard**) never surrenders without a fight. Possessed by a demon, Skorri is much more powerful than a normal human.

Tricks of the Trade

Consider the following guidance when determining how to best run this combat encounter.

- **Acolytes.** Five acolytes cast *bleed*, making sure all cult leaders and most acolytes are affected. One or two acolytes per cult leader cast *sanctuary* on themselves, and then use *cure wounds* to heal the cult leader. The rest use the *Help* action to aid the cult leaders, or attack with either clubs or the sacred flame spell.
- **Gorn.** Gorn is not tactical or a team player, and simply attacks whoever seems strongest or insults him. He surrenders if reduced to 25 hp or less.
- **Elaris.** Elaris takes cover. He prefers to target arcane spellcasters with *spiritual weapon*. If attacked in melee, he might cast *hold person* or *sneak attack* with his daggers. If insulted, he casts *command* to force the target to grovel. Elaris surrenders if reduced to 25 hp or less.
- **Strong Skorri.** The cult leader stands his ground if he has the upper hand. Even then, Skorri keeps his distance, letting his allies fight. He creates *spiritual weapons* and uses *healing word* or *mass healing word* on his defenders. If the tide turns, he uses *Incite Rampage* on the cult leaders, but this reveals **Korasch's** influence. Skorri flees through if half his defenders have fallen or he is reduced to 100 hp or less. He then uses his *potions of greater healing* or spells to heal.
- **Weak Skorri.** In any situation where Skorri is caught off guard, he calls for help and flees through secret doors. If needed, he tries to grab an acolyte, taking them to the kennels (**Area C**) to kill them and transform the **hyenas** into **gnolls**. Likewise, he commands the **dung quasits** to attack. He casts *healing word* to recover hit points, both during and between confrontations. If Skorri is cornered or reduced to 75 hp or less, he abandons any subtlety and casts *spirit guardians*. If reduced to 25 hp or less, he attempts to flee through the escape tunnel (**Area B**), but surrenders if escape seems impossible.

Adjusting this Encounter

Here are some suggestions for adjusting this encounter, according to your group. These are not cumulative.

Very Weak or Weak: Reduce **Skorri's** hit points to 125 hp. Reduce **Gorn's** hit points to 66 hp and **Elaris's** hit points to 33. Reduce the number of **acolytes** to eight.

Average: **Elaris** has 55 hit points.

Strong: Increase **Skorri's** hit points to 200 hp. Increase the number of **acolytes** to sixteen. **Elaris** has 55 hit points.

Very Strong: Increase **Skorri's** hit points to 250 hp. Increase the number of **acolytes** to twenty. **Elaris** has 55 hit points.

Developments

Skorri's desperation causes him to reveal his true nature. The first time he uses spells or *Incite Rampage*, the *ring of mind-shielding* appears on his left hand and the demonic spirit of Korasch begins to manifest around him. The fiend appears as an avatar of the demon lord Yeenoghu—a hulking, scarred gnoll with black spines and burning, emerald eyes with long tentacles instead of arms. The ghostly fiend acts in whatever way is appropriate at the time.

Any **acolytes** who see Korasch manifested at least three times abandon the fight in horror.

Short on Time?

If short on time, Skorri should either escape or surrender. He surrenders if he is at less than half his hit points, most of his allies are defeated, or his escape is impossible. He should instead escape if he has more than half his hit points, most of his allies can still fight, and escape is possible.

Skorri's Escape

If the characters have the upper hand, Skorri does everything in his power to flee the island like the coward he is. Likewise, if they manage to turn the cult against him but he defeats the characters, he flees with whatever allies and resources he can gather.

Hidden within the escape tunnel (**Area C**) is a fast-moving sailboat set aside specifically for this purpose. If Skorri can reach it, he purposefully triggers the tunnel collapse **trap** when opening the sea-side **secret door** of the tunnel to cut-off pursuit. He then sets sail for the mainland. If he has the *coral skull* in his possession, he commands the sargassum spirits to cover his escape with *control weather* and charmed sea creatures.

If the sailboat is damaged or the tunnel already collapsed, Skorri instead tries to reach the *Justly Scorned*. He doesn't trust Dag Colden anymore (Dag vouched for these traitors) but intimidates him into setting sail. Fortunately, Dag leaves a trail of breadcrumbs behind in the form of rocks scraped by the hull in the direction he's headed.

If the characters recovered the *coral skull*, then it is impossible for Skorri to escape by any means. If he tries, the uncontrolled spirits summon a terrible storm, forcing him to return to the island and surrender.

Developments

If Skorri is able to successfully escape in the small sailboat, he moves too quickly and stealthily for the characters to easily pursue. He escapes justice for now, potentially making it necessary for them to hunt him down.

However, if he departs in the *Justly Scorned*, it is possible the characters have access to the hidden sailboat themselves. They might be able to give chase by following clues left behind by Dag.

SKORRI'S SURRENDER

If Skorri surrenders, Korasch turns on him.

Skorri Boarson casts his greataxe aside while dropping to his knees, "Please...I surrender! Just don't..."

The fiendish gnoll-spirit's flaming emerald eyes flash, and its open jaws darts forward toward Skorri's upraised hands. He screams out in pain as a ring of fangs falls to the ground before him...alongside the severed finger it was wrapped around.

The hulking, black-spined demon grunts dismissively, falling forward onto all fours as it pulls itself free of Skorri with a lurch. It speaks in a guttural voice, "As weak as the rest," he says to the shivering acolytes, before turning to regard you. "I am Korasch, First Fang of Yeenoghu. Claim my power. It is your right. You need only kill this mewling whelp."

If the characters kill Skorri, Korasch returns to the *ring of mind-shielding*. If they delay or argue, Korasch impatiently explains more about himself and Yeenoghu. He endeavors to convince them of his philosophy, but only in the most straightforward and brutal manner.

If they refuse, he finally abandons the ring to rejoin the eternal hunt of Yeenoghu in the Abyss.

Roleplaying Korasch (KOR-ash)

While his perspective and philosophy has recently evolved, the demonic spirit remains simplistic in outlook. There is only strength or weakness, with the strong devouring the weak. The biggest shift is, he believes, that weak mortals can be made strong with the proper application of cruelty and suffering. However, he still remains blunt, impatient, and savage.

Quote: "A fiend knows hatred by instinct, but mortals can be taught."

Development

Without Korasch possessing him, Skorri has the statistics of a bandit, and can easily be brought back to Gnarhelm for trial.

If Korasch's spirit returns to the Abyss, all of the Guardians of the North who are secretly worshipers of Yeenoghu lose all spellcasting, making them far less of a threat. In addition, Yeenoghu's blessing is removed from the island and all Guardians of the North lose the Rampage trait.

Treasure

The characters can claim Skorri's *ring of mind-shielding*. If Korasch abandons the ring, it becomes a normal (non-sentient) *ring of mind-shielding* without the demonic spirit inhabiting it and working to corrupt its wearer. If the characters kill Skorri, Korasch still possesses the ring.

Long on Time?

It is possible Skorri has no reason stay on the island or is quickly defeated when there is still more time remaining. This is especially possible if the characters decide to ambush him early and quickly deal a large amount of damage. In that scenario, consider having the demon spirit of Korasch manifest to fight the characters personally as an optional combat encounter.

Korasch is willing to accept a strategic retreat after a well-fought battle. He can also choose a new wielder for the ring of mind-shielding if Skorri is properly beaten by superior foes. However, the demon is at a loss if his proven champion is defeated or flees without much of a fight. He can't tell if Skorri is simply a coward, unlucky, or both. Thus, Korasch manifests to personally test the characters and see if they are worthy of his power.

Korasch

As an additional optional combat encounter, the demon spirit **Korasch** (treat as an **alkilith**) might break free of a too-easily defeated Skorri, and personally test the characters' strength.

If much of the island remains unexplored and there are allies at hand for him to use, he prefers to lead them into trouble, and observe their actions from the shadows. Otherwise, he fights them directly.

Tricks of the Trade

The DM can consider the following guidance when determining how to best run this optional combat encounter.

Party Strength. The demonic spirit Korasch represents an extremely challenging foe. He's only appropriate for use against **strong** or **very strong** parties who manage to ambush and overwhelm Skorri. In this case, Korasch can help prevent an anticlimactic ending. However, if a weaker party manages to defeat Skorri, it's probably only through impressive tactics and hard work. The appearance of an even stronger foe they aren't expecting can rob them of a well-earned victory. In these cases, it is better to let them enjoy their success, and spend any remaining time detailing the ramifications as an epilogue.

Testing. Korasch's goal isn't to murder the characters, but to determine if they're worthy of inheriting his power. If the characters have not explored much of the fortress-temple, Korasch can make use of the many hidden traps and enemies. He uses Amorphous to pass through walls and floors into secret passages, drawing pursuers into traps or hidden enemies. If they do not take the bait, he can instead turn them on each other with *Incite Savagery* or leap out with Yeenoghu's Hunt active, and then attack any characters knocked prone (with advantage for extra damage).

Development

Korasch uses the fortress-temple's defenders and traps to test the characters, hoping to determine if Skorri's defeat was merely a quirk of fate, or evidence of their strength. If they overcome these challenges, he appears, offering them his aid in exchange for Skorri's death (see Skorri's Surrender above).

If a character accepts and murders Skorri, Korasch returns to the *ring of mind-shielding*. If they refuse, he attacks them again in earnest. This time he does not flee, and fights until they are dead or he's banished back to the Abyss.

Conclusion

The demonic manifestation shows the truth of any accusations, even if the characters lack other evidence. Without Korasch's power, it's a simple matter to bring the weakened Skorri to justice. He's found guilty of conspiracy in a fair and public trial. While some call for his execution, he is shown leniency, receiving only a lifetime of imprisonment in exchange for cooperation with the crown's inquiries into other worshipers of Yeenoghu.

The public revelation of the demon lord's influence shatters the Guardian's power. The cult only survives by evolving into something more accepting and benevolent, likely with the help of the acolytes the characters befriended and inspired.

If Skorri escapes, then the Guardians retain a conduit to Yeenoghu and remain a dire threat. If he cannot be eventually located and arrested, he simply starts over somewhere new...only this time, he's far better prepared for an attack and is far harder to find.

If Skorri is killed, the characters show they are worthy of inheriting Korasch's power. The demonic spirit infests the *ring of mind-shielding*, attempting to corrupt whoever claims it. Worse, the Guardians of the North claim that Skorri, and whoever else dies on Anvil, were assassinated by the crown. Membership in the organization swells, and they use the martyr's deaths to justify more overtly aggressive dogma and actions. The emboldened Guardians slowly drive the region toward a bloody schism, as some other Yeenoghu-worshipping cultist steps into Skorri's role.

Rewards

At the **end of the session**, the characters receive rewards based upon their accomplishments.

Character Rewards

The characters earn the following rewards:

Advancement

Upon successfully **completing** this adventure, each character gains a level. At their discretion, they may choose to decline advancement. Remind your players that the amount of gold that their characters can earn per level is limited; declining advancement means that they may reach a point where they earn no gold.

Gold

Award each character gold for each hour of the session. Adventures typically features cues for this, but you can add it wherever you see fit. The maximum gold that you can award a character per hour is determined by their tier, as follows:

| Tier | Hourly GP Award | GP Limit per Level |
|------|-----------------|--------------------|
| 2 | 30 gp | 240 gp |

Magic Item(s)

If found during the adventure, the characters can keep the following magic items; these items are described in **Player Handout 12**:

- *Potion of Greater Healing*
- *Ring of Mind Shielding*

Moonshae Organizations

If a character is a member of the Harbingers of Liberation organization and completed the MOON5 trilogy, they are considered to have completed a Major Objective for advancement in that group.

Dungeon Master Rewards

For running this adventure, one of your character gains a level. That character receives gold based on their tier prior to advancement:

| Tier | GP Earned |
|------|-----------|
| 1 | 80 gp |
| 2 | 240 gp |
| 3 | 1,600 gp |
| 4 | 6,000 gp |

You may also complete DM Quests for running this adventure. See the *Adventurers League Dungeon Master's Guide* for more information.



Dramatis Personae

The following NPCs feature prominently in this adventure:

Dag Colden

(DAG KOL-den) Dag has spent his long life bouncing around between dozens of organizations, factions, and leaders. His past as a Northland reaver, current role as a Guardian of the North, and new position as double-agent for Gnarhelm barely scratches the surface. However, despite being a habitual traitor, he has few enemies. He is both skilled at deflecting blame, and playing both sides until it is clear which is going to win.

Elaris Havalorre

(ELAR-is Hav-AH-lor) Elaris comes from a long-line of Llewyr wizards. As a rare-born son, his parents shielded him from disappointment, while assuming he'd easily develop spellcasting. However, despite access to private tutors and vast libraries, he didn't show the same aptitude as others from "lesser families." Instead of working or studying, he lazily blamed his people, family, and arcane magic in general.

Elaris left for the poorer human lands and found stepping on the weak made him feel taller. It was easy for Skorri and Korasch to mold the fledgling bully into a sadist. Now, he dreams of someday returning to his people and making them pay for every imagined slight.

Elaris is relatively young for an elf (age 88), and some would consider him to not yet be an adult. He's certainly still immature, though this can hardly be an excuse for his terrible actions.

Gorn Zweilander

(GORE-nh TSVIGH-land-er) Gorn holds the official rank of "Rauthat" but can seldom be seen in any armor. Gorn considers himself the ideal man: a warrior without equal who can out-drink and out-fight an army. He is impatient, superstitious, and boastful, lying with easy conviction about impossible things. So common and pervasive are Gorn's fabrications, not even Skorri knows much about his true background. Going by his word, he's won every war, traveled every land, and killed every monster.

Ingrid Osmond

(in-GRID os-MOND) Ingrid was weaned on tales of battle, and nightly dreamed of heroic triumphs. She eagerly volunteered to fight against the Storm Maiden but found the reality of war was different than the stories. While her dreams turned to nightmares, she still fought on until she faced a young, press-ganged reaver. She saw only fear in the boy's eyes but found her own hands shaking too much to raise her axe. She fled and hasn't raised a real weapon since.

Korasch

(KOR-ash) The demonic spirit Korasch became bound to a ring of mind shielding when a younger pack lord slew and devoured the Fang of Yeenoghu he possessed. This was right, for the strong must seize power from the weak. However, Korasch's greater mission remained unfinished. The feeble still ruled their pathetic world. Instead of returning to the Abyss, he elected to remain, guiding the battle's victor and whoever killed them in turn. In this way, he'd someday find one worthy of the demon lord's blessings. Now, Korasch believes Skorri is the one he has waited for, destined to subjugate and tear apart civilization.

Ohlega HERNISDOTTIR

(oh-LEG-a HURN-is-DOT-ter) Ohlega hails from a fishing community where strength is lauded, but wits are not. Her neighbors would speak of a fey touch in her observant eyes and insightful words. It became easier for her to stay silent, but this led to a deepening depression. The cult represents an escape from her circumstances, but she doesn't see she is confined by a similar cage.

SKORRI BOARSON

(SKOR-ree BOR-son) Skorri claims the title of "Direhar," and wears the traditional plate, but everything is a lie. Exile from Gnarhelm for murder earned him no respect among the Northland reavers. He was given the lowliest tasks and treated with malicious cruelty. He gained freedom after he brutally killed a tormentor with only his hands and teeth. After that, no reaver raised a hand to him, and most were unable to meet his gaze. Taking the name Skorri Boarson, he embraced a life of savage violence.

After slaying the reavers and claiming Korasch's ring, Skorri gained power beyond the dreams of most mortals. He now seeks an army. Next, he might wish for a crown, or even desire worship as a god. Skorri's ambition is a depthless void, and he can never be content.

TERRIS DEEPFURROW

(TER-ris Deep-FUR-oh) Terris is the youngest son of a wealthy family of dwarven merchants. Less responsibility suited Terris, and he's always been a dreamer and musician despite the whispers and frowns of his relations. Then, one of his siblings disappeared at sea and the other took gravely ill. His father now expects him to accept heavier burdens and says it is time to put away childish fancies. Terris loves his family but struggles to fit their expectations. He was sent to train with the Tempus-worshipping Guardians in the hope they can "toughen" him up.

Creature Statistics

Acolyte

Medium humanoid (any race), any alignment

Armor Class 10

Hit Points 9 (2d8)

Speed 30 ft.

| STR | DEX | CON | INT | WIS | CHA |
|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| 10 (+0) | 10 (+0) | 10 (+0) | 10 (+0) | 10 (+0) | 10 (+0) |

Senses passive Perception 10

Languages Common

Challenge 1/4 (50 XP)

Spellcasting. The acolyte is a 1st-level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 12, +4 to hit with spell attacks). The acolyte has following cleric spells prepared:

- Cantrips (at will): *light, sacred flame, thaumaturgy*
- 1st level (3 slots): *bless, cure wounds, sanctuary*

ACTIONS

Club. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +2 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 2 (1d4) bludgeoning damage.

Bandit

Medium humanoid (any race), any non-lawful alignment

Armor Class 12 (leather armor)

Hit Points 11 (2d8 + 2)

Speed 30 ft.

| STR | DEX | CON | INT | WIS | CHA |
|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| 11 (+0) | 12 (+1) | 12 (+1) | 10 (+0) | 10 (+0) | 10 (+0) |

Senses passive Perception 10

Languages any one language (usually Common)

Challenge 1/8 (25 XP)

ACTIONS

Scimitar. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d6 + 1) slashing damage.

Light Crossbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, range 80 ft./320 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d8 + 1) piercing damage.

Dag Golden [Bandit Captain]

Medium humanoid (any race), any non-lawful alignment

Armor Class 15 (studded leather)

Hit Points 65 (10d8 + 20)

Speed 30 ft.

| STR | DEX | CON | INT | WIS | CHA |
|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| 15 (+2) | 16 (+3) | 14 (+2) | 14 (+2) | 11 (+0) | 14 (+2) |

Saving Throws Str +4, Dex +5, Wis +2

Skills Athletics +4, Deception +4

Senses passive Perception 10

Languages any two languages

Challenge 2 (450 XP)

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The captain makes three melee attacks: two with its scimitar and one with its dagger. Or the captain makes two ranged attacks with its daggers.

Scimitar. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d6 + 3) slashing damage.

Dagger. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d4 + 3) piercing damage.

REACTIONS

Parry. The captain adds 2 to its AC against one melee attack that would hit it. To do so, the captain must see the attacker and be wielding a melee weapon.

Dung Babau [Babau]

Medium fiend (demon), chaotic evil

Armor Class 16

Hit Points 82 (11d8 + 33)

Speed 40 ft.

| STR | DEX | CON | INT | WIS | CHA |
|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| 19 (+4) | 16 (+3) | 16 (+3) | 11 (+0) | 12 (+1) | 13 (+1) |

Skills Perception +5, Stealth +5

Damage Resistances cold, fire, lightning; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks

Damage Immunities poison

Condition Immunities poisoned

Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 15

Languages Abyssal

Challenge 4 (1,100 XP)

Innate Spellcasting. The babau's innate spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 11). The babau can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components.

- At will: *darkness*, *dispel magic*, *fear*, *heat metal*, *levitate*

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The babau makes two claw attacks. It can also use Weakening Gaze before or after making these attacks.

Claws. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d8 + 4) slashing damage.

Spear. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d6 + 4) piercing damage, or 8 (1d8 + 4) piercing damage when used with two hands to make a melee attack.

Weakening Gaze. The babau targets one creature that it can see within 20 feet of it. The target must make a DC 13 Constitution saving throw. On a failed save, the target deals only half damage with weapon attacks that use Strength for 1 minute. The target can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success.

Dung Quasit [Quasit]

Tiny fiend (demon, shapechanger), chaotic evil

Armor Class 13

Hit Points 7 (3d4)

Speed 40 ft.

| STR | DEX | CON | INT | WIS | CHA |
|--------|---------|---------|--------|---------|---------|
| 5 (-3) | 17 (+3) | 10 (+0) | 7 (-2) | 10 (+0) | 10 (+0) |

Skills Stealth +5

Damage Resistances cold, fire, lightning; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks

Damage Immunities poison

Condition Immunities poisoned

Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 10

Languages Abyssal, Common

Challenge 1 (200 XP)

Shapechanger. The quasit can use its action to polymorph into a beast form that resembles a bat (speed 10 ft., fly 40 ft.), a centipede (40 ft., climb 40 ft.), a toad (40 ft., swim 40 ft.), or back into its true form. Its statistics are the same in each form. Any equipment it is wearing or carrying isn't transformed. It reverts to its true form if it dies.

Magic Resistance. The quasit has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

ACTIONS

Claws. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d4 + 3) piercing damage, and the target must succeed on a DC 10 Constitution saving throw or take 5 (2d4) poison damage and become poisoned for 1 minute. The target can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success.

Scare (1/Day). One creature of the quasit's choice within 20 feet of it must succeed on a DC 10 Wisdom saving throw or be frightened for 1 minute. The target can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, with disadvantage if the quasit is within line of sight, ending the effect on itself on a success.

Invisibility. The quasit magically turns invisible until it attacks or uses Scare, or until its concentration ends (as if concentrating on a spell). Any equipment the quasit wears or carries is invisible with it.

Elaris Navalorre [Black Earth Cultist]

Medium humanoid (humanoid), neutral evil

Armor Class 16 (breast plate)

Hit Points 33 (6d8 + 6)

Speed 30 ft.

| STR | DEX | CON | INT | WIS | CHA |
|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| 11 (+0) | 14 (+2) | 12 (+1) | 10 (+0) | 13 (+1) | 14 (+2) |

Skills Deception +4, Persuasion +4, Religion +2

Senses passive Perception 11

Languages Common, Terran

Challenge 2 (450 XP)

Dark Devotion. The fanatic has advantage on saving throws against being charmed or frightened.

Spellcasting. The fanatic is a 4th-level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 11, +3 to hit with spell attacks). The fanatic has the following cleric spells prepared:

- Cantrips (at will): *light, sacred flame, thaumaturgy*
- 1st level (4 slots): *command, inflict wounds, shield of faith*
- 2nd level (3 slots): *hold person, spiritual weapon*

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The fanatic makes two melee attacks.

Dagger. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d4 + 2) piercing damage.

Modify Elaris

- **Type** humanoid (elf)
- **Alignment** chaotic evil
- **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 13
- **Languages** Common, Elvish, Gnoll
- Add **Fey Ancestry** and **Trance**.

Gnoll

Medium humanoid (gnoll), chaotic evil

Armor Class 15 (hide armor, shield)

Hit Points 22 (5d8)

Speed 30 ft.

| STR | DEX | CON | INT | WIS | CHA |
|---------|---------|---------|--------|---------|--------|
| 14 (+2) | 12 (+1) | 11 (+0) | 6 (-2) | 10 (+0) | 7 (-2) |

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10

Languages Gnoll

Challenge 1/2 (100 XP)

Rampage. When the gnoll reduces a creature to 0 hit points with a melee attack on its turn, the gnoll can take a bonus action to move up to half its speed and make a bite attack.

ACTIONS

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 4 (1d4 + 2) piercing damage.

Spears. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d6 + 2) piercing damage, or 6 (1d8 + 2) piercing damage when used with two hands to make a melee attack.

Longbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, range 150/600 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d8 + 1) piercing damage.

Gorn Zweilander [Gladiator]

Medium humanoid (any race), any alignment

Armor Class 16 (studded leather, shield)

Hit Points 112 (15d8 + 45)

Speed 30 ft.

| STR | DEX | CON | INT | WIS | CHA |
|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| 18 (+4) | 15 (+2) | 16 (+3) | 10 (+0) | 12 (+1) | 15 (+2) |

Saving Throws Str +7, Dex +5, Con +6

Skills Athletics +10, Intimidation +5

Senses passive Perception 11

Languages any one language (usually Common)

Challenge 5 (1,800 XP)

Brave. The gladiator has advantage on saving throws against being frightened.

Brute. A melee weapon deals one extra die of its damage when the gladiator hits with it (included in the attack).

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The gladiator makes three melee attacks or two ranged attacks.

Spear. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 11 (2d6 + 4) piercing damage, or 13 (2d8 + 4) piercing damage if used with two hands to make a melee attack.

Shield Bash. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 9 (2d4 + 4) bludgeoning damage. If the target is a Medium or smaller creature, it must succeed on a DC 15 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone.

REACTIONS

Parry. The gladiator adds 3 to its AC against one melee attack that would hit it. To do so, the gladiator must see the attacker and be wielding a melee weapon.

Hunter Shark

Large beast, unaligned

Armor Class 12 (natural armor)

Hit Points 45 (6d10 + 12)

Speed 0 ft., swim 40 ft.

| STR | DEX | CON | INT | WIS | CHA |
|---------|---------|---------|--------|---------|--------|
| 18 (+4) | 13 (+1) | 15 (+2) | 1 (-5) | 10 (+0) | 4 (-3) |

Skills Perception +2

Senses blindsight 30 ft., passive Perception 12

Languages —

Challenge 2 (450 XP)

Blood Frenzy. The shark has advantage on melee attack rolls against any creature that doesn't have all its hit points.

Water Breathing. The shark can breathe only underwater.

ACTIONS

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 13 (2d8 + 4) piercing damage.

Hyena

Medium beast, unaligned

Armor Class 11

Hit Points 5 (1d8 + 1)

Speed 50 ft.

| STR | DEX | CON | INT | WIS | CHA |
|---------|---------|---------|--------|---------|--------|
| 11 (+0) | 13 (+1) | 12 (+1) | 2 (-4) | 12 (+1) | 5 (-3) |

Skills Perception +3

Senses passive Perception 13

Languages —

Challenge 0 (10 XP)

Pack Tactics. The hyena has advantage on an attack roll against a creature if at least one of the hyena's allies is within 5 feet of the creature and the ally isn't incapacitated.

ACTIONS

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +2 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 3 (1d6) piercing damage.

Ingrid Osmond [Veteran]

Medium humanoid (any race), any alignment

Armor Class 17 (splint)

Hit Points 58 (9d8 + 12)

Speed 30 ft.

| STR | DEX | CON | INT | WIS | CHA |
|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| 16 (+3) | 13 (+1) | 14 (+2) | 10 (+0) | 11 (+0) | 10 (+0) |

Skills Athletics +5, Perception +2

Senses passive Perception 12

Languages any one language (usually Common)

Challenge 3 (700 XP)

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The veteran makes two longsword attacks. If it has a shortsword drawn, it can also make a shortsword attack.

Longsword. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d8 + 3) slashing damage, or 8 (1d10 + 3) slashing damage if used with two hands.

Shortsword. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d6 + 3) piercing damage.

Heavy Crossbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, range 100/400 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d10) piercing damage.

Korasch [Alkith]

Medium fiend (demon), chaotic evil

Armor Class 17 (natural armor)

Hit Points 157 (15d8 + 90)

Speed 40 ft.

| STR | DEX | CON | INT | WIS | CHA |
|---------|---------|---------|--------|---------|--------|
| 12 (+1) | 19 (+4) | 22 (+6) | 6 (-2) | 11 (+0) | 7 (-2) |

Saving Throws Dex+8, Con +10

Skills Stealth +8

Damage Resistances acid, cold, fire, lightning; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks

Damage Immunities poison

Condition Immunities charmed, frightened, poisoned

Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 10

Languages Abyssal, telepathy 120 ft.

Challenge 11 (7,200 XP)

Amorphous. The alkith can move through a space as narrow as 1 inch wide without squeezing.

False Appearance. While the alkith is motionless, it is indistinguishable from an ordinary slime or fungus.

Foment Madness. Any creature that isn't a demon that starts its turn within 30 feet of the alkith must succeed on a DC 18 Wisdom saving throw, or it hears a faint buzzing in its head for a moment and has disadvantage on its next attack roll, saving throw, or ability check.

If the saving throw against Foment Madness fails by 5 or more, the creature is instead subjected to the confusion spell for 1 minute (no concentration required by the alkith). While under the effect of that confusion, the creature is immune to Foment Madness.

Magic Resistance. The alkith has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The alkith makes three tentacle attacks.

Tentacle. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 15 ft., one target. *Hit:* 18 (4d6 + 4) acid damage.

Ohlega HERNISDOTTIR [Scout]

Medium humanoid (any race), any alignment

Armor Class 13 (leather armor)

Hit Points 16 (3d8 + 3)

Speed 30 ft.

| STR | DEX | CON | INT | WIS | CHA |
|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| 11 (+0) | 14 (+2) | 12 (+1) | 11 (+0) | 13 (+1) | 11 (+0) |

Skills Nature +4, Perception +5, Stealth +6, Survival +5

Senses passive Perception 15

Languages any one language (usually Common)

Challenge 1/2 (100 XP)

Keen Hearing and Sight. The scout has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on hearing or sight.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The scout makes two melee attacks or two ranged attacks.

Shortsword. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d6 + 2) piercing damage.

Longbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, ranged 150/600 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d8 + 2) piercing damage.

Modify Ohlega

- **Type** humanoid (human)
- **Alignment** Neutral
- **Skills** Athletics +2, History +2, Investigation +2, Perception +3
- **Languages** Common
- **Actions** remove the **Longbow** action (unless the characters provide her with a ranged weapon in which case modify her accordingly).

Reef Shark

Medium beast, unaligned

Armor Class 12 (natural armor)

Hit Points 22 (4d8 + 4)

Speed 0 ft., swim 40 ft.

| STR | DEX | CON | INT | WIS | CHA |
|---------|---------|---------|--------|---------|--------|
| 14 (+2) | 13 (+1) | 13 (+1) | 1 (-5) | 10 (+0) | 4 (-3) |

Skills Perception +2

Senses blindsight 30 ft., passive Perception 12

Languages —

Challenge 1/2 (100 XP)

Pack Tactics. The shark has advantage on an attack roll against a creature if at least one of the shark's allies is within 5 feet of the creature and the ally isn't incapacitated.

Water Breathing. The shark can breathe only underwater.

ACTIONS

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d8 + 2) piercing damage.



SARGASSUM SPIRIT [Wraith]

Medium undead, neutral evil

Armor Class 13

Hit Points 67 (9d8 + 27)

Speed 30 ft., fly 60 ft. (hover)

| STR | DEX | CON | INT | WIS | CHA |
|--------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| 6 (-2) | 16 (+3) | 16 (+3) | 12 (+1) | 14 (+2) | 15 (+2) |

Damage Resistances acid, cold, fire, lightning, thunder; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks not made with silvered weapons

Damage Immunities necrotic, poison

Condition Immunities charmed, exhaustion, grappled, paralyzed petrified, poisoned, prone, restrained

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 12

Languages the languages it knew in life

Challenge 5 (1,800 XP)

Incorporeal Movement. The wraith can move through other creatures and objects as if they were difficult terrain. It takes 5 (1d10) force damage if it ends her turn inside an object.

Sunlight Sensitivity. While in sunlight, the wraith has disadvantage on attack rolls, as well as on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on sight.

ACTIONS

Life Drain. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 21 (4d8 + 3) necrotic damage. The target must succeed on a DC 14 Constitution saving throw or its hit point maximum is reduced by an amount equal to the damage taken. This reduction lasts until the target finishes a long rest. The target dies if this effect reduces its hit point maximum to 0.

Create Specter. The wraith targets a humanoid within 10 feet of it that has been dead for no longer than 1 minute and died violently. The target's spirit rises as a specter in the space of its corpse or in the nearest unoccupied space. The specter is under the wraith's control. The wraith can have no more than seven spectres under its control at one time.

Modify Sargassum Spirit

The sargassum spirits are cursed sargassum dryads, basically wraiths. Modify the wraiths as follows:

- **Languages** Elven, Sylvan

SKORRI BOARSON [Blackguard]

Medium humanoid (any), any non-good alignment

Armor Class 18 (plate)

Hit Points 153 (18d8 + 72)

Speed 30 ft.

| STR | DEX | CON | INT | WIS | CHA |
|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| 18 (+4) | 11 (+0) | 18 (+4) | 11 (+0) | 14 (+2) | 15 (+2) |

Saving Throws Wis +5, Cha +5

Skills Athletics +7, Deception +5, Intimidation +5

Senses passive Perception 12

Languages any one language (usually Common)

Challenge 8 (3,900 XP)

Spellcasting. The blackguard is a 10th-level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 13, +5 to hit with spell attacks). It has the following paladin spells prepared:

- 1st level (4 slots): *command*, *protection from evil and good*, *thunderous smite*
- 2nd level (3 slots): *branding smite*, *find steed*
- 3rd level (2 slots): *blinding smite*, *dispel magic*

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The blackguard makes three attacks with its glaive or its shortbow.

Glaive. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 9 (1d10 + 4) slashing damage.

Shortbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, range 80/320 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d6 + 2) piercing damage.

Dreadful Aspect (Recharges after a Short or Long Rest). The blackguard exudes magical menace. Each enemy within 30 feet of the blackguard must succeed on a DC 13 Wisdom saving throw or be frightened for 1 minute. If a frightened target ends its turn more than 30 feet away from the blackguard, the target can repeat the saving throw, ending the effect on itself on a success.

Modify Skorri

- **Type** humanoid (human)
- **Languages** Abyssal, Common, Gnoll

TERRIS Deepfuroow [Bandit]

Medium humanoid (any race), any non-lawful alignment

Armor Class 12 (leather armor)

Hit Points 11 (2d8 + 2)

Speed 30 ft.

| STR | DEX | CON | INT | WIS | CHA |
|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| 11 (+0) | 12 (+1) | 12 (+1) | 10 (+0) | 10 (+0) | 10 (+0) |

Senses passive Perception 10

Languages any one language (usually Common)

Challenge 1/8 (25 XP)

ACTIONS

Scimitar. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d6 + 1) slashing damage.

Light Crossbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, range 80/300 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d8 + 1) piercing damage.

Modify Terris

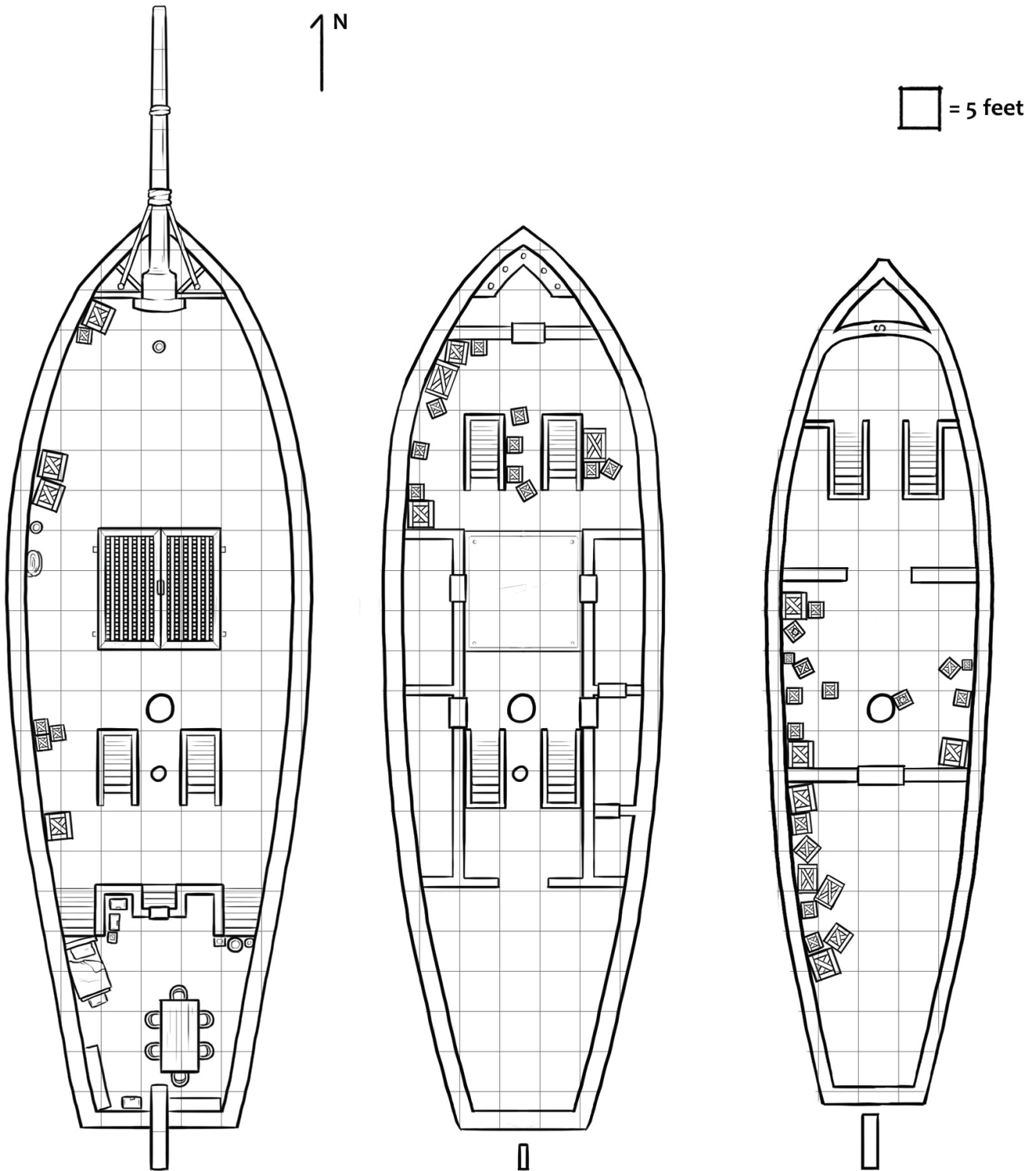
- **Type** humanoid (dwarf)
- **Alignment** neutral
- **Speed** 25 ft.
- **Skills** Perform +5, Persuasion +5
- **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 11
- **Languages** Common, Dwarven, Elven
- Add **Dwarven Resilience** and **Stonecunning**
- Remove **Light Crossbow** action (unless the characters provide him with a ranged weapon in which case modify him accordingly).

Appendix 1A: Northern Alaron



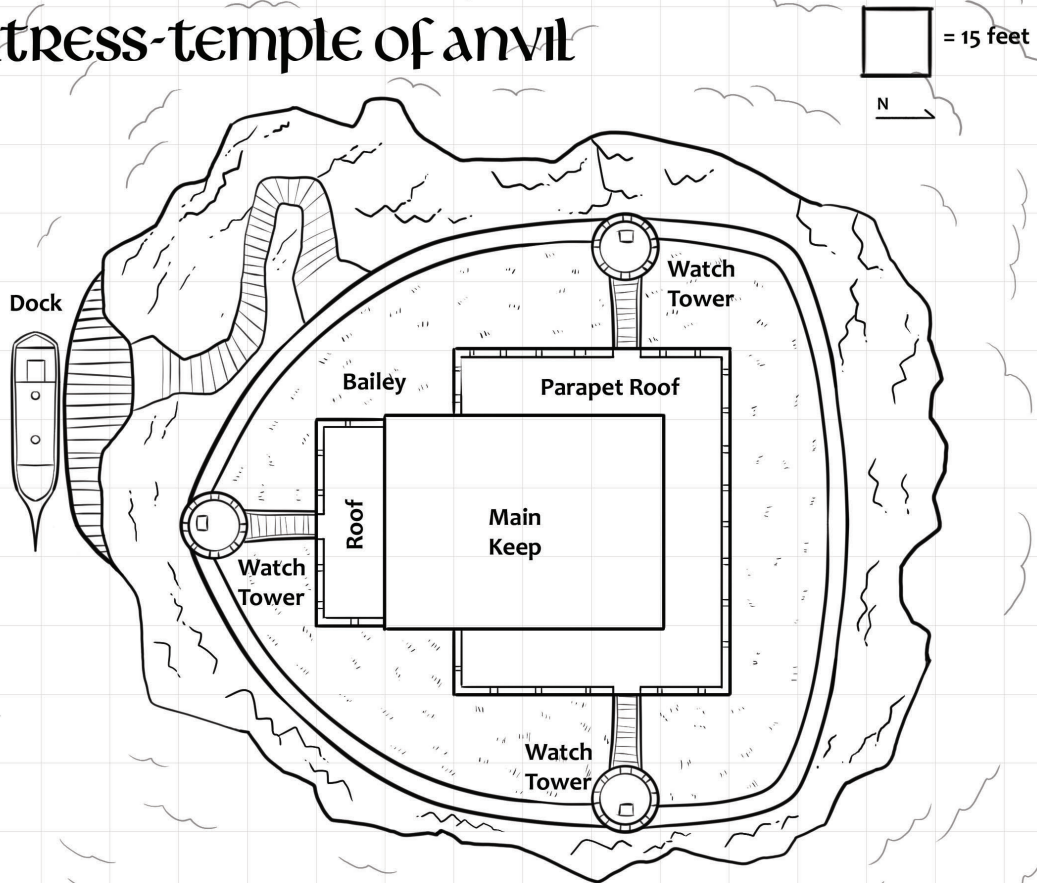
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Appendix 1B: The Justly Scorned



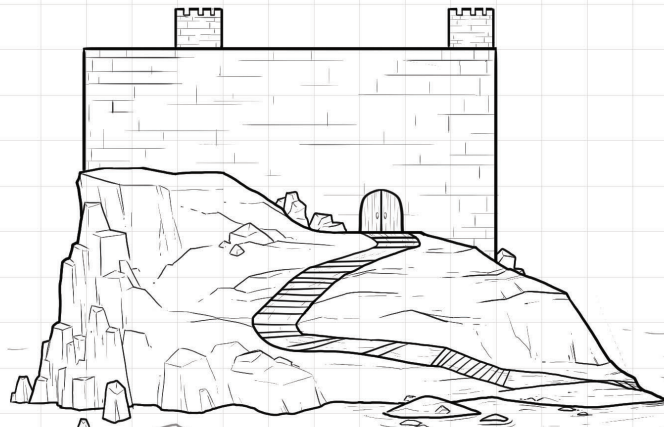
Appendix 1C: Isle of Anvil

fortress-temple of anvil

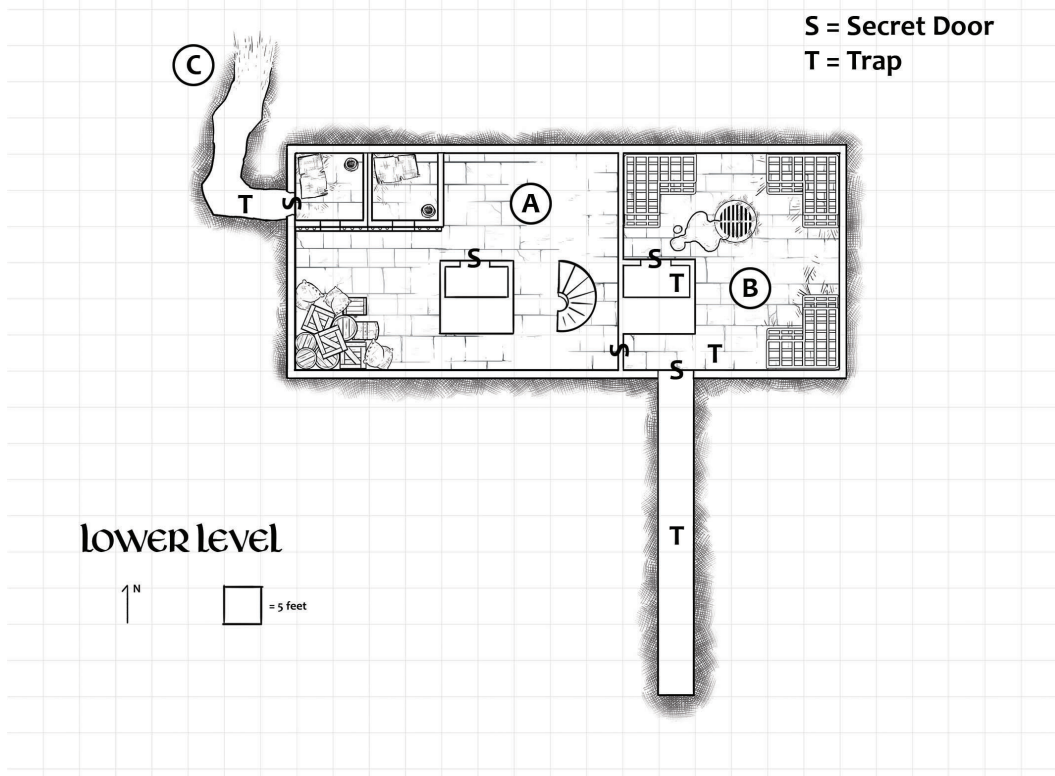
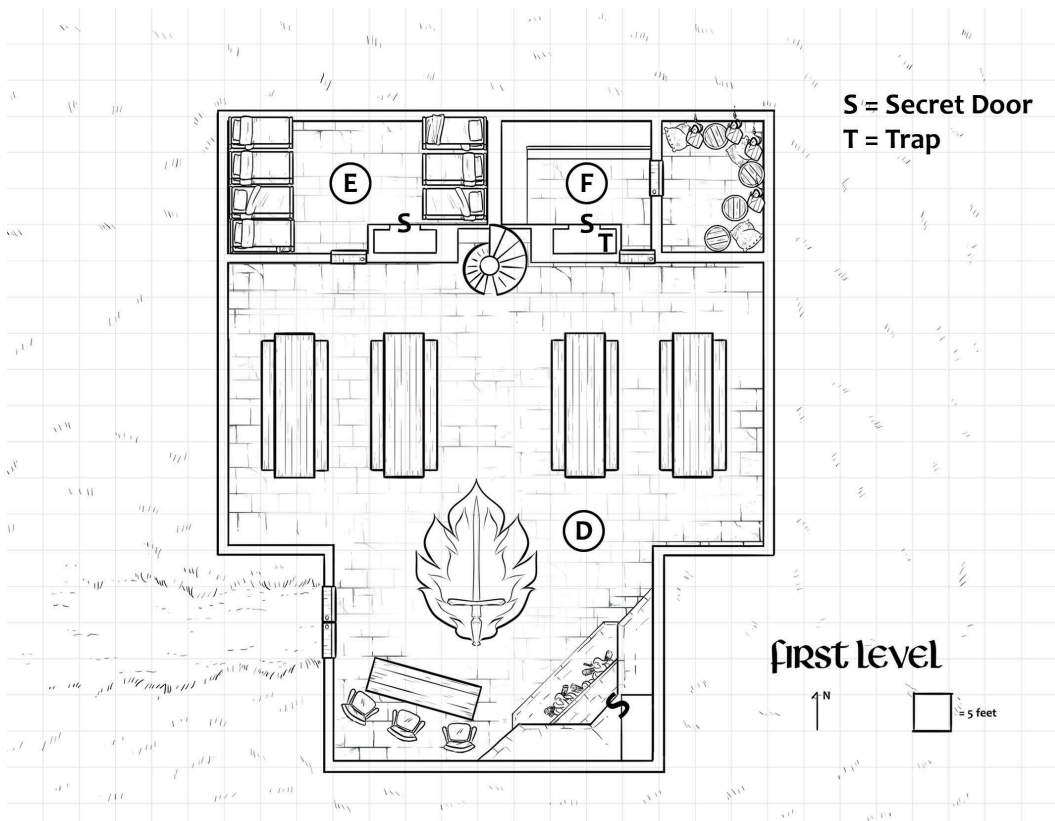


side view

□ = 15 feet



Appendix 1d: fortress-Temple Map 1

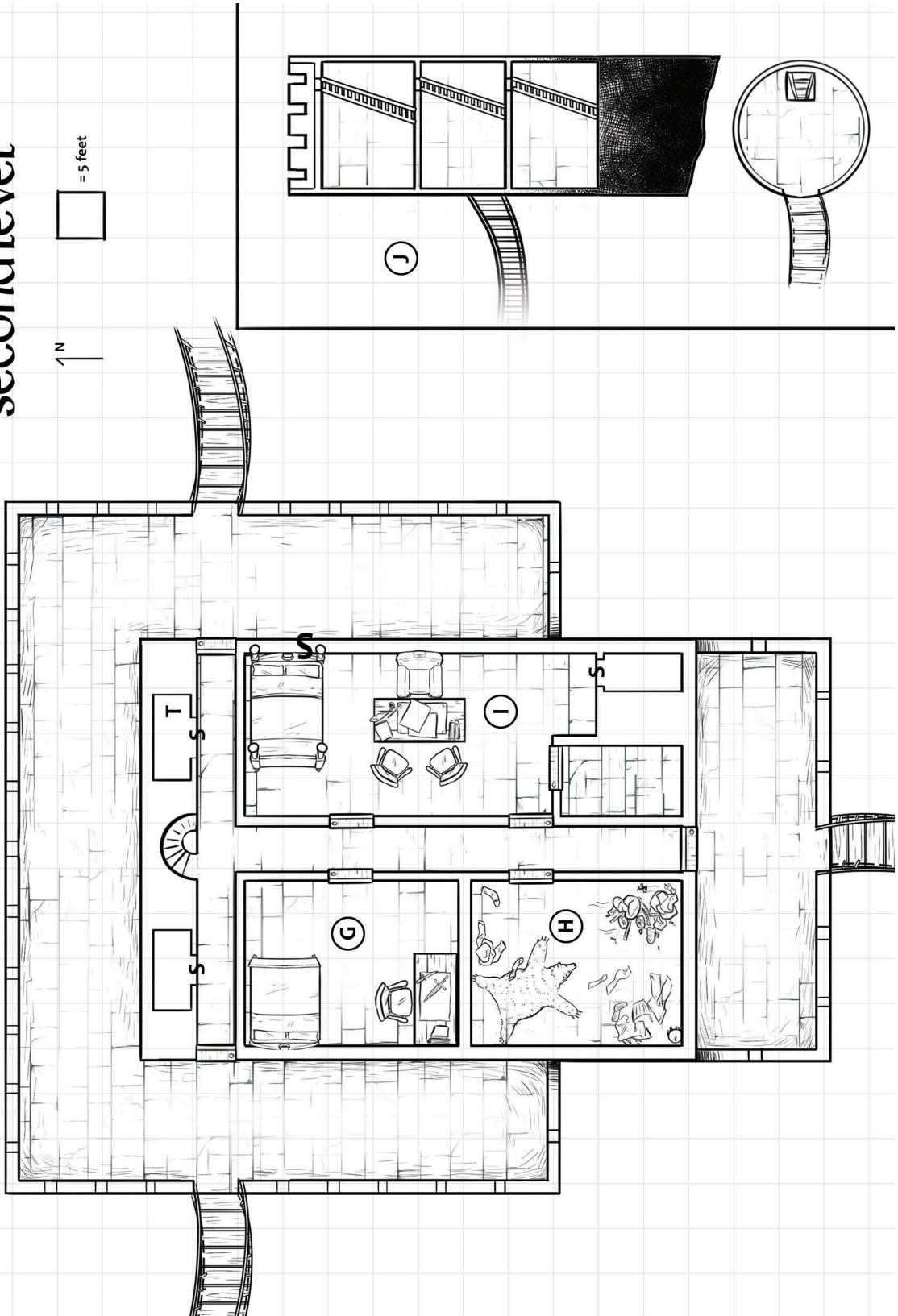


Appendix 1E: fortress-temple Map 2

second level



S = Secret Door
T = Trap



Appendix 2: Daily Schedule of the Guardians of the North

Daily Schedule

The following is an approximate daily schedule for the Guardians of the North cult while on Anvil, including the nightly guard rotations. The cult leaders can alter the schedule to suit their desires or to punish the acolytes. For example, having a training session start early to rob them of free time, or ending a meal after only a half-hour.

Breakfast. 8 AM to 9 AM

Morning Free Time. 9 AM to 10 AM

Morning Training Session. 10 AM to 12 PM

Lunch. 12 PM to 1 PM

Afternoon Free Time. 1 PM to 3 PM

Afternoon Training Session. 3 PM to 5 PM

Dinner*. 5 PM to 6 PM

Evening Free Time. 6 PM to 8 AM

*The cult leaders sometimes force everyone to stay late after dinner. A keg of ale or mead is tapped, and nobody can go to bed or on watch until it is empty.

Guard Duty Schedule

Each acolyte is expected to perform one 8-hour long watch rotation each night, either in one of the three watchtowers or patrolling the walls.

The guard rotations purposefully overlap to prevent acolytes from getting more than six hours of continuous rest. The cult leaders routinely perform surprise inspections every few hours to make sure no one is sleeping on duty.

First Watch. 6 PM to 2 AM

Second Watch. 8 PM to 4 AM

Third Watch. 12 AM to 8 A



Appendix 3A. Guardians of the North

Culture and Traditions

The cult glorifies all aspects of Northlander culture, but primarily focuses on the virtues of strength, hardiness, and bravery. They embrace notions of honor and an individual's need to defend against embarrassment or challenges. Weakness and cowardice are grave sins or terrible insults. The cult believes Northlander traditions are under attack, and they must guard against outside influences.

The Guardians generally dislikes arcane magic, thieves, and city folk. They disparage notions of art, higher education, and sophistication, seeing these traits as impractical. The cult doesn't forbid individuals with these backgrounds from joining, but the traits are generally viewed as embarrassing weaknesses to be abandoned or mocked.

Though the cult professes acceptance of all races and genders, their leadership is almost always human or male, and commonly both.

Religious Cult

The cult worships the war god Tempus, also called the Foehammer or the Lord of Battles. The deity directs his followers to be brave, never turn from battle, and obey the honorable rules of engagement.

The Guardians of the North cult diverges from the main religion by primarily focusing on an individual's mettle and honor, with competition greatly encouraged. Members are expected to be fearless warriors in defense of their home and Northlander culture.

While clergy of Tempus refer to themselves as "Hammers," the cult instead calls individuals, "Guardians." New adherents are called "acolytes."

Ritual

The words, "Tempus thanks you," are used by the faithful whenever witnessing a deed seen as pleasing to Tempus, with the complimented party expected to respond with, "And I thank Tempus."

Appendix 3B: Haldis Ulfsdottir's Letter

After your successes in defending northern Alaron, Haldis "Swift Feet" Ulfsdottir has the following letter sent to you.

My Friends,

I already owe you a tremendous debt, but I fear there is no one else I can trust with this delicate and dangerous task.

I've received confirmation the Guardians of the North are indirectly responsible for the death and destruction in recent months. Specifically, I suspect their leader, "Skorri Bearson," is pulling the strings at a distance. I know not why, have no solid evidence, and the Tempus-worshipping cult is an entrenched, politically influential force.

The temple-fortress on the Island of Anvil is too well-defended for anything short of a full military assault. We cannot risk martyring their leader... not to mention however many innocent fools he tricks into dying for him.

They use the island for training new acolytes, but the gods only know what else. We need someone to infiltrate the cult, gather evidence against Skorri, and bring him back for a fair trial. I fear anything less risks pushing more people toward the Guardians, and perhaps even another civil war. Please go, if you are willing. Should Bearson or any others prove worthy of arrest, you are fully empowered to act on the jarl's behalf.

Our agents discovered the captain of the Guardian's supply ship, one "Dag Colder," was a Northlands reaver and wanted for a number of crimes. A combination of amnesty and bribery was sufficient for him to provide transport and vouch for you as prospective acolytes. Though I warn, take care. If the need was less dire, I would never dare to trust a traitor.

Sincerely,

Haldis "Swift Feet" Ulfsdottir

Appendix 3C: Keolinn Ni Brianin's Betrayal

The fomorian **Keolinn Ni Brianin** left the following note behind in the event of her death, or relayed the following information in exchange for her life.

To Whom It May Concern,

Should you possess this correspondence, it is likely I am dead.

Regardless, your reading means I have failed my Queen, and I can only presume your responsibility. Maybe you are one of my many enemies, an opportunistic betrayer, or simply some righteous pawn of fate. In the end, I suppose it matters little. I realized the risks of my ambitions long ago.

However, I adamantly refuse to accept disappointment if far more arrogant and small-minded cowards are allowed to prosper. Had I known, "Skorri Boarson" better, I never would have entered an alliance.

Skorri is weak, and like many fragile men, he only imagines himself strong. He hides on the isle of Anvil, surrounding himself with malleable sycophants. His so-called Guardians of the North defend him, but I suspect are more to protect his fragile ego.

I must also give a warning, should you venture there. I presented him with one of the coral skulls of the Ocean's Sisters as a gift. At the time, I believed it a meaningless gesture, but he somehow managed to summon and bind the spirits of the shadow-cursed sea dryads. Skorri should not have been capable of this, and I suspect a hidden power is behind him. I've seen visions of a fanged fiend running in the wake of a laughing, emerald-eyed demon, but do not know what it means.

Perhaps you wisely ask why would I betray an ally with no clear gain? Maybe it is spiteful and petty, but the repulsive brute deserves far worse. I hope he suffers, but not with simple pain or death. Rather, I pray his lies are all exposed, with his weakness put on display for all the world to see.

Keolinn Ni Brianin

Appendix 3D: Tale of the Ocean's Sisters

The Song of the Sargassum Spirits tell the following story.

The Island of Oman was always a bridge between worlds. But the way was safeguarded by the Ocean's Sisters – dryads of the reef, waves, and storm.

While few could pass through the blinking portals, many dark creatures tested the Sisters. After all, they believed, compassion was weakness.

These wretches each fell, one by one, and their bones all joined the coral. For a gentle sea can be a righteous terror when unwarily crossed by fools.

Then, the forces of the shadows grew strong. The unseelie danced, the giants marched, and the gates swung wide before them. The Sisters knew they could no longer hold back their enemies, who hungered for revenge. Still, they fought, even if death, and worse, was certain.

The invaders broke the Sisters and cursed the reefs they loved. Darkness consumed all the life and left nothing but bone behind. The shadow creatures thought this torment would turn the dryads to their cause.

They were wrong.

Even in an accursed state, the Sisters were as wild as a raging storm. It is said they spite them still, forever struggling and refusing to surrender.

Appendix 4: Character Rewards

If found during the adventure, the characters can keep the following magic items; it's suggested that you print off enough copies of this page to be able to give one to each of your players (crossing out rewards they didn't receive during the session).

Potion of Healing [Greater]

Potion, uncommon

You regain hit points when you drink this potion. The number of hit points depends on the potion's rarity, as shown in the Potions of Healing table. Whatever its potency, the potion's red liquid glimmers when agitated. A *potion of greater healing* cures $4d4 + 4$ hit points. This item can be found in the *Dungeon Master's Guide*.

Ring of Mind-Shielding

Ring, uncommon (requires attunement)

While wearing this ring, you are immune to magic that allows other creatures to read your thoughts, determine whether you are lying, know your alignment, or know your creature type. Creatures can telepathically communicate with you only if you allow it.

You can use an action to cause the ring to become invisible until you use another action to make it visible, until you remove the ring, or until you die.

If you die while wearing the ring, your soul enters it, unless it already houses a soul. You can remain in the ring or depart for the afterlife. As long as your soul is in the ring, you can telepathically communicate with any creature wearing it. A wearer can't prevent this telepathic communication.

This ring is fashioned from yellowed gnoll fangs bound together in a circle. If **Skorri Boarson** is not killed during *Tide of Blood MOON5-3 Bloodlust Tempered*, this functions as a normal ring of mind shielding.

If Skorri Boarson was killed, the ring contains the soul of **Korasch**, a demon spirit sent by Yeenoghu to possess and empower his greatest fangs. Korasch sees the world only in terms of power. He seeks to push his wielder to gain strength by any means and to dominate the weak. He is mostly a voice in the back of the mind of the character but could influence the character's behavior in moments of weakness.

This item can be found in the *Dungeon Master's Guide*.





RISING SHADOWS

SHEET #

CCC-BMG-MOON5-3 ADVENTURE TITLE ADVENTURE LOGSHEET

Character Name

Class

Moonshae Organization
(optional)

Player Name

Event and Date

Dungeon Master

LEVELING

Starting Level

Level Accepted?

Ending Level

MAGIC ITEMS

Starting

Earned

Spent

Total

GOLD

Starting

Gained

Spent

Total

DOWNTIME

Starting

Earned

Spent

Total

MAGIC ITEM UNLOCKED

Ring of Mind Shielding

This ring is fashioned from yellowed gnoll fangs bound together in a circle. If Skorri Boarson is not killed, this functions as a normal ring of mind shielding. If Skorri Boarson was killed, the ring contains the soul of Korasch, a demon spirit sent by Yeenoghu to possess and empower his greatest fangs. Korasch sees the world only in terms of power. He seeks to push his wielder to gain strength by any means and to dominate the weak. He is mostly a voice in the back of the mind of the character but could influence the character's behavior in moments of weakness.

(rarity, Table F, requires attunement)

Consumables

Potion of Greater Healing *(uncommon, Table A)*

STORY SUMMARY

You were recruited to infiltrate the Guardians of the North and arrest their leader, Skorri Boarson, preferably with solid evidence of his and the cult's wrongdoing. The cult is based on a small island fortress at Alaron's northern coast where they train promising cult members. Posing as prospecting members you got on the island and started your investigation. You learned that its leadership was corrupt, worshipping the demon lord Yeenoghu. The acolytes had good intentions, and the island was used to brainwash them into compliance. Eventually you confronted Skorri Boarson and the other leaders of the cult.

What happened to Skorri Boarson?

Caught alive / Escaped / Killed

ADVENTURE NOTES

Story Awards

None.

Moonshae Organizations

Completing the MOON5 trilogy counts as a major objective for the Harbingers of Liberation organization.

