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# Dead Fire

Requires the Use of the Dungeons and Dragons Player's Handbook, Published by Wizards of the Coast

An introductory adventure for characters of 1st or 2nd level.



By Tony Bounds, Darrin Drader,  
and Dan Eveland



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## Introduction

Dead Fire is a challenging adventure for characters levels 1-3, and serves as an excellent introduction to the 3<sup>d</sup> edition rules. It is recommended that the party consist of 4-6 characters, and it would be a good idea, but not *completely* necessary to include a Wizard and a Ranger in the party. Most of the adventure takes place in the wilderness surrounding the small village of Foresthall, where an unnatural forest fire grows larger by the minute, threatening the survival of both Foresthall and a nearby elven community in the path of the blaze.

## Background

Eldolan Darkbough came to the Foresthall area some twenty years ago as a young but powerful wizard deeply involved in magical research. In search of a secluded place from which to work, he settled into an abandoned tower in the forest outside of town, near a community of elves. Eldolan's research, indeed even his presence, went largely unnoticed for several years, until one fateful spring afternoon. A small group of dryads also called the woods near the wizard's tower their home. Following a particularly violent spring thunderstorm, these dryads had left their grove to tend to animals injured during the storm. The same morning, Eldolan set out into the forest in search of wood from the heart of an ancient oak (necessary as a spell component) and, stumbling upon the dryad's grove, sought out his goal by casting a *lightning bolt* spell to sunder one of a great oaks. Sensing this destruction, the dryads instantly returned to their grove, confronting the wizard. The battle was short and brutal: to defend himself, Eldolan used *flesh to stone* (a spell he was entirely too fond of) and turned each of the dryads into a lifeless statue.

Eldolan found himself struck by the frozen beauty of the dryads, and summoned one of his golem servants to carry them back to the tower as trophies. He arranged them neatly in the gardens, integrating them into the landscaping surrounding his tower. Over the years, Darkbough became so deeply involved in his studies that he ceased tending to the upkeep of his tower, and focused his attentions completely on his magical research.

Many years later, a young wizard named Arduar Desmid, an apprentice from Foresthall's small school of wizardry, came upon what he believed to be an abandoned tower. Exploring, he discovered one of the 'dryad statues' buried beneath a heap of moss and foliage. Unable to attract the attention of the occupant of the tower and thus deciding it was empty, he gathered up his mule,

onto which he loaded one of the statues, and brought it back to decorate his room. He often thought the statue must have special magical powers hidden within it.

Over the course of several years, Arduar's knowledge in the arcane arts grew, as did the level of trust his mentors placed in him. One evening, he snuck into the college and absconded with a *Stone to Flesh* scroll. Returning to his rooms, he cast it upon the statue, hoping to release the magic contained within.

The 'statue' dissolved into the form of the dryad Niederial who ran from the building, leaving a stunned Arduar in her wake, and used the nearest tree to teleport back to her grove. What she discovered upon her arrival changed the dryad forever. The grove's ancient oaks had become badly diseased and rotted. With no evidence that her grove-sisters still lived, and much evidence to the contrary, she became enraged, filled with vengeance and hatred towards the wizard who had caused this horrible loss. The decay of her personal oak had not affected Niederial when she had been stone, but now the fire of hatred and desire for revenge overcame her pure nature: her appearance transformed into a twisted and distorted corruption of her former beauty, mirroring the horribly marred state of her oak.

There was one item left behind at her tree, a small but powerful amulet that had been overlooked by Eldolan, which the dryads had occasionally used to charm people who were normally resistant to their natural abilities. Niederial sought out Ancarohir Hyaryandil, a powerful elven wizard. She approached him and, using her amulet, charmed him. When she discovered Ancarohir did not have any information about her grove-sisters, she grew even more enraged, believing the Elves had done nothing to stop Eldolan from destroying the grove and her sisters. She brought Ancarohir through a Dimension Door to a point near the Wizard's tower, and commanded the Wizard to summon the most powerful creature within his power to destroy Eldolan Darkbough.

From the tower, Eldolan watched in horror as an elf he had never seen before summoned a flame hive-queen and sent it towards his tower. Believing the Elves were attacking without reason, the wizard summoned a large water elemental to fight the monster. After a desperate battle, the water elemental was defeated, and the fire within destroyed the tower. Eldolan was killed as the burning roof collapsed on him before he could react, but while his retinue of zombies, skeletons and others were horribly burned, many that Eldolan had been experimenting with survived the blaze, taking on new and unusual characteristics.



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Still filled with insane rage against the elves, she imprisoned Ancarohir with the intent of keeping him alive to make sure the Flame Hive Queen would remain on his plane until the Elven woods were utterly destroyed. The Elven wizard eventually recovered from the charm and, powerless to escape, watched in horror as a path of fiery death and destruction traveled towards his home.

### Notes For the DM

This module uses the d20 system, and the open gaming license that is graciously made available by **Wizards of the Coast**. It requires the Third Edition **Dungeons and Dragons** **Player's Handbook**, and it is recommended that you have the **Core Rulebook II** and **Core Rulebook III**. You should take the time to read through this module in its entirety before attempting to run it. Keep in mind that this is written mainly for first or second level characters, but it is designed to be a challenge; it is very likely that a party of four or five 1<sup>st</sup> level adventurers will advance in level over the course of this module. If you are a new DM, take the time not only to read the adventure, but also to familiarize yourself with the rules in **Core Rulebook II** referring to running an adventure.

Dead Fire is the prelude to a series of modules called **White Robes – Black Hearts**, each of which can be played independently, or in order from beginning to end. The forthcoming modules will deal more directly with the conflict between Calrendia and Muhl and the struggle for freedom within Calrendia. This adventure is designed to introduce the players to a small corner of Arekoz, as well as to familiarize them with the 3<sup>d</sup> edition rules. As with all modules produced by Dark Portal Games, you may modify this adventure to fit within any campaign setting. While it is not required that you use the world of Arekoz as the backdrop for this adventure, using it will aid in tying this module together with forthcoming products. Also, certain elements presented will be unique to Arekoz, and may require some modification to adapt it to another campaign setting.

The map of the surrounding area is 50 miles from east to west. The village of Foresthall lies in a neutral territory between Calrendia and Muhl, which are usually in a state of political upheaval. Muhl recently won a long fought war against Calrendia, and as a result, the citizens of Calrendia have been subjugated. Almost as soon as the war ended, the fighting resumed again as the people of Calrendia organized to overthrow the invaders. There is a rumor that a previously unknown warlord, whose tactics have been taking their toll on Muhl occupation forces, heads this new effort. It is possible that the adventurers will become involved in the events presented in this module while on their way to take a side in the struggle. If you choose not to use this adventure hook, the group

might simple start out in the village of Foresthall, or be passing through on their way to someplace else.

In all the stat blocks listed below, the NPC's are listed as they would be if they were ready for combat. In most interactions with them however, they will not be in a combat situation, and therefore will not be likely to be wearing armor, and only somewhat likely to be carrying their weapons. Applicable skills are adjusted to reflect armor check penalties. If these skills are used in a non-combat situation without the character's armor, add the armor check penalty back into the skills score.

### Scaling the Adventure

It is entirely possible that your gaming group has already gone through the very early levels, and you are now looking for a challenge for a group of mid-level characters or higher. It's possible to use this adventure with higher-level parties with a little bit of work before playing.

For a group of adventurers levels 4-6, replace the flame zombies with wights that possess the same special properties. Also, the flesh golem encountered near the end of the module should be full strength instead of weakened. You may want the water elemental summoned at the end of the module to soften up the flame hive-queen, but fail, forcing the characters to finish the job. Even in a weakened state, the flame hive-queen will be a challenge to a party of mid-level adventurers. If you opt for this resolution to the module, you may want to slightly decrease the damage from the monster's attacks. It is not recommended that 1<sup>st</sup> to 3<sup>d</sup> level characters be forced to contend with the flame hive-queen themselves.

For characters level 7-10, increase the number of wights encountered, include two or more flesh golem servants, or tweak the storyline so that the party is forced to contend with the flame hive-queen at full strength themselves (for instance, the dryads have no special ability to summon a water elemental, but recovering the other dryads does calm down Niederial's rage). The party might already have the ability to cast *stone to flesh*, so you could rearrange the chronology of the adventure, allowing the party to turn the dryads back to flesh, conquer the flame hive-queen, then explore the tower to unravel its secrets, though the sense of urgency during the search will be lost in that alternate sequence of events.

If, at any level, the encounters are not adequately challenging, increase the number of foes or strengthen them until they are of sufficient difficulty to keep the players interested. Feel free to include wandering monsters, or invent new encounters to add to the ones presented within this book to make the adventure more challenging and enjoyable for the group. Some



possibilities include dire-forest creatures driven into inhabited areas by the fire, or rescuing helpless forester families trapped within their homes by the fire.

## How to Begin

There are two suggested methods for beginning the game. The first is for the characters to originate from Foresthall, or to use it as the base of operations for several adventures. This module details one possible scenario involving Foresthall, but a number of other adventures can be easily set in the village and the surrounding area. The region was purposely left vague so that you, the DM, may develop it as you see fit.

The second option assumes the characters are traveling through Foresthall on their way somewhere else. The characters could be traveling to Calrendia to take part in (or take advantage of) the struggle, when they pass

through Foresthall, providing the perfect hook to get the party involved in the crisis in the forest. The village is on the main road, but will not show on many of the larger maps. In fact, unless the party is already familiar with the area, they may not even be aware of the village's existence.

Regardless of how the party comes to be in Foresthall, it should become quickly apparent that all is not right: an ominous black cloud of smoke is spreading out over the forest, moving slowly but inexorably towards the small town. It is mid-spring, and it is unusual for a large forest fire this time of year. The people of the village speak in hushed tones of the black omen this fire represents. There will be a general tension present through the townsfolk, and people in the streets will be obviously nervous; understandably so, since they are worried that the fire may threaten them directly. They are also concerned that the flames portend a drought for the coming summer, which will be hard on them and their

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crops come harvest time. It is recommended that you start the adventure in the late afternoon on a warm and sunny, though smoky, day. The encounter with the student mage Ardruar Desmid should occur later that evening.

There is a small school of magic in the village (very small: three professors and a handful of students in two large buildings on the outskirts of town) that is looked to for wisdom and leadership in times of arcane misfortune. Unfortunately for the village, none of the teachers rank higher than third level. Since they know full well that their combined skills wouldn't be very effective against an impending blaze, they have instead turned their efforts to coordinating the people to be prepared with large amounts of stored water, and seeing to the safety of their students. They have a few spells to offer, but possess little power to combat the blaze should it threaten the village directly. None of them suspect that the blaze is anything but natural.

One thing to keep in mind is that the proper path to stopping the fire will not be cleanly laid out for the heroes before they leave the village. They will have to role-play several encounters with the locals, as well as NPCs they meet later in the forest. They will further have to explore obvious locations, including the village and Eldolan's Tower in order to form a clear picture of what is happening, and what events led up to it. If the players don't seem to be piecing together the clues or if they come to a dead end, you may want to consider imparting some additional information through various sources, including new NPCs, scrolls or journals that provide clues, or (worst case) a premonition or dream.

### About Foresthall

**Foresthall (Village):** conventional; AL NG; 200 GP limit; Assets: 12,000 gp; Ready Cash 4500; Population 1000; Mixed (human 80%, elf 8%, half-elf 5%, halfling 7%); Highest level NPC 4<sup>th</sup> level fighter.

**Authority Figures:** Sir Darius Brandenburg, the school of wizardry, Temple of Maransol.

**Important Characters:** Anskar, Belar Anvilsplitter, Darius Brandenburg, Ardruar Desmid, Dotta, Genevive, Larissa, Laucimos, Olvir, Valgard, Agus Wrightsmith.

**Notes:** militia 50 1<sup>st</sup> level warriors, of those 15 are kept in active duty to patrol and maintain the peace in the village and the surrounding area.

The community of Foresthall is a small village that lies along a major trade route between the city of Gateway and the kingdom of Calrendia. Although the city of Gateway is technically a city-state, they police and defend much of the territory between the major kingdoms of the land. Ironically, despite the fact that many of these kingdoms strive to gain as much territory as possible,

most of them find comfort in the fact that there is an established free zone that is protected between the kingdoms. This allows for relatively safe traveling conditions. Gateway's military has been notorious for "enforcing" the "goodwill" between the kingdoms.

The sovereign of Gateway has placed Foresthall under the watchful eye of his trusted knight, Sir Brandenburg. The good knight takes his responsibilities very seriously, and at the time of this adventure can be found in his estate at the north end of the village. He is a veteran of several small conflicts that have served to protect the sovereignty of Gateway in the past. Now in his middle years, he puts on a festive face whenever out in the community in order to keep the morale of the people high. He takes the time to listen to people's concerns personally, and is generally well respected.

Most of the humans who call Foresthall home either tend the fields for a living, or are involved in the harvesting, transporting, or selling of lumber. The elves don't care for the way the humans use the land, which is why they came to a compromise several years ago outlining very specifically how many trees can be harvested, where they can be harvested, and how many can be cut from a single area. Many of the humans are still resentful about the way they have to live make the elves happy. Sir Brandenburg insists that it is for the good of the village that they take their neighbors' concerns into consideration.

The majority of the inhabitants of Foresthall are human. Most of the elves living in the town are either outcast from their society, or *consider* themselves outcasts. Most of the halflings will have wildly different stories about why they live within a human community, but they will almost all admit that they would not be happier (or at least not much happier) anywhere else. There is a tavern on the northeastern end of town called *Laucimos' Cracked Mug*, which counts the majority of the demi-humans of the village among its customers. Most demi-humans of the village are either retired from their profession, or have some sort of craft from which they generate an income, as opposed to earning a living by working the fields.

On the southern end of town is a small school of magic where anywhere from 25 to 50 aspiring wizards train at any given time. An odd mixture of children end up at this school, including the unruly (being dumped there by their parents), somewhat talented individuals (who might one day practice magic for a living), and the truly talented (who have a bright career ahead of them). The people of the village place a great deal of faith and trust in the capabilities of the mages who run the school, believing them to be more powerful than they truly are.

In the center of town is the temple of Maransol. The clerics of the temple tend to the spiritual needs of the community, and provide healing when necessary. Their temple is a large stone structure where nearly 500 people

come on the average day of worship. Despite their overwhelming popularity in the community, the priests try not to assert any sort of political pressure on Sir Brandenburg, choosing instead to stay in his good graces.

Clustered around the temple are the businesses of the village. The community boasts Belar Anvilsplitter's blacksmithy, the "Golden Hoof" horse breeder, The Swaying Merchant tavern, and The White Wood Inn among others. There is also a small marketplace where locals have permission to sell goods and services for a small temple tithe.

## Rumors

If the party decides to try and gather information about the fire, they can easily collect a number of rumors that are floating around the village. The rumors below are grouped so that the most likely and common explanations

have a higher chance of being shared. The tendency of the local townspeople to deny that the fire is threatening their homes is also taken into account.

For player's role-playing conversations between their characters and the townsfolk, the DM should make a *gather information* skill check, and compare the results on the following chart. The higher the player rolls on their *gather information* skill check, the more honest an answer they receive. However, just because an answer is honest, does not make it true, therefore a good roll from the player may still generate a useless result. Completely accurate rumors are labeled as True. Completely inaccurate rumors are labeled as False. Some rumors are false yet contain information that is relevant to the current situation. These are labeled as False But Relevant. Some information isn't a rumor at all but simply an irrelevant statement. These are labeled as Neutral.

### Rumor Table A: Base DC 10 or greater

Roll 1d10

- |    |   |
|----|---|
| 1  | Some kids playing with kindling sticks started the fire.<br><b>False:</b> Kids do start fires in the forest occasionally, but never so far away from town. They're not responsible for this fire.   |
| 2  | Some local woodsmen started the fire to clear more farmland for the town. No worries. It's all under control.<br><b>False:</b> Woodsmen do periodically start fires to clear farmland but it's a controlled burn. They're not responsible for the current blaze.  |
| 3  | Some local woodsmen started the fire to clear more farmland. They made a mistake. Now it's out of control.<br><b>False:</b> Woodsmen do periodically start fires to clear farmland but it's a controlled burn. Once in awhile they do get out of control. They're not responsible for the current blaze, however. |
| 4  | Nothing to worry about. The elves start such fires every 50 years or so to keep the woodlands healthy.<br><b>False:</b> The elves don't start such fires.   |
| 5  | Lightning started the fire. It happens all the time.<br><b>False:</b> Lightning does start fires occasionally but not in this instance.   |
| 6  | There's no fire. That's an unusually concentrated release of seedlings from an ancient stand of cottonwood trees.<br><b>False:</b> This person is extremely misinformed with little or no sense of smell.   |
| 7  | The minotaurs are having their annual elf roast. Elf Fest 23! Hooaaa!<br><b>False:</b> The minotaurs do not hold such a feast; at least not in this forest.   |
| 8  | The elves are at war and their enemies are trying to burn them out.<br><b>False:</b> The forest fire was not started for any such reason.   |
| 9  | A farmer's chicken caught on fire and went running into the woods.<br><b>False:</b> This has happened in the past (and is certainly a story worth hearing) but in this instance, it's not true.   |
| 10 | DM's choice.  |



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## Rumor Table B: DC 15 or greater

Roll 1d4

- 1 A woodcutter saw an evil old hag creeping about the forest. She no doubt started the fire.  
**False But Relevant:** A woodcutter did see Niederial the crazed dryad. She did not start the fire, however. This is still a valuable clue for the party.
- 2 The magi from the school of wizardry summoned a fire demon and it's causing all the trouble.  
**False But Relevant:** The magi had nothing to do with the fire other than the indirect results of Ardruar's actions.
- 3 There're evil witches in those woods. Woodland witches, yeah.... They are responsible for the fire.  
**False But Relevant:** Some people know of the general existence of the dryads whom they call the woodland witches. However they did not start the fire.
- 4 DM's choice.

## Rumor Table C: DC 20 or greater

Roll 1d4

- 1 A wizard that lives in a spooky old tower out in the forest somewhere no doubt had something to do with it.  
**True:** Eldolan, the last resident of the 'forest tower', did indeed have something to do with the fire. If the characters follow up on this lead, they will eventually find the tower.
- 2 Fire? What fire?  
**Neutral:** This person is either oblivious, in total denial, or wishes to be evasive. Role-play the encounter as you see fit.
- 3 I did it! I did it all! Ill burn you too if you don't get away from me! Hahahaha!  
**False:** Obviously this individual is deeply disturbed. Have fun role-playing the encounter.
- 4 DM's choice

## Locales of Foresthall

Run the following encounters as the party explores the city. Between the information that they gather here, plus the information they obtain through the rumor mill, they should come to two conclusions about the blaze: 1. It is not caused naturally. 2. The secret to stopping the fire lies in the very same forest that is in flames. It is vitally important that the party meet the young student mage Ardruar Desmid. If they shy away from the tavern, or if you prefer not to start adventures in taverns, have them encounter him drunk in the streets of the village. The encounters presented below can be run in no particular order, and not all of them are necessary for the party to have enough information to begin the investigation elsewhere.

### Belar Anvilsplitter's Blacksmithy:

Despite the name of the proprietor of this establishment, Belar is not a dwarf. He is a large, tall, hard-working man

in his mid-thirties with curly black hair and a beard. If asked about the fire, Belar won't have very much additional information for the party. Roll on the rumor table above to determine his response to any inquiries they might have. He is capable of producing and repairing all metal non-magical weapons and armor. He will have several pieces on display on his shop, which can be purchased for the prices listed in the Player's Handbook.

**Belar Anvilsplitter, male human Exp3:** CR 2; Size M (6 ft., 4 in. tall); HD 3d6; hp 16; Init +4 (+4 Improved initiative); Spd 30 ft.; AC 18 (+7 half-plate armor, +1 shield); Attack +4 melee (1d8 +3 +1, warhammer, crit X3, or 1d8+2, longsword, crit 19-20) or +3 ranged; SV Fort +1, Ref +1, Will +3; AL CG; Str 14, Dex 13, Con 11, Int 17, Wis 11, Cha 7.

**Languages Spoken:** Common, Dwarven, Elven, Giant, Goblin.

**Skills and feats:** Appraise +6.5, Bluff +1, Craft (blacksmithing) +13, Disable device +4, Gather information +3, Innuendo +2.5, Intuit direction +9, Listen +0, Open lock +3.5, Search +5, Sense motive +2,



Speak language +1, Spot +1, Use magic device +1; Improved initiative, Skill focus (gather information), Skill focus (intuit direction).

**Possessions:** +1 warhammer, longsword, half-plate armor, medium iron shield, great helm, gold ring (25gp), silver ring (5gp), 100gp.

## Laucimos' Cracked Mug:

Owned and Operated by a gold elf bard and former adventurer, Laucimos' Cracked Mug has become the meeting place for demi-human inhabitants of the village. The rules of the establishment are simple: all races (including humans) are welcome, and there will be no snobbery in the name of any race's alleged superiority or refinement. Laucimos is known to play a song or two on a nightly basis; he offers free meals or drinks to any other bards who wish to perform in his tavern. Laucimos left the gold elves many years ago to see the world. His experiences left him no longer craving the sedentary lifestyle of his homeland. Instead, he sees that there are some serious changes taking place in the world that could easily affect his people. He keeps an ear out for trouble, occasionally closing down the tavern to visit his kin in the forest.

If asked about the fire, Laucimos will be nervously perplexed about the situation. He will freely offer any knowledge he has to the party. He knows that the elder mage Ancarohir Hyaryandil, the senior wizard in the mage community takes it upon himself to oversee the extinguishing of any forest fires that might threaten the elves. If this were an ordinary blaze, it should have been taken care of some time ago. The only conclusions that he has reached about the situation are that either Ancarohir isn't available to fight the fire for some reason, or it is beyond his control.

**Laucimos, male elf (gold) Brd3:** CR 3; Size M (5 ft., 0 in. tall); HD 3d6; hp 15; Init +3 (+3 Dex); Spd 30 ft.; AC 17 (+3 Dex, +3 leather armor +1, +1 small wooden shield); Attack +1 melee (1d8-1 longsword, crit 19-20), or +5 ranged (1d8, crit X3); SV Fort +1, Ref +6, Will +2; AL NG; Str 8, Dex 16, Con 11, Int 16, Wis 9, Cha 14.

Languages Spoken: Common, Draconic, Elven, Goblin, Orc.

**Skills and feats:** Balance +8, Climb +2, Disguise +8, Hide +9, Knowledge (religion) +7, Listen +1, Move silently +8, Perform +4, Scry +9, Search +5, Spot +1, Tumble +8; Point blank shot, Two-weapon fighting.

**Possessions:** +1 longsword, composite longbow, 6 masterwork arrows, 24 arrows, +1 leather armor, small wood shield, elven lute, elven pipes, silver necklace (50gp), 250 gp.

**Bard Spells Known (3/2):** 0th -- Daze, Detect Magic, Flare, Ghost Sound, Mage Hand, Mending. 1st -- Protection from Chaos, Silent Image, Sleep

## Golden Hoof, Horse Breeder:

Dotta and her husband Valgard run Golden Hoof Horse Breeding. They will be pleased to talk to the party about whatever the party wishes to discuss, though they will be focused on attempting to sell the party a mount. They will be willing to purchase an old mount from the party and  $\frac{3}{4}$ the rate listed in the **Player's Handbook**, provided that the mounts are in good condition. Dotta is a woman in her late twenties with light skin, blond hair and green eyes. She stands 5'6" tall, and walks with a slight limp because of a riding accident she suffered earlier in the spring. Valgard is in his early thirties with medium length brown hair, and a mustache. He generally greets most of the customers and does the majority of the selling, while his wife gives customers tips on how to properly care for their horses. They currently have a total of 16 mounts for sale including 2 mules (8 gp), 6 ponies (30 gp), 6 light horses (75 gp), and 2 heavy horses (200 gp).

They will have one particularly valuable piece of information for the party, provided that they mention the fire to the couple. Just yesterday, when Dotta was out riding through the woods (as she often does), she found herself all too close to the blaze in the forest, in an area that has now been completely burned. Through the smoke and haze, she saw a magmin that had been produced by the flame hive-queen. She won't recognize the name or the traits of the monster, but will describe it as a small human-shaped being that seemed to be made of fire, running around through the forest lighting trees and plants on fire.

**Dotta, female human Exp2:** CR 1; Size M (5 ft., 2 in. tall); HD 2d6; hp 12; Init +2 (+2 Dex); Spd 30 ft.; AC 15 (+2 Dex, +2 leather armor, +1 small wooden shield); Attack +1 melee (1d6 short sword, crit 19-20; or 1d4 dagger, crit 19-20), or +3 ranged (1d6 shortbow, crit X3); SV Fort +0, Ref +2, Will +3; AL LG; Str 10, Dex 15, Con 11, Int 15, Wis 11, Cha 14.

Languages Spoken: Common, Draconic, Elvish

**Skills and feats:** Animal empathy +3, Balance +7, Listen +4, Move silently +7, Profession +15 (horse breeding & training), Read lips +7, Ride +9, Spot +5, Use magic device +4, Use rope +5; Mounted Archery, Mounted Combat.

**Possessions:** short sword, dagger, short bow, 6 silver arrows, 24 arrows, leather armor, small wood shield, gold ring with topaz (100gp), 400 gp.

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**Valgard, male human Exp2:** CR 1; Size M (5 ft., 8 in. tall); HD 2d6+2; hp 9; Init +3 (+3 Dex); Spd 30 ft.; AC 16 (+3 Dex, +2 leather armor, +1 small wood shield); Attack +3 melee (1d6+2 short sword, crit 19-20; or 1d4+2 dagger, crit 19-20), or +4 ranged (1d6 short bow, crit X3); SV Fort +1, Ref +3, Will +2; AL NG; Str 15, Dex 16, Con 12, Int 11, Wis 9, Cha 10.

**Languages Spoken:** Common.

**Skills and feats:** Balance +4, Diplomacy +7, Gather information +8, Hide +3.5, Move silently +3, Spot +6.5, Swim +4, Tumble +4; Mounted Combat, Skill focus (spot).

**Possessions:** short sword, dagger, short bow, 6 silver arrows, 2 masterwork arrows, 24 arrows, leather armor, small wood shield, silver belt buckle with abalone (25gp), 250 gp.

### Sir Brandenburg's Estate:

Aside from the temple, this is the largest structure in the village. A 6' tall, stone wall surrounds the property. Three buildings are arranged around the grounds, which include the estate of Sir Brandenburg, a servant's house, and stables. Darius Brandenburg lives with his wife Larissa, and employs ten guards and three servants. The guards guard the front gate and patrol the grounds for him at all times and make sure that his home is secure. If the party wishes to speak with the knight, they will be granted an audience, though how soon depends on the stated purpose for the visit. Should they say that they wish to speak with him about the fire, they will be granted immediate audience. Should they indicate any other reason for wishing to speak with him, he will postpone them until the following day.

Darius Brandenburg is in his early fifties with graying black hair cut short. He is loud, boisterous, and festive, given the opportunity. The fire concerns him a great deal, but he has no reason to believe that it is the result of anything but natural causes. He has been spearheading an effort by the people of the village to dig water trenches and store as much water from the river as possible so that they may hold off the flames should they spread to Foresthall.

Larissa is a tall woman in her late forties with long brown hair shot with silver. She was raised to the noble court in Gateway, but loves the small village she and her husband now live in, though she does spend a great deal of time elsewhere. The couple has one son, Owen, now seventeen, who is currently the squire to a landed knight in Gateway.

If the party gains an audience with Sir Brandenburg, he will invite them into his home and cordially offer them food and drink while listening to what they have to say. He will be skeptical of any claims the party may make



about the source of the fire being unnatural. He will easily identify the party as adventurers, and will assume that they will be there to talk him into giving them some sort of reward for 'saving the town.' Have the character in the party who is doing most of the talking make a *diplomacy check* (DC 17) to determine the level of their believability. If several members of the group are trying to speak, allow them all diplomacy checks, but raise the DC to 25: Sir Brandenburg does not like disorganization. If the party has already encountered Ardruar Desmid or Dotta and relays either of their stories, lower either DC by 5.

After weighing their arguments (assuming that the party succeeds in their diplomacy check), he will offer them 2000 gp if they are able to stop the menace that threatens the village. If the party asks him for adventuring gear in advance, he will provide them with basic non-magical gear, not in excess of 500 gp in value, which will be deducted from their reward upon their return.

**Darius Brandenburg, male human Ftr4:** CR 4; Size M (6 ft., 1 in. tall); HD 4d10+16; hp 40; Init +2 (+2 Dex); Spd 30 ft.; AC 19 (+8 full plate armor, +1 medium metal shield); Attack +7 melee (2d6+4 greatsword +1, crit 19-20; or 1d8+3 light flail, crit X2; or 1d4+3 dagger, crit 19-20), or +6 ranged (1d8 composite longbow, crit X3); SV Fort +8, Ref +2, Will -1; AL NG; Str 17, Dex 14, Con 18, Int 14, Wis 7, Cha 15.

**Languages Spoken:** Common, Elvish, Giant.

**Skills and feats:** Climb +4, Craft +8, Diplomacy +4, Handle animal +9, Innuendo +2, Listen +2, Spot +0, Swim +4; Alertness, Combat reflexes, Power attack, Weapon focus (Greatsword), Weapon focus (longbow), Weapon focus (flail, light).

**Possessions:** +1 greatsword, light flail, dagger, mighty composite longbow, 12 masterwork arrows, 24 arrows, heavy lance, full plate armor, medium shield, great helm, platinum signet ring with ruby (500gp), gold ring with topaz (150gp), 2,300 gp.

**Larissa, female human Nob3:** CR 2; Size M (5 ft., 7 in. tall); HD 3d8; hp 13; Init +1 (+1 Dex); Spd 30 ft.; AC 16 (+1 Dex, +4 scale mail, +1 small shield); Attack +5 melee (1d6+4 rapier +1, crit 18-20; or 1d4+4 dagger +1 crit 19-20), or +3 ranged (1d8, crit 19-20); SV Fort +1, Ref +2, Will +5; AL NG; Str 16, Dex 12, Con 11, Int 7, Wis 14, Cha 15.

**Languages Spoken:** Common.

**Skills and feats:** Diplomacy +8, Heal +4, Listen +5, Ride +7, Sense motive +3, Spot +2; Mounted combat, Skill Focus (Heal), Skill focus Diplomacy.

**Possessions:** +1 rapier, +1 dagger, light crossbow, 24 bolts, scale mail armor, small shield, gold and silver tiara with pearls(1250gp), gold necklace with amethyst (1250gp), 500gp.

**Guards (10), human War1:** CR 1; Size M HD 1d8+1; hp 6, 6, 7, 7, 7, 8, 8, 8, 9; Init +3 (+3 Dex); Spd 30 ft.; AC 18 (+7 half plate, +1 medium shield); Attack +5 melee (1d8+4 longsword, crit 19-20; or 1d8+4 light flail, crit X2), or +4 ranged (1d8 longbow, crit X3); SV Fort +3, Ref -3, Will +0; AL NG; Str 18, Dex 16, Con 12, Int 11, Wis 10, Cha 10.

**Languages Spoken:** Common.

**Skills and feats:** Hide -1, Jump +0, Listen +0, Move silently -2, Spot +2; Exotic weapon proficiency (sword, two-bladed), Quick draw.

**Possessions:** Longsword, light flail, long bow, spear, half-plate armor, medium shield, silver ring (10gp), 50gp.

**Servants, human Com1:** CR 1; Size M (5 ft., 10 in. tall); HD 1d4-2; hp 2; Init +1 (+1 Dex); Spd 30 ft.; AC 11 (+1 Dex); Attack +2 melee, or +1 ranged; SV Fort -2, Ref +1, Will +1; AL NG; Str 14, Dex 12, Con 7, Int 11, Wis 12, Cha 11.

**Languages Spoken:** Common.

**Skills and feats:** Bluff +1, Hide +1, Innuendo +3, Listen +3, Move silently +1, Ride +5, Spot +7; Alertness, Skill focus (ride).

**Possessions:** 4 gp.

## School of Magic:

This school fills an odd niche in the community of Foresthall, and is overseen by Genevive, Anskar, and Olvir. More often than not, small villages with few or no spellcasters of their own are very suspicious of magic and its practitioners. In Foresthall, however, the school of

magic was endorsed by the sovereign himself, and set in place for the protection and the betterment of the people. Most of the villagers recognize the fact that there is a 'magical' elven community nearby; they feel that the school evens things up a bit in their favor, plus they take comfort from the fact that these highly educated people have taken up residence in their community. The school is certainly not in place to groom war wizards; it is, in fact, a place where youngsters who show some aptitude for magic can learn the basics before they move on to larger schools when they are a little older. The school of wizardry has had a couple of its students go on to be world-renowned wizards, and therefore exists as a great pride to the village.

Genevive is a woman in her early twenties with bright curly red hair that she wears long. She usually dresses in gray robes with dark blue magical sigils running along the borders. Anskar is in his early thirties, with a shaven head, very dark skin, brown eyes, and a strong physique. He usually dresses in white robes with gold trim. Olvir is in his mid-twenties and is a graduate of the school. He has long dark brown hair, a slight build, and pale skin. Genevive is the unofficial leader of their small enclave. Anskar, though not as advanced magically as Genevive, is the oldest of the three, and considered to be the wisest; he acts as the superintendent of the school.

If asked if they have any knowledge about the fire, they will respond that they have no direct knowledge, but they think, "there's a good chance that this is no natural fire". They point to the fact that during this time of year, the woods are comparatively wet, and therefore a fire in the forest would have a tendency to burn out quickly after it started. If the party has not yet heard about the fire at Eldolan's tower, the mages will tell them that just before the fire started, there was an enormous blaze that consumed the tower out in the forest. They weren't fond of what they knew of Darkbough's methods, and so weren't overly concerned until the fire began to spread in a southwest direction. They further believe that if this were a natural fire, and it started at the tower, it would have spread outward from the tower randomly, not away in a particular direction. They will draw a rough map for the party indicating the approximate location of the tower, the village, and the area the fire has traveled.

If they are asked why they aren't trying to do something about it, they will respond that they have the safety of their students to look after, and the elves can do a much better job controlling the blaze than they can. This is partially true since they are charged with the protection of their students, but the heart of the matter is that they aren't powerful enough to affect the fire in any meaningful way. If the party relay's Ardruar's story, they will be very upset with the student, expel him immediately, and Anskar will insist upon accompanying them to try and resolve the crisis. Anskar may be played as an NPC for this adventure. If the party's wizard dies



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during the adventure, or if they didn't have a wizard to begin with, he may be adopted by a player upon the completion of the adventure, at your discretion. If the party has already convinced Ardruar to accompany them, Anskar will vehemently insist that only one or the other of them go with the party.

If the party asks to purchase any magic items, the school will offer them up to 5 potions of *cure light wounds* at 55 gp each. If the party tries to sell them any potions or magic items, they will be willing to purchase up to 1,000 gp worth, and will be willing to pay up to 125% of the gp value listed in the **Core Rulebook II**.

**Genevieve, female human Wiz3:** CR 3; Size M (5 ft., 5 in. tall); HD 3d4+3; hp 12; Init +1 (+1 Dex); Spd 30 ft.; AC 11 (+1 Dex); Attack +0 melee, or +2 ranged; SV Fort +2, Ref +2, Will +1; AL CG; Str 8, Dex 13, Con 12, Int 17, Wis 7, Cha 17.

**Languages Spoken:** Common, Draconic, Dwarven, Gnoll.

**Skills and feats:** Alchemy +9, Balance +3, Craft +9, Hide +1, Knowledge (arcana) +4, Knowledge (religion) +9, Listen -2, Move silently +1, Pick pocket +2, Spellcraft +9, Spot -2, Use rope +3; Empower spell, Quicken spell, Run, [Scribe scroll].

**Possessions:** Brooch of shielding, scroll charm person, scroll sleep, scroll spider climb, scroll summon monster 1, 2 potions cure light wounds, potion of invisibility, silver bracelet (25gp), 25 gp.

**Wizard Spells Known (4/3/2):** 0th -- Arcane Mark, Dancing Lights, Daze, Detect Magic, Detect Poison, Disrupt Undead, Flare, Ghost Sound, Light, Mage Hand, Mending, Open/Close, Prestidigitation, Ray of Frost, Read Magic, Resistance. 1st -- Charm Person, Feather Fall, Grease, Identify, Sleep, Spider Climb, Summon Monster I, Tenser's Floating Disk 2nd -- Mirror Image, Web

**Anskar, male human Wiz2:** CR 2; Size M (5 ft., 10 in. tall); HD 2d4+2; hp 7; Init +4 (+4 Improved initiative); Spd 30 ft.; AC 10; Attack +0 melee, or +1 ranged; SV Fort +1, Ref +0, Will +2; AL LN; Str 11, Dex 10, Con 13, Int 17, Wis 11, Cha 12.

**Languages Spoken:** Celestial, Common, Giant, Orc.

**Skills and feats:** Alchemy +8, Hide +0, Jump +0, Knowledge (nature) +8, Knowledge (religion) +8, Listen +1, Move silently +2, Profession +4, Search +5, Spot +1; Alertness, Improved initiative, [Scribe scroll].

**Possessions:** 2 scrolls magic missile, 2 scrolls sleep, 2 potions cure light wounds, potion fly, potion fire breath, iron ring (2gp), 20 gp.

**Wizard Spells Known (4/3):** 0th -- Arcane Mark, Dancing Lights, Daze, Detect Magic, Detect Poison, Disrupt Undead, Flare, Ghost Sound, Light, Mage Hand, Mending, Open/Close, Prestidigitation, Ray of Frost, Read Magic, Resistance. 1st -- Change Self, Magic

Missile, Nystul's Undetectable Aura, Protection from Evil, Silent Image, Sleep.

**Olvir, male human Wiz2:** CR 2; Size M (6 ft tall); HD 2d4+2; hp 8; Init +2 (+2 Dex); Spd 30 ft.; AC 12 (+2 Dex); Attack +1 melee, or +3 ranged; SV Fort +1, Ref +2, Will +4; AL LE; Str 11, Dex 15, Con 12, Int 14, Wis 8, Cha 11.

**Languages Spoken:** Common, Dwarven, and Giant

**Skills and feats:** Disguise +2, Heal +1, Hide +2, Intimidate +2, Knowledge (religion) +6, Move silently +3, Search +3, Spot +2.5, Use rope +2.5, Wilderness lore +1; Iron will, Quicken spell, [Scribe scroll].

**Possessions:** 2 scrolls burning hands, 2 scrolls magic missile, 2 potions cure light wounds, potion gaseous form, tooled leather belt (5gp), 50 gp.

**Wizard Spells Known (4/3):** 0th -- Arcane Mark, Dancing Lights, Daze, Detect Magic, Detect Poison, Disrupt Undead, Flare, Ghost Sound, Light, Mage Hand, Mending, Open/Close, Prestidigitation, Ray of Frost, Read Magic, Resistance. 1st -- Burning Hands, Chill Touch, Identify, Magic Missile, Silent Image, Spider Climb

### The Swaying Merchant Tavern:

The most frequented establishment in Foresthall is the Swaying Merchant Tavern. It's a place where the villagers, merchants, and travelers gather to cut loose and shake off the cares of work. This place is usually dimly lit and full of pipe smoke. The festivities within can usually be heard up to two blocks away. The beverages served include everything from water to ale and specialty drinks commonly ordered by demi-human patrons.

The proprietor is a much-loved old man named Agus Wrightsmith. Agus has run the tavern for over forty years. If asked, he'll go on for close to an hour about other fires he's seen in his day, but in his entire experience he's never seen a fire this early in the spring. If asked if anything strange has been going on besides the fire, he will tell the party that the young mage Ardruar Desmid has been in the tavern getting himself drunk quite a bit the last couple days, and has been acting depressed and worried. This makes an excellent introduction to the encounter with the young wizard himself.

**Agus Wrightsmith, male human Com2:** CR 1; Size M (5 ft., 10 in. tall); HD 2d4+4; hp 11; Init +0; Spd 30 ft.; AC 10; Attack +4 melee (1d4 +2 dagger, crit 19-20), or +1 ranged; SV Fort +4, Ref +0, Will +3; AL LN; Str 16, Dex 10, Con 15, Int 14, Wis 16, Cha 16.

**Languages Spoken:** Common, elf.

**Skills and feats:** Handle animal +7, Hide +7, Listen +8, Ride +5, Spot +5, Swim +8; Great fortitude, Point blank shot.

**Possessions:** dagger, iron ring (2gp), 4 gp.



## Arduar Desmid

The party will encounter Arduar Desmid slouched over a tankard of *nead* at a table in a corner of the Swaying Merchant Tavern. Arduar is sixteen years old, and nearly graduated from the school of wizardry. To be honest, he's stayed on a bit long, since he's not entirely sure what to do with himself. He stands 5'9" with light brown hair, a pale complexion, and blue eyes. If you prefer not to begin adventures in taverns, he may also be encountered in the streets of the village, intoxicated, looking haggard and bedraggled. The stench of alcohol will be evident merely standing in his presence. It should be obvious that something has seriously disturbed the young man. Attempts to talk to him will at first be shrugged off, but if the party decides to leave, he will pursue them, following the unfathomable logic of the inebriated. He will attempt to make the group promise to keep a secret. If they refuse for any reason, he'll wave them away, but may return later. If they agree, he will tell them of the link he believes exists between his actions and the fire that threatens Foresthall. His speech will be slurred, but he will make a concerted effort to speak clearly and succinctly to ensure he tells his story to someone he believes may be able to help. The following can be read verbatim, or paraphrased and included in an interactive conversation with the PCs.

Arduar clears his throat nervously, and begins to relay his tale. "It was over a year ago," he begins, then hiccups slightly. "I was riding through the forest in search of spell components when I came upon a tower. I'd been told by the school to stay away from the tower because of the evil practices that're supposed to go on there. I didn't mean to be there at first, but I figured that since I was there I might as well take a look around. The whole place was overgrown with weeds and tall grass, and looked deserted. Well, I thought it was a really interesting place, so I sat down on a tall rock and started to sketch the tower in my journal. At least, I thought what I sat down on was a rock until I started playing with the moss. I scraped some of it off, and discovered that underneath the moss was a statue of an incredibly beautiful woman. I cleared off the moss, but started wondering if the person living in the tower would notice me out there after all that time. I started to leave, and then noticed that other than my own footsteps, and the birds chirping, and the insects, I couldn't hear anything else. So I walked back to the tower and called out to see if anyone was there. I didn't get an answer. I called again and again, expecting whoever lived in the tower to come out and say something to me, or turn me into a frog, or something. I finally decided that no one lived there. I

wasn't going to go inside, since my instructors told me what an evil place it was. "I started studying the statue and noticed how real it looked. I finally decided that it must have been a gift from the gods for me to find it there. It was very heavy, but I managed to load it onto my mule and brought it back to town. I put it in my dormitory room, and didn't tell my teachers where I'd been. It pretty much sat in my dorm room for about a year, then one day in the school I found a bunch of scrolls the teachers had hidden away. I started reading them. One of them shocked me when I picked it up, so I moved on to the next one. Eventually I came on one that was supposed to turn *stone to flesh*. I decided to take it and cast the spell on the statue.

"I was thinking that if I cast the spell on the statue, it might release the magic that I was sure was in the thing. When I cast it, it turned into this perfect-looking woman. She looked at me, screamed, and ran from my dormitory. A couple days later the tower where I found her was on fire. A little after that, this forest fire had started. So you see, I'm responsible for starting the fire. Please don't tell the school. They'll expel me, and I'm so close to graduating."

Hearing Arduar's story should be enough to convince the party that the answer to ending the threat of the fire lies outside the village. He has imparted to them all the information he has about the current situation. If the party tries to make him feel even more guilty, and tries to shame him into accompanying them, he will reluctantly go, but not until he comes up with an excuse to tell his teachers explaining why he won't be available for class in the morning.

**Arduar Desmid, male human Wiz1:** CR 1; Size M (5 ft., 6 in. tall); HD 1d4+1; hp 5; Init +0; Spd 30 ft.; AC 10; Attack -2 melee, or +0 ranged; SV Fort +1, Ref +0, Will +2; AL LG; Str 7, Dex 11, Con 13, Int 15, Wis 11, Cha 11.

**Languages Spoken:** Common, Giant, Terran.

**Skills and feats:** Balance +2, Handle animal +1, Hide +2, Listen +1, Move silently +0, Open lock +1, Spellcraft +4, Spot +0, Swim +0; Enlarge spell, [Scribe scroll], Silent spell.

**Possessions:** Scroll sleep, 2 scrolls enlarge, 2 scrolls burning hands, 4 potions cure light wounds, potion bull's strength, potion speak with animals, 100 gp.

**Wizard Spells Known (3/2):** 0th -- Arcane Mark, Dancing Lights, Daze, Detect Magic, Detect Poison, Disrupt Undead, Flare, Ghost Sound, Light, Mage Hand, Mending, Open/Close, Prestidigitation, Ray of Frost, Read Magic, Resistance. 1st -- Sleep

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### The Temple of Maransol:

The largest structure in Foresthall, the temple of Maransol is home for 17 priests and acolytes. Maransol is the god of loyalty, and as such, is the focus of the community. Characters may go there to receive the benefits of any first and second level clerical spells (for a small fee). The temple does not have any means of resurrecting slain characters, but they do have a magical gate that connects to a temple in Gateway where such services are available. Should the party need to travel to the nearby city in a hurry, they may be able to convince the priests of the temple to let them use the gate upon a successful diplomacy check (DC 17).

### The White Wood Inn:

For 5 gold per night, the party may stay at the inn. It is a 2 story rectangular building with a common room downstairs where anyone may stay for a mere 2 gold per night. This is a good place to stay in town, and a good place to listen for rumors.

## Entering the Forest

Before the party leaves for the wilderness, it may be wise for them to obtain a map of the surrounding area. If they took the time to visit the school of wizardry, they should now have a rough idea of the lay of the land. The map they obtained is simple, but they should be able to navigate by it. The party may also purchase a local area map from one of the merchants in the market for 3 silver pieces. If they leave the village at night, the market will be empty, but they may be able to purchase a map from someone at the Swaying Merchant Tavern, for twice the price. There is also a 25% chance that a map procured in such a manner will be slightly inaccurate, and cause the party to get lost in the forest for an additional 1d8 hours.

After the party has left the village, read the following description to the players. It assumes that the party has left the village in the morning. Alter it if they leave at a different time of day:

The odd combination of the odor of morning dew, sap, and smoke fills the air as you leave the village of Foresthall on your way into the woods. The sky is clear, the air is crisp, and it feels as though it's going to be a warm day today. Game trails cut through the woods in several different directions, making the navigation of this forest somewhat easier. The trees loom majestically overhead, but there is something obviously amiss.

The encounter with the gold elves should occur 1d6 hours after leaving Foresthall, with Niederial's encounter 1d6 hours after that, or before the party reaches the tower, whichever comes first. Once the party has left the village, give them two days of game time to complete the adventure. If they fail to raise the water elemental by then, the fire will rage completely out of control, burning the elven village and Foresthall to the ground within a few hours.

The information the party will glean from their encounter with the gold elves is intended to throw them off track. The elves have not seen any evidence that this fire is anything but naturally occurring, and they will say as much to the party. The encounter with the dryad, if played well by the party, will suggest the history of this crisis, as well as point them in the direction of the tower as a place where a possible resolution may be found. If the party gets the chance to talk to Ancarohir, they will know that a flame hive-queen is causing the fire. Since the flame hive-queen is a new monster, allow Ancarohir to describe the monster to them.

Should the party decide to challenge the creature after speaking with the elven mage, make it clear to them that in order to find it they will probably have to go through the burning area of the woods – something that will prove to be a costly endeavor for them. Should they decide upon this course of action, or become lost in the woods and end up in the burning area, they will be subjected to the effects of the forest fire.

As the group travels further into the forest, the amount of smoke will increase until visibility is limited, resulting in ½ concealment to any targets over 50 feet away. The area of forest that is actually on fire will be anywhere from 100 to 600 yards from the point where the smoke hinders visibility. Continuing on beyond that point will lead to an area of blackened forest where the trees have already burned. Many of them have fallen in the blaze; while others are dead, but still standing. Characters running through a section of forest that is currently on fire will be subjected to the affects of furnace-like heat, and will probably (Reflex save, DC 15, every round) catch on fire. See the sections on *Heat Dangers*, *Catching on Fire*, and *Smoke* in **Core Rulebook II**. 1<sup>st</sup> through 3<sup>d</sup> level characters will most likely not survive such an encounter.

Because the woods are damp this time of year, if the party accidentally ends up near the fire but not in it, they will have a fairly easy time outrunning it as the fire spreads at a rate of only ¼ 1 mile per hour in any given direction. While this will leave the landscape altered somewhat depending on how many hours the characters take to end the crisis, for the intents and purposes of the game, don't extend the borders of the fire any further than what is shown on the map, unless the heroes fail to stop it within a two day period. The area surrounding Eldolan's

tower is near the borders of the fire, but it has already burned out, making the approach to the tower fairly easy.

bogged down in random encounters, skip a few and proceed to the next planned encounter.

## Random Encounters

Because the creatures of the forest are fleeing the fire, roll a d20 once for every half hour of travel, referring to the chart below. Reroll if the results don't make sense. For example: if the results indicate a Fire Mephit, but the party is nowhere near the outskirts of the fire, re-roll until a normal creature is encountered. If the game seems to get

## The Forest Random Encounter Table

All animals will be under stress or fleeing from the fire; apply a penalty of +8 to the DC for any attempts made to use the Animal Empathy skill in such encounters. If left alone, the animals will be 75% likely flee. If cornered, they will fight ferociously.

## Random Monster Types

Roll 1d20 to determine type.

# Rolled	Encounter	Number
1	Badger	1
2	Black Bear	1-3
3	Wolf	1-6
4-5	Deer*	1-4
6	Boar	1
7	Stag*	1
8	Fire Elemental type (see chart below)	NA
9-20	No encounter	NA

## Fire Elemental Types

Roll 1d4 to determine type.

D4	Encounter	Number
1	Azer	1
2	Magmin	1
3	Fire Mephit	1
4	Fire Salamander	1

\* Use the statistics for a Bison/Herd animal.

## Dark Portal Games

### Gold Elves

A group of six gold elves are returning home after battling the fire. When running this encounter, have the party make an opposed spot check versus hide to see if they notice the elves. If no one notices them, re-roll one more time the next round. If still no one notices them, the elves will wander away from the encounter towards their home without bothering to get the party's attention. Assuming the party notices the elves, read the following description to the players:

Through the smoke and trees, you see six lithe shapes moving silently through the forest. As you near, their distinctive angular features become apparent. Three of them have their bows drawn, while the others have their weapons out. They are standing in a defensive position facing you, though they are making no openly hostile moves.

The gold elves have no wish to begin a conflict with the party, yet they fear a hostile reception, so they are being as careful as possible. Their intention will be to politely interrogate the party to see if they have any information about how the blaze started. If the party asks them what they know, the elves will reply that it is an unseasonable fire, and nothing more. If the party suggests that there is something unnatural about the fire, the gold elves will shrug off the suggestion as being a quaint theory. At this point the party should have no knowledge that the fire is being caused by a flame hive-queen or its offspring, and this group of elves have yet to encounter any of the creatures the monster has produced.

The party can learn the following information if they succeed in a *diplomacy* check (DC 20). The elves are nervous not only because of the fire, but also because their most trusted wizard Ancarohir has been missing since before the blaze began. They fear that his disappearance has something to do with the fire. He is the one who usually spearheads the battles against threatening conditions, such as forest fires. Without him they are trying their best to use the skills he taught them, but their *wands of Ice Storm* they use to combat the fire are running low, and the fire is fast approaching their village. The party may wish to obtain one or more of the *wands of ice storm*. The elves will agree to part with one of them upon a successful *diplomacy* score (DC 20). The party may also try to steal one from one of the elves, which will require a successful *pick pockets* skill check (DC 20), and a contested roll between the party member's *pick pockets* skill versus the elf's *spot* check, but this begs the question of how the sneak-thief got that close to the elves in the first place.

If the party is unable to get the above information out of them, the elves will advise the party to return to their village where it is safer, and stay out of the path of the fire. They will make no promises that they will be able to get the blaze under control however, and in fact they're running out of options.

**Gold Elves, Adp1/War1:** CR 1; Size M (4 ft., 11 in. tall); HD 1d6-2 + 1d8-2; hp 5; Init +1 (+1 Dex); Spd 30 ft.; AC 13 (+1 Dex, +2 leather armor); Attack +1 melee (1d8 longsword, crit 19-20), or +2 ranged (1d8 longbow, crit X3); SV Fort +0, Ref +1, Will +3; AL LE; Str 10, Dex 12, Con 7, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 11.

**Languages Spoken:** Common, Elven.

**Skills and feats:** Appraise +2, Hide +1, Knowledge (religion) +0.5, Listen +3, Move silently +3, Search +2, Spot +3, Use rope +1.5; Scribe scroll.

**Possessions:** Longsword, longbow, 12 masterwork arrows, leather armor, small wood shield, gold ring (20gp), wand of ice storm (2 charges).

**Spells Per Day:** magic missile

### Encounter With Niederial

Run the following encounter 1d6 hours after the party encounters the elves. If they are using a fast method of traveling through the forest, such as a flying carpet, etc. run this encounter well before the party reaches the tower.

The encounter must be run for the adventure to make sense, but the party should have the sense that use of their skills has found this place. Make a spot roll for one of the characters, then whether it succeeds or fails, inform them that they have discovered a pair of relatively fresh footprints leading off to the north. After following the tracks for a while, read the party the following description. If the party chooses to ignore the footprints, move them closer to the cave, and have them blunder into Niederial, automatically catching them by surprise; then paraphrase the following description, omitting anything that would indicate that they are seeing the scene from a distance.

Peering through the foliage in a small clearing, you spy a strange, misshapen, horrid creature pacing back and forth in front of a low narrow cave opening penetrating the side of a hill. The creature resembles an old woman stooped with age. She is clothed in a ragged, full-length dress that may have at one time been of fine make, decorated with a complex green and brown pattern. Her gray hair is wild and unkempt, hanging in long twisted strands nearly to her ankles. The skin of the creature is wrinkled, mottled green, and seems to be peeling off in patches. The red-rimmed eyes glow with a sort of fierce, feral hunger. Mumbling and cackling to herself, she occasionally peers intently and suspiciously



into the surrounding woods. On these occasions, you see that her wrinkled and shrunken countenance has a horrible scar running the length of her face. In one hand she tightly grips a rope that leads into the cave opening. You think you detect some movement within the darkness.

The party may mistake the insane dryad Niederial for a Green Hag. If so, play upon their assumption. Niederial has taken up residence in a small cave near her damaged oak tree. She spends little time inside the cave and guards the exterior so that Ancarohir cannot escape or be rescued. She tirelessly paces around the area in a state of constant alert, and is therefore difficult to catch by surprise. Only if the party attempts to move silently will they have a chance of sneaking up on her. Make a contested roll of the party's *move silently* or *hide* skills versus her *spot* skill to see if she spots them. As they get closer, read the following description.

As you approach the creature, she quickly positions herself protectively in front of the cave entrance. She threateningly raises her claw like hands, displaying wickedly long and broken black nails; obviously ready to lash out at the nearest one who advances. In a hissing cracked singsong voice she screeches, "Be gone thieves. You'll not have the elf until my sisters have returned from the grave! If you've come from the evil tower, your bloody bones will feed the hungry roots of this forest."

You think you see more movement, seemingly more energetic, within the darkness of the cave.

Niederial will not attack as long as the characters stay at least 30' away. If they approach any closer she will attempt to cast charm person on the nearest warriors, commanding them to protect her. She will continue to use all of her charm person spells if need be. In addition to that, she possesses an amulet of charming. She used the amulet rather than her natural charm ability to capture Ancarohir. It works as a charm spell as if cast by a 9<sup>th</sup> level sorcerer (DC20). If pressed to defend herself physically, she will do so ferociously, immediately going into an insane fit equal to barbarian rage.

She has set a simple snare trap 10' away from the entrance to the cave. Unless the trap is detected, any characters coming within the area incur a 50% chance to activate it and become ensnared. Those ensnared are quickly and forcefully dragged up from the area to hang upside down by one leg from a nearby tree. If the trap isn't immediately sprung, there is an additional 10% cumulative chance per round they are in the area that one of them will activate the trap. The ensnared party member

will then take 1d6 points of falling damage if not very carefully extricated from the trap.

**Snare Trap:** CR 2; ensnares victim, hanging them 10' up in the air; Reflex save Avoids (DC 15); Search (DC 15); Spot (DC 20); Disable Device (DC 5).

If the party stays and continues to speak with her, making no threatening moves, she will remain extremely wary and on guard, but will not attack. During this time, Ancarohir will creep to the mouth of the cave to see what's happening; at which time he will become plainly visible. If the party does this, read the following.

You notice a haggard looking elven male clothed in brown and bright green, but unkempt and dirty robes peering out from the confines of the cave entrance. Forced to squat on his haunches because of the low cave entrance, he watches your party. You notice his hands are bound in front of him with a rope, the other end held by the creature guarding the entrance.

Ancarohir will continue to observe the party for at least 10 rounds. If they make no threats toward Niederial, he will speak to them. Niederial will ignore him, seemingly oblivious to his speech. First, he will ask them what they are doing in the forest. If they indicate they are there to investigate the fire he will tell them his story. Ancarohir cares for the dryad as a kindred forest soul and will not harm her under any circumstances. He realizes he's in a difficult position and will see a friendly party as a means to extricate himself from the situation without causing her harm. If they attack her he will call out, desperately trying to convince them to stop immediately. If they ignore his pleas, he will not take kindly to the party if they continue to attack.

If they harm or kill her, he will attempt to run off, making his way to the nearest elven community. If he makes his escape as the result of harm coming to Niederial, within two hours elven rangers will begin looking for the party with the intent of driving them from the forest, or killing them if need be.

**Ancarohir's Story:** If the party succeeds in speaking with a friendly Ancarohir, he will tell them the following:

I was charmed by the dryad's amulet, and forced to do battle with Eldolan Darkbough at the tower. Before the battle, she told me to summon the most powerful creature within my power, which I did. I summoned a flame hive-queen, a horrendous creature from the plane of fire, which is now raging through the forest wreaking fiery destruction wherever it goes. Later, when the charm wore off and I came to my senses, I came to realize the creature

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that charmed me was actually a horribly deformed dryad, which I had known for many years, and who had inexplicably disappeared a decade ago, along with her many grove sisters. Her name is Niederial. I beg of you not to harm her. She's very upset about the apparent death of her six sisters.

The creature I summoned is far beyond my usual capabilities. I used a scroll from my lab to bring it here, but I made a mistake during the casting, making it impossible for me to banish it. Niederial and her sisters once had the ability to summon an enormous water elemental from the lake near here. Alas, they are most likely dead, but such a creature might have challenged the flame hive-queen.

Perhaps if you investigate the tower you may find out what happened to the other dryads. If they, like Niederial, are still alive somehow, they might yet be able to stop the fire. I wish to remain here to protect this poor creature. I would advise you to be wary of speaking to any other elves you might meet: they would most likely not believe your story, and would threaten Niederial. Even I cannot help them. The only hope we have of averting this tragedy lies somewhere within the burned ruins.

Perhaps if you investigate the tower you may find out what happened to the other dryads. If they, like Niederial, are still alive somehow, they might yet be able to stop the fire. I wish to remain here to protect this poor creature. I would advise you to be wary of speaking to any other elves you might meet: they would most likely not believe your story, and would threaten Niederial. Even I cannot help them. The only hope we have of averting this tragedy lies somewhere within the burned ruins.

If the party proposes to attack and kill the flame hive-queen, Ancarohir will explain the incredible danger the creature represents, and how small he thinks the party's chances are of surviving such an encounter. His only real hope is that there might be something at the tower left over from the magic Darkbough amassed that might help them. He will try to direct them in that direction and away from any plan that leads to facing the monster themselves.

**Niederial, the Insane Dryad:** CR 1; Medium-Size Fey; HD 2d6; hp 10; Init (+6 Dex, +4 improved initiative); Spd 30 ft.; AC 10 (+2 Dex, -2 Rage); Atk +1 melee (1d4+2); SA Spell-like abilities; SQ Symbiosis; AL CN; SV Fort +2, Ref +5, Will +5; Str 14 (+4 Rage), Dex 15, Con 11 (+4 Rage, -4 Damage), Int 10 (-4 Insanity), Wis 10 (-4 Insanity), Cha 10 (-8 Damage)

**Skills & Feats:** Animal Empathy +9, Craft-Trap Making +6, Escape Artist +7, Hide +7, Listen +9, Move Silently

+7, Sense Motive +7, Spot +9, Wilderness Lore +7, Alertness, Dodge, Improved Initiative.

**Special Attack:** Charm ability. Insane rage gives her +4 to Strength, +4 to Constitution, +2 morale bonus on Will saves, -2 penalty to AC. There is no constitution-based limit on the amount of time the rage can last.

**Special Qualities:** Symbiosis with her oak tree. The tree is barely alive and therefore this quality provides her with no advantage. She can no longer dimension door and has lost the ability until she and her tree are cured.

**Spells:** Charm person 3x per day as a 4th-level sorcerer; targets must make a Will save (DC 15) or be charmed for 4 hours.

### For the Rules Lawyer:

Symbiosis (Su): Each dryad is mystically bound to a single, enormous oak tree and must never stray more than 300 yards from it. Any who do become ill and die within 4d6 hours. A dryad's oak does not radiate magic.

The above rule is very much in effect. Niederial risked much by traveling a great distance away from her oak to capture Ancarohir, and exact her vengeance against Eldolan. Her tree is not dead, but in a severely damaged and weakened state. At the conclusion of the adventure the party will have the opportunity to restore the tree, which will restore Niederial's health, both mentally and physically.

**Ancarohir, Wiz8 CR 8:** Size M (4 ft., 11 in. tall); HD 8d4+8; hp 33; Init +5 (+1 Dex, +4 Improved initiative); Spd 30 ft.; AC 11 (+1 Dex); Attack +3 melee (1d8 longsword +1, crit 19-20), or +5 ranged; SV Fort +3, Ref +3, Will +5; AL NG; Str 9, Dex 12, Con 12, Int 12, Wis 9, Cha 6.

**Languages Spoken:** Common, Elven.

**Skills and feats:** Bluff +1, Craft +12, Disable device +3, Handle animal +0, Hide +1, Listen +1, Move silently +5, Perform +2.5, Search +3, Spot +1; Craft wondrous item, Improved initiative, Martial weapon proficiency (longsword), [Scribe scroll], Silent spell.

**Possessions:** +1 longsword, ring of protection +2, 2 scrolls ice storm, 2 potions cure light wounds, potion fire resistance.

**Wizard Spells Known (4/5/3):** 1st -- Burning Hands, Change Self, Charm Person, Chill Touch, Identify, Jump, Magic Missile, Message, Reduce, Shield, Sleep, Summon Monster I. 2nd -- Alter Self, Blur, Ghoul Touch, Invisibility, Knock, Locate Object, Melf's Acid Arrow, Mirror Image, Obscure Object, Protection from Arrows, Summon Monster II, Tasha's Hideous Laughter, Web.

## Eldolan's Tower

At the point when the party comes within about 5 miles of the tower, read the following description to the players.

You have entered an area that the fire has passed through. The landscape looks dead and desolate. The trees are all blackened. Many still stand, some lay tipped at unnatural angles, while others lay on their sides. The ground is gray and covered in a thick layer of ash. Several pillars of smoke yet rise into the sky, the foliage and wood beneath them still smoldering. You are not far from the blaze now. The sky overhead is black with smoke, and the acrid stench of burnt timber is overpowering.

If the party stops to examine their surroundings, a successful search check (DC 17) will reveal the tracks of both wildlife fleeing the area, as well as bipedal forms that do not seem to be fleeing the blaze. A few of the bipeds will have clawed footprints while others will be almost humanoid in appearance. These tracks lead in all different directions, left by the elemental monsters born from the flame hive-queen.

The trek through this section of wilderness is meant to be a solemn journey for the party. Try to create tension as you describe their journey the rest of the way to the tower. A useful technique is to roll dice behind your DM's screen while making a few cryptic comments. Don't run any further encounters until they have reached the tower.

When the tower is in sight, read the following description to the players.

The tower, constructed of dark basalt rock, lies ahead and sits atop a tall hill that looks out over the surrounding landscape. The wild vines that once crept up the walls are still mostly in place, but are all shades of gray and black. There are seven levels of windows spaced evenly up the tower, though all the glass has been blown out of the casements. The edges of the window openings are blackened with soot. From where you stand, it appears that the tower roof has collapsed. A set of double doors stands at the base of the tower, now slightly ajar.

Hidden in this landscape of destruction are the statues of the dryads Eldolan turned to stone long ago. A search of the area (DC 15) will reveal them. Before the fire overran the area, they were buried under layers of filth and moss -- now they are buried under just as much ash and soot. The statues themselves are still in good

condition, and if the party casts *stone to flesh* on any statue, they will return to life.

If the party decides to bypass the exploration of the tower by attempting to climb it, allow them to try. The tower stands approximately 130 feet tall. Because of the excess of soot and ash along the sides of the tower, the party-member making the climb will have to make a climb check (DC 17) every 10 feet.

If a party-member decides to use a grappling hook to assist their climb, use the following guidelines: have the character making the attempt try to beat a DC of 20 by adding their strength modifier to a d20 roll. Have them then make a dexterity check against a DC of 15 to see if it catches. The character may take 10 or take 20 (2 minutes of consecutive attempts) on the initial throw, but may not take a 10 to see if it catches. If they successfully climb the tower, proceed to level 7.

The key to solving the adventure is to turn the dryads from stone to flesh. The dryads will then return to their grove and the nearby lake, where they will call forth an elder water elemental strong enough to defeat the flame hive-queen. In order to do this the party will either have to turn the dryads back to flesh with any spells or potions they have with them, or they will have to retrieve the wand of stone to flesh that is on level 7 of the tower. If the party was established before the beginning of this module, and has enough resources with them to turn the dryads back to their natural forms, allow them to do so, then proceed to the chapter **Concluding the Adventure**. They may still wish to explore the tower, and gather treasure.

Before entering the tower, run the following encounter:

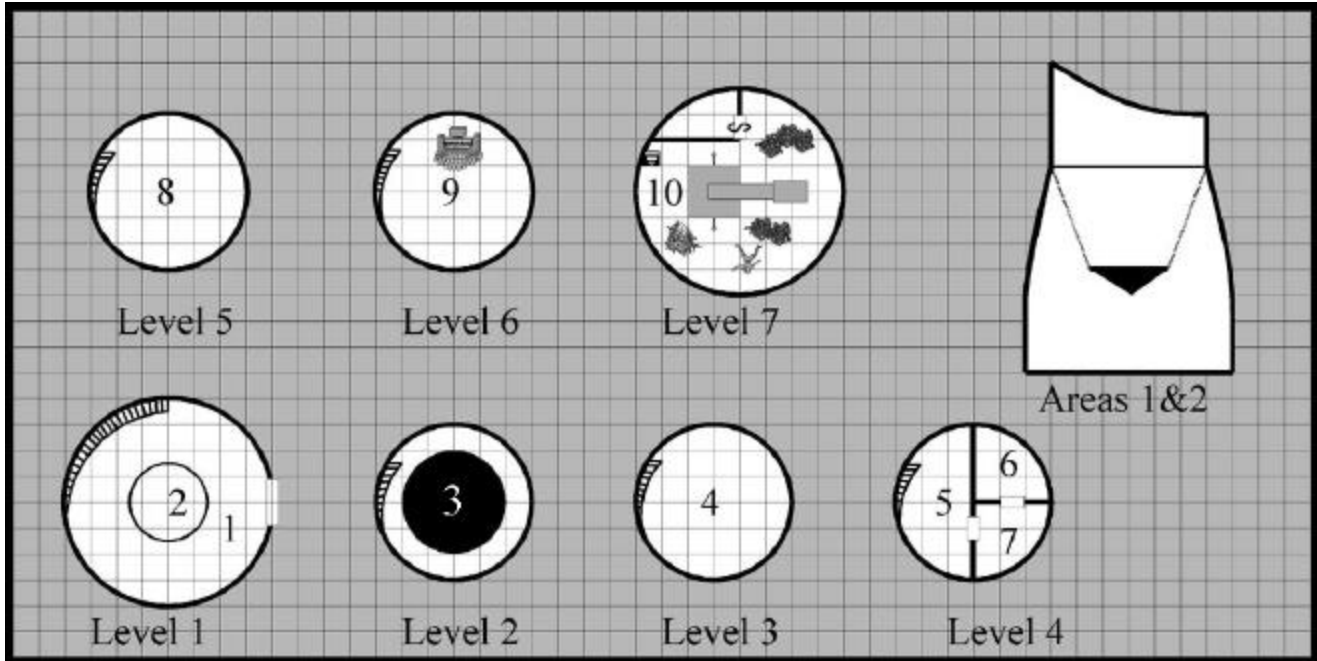
### Approaching the Tower Doors

Eldolan did a great deal of experimentation with his undead servants before his death. One of the experiments he attempted was to fortify the flesh of his zombies so that they would last longer in a fight. While his experiments at first appeared to fail, when the flame hive-queen attacked the tower, the zombies caught fire but managed to adopt fire as a component of their makeup. The heat that burns within them has made them somewhat more brittle, lowering their overall number of hit points, but it has given them the ability to cause fire damage. See description of the **Fire Zombie** in appendix I.

While many of Eldolan's undead minions perished in the blaze that consumed the tower, the ones that remain will still be tending to the tasks he assigned them before he died. One of his instructions to the zombies was to attack anyone other than himself opening the front doors. As the party approaches the doors to enter the tower, four



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fire zombies will attack them. Read the following description to the players.

Before you reach them, the tower doors open wide. Shambling movement attracts your attention deep within the darkness. Something large is definitely moving around just beyond your vision; perhaps several somethings. For a moment you think you've caught a glimpse of a pair of blazing eyes.

Give the party one round to decide what they're going to do. If they decide to stick around to see what's coming out of the smoke, read the following:

Breaking out of the inky blackness within, several man-like creatures shamble towards you with a stiff awkward gait. Blackened, rotting flesh hangs loosely on their decaying forms. Obscenely accentuated by the taugt shriveled flesh of their gaunt visage, broken yellowed teeth stretch in ghastly rictus grins. Their eyes, seemingly aglow from within, hold the dancing flame of baleful un-life. Their arms are raised toward you, their hands are torches; flames licking at their flesh, though not consuming it. Small wisps of smoke rise from their bodies, adding to the intense cloistered haze of the area.

The zombies will attack the party until either they or the party have been destroyed.

EL 4

**Fire Zombies (4):** HP 11, 8, 8, 7

## Level 1

Because of the fire, the wooden stairs will be extremely unstable throughout the entire tower. For every level the party ascends, there is a 20% chance that the stairs will crumble beneath their weight, taking out a 5' section. Two checks will be required when climbing from level 1 to level 2. When a section of stairs crumbles beneath them, the affected characters will either have to jump up the stairs ahead of the collapse, or climb the wall to the next section of stairs they wish to proceed to. If they jump, they will have to catch hold of the next area above them that is still intact, then pull themselves up (Jump DC 17). If they climb to the next section of stairs, the going will be rough due to the ash and soot that clings to the walls (DC 17 to climb). On this check, the party may take 10 or 20, if necessary to move the adventure forward.

## 1. Entrance hall

The air is thick with smoke in this room, immediately irritating your eyes and throat. The circular room you are in is 40 feet in diameter. A narrow wooden staircase, badly burned, curves upward, along the outer wall. Twenty feet above you, chains attached to the walls suspend a rough stone





platform in mid-air. There seems to have been a great deal of finery in this room at one time, including a couch, a rich carpet, and tapestries, but they have all been reduced to ashes and scorched wooden frames. Upon the far wall hangs the remnant of a picture of some sort. Several large smooth stones are scattered about the floor of the room.

Upon entry to the tower, 3 fire zombies will attack the party from above. They will pick up large stones and hurl them down upon the party. The stones are kept in area 2, in three large piles, with a total of 22 stones in each pile. Each will hurl one stone per round at a random member of the party. If the party moves under the platform, but remains where they can see enough of the zombies to attack, they will have  $\frac{1}{2}$  concealment, meaning that any hit rolled will have a 20% chance of missing, even if a successful hit is rolled. Zombies on top of the platform in this situation will likewise receive  $\frac{1}{2}$  concealment. Characters that retreat completely beneath the platform will not be able to attack the zombies, or vice versa. Each rock is approximately 10 lbs. and will do 1d6 points of damage on a successful hit.

If the party examines the painting they will find one +1 longsword (no search necessary) hidden behind the blackened canvas. Eldolan kept the weapon here in case one of his (rare) guests proved unruly and prone to physical attacks.

## 2. Ambush Platform

On this platform, 3 fire zombies are stationed with orders to attack any intruders below. The platform is made of the same basalt rocks that the tower is constructed of. When the tower was first erected, the platform was raised up to its current height with a pulley system, and then chained into place. The chains were somewhat weakened in the fire, but not to the point where they will be easy to dislodge or break. The chains have a hardness of 15 and 50 hp.

EL 4

Fire Zombies: 8, 9, 10

## Level 2

## 3. Storage Area

The center section of floor in this chamber has been burnt completely through. Ragged, charred edges of floor planks jut into a dark opening you know must open to the floor below. There are a few scorched wooden crates and singed burlap sacks stacked along the walls where the floor hasn't been burnt through. In one of the broken crates against the far wall, something is skittering about, making squeaking, chittering sounds. It's obvious that other, similar items stored here must have fallen to the chamber below when the floor collapsed. The stairs continue to spiral along the outer wall to the next floor.

There are 3 crates and 3 burlap sacks left in this storage room. One crate contains dried apples and the other a live ferret that somehow survived the fire. The ferret was a trained pet of Eldolan, and if bribed it can follow simple commands issued by those possessing Animal Empathy, Handle Animal or similar skills. The dried apples work well for the purpose of befriending the animal.

The ferret has a silver collar engraved with the name 'Jilby'. If a party member befriends the creature and learns to command it, the ferret can prove extremely useful in retrieving the wand of Stone to Flesh on the top floor. See the key to level 7 for details.

All three burlap sacks contain dried beans. If the characters wish to investigate the items, perhaps to rescue the ferret, they will have to creep along the outer section of flooring, clinging to the perimeter of the tower wall. Doing so incurs a risk of collapse every 5 feet traveled, with results similar to collapsing stair sections, detailed above. The only difference is that those who fall are subject to the choking effects of the resulting dust cloud.

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**Ferret:** CR 1/4; Tiny Animal; HD 1/2 d8; hp 2; Init +2 (Dex); Spd 20 ft., climb 20ft.; AC 14 (+2 size +2 Dex); Atk Bite +4 melee (1d3-4); SA Attach; SQ Scent; AL N; SV Fort +2, Ref +4, Will +1; Str 3, Dex 15, Con 10, Int 2, Wis 12, Cha 5

**Skills & Feats:** Balance +10, Climb +11, Hide +13, Move Silently +9, Spot +4, Weapon Finesse (bite)

**Special Attack:** Attach-If a ferret hits with a bite attack, it uses its powerful jaws to latch onto the opponent's body and automatically deals bite damage each round it remains attached. An attached ferret has an AC of 12.

**Special Qualities:** Scent-If sufficiently frightened or aggravated a ferret is capable of releasing a spray of foul smelling fluid from their scent glands. This spray is capable of hitting anyone within a 50' radius of the animal (Save vs. Ref DC 15). The scent is harmless but will reduce by -4 the charisma of anyone struck by it. This undesirable effect lasts for 1d4 weeks and cannot be washed off.

## Level 3

### 4. Zombie Hold

As you continue your ascent of the stairway you enter another circular chamber. This chamber is filled with heavy smoke, which severely clouds your vision. Your eyes become much more irritated, stinging from exposure to the pungent atmosphere.

Eldolan stored his retinue of zombies here. Because of the heavy accumulation of smoke, vision here (including dark vision) is limited to a distance of no further than 5' in any direction. Obeying Eldolan's last orders, four Fire Zombies hidden in the smoky vapors guard the area and will attack if the area is entered, or if the characters try to continue up the stairway.

One zombie is on the stairway, making combat with the creatures unavoidable if the party wishes to reach the next level. The zombies will wander in and out of the smoky haze as they attack, gaining a +2 on initiative every other combat round.

Hidden within the cloud of smoke, underneath the stairway (Spot DC 20) is a small wooden chest containing 50gp.

**EL 4**

**Zombies:** HP 7, 7, 8, 8

## Level 4: Living Quarters

The characters will emerge from the stairway into room 5. Because this was the area where Eldolan lived, he kept his undead servants out of it.

### 5. Bedroom

Little more than ashes remain of the door to this room. Within the room is the blackened, crusty remains of a bed, an enormous pile of ashes - the remains of what you cannot guess, and a badly singed, but intact chest sitting in the middle of the room.

The room is devoid of anything of value except for the contents of the chest. The lock was damaged in the fire, and will unlock if a successful *open locks* skill check (DC 9) is made. The contents of the chest are 2 potions of *cure moderate wounds*, an *identify scroll*, 320 gp, and 98 sp.

### 6. Dining Room

This room is full of charred pieces of wood that once were a table and chairs set. On the floor is a pile of silver that you assume were once eating utensils.

If the silver is taken back with the party, it can be melted down into a small block that can be sold for 25 sp.

### 7. Kitchen

Judging by the stench of burned and rotting food, and the remains of what were once counters and cabinets attached to the walls, you get the impression that this was once the wizard's kitchen.

Besides badly burned and rotting food, there will be nothing of value to be found within this room.

## Level 5

### 8. Laboratory

You seem to have found a section of the tower that was very nearly missed by the fire. Judging by the

layout of the furnishings, you assume that this was once the wizard's laboratory. This floor is divided into quarters. A wall runs from east to west, bisecting the circular chamber. Another wall runs north to south, but stops about seven feet short of the wall in this room.

The walls are lined with worktables, upon which sit an assortment of items such as glass beakers, jugs full of colored liquids, heaps of different types of powders, and some very odd-looking equipment. Also on the table, a large glass vessel contains a hideous-looking humanoid head suspended in a purplish liquid. Against the north wall stands a human skeleton on a rack. Next to that is a stuffed sheep. In the corner a set of shelves runs from floor to ceiling, stuffed with bags. Next to these a glass tube, much larger than a human, holds the body of a monster seemingly taken from the twisted imagination of a demented individual, also suspended in purple liquid. The body is a bizarre conglomeration of parts from different creatures. It has the lower torso and legs of a goat, which have been forced into a standing position, the upper torso of a man, though much larger. Long, chitinous arms end in hooks, and there is no head present. The sections of the monster seem to have been sewn together, though the flesh seems to have pulled together and healed.

Dissatisfied with the unwitting service of his zombies, Eldolan was in the process of creating a new monster to serve him. The head in the jug on the table is still alive, and is that of a bugbear. It poses no danger to the party provided that they don't open it up and trifle with it. Should they decide to do this it quickly becomes apparent that the head is still alive, and it isn't happy. If it is removed from the purple liquid for more than ten minutes it will die. If a PC puts their hand in the jug with the head, it will attempt to bite their hand. While Eldolan was able to get the body parts of his construct to come together in a life-like state, he had not finished connecting the head to the body.

If the party attaches the head of the bugbear to the construct in the tank, have them make an intelligence check against a DC of 25, or a Knowledge (Anatomy) check DC 15), to see if they can connect the two parts correctly. If the check is successful, the monstrous construct will animate, asking after the whereabouts of its master. If the party answers that its master is dead, it will attack the party. If the group answers anything else, it will go in search of the master. The head is aware of Eldolan, so it will not believe any party member trying to claim that it is its master. If the party lets it go without killing it, there is a 50% chance that they will encounter it again by the end of the adventure, when it will have

figured out the fate of its master, and it will attempt to punish the party for their deception. It will, under no circumstances, confront them on the top level of the tower unless the party leads it up there with them.

The skeleton in the corner is from a human, and is not animated. The materials on the table include powdered mandrake root, powdered silver, powdered copper, powdered gold, and powdered bone. The glass containers on the tables contain the following potions: (3) cure light wounds, (1) spider climb, (2) ghoul touch, (1) Delay Poison, (1) Levitate, (1) Water Breathing, and (1) Gaseous Form. If the party searches the shelving, they will find the spell components necessary for most spells levels 1-3 (including two pearls suitable for *identify* spells). They will also find an unlocked box with 4 potions of restoration inside. The gold dust is worth a total of 10 gp if melted down, or 15 gp as a spell component to other wizards. The silver dust is worth 20 sp melted down, or 30 if sold as a spell component. The copper dust is worth 10 cp, or 15 cp if sold as a spell component. If the party can get the body of the magical construct out of the tower intact, it will be worth up to 2,000 gp, but it would have to be sold to a client with a need for something of that nature. Additionally the living bugbear head may be worth up to 500 gp if sold to a similar client.

**Bugbear Head:** CR 1/4; small humanoid head; HD 1d8 (3); Init -1; Spd 1 ft (swim only); AC 10; Atk 1 bite +4 melee; DMG bite 1d4; Face/Reach 1 ft. by 1 ft./1 ft; AL CE; Fort +1; Ref +1; Wil +1; Str 2; Dex 2; Con 2; Int 10; Wis 10; Cha 9; Height 1 ½ Weight 25 lbs.

**Monstrous Construct:** CR 3; Medium Construct; HD 4d10 (20 hp); Init -1 (DEX); Spd 30 ft.; AC 19 (-1 DEX +10 natural); Atk 2 hooks +8 melee; DMG hooks 1d6+5; Face/Reach 5 ft. by 5 ft./ 5 ft; SA Berserk; SQ Construct/magic immunity, damage reduction 15/+1; AL N; Fort +3; Ref +2; Wil +3; Str 21; Dex 9; Con -; Int -; Wis 11; Cha 1; Height 7 ft.; Weight 310 lbs;

## Level 6

### 9. Music Room

Against the far wall of this circular room stands a strange contraption. Heavily blackened by soot, it seems to be some sort of machine made of dark, stained wood, ivory and bronze. Several fluted bronze pipes and tubes of various sizes rise from it nearly to the ceiling, their point of origin lost somewhere deep within the guts of the device. A thick layer of dust and



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spider webs covers the apparatus, testifying to a long period of disuse.

An old, very threadbare, circular rug (once colorful but now faded with age) covers the floor. Along the walls hang equally ancient and threadbare banners depicting various woodland creatures.

Also, three fire zombies shamble towards you.

The fire zombies have been left here so Eldolan could fetch them to the roof should he need them. They were instructed to attack anyone within the tower other than himself. They will attack the party upon their entry into the room.

The device is an ancient pipe organ left centuries ago by the previous occupants of the tower. Eldolan had no interest in the object and had left it undisturbed. Beneath the rug is a circular pressure plate connected to mechanical apparatus, which activates the organ when weight is placed on it. After one round, anyone stepping on the rug will cause the organ to begin braying and wailing, spewing forth a cacophonous, ear-splitting clamor.

The organ is badly out of tune and will continue playing as long as anyone is on the rug. Though it may seem to be of little worth, if the party can remove it whole from the tower, they can sell it to a collector for up to 1,000gp. If they somehow manage to clean, repair and tune the organ, it is worth 7,000gp, though the process will cost them approximately 2,000 gp in work and replacement parts. The object weighs approximately 1500 lbs. and takes a combined strength of at least 40 to move. It can be removed from the tower with great effort, good planning and proper equipment (a block and tackle, rope, etc.).

**EL 3**

**Fire Zombies:** HP 7, 8, 8.

## Level 7 Top Floor

### 10. Observatory

When the party enters this room, read the following to the players.

A massive room at the top of the tower; the once vaulted ceiling here has collapsed inward, revealing much of the sky overhead. In the center of the room stands a massive bronze telescope pointed towards a gaping hole in the ceiling. A great deal of additional bronze equipment is attached to the bottom of the

telescope. Several levers, wheels, and pulleys are attached in disparate locations. Many piles of burned lumber lay in tumbled, ashen heaps on the floor, several still smoking. Near the southern side of the room, underneath a pile of blackened roofing, lies the body of a dead... human (you think) dressed in green robes. It's face and body are burned beyond recognition. Three smoldering corpses stand at the ready, just across the room from the stairway.

Eldolan was a believer in the mystical powers inherent in heavenly bodies. He was an avid astronomer, and he'd had the roof of the tower reconstructed to retract in order to make viewing the sky possible. In its current state, many of the pulleys will still work, but the roof will refuse to move from its current position, other than perhaps to collapse some more.

The corpses are fire zombies, and they will attack anyone entering the room. The wizard also concealed a flesh golem behind the secret door on this level with the express instructions to attack anyone besides himself or the zombies that entered this room. The flesh golem was badly damaged in the fire, but it will still fight, acting on the last set of instructions it was given.

**EL 5**

**Fire Zombies:** HP 8, 8, 9

**Flesh Golem (1):** CR 3; Large Construct; HD 9d10 (35); Init -1; Spd 30 ft (can't run); AC 15; Atk 2 slams +10 melee; DMG slam 1d8+3; Face/Reach 5 ft. by 5 ft./10 ft; SA Berserk; SQ Construct, magic immunity, damage reduction 15/+1; AL N; Fort +3; Ref +2; Wil +3; Str 16; Dex 9; Con -; Int -; Wis 11; Cha 1; Height 8'; Weight 300lbs.

#### For the Rules Lawyer:

While it is true that the Flesh Golem is supposed to be a tougher monster based on published D20 rules, this particular flesh golem is much weaker because of the damage it sustained in the fire. It has lost a great deal of its strength and health, weakening its attacks and lowering its hit point total.

Underneath a pile of fallen roofing within this room is the wand of *stone to flesh* the party will need to turn the dryads back to their natural form. If the party succeeds in a *search* check (DC 15) they will spot the wand. It will not be easy to get to however, as there are several hundred pounds of charred wood laying on top of it. The blackened wood will require a nearly impossible strength check to lift (DC 35). The party may decide to chop away

at the wood until they have reached it (*charred wood*: hardness 5; HP 60). They may also command the ferret they found in level 2 to retrieve it. The ferret will be small enough to fit through the narrow opening and retrieve it without a problem. The party may also make use of various spells such as *unseen servant* to retrieve it, though *mage hand* cannot, since the item is magical.

## Concluding the Adventure

As soon as the party has found the dryads and turned them to flesh, the adventure is essentially over. The six dryads will go back to their trees, three of which will still be completely intact. Niederial will be ecstatic to see her sisters alive, and will immediately release Ancarohir. The dryads will then dimension door to the nearby lake where the elder water elemental lives. The group of them has a special skill that allows them to combine their charm abilities into something completely different – the ability to command elementals. A total of five of the dryads have to be present in order to use this ability. The water elemental will be dispatched to battle the flame hive-queen. Depending on the level of the characters participating in the adventure, you may wish for the water elemental to fail in its efforts to destroy the flame hive-queen, and leave the cleanup for the party. This is not recommended for weaker parties.

The flame hive-queen itself will be found near the center of the burned area. Its fiery offspring will be collecting whatever fuel hasn't been consumed already by the fire, and bringing it to the flame hive-queen, keeping it at the center of a great bonfire as it gives birth to more fiery spawn. When the fuel from an area becomes completely consumed, the flame hive-queen will move to a new area where it will build up an enormous bonfire once again.

Ancarohir, once released, will return to the elven village. As the dryads are summoning the elder water elemental, the elves will gather *en-force* to combat the creatures created by the flame hive-queen. They will use their remaining *wands of ice storm* to cut through the flames of the forest fire, and fight the creatures they find there. If the party (or DM) wishes, they may return with Ancarohir, going with the elves as they seek to vanquish the fire creatures. If you opt to end the adventure in this way, roll 1 random encounter every half hour of game time for six game hours following the water elementals defeat of the flame hive-queen, using the *fire elemental types* table found in the **Entering the Forest** chapter.

**Water Elemental, elder (1):** CR 11; Huge Elemental; HD 24d8+120 (228 hp); Init +6; Spd 20 ft., swim 90 ft.; AC 23; Atk slam +25/+20/+15/+10 melee; DMG 2d10+13; Face/Reach 10ft. by 5ft./ 15ft.; SA Water Mastery, Drench, Vortex; SQ Elemental, damage reduction 15/+3, fire immunity; AL N; Fort +19; Ref +14; Wil +8 ; Str 28; Dex 22 ; Con 21; Int 6; Wis 11; Cha 11; Skills: Listen +26, spot +26 ; Feats: Cleave, Great Cleave, Improved Critical, (slam), Power Attack, Sunder.

## Saving the Dryad's Trees

The party can gain some extra experience by saving the dryad's trees. Four of the trees were badly damaged when Eldolan split them apart. While this did not kill them, it weakened them badly. To this day, the oaks are barely hanging on to life. Niederial and three of the other dryads will continue to decline rapidly as the result of the condition of their trees if they are not restored. The party may save these trees by using the *restoration* potions on them, if they were found in Eldolan's lab. Because of the symbiotic relationship between the dryads and the trees, when the potion is consumed by the dryad, the tree will recover to a large extent, and vice versa. The dryads will become youthful and beautiful again within 1d6 hours after drinking the potion. They may also restore the trees by recruiting priests from the somewhat distant city of Gateway that are capable of casting *restore*. The party will earn 300 experience points for every oak they restore to health.

### Returning to Foresthall

When the fire is extinguished and the village of Foresthall is no longer in danger, the party will be looked to as heroes. Darius Brandenburg will be ecstatic upon their return. If the party spoke with him earlier, and they talked him into offering them a reward, he will gladly pay it. He will also offer to write them a letter that, when presented to the sovereign, will nominate them for knighthood within the city-state of Gateway, though he does not mention that a period of “squire’s service” would be required, if they get accepted. As a token of their appreciation, the town will offer to let them stay at the inn free of charge, and the taverns in town will provide them with a night’s carousing for free.

### Continuing the Adventure

This module is intended as a possible lead-in to the first series of modules collectively entitled *White Robes – Black Hearts* by Dark Portal Games, in which the party will fight to free the conquered people in a war-torn kingdom. If they decide to follow up on Sir Brandenburg’s suggestion that they become knights, they will undoubtedly have to survive several trials. If they make it to knighthood, they will then likely be sent on several quests, one of which will undoubtedly be to go to Calrendia to help free the people of that land.



Appendix I: Monsters**Fire Zombie****Medium (Undead)****Hit Dice:** 1d12+1 (7 hp)**Initiative:** -1 (Dex)**Speed:** 30 ft.**AC:** 11 (-1 Dex, +2 natural)**Attacks:** Slam +2 melee**Damage:** Slam 1d6+1**Face/Reach:** 5 ft. by 5 ft. / 5 ft.**Special Attacks:** Burn**Special Qualities:** Undead, immune to fire, partial actions only**Saves:** Fort +0, Ref -1, Will +3**Abilities:** Str 13, Dex 8, Con -, Int -, Wis 10, Cha 1**Skills:** Listen +X, Spot +X**Feats:** Toughness**Climate/Terrain:** Any land**Organization:** Gang (2-5), squad (6-10), or mob (11-20)**Challenge Rating:** 1**Treasure:** None**Alignment:** Always neutral**Advancement Range:** 2-3 HD (Medium)

**Description:** The Fire Zombie is a sub-type of medium zombie created by the combination of magical experimentation and an accident involving an out of control fire. Since their creation was an accident, there are only a very small number of them in existence. Attempts have been made to capture them for study in an effort to replicate them. Although physically weaker because of the deteriorating effect the fire on has had on their decaying corpses, their attack is more deadly than that of regular zombies. Their appearance is much like that of regular zombies except the heat within them has turned their corpse charcoal black. Flames dance in their eyes, and they exude a cloud of smoke wherever they go. Their hands are alight with flame at all times.

**Combat:** They use the same combat techniques as is found in Core Rulebook III.

**Undead:** Immune to Mind-influencing effects, poison, sleep, paralysis, stunning, and disease. Not subject to critical hits, subdual damage, ability damage, energy drain, or death from massive damage.

**Burn:** Those hit by the Fire Zombie's attacks must succeed at a ref save (DC 12) or catch fire. The flame burns for 1d4 rounds, inflicting 1d6 points of damage. A burning creature can take move-equivalent action to put out the flame.

**Partial Action:** Fire Zombies have poor reflexes and can perform only partial actions. Thus they can move or attack, but can only do both if they charge (a partial charge).

\* This monster is a variation on the zombie, as presented by **Wizards of the Coast**, and made available through the Open Gaming License.

## Flame hive queen

**Huge Elemental (Fire)**

**Hit Dice:** 13d8+20 (80 hp)

**Initiative:** +6 (+2 Dex, +4 Improved initiative)

**Speed:** 20 ft

**AC:** 21 (-2 size, +2 Dex, +11 Natural)

**Attacks:** 1 Bite +15 melee, 2 slam +15 melee

**Damage:** Bite 2d6+7; slam 2d6+7

**Face/Reach:** 10 ft. by 10 ft. / 15 ft.

**Special Attacks:** Grapple, Burn

**Special Qualities:** Elemental, damage reduction 10/+2 fire subtype

**Saves:** Fort +10, Ref +11, Will +5

**Abilities:** Str 24, Dex 14, Con 20, Int 15, Wis 11, Cha 10

**Skills:** Gather Information +6, Intimidate +18, Listen +6, Search +8, Sense Motive +18, Spot +6

**Feats:** Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Improved Initiative, Power Attack

**Climate/Terrain:** Any land and Underground

**Organization:** 1-4

**Challenge Rating:** 9

**Treasure:** Standard

**Alignment:** Usually lawful evil

**Advancement Range:** 16-23 HD (Huge); 24-30 HD (Gigantic)

**Description:** Originating from the elemental plane of fire, Flame hive-queens are incredibly rare and very feared on the prime material plane. They can give birth to any creatures from the plane of fire up to one size smaller than themselves. Only once per year it may generate a younger Flame hive-queen. They don't typically choose to leave their home plane, but sometimes they do find themselves summoned by those who would use them for their sheer destructive power and their ability to bring forth other fire-based monsters.

The Flame hive-queen is an enormous creature made from a magma-like material, with an exoskeleton that bears a remarkable resemblance to a fire-ant. It has an enlarged abdomen, from which it lays its offspring. It tends not to move around a great deal, preferring instead to find a nice burning place where it can produce its spawn.

**Combat:** Flame hive-queens prefer to let their offspring fight for them. If pressed into a fight, they will attempt to bite their opponents, causing 2d6+7 points of damage plus burn damage. They will also use their arms for a slam attack, causing 2d6 points of damage, plus grapple and burn attacks. If a Flame hive-queen feels its life is threatened it will have a preplanned route of escape.

**Grapple:** Characters hit by a slam attack must make a reflex saving throw against a DC of 17, or be grappled, which will inflict an additional 1d6+7 points of squeeze damage per round. They will also be automatically affected by burning as described below. The victim may only escape by severing the appendage that holds them, which has 3d8 hit points, or by attempting to break free, in which case the victim and the Flame hive-queen will engage in a strength contest.

**Burn:** Those hit by any one of the Flame hive-queen's attacks must succeed at a reflex save (DC 22) or catch fire. The flame burns for 1d4 rounds, inflicting 1d6 points of damage. A grappled character takes this damage automatically. A burning creature can take move-equivalent action to put out the flame. Creatures hitting a Flame hive-queen with natural weapons or unarmed attacks take fire damage as though hit by the Flame hive-queen's attack, and also catch fire unless they succeed at a reflex save.

**Spell Like abilities:** The Flame hive-queen can Heal itself once per day, but only if it is near a source of fire.

**Appendix II: Open Gaming License**

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# Dead Fire

The wizard Eldolan Darkbough is dead, but his legacy lives on. The village of Foresthall is under siege from a horrendous forest fire. The gold elves use their limited resources to combat the blaze, but their most powerful and wizened wizard has gone missing. Somewhere a lonely and tormented dryad holds the key to the survival of all in the path of the raging blaze.”

**Dead Fire is an adventure for 4-6 characters of 1-2nd level.**

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