



ADVENTURERS LEAGUE

CORRUPTION

OF THE

ELDEROAK

FOREST CITY
COMIC CON



Corruption of the Elderoak

Perpetual twilight awaits heroes when a simple request leads them to lands beyond time, beyond mortal understanding, and where those with twisted fates pray for atonement and freedom. Will joyful light return to this ancient land or will the curiosity of an outsider bring ruin to all.

Part 2 of 3 of **Tales of Estirwald**

A 4-Hour Adventure for 5th-10th Level Characters



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Introduction

Welcome to *Corruption of the Elderoak*, a D&D Adventurers League™ adventure, part of the official D&D Adventurers League™ organized play system and the Tomb of Annihilation™ storyline season.

This adventure begins in the booming town of Estirwald, south West of Elmwood, where a carnival is currently being held. Being experienced adventurers with some renown already, the party will be tasked to investigate thorny bushes that have been growing at an alarming rate in the nearby Cormanthor forest and look for clues about a wizard that used to live in Estirwald many years ago.

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

This section provides the adventure's background, a list of prominent NPCs, an overview of the adventure in play, and hooks that you can use to introduce your players's characters to the action.

Authors' Foreword

This adventure was designed for replayability such that each group should have the possibility to experience a story from a different point of view, and returning players would enjoy a different twist. For this reason, this module offers alternate routes through adventure. Enjoy!

Three pillars of adventuring make up the D&D game: exploration, social interaction, and combat. To encourage roleplaying, DMs may reward extra or new "Charms" if the group engages in social interactions to help create solutions to encounters.

Adventure Background

Having outgrown all further opportunities of his home hamlet, Estirwald, the wizard Randel Malark Ambledragon went adventuring in the hope of obtaining new power and magical knowledge. During his travels, he acquired a magical acorn that he misidentified as a stray specimen from the Feywild.

Little did Randel know that someday he would be venturing in the Feywild himself and be offered hospitality by one Lord Coradin. As a token of gratitude for being such a generous host, Randel gifted his new fey friend with the acorn which unbeknownst to him was spawned in the Shadowfell. No one suspected it would swiftly grow to be a dark oak that would alter the environment, corrupt the Stronghold's denizens and weaken the Elderoak from within.

As time flows asynchronously in the Feywild, decades passed while the material plane only experienced several years, during which the hamlet of Estirwald grew into a town proper through the influx of refugees fleeing disasters from the Moonsea cities of Phlan, Mulmaster, Hillsfar, and even the nearby Elmwood.

The newly elected Mayor of Estirwald, Arauna Lilly Davenrish, a noble and refugee from Phlan herself, sought to organize the construction efforts to ensure general well-being of her citizens. Searching through the few official records, she

stumbled upon the story of a wizard born in the hamlet some 30 years ago, which attracted her attention, but quickly dismissed it in favour of other priorities including reports of growing sickly thorny dark briars in the nearby Cormanthor forest.

Sensing a need to comfort the town folks after all the hardship and struggles they'd gone through, Arauna Lilly Davenrish proposed a new annual festival in the hopes of improving morale and creating more friendly ties with the nearby settlements. Through word-of-mouth, the festival has now attracted people of various tenure and social rank, including both fledgling and veteran adventurers. Seeing an opportunity, she approaches them and asks them to look in the thorny thicket and its infestation, and if time allows, to uncover more information about the wizard.

Location and NPC Summary

The following NPCs and locations feature prominently in this adventure.

Randel Malark Ambledragon (RAN-Dal Mal-ARK). A wizard that once lived in the town of Estirwald, unwitting source of the Elderoak's corruption.

Arauna Lilly Davenrish (A-RAW-na). The current mayor of Estirwald, a noble born in Phlan whose family was decimated by Vorgansharax's attack on that city.

The Elderoak Stronghold. A Stronghold built inside a gargantuan oak tree by generations of fey beings, mixing masonry and living wood.

Lord Coradin (COR-A-Din). Ancient fey Lord who has been corrupted by the Elderoak.

Lady Sethikye (Seth-E-kye). Spouse of Lord Coradin, she now roams the Stronghold's gardens and hunts intruders.

The Elderoak. This gigantic oak reaches for the sky and houses the Stronghold within its trunk, root system and branches. It is being corrupted from within by the Dark Oak.

The Dark Oak. Grown from an acorn originating from the Shadowfell, this semi-sentient parasitic tree drains life from its surroundings and corrupts everything in range.

Adventure Overview

The adventure is broken down into five parts:

Part 1: The Forest City Festival. The adventurers arrive at the town of Estirwal and briefly partake in the festival activities before being approached by Arauna Lilly Davenrish, the town's mayor, with a request to investigate unnatural growth of the briars nearby and possibly find information about a wizard that used to live in this town.

Part 2: Into the Feywild. Investigating the briars unexpectedly leads the adventurers through a portal to the Feywild. As they realize what has happened,

they meet with two dryad sisters asking for their help to recover a crown of leaves they lost in a nearby pond. If they accept the task, the sisters will explain their brother's situation and ask for help to cleanse the Elderoak Stronghold when they return. If they refuse, the dryads disappear and let them aimlessly wander the Feywild until arriving at a bridge guarded by a corrupted treant.

Part 3: The Stronghold. The party is either guided by the dryad sisters to the Elderoak Stronghold, armed with knowledge of the situation, or they end up finding the Elderoak by themselves. They must enter the place and explore while facing several threats until they can reach its throne room where the corruption originated.

Part 4: The Throne Room. Inside the throne room, they face Lord Coradin and must find a way to either defeat or redeem him along with the Elderoak Stronghold's denizens by cleansing the corruption.

Part 5: The Aftermath. Once they've dealt with Lord, the adventurers need to find a way back to the Material Plane, where they can report their findings and collect a reward.

Adventure Hooks

This adventure starts in the booming town of Estirwald. Several reasons could have led the characters to this place:

Lords' Alliance (Faction Assignment). Arauna Lilly Davenrish is a Lords' Alliance representative. Her family was decimated during Vorgansharax' assault on Phlan and found herself on the roads with very few possessions. She has recently settled in a hamlet that has grown significantly over the last couple of years and now occupies the position of elected mayor. The Lords' Alliance would like its agents to support this new town while monitoring relations with nearby Elmwood, which has also gone through hardship of late.

Emerald Enclave (Faction Assignment). The Emerald Enclave, through Lords' Alliance contacts, has had word of strange dark sickly briars appearing in the Cormanthor forest, close to the new booming town of Estirwald. The faction asks its nearby operatives to go investigate while bolstering the festivities being held.

Zhentarim, Order of the Gauntlet, and Harpers (Faction Assignment). Through information sharing with the Lords' Alliances, the Black Network, the Order of the Gauntlet and Those Who Harp have heard about the new booming town of Estirwald

which has grown tremendously over the last couple of years, due to refugees pouring in from the various Moonsea cities following elemental cult activities, demon lords' invasions, dragon occupation, appearance of sinister mists or other crises. These three factions are calling for their agents to head to the town and support efforts to provide some relief to the common folks. Plus, everyone deserves the entertainment of a festival occasionally...

Friend of the Pierced Snout Kobolds. If a character has the Story Award "Respect of the Pierced Snout Tribe" (see CCC-FXC01 Nothing Happens in Elmwood by Christopher M. Sniezak and Xavier A. Devenoges), they are approached by two kobolds before the beginning of this adventure who tell them that Matron Tokni has a vision where she saw them enter dark briars and face dark, twisted fey creatures. The kobolds will hand each character with the Story Award a pendant made of twigs, feathers and rocks, which acts as protective charm in Part 4, and bid them to head to the town of Estirwald before the festival starts.

Tymora's Blessing. Factionless characters may have traveled in the region and heard various gossips from other travelers on the roads. Part of the rumors they learn about a new festival being held in a fresh new town named Estirwald. Through various discussions with the people, they find their way to the hamlet just as the festival starts.

Part 1. The Forest City Festival

Estimated Duration: 15 minutes

The party will meet with the Mayor, Lilly Davenrish, during a festival in Estirwald. Mayor Davenrish is accompanied by a tiefling scout named Hope, who lives in the forest. Hope comes with complaints of a growing thorny briar that is blocking the road into the forest. This is causing quite a problem for visitors coming for the festival. Rumors about the Magician Randel Malark Ambledragon being in the area also cause concerns.

General Features

Estirwald has the following general features.

Terrain. Estirwald is located under the partial shade of the forest.

Weather. Clear skies for days.

Light. The characters arrive early afternoon, the sun is up with not a cloud to be seen.

Smells and Sounds. The streets around the local tavern The Hardy Bowl, smells of cooking food, ale, and lots of people. The noise level is celebratory, but with an edge of nervous laughter.

It's a perfect day for a festival. Having arrived in the Hamlet of Estirwald, you discover the playful mood of a festival in progress. About an hour into the festival, you are approached by two women. The look in their eyes suggests that they have a request to make.

Mayor Davenrish approaches the adventurers with an offer of food and drink at the local tavern, the Hardy Bowl, and with the request of finding out the cause of strange thorny briars that have grown practically overnight in the forest.

Hope, a tiefling scout, can tell the following:

- They have spotted a massive briar in the nearby Cormanthor forest.
- Attempts to burn or damage it has caused it to grow bigger at an unnaturally fast rate. Attacking it directly has also left several people wounded.
- It grew overnight and is now overtaking several roads through the forest. This will block people from arriving and leaving Estirwald.

- Hope can guide the adventures to where she has discovered some openings.

Mayor Davenrish adds the following information:

- When she first came to hamlet, she was looking into its history. During her research she came across mention of a magician named Randel Malark Ambledragon.
- Randel was born in Estirwald 30 years ago and resettled here after his adventuring days.
- Conflicting rumours suggest that either he was unimpressive as a wizard, or pretended to be a wizard of lesser power to hide his true potential.
- He disappeared some years ago into the forest, but those few who remember him say he was a curious person and experimented with various magics causing random and strange happenings.
- There is a rumor that Randel was recently spotted in the area before the briar appeared.

Mayor Davenrish requests that the adventurers explore the briar and discover what is causing it to grow. In particular, she asks them to confirm whether or not it's related to Randel. She offers the party 200 gold in reward.. If prompted for more reward, she accepts to increase to 300 gold.

Tricks of the Trade

Keep this part short and mostly roleplay. They can play one or two short carnie games such as ring toss, challenges of arm wrestling or partake of drink or food before they are interrupted. The players can ask questions of Hope or the Mayor; however, don't let it dominate your time before moving onto Part 2.

Part 2. Into the Feywild

Estimated Duration: 45 minutes

The adventurers are led by a scout to the location the briars have been spotted. Upon investigation, they soon find a passage through the thicket and unknowingly step through a portal that brings them to the Feywild.

There they encounter two dryad sisters willing to share some information if they accept a task to recover a crown of leaves from a nearby pond. If the adventurers refuse, the sisters leave and let them deal with the local dangers by themselves. In any case, the characters end up finding the way to the Elderoak Stronghold from Part 3.

General Features

This region of the Feywild has the following general features.

Terrain. Dense forest and barely visible trails. While generally lush in vegetation, this region looks sick and withering, the natural color of plant life has tarnished to grey, and rot and decay are common sight.

Weather. The more the characters progress towards the Stronghold, the colder it gets, until breath turns to mists.

Light. Ambient diffuse dim light pierces through the canopy, and night never falls.

Smells and Sounds. Strangely silent, as if all life had disappeared or fled from this place with the only sounds to be heard are those of twigs and branches breaking under the character's weight. This region of the Feywild smells of rot and decay.

Read or paraphrase the following:

Hope leads you through the nearby forest to an area where you can see sickly-looking briars. As you get closer, you notice that around the thicket are corpses of rodents and birds, and even a young fawn.

Searching around, you notice holes large enough to let a individual enter, though most only extend a few feet before being blocked.

At last, you find one opening that extends further in, meandering through in the manner of a maze, until the sky gets clouded by overgrowth and you have the strange sensation that you've crossed some kind of frontier.

A. The two sisters' deal

Read or paraphrase the following:

As you continue walking, you come to realize that you are not in the same forest and Hope has vanished. Attempts to trail back prove unsuccessful as the briar path has closed behind you.

Looking around, whatever is causing the briars to grow sickly is affecting this region as well: trees appear gaunt, bushes have lost their foliage, and even the ground looks dry and thirsty.

Suddenly you hear a voice calling to you: "Welcome, travelers... we mean you no harm. My sister and I wonder why you are here?"

Searching for the voice's origin, you see two emaciated grey dryads emerge from a nearby dying tree.

The twin **Dryad** sisters, Celsa and Maple, are curious as to why the characters have entered the Feywild and see potential allies in them to help them redeem their brother, Lord Coradin. However, before they agree to divulge information, they seek to ensure the adventurers will be up to the challenge by asking them to recover Celsa's crown of leaves that she has lost at a nearby pond (see section B below). If asked why they do not do it themselves, they explain that the pond has guardians and that they are testing the characters.

If the adventurers agree to try and recover the crown then the sisters will share the following while traveling to the pond:

- The characters have entered the Feywild through a portal; unfortunately, the sisters do not know how they can go back. An answer might be found at the Elderoak.
- Several seasons ago, a fledgeling wizard entered the Feywild the same way the adventurers did: by stumbling on a portal.
- The wizard's name was Randel Malark Ambledragon and he originated from Faerûn.
- The dryads' brother, Lord Coradin, took an interest in the wizard and invited him to stay at the Elderoak stronghold, until he could find a way back to the material plane.
- The Elderoak has been built by generations of feys and is nested inside a gargantuan oak tree where masonry blends with natural walls.
- Before parting, the wizard offered Lord Coradin a magical acorn that he had found while adventuring. The gift was well received by the fey lord and the Elderoak's denizens; however, as it

grew strong in the throne room, it darkened and slowly started corrupting its surrounding.

- Most of the Stronghold's denizens have now faded from existence and turned into spectral figments, while some have become twisted monsters.
- Sensing that something was amiss, Celsa and Maple chose to leave the Stronghold, but even with the distance they feel their life force being drained.
- The two sisters hope that the characters will be able to find a way to end the corruption and redeem their brother and family.
- The corruption in the feywild has spread through the passageway from which the wizard originated, and will likely continue unless the magic of the acorn is stopped.
- If the party agrees to help, the two sisters can guide them to their brother's Stronghold, thus avoiding any further danger.

If, however, the characters dismiss the dryads and choose to proceed by themselves, they need to find their own way to Lord Coradin's Stronghold and face the bridge encounter (see section C below).

B. The Pond and the Crown of Leaves

The Pond's map is shown in Appendix Map 2.A.1.

Read or paraphrase the following:

Celsa and Maple lead you through the withered forest, telling you about their brother, until you arrive at a point where you can see a pond of stagnant water set inside a basin within the woods.

"It should be there," says Maple. "Celsa's crown should still be near the rock at the center of this pond. Alas, its guardians will not let us get any closer."

The crown of leaves has fallen into the water near the rocks and needs to be found with a DC 5 perception check once closer. However, the pond is surrounded by patches of **Razorvines**, limiting access and sight. A rotting rose bush, **Shambling Mound**, lies in wait at the bottom of the pond near the rocks, two patches of **Assassin Vines** hang from trees, and a group of six **Stirges** nest on the other side of the pond.

Adjusting this Encounter

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

- **Very Weak:** Remove one **Stirge**, one **Assassin Vines**, and there is no **Shambling Mound**
- **Weak:** Remove one **Stirge** and all **Assassin Vines**.
- **Strong:** add one patch of **Assassin Vines**.
- **Very Strong:** Add three **Stirges** and two **Assassin Vines**.

How the character wish to go about it is up to them. A best approach would be to stealth through, as to avoid waking up the Stirges. Alas, given the hidden dangers, remaining silent will be more difficult than the adventurers may think. If they attract the attention of the Assassin Vines or the Shambling Mound by coming close to them, combat will ensue and warn the other denizens.

The passive perception scores are:

Assassin Vines	10
Shambling Mound	10
Stirges	9

Razorvine

Razorvine is a plant that grow in wild tangles and hedges. It also clings to the sides of building and other surfaces as ivy does. A 10-ft-high, 10-foot-wide, 5-foot-thick wall or hedge of razorvine has AC 11, 25 hit points, and immunity to bludgeoning, piercing, and psychic damage.

When a creature comes into direct contact with razorvine for the first time on a turn, the creature must succeed a DC 10 Dexterity saving throw or take 5 (1d10) slashing damage from the razorvine's bladelike thorns.

Tricks of the Trade

This encounter can quickly get complex for a DM to run, because there are several types of monsters opposing the characters. To alleviate your burden, you can drop the Stirges and have them fly around the characters menacingly, but not attacking. Then focus the fight on the Shambling Mound and Assassin vines.

The map in Appendix shows possible locations for Assassin Vines, the Shambling Mound and the Stirges' nest location respectively with the A, S, and N letters.

Troubleshooting this encounter

It is possible the characters fail to recover the crown. Provided they tried, yet failed, the dryad sisters will

still share the information with them and call for more caution ahead.

Development

Once this encounter is over, the sisters plead with the party to help redeem their brother and offer the following information if they accept:

- Lord Coradin was the guardian of the passageways to and from the feywild in this area.
- He was corrupted by the Dark Oak. Save him and he may know a way to return you.
- If the party agree to help, the two sisters can guide them to their brother's Stronghold, thus avoiding any further danger. (Skip C: Bridge Encounter).
- Likewise, they will tell them of three routes they know that will get the adventurers into the Elderoak Stronghold.
- If asked to accompany the party, the sisters will decline, stating that entering the Stronghold will speed up their corruption.
- They recommend resting before entering the Elderoak; however, they are uncertain of how the passage of time will affect them when they return to their home plane.

According to the sisters, there are three ways of entering the Elderoak Stronghold:

Walls. There were smaller trees around the walls that the sisters used to climb to visit their brother's mastiffs. The trees and walls might be climbed, or perhaps by flight or teleporting. The walls lead to the kennels (Area A).

Secret Passage. At the bottom of the cliff, hidden among the roots of the tree, is a secret passage. It leads into the Elderoak via the Cistern (Area B).

Main Gate. The gate was often left open but had a guardian that watched over it. It leads to the Garden (Area C).

C. Bridge Encounter

The Bridge's map is shown in Appendix Map 2.A.2.

Read or paraphrase the following if the party does not partake in the sisters request:

You have been exploring the Feywild for hours and had to fend off all kind of attacks from the warped fauna and flora, which has had a toll on your endurance and ability to rest. At last, in the distance, you spot what looks like a Stronghold of some kind, built inside a gargantuan tree. At the bottom of the long slope in front of you lies a clearing that is crossed by a broad and fast river, over which spans a wooden bridge. Looking around, you see nothing out of the ordinary, yet you feel as if you're being observed.

Because the characters had to explore and fend off several attacks already:

- each character needs to succeed a DC 15 Constitution Saving or else suffer one level of Exhaustion. They also suffer 14 (4d6) damage from various sources.
- spellcasting characters (anyone able to cast spells) need to succeed one DC 15 Saving Throw, based on their Spellcasting ability or suffer the loss of 5 (1d8) levels of spell slots spent fighting; multiclassed spellcasters get to choose the ability.

On the opposite side of the bridge, by the river, a **Treat** is observing the characters and waiting for them to start crossing the bridge to animate two of the surrounding trees and attacks.

Adjusting this Encounter

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

- **Very Weak:** The Treat does not animate any tree.
- **Weak:** The Treat animates only one nearby Tree.
- **Strong:** one **Water Elemental** comes from under the bridge and joins the fray
- **Very Strong:** Two **Water Elementals** come from under the bridge and join the fray

Tricks of the Trade

Make sure to move the animated trees before the Treat, to draw the character's attention on dummies.

Development

Once this encounter is defeated, proceed to Part 3 without the adventurers gaining insight from the sisters into different routes of entry. These they must discover themselves.

Part 3. The Stronghold

Estimated Duration: 120 minutes

This part deals with the exploration of the fey Stronghold, where the adventurers need to find a way to its inner sanctum, the Throne Room, to confront Lord Coradin and the Dark Oak, in Part 4. It is designed as a series of locations and is purposely not fully mapped, as to prevent players from trying to determine content and precise teleportation points.

The Elderoak Stronghold was built by generations of fey who have shaped a gigantic tree and built sections of masonry, reinforced by numerous dweomers. Consequently, it is a living organism while sporting normal parts of construction. When adventurers deal damage to walls, ceiling or floor, sap slowly flows and crystalizes into ember to patch up the wounds.

Make sure to read this whole section before jumping right into each area.

General Features

The Stronghold is built inside an ancient massive tree. Over eons, the fey have magically shaped the tree and merged its organic matter with stone masonry, thus establishing a symbiosis relation. From outside, it resembles a gigantic oak with parts of stone and lumber appearing in several spots, and lit windows or balconies sprouting from the tree bark.

Terrain. Most of the encounters take place inside the Stronghold. Stone flooring, masonry walls and living lumber craftwork provide the inner structure, punctuated by some organic sections.

Weather. In the Gardens, the air is lukewarm, and the sky is clear, but moonless. When inside, the air is cold.

Light. When inside the Stronghold, ambient light is offered by torches and lanterns placed in various places. In the Gardens, an ambient dim light permeates from the sky, with patches of shadows from the giant tree leaves.

Smells and Sounds. The entire Stronghold smells of dust and rot. Distant whispers and occasional screams can be heard throughout the place.

Managing the adventure flow and time considerations

The Stronghold is described as a series of locations which are linked. Each subsection headers describes the available routes. However, the DM needs to consider the adventure flow and the available time, for this adventure was written in a way that enables various routes to the final objective, thus increasing its future replayability. Ultimately, groups of players would have different stories to tell others, even though they have played the same adventure.

The outer areas (A, B, and C) offer standard encounters consisting of a couple of creatures to interact with or defeat. The inner locations (D through F) offer more complex encounters, with scripted events and/or reactions; the intent is to deviate from traditional fights.

If given the opportunity, the party could explore the entire Stronghold before entering the final throne room. However, if you see that the story drags on and that the group will not meet the allocated time for in-store or convention play, you can elect to close doors and keep them shut, effectively railroading the party to the encounters you are most comfortable with and to the final encounter. If an adventurer attempts to force these doors open or uses magical means, the following events can take place:

Brute force. At first the door gives way, but then tendrils quickly grow and reinforce the structure, closing the door even further. Every weapon chop or damage is met with an instantaneous regrowth; the living structure heals itself.

Magical means. An attempt at using *knock* or similar spells will be met by a magical reaction, sending the spellcaster or item user flying 10 feet back and causing 7 points (2d6) of bludgeoning damage; a *Detect Magic* spell will reveal an abjuration dweomer growing organically around the door. Attempts at teleporting through the door is a dangerous option, for the adventurers have no idea what the area outside of the mapped locations looks like; they may well end up outside of the Stronghold and fall.

Effects of the corruption and resting inside the Stronghold

Though at first the Dark Oak acorn appeared beneficial, as it grew its corruption spread steadily and drained the Elderoak Stronghold's denizens of their will and lifeforce. Strange whispers were overheard by the inhabitants followed by sleep deprivation, exhaustion, madness, and finally fading into spectral existence for those lucky enough not to be twisted into monsters.

Adventurers may elect to take a short or long rest at any time; if they manage to secure a location, there are no apparent immediate dangers to them. However, due to the ambient corruption, they will be subject to stress in the form of whispers and nightmares.

Every short rest (1 hour) spent resting inside the Stronghold requires success of a DC 10 Constitution Save to avoid taking a level of exhaustion; this save is made with Advantage if a character has resistance

to necrotic damage, and the DC increases by 5 after each subsequent success.

Every long rest inside the Stronghold requires success of a DC 15 Wisdom Save to be able to effectively gain the benefits of the long rest. If a character fails the save, they are haunted by whispers and nightmares and are unable to rest.

Entering the Stronghold

When ready to proceed, read or paraphrase the following:

Your trek through the Feywild finally leads you in view of a humongous tree sitting on the edge of a cliff with some of its massive roots descending to the rocks down below. Murky water bleeds from the roots. Merged with the tree trunk, one can spot stone walls intermixed with living branches and windows. A portcullis appears raised at the foot of the tree.

How would you like to enter this place?

The Stronghold has three ways of entering:

Flying or teleporting over the Walls. A group of adventurers could possibly fly, teleport, or even climb the 120 ft of outer walls. These options will lead them to the Kennels (Area A). Refer to the section for information for that location.

Exploring around the Stronghold. By exploring around the Stronghold, adventurers will discover a hidden passage where the tree roots meet the bottom of the western cliff. Finding the hidden passage requires a DC 15 perception check or a DC 10 if told about it by the Dryad sisters. Entering the Stronghold with this option will lead them to the Cistern (Area B). Refer to the section for information for that location.

Going through the Main Gate. The Main gate is open and, while the sisters thought there was a guardian, no one is keeping watch over them. Adventurers can simply walk through and enter the Garden (Area C) where the guards are playing. Refer to the section for information for that location.

Clever adventurers will look for other ways in, such as teleporting directly inside; however, because the tree is merged with masonry and is shielded against scrying, it is impossible for them to precisely determine a safe location.; the spell or magical item simply fails.

Tricks of the Trade

Don't focus too long on how they get into the Elderoak. Keep any DC checks low. Move right into one of the areas (Area A, B, or C) once they have decided on which route to take. Just note if they go stealthily or not.

Area A. The Kennels

"That which is clearly known hath less terror than that which is but hinted at and guessed."

— Arthur Conan Doyle, The Hound of the Baskervilles

Once a place where the beloved mastiffs lived and were looked after, the kennels have become decrepit, abandoned, and desecrated. Only canine bones remain of its former occupants; their souls, however, haunt the location, growling at intruders, and ready to attack any moment.

The kennels are laid on two levels, and each hosts alcoves where the dogs lived, and pups were raised. Pillars run from the lower floor up to the ceiling, holding the upper level.

Winding staircases lead either to the Council Room or to the Reception Hall.

A thin layer of dust covers this place. In front of you, a set of stairs descend to a lower level while the current level is indented with dark alcoves. Two other sets of stairs ascend to other locations.

As you look around, you can't help but notice numerous dog skeletons, laying on the ground. It would appear that they remained obedient until their last moment. Against a pillar, you also notice that someone has engraved the following words: "The Wolves of Nosnra... who are they?".

As you enter, the doors shut behind you, leaving you trapped inside the room. From the dark alcoves, you see multiple pairs of red eyes observing you, and growls echo throughout the room. Suddenly, large dark forms lunge at you.

Six **dire wolves** and two **winter wolves** attack the adventurers and will fight until destroyed.

Thematical options: Spectral

The following modifications are optional and may add to the thematic description of the Kennels; however, the CR of the combat may increase. Consider applying the following to their respective stat blocks:

- Creature type: Large Undead, Neutral Evil
- Damage Resistance: Acid, Cold, Fire, Lightning, thunder: Bludgeoning, Piercing, and Slashing from Nonmagical Attacks
- Damage Immunities: Necrotic, Poison
- Condition Immunities: Charmed, Exhaustion, Grappled, Paralyzed, Petrified, Poisoned, Prone, Restrained, Unconscious
- Incorporeal Movement. The spectral creature can move through other creatures and objects as if they were difficult terrain. It takes 5 (1d10) force damage if it ends its turn inside object.

Note that given the desecration of the kennels, these wolves have advantage on saves versus Turn Undead.

The winter wolves will make best use of their breath against packed opponents, while the dire wolves will use their Incorporeal Movement to move between levels and get pack tactics.

Adjusting this Encounter

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

- **Very Weak:** Remove four **Dire Wolves** and one **Winter Wolf**
- **Weak:** Remove two **Dire Wolves** and remove one **Winter Wolf**
- **Strong:** add two **Winter Wolves**
- **Very Strong:** Add four **Dire Wolves** and two **Winter Wolves**

Treasure

At first, the kennels appear empty. However, upon close inspection and a successful DC 13 Intelligence (Investigation) check, the adventurers will find a tiny six legged spectral kitten with small bumps on their shoulders cowering and blinking in a corner. If a player character decides to keep it, they earn the story award: "A spectral displacer kitten?"

Development

When the encounter ends winding staircases allow the adventures to move to their next location either the Council Room (Area E) or Reception Hall (Area D).

Area B. Cistern

"Up, or down?"

— Labyrinth

Where the Elderoak's roots meet with the bottom of the cliff lies a hidden passage. Behind a massive stone door, a wet passageway leads to the Cistern. The Cistern is the source of the Elderoak Stronghold's water supplies. While the water used to be crystalline and perfectly filtered, the corruption has had a detrimental effect even here: the water has turned stagnant and muddy, while the few koi carps that lived in the 50 feet deep water have mutated into large ravenous monsters. The root covered ceiling is just 10 feet above the surface of the water.

There are two access routes from the Cistern that either lead to the Council Chamber or the Library. However, each passageway is currently flooded by water and blocked by a portcullis that can be opened via levers located on the far end of the cistern.

A wet passageway leads you to a cistern filled with deep, stagnant water. Ten feet above the surface of muddy water is a ceiling intermixed with stone and roots. Several platforms, covered in bioluminescent moss, litter the surface of the water. Makeshift plank bridges connect the platforms, creating a path towards two recesses. Stairs hugging the wall on both sides lead down into the water.

Two red giant dire goldfish (**giant sharks**) roam the stagnant water, waiting for a prey to embark on the planks, deliberately swim through, or disturb the water. Once they spot a target, they grapple it and drag it underwater (50 feet deep), where they'll spin and drown it. Given their size, the dire goldfish do not hesitate to jump out of water to either grab a target or crash on the planks, which also destroys the makeshift bridge. When a character is subject to the spinning, they can roll a DC15 Wisdom (Survival) check to figure their way up; characters with the Keen Mind feat make this roll with Advantage. If they fail, determine randomly their course of action.

Underwater disorientation

d10	Behavior
1-6	The creature uses all its movement to move in a random direction. To determine the direction, roll a d10 and assign a direction to each die face,

	including up and down. The creature doesn't take an action this turn.
7-8	The creature doesn't move or take actions this turn.
9-10	The creature can act and move normally.

The two levers found in the recesses open a portcullis each and if both are activated will lower the water, reveal the stairs and unflood the passages leading to either Council Chamber (Area E) or the Library (Area F).

Adjusting this Encounter

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

- **Very Weak:** giant goldfishes use **Hunter sharks** stats
- **Weak:** giant goldfishes use **Hunter sharks** stats and there are three of them
- **Strong:** Add one giant goldfish (**giant shark**)
- **Very Strong:** Add two giant goldfishes (**giant sharks**)

About the platforms and makeshift bridges

The platforms' moss is slippery, requiring anyone moving over them to succeed a DC 13 Dexterity save to avoid falling prone and sliding 10 feet off the platform.

Makeshift wooden bridges can support one medium humanoid with equipment or two small humanoids with equipment at a time. Use your best judgment to figure out whether the planks will hold or break under the weight. This is an opportunity to add stress to the players, by describing the groaning of planks under their weight.

About the Dire Goldfish

The Dire Goldfish are still animals and can still be communicated with via the *Speak with Animal* spell or any ability that allows communication with water animals. If the Dire Goldfish are offered food, and a successful persuasion or handle animal check DC 13, they will allow unmolested passage and provide a special charm shaped like a fish head (See Players Handout 3: Charm).

Treasure

The Cistern has 500gp in various coinage littered all over the bottom, result from wish money thrown through the well above over the years. It takes one character about 10 minutes to gather it all.

Area C. The Gardens

"Alice: Would you tell me, please, which way I ought to go from here?"

The Cheshire Cat: That depends a good deal on where you want to get to.

Alice: I don't much care where.

The Cheshire Cat: Then it doesn't matter which way you go."

— Lewis Carroll, *Alice in Wonderland*

The Gardens, once a beautiful and well-tended location of the Stronghold, has become derelict and attracted terrible denizens. Its hedges are now populated by life-like statues, redcaps and a medusa – the former chatelaine, Lady Sethiky.

There are two doors in these gardens leading either to the Reception Hall or the Library.

Encounter

The air is chill as you enter a hedge maze encased by high walls. As you make your first steps in, you briefly hear cackling and giggling in the distance, followed by loud footsteps approaching.

This encounter uses either map 3.H.1 or 3.H.2 (up to the DM's discretion or determined randomly), that is, in fact, an *Hallucinatory Terrain* cast over the true map layout. The save DC for the *Hallucinatory Terrain* is 18, and all conditions detailed in the spell apply. Since it is an illusion spell, anyone probing the area for magic will sense it.

Four **Redcaps** are up to no good in the gardens. Unaffected by the hallucinatory terrain, they run at the adventurers and use their kick ability before ganging up on them and then running away, laughing. They try to maintain the illusion as much as they can, thus coming out of corners, and retreating behind other corners, effectively using illusionary hedges to disappear from the adventurers' view. Every time an adventurer fails their Dexterity save to avoid the kick, and are knocked prone, magical fireworks shoot in the air above the gardens.

Adjusting this Encounter

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

- **Very Weak:** Remove the two **redcaps**
- **Weak:** Remove one **redcap**
- **Strong:** Add two **redcaps**

- **Very Strong:** Add two **redcaps**, and Lady Sethikye, a **Medusa**, joins the fray

Tricks of the Trade

This special encounter's challenge is for the characters to figure out they are under the effect of an Hallucinatory Terrain. You do not want to give it away in one simple Intelligence (Investigation) ability check. Instead, you should run this encounter normally, as if the hallucinatory hedges were real, and only allow them a roll if the characters have enough suspicion, such as seeing the Red Caps run through the hedges or the characters interact with the hedges directly. Also, do not forget that each character is a distinct individual; while one party member may piece it all together, the others may still be fooled. If another party member tries to help them overcome the spell effect, give them advantage on the roll but do not handwave it.

Treasure

If present, Lady Sethikye wears a finely crafted torque made of jointed golden leaves, and a delicate silver crown encrusted with emeralds, for a total value of 350 gp. The redcaps carry coinage, jewels and precious stones hidden inside their smelly iron boots, for a total value of 150 gp.

Development

When the encounter is defeated, silence returns to the Gardens, and any Hallucinatory Terrain effect is lifted. Doors are unlocked, allowing the adventurers to move to their next location either the Library (Area F) or Reception Hall (Area D).

Area D. Reception Hall

The reception hall is where the fey hold balls and plays. It has slowly become corrupted and its inhabitants have turned into spectral entities of their former self, eager on being entertained while carousing.

Five doors can be seen around the room, one leads to the Kennels, the second to the garden, the third to the library and the fourth and fifth leads to the Throne Room. These doors follow the rules described in the Stronghold's generic description.

You step into a large room filled with tables and benches facing a set of large closed purple curtains on one end. Several evenly spaced tall pillars go up 80 feet, to support the domed ceiling.

Spectral denizens feast and socialize around the tables, cheering and enjoying unsubstantial food carried by spectral servants, seemingly paying no attention to you.

Encounter

This area offers one of the following three plays, either determined randomly or chosen by the DM:

- Dr. Diodati's monster
- Romualt and Julian
- The headless cavalier

Make also sure to read the special rules regarding spells in the sub-section below, as the denizens will not tolerate excessive use of magic that would disturb the play.

As you appraise the situation, the curtains open slightly to let one specter walk on the stage and address the room in a loud voice: "Ladies and gentlemen! The moment we've all been waiting for has arrived! Tonight's entertainment troupe will soon deliver a play that you will not forget."

Invisible projectors now point at your party, and all spectral heads turn in unison towards you, while clamor and handclaps rise in the room. "Hooray!"

The curtains part, revealing the setup or the intended play. See each sub-section below for details.

Dr. Diodati's monster

"I was benevolent and good; misery made me a fiend. Make me happy, and I shall again be virtuous."

— Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley, Frankenstein

Dr Diodati's monster pits the party against one Flesh golem and its gnomish creator, along with pylons of electricity that crackle and feed the golem every few rounds. To defeat this encounter, the party will need either to defeat the gnome and its monster before the pylons can heal the monster (and possibly damage the adventurers), or destroy the pylons then the monster. When ready to introduce the play, read the following box text:

Lights darken, and the curtains open to reveal a laboratory filled with bubbling apparatus, glass tubes running everywhere and strange contraptions. In its middle is a table, upon which a large humanoid, whose parts are stitched together, lays to rest. Throughout the reception hall, six metallic pylons materialize out of thin air and a smell of ozone fills the air.

Next to the table, a female gnome, wearing a blood stained white apron and large goggles, pulls a lever, sending steam, more bubbles, and lightning sparking across the entire room. As pylons around the place crackle, thunderbolts converge on the table, and the creature suddenly lifts an arm, then a foot, and finally stands up.

The gnome cackles, and filled with wonder, shouts: "It is alive! My creature is aliiiiiiiiive!". Then her attention turns towards your party and she smirks. "Looks like the angry mob of peasants have come to undo my creation... very well! Creature, dispose of these peons!"

Dr. Diodati is a gnome **Enchanter**, while her creature is a **Flesh Golem**. In her first round, Dr. Diodati will use Invisibility and find a location where she can remain unseen; the subsequent round, she will haste her creature. She will finally use her abilities to counter the adventurers and kill their pets. The creature, although sentient, is not smart, and will charge whoever the first character is.

Every 3 rounds, at initiative 20 (losing initiative ties) the pylons crackle and shoot bolts of lightning at the golem in a straight line. Each character on the trajectory needs to succeed a DC15 Dexterity Save or take 11 (2d10) lightning damage; half if successful. Note that due to the Golem's Lightning Absorption ability it takes no damage from this energy and instead regains 11 (2d10) hps.

Each pylon has AC 19 and 18 hit points. They charge 5 (1d10) electricity damage each round, and discharge on the third round. Attacking the pylon within 5 feet requires a DC15 Dexterity Save or take as much damage as is currently charged (5 or 1d10 on the first round, 11 or 2d10 on the second round, and none on the third round); half damage if successful.

Adjusting this Encounter

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

- **Very Weak:** remove 4 pylons

- **Weak:** remove 2 pylons
- **Strong:** 2 **wights** enter the stage on round 2, initiative 10
- **Very Strong:** 4 **wights** enter the stage on round 2, initiative 10

Romualt and Julian

"Don't waste your love on somebody, who doesn't value it."

— William Shakespeare, *Romeo and Juliet*

Romualt and Julian recounts the story of a young Cormyrean Noble, Romualt, and a young merchant, Julian who fell in love during the Cormyrean wars. Their families eventually learned of the relationship and decided to take action when they refused to break up. This encounter is relatively simple to run, consisting of only two opponents; however, Romualt benefits from Julian's buffs and healing, while Julian's high AC and defenses will delay the party. When ready to introduce the play, read the following box text:

Lights darken, and the curtains open to reveal a courtyard with two round towers in the back. A man slowly walks down a set of stairs from the left tower, addressing the audience: "Ohhhh Julian, my beloved Julian, all I ever wished for, was to live with you forever!"

From the right tower, another man goes down the stairs, declaiming: "Alas, my Romualt, our families would not accept our relation, and even forbid us from seeing each other." Suddenly, both peer at you and Romualt adds "And now, dear Julian, they dare sending hirelings to bring our story to an abrupt end." Both seize their weapons and shields and approach.

Romualt is a **Gladiator**, while Julian is **Priest** with the following modifications:

- Half-Plate Armor and Shield; AC 17
- Hit points: 51 (9d8 + 9)
- Spellcasting. Julian is a 9th-level spellcaster. His spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 15, +7 to hit with spell attacks). He has the following cleric spells prepared:
 - Cantrips (at will): *guidance, light, sacred flame, thaumaturgy*
 - 1st level (4 slots): *cure wounds, guiding bolt, healing word, sanctuary*
 - 2nd level (3 slots): *aid, lesser restoration, spiritual weapon*

- 3rd level (3 slots): *dispel magic*, *spirit guardians*
- 4th level (3 slots): *Freedom of movement*
- 5th level (1 slot): *Mass Cure Wounds*

As they descend the stairs, Romualt will drink a *Potion of Invulnerability*, while Julian will cast *Sanctuary* on himself. On the First round, Julian will cast a 4th level *Aid*. Both will try to remain close to each other during the subsequent rounds. They cannot be reasoned with, and only talk to each other, boasting of their exploits or encouraging their significant other.

Adjusting this Encounter

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

- **Very Weak:** Julian is an unmodified **Priest**, and Romualt is a **Veteran**
- **Weak:** Julian is an unmodified **Priest**
- **Strong:** Julian is a **War Priest**, and Romualt does not have a *Potion of Invulnerability*
- **Very Strong:** Julian is a **War Priest**, and Romualt is a **Champion**

The Headless Cavalier

“His appetite for the marvelous, and his powers of digesting it, were equally extraordinary”

— Washington Irving, *The Legend of Sleepy Hollow*

The headless cavalier literally pits the party against a headless cavalier, riding a nightmare across the room, and as long as his head is missing, the cavalier will ride-by-attack the adventurers while regenerating damage. Whether they deal enough damage to take him down or go looking for his head is up to the party to decide. When ready to introduce the play, read the following box text:

Lights darken, and the curtains open to reveal a graveyard filled with countless rows of tombs. In the middle of the stage stands a large gaunt leaves less oak, long veins of red streaking and pulsing along its trunk, until suddenly the base explodes and a headless cavalier riding a black horse with hooves, mane, and tail of fire emerges.

A disembodied spectral voice rises from all over the room: “The headless cavalier has returned! This once proud paladin fell to greed and avarice eons ago, and was cursed to obey whoever held his head. Will the brave adventurers find it before they are slain, one by one?”

Around the reception hall, a dozen bloody baskets materialize out of thin air as the cavalier launches its mount into a gallop.

The headless cavalier is a **Champion** with the following modifications:

- It is a medium undead
- It has Damage Resistances to necrotic, bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical weapons
- As long as the cavalier is headless, it has Regeneration and regains 15 hit points at the start of its turn if it has at least 1 hit point and isn't in sunlight or running water. If it takes radiant damage or damage from holy water, this trait doesn't function at the start of the its next turn.

The cavalier is mounted on a **Nightmare**, and for simplicity, they share the Nightmare's initiative.

Considering the Champion uses a Glaive with a 10 foot range, it will focus on ride-by attacks. When its rider has taken serious damage, the Nightmare will enter the Ethereal plane, let him heal for a few rounds, and come back to resume its attacks. Key to success is either Banish or kill the Nightmare early on to reduce the Champion's mobility.

The location of the cavalier's head, which is actually a skull, is determined at random at the beginning of the encounter. Roll a d12 to determine which basket contains the head. Once the head has been retrieved and presented to the cavalier, both cavalier and its steed will disappear.

Adjusting this Encounter

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

- **Very Weak:** The cavalier is a **Veteran**; modifications remain the same, but regeneration regains only 10 hit points
- **Weak:** The cavalier is a **Gladiator**, modifications remain the same, but regeneration regains only 10 hit points
- **Strong:** 3 **specters** rise from 3 random baskets around the room on the second round at initiative 10; the **Nightmare** now has chainmail barding, increasing its AC to 16
- **Very Strong:** 3 **specters** rise from 3 random baskets around the room on the second round at initiative 10, and the regeneration is increased to 20 hit points per round; the **Nightmare** now has splint mail barding, increasing its AC to 17

Use of spells and spell effects during the encounter

Spectral patrons are intending on enjoying the show with minimal disruption and may eventually oppose display of disruptive magic.

Every time an adventurer uses a spell of 3rd level or higher involving somatic and/or verbal components, there is an increasing chance that a patron will counterspell it. The roll starts with a chance of 1-6 on a d20 and the range increases by 6 every spell cast thereafter. Once a spell has been countered, the chances are reset to 1-6. Note that adventurers may decide to counter-spell the counter-spell, thus expending more resources; this is perfectly acceptable, but the chances will not be reset in this case. When a counter-spell happens, denizens will throw spectral mugs, plates, cutlery, etc. at the spellcaster and express their displeasure by whistling and yelling at them; one does not interrupt the play without risking displeasure from the audience.

Treasure

Dr Diodati wears a golden locket inscribed “love is eternal. Lord B.”; it is worth 250 gp. Amidst the lab equipment, the characters can find a spellbook containing all the spells known by the gnome (see the **Enchanter’s** spell list).

Julian and Romualt have various coinage, jewels and precious stones in their purses, for a total of 350 gp.

The cavalier holds a pouch that contains ancient minted platinum coins, for a total value of 250 gp. The pouch will drop on the ground if the cavalier disappears, or can be obtained if it is killed. It also holds letters of marque from a Waterdhavian bank, for a value of 500 gp.

The characters also recover 1d3 heart-shaped lockets that act as protective charms for part 4 of this adventure. Each depicts that which each loved most (Dr Diodati’s is an idealized version of her creation; Julian’s or Romualt’s depict each other; and the Cavalier’s variations of his horse).

Development

When the encounter is defeated, all spectral denizens fade into oblivion, leaving a dusty and empty reception hall. Doors are unlocked, allowing

the adventurers to move to their next destination: the Throne Room, the Library (Area F), the Garden (Area C) or the Kennels (Area A).

Area E. The Council Room

Si vis Pacem, Para Bellum

— Publius Flavius Vegetius Renatus, De Re Militaro

The Council Room is where Lord Coradin and his advisors normally devise the strategies to rule the fiefdom. However, since the corruption, the place has been twisted into a collection of creepy trophies, and a large chess board occupies most of the space. No large chess pieces are currently on the board.

Five doors can be found inside the room, leading to the Kennels (Area A), the Cistern (Area B), the Reception Hall (Area D), the Library (Area F) and the Throne room. These doors follow the rules described in the Stronghold’s generic description.

Encounter

When the adventurers enter this room, read or paraphrase the following box text and sub-section:

You step inside a large stone walled 60 by 80 ft. room, and a ceiling at 35 ft. Its most interesting features are a life-size chess board on one side, and, standing on 2 feet raised section of the room, a large oak table littered with miniatures, rulers, maps, scrolls, and a smaller chess board.

Everything in this room is quiet and in dim light. A unique halo of light projects on the small chess board that lays on the table, with a game already in progress.

The room is empty and silent. However, as soon as a character touches the small chess board, the encounter triggers. The smaller game of chess will determine the composition of the opposition that will appear on the larger chess board.

When a player first touches the game board, read the following:

As your fingers merely graze a piece on the board, all doors suddenly lock, and a disembodied bass voice is heard over the room, for all to hear: “Are you certain this is a good move? Hmmm?”

The game will be played in series of three skill checks that will determine the strength of the

encounter. The character who first touched chessboard is required to keep playing or the pieces will not move. Another character; however, can assist them by using the Help action to give them advantage on their roll, provided they are proficient in the skill in question. Also, a character proficient in Dragonchess or equivalent game has advantage on the skill checks.

Skill check 1: A DC 11 Intelligence (Investigation) or Intelligence (History) will allow the adventurer to assess the current game situation, based on their observations or lessons of history. Note down the success or failure, and read the following:

You play a couple of moves and the opponent's pieces react accordingly, while the disembodied voice comments each one: "A bold move!", "Very well", "I wouldn't do that if I were you..."

Skill check 2: A DC 13 Wisdom (Insight) or Wisdom (Perception) will allow the adventurer to understand its opponent's mind or anticipate its moves and plan their own counter-attack. Note down the success or failure, and read the following:

You play a couple more moves and the opponent's pieces react accordingly, while the disembodied voice comments each one: "A bold move!", "Very well", "I wouldn't do that if I were you...", "That seems a bit rash, doesn't it?"

Skill check 3: A DC 15 Charisma (Deception) or Charisma (Performance) will allow the adventurer to bring its opponent into a trap. Count the number of successes and refer to the below table for the consequences:

Encounter

# of successes	Encounter
None	One pawn, one bishop, and the queen animate
One	Three Pawns, one knight, and one Bishop animate
Two	Two Pawns and one Bishop animate
Three	Two Pawns and one Knight animate

Pawns use the statistics of **Orogs** and resemble fey footmen wielding large axes. They stand at 5.5 feet tall. Their type changes to medium fey creature.

Knights use the statistics of **Hobgoblin Warlords** and resemble 6 feet tall proud fey knights in reinforced armors, wielding a longsword and short sword, while a banner stands attached to their back-armor piece. Their type changes to medium fey creature.

Bishops use the statistics of **Conjurers** and resemble noble fey men in robes with long sleeves, holding a pile of books in their left hand and wielding a dagger within their right hand. They stand at 6 feet tall. Their type changes to medium fey creature.

Rooks use the statistics of **Helmed Horrors**, with immunity to Fireballs, Slow, and Heat Metal. They resemble 6.5-foot-tall stone golems reinforced of metal joints that make the ground tremble when they move. Their type changes to medium fey creature.

The queen uses the statistics of a **Champion** and resembles a mighty noble woman in heavy armor, wielding a Glaive with speed and precision. Numerous skulls and antlers adorn her protection, and she stands at 7 feet. She exudes an aura of fear and nimbleness 30 feet around her. Her type changes to medium fey.

The king uses the statistics of a **Fire Giant** and his Greatsword has a range of only 5 feet. He resembles a 7-foot-tall fey in reinforced heavy armor, wielding a Greatsword with deadly strength. All other chess pieces but the queen lower their heads as he walks by them. His type changes to medium fey.

None of the opponents use lethal damage, and adventurers can only be knocked unconscious, even by spells and projectile weapons. To add to the dramatic effect, run the encounter normally, including death saves. Only when the encounter is over, or when another character tries to stabilize a friend, will they learn about it.

As the final opponent is disabled, or the adventurers are defeated, a chest materializes in the middle of the room, containing two potions of greater healing.

Adjusting this Encounter

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

- **Very Weak:**

Three Successes: remove the knight
Two successes: remove two pawns and substitute the bishop with a knight
One success: remove two pawns and the bishop
No success: remove one pawn and one bishop

● **Weak:**

Three Successes: remove the two pawns
Two successes: remove one pawn and substitute the bishop with a knight
One success: remove the bishop
No success: remove one bishop

Strong:

Three Successes: add two pawns
Two successes: add two pawns
One success: add one rook
No success: add one pawn and one bishop

● **Very Strong:**

Three Successes: add two pawns and one knight
Two successes: add two pawns and one knight
One success: add one pawn and the queen
No success: remove one pawn, add one bishop and the king

Treasure

Besides the potions that can be found in the chest, adventurers can find precious stones, jewels, and coinage on the large table, for a total value of 500 gp. If the characters have completed the encounter, the chess pieces they've defeated yield 1d3 military medals of leaves that act as protective charms for part 4 of this adventure.

Development

Silence and dust fall back in the Council Room, leaving it empty. Doors are unlocked, allowing the adventurers to move to their next location, the Throne Room or the Kennels (Area A), the Cistern (Area B), the Reception Hall (Area D), or the Library (Area F)

Area F. Library

The library is host to the castellan's book and trinkets collection. As the acorn's corruption extended through the Stronghold, this place was left pretty intact, albeit its usual denizens slowly faded to etherealness. Now, all that remains is a dusty place filled with thousands of books and a lectern over which hovers a large tome. Floating books are plucked out of shelves and opened by invisible hands before being placed back. The library itself is formed from 6 large branches woven together and creating individual shelves from smaller branches.

The walls are organic and radiates illusion, transmutation and divination magics.

The library has five visible doors leading to the Gardens (Area C), the Reception Hall (Area D), the Council Room (Area E), and the Throne Room (Part X of this adventure). It also has one door hidden behind a shelf that leads to the Cistern (Area B).

Encounter

When the adventurers enter this room, read or paraphrase the following box text and sub-section:

This room is shaped from six massive branches forming a circle. Smaller branches form walls, shelves, ladders. Every direction you look this library is filled with books. Invisible hands pluck some of these books and open them, as if someone was reading, before closing them and placing them back where they were.

In the center of the room, floating about two inches over a lectern, is a large tome with pages open, and as you step in, the book addresses to you: "Well, hello there... are you looking for answers or knowledge? I may have what you seek in my pages."

The hovering book is a trap designed to forcefully extract knowledge of its victim and generate new books.

The Cursed Book Trap

Once a character starts reading the book, roll for initiative and the following events trigger:

- At initiative 20, new books materialize on a nearby shelf; their title reflect the skills the reading character is proficient in, starting with the highest skill bonus to the lowest, and the author name reflect the character's. Each skill fills a number of books equal to the unmodified bonus.
- At the end of their turn, the reading character makes a DC 17 Intelligence Save. On a failure, they take 22 (4d10) Psychic damage and, on their next turn, they must keep reading the book. A success releases them from the compulsion, they take no further damage and no more books form as long as they stop reading. Alternately, a reading character dragged 30 feet or more away from the book makes the save with Advantage. New books and damage happen only if the book is being read (for example a

blind character is still compelled to read, but takes no damage and no books form.).

- At initiative 10, on the first round Six **Will-o'-Wisps** appear on the second floor, and four more appear every subsequent round until the reading character successfully saves or dies.

Adjusting this Encounter

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

- **Very Weak:** Remove four **Will-O'-Wisps** on round one, and only two appear every subsequent round.
- **Weak:** Remove two **Will-O'-Wisps** on round one, and only two appear every subsequent round.
- **Strong:** Remove one **Will-O'-Wisp** and add one **Flameskull** on round one. On subsequent rounds, only two **Will-O'-Wisp** and one **Flameskull** appear.
- **Very Strong:** Add two **Flameskull** on round one, and one **Flameskull** every subsequent round.

The cursed book

The book irradiates a mix of divination and illusion magic to anyone using Detect Magic. A DC 15 Intelligence (Arcana) check made by the character who used Detect Magic will reveal its cursed nature and how it operates.

It cannot be removed from the Library, and if someone attempts at pulling it out of the Library, it will vanish and reappear where it was first found.

It cannot be destroyed; any damage it sustains mends automatically. The book was created by a special *Wish* (9th level) and obeys Dispel Magic spell rules.

Treasure

Adventurers can get 100gp out of every 10 pounds of books they can carry, up to a maximum of 1,200 gp. If a character has read the cursed book trap and sells the resulting volumes, they obtain 20gp per book, and they also earn the **Story Award: I'm a published author!** Characters also find 1d3 bookmark pendants that look like quills of a large bird and act as protective charms for part 4 of this adventure.

Random books for curious minds

There are literally thousands of books in this library, covering all fields of study; however, the sorting is quite unusual and does not seem to follow any logic. If a character wishes to check what book they can find, use the following random

table to provide them with a book title for every 10 minutes spent browsing:

3d6	Book name and short content description
3	<i>Book of pressed fairies</i> , is a book with squashed, flattened fairies between the pages... with surprised expressions as if they landed on the book and then it was slammed shut.
4	<i>Mating Rituals of the Zaratan</i> , a science book about the actual mating of the gigantic turtles as big as an island, moving from place to place.
5	<i>Romualt and Julian</i> , a romance and tragedy novel, a play in 5 acts telling the story of two kind souls whose love is forbidden by their respective families.
6	<i>100 stews to warm you to the bone</i> , a collection of recipes from a place named Barovia.
7	<i>Volo's Guide to Monster</i> , this copy is even signed by the author.
8	<i>Don't call me Rover – 5001 names for your pet</i> , a long list of 5,001 names that could fit any kind of pet.
9	<i>Sylvan for beginners</i> , a step by step method to learn Sylvan; someone's written "Ray" over most of the pages and the front page harbors a disclaimer for coarse language and mature audience.
10	<i>How to win friends and influence people... when you're invisible</i> , a motivational book for invisible people.
11	<i>Cataloguing and classification: Introduction to MARC</i> , a compilation of academic articles discussion library referencing systems; it is obviously not in use in this library.
12	<i>Descent of Ishtar to the Netherworld</i> , a Mythological Poem written in a language relatively close to Mulhorandi.
13	<i>Honey Badger's guide to Volo</i> , a book filled with 0's and 1's.
14	<i>Get her! A practical guide to catching ectoplasms</i> , by Dr. Stantz, a book that discusses various approaches related to capturing ghosts and revenants. Someone has sketched a sponge cake on the back cover.
15	<i>Pony magic</i> , a treaty on the power of friendship.
16	<i>Protecting Your Vault: Seven Locks to Keep Your Vault Shut Tight</i> , by the wizard Nagatome. This book provides a series of seven measures to enforce safety of your plaza; handwritten on the inner cover are the words "Yippee Ki Yay".
17	<i>Castles and Humans</i> , a red box containing a make-believe game for dragons. Its back thick cover houses a pouch containing a set of polyhedral dices and some wax pens.
18	<i>The Unwritten book</i> , whose pages are just blank; they simply refuse to hold ink, chalk, graphite, or any other substance or marking.

Development

The Library becomes silent and the floating books fall to the floor with an echoing and cringing thud. Doors are unlocked, allowing the adventurers to move to their next location, the Throne Room or the Cistern (Area B), the Garden (Area C), the Reception Hall (area D) or the Council Room (Area E).

XP Award

If the characters detect and avoid the cursed book trap, award each character 1,000 XP.

Part 4. The Throne Room

Estimated Duration: 45 minutes

This part begins with the characters entering the Throne Room.

General Features

The Throne Room is the heart of the Elderoak Stronghold.

Terrain. The walls surrounding the Throne Room are shaped from the Elderoak tree and form a dome, some 50 feet over. Floor is paved with ancient stones; however, some roots of the Dark Oak have pierced through at several spots, breaking the even floor as it digs further inside the Elderoak to cannibalize it.

Light. No light is present in the Throne Room; any source introduced by characters will appear as if sucked by the Dark Oak in the center of the room.

Smells and Sounds. Deadly silence and smells of dust.

A. Entering the Throne Room

As mentioned in Part 3, as DM, you control the flow of the adventure and decide when the doors to enter the Throne Room open, which should be about 180 minutes after beginning this adventure.

If the party tries to enter any time before that, the wooden doors remain shut and instantaneously heal damage they incur. Refer to Part 3: Managing the adventure flow and time considerations.

When you are ready to let the characters enter, read or paraphrase the following:

Echoing through the halls and rooms of the Elderoak Stronghold, you hear the loud groaning of locks opening up, followed by a call: "Come forth and face us, intruders! For you came here to die!"

B. Encountering Lord Coradin and the Dark Oak

When the characters finally enter the Throne Room, read or paraphrase the following:

In the center of this octagonal room, surrounded by eight pillars, is the dark oak. Its pulsating roots have pierced the tiled floor here and wormed into the Elderoak underneath, feeding from the ancestral tree to grow stronger. Several alcoves are evenly placed on the sides of the room, filled with antique armors.

Standing next to the tree, you see a humanoid in a black heavy plate armor, holding a glaive to his right, with two red glowing circles inside a dark helmet adorned with antlers.

The fey speaks up while gesturing at the dark oak with his free hand: "The last traveler that came brought us this marvelous treasure. You will soon feed it. And then it will pierce through the planes and reach into your material plane..."

Lord Coradin

Lord Coradin is a **Blackguard** with the following modifications:

- His creature type changes to Medium Fey
- He has advantage on saving throws against being charmed, and magic can't put him to sleep.
- He has immunity to Necrotic Damage.
- Lord Coradin can take 3 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action option can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. Lord Coradin regains spent legendary actions at the start of his turn.
 - **Weapon Attack.** Lord Coradin makes a weapon attack.
 - **Spectral Boars.** Lord Coradin calls forth two spectral boars within 120 feet that materialize and immediately charge to attack one target then vanish; each spectral boar has a +5 to hit and if it hits, the target takes 17 (4d6+3) slashing damage and must succeed on a DC 13 Strength Saving throw or be knocked prone. If attacked, they have the stats of a **Giant Boar** and can't be summoned by Lord Coradin if killed.
 - **Pillar Walk.** If Lord Coradin is within 5 feet of one of the eight central pillars, he can walk in and reappear 5 feet away from any other pillar.

The Dark Oak

- Is not a creature and can consequently not be targeted by spells that target creatures.
- Has 140 Hit Points and an AC of 17; its bark is hard as stone
- Has resistance to Slashing, Bludgeoning and Piercing damage from Nonmagical Attacks
- Has immunity to Poison, Psychic, Cold, and Necrotic Damage

The Magical link

Similar to a *Death Ward*, a magical link exists between Lord Coradin and the Dark Oak with the following effects:

- any damage the tree sustains is shared with the Blackguard
- the link operates as long as the Blackguard stands on the same plane of existence
- the tree shields Lord Coradin from magic, which grants the Blackguard advantage on Saving Throws against Spells and other magical effects.

The link can be analyzed by anyone able to discern magic (Detect Magic, True Seeing, etc.). The link radiates Abjuration and Necromantic magics. As an action, a DC 17 Intelligence (Arcana) can be attempted to reveal details.

To sever the link, one needs to succeed a Dispel Magic against a 7th level spell.

Enemy reinforcements

Every round, at initiative count 0 (losing initiative ties), one **Wraith** materializes from the alcoves and acts normally on the next round (roll group initiative for the first Wraith to appear). All enemy reinforcements disappear when the Dark Oak is destroyed.

Necrotic Waves

At initiative count 20 (losing initiative ties), the entire Throne Room is washed by a wave of Necrotic Energy emanating from the Dark Oak. Any creature inside the room must succeed a DC 13 Constitution Save or take 7 (2d6) Necrotic Damage.

Protective charms

Throughout Part 3, the party may have acquired protective charms. These charms radiate faint abjuration magic to anyone able to Detect Magic, and a DC12 Intelligence (Arcana) made by a character who is proficient will reveal that they are one-use items to protect against Necrotic Damage.

When a character affected by the Necrotic Wave fails the save, one of the protective charms in their possession absorbs the Necrotic Energy, preventing the damage. The charm then blackens and crumbles to dust.

All remaining charms become simple trinkets with no magical powers when the characters leave the Feywild, including those given by the kobolds.

Saving Lord Coradin

There are a few ways to free Lord Coradin from the corruption:

- Adventurers could focus their damage on the tree and ignore the Blackguard and reinforcements. There is a few Hit Points tolerance between damage the tree and Lord Coradin can sustain individually. If the party manages to destroy the tree before killing the Blackguard, then he is freed.
- The link works only if Lord Coradin is on the same plane of existence. If the characters manage to Banish the Blackguard and destroy the tree before he returns, then Lord Coradin is freed.
- A spellcaster can try to sever the link.
- Lord Coradin can be brought back to life with Revivify or Raise Dead or kept from dying with healing magic.

Adjusting this Encounter

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

- Very Weak:** Lord Coradin is a **Gladiator**, the Dark Oak has 90 Hit Points and its AC is 15, and one **Wight** appears every round at initiative 0.
- Weak:** Lord Coradin is a **Gladiator**, the Dark Oak has 110 Hit Points and its AC is 15, and one **Ghost** appears every round at initiative 0.
- Strong:** Lord Coradin is a **War Priest** and is flanked with one set of **Animated Armor** that is immune to necrotic damage, the Dark Oak has 170 Hit Points and its AC is 17, one **Wraith** appears every round at initiative 0.
- Very Strong:** Lord Coradin is a **War Priest** and is flanked with two sets of **Animated Armor** that are immune to necrotic damage, the Dark Oak has 200 Hit Points and its AC is 17, two **Wraiths** appear every round at Initiative 0.

Tricks of the Trade

This encounter is designed to challenge the players with multiple priorities; the longer they wait, the more damage they and their familiars take from the necrotic wave, the more opponents add up, and the more Lord Coradin can hassle the rear guard (where rogues and spellcasters usually hide) with his spectral boars. If you notice that your player's damage output is insufficient, do not hesitate to reduce the number of hit points the Dark Oak has, and reduce frequency of the reinforcements.

To easily track who has a protective charm, consider printing off **Player handout 3: Charms**.

Whatever your way of playing this encounter, make it memorable and challenging!

Treasure

Lord Coradin holds a pair of Figurines of Wondrous Power: Golden Lions, which were corrupted and became the ghostly boars. Whether Lord Coradin dies or is saved, the figurines are for the adventurers to keep.

Part 5. The Aftermath

Estimated Duration: 30 minutes

This section begins when the Dark Oak is destroyed and deals with the aftermath, and the adventurers' return to the prime material plane. There are three possible scenarios to deal with:

- a. The adventurers have destroyed the Dark Oak while keeping Lord Coradin alive, or they have revived him.
- b. The adventurers have destroyed the Dark Oak but Lord Coradin did not survive the encounter.
- c. The adventurers fail to destroy the Dark Oak, but Lord Coradin dies.

In any case, when they revert to the Material Plane, they are greeted by their guide, Hope, who informs them that only a couple of hours have passed and that he'll lead them immediately to Arauna Lilly Davenrith.

A. Destruction of the Dark Oak and Lord Coradin's Cleansing

Provided the adventurers managed to destroy the Dark Oak while maintaining Lord Coradin alive or by reviving him after the encounter, the Elderoak gradually recovers its life force and the Stronghold denizens return to normal.

Read or paraphrase the following:

Your destruction of the Dark Oak brings an end to the corruption afflicting the Elderoak and this region of the Feywild. The Elderoak gradually recovers its strength while the Stronghold's citizens fade back into existence or get rid of the curses afflicting them. For the deceased, Lord Coradin arranges prayers and mourning, or resurrections for those fortunate enough to afford the service.

In the following couple of weeks, the Fey show reverence for your deeds and treat you as honored guests, while searching for a way to return you to Faerûn.

Before you cross the portal leading you back and as a token of appreciation for your help, Lord Coradin offers you his prized Golden Lions, "loyal and fierce hunting companions" as he describes them, as well as the friendship of his people.

When, at last, your vision readjust to the hues and brightness of the Moonsea, the first thing you spot is a Tiefling laying on a low branch of a nearby tree, munching an apple while reading a poetry book. Hope immediately sees you and raises an eyebrow: "You've been gone for less than two hours and you return already? Did you find anything?"

Development

Having returned back from the Feywild, Hope guides you back to the hamlet and to the Mayor to report. If any protective charms remain, they become simple trinkets with no magical powers.

B. Destruction of the Dark Oak and Lord Coradin's death

If the adventurers manage to destroy the Dark Oak, but Lord Coradin dies or is killed, the Elderoak gradually recovers its life force and the Stronghold denizens turn back to normal.

Read or paraphrase the following:

Your destruction of the Dark Oak brings an end to the corruption afflicting the Elderoak and this region of the Feywild. The Elderoak gradually recovers its strength while the Stronghold's citizens fade back into existence or get rid of the curses afflicting them. However, with the death of Lord Coradin, few mourn his loss, except his sisters who arrange for his funeral. Other fey seem to shun the Elderoak, but show thanks for your deeds. As a final thank you, despite not being able to save their brother, the sisters help in searching for a way to return you to Faerûn.

Before you cross the portal leading you back and as a token of appreciation for your help, Maple offers you her brother's prized Golden Lions, "loyal and fierce hunting companions" as she describes them. "May they serve you better in life than they did my brother."

When, at last, your vision readjust to the hues and brightness of the Moonsea, the first thing you spot is a Tiefling laying on a low branch of a nearby tree, munching an apple while reading a poetry book. Hope immediately sees you and raises an eyebrow: "You've been gone for less than two hours and you return already? Did you find anything?"

Development

Having returned back from the Feywild, Hope guides you back to the hamlet and to the Mayor to report. If any protective charms remain, they become simple trinkets with no magical powers.

C. Dark Oak survives and Lord Coradin's death

If the Dark Oak is not destroyed it overtakes the Elderoak and its corruption spreads throughout this area of the Feywild, turning Fey and plants into dark and twisted versions of themselves.

Read or paraphrase the following:

Having been forced to flee the corrupted Elderoak, you find Maple and Celsa awaiting you. They watch as one as the Elderoak is transformed entirely by the Dark Oak. It's once strong branches turning black and desiccated. As the rot spreads, parts of the forest crumbles to the ground. Searching the remains, you and the sisters find the broken and crushed body of Lord Coradin. Afterwards, few mourn his loss, with the exception his sisters who arrange for his funeral. Other fey seem to shun where the Elderoak once stood. As a final thank you, despite not being able to save their brother, the sisters help in searching for a way to return you to Faerûn.

Before you cross the portal leading you back and as a token of appreciation for your help, Maple offers you her brother's prized Golden Lions, "loyal and fierce hunting companions" as she describes them with tears in her eyes. "May they serve you better in life than they did my brother." Then both sisters crumble into ash.

When, at last, your vision readjust to the hues and brightness of the Moonsea, the first thing you spot is a Tiefling laying on a low branch of a nearby tree, munching an apple while reading a poetry book. Hope immediately sees you and raises an eyebrow: "You've been gone for less than two hours and you return already? Did you find anything?"

Development

Having returned back from the Feywild, Hope guides you back to the hamlet and to the Mayor to report. If any protective charms remain, they become simple trinkets with no magical powers. While the briar disappears, the corruption causes it to regrow the following season.

Meet the Mayor again and final debriefing

The adventurers return with Hope to the Hardy Bowl Tavern and meet again with the Mayor.

Once more you find yourself in the Hardy Bowl Tavern, this time greeted by the Mayor in a much more joyous mood. "You're back! Hope tells me that the strange briar has disappeared from the forest... though I'm unsure how. You haven't been gone that long." She gives you a somewhat puzzled look. "What happened? Did you learn anything about the Wizard?"

If time allows, let the adventures to tell their tale. Afterwards, Mayor Davenrish thanks them and offers them a token of appreciation.

"Much thanks to you. I wonder where that bothersome Magician has gone to now. Hopefully he doesn't cause any more mischief for our hamlet. Come the festival is still going and you might still win a prize at the games."

Treasure

As thanks, Mayor Davenrish gives the adventurers 300 gp regardless of whether they asked for an increase upfront.

Rewards

Make sure players note their rewards on their adventure log sheets. Give your name and DCI number (if applicable) so players can record who ran the session.

Experience

Total up all combat experience earned for defeated foes, and divide by the number of characters present in the combat. For non-combat experience, the rewards are listed per character.

Combat Awards

Name of Foe	XP Per Foe
Animated Armor	200
Assassin Vines	700
Blackguard	3900
Champion	5000
Conjurer	2300
Dire Wolf	200
Dryads	200
Enchanter	1800
Fire Giant	5000
Flameskull	1100
Flesh Golem	1800
Ghost	1100
Giant Boars	450
Giant Shark	1800
Gladiator	1800
Helmed Horrors	1100
Hobgoblin Warlord	2300
Hunter Sharks	450
Knight	700
Medusa	2300
Nightmare	700
Orog	450
Priest	450
Redcap	700
Shambling Mound	1800
Specter	200
Stirge	25
Treant	5000
Veteran	700
War Priest	5000
Water Elemental	1800
Wight	700
Will-o'-Wisps	450

Winter Wolf	700
Wraith	1800

Non-Combat Awards

Task or Accomplishment	XP Per Character
Avoid cursed book trap	1000 xp

The **minimum** total award for each character participating in this adventure is 4500 **experience points**.

The **maximum** total award for each character participating in this adventure is 6000 **experience points**.

Treasure

The characters receive the following treasure, divided up amongst the party. Treasure is divided as evenly as possible. Gold piece values listed for sellable gear are calculated at their selling price, not their purchase price.

If they sell the library books they get 100 gp per 10 pounds (max 1200 gp) from a traveling acquisition Librarian. If a character has read the cursed book trap and sells the resulting volumes, they obtain 20gp per book, and they also earn the **Story Award: I'm a published author!** (see **Player Handout 1**)

Treasure Awards

Item Name	GP Value
Cistern's Coinage	200 gp
Redcaps loot	150 gp
Lady Sethikye's torque and crown	350 gp
Dr Diodati locket	250 gp
Julian and Romualt loot	350 gp
Cavalier platinum coins	250 gp
letters of marque	500 gp
Cursed books	20 gp / book
Council room loot	500 gp
Mayor Davenrish	200 or 300 gp

Consumable magic items should be divided up however the group sees fit. If more than one character is interested in a specific consumable magic item, the DM can determine who gets it randomly should the group be unable to decide.

Permanent magic items are divided according to a system detailed in the *D&D Adventurers League Dungeon Master's Guide*.

Figurine of Wondrous Power: Golden Lions

Wondrous Item, Rare (Table G)

These gold statuettes of lions are always created in pairs. You can use one figurine or both simultaneously. Each can become a lion for up to 1 hour. Once a lion has been used, it can't be used again until 7 days have passed.

The lions that appear are twinned pairs of opposite colouration. One white with black stripes, the other black with white stripes.

This item can be found in **Player Handout 2**.

Potion of Invulnerability

Potion, rare

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

Potion of Greater Healing x2

Potion, uncommon

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

Spellbook

This spellbook features the spells from the Enchanter's prepared spells.

Story Awards

During the course of this adventure, the characters may earn the following story awards:

I'm a Published Author!

Congratulations, you have unwillingly published your first book, and it has not gone unnoticed. A conclave of Wizards on the Sword Coast has taken a liking in your fact-based, straight to the point style. Your name is spreading amongst academics, sages, librarians, Clerics of Oghma and Deneir and even Candlekeep has heard about it. More information can be found in **Player Handout 1**.

A Spectral Displacer Kitten?

You have found a spectral six-legged kitten with small bumps on its shoulders. The kitten keeps blinking in and out of view, suggesting that it may have once been a Displacer Beast kitten. If you

decide to keep it, you find it extremely playful and friendly. After several adventures you realize it will never grow into an adult. More information can be found in **Player Handout 1**.

Renown

Each character receives **one renown** at the conclusion of this adventure.

Refer to season 8 or later documentation for awarding renown and downtime.

DM Reward

In exchange for running this adventure, you earn DM Rewards as described in the *D&D Adventurers League Dungeon Master's Guide* (ALDMG).

ACP and Treasure Points

Players receive 4 ACP (Advancement Checkpoints) points and 4 TP (Treasure points). They unlock the magic item.

Otherwise, refer to season 8 or later documentation for awarding Treasure and Experience.

Appendix. Dramatis Personae

The following NPCs are featured prominently in this adventure:

Randal Malark Ambledragon (RAN-Dal Mal-ARK). A wizard who lived in the town of Estirwald, who was the unwitting source of the Elderoak's corruption. Ambledragon was an adventurer who quickly grew bored of the constant requests for his aid. His original intention was to help those who were new to adventuring. He pretended to be a weak spellcaster everytime he was around people, but would use his potent magics if the situation became dire.

Arauna Lilly Davenrish (A-RAW-na). The current mayor of Estirwald, a noble born in Phlan whose family was decimated by Vorgansharax's attack on that city.

Lord Coradin (COR-A-Din). Ancient fey Lord who has been corrupted by the Dark Oak. A once fair and welcoming Fey Lord who loved literature and protected a portal that connected the Feywild to the mortal realm. Brother to Dryads Maple and Celsa.

Maple (Ma-PAL). Dryad sister to Lord Coradin and twin to Celsa.

Celsa (CEL-sa). Dryad sister to Lord Coradin and twin to Maple.

Lady Sethikye (Seth-E-Kye). Spouse of Lord Coradin, she now roams the Elderoak Stronghold's gardens and hunts intruders. Lady Sethikye was turned into a medusa when the acorn corrupted the Elderoak and her husband.

Appendix. Monster/NPC Statistics

Animated Armor

Medium construct, unaligned

Armor Class 18 (natural armor)

Hit Points 33 (6d8 + 6)

Speed 25 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
14 (+2)	11 (+0)	13 (+1)	1 (-5)	3 (-4)	1 (-5)

Damage Immunities poison, psychic

Condition Immunities blinded, charmed, deafened, exhaustion, frightened, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned

Senses blindsight 60 ft. (blind beyond this radius), passive Perception 6

Languages —

Challenge 1 (200 XP)

Antimagic Susceptibility. The armor is incapacitated while in the area of an *antimagic field*. If targeted by *dispel magic*, the armor must succeed on a Constitution saving throw against the caster's spell save DC or fall unconscious for 1 minute.

False Appearance. While the armor remains motionless, it is indistinguishable from a normal suit of armor.

Actions

Multiattack. The armor makes two melee attacks.

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

Assassin Vine

Large plant, unaligned

Armor Class 13 (natural armor)

Hit Points 85 (10d10 + 30)

Speed 5 ft., climb 5 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	10 (+0)	16 (+3)	1 (-5)	10 (+0)	1 (-5)

Damage Resistances cold, fire

Condition Immunities blinded, deafened, exhaustion, prone

Senses blindsight 30 ft., passive Perception 10

Languages --

Challenge 3 (700 XP)

False Appearance. While the assassin vine remains motionless, it is indistinguishable from a normal plant.

Actions

Constrict. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 20 ft., one target. *Hit:* The target takes 11 (2d6 + 4) bludgeoning damage, and it is grappled (escape DC 14). Until this grapple ends, the target is restrained and it takes 21 (6d6) poison damage at the start of each of its turns. The can constrict only one target at a time.

Entangling Vines. The assassin vine can animate normal vines and roots on the ground in a 15-foot square within 30 feet of it. These plants turn the ground in the area into difficult terrain. A creature in the area when the effect begins must succeed on a DC 13 Strength saving throw or be restrained by entangling vines and roots. A creature restrained by the plants can use its action to make a DC 13 Strength (Athletics) check, freeing itself on a successful check. The effect ends after 1 minute or when the assassin vine dies or uses Entangling vines again.

Blackguard

Medium humanoid (any race), 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 +S, 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.

Champion

Medium humanoid (any race), any alignment

Armor Class 18 (plate)

Hit Points 143 (22d8 + 44)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
20 (+5)	15 (+2)	14 (+2)	12 (+1)	14 (+2)	12 (+1)

Saving Throws Str +9, Con +6

Skills Athletics +9, Intimidation +5, Perception +6

Senses passive Perception 16

Languages any one language (usually Common)

Challenge 9 (5,000 XP)

Second Wind (Recharges after a Short or Long Rest). As a bonus action, the champion can regain 20 hit points.

Indomitable (2/Day). The champion rerolls a failed saving throw.

Actions

Multiattack. The champion makes three attacks with its greatsword or its shortbow..

Greatsword Melee Weapon Attack: +9 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 12 (2d6 + 5) slashing damage, plus 7 (2d6) slashing damage if the champion has more than half of its total hit points remaining

Light Crossbow. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, range 80/320 ft., one target. Hit: 6 (1d8 + 2) piercing damage, plus 7 (2d6) piercing damage if the champion has more than half of its total hit points remaining.

Conjurer

Medium humanoid (any race), any alignment

Armor Class 12 (15 with mage armor)

Hit Points 40 (9d8)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
9 (-1)	14 (+2)	11 (+0)	17 (+3)	12 (+1)	11 (+0)

Saving Throws Int +6, Wis +4

Skills Arcana +6, History +6

Senses passive Perception 11

Languages any one language (usually Common)

Challenge 6 (2,300 XP)

Spellcasting. The conjurer is a 9th-level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 14, +6 to hit with spell attacks). The conjurer has the following wizard spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): *acid splash*, * *mage hand*, * *poison spray*, * *prestidigitation*

1st level (4 slots): *mage armor*, *magic missile*, *unseen servant**

2nd level (3 slots): *cloud of daggers*, * *misty step*, * *web**

3rd level (3 slots): *fireball/1*, *stinking cloud**

4th level (3 slots): *Evard's black tentacles*, * *stoneskin*

5th level (2 slots): *cloudkill*, * *conjure elemental**

*conjuration spell of 1st level or higher

Benign Transposition (Recharges after the Conjurer Casts a Conjunction Spell of 1st Level or Higher). As a bonus action, the conjurer teleports up to 30 feet to an unoccupied space that it can see. If it instead chooses a space within range that is occupied by a willing Small or Medium creature, they both teleport, swapping places

Actions

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

Dire Wolf

Large beast, unaligned

Armor Class 14 (natural armor)

Hit Points 37 (5d10 + 10)

Speed 50 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
17 (+3)	15 (+2)	15 (+2)	3 (-4)	12 (+1)	7 (-2)

Skills Perception +3, Stealth +4

Senses passive Perception 13

Languages —

Challenge 1 (200 XP)

Keen Hearing and Smell. The wolf has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on hearing or smell.

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

Actions

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 10 (2d6 + 3) piercing damage. If the target is a creature, it must succeed on a DC 13 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone.

Enchanter

Medium humanoid (any race), any alignment

Armor Class 12 (15 with mage armor)

Hit Points 40 (9d8)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
9 (-1)	14 (+2)	11 (+0)	17 (+3)	12 (+1)	11 (+0)

Saving Throws Int +6, Wis +4

Skills Arcana +6, History +6

Senses passive Perception 11

Languages any four languages

Challenge 6 (2,300 XP)

Spellcasting. The conjurer is a 9th-level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 14, +6 to hit with spell attacks). The conjurer has the following wizard spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): *friends, mage hand, mending, message*

1st level (4 slots): *charm person, * mage armor, magic missile*

2nd level (3 slots): *hold person, * invisibility, suggestion**

3rd level (3 slots): *fireball haste, tongues*

4th level (3 slots): *dominate beast, *stoneskin*

5th level (2 slots): *hold monster**

*Enchantment spell of 1st level or higher

Actions

Quarterstaff. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +2 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 2 (1d6- 1) bludgeoning damage, or 3 (1d8- 1) bludgeoning damage if used with two hands.

Reactions

Instinctive Charm (Recharges after the Enchanter Casts an Enchantment Spell of 1st Level or Higher). The enchanter tries to magically divert an attack made against it, provided that the attacker is within 30 feet of it and visible to it. The enchanter must decide to do so before the attack hits or misses. The attacker must make a DC 14 Wisdom saving throw. On a failed save, the attacker targets the creature closest to it, other than the enchanter or itself. If multiple creatures are closest, the attacker chooses which one to target.

Fire Giant

Huge giant, lawful evil

Armor class 18 (plate)

Hit Points 162 (13d12 + 78)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
25 (+7)	9 (-1)	23(+6)	10 (+0)	14 (+2)	13 (+1)

Saving Throws Dex +3, Con +10, Cha +5

Skills Athletics +11, Perception +6

Damage Immunities Fire

Senses passive Perception 16

Languages Giant

Challenge 9 (5,000 XP)

Actions

Multiattack. *The giant makes two greatsword attacks*

Greatsword. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +11 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. Hit: 28 (6d6 + 7) slashing damage.

Rock. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +11 to hit, range 60/240 ft., one target. Hit: 29 (4d10 + 7) bludgeoning damage.

Flameskull

Tiny undead, neutral evil

Armor Class 13

Hit Points 40 (9d4 + 18)

Speed 0 ft., fly 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
1 (-5)	17 (+3)	14 (+2)	16 (+3)	10 (+0)	11 (+0)

Skills Arcana +5, Perception +2

Damage Resistances lightning, necrotic, piercing

Damage Immunities cold, fire, poison

Condition Immunities charmed, frightened, paralyzed, poisoned

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 12

Languages Common

Challenge 4 (1,100 XP)

Illumination. The flameskull sheds either dim light in a 15-foot radius, or bright light in a 15-foot radius and dim light for an additional 15 feet. It can switch between the options as an action.

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

Rejuvenation. If the flameskull is destroyed, it regains all its hit points in 1 hour unless holy water is sprinkled on its remains or a *dispel magic* or *remove curse* spell is cast on them.

Spellcasting. The flameskull is a 5th-level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 13, +5 to hit with spell attacks). It requires no somatic or material components to cast its spells. The flameskull has the following wizard spells prepared:

Cantrip (at will): *mage hand*

1st level (3 slots): *magic missile*, *shield*

2nd level (2 slots): *blur*, *flaming sphere*

3rd level (1 slot): *fireball*

Actions

Multiattack. The flameskull uses Fire Ray twice.

Fire Ray. *Ranged Spell Attack:* +5 to hit, range 30 ft., one target. *Hit:* 10 (3d6) fire damage.

Flesh Golem

Medium construct, neutral

Armor Class 9

Hit Points 93 (11d8 + 44)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
19 (+4)	9 (-1)	18 (+4)	6 (-2)	10 (+0)	5 (-3)

Damage Immunities lightning, poison; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks that aren't adamantine

Condition Immunities charmed, exhaustion, frightened, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10

Languages understands the languages of its creator but can't speak

Challenge 5 (1,800 XP)

Berserk. Whenever the golem starts its turn with 40 hit points or fewer, roll a d6. On a 6, the golem goes berserk. On each of its turns while berserk, the golem attacks the nearest creature it can see. If no creature is near enough to move to and attack, the golem attacks an object, with preference for an object smaller than itself. Once the golem goes berserk, it continues to do so until it is destroyed or regains all its hit points.

The golem's creator, if within 60 feet of the berserk golem, can try to calm it by speaking firmly and persuasively. The golem must be able to hear its creator, who must take an action to make a DC 15 Charisma (Persuasion) check. If the check succeeds, the golem ceases being berserk. If it takes damage while still at 40 hit points or fewer, the golem might go berserk again.

Aversion of Fire. If the golem takes fire damage, it has disadvantage on attack rolls and ability checks until the end of its next turn.

Immutable Form. The golem is immune to any spell or effect that would alter its form.

Lightning Absorption. Whenever the golem is subjected to lightning damage, it takes no damage and instead regains a number of hit points equal to the lightning damage dealt.

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

Magic Weapons. The golem's weapon attacks are magical.

Actions

Multiattack. The golem makes two slam attacks.

Slam. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 13 (2d8 + 4) bludgeoning damage.

Ghost

Medium undead, any alignment

Armor Class 11

Hit Points 45 (10d8)

Speed 0 ft., fly 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
7 (-2)	13 (+1)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)	12 (+1)	17 (+3)

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

Damage Immunities cold, necrotic, poison

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

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 11

Languages any languages it knew in life

Challenge 4 (1,100 XP)

Ethereal Sight. The ghost can see 60 feet into the Ethereal Plane when it is on the Material Plane, and vice versa.

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

Actions

Withering Touch. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 17 (4d6 + 3) necrotic damage.

Etherealness. The ghost enters the Ethereal Plane from the Material Plane, or vice versa. It is visible on the

Material Plane while it is in the Border Ethereal, and vice versa, yet it can't affect or be affected by anything on the other plane.

Horrifying Visage. Each non-undead creature within 60 feet of the ghost that can see it must succeed on a DC 13 Wisdom saving throw or be frightened for 1 minute. If the save fails by 5 or more, the target also ages 1d4 × 10 years. A frightened target can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the frightened condition on itself on a success. If a target's saving throw is successful or the effect ends for it, the target is immune to this ghost's Horrifying Visage for the next 24 hours. The aging effect can be reversed with a *greater restoration* spell, but only within 24 hours of it occurring.

Possession (Recharge 6). One humanoid that the ghost can see within 5 feet of it must succeed on a DC 13 Charisma saving throw or be possessed by the ghost; the ghost then disappears, and the target is incapacitated and loses control of its body. The ghost now controls the body but doesn't deprive the target of awareness. The ghost can't be targeted by any attack, spell, or other effect, except ones that turn undead, and it retains its alignment, Intelligence, Wisdom, Charisma, and immunity to being charmed and frightened. It otherwise uses the possessed target's statistics, but doesn't gain access to the target's knowledge, class features, or proficiencies.

The possession lasts until the body drops to 0 hit points, the ghost ends it as a bonus action, or the ghost is turned or forced out by an effect like the *dispel evil and good* spell. When the possession ends, the ghost reappears in an unoccupied space within 5 feet of the body. The target is immune to this ghost's Possession for 24 hours after succeeding on the saving throw or after the possession ends.

Giant Boar

Large beast, unaligned

Armor Class 12 (natural armor)

Hit Points 42 (5d10 + 15)

Speed 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
17 (+3)	10 (+0)	16 (+3)	2 (-4)	7 (-2)	5 (-3)

Senses passive Perception 8

Languages —

Challenge 2 (450 XP)

Charge. If the boar moves at least 20 feet straight toward a target and then hits it with a tusk attack on the same turn, the target takes an extra 7 (2d6) slashing damage. If the target is a creature, it must succeed on a DC 13 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone.

Relentless (Recharges after a Short or Long Rest). If the boar takes 10 damage or less that would reduce it to 0 hit points, it is reduced to 1 hit point instead.

Actions

Tusk. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 10 (2d6 + 3) slashing damage.

Giant Shark

Huge beast, unaligned

Armor class 13 (natural armor)

Hit Points 126 (11d12 + 55)

Speed 0 ft., swim 50 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
23 (+6)	11 (+0)	21 (+5)	1 (-5)	10 (0)	5 (-3)

Skills Perception +3

Senses blindsight 60 ft., passive Perception 11

Languages --

Challenge 5 (1,800 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:* +9 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 22 (3d10 + 6) piercing damage.

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. and 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.

Helmed Horror

Medium construct, neutral

Armor Class 20 (plate, shield)

Hit Points 60 (8d8 + 24)

Speed 30 ft., fly 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	13 (+1)	16 (+3)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)

Skills Perception +4

Damage Resistances bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks that aren't adamantite

Damage Immunities force, necrotic, poison

Condition Immunities blinded, charmed, deafened, frightened, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned, stunned

Senses blindsight 60 ft. (blind beyond this radius), passive Perception 14

Languages understands the languages of its creator but can't speak

Challenge 4 (1,100 XP)

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

Spell Immunity. The helmed horror is immune to three spells chosen by its creator. Typical immunities include fireball, heat metal, and lightning bolt.

Actions

Multiattack. The helmed horror makes two longsword attacks.

Longsword. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 8 (1d8 + 4) slashing damage, or 9 (1d10 + 4) slashing damage if used with two hands.

Hobgoblin Warlord

Medium humanoid (goblinoid), lawful evil

Armor class 20 (plate, shield)

Hit Points 97 (13d8 + 39)

Speed 30 ft.

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

Saving Throws Int +5, Wis +3, Cha +5

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10

Languages Common, Goblin

Challenge 6 (2,300 XP)

Martial Advantage. Once per turn, the hobgoblin can deal an extra 14 (4d6) damage to a creature it hits with a weapon attack if that creature is within 5 feet of an ally of the hobgoblin that isn't incapacitated.

Actions

Multiattack. The hobgoblin makes three melee attacks. Alternatively, it can make two ranged attacks with its javelins.

Longsword. Melee *Weapon Attack*: +9 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 7 (1d8 + 3) slashing damage, or 8 (1d10 + 3) slashing damage if used with two hands.

Shield Bash. Melee *Weapon Attack*: +9 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 5 (1d4 + 3) bludgeoning damage. If the target is Large or smaller, it must succeed on a DC 14 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone.

Javelin. Melee or Ranged *Weapon Attack*: +9 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 30/120 ft., one target. Hit: 6 (1d6 + 3) piercing damage

Leadership (Recharges after a Short or Long Rest). For 1 minute, the hobgoblin can utter a special command or warning whenever a nonhostile creature that it can see within 30 feet of it makes an attack roll or a saving throw. The creature can add a d4 to its roll provided it can hear or understand the hobgoblin. A creature can benefit from only one Leadership die at a time. This effect ends if the hobgoblin is incapacitated.

Reactions

Parry. The hobgoblin adds 3 to its AC against one melee attack that would hit it. To do so, the hobgoblin

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 ftl, swim 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
20 (+5)	10 (+0)	19 (+4)	2 (-4)	12 (+1)	5 (-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.

Medusa

Medium monstrosity, lawful evil

Armor Class 15 (natural armor)

Hit Points 127 (17d8 + 51)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	15 (+2)	16 (+3)	12 (+1)	13 (+1)	15 (+2)

Skills Deception +5, Insight +4, Perception +4, Stealth +5

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 14

Languages Common

Challenge 6 (2,300 XP)

Petrifying Gaze. When a creature that can see the medusa's eyes starts its turn within 30 feet of the medusa, the medusa can force it to make a DC 14 Constitution saving throw if the medusa isn't incapacitated and can see the creature. If the saving throw fails by 5 or more, the creature is instantly petrified. Otherwise, a creature that fails the save begins to turn to stone and is restrained. The restrained creature must repeat the saving throw at the end of its next turn, becoming petrified on a failure or ending the effect on a success. The petrification lasts until the creature is freed by the greater restoration spell or other magic.

Unless surprised, a creature can avert its eyes to avoid the saving throw at the start of its turn. If the creature does so, it can't see the medusa until the start of its next turn, when it can avert its eyes again. If the creature looks at the medusa in the meantime, it must immediately make the save.

If the medusa sees itself reflected on a polished surface within 30 feet of it and in an area of bright light, the medusa is, due to its curse, affected by its own gaze.

Actions

Multiattack. The medusa makes either three melee attacks—one with its snake hair and two with its .

Snake Hair. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 4 (1d4 + 2) piercing damage plus 14 (4d6) poison damage.

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

Longbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, range 150/600 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d8 + 2) piercing damage plus 7 (2d6) poison damage.

Knight

Medium humanoid (any race), any alignment

Armor Class 18 (plate)

Hit Points 52 (8d8 + 16)

Speed 30 ft.

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

Saving Throws Con +4, Wis +2

Senses passive Perception 10

Languages any one language (usually Common)

Challenge 3 (700 XP)

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

Actions

Multiattack. The knight makes two melee attacks.

Greatsword. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 10 (2d6 + 3) slashing damage.

Heavy Crossbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +2 to hit, range 100/400 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d10) piercing damage.

Leadership (Recharges after a Short or Long Rest). For 1 minute, the knight can utter a special command or warning whenever a non-hostile creature that it can see within 30 feet of it makes an attack roll or a saving throw. The creature can add a d4 to its roll provided it can hear and understand the knight. A creature can benefit from only one Leadership die at a time. This effect ends if the knight is incapacitated.

Actions

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

Nightmare

Large fiend, neutral evil

Armor Class 13 (natural armor)

Hit Points 68 (8d10 + 24)

Speed 60 ft., fly 90 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	15 (+2)	16 (+3)	10 (+0)	13 (+1)	15 (+2)

Damage Immunities fire

Senses passive Perception 11

Languages understands Abyssal, Common, and Infernal but can't speak

Challenge 3 (700 XP)

Confer Fire Resistance. The nightmare can grant resistance to fire damage to anyone riding it.

Illumination. The nightmare sheds bright light in a 10-foot radius and dim light for an additional 10 feet.

Actions

Hooves. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 13 (2d8 + 4) bludgeoning damage plus 7 (2d6) fire damage.

Ethereal Stride. The nightmare and up to three willing creatures within 5 feet of it magically enter the Ethereal Plane from the Material Plane, or vice versa.

Orog

Medium humanoid (orc), chaotic evil

Armor Class 18 (plate)

Hit Points 42 (5d8 + 20)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	12 (+1)	18 (+4)	12 (+1)	11 (+0)	12 (+1)

Skills Intimidation +5, Survival +2

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10

Languages Common, Orc

Challenge 2 (450 XP)

Aggressive. As a bonus action, the orog can move up to its speed toward a hostile creature that it can see.

Actions

Multiattack. The orog makes two greataxe attacks.

Greataxe. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 10 (1d12 + 4) slashing damage.

Javelin. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 30/120 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d6 + 4) piercing damage.

Priest

Medium humanoid (any race), any alignment

Armor Class 13 (chain shirt)

Hit Points 27 (5d8 + 5)

Speed 25 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	10 (+0)	12 (+1)	13 (+1)	16 (+3)	13 (+1)

Skills Medicine +7, Persuasion +3, Religion +4

Senses passive Perception 13

Languages any two languages

Challenge 2 (450 XP)

Divine Eminence. As a bonus action, the priest can expend a spell slot to cause its melee weapon attacks to magically deal an extra 10 (3d6) radiant damage to a target on a hit. This benefit lasts until the end of the turn. If the priest expends a spell slot of 2nd level or higher, the extra damage increases by 1d6 for each level above 1st.

Spellcasting. The priest is a 5th-level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 13, +5 to hit with spell attacks). The priest has the following cleric spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): *light, sacred flame, thaumaturgy*
1st level (4 slots): *cure wounds, guiding bolt, sanctuary*
2nd level (3 slots): *lesser restoration, spiritual weapon*
3rd level (2 slots): *dispel magic, spirit guardians*

Actions

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

Redcap

Small fey, chaotic evil

Armor Class 13 (natural armor)

Hit Points 45 (6d6 + 24)

Speed 25 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	14 (+2)	18 (+4)	10 (+0)	12 (+1)	9 (-1)

Skills Athletics +6, Perception +3

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 13

Languages Common, Sylvan

Challenge 3 (700 XP)

Iron Boots. While moving, the redcap has disadvantage on Dexterity (Stealth) checks.

Outsize Strength. While grappling, the redcap is considered to be Medium. Also, wielding a heavy weapon doesn't impose disadvantage on its attack rolls.

Actions

Multiattack. The redcap makes three attacks with its wicked sickle.

Wicked Sickle. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 9 (2d4 + 4) slashing damage.

Ironbound Pursuit. The redcap moves up to its speed to a creature it can see and kicks with its iron boots. The target must succeed on a DC 14 Dexterity saving throw or take 20 (3d10+4) bludgeoning damage and be knocked prone.

Shambling Mound

Large plant, unaligned

Armor Class 15 (natural armor)

Hit Points 136 (16d10 + 48)

Speed 20 ft., swim 20 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	8 (-1)	16 (+3)	5 (-3)	10 (+0)	5 (-3)

Skills Stealth +2

Damage Resistances cold, fire

Damage Immunities lightning

Condition Immunities blinded, deafened, exhaustion

Senses blindsight 60 ft. (blind beyond this radius), passive Perception 10

Languages —

Challenge 5 (1,800 XP)

Lightning Absorption. Whenever the shambling mound is subjected to lightning damage, it takes no damage and regains a number of hit points equal to the lightning damage dealt.

Actions

Multiattack. The shambling mound makes two slam attacks. If both attacks hit a Medium or smaller target, the target is grappled (escape DC 14), and the shambling mound uses its Engulf on it.

Slam. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 13 (2d8 + 4) bludgeoning damage.

Engulf. The shambling mound engulfs a Medium or smaller creature grappled by it. The engulfed target is blinded, restrained, and unable to breathe, and it must succeed on a DC 14 Constitution saving throw at the start of each of the mound's turns or take 13 (2d8 + 4) bludgeoning damage. If the mound moves, the engulfed target moves with it. The mound can have only one creature engulfed at a time.

Specter

Medium undead, chaotic evil

Armor Class 12

Hit Points 22 (5d8)

Speed 0 ft., fly 50 ft. (hover)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
1 (-5)	14 (+2)	11 (+0)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)	11 (+0)

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

Damage Immunities necrotic, poison

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

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10

Languages understands all languages it knew in life but can't speak

Challenge 1 (200 XP)

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

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

Actions

Life Drain. *Melee Spell Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 10 (3d6) necrotic damage. The target must succeed on a DC 10 Constitution saving throw or its hit point maximum is reduced by an amount equal to the damage taken. This reduction lasts until the creature finishes a long rest. The target dies if this effect reduces its hit point maximum to 0.

Stirge

Tiny beast, unaligned

Armor Class 14 (natural armor)

Hit Points 2 (1d4)

Speed 10 ft., fly 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
4 (-3)	16 (+3)	11 (+0)	2 (-4)	8 (-1)	6 (-2)

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 9

Languages —

Challenge 1/8 (25 XP)

Actions

Blood Drain. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 5 (1d4 + 3) piercing damage, and the stirge attaches to the target. While attached, the stirge doesn't attack. Instead, at the start of each of the stirge's turns, the target loses 5 (1d4 + 3) hit points due to blood loss.

The stirge can detach itself by spending 5 feet of its movement. It does so after it drains 10 hit points of blood from the target or the target dies. A creature, including the target, can use its action to detach the stirge.

Treant

Huge plant, chaotic good

Armor Class 16 (natural armor)

Hit Points 138 (12d12 + 60)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
23 (+6)	8 (-1)	21 (+5)	12 (+1)	16 (+3)	12 (+1)

Damage Resistances bludgeoning, piercing

Damage Vulnerabilities fire

Senses passive Perception 13

Languages Common, Druidic, Elvish, Sylvan

Challenge 9 (5,000 XP)

False Appearance. While the treant remains motionless, it is indistinguishable from a normal tree.

Siege Monster. The treant deals double damage to objects and structures.

Actions

Multiattack. The treant makes two slam attacks.

Slam. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +10 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 16 (3d6 + 6) bludgeoning damage.

Rock. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +10 to hit, range 60/180 ft., one target. *Hit:* 28 (4d10 + 6) bludgeoning damage.

Animate Trees (1/Day). The treant magically animates one or two trees it can see within 60 feet of it. These trees have the same statistics as a treant, except they have Intelligence and Charisma scores of 1, they can't speak, and they have only the Slam action option. An animated tree acts as an ally of the treant. The tree remains animate for 1 day or until it dies; until the treant dies or is more than 120 feet from the tree; or until the treant takes a bonus action to turn it back into an inanimate tree. The tree then takes root if possible.

Veteran

Medium humanoid (any race), any alignment

Armor Class 17 (splint)

Hit Points 58 (9d8 + 18)

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.

War Priest

Medium humanoid (any race), any alignment

Armor Class 18 (plate)

Hit Points 117 (18d8 + 36)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	10 (+0)	14 (+2)	11 (+0)	17 (+3)	13 (+1)

Saving Throws Con +6, Wis +7

Skills Intimidation +5, Religion +4

Senses passive Perception 13

Languages any two languages

Challenge 9 (5000 XP)

Spellcasting. The priest is a 9th-level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 15 +7 to hit with spell attacks). It has the following cleric spells prepared.

Cantrips (at will): *light, mending, sacred flame, spare the dying*

1st level (4 slots): *divine favor, guiding bolt, healing word, shield of faith*

2nd level (3 slots): *lesser restoration, magic weapon, prayer of healing, silence, spiritual weapon*

3rd level (3 slots): *beacon of hope, crusader's mantle, dispel magic, revivify, spirit guardians, water walk*

4th level (3 slots): *banishment, freedom of movement, guardian of faith, stoneskin*

5th level (1 slot): *flame strike, mass cure wounds, hold monster*

Actions

Multiattack: The priest makes two melee attacks

Maul. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 10 (2d6 + 3) bludgeoning damage.

Cold Breath (Recharge 5–6). The wolf exhales a blast of freezing wind in a 15-foot cone. Each creature in that area must make a DC 12 Dexterity saving throw, taking 18 (4d8) cold damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

Reactions

Guided Strike (Recharges after a Short or Long Rest): The priest grants a +10 bonus to an attack roll made by itself or another creature within 30 feet of it. The priest can make this choice after the roll is made but before it hits or misses.

Water Elemental

Large elemental, neutral

Armor Class 14 (natural armor)

Hit Points 114 (12d10 + 48)

Speed 30 ft., swim 90 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	14 (+2)	18 (+4)	5 (-3)	10 (+0)	8 (-1)

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

Damage Immunities poison

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

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10

Languages Aquan

Challenge 5 (1,800 XP)

Water Form. The elemental can enter a hostile creature's space and stop there. It can move through a space as narrow as 1 inch wide without squeezing.

Freeze. If the elemental takes cold damage, it partially freezes; its speed is reduced by 20 feet until the end of its next turn.

Actions

Multiattack. The elemental makes two slam attacks.

Slam. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 13 (2d8 + 4) bludgeoning damage.

Whelm (Recharge 4–6). Each creature in the elemental's space must make a DC 15 Strength saving throw. On a failure, a target takes 13 (2d8 + 4) bludgeoning damage. If it is Large or smaller, it is also grappled (escape DC 14). Until this grapple ends, the target is restrained and unable to breathe unless it can breathe water. If the saving throw is successful, the target is pushed out of the elemental's space.

The elemental can grapple one Large creature or up to two Medium or smaller creatures at one time. At the start of each of the elemental's turns, each target grappled by it takes 13 (2d8 + 4) bludgeoning damage. A creature within 5 feet of the elemental can pull a creature or object out of it by taking an action to make a DC 14 Strength and succeeding.

Wight

Medium undead, neutral evil

Armor Class 14 (studded leather)

Hit Points 45 (6d8 + 18)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
15 (+2)	14 (+2)	16 (+3)	10 (+0)	13 (+1)	15 (+2)

Skills Perception +3, Stealth +4

Damage Resistances necrotic; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks that aren't silvered

Damage Immunities poison

Condition Immunities exhaustion, poisoned

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 13

Languages the languages it knew in life

Challenge 3 (700 XP)

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

Actions

Multiattack. The wight makes two longsword attacks or two longbow attacks. It can use its Life Drain in place of one longsword attack.

Life Drain. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 5 (1d6 + 2) necrotic damage. The target must succeed on a DC 13 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.

A humanoid slain by this attack rises 24 hours later as a zombie under the wight's control, unless the humanoid is restored to life or its body is destroyed. The wight can have no more than twelve zombies under its control at one time.

Longsword. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d8 + 2) slashing damage, or 7 (1d10 + 2) slashing damage if used with two hands.

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

Will-o'-Wisp

Tiny undead, chaotic evil

Armor Class 19

Hit Points 22 (9d4)

Speed 0 ft., fly 50 ft. (hover)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
1 (-5)	28 (+9)	10 (+0)	13 (+1)	14 (+2)	11 (+0)

Damage Immunities lightning, poison

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

Condition Immunities exhaustion, grappled, paralyzed, poisoned, prone, restrained, unconscious

Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 12

Languages the languages it knew in life

Challenge 2 (450 XP)

Consume Life. As a bonus action, the will-o'-wisp can target one creature it can see within 5 feet of it that has 0 hit points and is still alive. The target must succeed on a DC 10 Constitution saving throw against this magic or die. If the target dies, the will-o'-wisp regains 10 (3d6) hit points.

Ephemeral. The will-o'-wisp can't wear or carry anything.

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

Variable Illumination. The will-o'-wisp sheds bright light in a 5- to 20-foot radius and dim light for an additional number of feet equal to the chosen radius. The will-o'-wisp can alter the radius as a bonus action.

Actions

Shock. *Melee Spell Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 9 (2d8) lightning damage.

Invisibility. The will-o'-wisp and its light magically become invisible until it attacks or uses its Life Drain, or until its concentration ends (as if concentrating on a spell).

Winter Wolf

Large monstrosity, neutral evil

Armor Class 13 (natural armor)

Hit Points 75 (10d10 + 20)

Speed 50 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	13 (+1)	14 (+2)	7 (-2)	12 (+1)	8 (-1)

Skills Perception +5, Stealth +3

Damage Immunities cold

Senses passive Perception 15

Languages Common, Giant, Winter Wolf

Challenge 3 (700 XP)

Keen Hearing and Smell. The wolf has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on hearing or smell.

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

Snow Camouflage. The wolf has advantage on Dexterity (Stealth) checks made to hide in snowy terrain.

Actions

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 11 (2d6 + 4) piercing damage. If the target is a creature, it must succeed on a DC 14 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone.

Cold Breath (Recharge 5–6). The wolf exhales a blast of freezing wind in a 15-foot cone. Each creature in that area must make a DC 12 Dexterity saving throw, taking 18 (4d8) cold damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

Wraith

Medium undead, neutral evil

Armor Class 13

Hit Points 67 (9d8 + 27)

Speed 0 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 that aren't silvered

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 (1800 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 its turn inside an object.

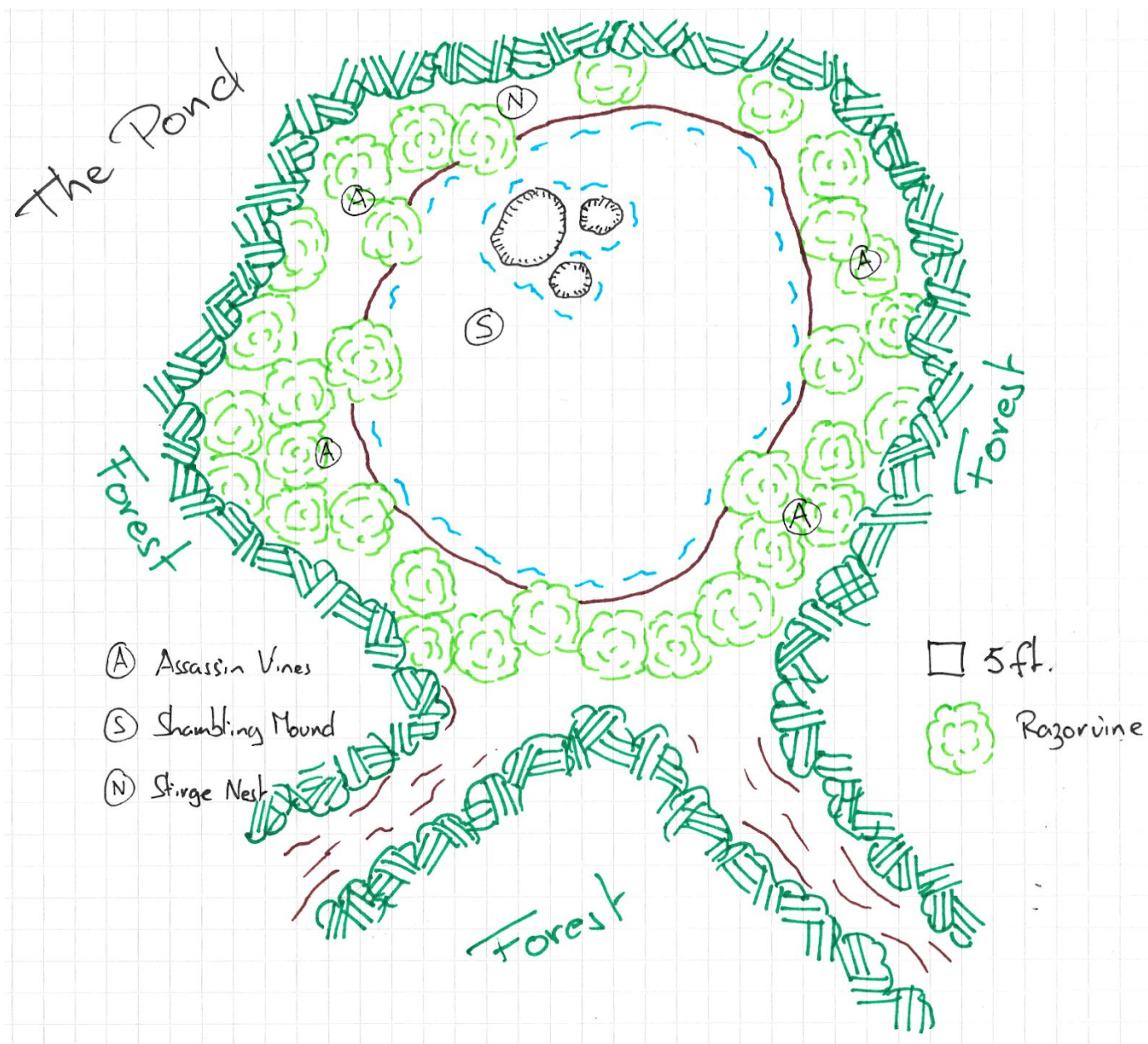
Sunlight Sensitivity. While in sunlight, the wraith has disadvantage on attack rolls, as well as on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on sight.

Actions

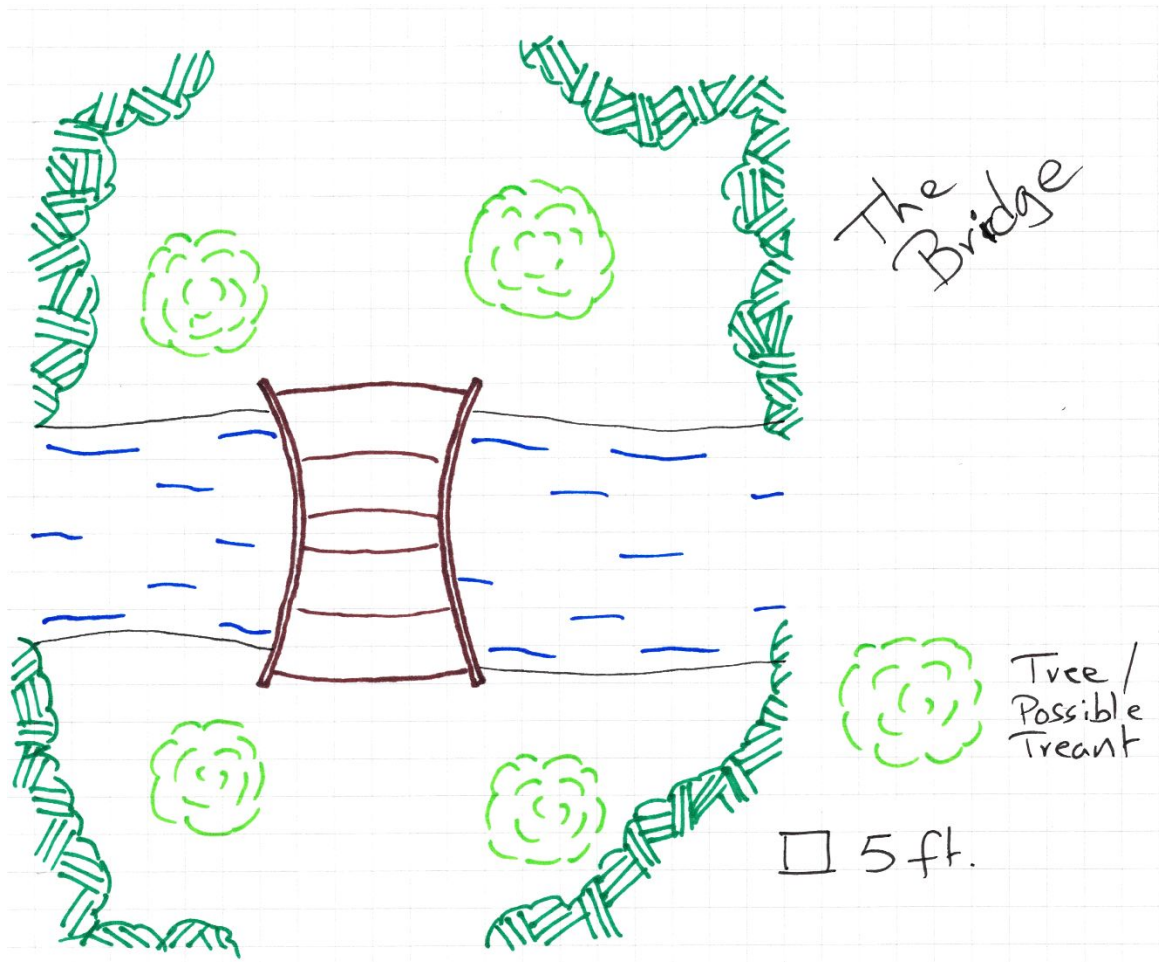
Life Drain. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 21 (4d8 + 3) necrotic damage. The target must succeed on a DC 14 Constitution saving throw or its hit point maximum is reduced by an amount equal to the damage taken. This reduction lasts until the target finishes a long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

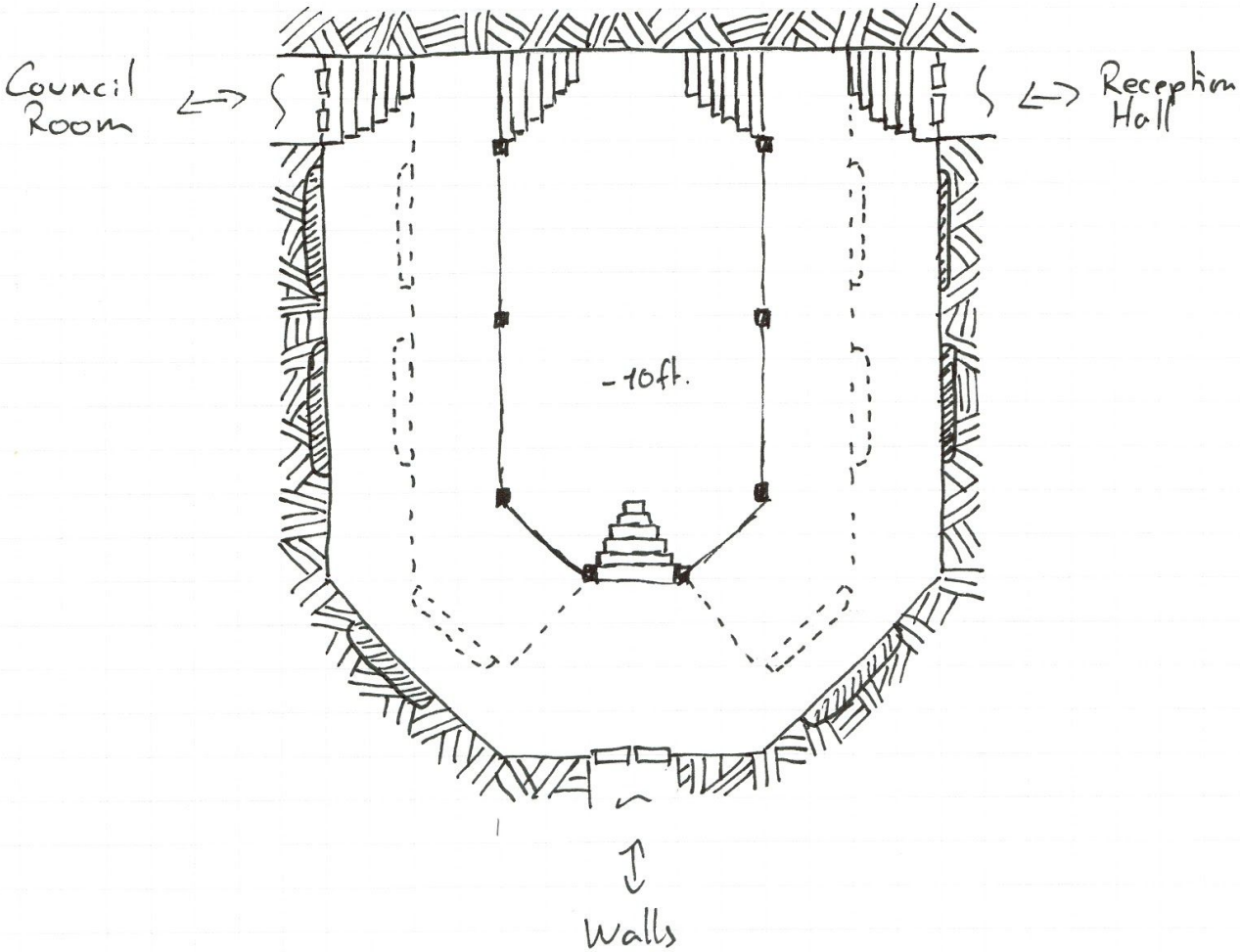
Appendix. Map 1.A The Pond



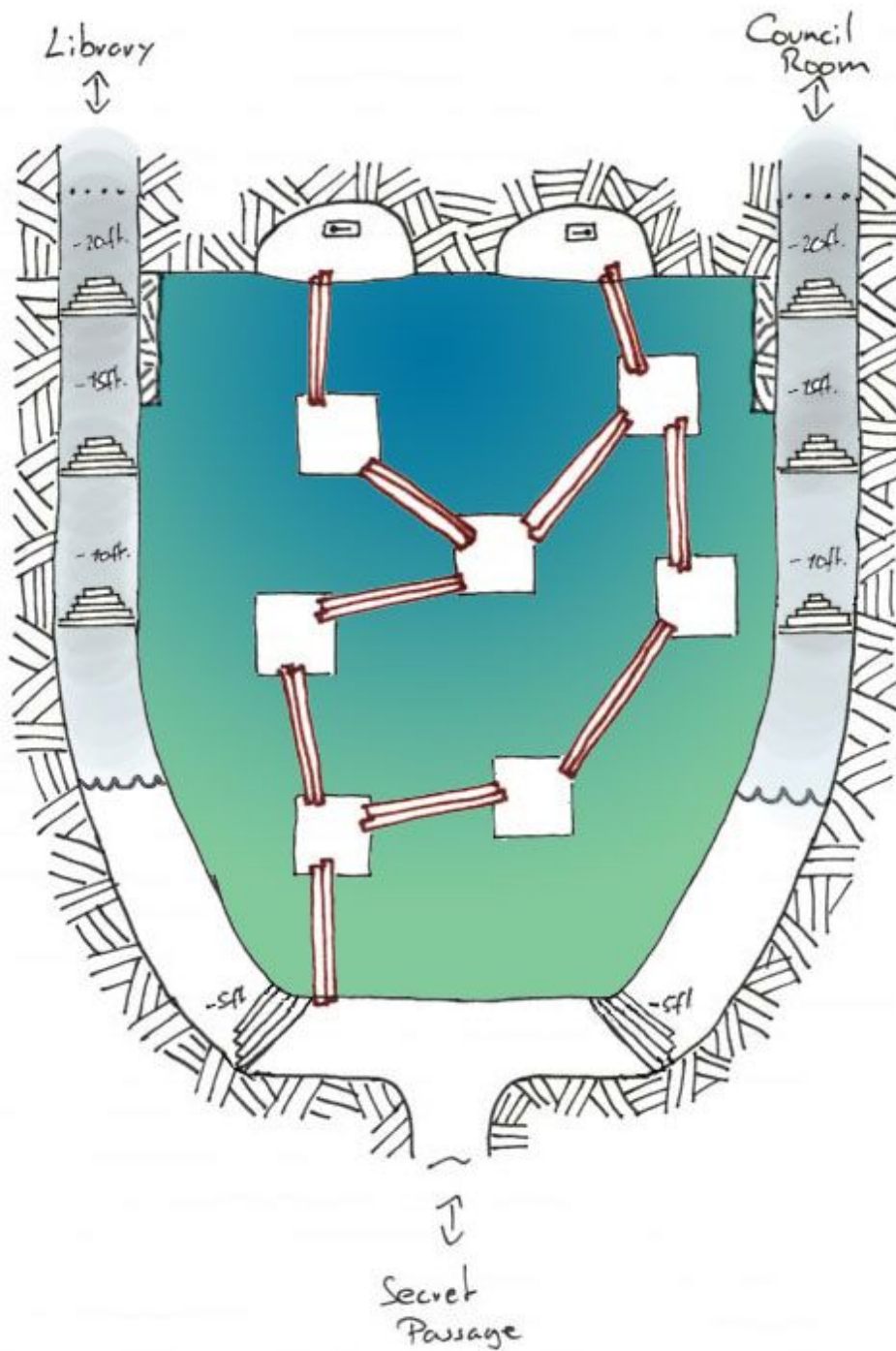
Appendix. Map 1.B The Bridge



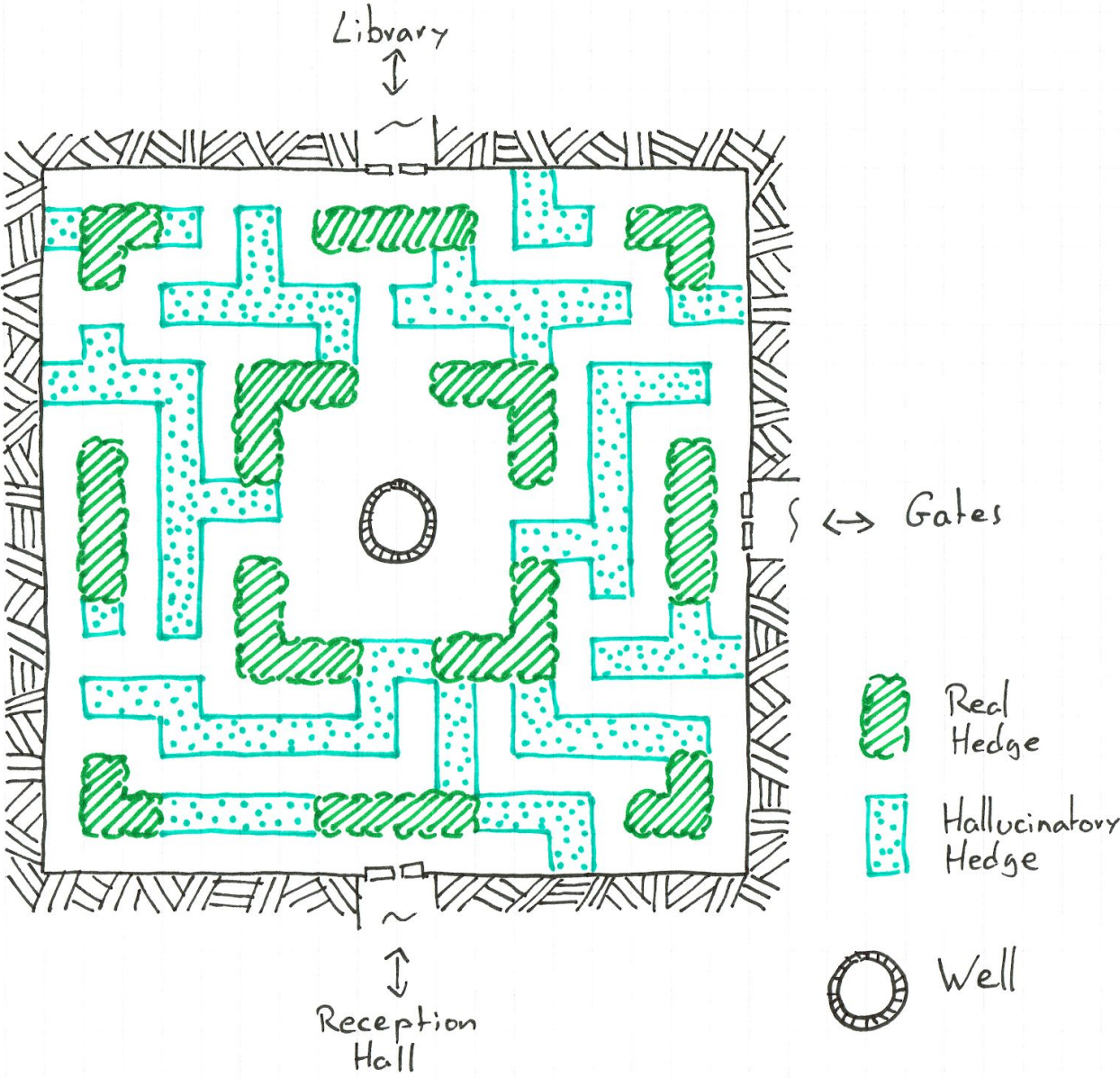
Map 2.A Kennels



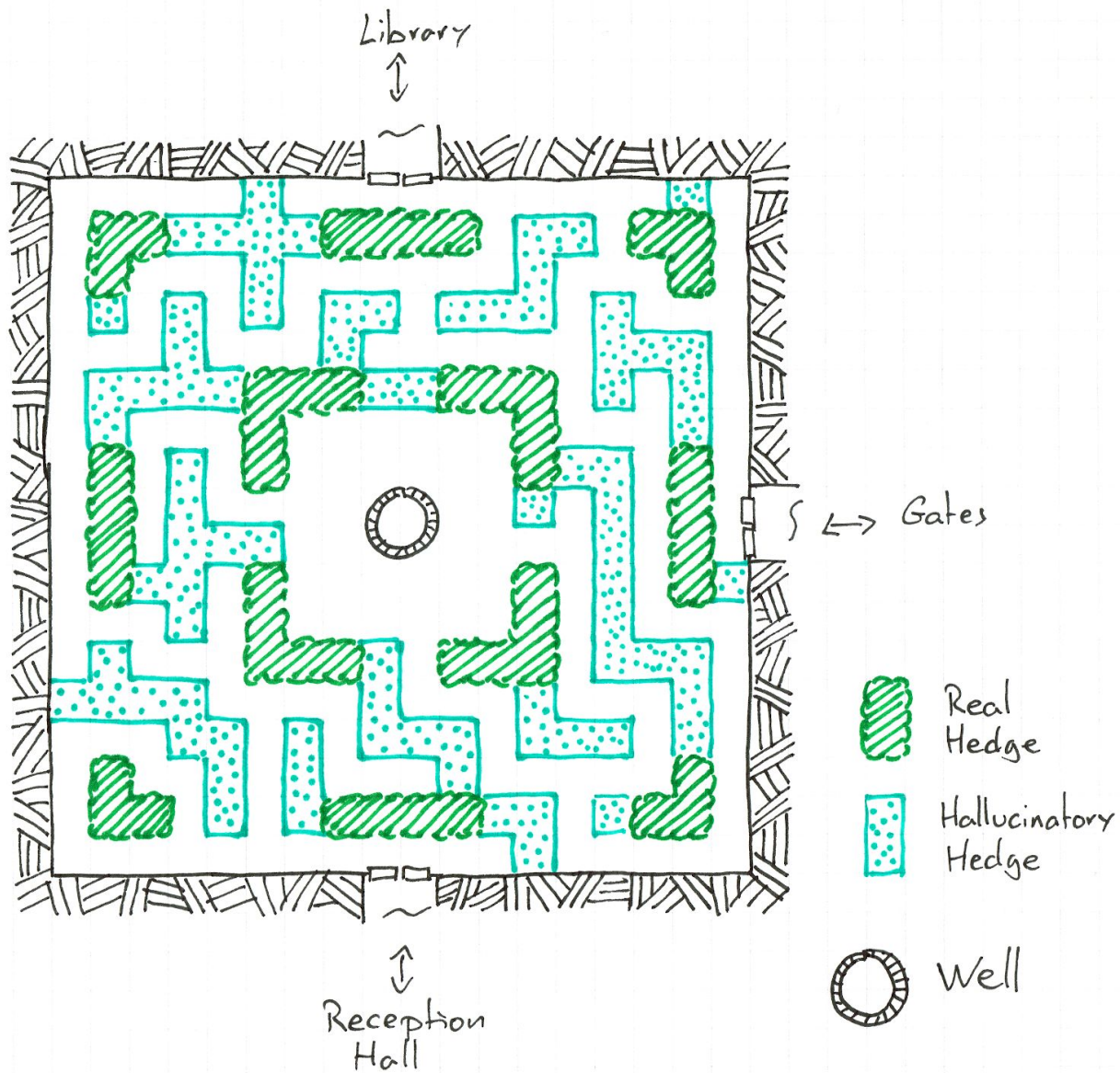
Appendix. Map 2.B Cistern



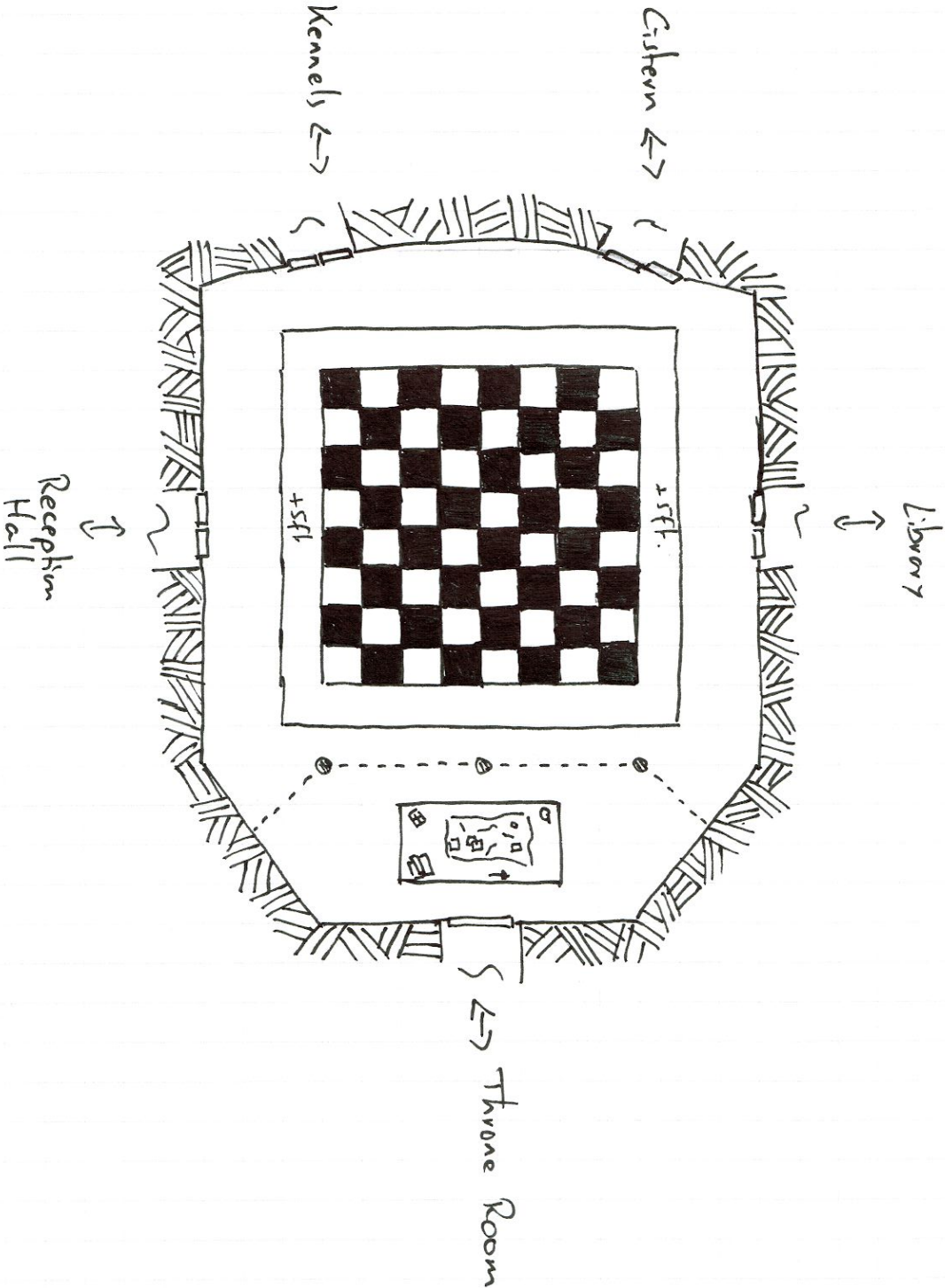
Appendix. Map 2.C.1 Gardens (Hallucinatory Terrain Config 1)



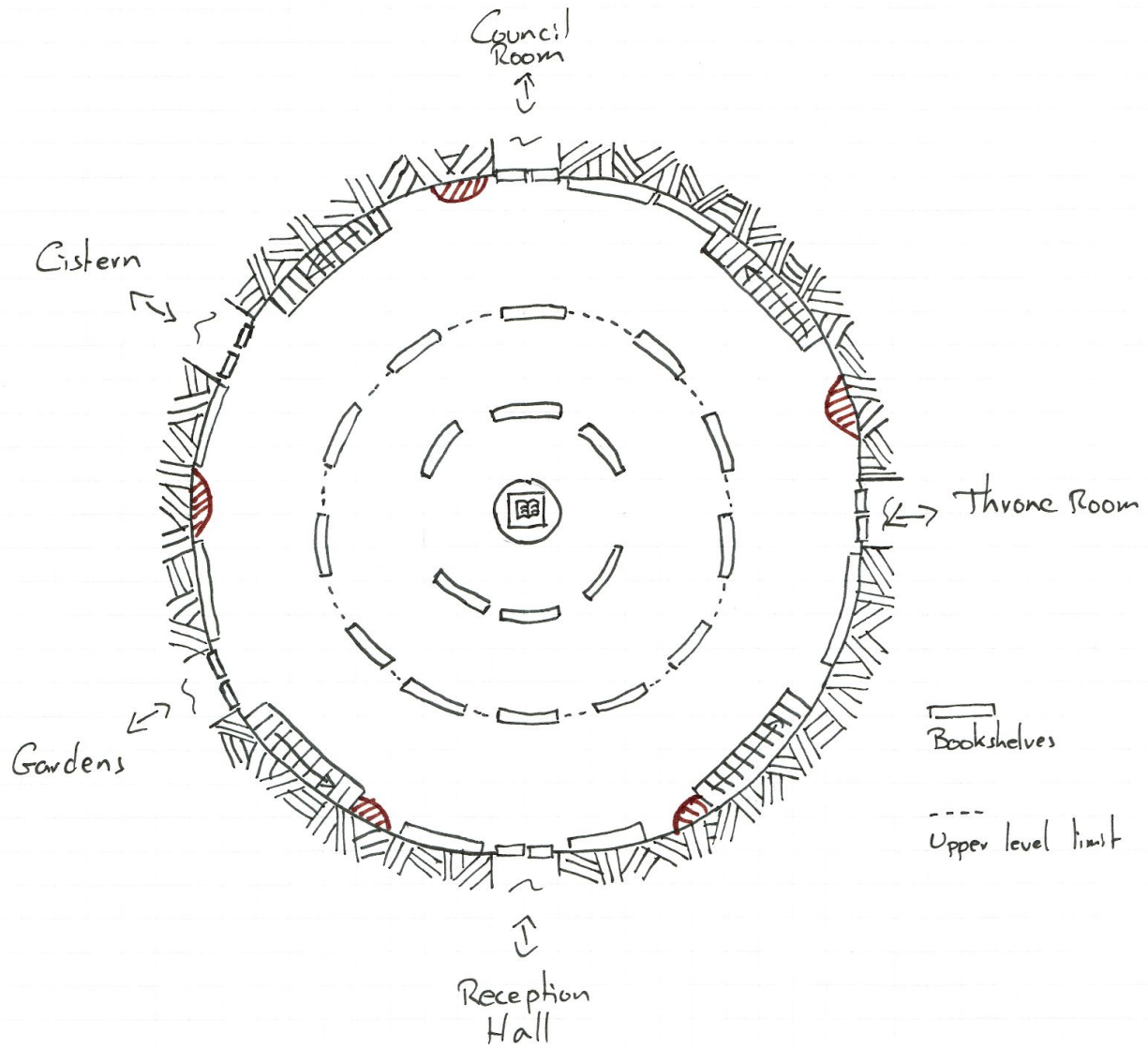
Appendix. Map 2.C.2 Gardens (Hallucinatory Terrain Config 2)



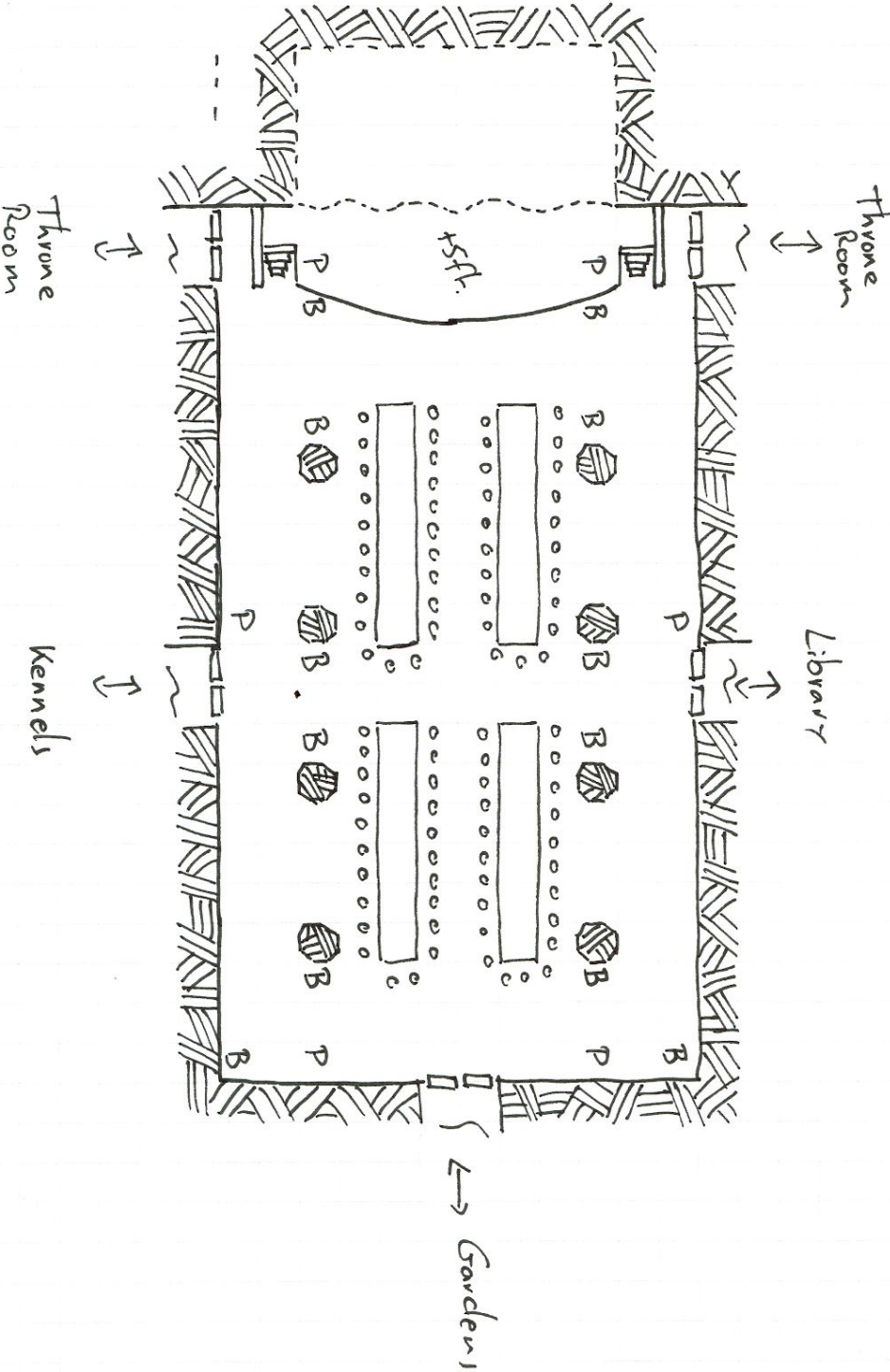
Appendix. Map 3.A Council Room



Appendix. Map 3.B Library

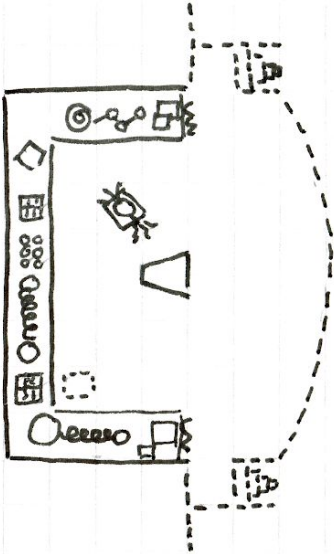


Appendix. Map 3.C Reception Hall (Room)

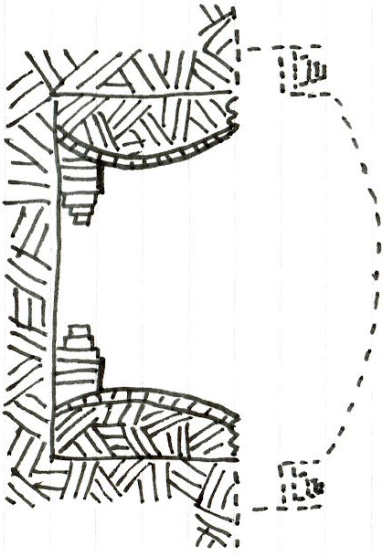


Appendix. Map 3.C Reception Hall (Stage Play Configurations)

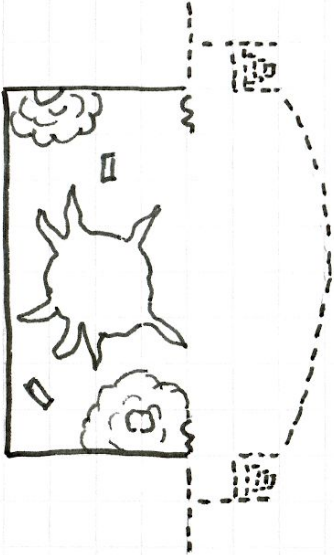
Dr. Diodati's monster



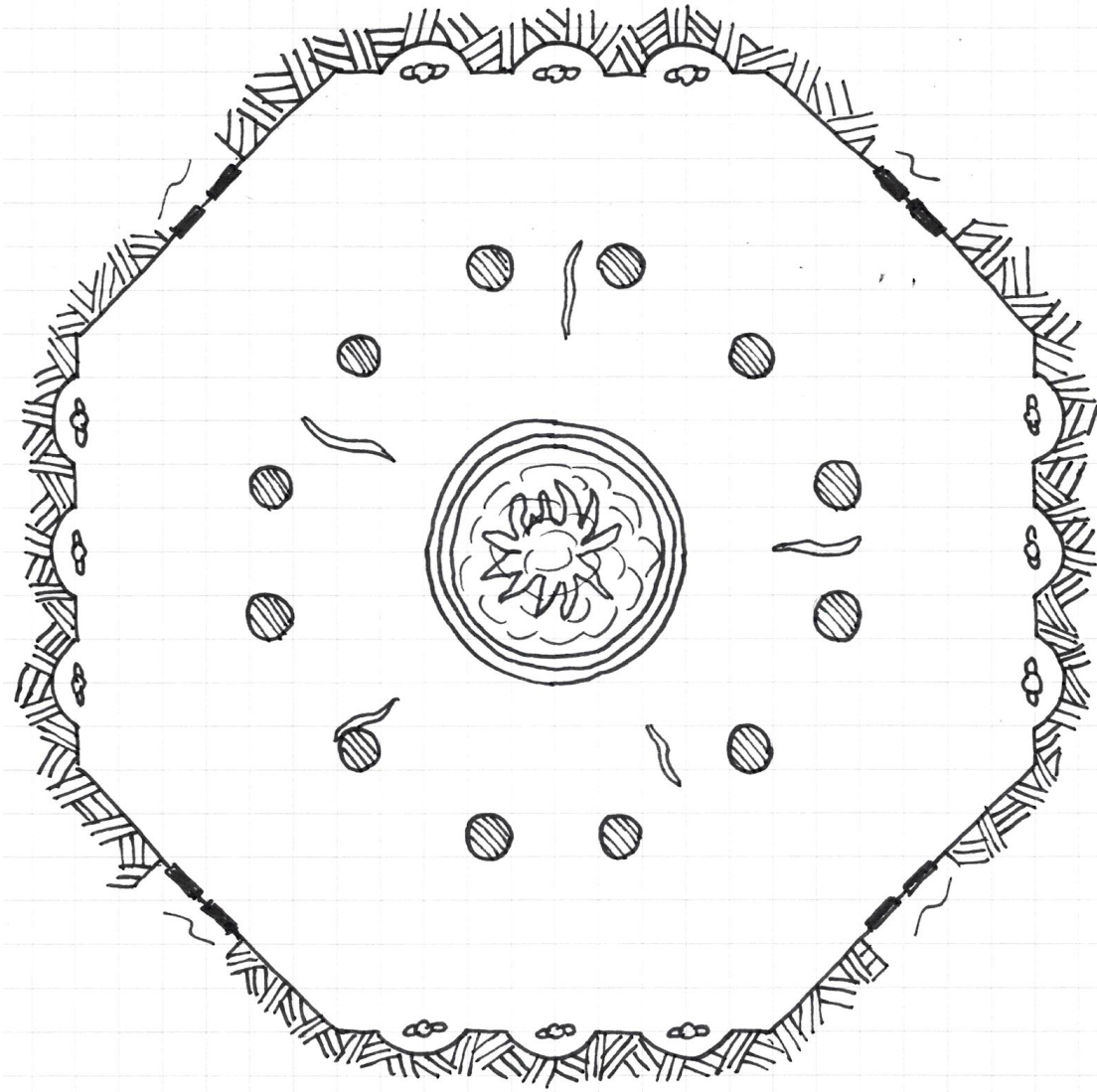
Romualt and Julian



The headless cavalier



Appendix. Map 4 Throne Room



Player Handout 1. Story Award

During the course of this adventure, the characters may earn the following story award. If you are printing these out for your characters, print as many as you may need to ensure that any eligible character receives a copy:

A spectral displacer kitten?

You have found a spectral six-legged kitten with small bumps on its shoulders. The kitten keeps blinking in and out of view, suggesting that it may have once been a Displacer Beast kitten. If you decide to keep it, you find it extremely playful and friendly. After several adventures you realize it will never grow into an adult.

I'm a Published Author!

Congratulations, you have unwillingly published your first book, and it has not gone unnoticed. A conclave of Wizards on the Sword Coast has taken a liking in your fact-based, straight to the point style. Your name is spreading amongst academics, sages, librarians, Clerics of Oghma and Deneir and even Candlekeep has heard about it.

Player Handout 2. Magic Item

During the course of this adventure, the characters may find the following permanent magic item:

Figurine of wondrous power: Golden Lions

Wondrous Item, Rare (Table G)

A *figurine of wondrous power* is a statuette of a beast small enough to fit in a pocket. If you use an action to speak the command word and throw the figurine to a point on the ground within 60 feet of you, the figurine becomes a living creature. If the space where the creature would appear is occupied by other creatures or objects, or if there isn't enough space for the creature, the figurine doesn't become a creature.

The creature is friendly to you and your companions. It understands your languages and obeys your spoken commands. If you issue no commands, the creature defends itself but takes no other actions. See the *Monster Manual* for the creature's statistics.

The creature exists for a duration specific to each figurine. At the end of the duration, the creature reverts to its figurine form. It reverts to a figurine early if it drops to 0 hit points or if you use an action to speak the command word again while touching it. When the creature becomes a figurine again, its property can't be used again until a certain amount of time has passed, as specified in the figurine's description.

These gold statuettes of lions are always created in pairs. You can use one figurine or both simultaneously. Each can become a lion for up to 1 hour. Once a lion has been used, it can't be used again until 7 days have passed.

The lions that appear are twinned pairs of opposite colouration. One white with black stripes, the other black with white stripes.

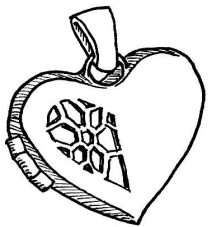
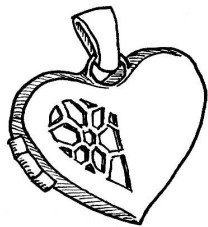
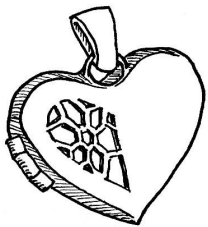
Player Handout 3. Charms

During the course of this adventure, the characters may find protective charms for part 4 of this adventure. We encourage you to print this page and cut illustrations as handouts.

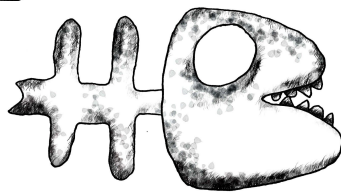
Protective Charms



Quill Pendant



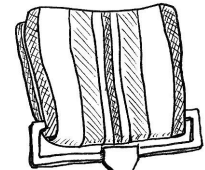
Fish Head



Locket



Pendant of twigs, feathers and rocks



Military Medal

