

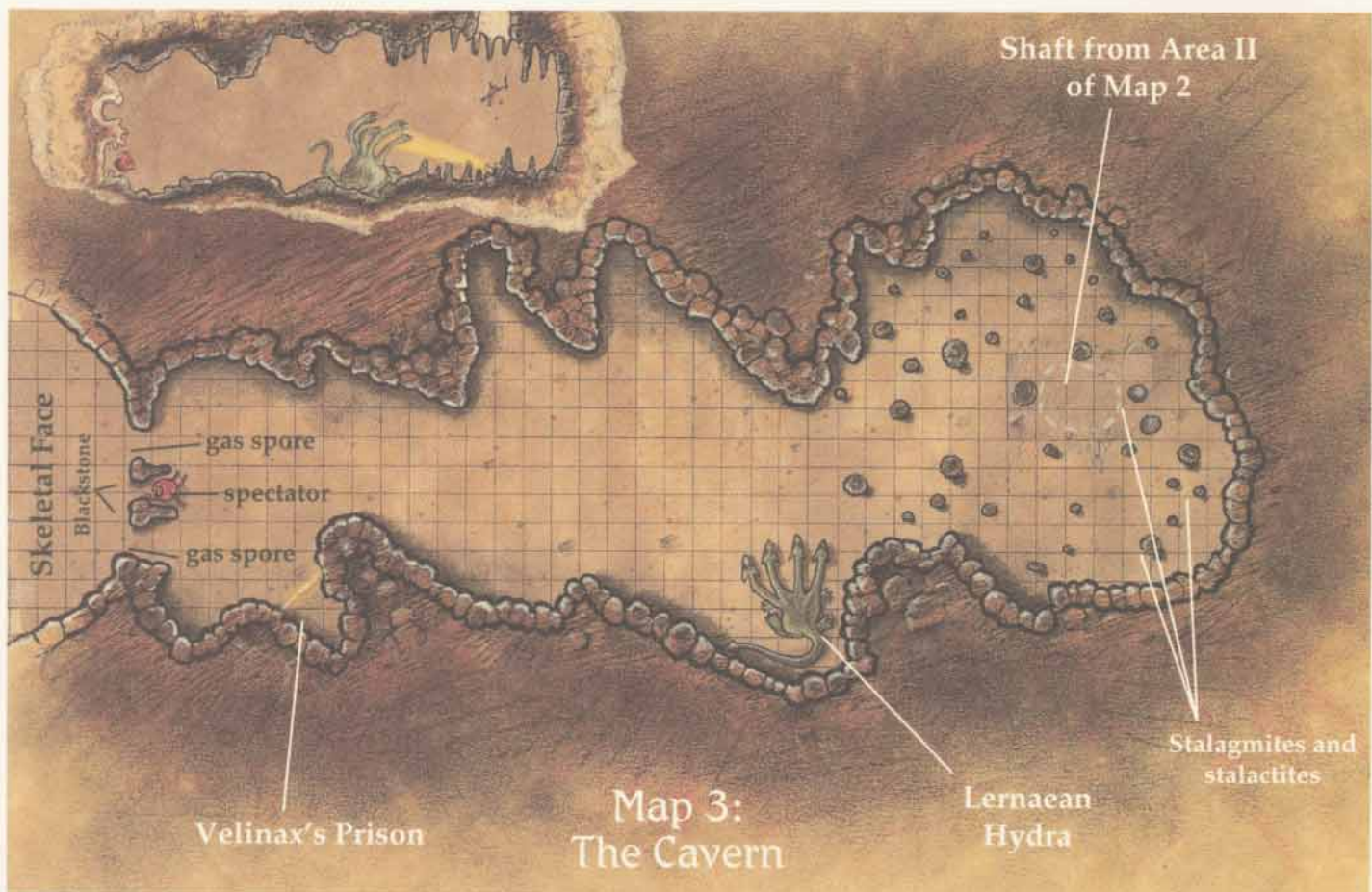


Advanced
Dungeons & Dragons[®]
Monstrous Arcana™

9530

Eye of Doom





Advanced Dungeons & Dragons[®] Adventure Monstrous Arcana[™] Eye of Doom

by Thomas M. Reid

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Introduction

Welcome to *Eye of Doom*, an adventure designed for characters of levels 6 to 10 (at least 40 total levels) that can be played separately or as the second of a trilogy. The other two adventures in the series are *Eye of Pain* and *Eye to Eye*. As always, before you attempt to run this adventure, you should familiarize yourself with the plot and individual encounters. If you are pressed for time, at the very least skim through the text, noting the main sections, and only read the first two sections (Background and Beginning the Adventure) in any detail.

Eye of Doom is set up so that you can utilize it almost anywhere in your campaign world. The locations are generic enough that they can easily be renamed, if needed, to match a particular region that is already detailed in your setting.

Be aware that although this adventure is designed for mid-level characters, it should not be taken lightly by the players. *Eye of Doom* revolves around some of the more well-known but potentially underrated creatures in the AD&D® game system—the cunning beholder and its kin. This is not just a hack-and-slash

affair; characters who venture forth, intent on stomping into the beasts' lair and slaying them without any forethought and preparation, are in for a nasty surprise. In fact, the PCs will be hard pressed to survive against the guileful machinations of the creatures, much less actually succeed.

Although the DM does not need anything other than the *DUNGEON MASTER*® *Guide*, the *Player's Handbook*, and the *MONSTROUS MANUAL*™ accessory in order to get full use out of this adventure, it is part of the *MONSTROUS ARCANA*™ series of products that includes *I, Tyrant*, a sourcebook on beholders. *I, Tyrant* is a perfect complement to the entire beholder trilogy of adventures, providing the DM with all sorts of additional information on beholders and beholder kin. It can serve as an invaluable way to spice up the characters' encounters with the nasty creatures in this and the other two adventures. In fact, *I, Tyrant* provides some of the material in these adventures.



Background

Far removed from the sight of man, a hive of beholders has taken root, biding its time until the glorious day when it can rise up and reclaim ancient sacred beholder lands from its hated enemies, the humans. The hive mother, a great, lumbering behemoth known as Ixathinon, rules the hive with an iron grip, demanding the strictest obedience from her minions.

One such subordinate, however, has other ideas and has been carefully implementing its *own* insidious plans, unbeknownst to the hive mother. Qeqtoxii, an elder orb, has kept its true identity a secret from the hive mother by posing as a mere true beholder. It hopes someday to claim leadership of the hive for its own. In order to do this, however, Qeqtoxii must defeat and destroy the hive mother—a formidable task, indeed.

Thus, Qeqtoxii has decided to utilize outside forces in its quest for supremacy—namely, unwitting adventurers. The first part of the elder orb's plans (which took place in *Eye of Pain*, the adventure that precedes this one) included finding a group of adventurers hearty and clever enough to survive exploration of a devious underground lair created by Qeqtoxii himself. Laden with cruel minions, insidious traps, and a bit of treasure—just enough to tantalize the heroes—the lair served as a testing ground to prove the heroes' mettle. Once they had survived that, Qeqtoxii knew they were capable of even greater—and more deadly—challenges.

Qeqtoxii left a trail for the characters to follow as it departed from the secret lair, hoping the subtle clues it planted would be enough to lead the heroes deeper into the complex web of its plans and eventually back to the hive. In order to appear free of involvement to Ixathinon the hive mother, and also to keep from overwhelming the characters with more than they can handle, Qeqtoxii has broken its plan into multiple phases, with the initial phase designed to pit the characters against the elder orb's own forces.

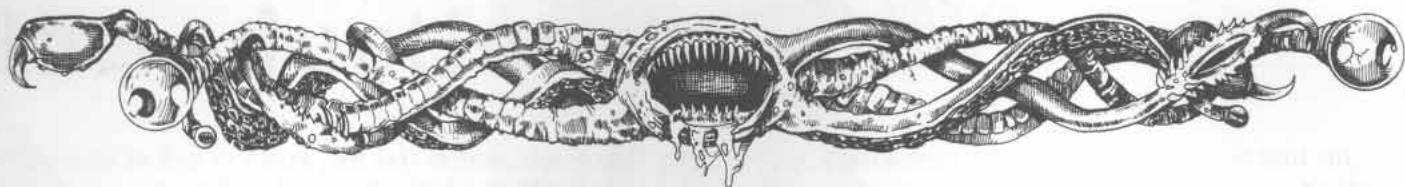
The hive mother's ultimate goal has been to reclaim for the hive a region of land occupied by

humans. The beholders consider the terrain sacred, as it is the site of an ancient beholder city. Unfortunately, the town of Cumbert lies directly over the remains of this site, and in her fervor, Ixathinon has become insistent upon eradicating the town and all who live within its walls. The problem, of course, is that the hive is not strong enough to achieve this through open warfare. Instead, Ixathinon intends to subtly take control of the city through a program of organized criminal activity.

The hive mother chose Qeqtoxii to head up this operation, an assignment the elder orb has carried out effectively and with great relish. The elder orb's criminal organization, known to the outside world as the Unblinking Eye (an attempt at ironic humor by Qeqtoxii, who feels a constant need to identify with humans in order to better manipulate them), is a smoothly running machine with involvement in various forms of organized crime. These activities include such things as corrupting governments, smuggling, creating a protection racket against the merchants, forging documents, and so forth.

Of course, the higher chains of command within the Unblinking Eye are secretive, with orders being issued and reports being made through special methods to keep identities of superiors a secret. Nobody within the organization knows Qeqtoxii's true identity, and in fact it has taken steps to ensure that it has no recognizable visage within the Unblinking Eye, either. The minions in the organization know Qeqtoxii simply as the Faceless Man, and they all believe it to be a human of some sort but have never been allowed to get a good glimpse of its face—a translucent screen hides it.

Because of the great success of the Unblinking Eye, Qeqtoxii has come to enjoy the level of power it commands among the surface dwellers and is not so willing to surrender it to Ixathinon. It sees her plan to destroy Cumbert as foolish and a waste of potential resources and has decided to usurp her and take over the hive. If it is successful, Qeqtoxii will continue to build its power base



Background

within Cumbert and eventually spread its organization's influence farther afield.

In order to allay suspicion, Qeqtoxii intends to lead the characters right into the midst of the Unblinking Eye, and thus let them "discover" that there are beholders behind the activity. If the heroes act according to the elder orb's plans, they will follow the trail Qeqtoxii has planted for them right to the hive (with a minimum of disruption to its own well-oiled criminal machine). Of course, in order to get the characters to infiltrate the Unblinking Eye, it needs to get their attention. The elder orb intends to do that through judicious use of its alias, Velinax the Vermilion.

By spreading rumors that Velinax is out to bring down the criminal organization, the elder orb has goaded its members into taking action against the wizard and all of his associates. Of course, the heroes believe that Velinax is interested in finding beholders, but trying to convince a criminal organization of this may be difficult, at best. Eventually, Qeqtoxii hopes, the characters will put two and two together and realize that the disappearance of Velinax and their harassment by the Unblinking Eye are connected, and they will go after the culprits.

Once the characters start following the trail of the Unblinking Eye, it becomes only a matter of time before they manage to infiltrate the criminal operation and begin interfering with things. Qeqtoxii realizes that a certain level of disruption to its business is inevitable if the plan is to work, but it hopes to minimize the damage by making it easy for the characters to go right to the heart of the matter. The clues it plants will allow the heroes to quickly follow the chain of command and confront the highest levels of leadership in their secret headquarters.

At this stage of the game, however, it is a very real possibility that the characters could be captured; after all, the elder orb's highest officers are powerful individuals in their own right. To avoid the risk of premature destruction of its "pets," Qeqtoxii will arrange for many of its closest subordinates to be away from the headquarters when the PCs invade.

One way or another, the heroes will come

before the Faceless Man, the mastermind of the Unblinking Eye. Since the Faceless Man *is* the elder orb, it will be within its power to direct the PCs right where it wants them—down below the town of Cumbert, deep into its own Inner Sanctum and one step away from the hive itself. From there it will manipulate them by posing once again as Velinax the Vermilion, this time making it appear that he has been a prisoner of the beholder.

The final bits of evidence will be carefully worded lies from "Velinax" to the heroes. They have rescued the wizard, and he has quite a bit of useful information to reveal. There is more to this beholder situation than he ever dreamed, he will tell them, and the source of the danger lies ever deeper beneath the surface of the earth. They must rest up and prepare to enter the darkest recesses of an ancient beholder city and confront the dark denizens hiding there. Then the true danger is only beginning.

Beginning the Adventure

The majority of the adventure takes place in and beneath Cumbert, a rather nondescript small town. There are two ways to start; the first choice is for those DMs who wish to begin the story with this adventure, skipping *Eye of Pain* entirely. In this case, begin with the event entitled *A Strange Wizard*, immediately below. The second choice assumes that you ran the previous adventure, *Eye of Pain*, for the players and their characters. If this is the case, then the adventure picks up about a week after the last adventure left off, beginning with the event entitled *An Old Mystery*, further below.

A Strange Wizard

This event is designed as a lead-in to the main part of this adventure for those DMs who did not choose to run *Eye of Pain* previously. It begins with the characters relaxing in a tavern known as the Grumbling Goblin in the town of Cumbert one evening. The details of Cumbert do not matter much; feel free to flesh it out further however you wish.

A wizard who wishes to hire the characters to aid him in ferreting out a nest of beholders beneath the city approaches the group. Read the following aloud to the players:

The Grumbling Goblin is an unremarkable place, a typical tavern with a smokey interior. A few folk sit in small groups here and there, but the place is hardly full. Off to one side and a ways toward the back, a gentleman sits at a round table. This fellow stands out from the crowd, as he is dressed rather garishly, decked out from head to toe in bright red robes. It is a pretty sure bet that he is a wizard.

He catches your eye, smiles graciously, and moves to where you are sitting. He nods his head slightly as he introduces himself. "Greetings and good evening to you. I am Velinax the Vermilion, and I have a business proposal for you. May I buy you a round while we discuss it?"

Allow the players to decide whether their characters are interested in hearing Velinax's story. If they are not, then go immediately to Ambush, below. Otherwise, continue by reading the following aloud to the players:

"Very good, then," says the aging gentleman as he signals for a bar wench and seats himself at your table in one motion. He orders a round of drinks and then proceeds.

"I am looking for a group such as yours to aid me in a rather dangerous expedition. For a number of years, I have been gathering infor-

mation on beholder lore. It is a wondrous subject. Of course, all of my studies have been abstract in nature—very few people have encountered one of the eye tyrants and come back to tell the tale, much less come back with any useful details.

"I have reached a point where I feel that my studies have gone as far as they can in the laboratory, and I wish to do some firsthand field research. As preposterous as it sounds, I strongly believe that a nest of beholders is living somewhere beneath this town.

"I have been gathering evidence on this matter for close to a month now, and I think that a nest of them may be at this very moment hiding in plain view, disguised as humans or demihumans and interacting with the citizens of Cumbert. Of course, the only way to incontrovertibly prove this is to ferret them out, but danger lies along that path, and I dare not risk it alone. If you know anything at all about beholders, then you know that they can be a wizard's worst nightmare.

"I want to hire you to help me investigate. I will not lie to you; the risk is great. But I am willing to give you whatever treasure we confiscate. All I am interested in is the information to be gained. What do you think?"

Allow the players a chance to discuss the situation and decide what their characters are going to do, but regardless of what they decide, others in the tavern have taken notice of the PCs' interaction with Velinax and are preparing a meeting with the heroes later.

Wrap up whatever role-playing is necessary to conclude the agreement, then have Velinax excuse himself. He heads upstairs as if going to a room, but once out of sight, he casts *teleport without error* to leave the premises. Once the characters leave the Grumbling Goblin, go to Ambush, below.

An Old Mystery

This event is designed to continue the action begun in *Eye of Pain*; it takes place shortly after the characters have finished exploring the hidden lair of the death tyrant. The exact amount of time depends on several factors. First, the characters need some time to advance an experience level after completing *Eye of Pain* (how much depends on how you handle training for new levels). If the characters have not gained quite enough experience to bring them in line with the prerequisite level ranges for this adventure, consider a brief mini-adventure or two in between.

Second, Qeqtoxii needs some time to prepare his plans and lure the characters into investigating the Unblinking Eye. Not too much time should pass, however, or the players may lose interest in the story thread. Ideally, this event should occur when the characters are in the town of Cumbert, but it could be adjusted to work with the PCs in another locale. Read the following aloud, adjusting as necessary:

The end of an uneventful day finds you relaxing in your quarters, not quite ready to retire for the night, yet lethargic enough not to want to go out after dinner. It seems as though you will while away another evening in quiet leisure when a note slips under your door.

Once the characters retrieve the note, read the following aloud:

The note, written in a smooth, clean hand, is short and simple:

"The one you seek known as Velinax the Vermilion is in the common room of the Grumbling Goblin at this very moment. If you hurry, you may catch him."

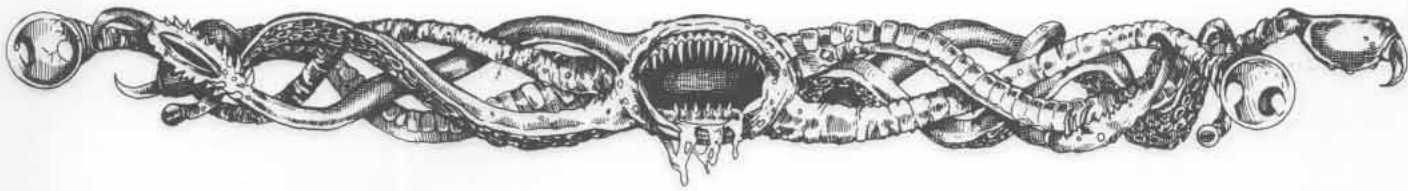
At last, a lead! You reflect back for a moment over the last several days. After returning to

Cumbert to meet the mysterious wizard, you discovered that he had vanished once again. A week of fruitless searching turned up no clues, and you had almost given up hope. Now, though, he seems to have resurfaced.

The note is *not* in the handwriting of Velinax (in case the PCs compare this writing with that on some of the notes they found in the wizards' room at the Knotty Pine in Burke's Crossing). The characters have several choices here. They may try to open the door immediately (perhaps even before they have read the note) to see who delivered the message. However, there will be no one there, for Qeqtoxii (in human form) slid it under the door and then immediately cast *teleport without error* to disappear. The heroes may decide to ignore the note, in which case Qeqtoxii will try to pique their curiosity again in the near future. See the notes at the end of this event for more information.

If the characters head straight for the Grumbling Goblin, Velinax is nowhere to be found, and no one has seen him all night. Hopefully, once they realize he has slipped away again, the characters will begin asking other patrons and employees in the establishment if the wizard has been seen.

Qeqtoxii's own part in this elaborate scheme is simply to watch and gather information. The elder orb, still disguised as a human (its alias is a bard by the name of Vanauer), used its *teleport without error* spell to return to a private room at the Grumbling Goblin and now waits casually on a balcony overlooking the second floor. Vanauer/Qeqtoxii watches the heroes and reads their thoughts using an *ESP* spell from this position. In order to continue manipulating the characters into following its plan, it wants to get inside their heads and become more intimate with the way they think. It will use this information to customize its next set-up for them. (and so will you, as you will see later in the adventure).



An Old Mystery

Ambush

Whether you arrive at this event from *A Strange Wizard* or *An Old Mystery*, this takes place after the characters depart the Grumbling Goblin. It is actually an elaborate set-up on the part of Qeqtoxii. It has spent the last week sowing some very subtle seeds within the Unblinking Eye, the criminal organization it operates on behalf of the hive. The elder orb's plan was fairly simple. For the first few days that the characters were in town, it began to appear in strategic places within Cumbert as Velinax (always careful to avoid the PCs), making it known that the wizard wanted to take on the Unblinking Eye and destroy it. Velinax was interested in hiring some heroes to help him wipe out this social menace.

Qeqtoxii let this information leak to individuals who would spread it back to members of the Unblinking Eye, thereby piquing their own curiosity. The elder orb knew that word would eventually work its way up the chain of command and reach the Faceless Man (Qeqtoxii's alias as leader of the Unblinking Eye), and it would then issue orders to have this wizard and any of his associates "taken care of." Anyone asking about or seen fraternizing with the wizard would be accosted by the Unblinking Eye's thugs.

The next step in the elder orb's plan was to set up an "accidental" meeting between the heroes and these thugs. Qeqtoxii had made certain that Velinax was seen often enough around the Grumbling Goblin that his thugs would look for the wizard there. Then, of course, it set things up so that the PCs would be at the Grumbling Goblin and become guilty by association.

On this night, five members of the Unblinking Eye lurk in the Grumbling Goblin, waiting for any sign of Velinax the Vermilion. Each of them wears the insignia of the Unblinking Eye (a single, stylized eye) worked somewhere into their dress.

Borst, hm, T5: AC 7 (leather, Dex bonus); MV 12; hp 21; THAC0 18 (16 with *long sword* +2); #AT 1; Dmg 1d8+2/1d12+2 (*long sword* +2); SA backstab x3; SZ M (6' 6"); ML unsteady (7);

AL CN; XP 650.

S 12, D 15, C 11, I 13, W 16, Ch 9.

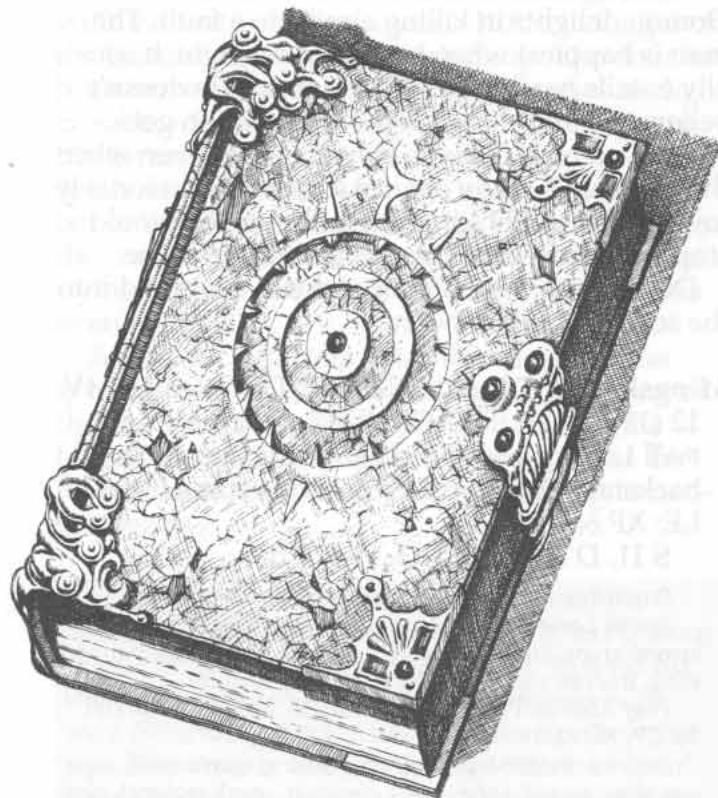
Personality: miserly, covetous.

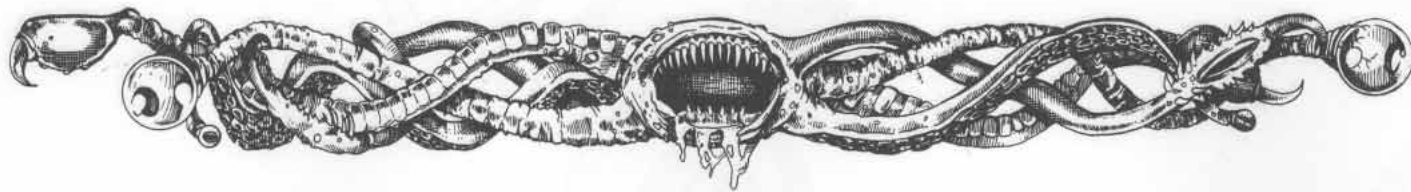
Special Equipment: eyes of minute seeing, long sword +2, leather armor, thieves' picks, short bow, 10 flight arrows, 50-foot hemp rope, 3 pp, 3 cp.

Thief Abilities: PP 30, OL 30, F/RT 20, MS 50, HS 35, DN 35, CW 80, RL 20.

Proficiencies: disguise, fire-building, forgery, local history, long sword, rope use, short bow, short sword, speak common, speak regional.

Greed almost completely motivates Borst. He has been loyal to the Unblinking Eye so far, primarily because the money has been extremely good. Most of Borst's work has involved shop keepers who are delinquent in their protection money, so he is not used to opponents who fight back, as the characters will. When this happens, he will withdraw to consider his options and report to his superiors that Velinax has some formidable





An Old Mystery

allies (assuming he survives the encounter). Because of his greed, Borst is bribable, although it will take a considerable amount for him to sell out the Unblinking Eye, because he knows he will have to leave Cumbert for greener pastures.

Borst wears his insignia on his collar, like a military rank insignia.

Domon, hm, F4: AC 6 (brigandine, small shield, Dex penalty); MV 12; hp 22; THAC0 17 (15 with *long sword* +2, 14 with specialization, 13 with Str); #AT 3/2; Dmg 1d8+5/1d12+5 (*long sword* +2, specialist, Str); SZ M (5' 11"); ML fanatic (17); AL NE; XP 175.

S 17, D 6, C 8, I 9, W 12, Ch 5.

Personality: brave, cheerful.

Special Equipment: *long sword* +2, brigandine armor, small shield, hooded lantern, light crossbow, 13 light quarrels, 50-foot silk rope, 6 gp.

Proficiencies: endurance, fire-building, light crossbow*, *long sword**, rope use, speak regional, speak common (* indicates specialization).

Domon delights in killing almost to a fault. The man is happiest when he is working, which usually entails beating people to a pulp. He doesn't believe in running when the competition gets intense, so he is likely to stay and fight even when the odds are heavily against him. He is reasonably loyal to the Unblinking Eye, although he would stop well short of selling his life for the cause.

Domon has the insignia of the Eye worked into the scabbard of his sword.

Mingsley, hf, T4: AC 6 (leather, Dex bonus); MV 12 (11); hp 10; THAC0 19 (17, *short sword* +2); #AT 1; Dmg 1d6+2/1d8+2 (*short sword* +2); SA backstab x2; SZ M (6' 0"); ML average (8); AL LE; XP 650.

S 11, D 16, C 10, I 13, W 9, Ch 7.

Personality: foolhardy, reverent.

Special Equipment: *oil of impact*, *short sword* +2, leather armor, grappling hook, hooded lantern, 50-foot hemp rope, sling, thieves' picks, 19 sling bullets, 2 pp, 20 cp.

Thief Abilities: PP 20, OL 60, F/RT 35, MS 10, HS 15, DN 35, CW 85, RL 15.

Proficiencies: fire-building, gem cutting, quarterstaff, rope use, *short sword*, sling, speak common, speak regional, tumbling.

Mingsley is the second-story "man" of the operation, as she gets into locked places and high spaces. She holds a very high opinion of her own abilities to scale a wall or walk a tightrope, so much so that others have called her crazy for some of the stunts she tries. Yet, for all of her daring, she follows a god of thieves and nighttime devoutly.

Mingsley is a homely woman getting on in years, yet she is still quite agile. She dislikes toe-to-toe fighting, so when the combat starts she prefers to be in the shadows on top of a building somewhere where she can use her sling. If things go badly for her team, she will ditch them and head back to headquarters to report.

Mingsley wears her Unblinking Eye insignia around her neck as a pendant.

Kutrus, hm, F6: AC 5 (chain mail, medium shield, Dex penalty); MV 12; hp 24; THAC0 15 (14 with Str, 13 with specialization); #AT 3/2; Dmg 1d8+5/1d12+5 (*bastard sword*, specialization, Str); SZ M (5' 10"); ML steady (11); AL NE; XP 420.

S 18/40, D 6, C 11, I 8, W 8, Ch 9.

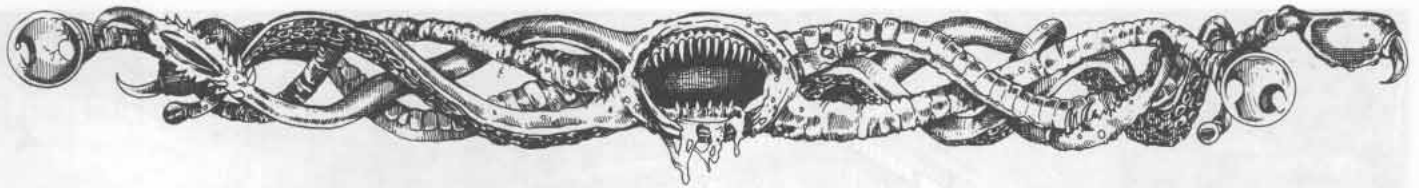
Personality: nervous, obsequious.

Special Equipment: chain mail, medium shield, *bastard sword*, heavy crossbow, 12 heavy quarrels, grappling hook, hooded lantern, 50-foot silk rope, 4 pp, 8 gp, 9 ep.

Proficiencies: *bastard sword**, fire-building, heavy crossbow*, mountaineering, navigation, rope use, speak common, speak regional, two-handed sword (* indicates specialization).

Kutrus is a nervous, ingratiating man who lives only to please his superiors—and gain favor by doing so. For a man as strong as he, his nervousness verges on paranoia. He constantly worries that someone is spying on the team and that leaders higher within the Unblinking Eye are displeased with the team's work, etc. He implicitly trusts Borst, though, which is about the only thing that keeps him from getting too nervous to work a job. Nonetheless, Kutrus is a formidable foe in battle, and once he gets into the thick of things, he forgets all else, happy to swing his sword at enemies left and right.

Kutrus's insignia for the Unblinking Eye is worked into a ring on the middle finger of his right hand.



An Old Mystery

Vartin, ½em, F5/M4: AC 6 (buckler, studded leather); MV 12; hp 19; THAC0 16; #AT 1; Dmg 1d4/1d4 (light crossbow); SZ M (5' 6"); ML average (9); AL LE; XP 420.

S 14, D 7, C 9, I 12, W 9, Ch 10.

Personality: madcap, barbaric.

Special Equipment: spellbook, studded leather, buckler, light crossbow, long sword, 13 light quarrels, 50-foot silk rope, 7 pp, 7 gp, 15 ep.

Spellbook (3/2): 1st—*enlarge**, *feather fall**, *friends*, *grease**, *hypnotism*, *jump*; 2nd—*fog cloud**, *forget*, *hypnotic pattern*, *invisibility**, *knock*, *ESP*.

*Indicates favored spell.

Proficiencies: battle axe, claymore, halberd, hunting, light crossbow, long sword, mountaineering, reading/writing, religion, rope use, speak common, speak regional.

Vartin is a strange, almost insane half-elf who has followed Borst for many years. He disdains the trappings of the city, preferring instead to adapt the style of dress of his elven heritage. He often expresses himself with wild gestures and frequently hops around or does strange dances, which has earned him his reputation for eccentricity. No one (perhaps not even Borst) knows for sure whether this behavior is an act to unnerve and distract his opponents or if Vartin truly is insane.

Although he is a warrior, Vartin prefers to shoot his crossbow from a distance rather than go toe-to-toe with opponents. He prefers to save his spells for those moments when they will surprise the most people, sometimes his associates included.

Vartin has tooled the insignia of the Unblinking Eye into the cover of his spellbook.

These members of the Unblinking Eye have been ordered to keep a lookout for Velinax or any of his associates, and once the characters enter the picture, the team gets very interested in them. Once they realize the PCs are associated with Velinax, they leave the Grumbling Goblin and wait outside to ambush the heroes when they leave. They intend to strike from an alley near the tavern, hoping to capture rather than kill the PCs. Their first concern is to find Velinax himself, and they hope the characters will have information

that will lead the thugs to the wizard.

Refer to Map 1: The Ambush for this encounter. The main street running in front of the Grumbling Goblin is paved with cobblestones, but the alley is nothing more than dirt. Note the starting positions of each of the members of the Unblinking Eye. Vartin casts a *fog cloud* spell centered in the alley moments before the PCs arrive, so it spills out into the street abundantly enough to appear to be a foggy evening. The fog is not quite as dense as the spell description indicates, as it has had some time to dissipate slightly. Visibility is at ten feet rather than two feet, but the fog still provides a 25% bonus to all rogues' hide in shadows ability scores. Borst begins the encounter lurking around the far corner of the alley, waiting to move into position until the characters enter the alley. Mingsley crouches in the crevice created between the roof of the weaver and the second story of the general goods store. She has coated five sling bullets with her *oil of impact*, so she receives an additional +3 bonus to her attack and damage rolls with the first five sling attacks. Kutrus lounges on the back steps of the Weaver's Shop. The door has been barred shut behind him. Vartin uses his light crossbow from his vantage point, staying out of the general fray so that he can safely cast needed spells. Domon, dressed in the uniform of a member of the town guard, pretends to stand watch at the corner. He has his hooded lantern lit, as if he is trying to make the foggy streets a little safer this evening.

After the characters enter the alley, Domon gives a little whistle call as a signal to the rest of the team and moves into position behind the heroes, crossbow loaded and cocked. Read the following aloud to the players, adjusting as necessary:

As you depart the warm atmosphere of the Grumbling Goblin, you notice that it has grown foggy. Drawing cloaks more tightly to fend off the damp, cool night air, you set out on your way. Rounding the corner to enter an alley that you often use as a shortcut to get back to your own abodes, you notice a lone member of the



town guard, a lit lantern in his hand, standing watch across the way.

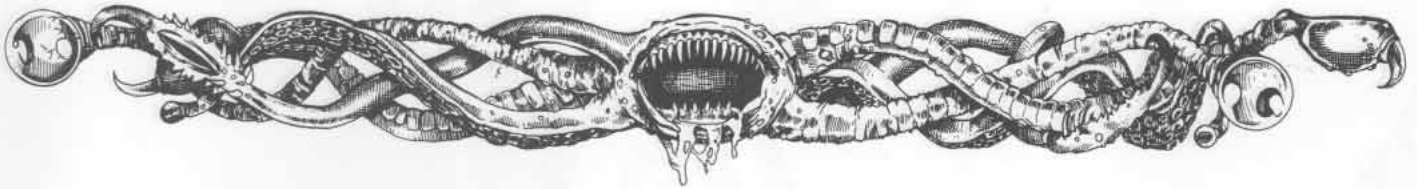
He nods to you and smiles. "Evening, folks. Here, let me shine some light down that way for you." He raises the lantern high and follows you a few steps into the alley, helping to illuminate the path better.

Give the characters some time to react. They may want to get out some weapons or magical items or cast some spells. Whatever they want to do, let them. Domon plays the part throughout, looking at them with a puzzled expression on his face, as if thinking, *It's just an alleyway, for crying out loud*. Once the characters are well down the alley, he shuts the lantern and takes his position behind them, crossbow at the ready. Go directly to An Unpleasant Conversation, below.

The PCs may smell the ambush coming and may not want to enter the alley, and this is fine. If they hesitate long enough, Mingsley knows to scream as though being assaulted, and Domon should then run into the alley to aid her. Read the following aloud to the players if the characters refuse to go into the alley:

The town guard shrugs his shoulders and says, "Suit yourself. Have a pleasant evening, then." He then moves back to his former position. Suddenly, a woman's scream emanates from the foggy alley, and without the slightest hesitation, the guard charges down the alley, drawing his sword. He calls back over his shoulder, "Summon help! And stay back!" Then all that you can see of him is his glowing lantern, bobbing wildly in the fog as he sprints to the rescue.

Give the characters a chance to react without pushing them into following. If they still won't, then Domon screams, too, and covers his lantern. The alley is dark, and the sounds of a desperate fight are heard. If the players *still* refuse to send their characters into the alley, then end the encounter. Borst and his team will have to devise another way of jumping the characters, most likely through a forged note from Velinax summoning the PCs to some remote location. You will have to improvise this event, devising an ambush in some warehouse or something.



An Old Mystery

An Unpleasant Conversation

Once the characters are in the alley, Borst appears at the far end, having placed another lantern behind him so that he is backlit and his features are not easily seen. Read the following aloud to the players:

You reach the middle of the alley, at a courtyard of sorts, and see the silhouette of a man in armor holding a sword at the ready. He is lit from behind, so you cannot make out any features. It is obvious, however, that he is intentionally blocking the far exit. Glancing around, you notice another man lounging on a set of steps leading to a back door. He, too, has a sword in his hand, and he smiles malevolently at you. You also realize that the town guardsmen is standing behind you, pointing a crossbow in your direction.

Again, give the players some time to react, but the first threatening move they make provokes the following response from Borst (read aloud to the players):

The silhouetted form at the end of the alley cocks his head to one side and says, "Before you do something rash, I'll warn you that the fog hides much. Do you think we would jump you with only three? But there's no need for bloodshed. We just want to talk."

If the characters attack anyway, then the NPC team from the Unblinking Eye wastes no more time and tries to subdue the characters. If the PCs are willing to discuss things with Borst, then he begins to grill them rudely, asking the following questions:

- Who are you?
- What do you know about Velinax the Vermilion?
- What does he want from you?
- How much is he paying you?

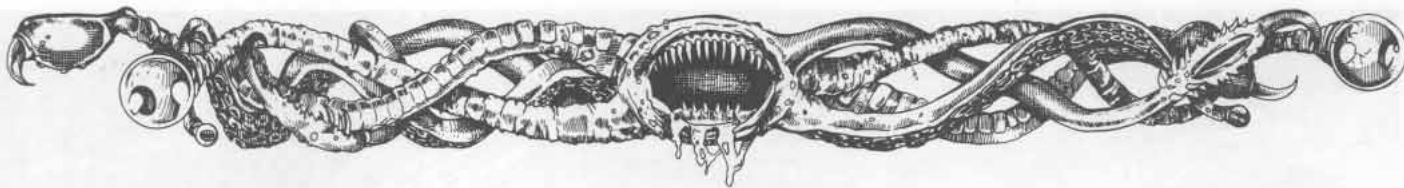
The questions above just provide a guideline for the conversation between Borst and the characters. Allow the course of the discussion to go wherever it needs to in order to sound natural, but keep in mind that since the word on the street is that Velinax wants to bring down the Unblinking Eye, Borst is not going to believe any stories the PCs tell about going after a nest of beholders. He sneers at their answers, accuses them of lying, and generally makes rude comments at them.

If Borst's behavior during his interrogation of the characters doesn't spur them to fight, then his next actions almost certainly will. He finally gives up on asking questions and orders the heroes to throw down their weapons and surrender to him so that he may take them for further questioning by his superiors. Once the heroes take up arms, run the combat to its conclusion.

The characters should win this fight, but it should be enough of a challenge that they realize they are up against a well-organized enemy who's done this kind of thing before. Of course, this whole ambush is bound to cause confusion in the characters' (and the players') minds, but it shouldn't take much for them to make the connection between the attack and Velinax's quest for beholders. If it doesn't, run a few more unpleasant surprises like this one (all devised by Qeqtoxii, who is using that *ESP* spell to manipulate the characters, don't forget) until the players get the idea to follow up on them.

The Plan of Attack

Once the battle commences, the team from the Unblinking Eye has a precise plan of battle to follow. Borst, Domon, and Kutrus will wade into the thick of things, occupying the warriors of the group. Mingsley is in charge of disrupting spells with her magically enhanced sling bullets. Vartin, meanwhile, should assist Mingsley with his light crossbow or cast spells when it seems an opportune time. He will use *grease* to try to delay any of the heroes who break rank or try to outflank the three team members engaged in melee combat. If necessary, Vartin can cast *enlarge* on one of the team members to allow him to block an exit.



An Old Mystery

If it appears that the battle is going badly for the team, Mingsley will drop silently to the ground and attempt to backstab one of the PCs. Don't forget that she has a 25% bonus to her hide in shadows roll due to the fog. If it looks as though the members of the Unblinking Eye will lose the fight, Borst may call a retreat. Alternatively, if it looks like there is no way out, he will ask to parley with the characters. Vartin, however, has been instructed to use his *invisibility* spell on himself to insure that he gets away to report to the team's superiors.

Some final notes: The sewer drain in the middle of the courtyard is only two feet in diameter and is firmly embedded in the stone sewer system below. This drain leads into a series of very old square tunnels about five feet tall that eventually run off into the river. The narrow space between the weaver's shop and the general goods store is about 1½ feet wide, so a small demihuman (such as a gnome or a halfling) might be able to squeeze in, but the amount of debris choking the way would make navigating it almost impossible. Someone magically reduced in some manner could certainly traverse it, but there are bound to be rats and other rodents living in there.

An Unexpected Turn of Events

If for some reason the PCs *do* surrender, then Borst and the rest of the team thoroughly search them, tie them up, and march them to a safe-house nearby. The heroes then wait in a locked room for a while until a pair of the team's superiors come in to question them further. One of them is a wizard who uses an *ESP* spell to determine if they are lying, but he is careful to conceal this from them. Once it is clear that the PCs are telling the truth, the officials of the Unblinking Eye order Borst to eliminate the PCs and hide their bodies.

These events have been left for you to flesh out, as they are not the most likely course of action the players will take. Allow their characters a fair chance to escape from this mess, but do not make it easy. Any well-thought-out plan to

overwhelm Borst and the others (who have been lulled into a false sense of security due to the ease with which they originally captured the PCs) will be a fun and exciting side story.

Searching for Velinax

As the rest of this adventure unfolds, the characters may continue to search for information on the whereabouts of Velinax. Although they may catch snippets of information ("Oh, he was here just a few days ago"; "A wizard dressed in red? Sure, he used to come in here regular. Haven't seen him for a few days, though"), the characters should never catch up with Velinax.

If the heroes continue to search for the wizard to the exclusion of all else, feel free to slip some more notes under their door or even have Vanauer (Qeptoxxii's bard persona) contact them with information that connects Velinax with the Unblinking Eye. The important thing here is that Qeptoxxii wants the characters to associate the wizard with the thieves' guild so that they will continue to unwittingly fulfill his plans.



Infiltrating the Unblinking Eye

After the characters have dealt with Borst and his companions one way or another, they may begin trying to find out who is behind the thugs' attack. There are several ways of going about this. Each of the events set up below is designed to cover one aspect of the PCs' investigation. Run as many of them as are needed to handle the characters' actions. As each event is pieced together with the others, the characters should begin to get a good picture of the Unblinking Eye and where to find its leadership.

There are two additional events thrown in simply as red herrings. You may choose to run these at any point during the course of the adventure, or you may decide not to run them at all. They are set up merely to keep the rest of Cumbert dynamic while the characters are wrapped up in their own affairs.

Strange Insignias

If the characters search the bodies of Borst or his compatriots (assuming that they managed to kill or subdue any of the NPCs), they have a chance to notice the insignia of the Unblinking Eye. Have each player whose character searches a body roll an Intelligence check. A successful check indicates the character realizes that, although the insignias are worn differently and stylized differently, they are all essentially the same symbol.

If the characters try to find out what the insignia means by querying townsfolk, they get quick results. Any merchant, shopkeeper, or store owner can tell the PCs what the insignia stands for, as well as the fact that the Unblinking Eye runs a protection racket. Any business that does not pay protection money has an "accident." If the heroes start showing the insignias around in taverns and inns, however, they may be in for a nasty surprise. There is a 30% chance that they attract the attention of a group of Unblinking Eye members, and since the characters are asking questions, it is obvious they are not members themselves.

At the first opportunity, thugs from the Unblinking Eye pick a fight with or jump the PCs. They are not interested in talking to the characters about where the insignias came from. By their own code, anyone who possesses Unblinking Eye insignias and exhibits or discusses them in a public place is considered an enemy of the guild. These antagonists are all low-level flunkies and should be no problem for the PCs to handle in a fight.

Felibarr, hm, B4 (leader): AC 10; MV 12; hp 20; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1d6/1d6 (quarterstaff); SA spells; SZ M (6' 1"); ML elite (13); AL NE; XP 420.

S 13, D 13, C 14, I 13, W 8, Ch 17.

Personality: warlike, practical.

Special Equipment: spellbook, quarterstaff, composite short bow, 15 flight arrows, 6 daggers, clawed gloves, 50-foot hemp rope, harp, 1 ep, 11 cp.

Spellbook (2/1): 1st—*change self**, *charm person**; 2nd—*detect invisibility*, *flaming sphere*, *glitterdust*, *improved phantasmal force**.

*Indicates favored spell.

Thief Abilities: PP 25, DN 35, CW 75, RL 15.

Proficiencies: composite short bow, dagger, local history, musical instrument, quarterstaff, singing, speak common, speak regional, tumbling, ventriloquism.

au'Triel, hf, T3: AC 6 (leather, Dex bonus); MV 12 (9); hp 6; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1d6/1d8 (short sword); SA backstab $\times 2$; SZ M (6' 0"); ML average (8); AL LE; XP 175.

S 11, D 16, C 12, I 12, W 7, Ch 10.

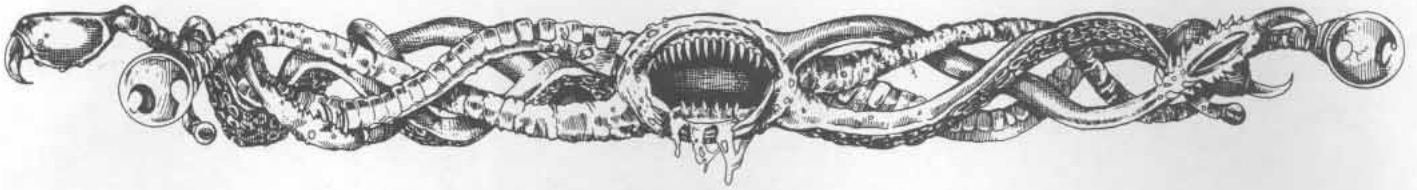
Personality: articulate, mousy.

Special Equipment: *potion of clairaudience*, *ring of X-ray vision*, short sword, dagger, lasso, thieves' picks, 50-foot hemp rope, 5 ep, 9 cp.

Thief Abilities: PP 30, OL 25, F/RT 20, MS 25, HS 20, DN 30, CW 80, RL 15.

Proficiencies: appraising, dagger, gem cutting, rope use, short sword, speak common, speak regional.

Sabbar, hm, F3: AC 6 (ring mail, small shield); MV 12; hp 12; THAC0 18 (17 with specialization); #AT 3/2; Dmg 1d8+3/1d8+3 (scimitar with Str bonus and specialization); SZ M (5'



Infiltrating the Unblinking Eye

7"); ML steady (12); AL LE; XP 120.

S 16, D 12, C 11, I 10, W 9, Ch 14.

Personality: extravagant, perfectionist.

Special Equipment: ring mail, small shield, scimitar, composite long bow, 8 flight arrows, 50-foot silk rope, 3 gp.

Proficiencies: composite long bow*, endurance, scimitar*, speak common, speak regional, survival (* indicates specialization).

Mariag, hm, T2: AC 8 (leather); MV 12 (11); hp 9; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg 1d8/1d12 (long sword); SA backstab x2; SZ M (5' 11"); ML average (8); AL NE; XP 120.

S 13, D 11, C 11, I 8, W 9, Ch 12.

Personality: sarcastic, morose.

Special Equipment: leather armor, long sword, short bow, 5 flight arrows, thieves' picks, 50-foot hemp rope, one 800-gp precious gem, 3 pp, 22 cp.

Thief Abilities: PP 25, OL 25, F/RT 10, MS 10, HS 15, DN 25, CW 70, RL 10.

Proficiencies: fire-building, long sword, rope use, short bow, speak common, speak regional.

If the characters manage to capture one of the thugs, they can get a certain amount of information on guild operations. The Unblinking Eye member can tell the PCs who his immediate superior is, how sensitive information is passed back and forth, and what some of the current activities of the guild are (at least, those activities he knows about).

Minda the Goat

If the characters simply want to try finding out more about Borst and his team, they may ask around. Inquiries in the Grumbling Goblin earn the PCs nothing but hard, cold stares, unless they speak to the barkeep. When this happens, read the following aloud to the players:

The barkeep eyes you levelly for a moment, almost as if he has no intention of acknowledging your question. Then, though, he speaks after all. "You look thirsty. I'll bet you all want something to drink." He is glancing at your belt pouches expectantly.

Give the players a chance to have their characters bribe the man, whose name is Skarlow. For anything less than 10 gold pieces over the price of the drinks, Skarlow tells the characters that the Unblinking Eye is the local thieves' guild in town and that Borst and his toughs were members. If the characters bribe Skarlow with at least 10 gold pieces, however, read the following aloud to the players:

The barkeep nods to himself with satisfaction and whispers conspiratorially, "Borst and his thugs work for the local thieves' guild . . . an organization called the Unblinking Eye. The word is that some crazy wizard named Velinax the Vermilion got on their bad list, and they want him and anyone associated with him dead and buried. It seems Velinax wants to exterminate the whole lot of them, and he hired you to help him.

"If you want to know more about the Unblinking Eye, you should talk to Minda the Goat. She's an informant for some of Borst's bosses, and she might—for the right price—tell you what you want to know."

Minda the Goat is usually found begging in the public market area, and Skarlow tells the characters this if asked. He tells them that everyone knows her; they should just ask around. Skarlow doesn't know anything beyond this.

Minda the Goat is indeed in the public market, begging. She is a filthy woman who smells as though she hasn't bathed in several weeks (hence the name), and she isn't very easy on the eye, either. She has yellowed, cracked teeth protruding from her mouth at odd angles, and her hair is stringy and always in her face. She has fat cheeks which make her look like she squints perpetually. She is dressed in soiled, tattered, woolen clothing.

If the characters approach her and question her openly (that is, loudly where other people in the marketplace can hear) about her association with the Unblinking Eye, she pointedly ignores them and has nothing to do with them. If they



approach in a more subtle fashion, however, read the following aloud to the players:

This foul-smelling woman does not at first seem to hear your question, going on about her business of calling for coin from all who pass her by. Just as you are about to repeat the query, however, she hisses under her breath, "Gold. Let's see some gold, you dandies."

If the characters drop a few gold coins into her basket, continue with the following, adjusting as necessary:

Minda the Goat smiles up at you, a visage that is almost more horrifying than before. "Thank you most kindly, generous lords and ladies. May the gods smile upon you today." She fawns on you for a minute more before hissing under her breath once again, "Meet me behind the fish stalls at the end of the day, and bring lots more of that gold you dandies are always toting around." Then she cackles. "I sure love you dandies. Always good for some gold."

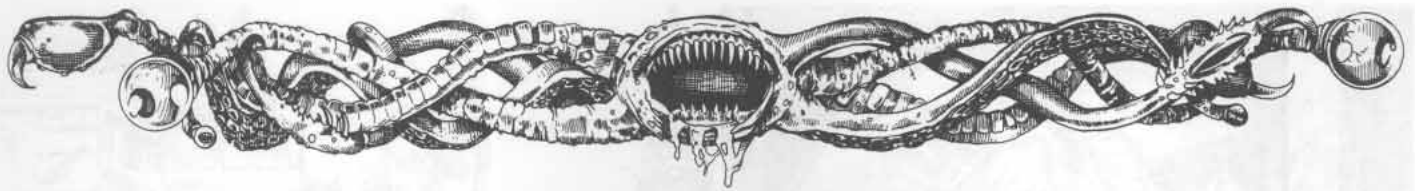
Minda ignores the characters after this. If the characters have met her conditions, follow this event up with the one entitled Behind the Fish Stall, further below.

If at any point the characters seem on the verge of attacking Minda (a 0-level human), a cohort of hers who has been working incognito nearby comes to her rescue. Gorlon, who is a huge man, sets up a simple, portable smithy every day in the public market. He is also Minda the Goat's business partner, after a fashion. He aids her in some of her more dangerous guild activities in exchange for a cut of her take.

Gorlon, hm, F10: AC 10; MV 12; hp 83; THAC0 11 (9 with *two-handed sword* +2, 6 with Str, 5 with specialization); #AT 2; Dmg 1d10+7/3d6+7 (*two-handed sword* +2, Str bonus, specialization); SZ M (6' 8"); ML steady (12); AL CN; XP 2,000.
S 18/62, D 9, C 16, I 8, W 11, Ch 12.

Personality: dull, focused.

Special Equipment: *two-handed sword* +2, 2 pp, 2 gp, 7 ep (all on his person); long sword, bastard sword, broad sword, forging equipment (if he is in the public market); and a sack with 250 gp and an assortment of small, light blue sapphires totaling 1,500 gp in value (in a hollow in his anvil).



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Proficiencies: armorer, bastard sword, blacksmithing, broad sword*, fire-building, leatherworking, long sword*, speak common, speak regional, two-handed sword* (* indicates specialization).

The two do not publicly acknowledge their relationship, but whenever anyone starts harassing Minda, Gorlon intervenes quickly "as a concerned citizen looking out for the little people." As quite a bit of money changes hands at the public market, the guard maintains a significant presence, so any kind of fight is stopped after only a round or two by guardsmen stepping in to break it up.

Handle this as you see fit, based on the personality of your players, but keep in mind that Gorlon will not draw a weapon until one is drawn against him. He prefers to fist-fight, knowing that in a round or two the fight will be stopped, anyway. The guardsmen always give Gorlon the benefit of the doubt over strangers, since he is a citizen and profitable businessman of Cumbert and is ostensibly acting to keep the peace. (Besides believing his account of what happened, they'll let Gorlon beat a stranger for a round or two before intervening, if the smith is winning.)

Behind the Fish Stall

This event is run if the characters have contacted Minda the Goat and met her conditions. The meeting takes place at the end of the business day behind the fish stalls, in a filthy alley where there is very little traffic. The fishmongers generally toss the fish heads and entrails back here during the day, so it is a disgusting place. Minda chose it specifically for that reason, because she wants to make the PCs as uncomfortable as she can. Gorlon is with her, but he stands a few feet off, not interested in overhearing the conversation.

Once the characters arrive, read the following aloud to the players, adjusting as necessary:

Minda the Goat appears to have chosen the most disgusting location in Cumbert to hold this meeting. The remains of fish litter the

ground, and the flies buzzing around them form a thick cloud in the air. The stench comes close to choking you. Minda herself seems right at home. Off in the distance, a huge man stands half-turned away from the proceedings, but with his hands resting easily on a two-handed sword of fine craftsmanship. He is bald, has a goatee, and wears no shirt.

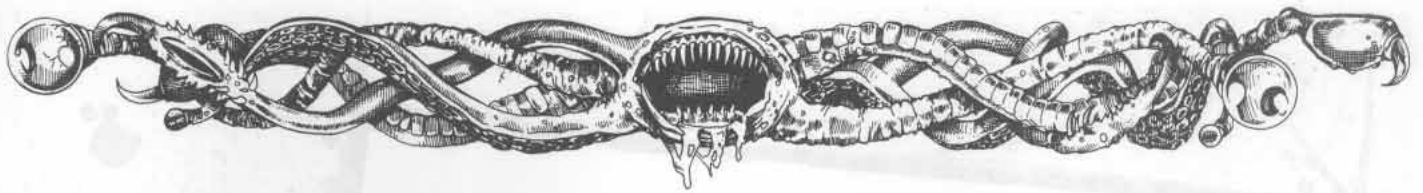
Minda takes a moment to peer around, as though looking for someone else. "You weren't followed, were you? You dandies probably never think to check and see if you were followed." She paces to either end of the little area behind the fish stalls, looking this way and that.

"Nobody there," the woman cackles. "Then let's get down to business. I want 500 gold coins up front. Then, depending on what you want to know, I'll set the rest of the price."

If the characters balk at this, Minda shrugs and prepares to leave. She is not that desperate to sell out the Unblinking Eye, so she won't negotiate. Once the characters cough up the money and specify their information, she sets the rest of the price at an additional 1,000 gp, regardless of the nature of the questions, for she is prepared to give the PCs more information than they might have hoped for.

Minda works as an information gatherer. She has her own network of spies, both inside the guild and beyond, and she knows almost as much about the activities of the Unblinking Eye as Qeqtoxii himself. She also knows many other things going on in the town of Cumbert, including all the hubbub over Velinax the Vermilion and his associates. Minda is well aware of the fact that the Unblinking Eye wants to get the heroes, as well as the wizard, and that the characters pose a genuine threat to the guild.

As unassuming a character as Minda is, she actually has quite a bit of underworld political power within Cumbert. She secretly desires to control the Unblinking Eye eventually, and she can see the potential for this through overthrowing the Faceless Man. If the PCs can do this work for her, then it would be possible to accomplish



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her goal without putting herself in great danger. Then she could step in and take control in the power vacuum that would result.

Thus Minda the Goat has sized up the heroes and come to the conclusion that they are capable of overthrowing the Faceless Man by dashing into the thick of things and throwing their weapons and spells around. Therefore, she isn't going to let them waste time beating on the appendages of the guild; she plans to send them right to the head of the operation, the headquarters of the Unblinking Eye. No matter what the PCs already know and what kind of information they hope to get out of Minda the Goat, she will reveal to them the location of the headquarters of the Unblinking Eye, and a lot about how to get past all of its defenses.

The reality of the situation is that the elder orb hoped the characters would wind up dealing with Minda the Goat, for two reasons. The first is that the heroes will gain the necessary information to infiltrate the Unblinking Eye quickly and easily, which saves time and allows the characters to bypass (and spare) a lot of the guild's operations. Qeqtoxii wants to get the operation back to full capacity as quickly as possible after the heroes come storming in, so the less they disrupt, the better.

Second, the elder orb wants an excuse to get rid of Minda the Goat, who has grown too powerful and too ambitious for her own good. Qeqtoxii is well aware of Minda's desire to see the Faceless Man overthrown and to see herself in that place. She has been a useful tool during her career, but after this last important job, the elder orb fully intends to dispose of her. By allowing her the opportunity to betray the guild, it will have the excuse it needs to make an example of her.

Minda tells the characters quite a bit of information for the 1,500 gp fee she charges. She will not know, of course, who the Faceless Man is (Qeqtoxii's human persona when acting as the Faceless Man), but she knows where the headquarters of the Unblinking Eye is located and how to get inside. Read the following aloud to the players:

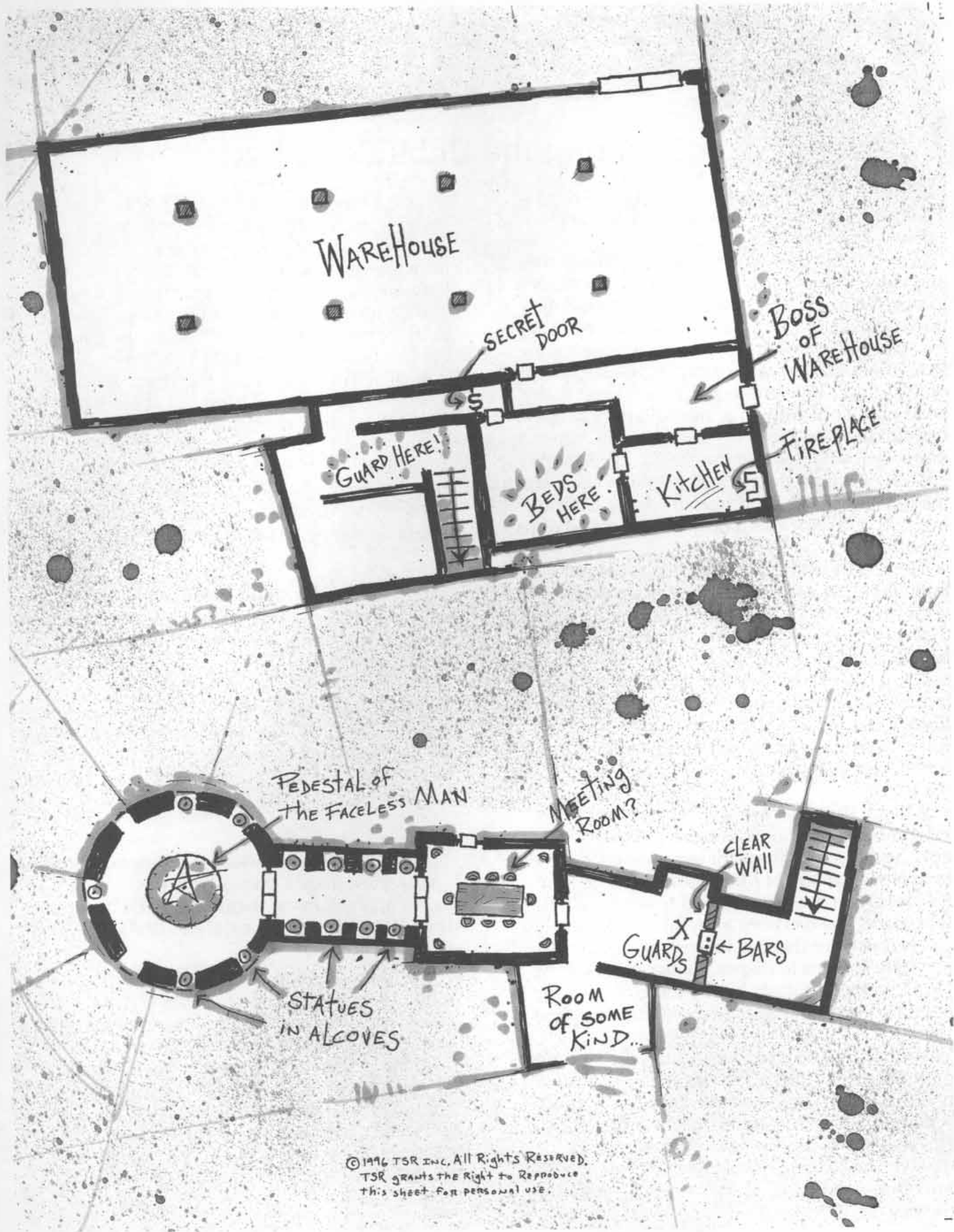
Minda gives you a level look. "Let's get one thing perfectly straight before you get your merchandise. I'm giving you this information for a reason. Nobody does anything around here for the greater good of humanity, and even you dandies must realize that. I've got my own motives for wanting to see you go up against the Unblinking Eye, so let's just say we are doing each other a favor here. If you and Velinax make good use of what I'm about to tell you, I'll be a happy woman. If you fail for some reason, they're going to want to know how you found out. And if you tell them, then I won't ever get the chance to hire more dandies to avenge your deaths, because I'll be DEAD! So whatever happens, keep your traps shut."

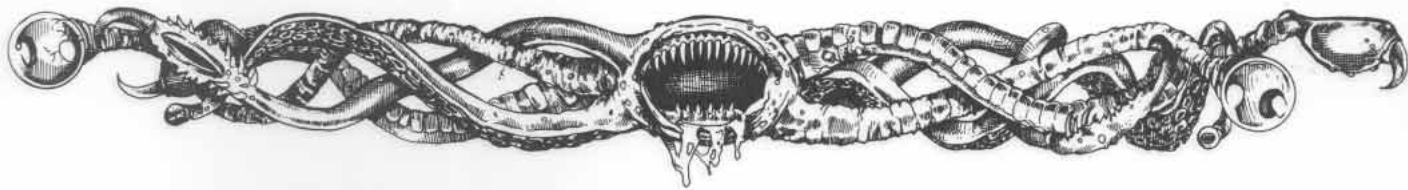
If the characters show surprise that Minda knows about Velinax and their involvement with him and question it, read the following aloud to the players:

"So, you didn't know I knew about that crazy wizard, did you? Well, I just wanted to mention him so you would know that the information you just bought is accurate. Old Minda the Goat knows a little bit about everything."

Once the PCs have asked any other questions, Minda gives them a map (see Map 4: Minda's Map) and explains to them where the headquarters is. Read the following aloud to the players:

The foul-smelling woman hands one of you a rolled piece of parchment. "Here is a map of the place," she begins. "I've only been there twice, and it was a while ago, but that's what I remember." She gazes off into the early evening sky, as if thinking. "I got to go before the Faceless Man himself, once. That was something, I'll tell you." She shakes her head as if returning from her reverie. "Nobody knows who the Faceless Man is. He hides his identity well, even from old Minda."





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"Anyway," she admonishes, "you take care once you're inside; there are guards everywhere. And if you think you're gonna get caught, then burn the damn map! Better yet, memorize it and destroy it before you go. Old Minda doesn't want her handwriting scribbled all over something in the possession of a bunch of dandies breaking into the Faceless Man's own house."

Regardless of the PCs' caution in keeping Minda's part of this a secret, on the following night, the PCs find the heads of Minda the Goat and Gorgon sitting on one of their beds. Qeqtoxii has had them executed for betrayal, and to make a pretense of showing the might of the guild to the heroes, it ordered this graphic message sent. It wants to make its organization realize that it means business about dealing with the heroes, even though it really doesn't want to scare the PCs away at all. The elder orb suspects that this kind of signal will actually anger the characters and manipulate them into retaliating, which is exactly what it wants them to do.

Other Avenues of Investigation

Before the adventure moves on to the next phase, namely the actual infiltration of the Unblinking Eye headquarters, the characters may perform some additional snooping. They may want to go after some of the satellite elements of the guild, close down some of the operations, and lean on guild members for more information. This aspect of the Unblinking Eye has been left largely sketchy so that you as DM can customize it to suit your needs and the style of play of your group. Here are some bits of information for you to keep in mind, however:

- The guild maintains very careful links between echelons of power. The lowest levels do not know much about their superiors; they receive instructions through *whispering wind* spells and make reports through being the subject of *ESP* spells. Members responsible for this kind of information exchange know to go to specific spots within the city at certain times of the day

or night and wait. (Alternatively, if you use psionics in your campaign, there are telepathic powers well suited to this kind of activity.)

When funds are delivered or received, remote drop sites are used for pick-up and delivery. Of course, one of the results of this method of security is that few members of the guild actually know about the Unblinking Eye's headquarters, especially where it is located.

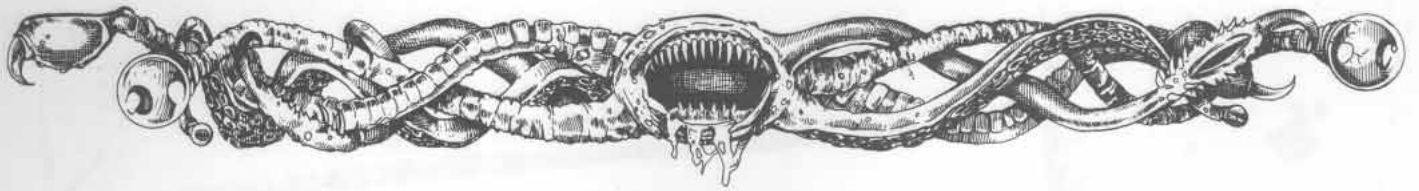
- The Unblinking Eye employs all kinds of classes in its work, because every job requires special talents. Look beyond the rogues and warriors for some of the delicate criminal work; wizards and even evil priests of a god of thieves are very useful.
- Just about every kind of organized criminal activity could be carried out by the Unblinking Eye. It is up to you to decide whether the Unblinking Eye has competition in Cumbert. If so, then you will have to develop the other thieves' guild (or perhaps one already exists within your campaign world) and determine what its members know and are willing to provide to the PCs to aid them in bringing the Unblinking Eye down.

Red Herrings

The following events are included simply as a means of keeping the characters off balance and to add a sense of dynamics to Cumbert, the background tapestry of the adventure. You may choose to run one or both of these as you see fit, although neither is necessary. If the players start to think that every event their characters participate in has to do with their involvement with Velinax and the Unblinking Eye, then these red herrings are a good method of shaking their confidence or simply confusing them a little.

The Lady's Carriage

While the PCs are out on the streets of the town one afternoon, they become entangled in a family feud. A young woman of some means, madly in love with a common man, is fleeing her father's men because he refuses to allow her to marry a



Infiltrating the Unblinking Eye

peasant and has arranged a marriage for her. The woman's name is Elyssa Spruand of House Spruand, a highly successful merchant house in Cumbert and beyond. Read the following aloud to the players:

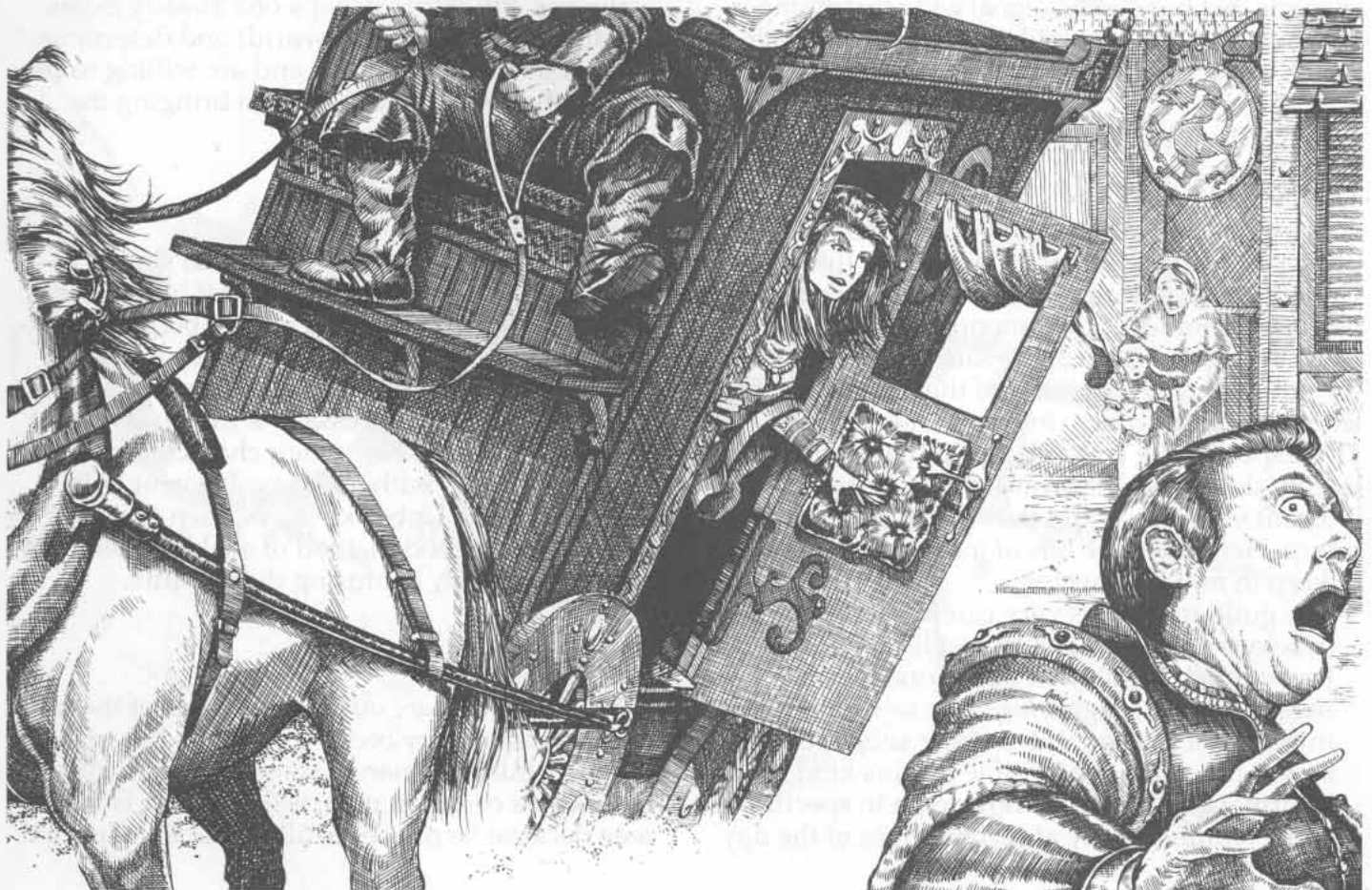
The calmness of the hour shatters suddenly when a black carriage trimmed in red velvet careens around the corner and heads directly toward you. Shouts of "Look out!" and "Get out of the way!" add fuel to the fire, and a panic ensues.

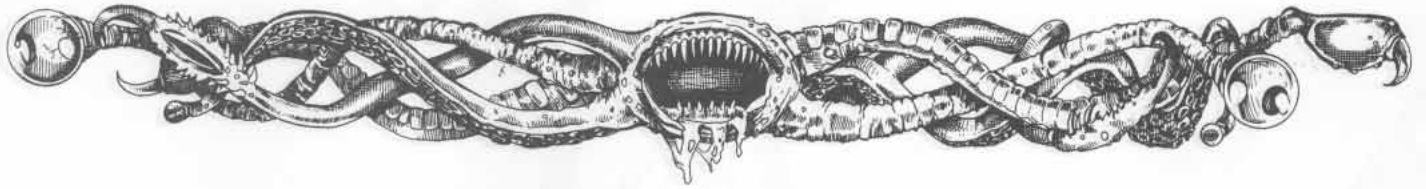
Have each character roll a Dexterity check to see if they can jump out of the way of the onrushing carriage. Those who fail suffer the misfortune of being run over; each victim suffers 2d8 points of damage from being trampled by the horses and rolled over by the carriage. In the meantime, Elyssa has decided to outwit her pursuers by

leaping from the vehicle and hiding in the streets. Read the following aloud to the players:

As the carriage goes thundering by, you hear a woman's voice cry "Catch me!" and you look up just in time to see a passenger leap from the doorway of the carriage, right at you.

Choose a character at random (from among those who were *not* run over by the carriage—those PCs are still in the street) and see if he or she manages to catch Elyssa. Another Dexterity check is in order here; success means that the PC does more or less gently break the woman's fall and they both tumble to the side of the street, unharmed. Failure indicates that the character suffers 1d6 points of damage, and Elyssa sprains her ankle. Once this is resolved, continue by reading the following aloud to the players:





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In a heartbeat, the carriage rushes by, and you are left standing there with its passenger crumpled in a heap on the side of the street. It is a woman, no more than 16 or 17 years of age, you would guess, and dressed in finery. She looks up at you beseechingly.

"You must hide me," she pleads, "I must get away from here before they see me. Please, help me hide."

If the characters try to ask her any questions immediately, she cries out that she must get out of sight. She may say two or three other things but these will be incoherent. Her first priority is to get out of sight before her father's men reach this location.

There is an alley nearby that the characters can bustle her to if they comply with her wishes to get out of sight. Remember, though, that if she has injured her ankle, she cannot walk, and one of the PCs will have to carry her. Gauge how long the characters delay before helping the woman to hide. If they waste two rounds or more before going into action, Lord Spruand's men spot them and give chase. They will be especially hostile if a character is carrying Elyssa, for they believe the PCs are kidnapping her.

The rest of this little escapade is left for you to flesh out. You may allow it to blossom into a full-scale side adventure, or it may all be over in a matter of minutes. Keep in mind the following points:

- Elyssa is a woman of means and is used to being waited on. She will quickly grow tired of hiding in the streets. She does not whine and she hasn't been pampered to the point of being spoiled, but she has grown up under certain conditions and just assumes that everyone else lives as she does. (This may prove to be a problem when she realizes that being with her lover will cause a drastic change in her standard of living.)
- Elyssa's ankle will trouble her greatly and will hinder all efforts on the part of the characters to move her, etc.
- Eventually, Elyssa will want to make contact with her love, a former stable boy at her father's estate named Galingo who was chased

off when Lord Spruand discovered the two were involved. She has no idea where Galingo is right now.

- Lord Spruand will believe he is within his rights and the rights of the law to reclaim his daughter, and he will lean on the town guard to aid him. He is a very influential member of the business community.

Regardless of the outcome of this event, if the characters act in a noble manner and the players perform some good role-playing, experience points are warranted. Giving each character somewhere around 200 points is a good reward.

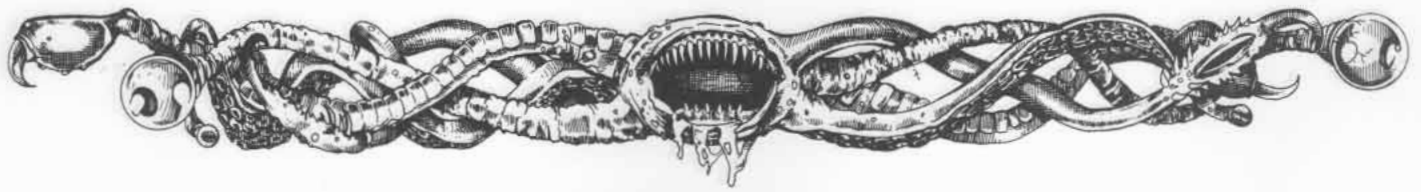
The Experimental Wizard

A young wizard has just recently come across a new spell that he added to his spellbooks, and he is trying it out. Ever the practical joker, Lyron has figured out that using the *unseen servant* spell to annoy people can be great fun. He prefers to find a busy section of town (like the public marketplace) and order the unseen servant to begin unbuckling belts, untying cloaks, knocking hats off, and moving small items in front of people in order to trip them. He merely strolls along about 20 feet behind his target, nonchalantly browsing or whatnot, while his unseen servant antagonizes some poor soul unmercifully.

You can spring this event on the characters any time, but it is particularly effective when they are at the public marketplace. Lyron will have already caused quite a stir by the time the heroes get there. Read the following aloud to the players:

As you are walking through the crowds in the streets of Cumbert, some sort of commotion appears to be getting louder up ahead of you. It seems as though there is a great deal of pushing and shoving taking place, and you can hear the word "ghost" shouted once or twice.

Give the characters a chance to react. If they decide to turn down a side street and avoid the confusion, then the encounter ends. If you as DM



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still want to use it later in the adventure, feel free to have Lyron single them out for his pranks.

If the heroes move forward to investigate, read the following aloud to the players:

"It's a ghost! Get away!" This and other cries run through the crowd of onlookers as they watch something beyond your view in amazement. Pushing to get a better vantage point, you finally see the source of excitement. A portly man, hands desperately swatting at some invisible force, stands in the middle of the crowd with his pants around his ankles. Every time he attempts to bend over and pull his trowsers up, he yelps in pain and grabs at his head. On the ground nearby are a cloak and some bolts of cloth.

Lyron has singled out a cloth merchant to antagonize by alternately ordering the unseen servant to yank down the merchant's pants and then pull his hair, jab at his eyes, or tug on his earlobes. Even though the people around seem nervous and totally convinced that a ghost is haunting the poor merchant, none of them make much of an effort to flee.

After a few more moments of this, the town guard shows up to check out the commotion and to disperse the crowd. Lyron finds this perfectly delightful and begins pestering the captain of the watch. First, the unseen servant undoes the captain's sword belt. Then it begins loosening the buckles of the man's armor. Finally, coins and other small objects begin flying out of the soldier's pockets and pouches of their own volition. Lyron, who is easily amused, will switch the attention of the unseen servant to anyone who moves forward to aid a victim, even a PC.

Clever players may have their characters study the crowd, looking for suspicious behavior. Have them role an Intelligence check at one-half the PC's score (or a spellcraft proficiency check at its normal value, if applicable) to determine if they spot Lyron in the crowd. If a player claims to be looking specifically for a spellcaster, the Intelligence check is made at two-thirds (round down) the normal score (automatic success for a character with spellcraft). Once Lyron is discovered, any

wizard with *unseen servant* in his spellbooks will recognize the somatic components of the spell.

Lyron is making some effort to conceal his actions, but he is also howling with laughter and is not paying attention to those around him. Thus it should be a fairly simple matter for PCs to move up to him unnoticed and accost him.

Lyron, hm, W3: AC 8 (*bracers of defense* AC 8); MV 12; hp 7; THAC0 20 (21, Str penalty); #AT 1; Dmg 1d6/1d6 (*quarterstaff*); SZ M (5' 8"); ML unsteady (5); AL CG; XP 175.
S 7, D 8, C 10, I 15, W 8, Ch 13.

Personality: mischievous, irreverent.

Special Equipment: spellbook, *bracers of defense* AC 8, *quarterstaff*, 9 pp, 7 ep.

Spellbook (2/1): 1st—*chill touch*, *detect magic*, *feather fall*, *grease*, *jump**, *message*, *protection from evil*, *read magic*, *unseen servant*; 2nd—*fog cloud*, *hypnotic pattern*, *Leomund's trap*, *locate object*, *misdirection*, *rope trick**, *web*.

*Indicates favored spell.

Proficiencies: ancient languages, astrology, herbalism, *quarterstaff*, reading/writing, speak common, speak regional, spellcraft.

Lyron tries to flee if he realizes he is caught. If he can, he casts *jump* to get away from immediate pursuit. If things are even more dire, he resorts to casting *rope trick*, climbing inside the pocket dimension, and hoping his pursuers get tired of waiting for him and leave. If the wizard *does* escape, he may choose to come back to bother the characters again at a later time, at your discretion.

If the characters help apprehend him, Lyron gives up without any further fight; he wants to avoid making the situation worse than it already is. The town watch will want to question everyone to get to the bottom of the situation, and Lyron will not volunteer any information, so the characters had better be ready to back up their actions. Simply claiming that this wizard cast a spell that caused the disturbance is not enough; they have to substantiate their claim with some sort of proof.

If the heroes *do* successfully put a stop to Lyron's mischievous activities, a small experience-point reward is in order. For this event, a reward of about 200 points each is appropriate.

The Headquarters of the Unblinking Eye

The Unblinking Eye owns quite a few buildings in Cumbert and operates businesses out of them as fronts for their more lucrative criminal activities. One of them, a warehouse near the docks, also acts as a concealment for the guild's headquarters. The headquarters itself is set up below ground with several means of ingress hidden around the area. The guild has constructed a separate building in the alley behind the warehouse, and it butts up against all of the other buildings in such a fashion that there literally isn't an alley there anymore. Debris has been piled up along all the former routes into the alley, and the overall effect makes them appear to be dead-ends.

The characters have several options for getting inside the guild headquarters. They may try to bully their way in, resorting to brute force and magical firepower. Alternatively, they may attempt to bluff their way inside, utilizing the insignias they lifted from Borst and his team. They may even try negotiating, attempting to convince the flunkies of the Unblinking Eye that the heroes have something the leadership of the guild is going to be very interested in learning about. The material presented below is detailed enough that you will have a pretty good idea what should happen no matter what the characters do, but it is not so structured that you have to lead the PCs around by the nose.

1. Main Warehouse

This is a large open building where cargo is stored, either before it is shipped elsewhere or after it arrives in Cumbert. A merchant house ostensibly owns this building and the business that is run out of it, but the profits eventually find their way into the coffers of the Unblinking Eye. At any time during the day, 1d6+9 workers move crates of goods to or from wagons here. They are street-tough individuals who have grown up on the seedy side of town and do additional work for the guild.

Typical warehouse thug, hm, F2: AC 10; MV 12; hp 11; THAC0 19 (18, Str); #AT 1; Dmg by weapon +1 (clubs, daggers, or knives plus Str bonus); SZ M (5'-6' tall); ML average (8); AL NE; XP 35.

S 17, D 11, C 12, I 8, W 8, Ch 9.

Personality: savvy, crude.

2. Offices/Living Quarters

This part of the warehouse serves as the offices of the business and the living quarters of the workers in the warehouse.

2a. Office

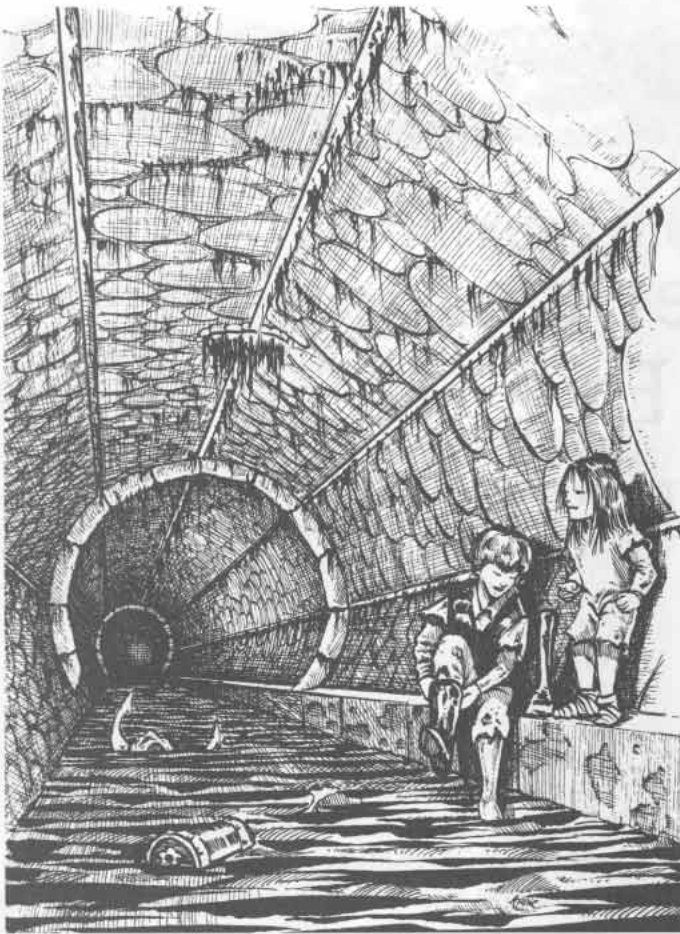
This serves as the office of the "owner" of the warehouse. Other merchants come here to conduct business, and the bookkeeping is done here. There is a strongbox in a drawer in the desk here, and inside are 500 gp, 200 pp, ten 100-gp golden sapphires, and five letters of credit from local moneylenders worth 1,000 gp each. The foreman of the warehouse (a 4th-level fighter otherwise identical to the typical thugs listed above) is usually here, running the day-to-day activities of the warehouse.

2b. Mess Hall

This room acts as a combination lounge, kitchen, and dining area for the workers who live on site. During business hours no one comes in here (except during lunch), but at night, 1d6+4 workers eat, play cards or dice, and generally carouse in here.

2c. Bunk Room

Warehouse workers who live on-site stay in this room. There are several beds here, along with some footlockers and a couple of armoires. There are always 1d4+2 thugs sleeping in here, regardless of the time of day. There is a 35% chance that one of them is awake. A thorough search of the area turns up 52 cp, 22 gp, 17 pp, and assorted gems (two 10-gp frost agates, two 50-gp moon-



stones, two 100-gp tourmalines, four 500-gp red spinels, and one 1,000-gp purple sapphire).

2d. Closet/Hidden Passageway

This closet also serves as one of the hidden routes to the underground headquarters of the guild. A panel slides to one side to reveal a hole cut in the outer wall of the building that passes through to the hidden building behind the warehouse. There is a trap on this passageway. If one of the pegs in the wall of the closet is not pushed in to disarm it, a spring-loaded board with spikes and shards of glass swings down from above when the panel slides open. Any person opening the panel suffers 2d4 points of damage (unless special caution is taken to stay clear of the opening when the panel is moved).

3. Trap Door to the Sewer

The end of the hallway from the bunk room in the warehouse is covered with a simple tapestry that has the stylized symbol of the Unblinking Eye woven into it. Concealed behind the tapestry is a door to a small room with a trap door set in the floor. This trap door opens to a square shaft with iron rungs set into one wall. The shaft drops

about 25 feet to a small tunnel that leads to the town's sewer system.

The sewers have low, wide tunnels with a two-foot-wide ledge along one side for maintenance workers to perform repairs and clean out blockages. The ceiling of the sewer tunnels is only five feet above the ledge, so there is not a lot of room to maneuver, and large weapons cannot be wielded here. At the point where the guild tunnel connects with the sewer tunnel, a secret door has been constructed out of wood paneling. The side that faces the sewer appears to be worked stone, just like the rest of the tunnel walls, but it is actually very thinly sliced stones glued to the paneling. The panel is hinged at the top and swings in and up. A beam inside the smaller tunnel can be braced against the secret door to lock it shut.

4. Entry Corridor and Stairs Down

No matter which entryway is used to access the guild area, all visitors must pass this checkpoint. A lone watchman is posted in this room to guard the stairs leading down to the main guild area. He sits in a chair and asks for the password for the day. He keeps a cocked and loaded heavy crossbow across his knees and levels it at the first person to appear in the room. Flanking this watch position are two holes in the wall through which two more guards, each also armed with a heavy crossbow, peer. They are sitting in chairs located in area 5.

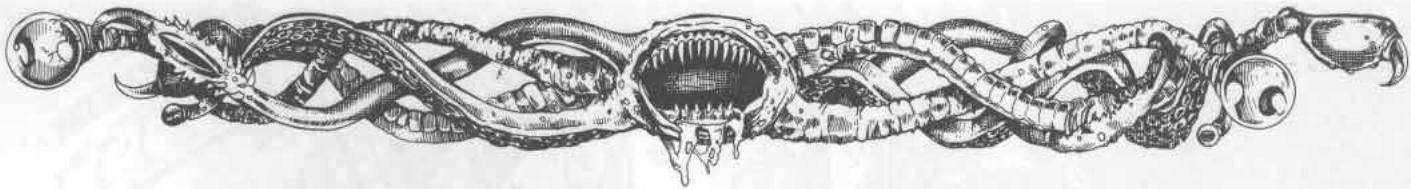
Guard, hm, F6: AC 5 (scale mail, small shield); MV 12 (9); hp 33; THAC0 15; #AT 1; Dmg 1d4+1/1d6+1 (heavy crossbow); SZ M (5'-6' tall); ML steady (12); AL LE; XP 420.

S 13, D 11, C 14, I 12, W 14, Ch 9.

Special Equipment: scale mail, small shield, heavy crossbow, 20 heavy quarrels, long sword.

4a. Roof Access

In this corner of the room is a trap door in the ceiling with a set of iron rungs in the wall leading up to it. This door is always kept locked from the inside, and a special code knock must be used for the guard to open it. It leads to the roof of the guild building.



The Headquarters of the Unblinking Eye

5. Guard Room

Within this inner chamber, additional guards keep a watch on the entryways into the guild's headquarters. Two chairs are stationed at the holes in the walls where a pair of guards wielding heavy crossbows sit. The rest of the room contains a table and some additional chairs. At any given time there are five men on watch here; two are "active," that is, peering through the arrow slits into area 4, while the rest are inactive, waiting their turn (one of them relieves the guard sitting in area 4). The inactive guards pass the time playing cards and dice.

Guards, hm, F6 (5): AC 5 (scale mail, small shield); MV 12 (9); hp 41, 39, 37, 34, 31; THAC0 15; #AT 1; Dmg 1d4+1/1d6+1 (heavy crossbow); SZ M (5'-6' tall); ML steady (12); AL LE; XP 420.

S 13, D 11, C 14, I 12, W 14, Ch 9.

Special Equipment: scale mail, small shield, heavy crossbow, 20 heavy quarrels, long sword.

5a. Trap Door

This trap door leads down to area 7. A bell pulley in this area rings a bell down in area 7. If the headquarters comes under attack, one of the guards in this area immediately sounds the alarm by ringing the bell.

5b. Winch

This mechanism controls a portcullis that is suspended over the bottom of the stairway. If the headquarters comes under attack, one of the guards in this area immediately releases the latch and drops the barrier, blocking the stairs.

6. Final Checkpoint Room

This room serves as a final defense zone against invaders from above. The entire western wall is composed of glassteel (glass that has been altered to the strength and consistency of steel by use of a *glassteel* spell), including the door. It is heavily barred from the other side. This allows the guard to observe all visitors before allowing them through. If enemies have made it into this room by force, they obviously will not be allowed

access, and they may very well find themselves trapped here, unable to go back the way they came (see area 7 for more information).

7. Observation Room

The majority of the headquarters' elite guard members spend their time in here. They access area 5 through the trapdoor in the ceiling (reached via a set of iron rungs in the wall), and they observe all visitors to the headquarters through the glassteel wall. Any suspicious-looking individuals will be forced to wait until a lieutenant is summoned from deeper within the compound.

7a. Barrier Winch and Water Valve

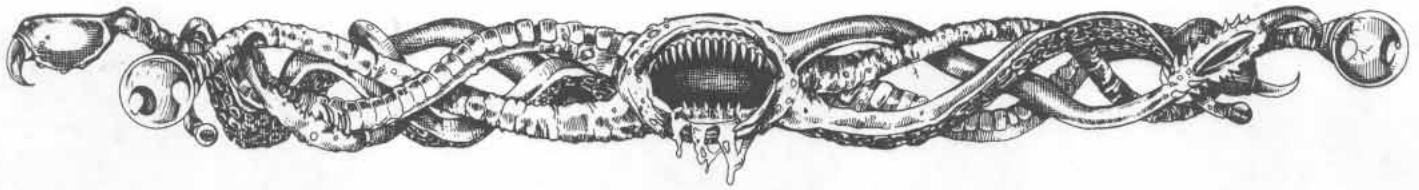
At this point along the wall, there are two crank mechanisms: a winch that operates an additional barrier at the base of the stairs and a valve that pumps water into area 6. If enemies reach this point, the barrier (a solid sheet of steel) is dropped into place via the winch, and the chamber is flooded with water from the sewers. Anyone trapped in area 6 will drown as the room fills with water, and the members of the guild can watch it all through the glassteel wall, as if watching a giant aquarium. As a precaution, Felmot (see area 9) also casts *wall of force* across the back side of the glassteel wall. This will prevent any accidental leakage, and if any enemies trapped in area 6 have the capacity to destroy the glassteel wall, the wall of force behind it acts as a secondary defense.

8. Guard Quarters

This chamber houses the elite soldiers of the guard. Inside are beds, footlockers, shelves, an armoire, and a table and chairs for recreation. In reality, few of the members of the elite forces spend their free time here, preferring instead to go topside to town. At any given time, there will only be 1d4-1 guards resting here.

Off-duty guards, hm, F6: AC 10; MV 12; hp 33; THAC0 15; #AT 1; Dmg 1d8/1d12 (long sword); SZ M (5'-6' tall); ML average (8); AL LE; XP 270.

S 13, D 11, C 14, I 12, W 14, Ch 9.



The Headquarters of the Unblinking Eye

Special Equipment: scale mail, small shield, heavy cross-bow, 20 heavy quarrels, long sword.

The guards typically resting here will not be armored, but since they have all of their gear here, they will be able to grab their long swords if needed. Searching the room and its furniture turns up the following treasure: 164 pp, 3 gems (one 10-gp obsidian stone and two 50-gp rainbow obsidian stones), a gold inlaid mahogany box worth 1,600 gp, and a *scimitar* +2.

9. Inner Sanctum

No one other than the Faceless Man's lieutenants are allowed into this area or beyond, unless escorted by one of the lieutenants themselves. The opulent room is plushly decorated with rugs, tapestries, and fine furniture. It resembles a study or a lounge, with great overstuffed couches and chairs, shelves with books, fine silver services, and braziers to keep the place warm and comfortable. The Faceless Man's lieutenants spend some of their free time here, going over records of various business activities, discussing strategies (around a large oak table in the center of the room), or simply relaxing and enjoying their high standard of living.

Qeqtoxii would prefer to avoid a bloody confrontation between its lieutenants and the heroes, since regardless of who wins, it will lose valuable assets. As a result, the elder orb has sent many of them out on various missions for it and they are away when the PCs arrive. However, two of its trusted subordinates remain in residence, Felmot the wizard and Duriken the bard. Assuming the characters tried to force their way in, Felmot has already been summoned to deal with them out at the final checkpoint (area 6), but if the characters used more subtle means of gaining entry, then Felmot is still in here.

9a. Felmot's Private Chambers

These inner rooms serve as Felmot the wizard's private study and bedroom, a place he retreats to in order to study spells, catch up on his more serious reading, or rest. It appears much as a typical wizard's quarters would, complete with a small laboratory, shelves overstuffed with books and scrolls,

and an assortment of mismatched furniture.

Felmot's spellbook is in here, hidden beneath a false bottom in one of his desk drawers. Other than that, there is little treasure to be found, although due to their untidy nature, it will take several hours for characters to search the rooms completely.

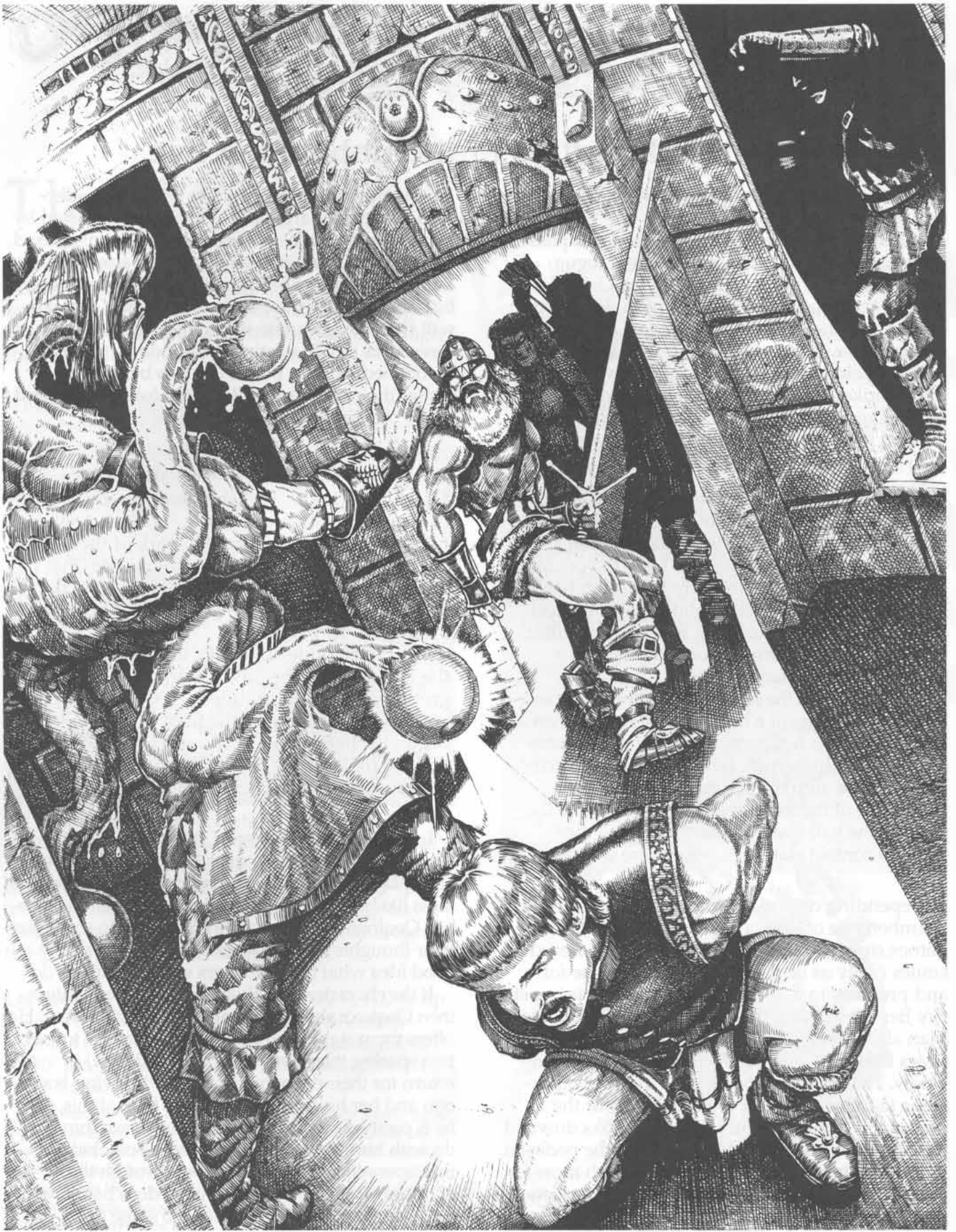
10. Hall of the Vanquished

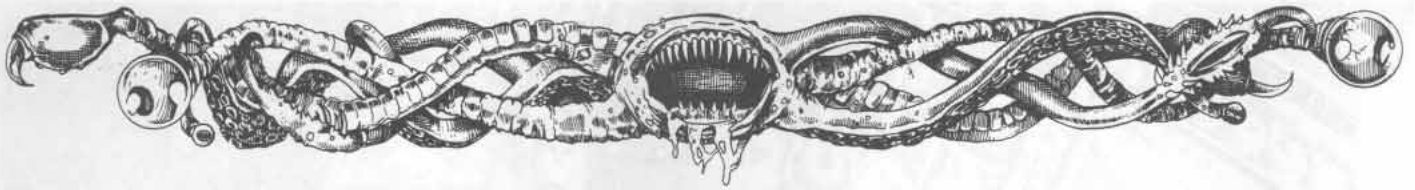
This wide passageway has been decorated in an unusual fashion. There are alcoves set all along both walls, and set within each alcove is a very lifelike statue of a former enemy of the Faceless Man. Each was an individual powerful enough to demand the leader's personal attention and thus warranted a note in the guild's personal history. Although most of the guild members do not know this, these are the actual petrified forms of enemies of the Unblinking Eye. As the individuals were conquered, each was brought before Qeqtoxii, who revealed its true nature to them right before using its *flesh to stone* eye power to petrify them. It then had their statuesque forms placed in the alcoves, and a *continual light* spell has been cast into a recessed cavity in the ceiling of the alcove. This causes diffused light to shine down on each individual statue and softly illuminate the corridor.

11. The Chamber of the Faceless Man

This large circular chamber is decorated similarly to the corridor leading to it (area 10). All around the outer wall, alcoves have been made into the stonework. Some of the alcoves hold statues of enemies of the Unblinking Eye, but some are empty. Each is lit by a *continual light* spell from above.

In the center of this chamber stands a large pedestal. The top of this pedestal is roughly ten feet above the floor. Around the perimeter of the top is an opaque screen. Soft light glows from within this private area, causing the screen (which is made of thin white fabric) to glow. This is the inner sanctum of the Faceless Man. He sits in judgment behind the screen, so that only his silhouette can be seen from the floor. Lieutenants come here to confer with their leader, and guests and prisoners are always escorted here. No one





The Headquarters of the Unblinking Eye

has ever seen the actual form of the Faceless Man, only his shadow.

When the PCs arrive, the Faceless Man is passing sentence on a prisoner, an independent rogue named Beniak who refused to join the Unblinking Eye but continued to operate in the guild's territory even though he was warned to stop. Duriken, one of the Faceless Man's lieutenants who is actually also a beholder disguised as a human, watches over him. Duriken is a beholder mage named Zerixith who serves Qeqtoxii unfailingly.

Read the following aloud to the players when their characters enter this chamber:

The double doors part to reveal a large circular chamber with a pedestal in the exact center. Immediately before you are a pair of men. One kneels before the pedestal, his back to you, and you can see that his hands are manacled behind his back. The other man stands over the kneeling one, as if he is guarding him. As you enter, this second man turns to look at you, and a smile crosses his face.

Looking up at the top of the pedestal, you can see the silhouette of a human form reflected on an opaque screen. A strange light source emanates from inside this screen, which completely encircles the area atop the pedestal. Around the perimeter of the room are alcoves, similar to the ones in the hall leading here. Almost all the alcoves contain statues, but some are empty.

Depending on how the characters arrive in this chamber, one of several things happens. If the heroes storm in brewing for a fight, then Zerixith smiles evilly as he transforms into his true form and prepares to do battle (his first action is to petrify Beniak with his eyestalk power). The Faceless Man also transforms into a beholder and disappears from his pedestal, escaping to the cavern below. The top of the pedestal is made of blackstone (a magical stone), and the inside of the pedestal is hollow. Qeqtoxii simply looks down at the blackstone and descends through the pedestal.

If the characters have arrived through more peaceful means, perhaps requesting an audience (posing as members of the Unblinking Eye or

simply intending to negotiate with the leadership), then they are most likely being escorted by Felmot, in which case Zerixith remains disguised. The Faceless Man will wish to have a private audience with the heroes and instruct everyone but Zerixith and the PCs to withdraw. Qeqtoxii will then congratulate the characters on their cleverness in penetrating his abode without bloodshed. At that point, the two beholders reveal their true forms. Read the following aloud to the players when this happens:

As the doors shut behind you, leaving your party alone with only the bard, the Faceless Man begins to speak. "Well done, good adventurers. Knowing when words are more powerful than weapons is often the mark of the wise. I applaud you. You must know, of course, that I have been monitoring your progress from the start. You do not think anything has happened by chance, do you?"

And then, quite suddenly, the silhouette of the Faceless Man begins to warp, to change. It grows wider, more rounded. At the same time, you realize the bard on the floor nearby has begun to change, too. Arms and legs withdraw and are replaced by eyestalks even as a single mouth opens across the man's torso. Beholders!

Important! At this stage, Qeqtoxii's actions depend on your judgment as DM. You must assess your players' personalities and decide how they are most likely to react to these circumstances. Remember, Qeqtoxii has been using *ESP* spells to scrutinize their thoughts and tendencies, so he has a pretty good idea what the characters will most likely do.

If the characters are always open to negotiation, then Qeqtoxii should attempt to deal with them. He offers them significant monetary gains (not to mention sparing their lives right here and now) in return for their cooperation in overthrowing Ixathinon and her hive. If the characters balk at this, or if he is pretty sure they would not have anything to do with him, he and Zerixith put the combat plan into operation, where he escapes through the pedestal while the beholder mage does battle with the characters to buy the elder orb some time.

The Caverns Below

The shaft that descends from the Faceless Man's pedestal drops approximately 75 feet into a natural subterranean cavern. Read the following aloud to the players when they descend through the shaft and arrive in this cavern:

The shaft through which you descend opens into a very large natural cavern. The place is full of stalagmites and stalactites, and is dimly lit by some unseen light source. There is no sign of the beholder.

The light comes from an eerie, glowing fungus that the beholders cultivate for just that reason. The floor of the cavern is uneven and dangerous, and any characters attempting to walk on it must make a Dexterity check each turn to see if they avoid slipping and falling (failure indicates the PC has suffered 1d2 points of damage). The cavern stretches beyond the character's line of vision.

After escaping the PCs and arriving here, Qeqtoxii puts the next phase of his plan into action. First, it releases a Lernaean hydra from petrification. It brought this creature to this cavern to serve as a means of protection, but Qeqtoxii keeps it petrified most of the time so that it won't be a nuisance. It is a rather small hydra, not really enough to threaten the PCs, but something to at least *look* like a defense (Besides, anything larger would have been too difficult to move through the caverns in order to bring it here).

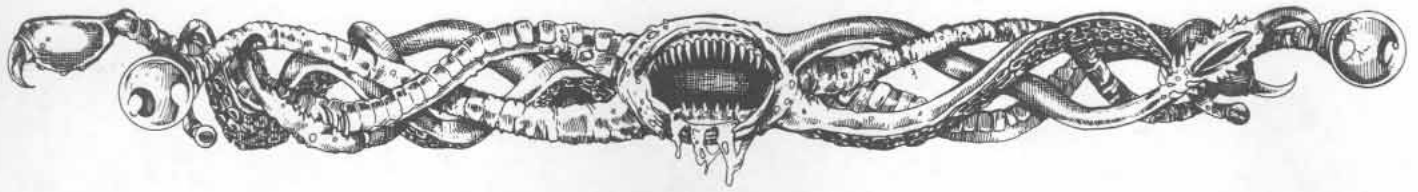
Lernaean Hydra (Hydra): AC 5; MV 9; HD 6; hp 48; THAC0 13; #AT 6; Dmg 1d6; SA extra heads (6 to start with); SD extra heads; SZ G (30' long); ML Average (9); Int semi (3); AL N; XP 3,000.

Notes: SA—each hydra head can attack each round, up to four heads can attack a single foe; SD—all heads must be severed before the hydra dies, Lernaean hydra will regenerate two heads for each one that is severed (maximum of 12), new heads form in 1d4 rounds and can only be prevented by prompt application of flame to the neck following the attack which destroyed the head; the hydra's body is immune to all attacks.

At the far end of the cavern from where the heroes arrive looms a masterfully crafted enormous skull that has been carved into the side of the cavern wall. Within the eye sockets of this skull float two gas spores, and in the mouth opening is a spectator that has been ordered to guard the passageway beyond, preventing anyone other than beholders from passing. Behind the spectator is a wall of blackstone. This is the entrance to the great beholder city, where the hive of Ixathinon currently resides.

Lastly, Qeqtoxii polymorphs himself into the form of Velinax the Vermilion. Positioning itself in a small alcove in the cavern near the entrance to the beholder city, it creates a wall of force in front of it. It wishes to make it appear that Velinax has been imprisoned here by the beholders





The Caverns Below

for a few days, so Velinax wears soiled and rumpled clothes, and he looks thin and emaciated.

At whatever point the PCs reach the entrance, but before they prepare to do battle with the spectator, read the following aloud to the players, adjusting as necessary:

“Wait!” you hear a muffled voice call. Looking in the direction from which the voice came, you see a surprising sight: Velinax the Vermilion, his clothing tattered and soiled, stands in a small alcove mostly hidden behind some large rock formations. “Please free me! I have been imprisoned here for several days now.” He pounds on an invisible barrier that appears to be holding him captive inside the alcove.

“Velinax” tells the characters that Qeqtoxii the elder orb went through the mouth and disappeared. He also tells them that he believes the mouth to be the entrance to a great, ancient city of beholders. He does his utmost to convince the characters that they should wait and rest before entering and pursuing the “great beast,” as it will take every bit of ability, magic, and luck they can muster to overcome such a foul place. In other words, he tries to convince them to retreat, rejuvenate, and train their bodies and minds for what lies ahead (rise in experience levels). Do whatever you must to make them see the wisdom of doing this—the next adventure is very difficult, and the characters will need to be within the recommended level ranges to survive.

Wrapping Up

This part of the adventure ends before the characters venture into the city of the beholders. If for some reason you do not intend to run the third adventure in this series, then the tunnel leads to any sort of underground complex that you wish to develop, or perhaps to nothing other than Qeqtoxii’s personal treasure hoard. Whenever you decide to take this adventure story, it should conclude with the characters battling something the elder orb wishes for them to exter-

minate for him—otherwise, it makes little sense for Qeqtoxii to have been manipulating the PCs into coming here in the first place.

Award Guidelines

It is ultimately the DM’s responsibility to hand out story and group awards to reflect how well the group has role-played, worked together, etc. However, some guidelines have been provided with this adventure that will help DMs make a final estimation of what to award a group in several specific instances (not including the XP earned by destroying monsters or NPCs). If the party wishes to advance more slowly (such as a group that has five or more adventures per level of advancement), then decrease the awards. If a party wishes to advance more quickly, then increase the awards. Of course, the DM can assign further points if the party does something unique (in other words, not listed here) that forwards the plot.

- **Strange Insignias:** If the characters capture one of the members of the Unblinking Eye, then award the players 500 XP each.
- **An Unpleasant Conversation:** For noticing that each of the ambushers are wearing the insignia, award a total of 500 XP to the players. If they decide to take some of the insignias, award each player 500 XP.
- **Behind the Fish Stall:** If the characters buy the map from Minda, award the players a total of 2,000 XP.
- **The Lady’s Carriage:** If the players role-play this scene well, then award them 200 XP each.
- **The Experimental Wizard:** Should the characters put a stop to Lyron’s mischief, then award each player 200 XP.
- **The Headquarters of the Unblinking Eye:** For entering the warehouse, the players earn their characters a total of 1,000 XP. If the characters successfully bluff their way all the way to area 11, then each player earns 5,000 XP. Any bluffing attempts that were only partially successful should be awarded based on how far they got before the bluff was called.

Major NPCs

Here are the entries for all the major NPCs in this adventure. Feel free to modify any of their statistics to suit game balance. Note that any NPCs not listed in this section are considered to be 0-level humans.

Qeqtoxii (Elder Orb Beholder): AC 0/2/7; MV Fl 3 (B); hp 75; THAC0 5; #AT 1; Dmg 2d4 (bite); SA eye powers, spells; SD anti-magic ray, immunity to *sleep*, *charm*, and *hold* spells; MR 50%; SZ M (6' diameter); ML fearless (19); Int godlike (23); AL LE; XP 18,000.

Notes: *Eye Powers*: Central—*anti-magic ray* (140-yard range, 90-degree arc before beholder; no magic functions in that area), plus the following eye powers: 1—*charm person* (as spell); 2—*charm monster* (as spell); 3—*sleep* (as spell, but only one target); 4—*telekinesis* (250-lb. weight); 5—*flesh to stone* (as spell, 30-yard range); 6—*disintegrate* (20-yard range); 7—*fear* (as wand); 8—*slow* (as spell, but only a single target); 9—*cause serious wounds* (50-yard range); 10—*death ray* (as *death* spell, but single target, 40-yard range).

Spells: 1st—*feather fall*, *hold portal*†; 2nd—*darkness* 15' radius*, *detect invisibility**, *ESP**†, *knock*; 3rd—*dispel magic**, *protection from normal missiles**†; 4th—*control death tyrant***†, *dimension door*, *extension I*, *instruct spectator***†, *polymorph self*† (note that polymorphing himself into humanoid form does not allow Qeqtoxii to cast spells with material or somatic components); 5th—*contact other plane*, *teleport*†, *wall of blackstone***†, or *wall of force**; 6th—*extension III*†, *geas*; 7th—*phase door*, *power word stunt*†, *teleport without error*, *vanish*, *veil*; 8th—*create death tyrant***†, *mass charm*, *power word blind*†; 9th—*Mordenkainen's disjunction*, *power word kill*, *prismatic sphere*†, *time stop*.

† Indicates favored memorized spell—Qeqtoxii can only memorize one spell per level at a time; * Indicates an elder orb variation on an existing spell—it requires only verbal components, takes twice as long to cast as the normal variety, and is known only to elder orbs; ** Indicates a special spell that appears in *I, Tyrant*.

Qeqtoxii is a brilliant and cunning creature, able to plan for almost any contingency and detect and eliminate all flaws in logic in his complex schemes. If it has one shortcoming, it is understanding the nature of human thinking, which isn't always logical at all. Since it has begun interacting with them, however, it is getting better.

Qeqtoxii craves power above all else. It burns with the desire to overthrow the hive mother it

currently serves and take her place. It has insinuated itself into her hive in the guise of a true beholder and bides its time until it can usurp her. Its plans for this are complex and time-consuming, but the elder orb is patient. It has worked for several years to make this a reality.

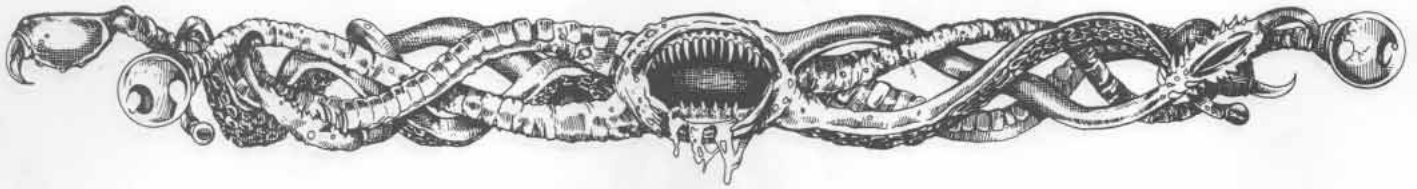
Qeqtoxii will not allow its enemies to detect and corner it; if it is in danger of direct contact, it will use whatever means it has at its disposal to escape notice, most likely through the use of spells. It is definitely not in its best interests to be seen by the PCs yet. It wants the characters to believe that they have been set up, but by another beholder, not it.

Qeqtoxii has several magical items at its disposal, which it can easily use when necessary. The first of these is a *bag of holding*; it stores many of its other magical items and important possessions, including its spellbook, in this magical container. Other items include potions of *extra-healing*, *gaseous form*, *human control* (humans), and *water breathing*; an *amulet of proof against detection and location* (which has been specially crafted to be worn around one of its eyes, and which it wears rather than stores); and a *Daern's instant fortress*.

Zerixith (Beholder Mage): AC 0; MV Fl 3 (B); hp 80; THAC0 11; #AT 1; Dmg 2d4; SA magic; SZ M (5' diameter); ML fanatic (18); Int genius (18); AL NE; XP 15,500.

Notes: *Eye Powers*: Central—none; 1st—*feather fall*; 2nd—*blindness*; 3rd—*hold portal*; 4th—*telekinesis* (250-lb. weight); 5th—*flesh to stone* (as spell, 30-yard range); 6th—*knock*; 7th—*magic missile* (Zerixith's special variation using only verbal component); 8th—*phantasmal force* (Zerixith's special variation using only verbal component); 9th—*polymorph self* (note that polymorphing itself into a humanoid form does not allow a beholder mage to cast spells with material or somatic components); 10th—*dimension door*.

Zerixith has faithfully served Qeqtoxii for a number of years, primarily because the elder orb could see the potential in Zerixith's condition rather than the limitations. Back in the hive, Zerixith would be pitied for the loss of its central eye



Major NPCs

(which occurred during a contest during his youth), and it would never have been taken seriously as a member of beholder society. With Qeqtoxii, however, it holds great power and responsibility.

Zerixith knows Qeqtoxii's true nature and the elder orb's desire to overthrow the hive mother, and it supports it. It would much rather serve Qeqtoxii than Ixathinon. However, it has serious doubts about whether mere humans can be a serious threat to the hive mother. In response, Qeqtoxii has challenged the beholder mage to hold off the characters during the final confrontation while the elder orb escapes to the cavern to prepare for their arrival.

Zerixith believes it will utterly destroy the PCs, which, in its mind will prove its point to Qeqtoxii and force the elder orb to come up with a better plan for overthrowing Ixathinon. If the characters prove otherwise, however, Zerixith will not stick around to be destroyed; it will use its *dimension door* spell stalk to attempt to escape. After the characters disappear, Zerixith is to assume the role of the Faceless Man and run things while Qeqtoxii is gone.

Felmot, hm, Inv10: AC 10; MV 12; hp 34; THAC0 17 (16 with *staff of withering*); #AT 1; Dmg 1d4+1 (*staff of withering*); SA spells; SD spells; SZ M (5' 10"); ML steady (11); AL LE; XP 4,000. S 9, D 7, C 16, I 17, W 11, Ch 12.

Personality: extravagant, sarcastic.

Special Equipment: *staff of withering*, *talisman of memorization*, *wand of lightning*, *scroll of protection from acid*.

Spellbook (4/4/3/2/2 [+1 per level specialty spell]): 1st—*alarm**, *detect magic*, *identify*, *magic missile**, *read magic*, *shield**, *Tenser's floating disc*, *wall of fog**; 2nd—*flaming sphere**, *stinking cloud**, *web* (×2)*; 3rd—*fireball**, *lightning bolt**, *Melf's minute meteors**; 4th—*Otiluke's resilient sphere* (×2)*, *wall of fire*; 5th—*cloudkill*, *cone of cold**, *wall of force**

*Indicates favored spell.

Proficiencies: ancient history, ancient languages, astrology, cooking, dart, herbalism, local history, quarterstaff, reading/writing, religion, speak common, speak regional, spellcraft.

Felmot is not a typical rogue wizard in the sense that he has the kinds of spells useful for criminal activity. He is past the days of going out on a job; instead, his talents lie in strategic planning and defense of the headquarters. The Faceless Man also likes Felmot because the invoker does not seem to have any hidden desires to usurp the throne of the Unblinking Eye. The wizard seems content to serve the guild and has never tried to determine the true identity of its mysterious leader through mundane or magical means. This, of course, pleases Qeqtoxii, who desires above all else to keep its true identity a secret.

If he gets into a great deal of trouble, Felmot will attempt to negotiate for his life. He is not above ransoming some of his magical items in exchange for being allowed to live, for he knows there will be other days to recoup his losses if he survives. He will not, however, sell out his employer unless all other avenues have been closed. He holds a sense of loyalty and obligation to the Faceless Man and makes it a policy not to dicker with other people's commodities.

Map 2: Headquarters of the Unblinking Eye



Upper Level

peepholes












fireplace

sewer with walkway

pedestal

glassteel wall

Lower Level

- | | | | |
|--|--|---|---|
|  door |  portcullis |  rungs |  winch |
|  secret door |  trap door in ceiling |  statue |  guard |
|  concealed door |  trap door in floor |  armoire | 1 sq. = 5 feet |

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Eye of Doom

For four to six characters of levels 6–8

by **Thomas M. Reid**

After hiring a group of brave adventurers to help him “acquire” a beholder specimen, the mage Velinax disappears! Rumors blame an insidious thieves’ guild called the Unblinking Eye for this turn of events. Why would the Unblinking Eye wish to “take care” of the mage? Why does the guild want to speak to anyone involved with Velinax? Finally, what dark goal does the guild truly intend to accomplish? Finding out the answers to these questions will lead doughty adventurers straight through the shadows of a crafty thieves’ guild and onto the threshold of an even deeper and more dangerous darkness.

Eye of Doom is the second of three adventures featuring the nightmarish beholder. It can be played as an individual mission or as part of the series that began with *Eye of Pain* and concludes in *Eye to Eye*.

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