

# ADVENTURE FRAMEWORK

Collection #2



S J Grodzicki

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# CREDITS

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**Websites** **Low Fantasy Gaming:** <https://lowfantasygaming.com/>

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# HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

Harken and glad meeting, traveller.

You hold in your hands a compilation of fourteen **Colour Adventure Frameworks** (no's 47-60, ie all of *Pickpocket Press*' colour adventures as at Aug 2020) providing a range of short, independent adventures set in common locations such as towns, mountains, jungles, forests, lakes, swamps, and plains.

Specifically designed for low prep, improvised play, each framework comes with hooks or rumours, a core scenario, NPC details & statistics, random encounters, and colour art. Thirteen of the adventures include location maps.

Armed with this compilation, filling your sandbox with small to medium sized adventures has never been easier. Browse through the frameworks, throw out a few hooks, and let the players bite where they may. Whichever direction they take, you'll be ready to handle it with aplomb.

These adventures use the *Low Fantasy Gaming* system, and are set in the *Midlands Low Magic Sandbox Setting* by default. They are easily adapted to other d20 based systems and medieval worlds.

## What's Missing

Consistent with *Low Fantasy Gaming*'s open world philosophy, there are no level guides for adventures. If your intended system does not include a *Party Retreat* rule of some kind, you might consider implementing one. Some adventures are clearly more difficult than others however, and ballpark "danger" guides are provided below.

Finally, frameworks do not include "read aloud" text. Every time a GM reads boxed text, an ad-lib fairy dies, and we've too much blood on our hands already. Paraphrasing and natural speech from the GM keeps players guessing what's pre-planned, and what's off-the-cuff-I-totally-planned-that awesome. And we wants that awesome, precious. We wants it.

No	ADVENTURE	PAGE	SITE	DANGER	SUMMARY
1	<b>Blight Over Brynderwold</b>	6	Town	Low	<i>Pinkscab Palsy</i> is spreading throughout the isolated outpost of <i>Brynderwold</i> , bringing debilitation and death to inhabitants. Will the party brave the sewers, defeat the plague bearing <i>Skratt</i> , and save the settlement?
2	<b>Tower of Baal</b>	22	Plains & Mountains	Low to Moderate	The <i>Tower of Baal</i> is a monument to fallen warriors of old. Abandoned for long centuries, the dead have begun to rise, resuming their ancient patrols and threatening the nearby outpost of <i>Fronbury</i> . Can the necromantic disturbance be stopped?
3	<b>Nest Beyond The Stars</b>	34	Jungle	Moderate	<i>Master Ballard</i> , scholar and artefact hunter, requires an escort to search for the <i>Quotaal Ziggurat</i> in the <i>Suurat Jungle</i> . Will the PCs locate the ziggurat, plunder its treasures, and keep their employer alive? Not if the reptile gods have anything to say about it.

4	<b>Night at the Green Goblin</b>	46	City	Low to Moderate	A flexible, one night adventure site as opposed to an overarching plot scenario. Activities include gathering info/rumours, fencing goods, acquiring illegal gear, gambling, recruiting hirelings, drinking contests, duelling, or good old fashioned brawling. Additional hooks: (i) hunting for a merchant spy, (ii) deciding what to do with the <i>Amulet of Agometh</i> , and (iii) dealing with an (inadvertently conjured) demon.
5	<b>Assault on Dunmark</b>	61	Plains & Moors	Moderate to High	<i>Lord Foster</i> is marching on <i>Dunmark</i> after one of the <i>Celdwyns</i> killed his young son in a drunken duel. A Mass Battle scenario fighting over an isolated keep, nestled between <i>Drelnor Forest</i> and the <i>Trackless Moors</i> .
6	<b>A Creeping Tide</b>	76	Lake	Moderate	In the small lakeside outpost of <i>Saxford</i> , reclusive inhabitants are engaging in increasingly strange, hivemind like behaviour. Can the PCs intervene before the outlanders summon a tsunami that will destroy them all?
7	<b>The Astravali</b>	89	Plains, Forests & Moors	Moderate	The <i>Astravali</i> , a magical card deck of the First Age, has been stolen by agents of the <i>Ordo Malefactos</i> . A cross country chase across forests, plains and moors follows, attempting to catch the thieves before they reach southern <i>Melek</i> . If the PCs retrieve the deck, they may each draw a card as part of their reward...
8	<b>Rise of the Starborn</b>	104	Lake	Moderate to High	<i>Lady Shae</i> , a wealthy metal merchant hires the PCs to investigate the disappearance of her son, a navy guard on <i>Arran Isle</i> . <i>Fishlings</i> and an ancient <i>Aboleth</i> await.
9	<b>Well of Demons</b>	118	Mountains	Moderate	<i>Sister Millicent</i> , of <i>Northgate's Order of the Anointed</i> , is seeking mercenaries to escort her into the <i>Sunstone Ranges</i> to find an abandoned observatory. Records suggest the complex was lost to <i>Skorn</i> raiders. In truth <i>Demons</i> were responsible, and linger still.
10	<b>Shadow Over Wistwood</b>	131	Forest	Moderate	A forest trek and dungeon crawl, with the PCs exploring a half flooded keep, searching for a magical crown... but is the treasure boon, bane, or both? Sometimes it's hard to tell.
11	<b>Fens of Mölot Baat</b>	143	Swamplands	Moderate to High	A marshlands point crawl, with the PCs scouring ancient ruins to rescue a captive of the <i>White Gator</i> barbarian tribe. But as will quickly become clear, worse than thuels lurk



					within these fog addled wetlands ( <i>Blue Fey</i> and <i>Moor Trolls</i> , to say the least).
12	<b>Cliffs of Elletarn</b>	156	Plains & Mountains	Moderate to High	A mini sandbox across a series of clifftop plateaus and low grasslands as the PCs hunt for a <i>White Griffon</i> . Sites include a haunted tower, barbarian encampment, giant ant colony, skorn village, and griffon eyries.
13	<b>Prophet of the Pit People</b>	172	Mountains	Moderate to High	A dying cartographer seeks a reading from an <i>Urgot</i> soothsayer living in the <i>Ironhull Mountains</i> . But before a reading may be taken, the party must face the <i>Four Trials of Belmogg</i> . Gladiator battles, blood sucking <i>Dorovyr</i> , sapient <i>Blood Roaches</i> and more lay in wait.
14	<b>Winterwold</b>	194	Forest	Moderate to High	The party stumbles into a secret forest enclave, filled with elven undead seeking vengeance against serpentmen who have (by coincidence) also entered the hidden domain at the same time. Can the party hold out long enough to undo the magical dome imprisoning them in <i>Winterwold</i> , or will the seemingly endless stream of <i>Flesh Feasters</i> devour them?



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# BLIGHT OVER BRYNDERWOLD



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## BLIGHT OVER BRYNDERWOLD

*Pinkscab Palsy* has struck the lake side outpost of *Brynderwold*, causing severe weakness or death in the afflicted. The Burgomaster is at his wit's end searching for the source, and is offering good coin to investigators to root out the cause, and cleanse the town.

The hitherto unknown disease is normally propagated by vermin and their fleas or mites (body fluids, bites, faeces, etc). In this instance however, the palsy is also being spread by a tribe of humanoid ratfolk known as *Skratt* (hiding in the sewers by day, and infiltrating the streets by night).

### Troubling Times

*Brynderwold*, a longstanding mining and fishing outpost on the eastern shores of *Lake Argos*, is in trouble. Protected from most threats by towering cliffs and treacherous waters, the settlement's woes began four months ago, when a number of the residents contracted *Pinkscab Palsy*.

Despite compulsory quarantining, cleansing by fire, and *Apothecary Benceini's* (Karok albino, 5'4", often donning his beaked contagion mask and gloves) careful ministrations, the disease somehow continues to spread, corrupting the inhabitants at an increasing rate.

*Brynderwold's* leader, *Burgomaster Shand*, is growing desperate, and has offered 400 gold crowns to anyone who can solve the mystery and rid the outpost of contamination.

### Pinkscab Palsy

*Pinkscab Palsy* manifests as a red, irritating rash that swiftly extends across the body in twenty four hours. Scratching leads to oozing scabs, until the third day manifests as severe muscle weakness, dragging gait, and involuntary tremors (1d6 Str and Dex loss, half movement rate).

Previously healthy adults generally recover in four to six weeks, but children, the infirm, and the elderly sometimes fail to pull through, succumbing to critical organ failure.



The PCs might become involved in this adventure for the gold, because a friend or relative recently died to the disease, or because they get attacked on the streets at night (see *Street Encounter 10*).



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## The Skratt

The *Skratt* are 5 ft, rat like humanoids with rodent heads, furred bodies, and bald tails. They move on two or four limbs as required, communicating in low chirps, high chitters and aggressive hisses, baring yellowed claws and fangs when threatened.

Like most vermin, the skratt are disease laden, skulking scavengers, careful to avoid physical danger unless necessary. Once engaged however, the ratmen fight with desperate fury, exploiting any obvious weakness in their foe. The skratt take no prisoners, and leave no survivors, preferring to eat slain enemies whenever possible (whilst technically omnivores, they prefer carrion).

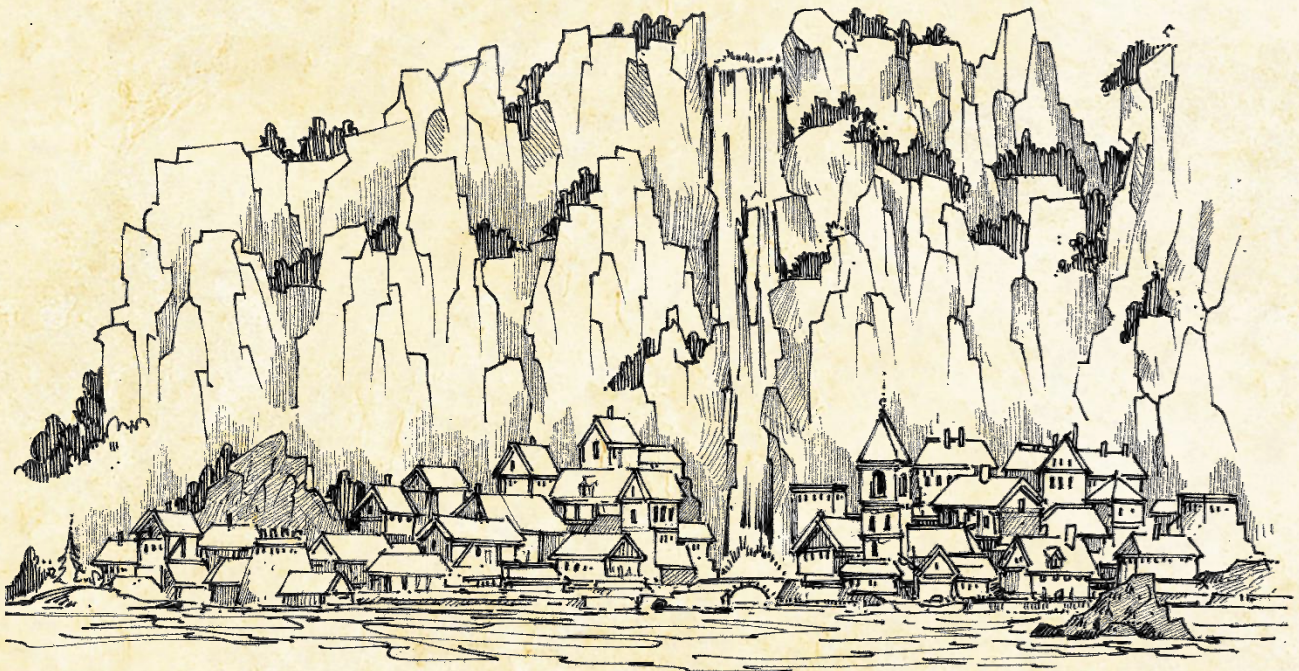
For just over four months, the skratt have been living in the sewers beneath *Brynderwold*, hiding and sleeping during the day. Between midnight and dawn the ratmen emerge for brief forays above ground, spreading the disease about the complex, hoping for more dead to feed upon.

**Skratt**, AC 11, HD 1, Bite 1d6 or weapon, 19: the *skratt* uses its tail to trip the target, S10 D13 C8 I9 P13 W7 Ch8, L5, Mv 40 ft inc climb & swim. A *skratt's* bite has a 50% chance of infecting the target with disease (Con check resists, in this adventure *Pinkscab Palsy*). *Skratt* see as well in darkness as in light.

## Brynderwold

By any standard, *Brynderwold* has never been a happy place, but its present mood is palpably glum. A week of unrelenting rain, mud churned streets and frostbitten winds, compounded by growing fears of contagion, have spun a depressing pall over the entire community.

The chance of random infection by a PC (via flea bites etc) is relatively low; 5% per week that they remain at the outpost. PCs that purposefully keep to themselves, don't drink the water, etc automatically avoid infection for the first month.



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Most of the 300 strong town is presently clear of the palsy, but the numbers rise each week (30 last fortnight, increasing to 37 last week). The sick are quarantined in Area 13, the dead burnt and cast into the sewers (eaten by the skratt as carrion) or buried (a handful of bodies have been dug up by the ratfolk, see Area 5).

### Clues about the Disease

The town's sole apothecary and surgeon, *Benceini*, is flummoxed by the plague and unable to rein it in, despite all manner of herbal tinctures, skin flensing, blood leeching, and fire cleansing. Nothing works.

*Benceini* is happy to chat with the PCs whilst he is around (see *Street Encounter 2*), but has precious little to tell, except that his inquiries failed to uncover the source, and his focus is now on quarantining and treating the ill (truth be told, he made very limited inquiries in the sewers, and the *Skratt* lured him away from their base).


*Benceini* recommends rechecking the *Half Stump Inn* (Area 2), Town Hall (Area 11) and Marketplace (Area 12) as areas of high traffic, along with the Stables (Area 3, in case of animal infection), and the Sewers (exposure to filth and "foul odours" being widely accepted as common sources of taint and disease).

### Street Encounters

As the party explores *Brynderwold*, the GM may call for a street encounter at any time. Alternatively there is a 30% chance of an encounter every 12 hours. If an encounter occurs, roll 1d12:

1. 1d6 *Guards*, led by *Rodric* (5'9", freckled, bitter & mirthless, but dependable, carries a *silvered sword*) harass the party for their weapons licences, and whether they have registered with the Town Hall (Area 12).



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2. Word reaches the PCs that *Benceini* (Area 10) has been murdered in his home (or perhaps the PCs hear his death scream). 1d4 *Skratt* broke in and killed him (a targeted attack, after they spied him treating the infected). The ratmen were forced to flee before they could drag his corpse away.
  3. The *Overseer, Burgomaster Shand* (Area 9) is out on the street, en route to a meeting or running a personal errand of some kind. This might be a chance for the party to ask questions or introduce themselves.
  4. A dozen chickens burst from a side street and towards the PCs. An eight year old child named *Rudy* (dark haired, energetic, has a cold) is chasing them. It's clear the fowl are much faster than Rudy and about to separate down different laneways. At the GM's option, Rudy might be the *Sergeant Kaden's* daughter (Area 1).
  5. A pickpocket named *Scylla* (Nydissian female, dark skin/hair, attractive, baker's apron) "accidentally" trips and drops a basket of loaves as she walks by the PCs. If a PC helps to pick them up, she thanks them profusely while attempting to pick their pocket (Dex 14). If caught out, she might confess being one of *Argyle's crew* (Area 13), and that she has to meet her quota or *Argyle* will punish her (whether this is true, or a con, is up to the GM).
  6. A *Priestess of Argona* named *Mabel* (50's, grey hair, star & shield motif on robe, walking stick) takes an interest in the new comers, introducing herself and welcoming them to the outpost.
  7. A middle aged woodcutter is very drunk, slumped against the side of a building, a bouquet of wild flowers scattered beside him. If questioned, *Umfrey* reveals that his infant son *Ethan* died to *Pinkscab Palsy* two weeks earlier.
  8. The weather turns even worse, a driving downpour of needling rain and jaw clenching wind. The streets swiftly empty and shops/stalls close for the day.
  9. A downcast woman in a brightly coloured dress (a rarity it seems in *Brynderwold*) is making her way down the street, eyes downcast. If queried, *Laurana* explains that her husband is infected with palsy, and she is going to see if she can visit him in Quarantine (Area 14).
  10. 3d4 young, inebriated miners are itching to teach someone a lesson after gambling their wages away. They choose the most outlandish looking PC and try to goad them into a brawl.
  11. *Badger* (male, 40's, bald, stubble on chin, sly grin), a bard of sorts, offers to make a song about the party's endeavours... If they'll just buy some of his famous bug mince pies; "*A healthy lunch packed with crunch*", as his mom always said, bless 'er soul.
  12. Growing ever bolder, 2d6 *Skratt* attack the PCs sometime between dusk and dawn. If the PCs are at an inn or similar, the ratmen scale the building and enter via the roof or windows to reach their bedroom. The targeting is coincidence.



### Area 1 - Guard Barracks

2d6+10 guards are on duty here at all times, with an array of weapons at their disposal, including heavy crossbows, fire pots, and a wheeled ballista. *Sergeant Kaden* (3 HD, 6 ft, burly 40s male in half plate, shouter, holds grudges) greets outsiders with a strong dose of veteran suspicion. *Captain Hellinger*, recently slain by *Red Scale* raiders (barbarians), is yet to be replaced.

**Guards**, AC 16 (heavy chain and shield), HD 1, Spear 1d6+2 (two handed), Sword 1d8+1, Longbow 1d8+1, or Heavy Crossbow 2d8+1, 19: as weapon, S13 D10 C11 I10 P12 W10 Ch10, L4, Mv 30 ft.

### Area 2 - The Half Stump

The *Half Stump* is a two storey wooden inn with a large common room, fireplace, and a handful of small, clean upstairs guest quarters. The menu standouts are seared trout, mutton & beets, and pork with potato surprise.

A few bottles of *Magnar's Fist* (pale ale, crisp, highly potent) might be available if the owner *Ethel* takes a liking to the party (5'8" ft, slim, late 20s female, Int 13, Cha 14, limp, sarcastic but generous, enjoys trading good natured insults, "Yeah, better my gimpy leg than your gimpy face, am I right?"). At least 3d6 residents are here until late, drinking, socialising and complaining.

PCs hunting rumours might hear the following (or GM's custom rumours). Roll 1d8:

1. A winged monstrosity lairs in a cave hidden behind the cliffside waterfall (true: a *Dire Bat*). Amongst the bones scattered within is 1 x Carry Loot.
2. There's something wrong with *Benceini*, the apothecary. He wanders the streets at night, lingering by the lake, as if in some kind of dream (untrue; he just had far too much drink/pipeweed that night).
3. The Lake Ruins (Area 15) are home to a giant reptile (true: a *Giant Crocodile*). Some say it's big enough to sink a caravel (untrue).
4. *Giant Rats* are breeding in the sewers beneath *Brynderwold*. If they aren't dealt with soon, the place will be infested with them (true, see *Sewers*).
5. *Sergeant Kaden* is planning to arrest *Burgomaster Shand* for fraud and treason (partially false, *Kaden* knows nothing of *Shand's* fraud, see Area 9, but might take action if he did).
6. Some manner of furred beast, walking on hind legs, was seen on the docks a week ago. It was skulking about a ship a few hours before dawn. When spotted, it dove into the water and disappeared (true: a *skratt* scout).

7. A witch is afoot in *Brynderwold*, hiding in plain sight amongst the outlanders, her sorcery responsible for the plague. The curse won't be lifted until she is ousted and burnt at the stake (false).
8. The copper mine has unearthed a 3 ft wide sink hole in one of the deep shafts, growing larger by the week. Miners say strange noises emanate from within (possibly true - see Area 7).

### Area 3 - Stables

Large, half empty stables house half a dozen horses, 2d6 hounds and a single pig. The hay loft might be used as sleeping quarters in a pinch. *Stablemaster Asger* (Fighter 2, 16 hp, 6' Varnori/Viking, blond haired, beard, tattoos, criminal brand under left ear, short tempered, bullying manner) sleeps next door, keeping an ear out for thieves or vagrants.

### Area 4 - Domiciles

These multi level wooden buildings are typical of *Brynderwold* homes; timber & white walls, cramped, locked and/or barred, with curtains drawn. The glow of lanterns and fireplaces can be seen at night. 1d6 outlanders live in each domicile.

**Outlander**, AC 11 (leathers), HD 1, Hammer or Shortsword 1d6 or Short bow 1d6, 19: as weapon, S10 D10 C11 I10 P11 W10 Ch10, LA, Mv 30 ft.

### Area 5 - Great Falls Graveyard

A roaring waterfall cascades down the cliffs here, neatly dividing *Brynderwold* into eastern and western banks. Winding caves behind the downpour lead to series of catacombs where some of the town's dead are buried (others choose to be cremated, or released on flaming barges into the lake).

A thorough canvas of the area reveals two recent graves were dug up and the bodies carried away. An Int (Wilderness Lore) check confirms at least one set of bipedal footprints were clawed (*skratt* stole the bodies and dove into the water, making their way to the sewers to devour the corpses in peace). A handful of sentimental trinkets (no gp value) were left behind.

### Area 6 - Temple of the Starmaiden

1d4+1 Priestesses of *Argona* (Goddess of health, wealth, happiness, and hope) tend to the only temple in the complex, a large stone church with a tall belltower. *Argona's* shield and star icon is emblazoned above the entry doors. The vast majority of *Brynderwold's* population attends services each week. *Mother Jenora* (5'9" female, S14, Will 14, dark haired, heavy set, pious and protective) heads the order, and is often out and about tending to her flock.

### Area 7 - Mines & Forge

A small copper mine operates here, digging shafts into the cliffs of the *Ironhull Mountains*. In recent times, a sinkhole appeared in one of the deep tunnels, possibly as a result of recent tremors. The sinkhole is growing larger each week, and is now approx 3 ft wide. At least one miner swears to hearing strange noises emanating from it.

Mine Boss *Wo Gong*<sup>1</sup> (6' Asian/Shenzu, S15, C15, long moustache, bulging frame, practical, well mannered, favourite phrase "*You disappoint me, wo mai*") wants access to the rich copper veins beyond, and has placed sturdy planks across the hole for now. What lurks below (if anything) is a matter for the GM.

Adjacent to the mines is the forge, run by *Mastersmith Raffbogen* (4'6" dwarf male, standoffish, alcoholic), a "free dwarf" and genuine smithing prodigy (tools, weapons, armour, etc).

<sup>1</sup> Brother of *Lu Shen*, owner of the *Yellow Lotus* (Midlands p.137).

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*Raffbogen* despises Karoks (including the apothecary) and has an arrangement with *Burgomaster Shand* that ensures against any attempts to return him to his “owners” in *Dol-Karok*. *Raff* recalls some of the old legends, told to him by his great grandmother, and might know the location of some lost Holds, ripe for exploration.

### Area 8 - Watch Towers

1d6+1 watchmen man each tower, keeping a lookout for pirates, barbarians, beastmen and other obvious threats. Each tower includes a stash of 2d6 javelins, 1d4 crossbows, and 2d4 fire pots. Prisoner cells are located below ground.

### Area 9 - Overseer's Residence

*Burgomaster Shand* controls the settlement, empowered by a partnership of merchants to act as outpost *Justicar*, and ensure the mining and fishing operations continue to meet caravan schedules.

*Shand* is presently up to his earholes in problems, including: constant *skorn* raiders, opportunistic pirates, the *Pinkscab Palsy* plague, worrying rumours from the mines (Area 7), giant croc concerns (Area 15), grave robbers behind the falls (Area 5), and talk of strange sightings on the docks (Area 13). Generally speaking, he has no time for fortune hunters, but will gladly put expendable warriors to task to solve the palsy mystery (for 400 gold crowns on completion, directing them to the *Exchequer* in Area 12). He has 1 x 5 HD Lair Treasure in a strongbox (bolted, double locked).

**Shand**, AC 11, HD 3, Sword 1d8+3 (two hands), 19: 1d4 *Guardsmen* appear to assist *Shand*, S10 D15 C11 I14 P11 W16 Ch15, L6, Mv 30 ft. *Shand* has advantage on persuasion related checks and speaks a bit of everything (Bardic Knowledge). He may use the *Inspire Greatness* Bard ability twice per combat.



*Shand* (6'2" male, dark goatee, aura of gravitas, efficient, spectacles, never without his hat) is a reasonable warrior but is most respected for his outstanding leadership. Loved by his allies and hated by his foes, the *Overseer* is generally fair but is growing increasingly jaded, and hard on those who break the rules. In recent months, *Shand* has begun skimming ore from the mines, turning a tidy profit with smugglers in Area 13. The *Burgomaster* believes the outpost can't last forever, and means to secure his future before it collapses.

### Area 10 - Apothecary

*Apothecary Benceini* resides in a relatively large home which includes an attached infirmary. Currently 1d6 recent infected are impounded here, the front door barred from the outside, with 1d3 guards on duty. *Benceini* has access to 1d3 healing kits and 1d4 anti-toxins if the PCs can demonstrate a need for them.

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### Area 11 - Marketplace

The main cluster of shops and services are located here, including a general store (clothes, lighting, some foods, etc), growers' market, fish market, leatherworker, weaver, herbalist, and brothel. The seven owners collectively refer to themselves as "the marketplace" and wield considerable political clout. At the GM's option, the party might pick up a rumour or two here (see Area 2).

### Area 12 - Town Hall

The town hall is a large two storey stone structure with an internal balcony, able to hold up to 400 people. The town's coat of arms (a black kite shield with copper anvil) is displayed on a large tapestry above a raised stage.

A small office off to one side belongs to *Exchequer Sarsi* (6' female, skinny, expensive garb, honest and shrewd with a piercing gaze), who manages the outpost's taxes, licences, bounties, etc, and their records. The *Exchequer* is quite meticulous in her role, and has begun to notice discrepancies in some of the mining records (due to the *Overseer's* fraud).

At the GM's option, the party might be required to register their details at the Town Hall when they arrive, and/or pay for weapons or "treasure hunting" licences (either flat fees, or a tithe).

Notices regarding bounties are posted here, presently 5 silver florins for thuels (barbarians), *skorn* (beastmen), or pirates, and 2 gold crowns per *giant rat*. More monstrous trophies are subject to negotiation. Any bounties the party might end up claiming will be paid to them by *Sarsi*.

### Area 13 - Docks

*Brynderwold's* docks are fog shrouded until early morning, but with the recent poor weather, the mists linger all day. *Harbour Keeper Rummage* (5'9" male, dark hair, beard, amiable and efficient, never without his nameless hound) manages the area, including the warehouses and security.

A smuggler from way back, *Rummage* has never been shy about making extra coin on the side, and currently has an arrangement with the *Overseer* (Area 9) to skim some of the mining ore off to southern Nydissia. Additionally, *Rummage* has connections with a small gang ("*Argyle's crew*", led by *Argyle*, Rogue 3) of 2d6+2 pickpockets and burglars (dock workers, miners, guardsmen) that occasionally fence things through him.

In the last few days, a bipedal rat creature was spotted loitering about some of the ships after midnight (see Rumour 6). When challenged, it dove into the lake (and swam underwater back into the sewers).



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So much can be confirmed by stevedore *Shamus* (male, 30's, jet black hair, jovial except when playing dice games about which he is deadly serious) who observed the rippling water trail into one of the sewer outlets. *Shamus* is happy to share such info "for a small donation, keep the wife happy, eh?" (he's not married).

### Area 14 - Quarantine Zone

Approx 25 infected are quarantined in two multistorey residences, the doors barred from the outside, with 1d6+1 guards keeping watch. No-one enters except in the company of *Apothecary Benceini*.

Every few days someone leaves (alive and having finally shaken the illness, or dead, wheeled out in a cart, to the tolling of bells). A temporary shrine to *Baal* (God of the dead, disease, suffering) has been set up nearby, attended to by a handful of (increasingly fervent) lay worshippers.

### Area 15 - Lake Ruins

Burnt out stone ruins and rotting pylons are all that remain of the old lake watch house (razed by pirates eight years ago). The area is now home to a *Giant Crocodile* that feeds on fish and other marine creatures. The locals avoid the beast, and by and large it avoids them (a few even consider it a kind of "town mascot").

Alternatively, something has happened recently that has led to the reptile attacking careless sailors (perhaps it is mating season and a female has recently entered the area, prompting "mating ritual" behaviour, including protecting territory). If lured or driven away, old pirate and barbarian bones give up 1 x Valuables.

**Giant Crocodile**, AC 14, HD 6, Bite 2d6+2, 19: special, S20 D10 C19 I3 P10 W12 Ch5, L8, Mv 30 or swim 50 ft. On a 19+, the target is caught in the croc's jaws and rolled/drowned if water present (lose action each turn until successful *Luck* (Dex) save to escape the croc's vice like jaws).

## The Sewers

Direct access to the sewers is via any number of street drains (by pulling up metal grates, requires a Str check if in a hurry) or lake outlets (the largest tunnels can be found here). The *skratt* section of the sewers appears on the following map, with direct access via Area 1 or 12 (vertical access pipes) or 10a (main storm drain out to *Lake Argos*)

Generally speaking the drain tunnels are fashioned of worked stone, approx 4 ft wide and 5 ft high, very dimly lit during the day (some ambient light filters through from above, 33% miss chance), or completely dark at night (*skratt* see in the darkness well enough). Doors are wooden and unlocked unless noted otherwise.

As might be expected the smell is nauseating, punctuated by constant dripping, chittering, and slurping sounds. Most of the sewer has narrow 1 ft walkways running alongside the walls, albeit these are often slippery with filth, especially after a storm. Those wanting to wade through the channels of muck will generally find them two feet deep.

Anyone moving about the sewers for more than half an hour is exposed to the palsy, requiring a *Luck* (Con) save to resist (max once/day).

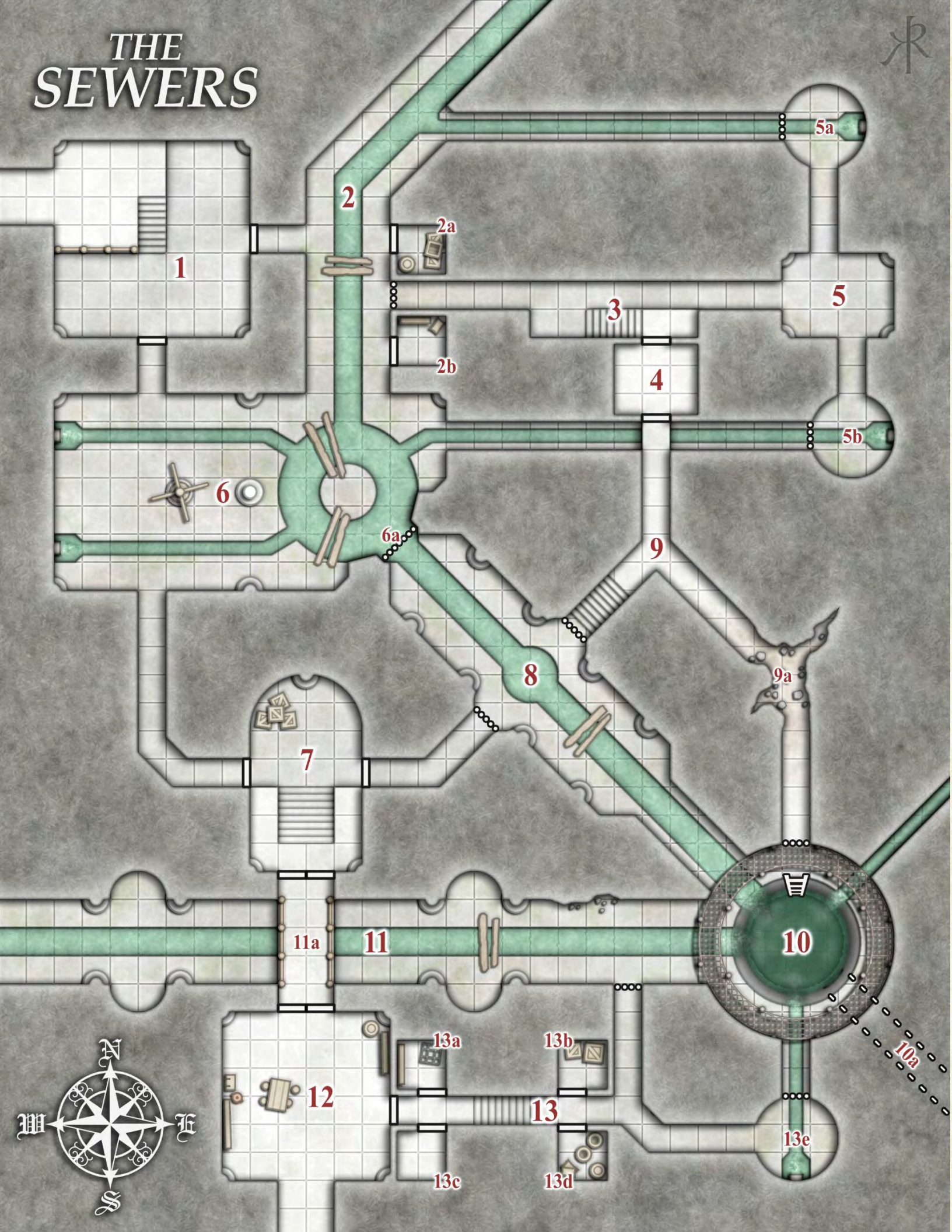
### Sewer Encounters

The *Skraatt* are holed up in a particular section of the sewers as outlined on the map. Finding the right area requires a Perc (Detection or Wilderness Lore) check. There is a 30% chance of a random encounter every half hour. If an encounter occurs, roll 1d8:

- i. A flock of bats come swooping out of the darkness, making a loud chittering (might draw nearby threats).
- ii. 1d4 *Skraatt* in the middle of mating. A curious mix of purring, chittering and



# THE SEWERS





scratching can be heard before the tangle of furred bodies is revealed. If the PCs are sneaky, they might catch them by surprise.

- iii. A swarm of 4d6 *Slush Beetles* (1 to 2 ft long) are swimming in the muck here, happily gorging their fill. They attack only to defend themselves (1 hp, bite 1 damage). They are afraid of fire, and make high pitched squeals if cornered.
- iv. A half eaten human corpse (recent missing dock worker) floats in the muck. Closer examination reveals a mix of bite marks and blade cuts (some of the *skratt* use swords, etc).
- v. A pet rodent of the *Skratt Brute* (Area 5) is hiding quietly nearby, observing everything it can about the PCs (Perc (Det) check to spot). Unless stopped, it scuttles away to report the intruders to its master.
- vi. 1d6+1 hungry *Giant Centipedes* are crawling along the ceiling, drawn to the PCs' light source.
- vii. A 2 ft glob of *Green Slime* is stuck to the ceiling nearby, waiting for a PC to walk under it.
- viii. The *Skratt Brute* (Area 5) is nearby, stalking the corridors in search of manflesh. He has detected the faintest whiff of the party's scent, and is drawn to investigate.

### Area 1 - 1st Manhole Entry

Pulling up a manhole on the street allows access to a 3 ft vertical chute and 15 ft ladder. The 35 ft square chamber includes a raised 20 ft square platform, with stairs descending a further 10 ft to the lower chamber.

If entered during the day, 1d4 *Skratt* (with swords) are sleeping here in a nest of refuse under the platform (supposed to be on sentry duty, a group Dex (Stealth) check keeps them that way). If night time before midnight, the sentries are awake, if after midnight there is no-one in this room (the sentries are instead out on an above ground scouting mission).

### Area 2 - Northern Drain

This 15 ft wide tunnel includes a 5 ft wide channel of foul, burbling slush. Sturdy planks have been placed at certain points to allow easy crossing (albeit these are covered with scattered moss and slime). There is a 50% chance of 1d2 wandering *Skratt* passing through.

### Area 2a - Rat Catching Supplies

This 10 ft room is locked (a Dex (Traps & Locks) check opens it, or the key from Area 12). Opening all the crates garners a dozen rat traps, a net on a stick, 1d4+1 bear traps (for *giant rats*), and 1d4 fire pots.

### Area 2b - Blockage Clearing Supplies

This 10 ft room is locked (a Dex (Traps & Locks) check opens it, or the key from Area 12). The room contains 1d3 10' poles, a spear, two work hammers, a portable block & tackle pulley system, and a small wheelbarrow.

### Area 3 - Corridor

The western iron gate to this 70 ft corridor is locked (Dex (Lock & Traps) check to open) but rusty (may be broken down with 2 x Str (Athletics) checks). To the east, foul chattering, whimpering and hissing noises may be heard. The stone steps ascend 10 ft to a small balcony and wooden door to Area 4.

### Area 4 - Tide of Rats

This 15 ft by 10 ft room is home to a single *Skratt* and her pets; a colossal swarm of many hundreds of rats. Listening at the door reveals a soft cooing and muffled scratching. The *skratt* is a loner and



quasi druid amongst her kin, more comfortable with tiny rodents than her own kind. At first, neither she nor her pets will necessarily move to attack the PCs.

Like all *skratt*, the vermin druid is unable to speak common, but is intelligent and can communicate via hand signals and body language. She has also learnt to write a handful of common words (gained via study from stolen papers, observing signs, etc).

If the party attempt parlay, the druid tries to convey that she would rather abandon the complex than fight, and presents a token of goodwill (a scroll case with a ragged map inside, suggesting the distant location of a treasure: a rat idol made of solid gold<sup>2</sup>).

If the parties come to blows, the tide of rats fight to protect their mistress (covering her body in a kind of living armour, as the remainder surge to attack). The swarm will not move more than 30 ft from her. The druid carries a *cold iron* knife.

**Skratt Druid**, AC 11, HD 3, Bite 1d8, 19: the tide of rats overwhelms the PC, biting and gnawing them all over (Will check or flee for 1d4 rounds), S13 D18 C8 I11 P14 W11 Ch14, L7, Mv 40 ft inc climb & swim. The druid has *Off Turn Attacks*, and her bite infects the target with *Pinkscab Palsy* (Con check resists). She sees as well in darkness as in light. When the druid suffers damage, there is a 50% chance the attack is negated (the blow absorbed by her body rats, which drop off, only to be replaced by more).

The *Tide of Rats* is more of an environmental effect than a monster. The vermin cover every available space and flow down the corridor (move 30 ft) like a chattering wave of doom, leaping onto PCs, dropping from the ceiling, scabbling underfoot, burrowing under clothes etc.

PCs automatically suffer 1 point of damage at the end of their turn, and must make a Dex check or fall prone (unbalanced by the skittering horde). If the druid is killed, the tide immediately disperses, squealing in anguish (at the GM's option, future rats hiss at the PCs for months to come). Torches and other small fires don't faze the tide, but large fires (fire pots, a wall of flame, etc) will give them pause, or disperse them for a round.

### Area 5 - Brute Lair

This 20 ft by 15 ft chamber is the *Skratt Brute's* lair, littered with stolen hay, straw, rags and mats. 1d6 *Skratt* live here, sleeping, socialising and mating. If not already encountered (per Random Encounter viii), the hulking 7 ft *Skratt Brute* is here, feasting on recent carrion.

*Skratt Brute*, AC 13, HD 4, Bite 1d12 or weapon, 19: the *skratt* uses its tail to whip stun the target (loses next action), S18 D11 C10 I8 P13 W10 Ch9, L8, Mv 40 ft inc climb & swim. The brute has *Minor Exploit Protection* and its bite infects the target with *Pinkscab Palsy* (Con check resists). It sees as well in darkness as in light.



<sup>2</sup> Adventure Framework 29; *Riddle of the Golden Rat*.

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The *Skratt* have gathered a collection of glinting baubles to decorate their nests (2 x Carry Loot).

### Area 5a - Northern Drain

This 15 ft diameter chamber has a west flowing drain running through it. The iron gates barring entry from the west and south are locked (the *Skratt Brute* has the key, Area 5).

The *Skratt* have captured an 8 ft mutant *Scorpion Roach*, which they keep confined here (the eastern drain is too small for it to fit through). The *Brute* likes to torment the creature, and uses it to punish defiant ratfolk. Releasing the monster from the cage would be a bad idea for anyone nearby (although it hates the *Brute* above all, and will prioritize attacks against him if possible).

**Scorpion Roach**, AC 15, HD 8, Bite 1d6 and Stinger 1d6 + poison, 19: the monster spews foul vomit on the target (Con check or target infected with a random disease), S17 D15 C13 I1 P10 W10 Ch3, L8, Mv 40 ft. 10 ft reach. The stinger's poison causes immediate agonizing pain (*Luck* (Con) save or helpless for 1d3 rounds). The *Scorpion Roach* has *Major Exploit Protection*. If slain, 1d4+1 doses of venom may be harvested with an Int (Apothecary) check.

### Area 5b - Eastern Drain

This 15 ft diameter chamber has a west flowing drain running through it. The iron gate barring entry from the west is in good repair and impassable without proper cutting tools.

### Area 6 - Western Den

This large 70 ft by 35 ft chamber has a 10 ft ceiling and multiple branching sewer canals. The chamber is one of two main dens for the ratfolk (the other being Area 8), scattered with nests of straw, rags and dried mud/scum. There are 2d6 *Skratt* eating or socialising here at any one time. A large winch operates the large iron portcullis (to 6a), which is currently in the raised position. Any commotion here will draw allies from Area 8.

### Area 6a - Portcullis

The iron portcullis here is currently in the raised position. The winch to lower it is in Area 6.

### Area 7 - Rounded Hall

This 35 ft by 20 ft rounded hall has a 10 ft high "u" shaped balcony and descending stairs. 1d6 *Skratt* are here fighting over stolen goods spread about the area or stacked in crates.

Roll 1d12 five times to determine the booty:

1. Bales of hay (5 sp).
2. Bundles of clothing (30 gp).
3. Basket of apples (2 gp).
4. Stacks of blank paper and ink (20 gp).
5. Crate of ceramic bowls, mugs, etc (5 gp).
6. 30 ft length of chain (10 gp).
7. Crate of 2d6 random weapons.
8. Random suit of heavy armour.
9. A pick, hammer and box of nails (4 gp).
10. Crate of ceramic tiles (15 gp).
11. Sack of salted meat (3 gp).
12. Crate of fine wine (60 gp).

### Area 8 - Eastern Den

This 45 ft by 15 ft chamber has an 8 ft ceiling and is one of two main dens for the ratfolk (the other being Area 6), scattered with nests of straw, rags and dried mud/scum. There are 1d4+4 *Skratt* sleeping or mating here. Any commotion here will draw *skratt* from Area 6. Barred metal gates (locked with chains, Dex (Traps & Locks) check to open) prevent direct access to Areas 7 or 9.

### Area 9 - Junction

If the PCs approach this junction from the south, there is a 50% chance the *Skratt Druid* in Area 4 coincidentally opens the southern door, immediately spotting the PCs (unless invisible or similar). If the *skratt* are already on alert, the chance increases to 90%.

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### Area 9a - Damaged Tunnel

Recent tremors have opened large cracks in this section of tunnel, dropping large chunks of rock to the floor. The ceiling is in a precarious state, but an Int (Wilderness Lore or General Lore) check deduces that it will not fall in unless action is taken to purposefully collapse it (eg blackpowder bomb, using a hammer or pick, prodding it with a 10 ft pole, etc). Causing a cave in blocks the tunnel completely (requires many hours with the right tools to clear).

### Area 10 - Main Cistern

This 25 ft diameter cistern is 30 ft deep, filled up to 25 ft high with sewer and storm water. Due to continuing heavy rains, the Area 10a exit drain (which is positioned at the 25 ft point), is constantly drawing sewer water away from the cistern and channelling it into *Lake Argos*.

An iron ladder attached to the northern wall extends to the base of the cistern. There is a 50% chance of a nest of 2d4 *Projectile Leeches* undulating about in the filth.

**Projectile Leech**, AC 10, HD 1, Bite 1d3 + blood drain, 19: the *leech* latches onto the target's face, causing an eye injury; (*Luck* (Con) save resists, with advantage if wearing a helm), S10 D10 C16 I2 P14 W8 Ch3 L3, Mv: 20 ft inc walls, ceiling, etc. May launch up to 10 feet to attack. Immune to bludgeoning damage. On a hit it latches on, automatically causing 1d4 damage and 1 Con loss each turn. A Str contest (Str 16) at disadvantage removes the parasite, or salt, fire or acid automatically kills it.

Weighed down at the bottom of the cistern is a small sealed strongbox (hidden by a since deceased smuggler) containing 1 x Valuables and 1 x Trinkets & Curios.

### Area 10a - Harbour Drain

The Harbour Drain is 5 ft high and runs a slight decline several hundred feet out to the edge of the

docks, dumping filth and storm water into the lake. The *skratt* make occasional use of the tunnel to survey the docks and climb about sleepy ships. The water level is roughly 6 inches deep. Any fighting here risks slipping over in the muck riddled tunnel (Dex check or fall prone).

### Area 11 - Eastern Drain

This 125 ft long drain corridor has a 15 ft ceiling and is occupied by 1d6+1 *Skratt* sniffing and pawing at the sewer slush, dragging out the charred body of a recent *Pinkscab Palsy* victim. The far eastern end eventually empties into the main cistern (Area 10). A 10 ft high bridge extends across part of the tunnel (Area 11a).

### Area 11a - Bridge

A 10 ft wide bridge with wooden railings extends 10 ft above the Eastern Drain (Area 11) below. The ceiling is 5 ft above the bridge, and 15 ft above Area 11.

### Area 12 - 2nd Manhole Entry

Pulling up a manhole on the street (Str check required if in a hurry) allows access to a 3 ft vertical chute and 15 ft ladder, opening into a 30 ft square chamber.

2d4 *Giant Rats*, pets of the *Skratt*, keep watch in this room. In daytime they are asleep in a large cluster, otherwise they are gnawing on the remains of *Wallace*. *Wallace* was an odd jobs worker (including maintaining the sewers) but hadn't been down for some weeks, and was murdered by the *Skratt* a few days earlier (no-one has yet noticed the poor scob missing). The keys to Areas 2a-b and 13a-d are in his pocket.

**Giant Rat**, AC 11, HD 1d4 hp, Bite 1d3, 19: If appropriate, another *Giant Rat* (60%) or *Dire Rat* (40%) comes to aid this one, S3 D14 C8 I2 P13 W6 Ch4, L3, Mv 40 ft. 50% chance of exposing a bitten target to *Pinkscab Palsy*.

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A poor quality table, stools and shelves (constructed by *Wallace* in this room) have been ransacked. Spread about the chamber are various stone/wood working tools, shattered lanterns, playing cards, a drinking mug, and broken bottles (bleach stains are everywhere).

### Area 13 - Rising Corridor

This 5 ft wide corridor includes stone steps that descend approximately 10 ft.

### Area 13a - Cage Room

This 10 ft room is locked (a Dex (Traps & Locks) check opens it, or the key from Area 12). Inside is a single 5 ft iron cage. The decaying corpse of a long dead *Giant Rat* lies inside.

### Area 13b - Lighting Supplies

This 10 ft room is locked (a Dex (Traps & Locks) check opens it, or the key from Area 12). Opening all the crates reveals 2d6 torches, 1d6 lanterns and 2d6 oil flasks.

### Area 13c - Empty Room

This 10 ft chamber is locked (a Dex (Traps & Locks) check opens it, or the key from Area 12). The room within is empty.

### Area 13d - Cleaning Fluid Supplies

This 10 ft room is locked (a Dex (Traps & Locks) check opens it, or the key from Area 12). A number of barrels are filled with bleach, vinegar and other medieval cleaning agents. One barrel,

although labelled bleach, in fact contains a high quality whiskey (1d6 x 10 gp worth). 1d6 empty flasks sit on a small table in the corner.

### Area 13e - Gas Pocket

An unfortunate mix of chemicals in this 15 ft diameter chamber (part of which includes the remains of the highly rare and poisonous *Buckfang Turtle*) have percolated into an invisible cloud of (non-flammable) toxic gas.

A scattering of dead roaches near the western entry are the only warning (Perc (Detection) check). Characters entering the area must make a Con check or suffer 1d2 Dex loss each round. The northern portcullis is unlocked but requires a Str (Athletics) great success to lift.

## Aftermath

All of the *skratt* must be killed or driven off to give *Brynderwold* any hope of eradicating the palsy. If the ratkin are removed, vermin exterminators clear out enough of the ordinary rodents to give the outpost a chance to recover.

If any of the *skratt* survive, they continue to spread the contagion, weakening the populace to such an extent that nearby barbarians take advantage to attack the settlement, razing it to the ground before abandoning the area as “cursed”. Whether the *skratt* escape and resurface at another outpost (or city) is left to the GM.



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# TOWER OF BAAL



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## TOWER OF BAAL

Four hundred years ago, the *Tower of Baal* stood as a sombre monument to the Battle of the High Plains, a tomb for hundreds of fallen Argosan warriors. Abandoned over the centuries, the *Libram Damogra* suggests the tower's secret altar was once decorated with the *Cloak of Bellaphas*, a relic blessed by the Lord of Crows himself. In all the years since, the cloak has never resurfaced.

### Dead Men Walking

Four hundred years ago, after a brutal conflict with rival barbarians, the *Argosans* interned hundreds of dead warriors in catacombs beneath a short mountain range known as the *Rock of Gorzat*.

Expanding on naturally formed tunnels, the Argosans excavated alcoves and ossuaries to lay the fallen, carving out an altar sacred to the *Lord of Crows* (*Baal*, god of the dead, decay, suffering and disease). Above ground, alongside the rumbling *Red March Falls*, a tower was erected as an enduring shrine and monument.

Over the centuries, increasing *skorn* (beastmen) numbers eventually lead to the monument being abandoned. In the underground shrine, an enchanted cloak (once belonging to the shrine's eldest priest, *Bellaphas*) began to malfunction, greedily channelling necromantic forces from beyond the Veil.

In recent months, the necromantic energies reached a tipping point, animating the bones of the dead. Skeletal warriors are lurching to "life", emerging from subterranean graves to resume their ancient patrols, slaying anyone they encounter.

Although the tower is in a relatively remote location in the *High Plains*, the nearby outpost of *Fronbury* is in danger. More than one sighting of

the undead has been reported, and the settlement's few rangers are already struggling to fend off barbarian and *skorn* raiders. *Overseer Venka* (60s, grey haired Fighter 3, wheezing, religious forehead brand) would be glad to have the assistance of some expendable outsiders, and is prepared to pay handsomely.



The party might become involved in this adventure by (i) accepting *Overseer Venka's* standing offer of 500 crowns to eradicate the source of the skeletal warriors, (ii) being attacked by undead while camped, or (iii) finding reference to the *Cloak of Bellaphas* in an old religious tome.

### Crossing the Plains

Reaching the *Rock of Gorzat* and the tower part way up the cliffs is at least a two day trek from *Fronbury* through the *Great Plains*. The plains are dominated by verdant grasses that grow up to four feet high. Trees are uncommon and sparsely spaced, with occasional groves of oaks and willows.



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In some regions, thorny shrubs have taken hold, overwhelming other plant life. Animals are abundant, including small game, horses, bison, panthers and birds of prey (including giant varieties).

Xenophobic thuel (barbarian) clans such as the *Skull Drinkers*, *Burnt Ones* and *Half Crows* ride the plains, taking advantage of their mobility to avoid the *skorn* horde that controls the region.

There is a 30% chance of an encounter every 8 hours. If an encounter occurs, roll 1d10:

1. 2d4 *Centaur*s are dragging 1d4 barbarians of the *Skull Drinkers* tribe behind them. The thuel are captured scouts, enroute to a nearby centaur camp for interrogation.
2. An enormous herd of hundreds of bison are wandering through the area, migrating to the next major water hole. There is a 50% chance of 4d6 *Skorn* in the long grass nearby, hoping to ambush any human hunters.
3. 1d4 *Giant Eagles* and 1d3 infant birds are riding the thermals high above, on the lookout for a potential meal. They will try to attack and carry away a moderately sized animal (dog, mule, pony, etc).
4. A single (70%) or pair (30%) of *Giant Serpents* are lairing nearby in the long grass, the female laying a clutch of eggs. They will attack and/or drive off trespassers.
5. A band of 4d6 warrior *Skeletons* from the tower are patrolling this area, drawn to extinguish the life force of nearby humans.

6. Earth rumbles underfoot for a short period before a *Baby Bulette* (2 ft long) bursts from the soil, chomping at a random PC's boot.

**Baby Bulette**, AC 14, HD 1, Bite 1d8+1, 19: the bulette latches on, automatically causing bite damage on its turn (opposed Str check to shake off), S17 D7 C10 I3 P10 W7 Ch8, LA, Mv 20 ft inc burrowing. +4 to hit and double damage if target surprised. Auto sense ground borne creatures within 90 ft.

There is a 50% chance the baby is within communicating distance of its sleeping mother, a full grown *Bulette*. Attacking the infant causes a furious parent to arrive in 2d6 rounds.

7. A solitary *Wraith* descends on the party's camp during the witching hour. Like all undead, it hungers for the souls of the living, and will not retreat until at least one large sentient creature is dead by its spectral hand (horse, human, etc).
8. The weather turns foul, inundating the plains with cold, misty rain for the next two days. The relentless wet grinds on the adventurers' spirits; PCs lose 1 point of Will (*Luck* (Will) save resists).
9. Panicked calls can be heard before 1d4 *Half Crow* barbarians burst into view through the grasses. They are clearly running away from something (a *Western Panther* or *Tiger*).
10. A 10d6 *Skorn* war band is on the move, horns blaring and drums beating as they cross the plains. If they notice the PCs, they inevitably attempt to catch and eat them (likely resolve as a stealth, decoy or chase scenario).

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## Climbing the Rock

The *Rock of Gorzat* is an abrupt and isolated stretch of sandstone mountains separating the high and low plains, as if dropped from the sky to neatly divide the grasslands in two. Reaching the tower is a three day climb up relatively steep slopes (quite taxing; requires a Con check to avoid 1 Str loss). Every 16 hours, there is a 50% chance of a random encounter. If an encounter occurs, roll 1d6:

1. Recent storms have weakened an overhead bluff, creating a 10% chance per PC (cumulative) of collapse. Anyone on the trail below suffers 4d6 damage as part of the mountain suddenly slides away (Int or Perc (Wilderness Lore) check forewarns of danger, otherwise *Luck* (Dex) save for half).
2. A dark cave retreats into a nearby mountainside, from which a flickering light may be seen (a solitary *Minotaur* named *Komerzu* lives within, revered by a handful of outcast thuels. The monster is sleeping off a drunken binge).
3. A dust covered “pool” gathered at the bottom of a narrow pass turns out to be a *Grey Ooze*. The ooze is hibernating but will awaken in 2d4 rounds if a human approaches within 120 ft.
4. Odd stalagmites at the base of a small cliff section are marked with what appear to be blood stained runes. An Int (Arcane Lore) check reveals abjuration magic is sealing something *within* the stone spires.
5. Guttural laughing and snorting can be heard before a 12 ft *Ettin* emerges from around a bend, chortling to itself. It is chewing on the charred remains of a human thighbone.



6. 4d6 *Barbarians* of the *Burnt Ones* tribe are waiting in ambush for the party at the top of a steep ravine. They have 1d6 large boulders (2d6 hp damage, *Luck* (Dex) save to avoid) to drop on the adventurers, before firing arrows and finally closing for melee.

## The Tower

The *Tower of Baal* is approximately 40 ft tall, made of aging, lichen covered sandstone, with small arched windows and oak doors. The structure appears somewhat sound; the roof has clearly collapsed, and some sections of the upper wall crumbled, depositing rubble on the earth below. No light or sounds emanate from within.

The catacombs beneath the tower are mostly naturally formed, about 7 ft high and 5 ft wide. The tunnels are completely dark (barring Area 17), cold, and largely silent.

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The entire complex is tainted with necromantic energy, partly as a result of the original cultist blessings, but mostly due to the malfunctioning cloak in Area 16. Local barbarians and beastmen abhor the site as cursed and stay well away. No living person has set foot in the tower for more than two centuries.

## Interior Encounters

While exploring the tower, the GM may call for a random encounter at any time. Alternatively, there is a 50% chance of an encounter every 20 minutes, or if the party is overly noisy or draws attention to themselves. If an encounter occurs, roll 1d8:

1. 2d6 freshly risen *Skeletons* from Area 14 are gaining their bearings, patrolling the tower and caverns.
2. A *Fungus Zombie* from Area 13 shambles around the corner, wandering the complex in an effort to locate the living, or make its way outside.
3. A faceless, incorporeal spirit emerges from a wall, drawn to the PCs. It has a vaguely female shape, and appears “clothed” in barbarian garb. The spirit wants to guide the party to its bones in Area 17. If they refuse, a supernatural chill comes over them (lose 1 *Luck*), and the ghost vanishes.
4. A flock of bats flutters out of a doorway or winding passage, piercing the darkness with short squeaks and chirps. The bats are harmless, but might draw attention to the area.
5. 1d4 *Giant Centipedes* from Area 15 are crawling along the ceiling, antennae twitching for a fresh, juicy meal.

6. Strange clicks, hisses, skittering and clattering can be heard echoing in nearby tunnels. If the PCs investigate, they find a *Giant Scorpion* battling 1d6 *Skeletons* (the scorpion entered via Area 18).
7. An earth tremor releases pockets of vertigo inducing gas from beneath the pool in Area 17. The invisible, lighter than air gas smells acidic, and slowly floats up the main passage. It passes around the doorframe of Area 8, Area 6, etc until escaping into the atmosphere at Area 2. PCs exposed to the gas must make a *Luck* (Con) check or suffer 1d4 Dex loss.
8. A patch of 1d4 *Green Slime* are dormant on the ceiling nearby. They awaken within 1d6 rounds of a living human approaching within 120 ft.





Cellar Floor



Ground Floor



Upper Floor  
(partly collapsed)

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## Interior Areas

### Area 1 - Ground Floor

Entry to the ground floor is via a locked oak door, marked with a silver murder of crows icon (*Baal's* symbol). A Dex (Traps & Locks) check opens the door, or a Str check forces it open.

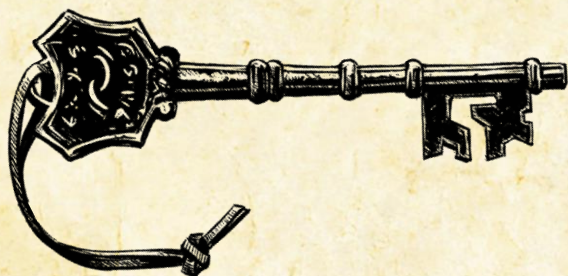
The 30 ft diameter chamber has a 20 ft ceiling, much of which has collapsed and is in pieces on the floor. The plaster walls are painted with frescoes of *Baal* services, including funerals, ancestor worship, tending the suffering, torturing enemy soldiers, and executions.

A large table, fireplace and shelves are the only furnishings (mugs, plates, utensils, a few old books and tied papers that are no longer legible). An Int (General Lore) check suggests one of the books appears to be some kind of pilgrim register, dating back 270 years. A large hole in a rotting trapdoor leads to the cellar (Area 3), or stairs to the upper floor (Area 2).

### Area 2 - Upper Floor

The upper floor is approximately 20 ft off the ground, the ceiling completely collapsed along with small sections of wall, leaving gaps in the stone. Climbing up is possible (Str (Athletics) check or automatic with a rope and grapple).

Whatever furniture once occupied the chamber has eroded in the weather, long rotten pieces of timber the only trace. The floor is heavily damaged with large sections collapsed. Walking here in heavy armour requires a Dex check to avoid plummeting through the rotten beams to the ground floor below (2d6 fall damage).



### Area 3 - Cellar

Access to the 30 ft diameter cellar is via the broken trapdoor in Area 1. Below the 5 ft wide hole is a circular stair that winds around the eastern wall.

Funnelled webs dominate the southern half of the room, making it difficult to see beyond. Beneath the stairs (leading to the ground floor trapdoor) are 1d4+3 *Baby Giant Spiders* (about 2 ft wide).

The spiders sleep in webs during the day, and go out hunting at night with their *Broodmother* (in Area 4). An attack on the baby spiders draws the attention of the mother.

**Baby Giant Spider**, AC 10, HD 1d4 hp, Bite 1d4 + poison, 19: special, S7 D17 C6 I2 P8 W7 Ch5 L3, Mv 30 ft inc up walls etc. On a Nat 19+ the victim is webbed and helpless (*Luck* (Str) save resists, victim may spend an action to break free, opposed Str check vs Str 10). Poison causes 1d6 damage + 1 Dex loss (*Luck* (Con) save resists). An adventurer has a 25% chance of harvesting 1 dose of poison from a dead spider.

The 30 ft diameter cellar holds a number of barrels of old spirits (75% chance they are spoiled, but if not, a barrel is worth 50 + 5d10 gp).

### Area 4 - Pantry

The kitchen and pantry contains various tables and shelves filled with old spoiled food and spices. The entire area is covered with webs, with a central funnel in the middle. A number of dead barbarian and ranger corpses can be seen hanging in the sticky strands.

The *Broodmother* (7 ft long) is concealed in the webs, hiding in the western corner (Perc check spots her darker patch). The giant spider is decades old, and will attempt to flee if severely injured. Lighting the webs on fire, or killing the baby spiders in Area 3 however, sends the *Broodmother* into a rage.

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**Broodmother**, AC 13, HD 4 (29 hp), Bite 1d6+1 + poison, 19: special, S14 D16 C12 I2 P12 W10 Ch4 L5, Mv 40 ft inc up walls etc. *Off Turn Attacks* and *Major Exploit Protection*. On a Nat 19+ the victim is webbed and helpless (*Luck* (Str) save resists, victim may spend an action to break free, opposed Str check vs Str 17). Poison causes 1d6 damage + 1 Dex loss (*Luck* (Con) save resists). An adventurer may harvest 1d3 doses of poison from the dead monstrosity.

If the *broodmother* is slain, searching the various corpses turns up 1 x Carry Loot.

### Area 5 - Storage

This 20 ft by 15 ft storage room is empty (50%) or contains a large crate holding 2d6 candles, a lantern, and 1d4 flasks of oil.

### Area 6 - Bedchamber

The door to this 20 x 15 ft bedchamber is locked (Dex (Traps & Locks) check to open, or force with a Str check). The interior includes some shelving (old decaying books and some trinkets, including 1 x Trinkets & Curios) and a mould ridden bed.

Pulling back the threadbare bedsheets reveals a patch of *Orange Mould*. The fungus is in stasis until a warm blooded creature comes within 30 ft, at which point it awakens after 1d6 rounds.

**Orange Mould**, AC 10, HD 3, 5 ft radius choking cloud 1d6, 19: special, S14 D5 C12 I2 P10 W-Ch-L6, Mv 20 ft inc up walls etc. *Orange Mould* moves in a hypnotic, wave like motion, releasing spore motes in its wake, choking its victims before incubating within them. On a Nat 19+ the victim is exposed to a random disease.

### Area 7 - Strongroom

The 10 ft square strongroom is locked (Dex (Traps & Locks) check at -3 penalty to open, or Str check great success). Inside are three chests containing old tithes (1 x 2 HD Lair Treasure). Hidden within the coins however are 1d4 *Treasure Ticks*.

Treasure ticks are 1 inch parasites drawn to the smell of valuable metal and gems. The bugs have an uncanny chameleonic ability, able to change colour and shape to match surrounding coins, gemstones, etc, where they hibernate until a suitably warm blooded victim becomes available.

If collected in a pouch etc, the bugs burrow out in 1d6 minutes, entering the flesh of their victim to feed on their blood (they secrete an anaesthetic effect similar to a leech). Detecting the burrowing tick requires a Perc check at disadvantage. If undetected, the parasite causes blood poisoning (1 Str and Dex loss after 1d4 hours, and a minor



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madness). Removing the tick requires deep flesh surgery (Int (Apothecary) check, causing 1d4 damage. If improperly performed, the victim suffers an *Injury* (roll 1d6, 1: Arm, 2: Leg, 3: Internal Bleeding, 4: Festering Wound 5: Muscle Tear, 6: System Shock).

### Area 8 - Study

This 15 ft by 25 ft study contains several desks and bookshelves (lined with religious iconography and brittle, sacred tomes; worth 2d6 x 50 gp to the right buyer). One of the desks has a blessed book (if read, a believer in the gods gains 1 *Reroll Pool* die (temporarily increasing beyond their maximum if applicable, once only), and a ritual knife (*cold iron*)).

### Area 9 - Trap

The door from Area 8 has a sliding bar on the study side (not breakable in the absence of a ram). Descending stairs lead to a series of warding prayers part way down the corridor.

The prayers are inscribed into the walls and floor in ruby red, spidery lettering (traditional of *Baal* cultists). The prayers include intonations such as “*All are equal before Baal*”, “*No life without death*”, “*Bones & Dust, Blood & Rust*” etc. Anyone passing by without intoning a prayer to the *Lord of Crows* is subject to a sacred rebuke. Roll 1d4:

1. Suffer a serious madness (*Luck* (Will) save resists).
2. 1d4 Will loss (no save).
3. Weapon shatters on the next fumbled attack (if magical, damaged instead, not usable until repaired).
4. *Suggestion* (gift all your coins to the next holy person you meet, lasts 1d4 weeks).

At the far end of the corridor is an iron gate (locked; a Dex (Traps & Locks) check opens it, or it can be broken open with a heavy weapon or tool and 2 x Str (Athletics) great successes). When the gate is opened, roll on the *Interior Encounters* table.

### Area 10 - Stalagmite Shade

This large cavern includes a number of stalagmites. A single *Shade* lingers here, a long dead warrior with no memory of its original existence. The shade hungers for the life force of living sapient, but can only leave the cavern complex for short periods. It is currently absorbing the shrine’s necromantic energies, rebuilding its strength.

**Shade**, AC 12, HD 4, Touch 1d6+1 + Str drain 19: the target’s weapon or armour (50%) is transformed into shadow (*Luck* save resists), S-D16 C-I10 P13 W10 Ch7, L7, Mv 40 ft inc walls, ceiling, etc. *Incorporeal Undead* with the usual benefits. On a hit, the target loses 1 Str. Targets reduced to zero Str are slain and have a 50% chance of rising as a shade.



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### Area 11 - Mould Colony

This small cavern has 1d4 patches of *Yellow Mould* living within. The flesh eating mould is hibernating, but will awaken after 1d4 rounds if humans approach within 30 ft.

**Yellow Mould**, AC 10 (automatic hit in melee), HD 3, Projectile Spore (see below), 19: the spore is extra strong, bursting in a 10 ft radius, S6 D- C16 I2 P14 W- Ch-, L6, Mv immobile. Attacks by way of projectile spores up to 60 ft that burst in a 10 ft diameter (causing horrible choking death in 1d6 rounds, *Luck* (Con) save resists). An adventurer protecting their nose and mouth with a mask gains advantage on the check.

### Area 12 - Skeleton Camp

This 15 ft diameter cavern has a charcoal fire pit in the centre. 3d6 *Skeletons* are here at any one time, recently animated from the catacombs.

**Skeleton**, AC 11, HD 1, Spear 1d6+1, 19: another *skeleton* reanimates or comes to aid this one, S13 D13 C10 I- P13 (special) W- Ch- L4, Mv 30 ft. *Undead*, impervious to piercing attacks. Automatically sense living creatures within 60 ft.

### Area 13 - Fungus Zombies

This 10 x 15 ft chamber contains large swathes of stringy dead brown mould that crumbles at a touch (non-hazardous). 1d6 *Fungus Zombies* are huddled in the southeast corner, motionless, where toxic mould and mushrooms are growing on them. They lurch to "life" if a living creature moves within 10 ft or if they are attacked.

**Fungus Zombie**, AC 11, HD 2, Fist 1d8, 19: another *zombie* reanimates or comes to aid this one, S15 D7 C18 I- P12 W- Ch- L5, Mv 20 ft. *Undead*. When a *fungus zombie* is reduced to zero hp, it falls to pieces, releasing a 5 ft diameter cloud of toxic spores (*Luck* (Con) save or 1d4 Str or Dex loss; even chance).

If the zombies are defeated, 1 x Carry Loot may be scavenged from them.

### Area 14 - Catacombs

Beyond this point, the catacombs divide up into a maze of hundreds of alcoves containing the bones of fallen Argosan warriors. If the party ventures here, their life force accelerates the animating process, causing 1d8 *skeletons* to rise every round (up to a maximum of 5d10+500 skeletons). If the party leave this area within 1d4 minutes (back to Area 14), the animating process returns to normal (2d6 *skeletons* every few days). Each alcove has a 5% to 10% chance of 1 x Carry Loot within.

### Area 15 - Giant Centipede Nest

A nest of 2d12 *Giant Centipedes* lairs in this chamber, clustered around three large rock stalagmites. The undead ignore the insects (not sufficiently sentient to attract them) and the bugs stay out of their way (primarily by crawling along the ceiling out of reach).

**Giant Centipede**, AC 13, HD 2, Bite 1d3 and Stinger (poison), 19: extra strong dose of poison requiring two *Luck* saves instead of one, S14 D14 C10 I- P10 W10 Ch2 L5, Mv 30 ft. *Giant centipede* poison causes 1 Dex loss (*Luck* (Con) save resists). 25% chance of harvesting one dose of poison from a dead centipede.

### Area 16 - Baal Shrine

This 20 ft by 15 ft cavern has a 20 ft ceiling. A manmade altar to *Baal* (crow motif) can be seen at the southern end. Behind the altar is a 10 ft stone statue, carved in the likeness of a skull, hovering above a bubbling ooze.

Laying on the altar is the *Cloak of Bellaphas*, one of the tower's most elder priests. The fine, red coloured cloak is enchanted, but malfunctioning, siphoning dark forces from the Veil to animate the dead. Removing the cloak from the site ends the curse.



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Unfortunately for all concerned, the cloak has developed a modicum of intelligence, and has no wish to go anywhere. Any PC touching the cloak is attacked.

**Cloak of Bellaphas**, AC 13, HD 5, Choke 2d6, 19: special, S18 D17 C- I- P10 W- Ch- L5, Mv 30 ft flying. On a Nat 19+ the target is wrapped up tight and helpless, automatically suffering 2d6 damage on the cloak's turn (victim may spend their action to make an opposed Str test to break free).

As a magical item, the cloak cannot be destroyed by normal means. If reduced to zero hp however it submits to the party, accepting one of them as its new master if they attune to it.



The cloak has three levels of attunement, as follows:

1. The wearer's skin takes on a pallid tone, and they no longer need to eat or drink.
2. Placing the cloak on a dead body animates it, similar to *Animate Dead*, controlled by the cloak's master.

3. Once per six months, the cloak animates (use stat block above) for up to 2d6 rounds, obeying the master's commands (no action).

At the GM's option, the cloak might from time to time rally against its master, particularly if their conduct somehow disparages *Baal's* tenets. In such a case, the PC must make a Will check to resist being possessed by the cloak for 1d6 x 10 minutes. What the cloak does during this time is up to the GM.

### Area 17 - Underground Pool

A 25 ft wide underground river passes through this cavern, forming a deep pool before cascading off the cliff's edge. The bones of a dead barbarian (female) are scattered on the bottom of the pool (see *Interior Encounter 3*), along with a *silvered* axe inscribed with a flaming brand (*Burnt Ones* tribe).

The pool is tainted with a small number of *Throat Leeches*. Swimming or exploring the pool exposes a random PC to the parasites (*Luck* (Dex) save to avoid swallowing the horrible wrigglers). On a failed save, leeches have entered the victim's throat and latched onto their gullet. Over the next 1d4 hours, and every day afterwards, the leeches feed, causing 1 Str or Con loss (even chance, to a minimum of half the victim's maximum stats).

Removing internal leeches requires surgery and/or special alchemical tinctures that are highly poisonous if not properly administered. An Int (Apothecary) check kills the parasites in 1d3 days. If failed, the victim also suffers 2d4 damage. A desperate victim might drink and regurgitate a flask of acid to kill the creatures in minutes (the drinker suffers 3d6 damage, and cannot use their vocal chords for 1d4 months).

Retrieving the bones, and either (i) granting them a proper burial according to *Burnt Ones* custom, or (ii) returning them or the axe to the tribe, allows

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the spirit to rest, and permanently increases one PC's maximum *Luck* by 1 point (whoever was most influential in the endeavour).

### Area 18 – Red March Falls

The 150 ft falls descend to a deep pool that runs off down the mountain. Steps cut from the rock form a precarious stairway up to Area 17 above. The steps are slippery with water spray, requiring a Dex check to avoid sliding off if the climbing is done with any kind of speed, or during combat.

A number of skeleton and zombie body parts are scattered about the area (fallen from the descent, and/or picked at by wild animals). A family of 1d2+1 *Giant Eagles* roosts in a high eyrie above. There is a 50% chance the birds are on the wing, looking for a quick meal. If they spot the party,

they target the smallest member, attempting to carry them away to their nest to eat in private.

**Giant Eagle**, AC 13, HD 3+3, Bite 2d4 and 2 x Claws 1d6, 19: the target is grabbed and may be carried away, S16 D14 C14 I2 P15 W14 Ch7 L6, Mv 90 ft flying.

If the *giant eagles* are defeated, and their nest reached, amongst the barbarian and beastmen bones is 1 x Carry Loot.

### Aftermath

If the cloak is removed from the shrine, the undead cease to animate. If not, they emerge in ever increasing numbers, eventually attacking *Fronbury* en masse, slaying everyone within. The outpost is abandoned thereafter.



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# NEST BEYOND THE STARS



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## NEST BEYOND THE STARS

*Master Ballard*, artefact hunter and scholar of ancient cultures, is in need of a capable band of explorers. He wishes to venture into the *Suurat Jungle* in search of the *Quotaal Ziggurat*, thought to be a monument devoted to primordial reptile gods.

### Missing Expedition

Early in the Second Age, before the world cooled and the *Scaled Ones* retreated to humid climes, reptiles reigned. For more than a thousand years, cold bloods ruled the “man monkeys”, enslaving them as labourers, playthings and gladiators, offering their souls to unblinking deities beyond the stars.

The *Quotaal Ziggurat* is one such edifice, dedicated to the scaled pantheon shared by *Serpentmen*, *Iguaato* (lizardfolk), and other slithering creatures long forgotten by humankind.

*Marcos Ballard* (human male, 40s, lengthy grey hair, pulls at ear when speaking) an anthropologist living in *Crow's Keep*, believes he has discovered the location of the ziggurat and wishes to recover any valuable artefacts that might remain. His first expedition crew departed two months ago but never returned (captured by *Iguaato* who worship at the site). Burdened by guilt, and unbridled curiosity, *Ballard* is more determined than ever to unearth *Quotaal's* secrets.

*Ballard* is willing to pay 300 crowns (100 up front, 200 on completion) to be accompanied into the *Suurat Jungle* to locate and explore the ziggurat.

He is not prepared to send any more explorers to their deaths while he remains safe in the city archives, poring over faded maps. In addition to the set fee, *Ballard* is prepared to offer the party a half share in any treasure, in recognition of the



genuine danger of the expedition. His only caveat is that objects of special cultural significance must be returned to the city's *Guild of Antiquities*.

**Marcos Ballard**, AC 14 (medium armour & shield), HD 1 (6 hp), Spear 1d6+1, 19: *Marcos* trips his target, S11 D10 C12 I14 P10 W15 Ch10, L8, Mv 30 ft. Advantage on jungle navigation related checks. *Marcos* may use his shield to negate a single directional attack. Treat as a PC for death and injury purposes.

The party might become involved in this adventure by (i) accompanying *Ballard* on his quasi rescue expedition, (ii) discovering a map to the hidden ziggurat in a prior adventure, or (iii) stumbling across the site whilst exploring the jungle at large.

## Jungle Trek Encounters

Reaching the ziggurat is at least seven days trek into the sweltering wilds of the *Suurat Jungle*. The tangled vegetation includes towering kapok and ficus trees, strangler figs, flowery aroids and thick, choking liana vines.

In the absence of recent animal trails, pathfinding is taxing and requires a cutting blade to make reasonable progress. The jungle is humid but generally well lit, the tree tops only partially shielding against the sun and nightly downpour. Mosquitoes and leeches are a constant plague.

Animal life is a cornucopia, with many species of birds, small mammals, apes and reptiles, including giant serpents, man eating monkeys and scorpions. Jaguars, tigers and their sabre tooth cousins also prowl here.

There is a 35% chance of an encounter every 12 hours. If an encounter occurs, roll 1d12.

1. A particularly thick cloud of mosquitoes descends on the party, biting at any

exposed limbs or faces. A *Luck* (Con) save is required to avoid contracting *Black Retch* (with advantage if the PCs cover up as much as possible, use herbalist insect repellents, etc).

*Black Retch*: This deep belly illness causes disorientation and nausea within 1d6 hours, inflicting 2d4 Dex loss and disadvantage on balance related checks. Carriers cannot abide food or drink, and vomit up a foul, black coloured fluid every few hours. The sickness passes in 1d4 days. An apothecary with the right healing herbs halves the duration.

2. 5d6 vicious *Man Eating Monkeys* begin following the party, hooting and taunting them from the trees (throwing faeces, fruit, stones). They hope to draw large predators to the PCs, intending to scavenge the remains (PCs or predators; they'll get to eat either way).
3. A pair of *Sabretooth Tigers* are hiding within nearby scrub, waiting for an opportunity to pounce. One will attack the rear PC (or hireling etc) and run off with them. The other will try to hold up the party for a time, before also fleeing.
4. An old 11 ft *Giant Trapdoor Spider* lives beneath the earth nearby. It hibernates between meals, allowing vines etc to regrow on its trapdoor lid (a Perc (Wilderness Lore) check notices the newer growth). It is awake and hungry.

**Giant Trapdoor Spider**, AC 15, HD 8+2, Bite 2d6 + poison, 19: the PC is thrust behind the monster, pushed into its cramped burrow (opposed Str or Dex check to squeeze back out), S19 D14 C14 I3 P10 W11 Ch4, L9, Mv 40 ft inc walls, ceilings etc. Poison causes paralysis in a random limb for 1d4 days (*Luck* (Con) save resists, Int (Apothecary) check halves duration).

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5. 5d6 4 ft tall *Skinkrunners* patrolling their patch of jungle. They are not necessarily hostile, but speak only the serpentmen tongue. They might be willing to trade for some rare healing jungle poultices.

**Skinkrunner**, AC 12, HD 1d6 hp, Spear 1d6+1, 19: the target is tripped by the *Skinkrunner's* tail, S9 D15 C8 I7 P12 W8 Ch10, L3, Mv 40 ft inc up walls. Amphibious.

6. The party ventures into a particularly thick area of jungle requiring many deviations and no visible landmarks. An Int (Wilderness Lore) check is required to avoid getting lost (lose one day's travel).
7. 5d6 *Flesh Eating Vines* are growing here, sprouting curious yellow flowers with black tips. A Perc (Detection) test notices animals and birds seem to avoid the area.

8. This evening's nightly rain is extremely heavy and persists into the next day. The ground turns into a viscid ankle deep mire. Slogging through the mud requires a Con check to avoid losing 1 point of Con due to exhaustion. Alternatively the party might lose a day holed up somewhere till the rain abates.

9. Glow bugs linger around a dense thicket of flowering plants, where the skeletal remains of a long dead explorer can be seen (dug up by an animal, or mud washed away by a recent downpour). Searching the bones garners 1 x *Carry Loot*.

10. *Rufia*, a human female (Fighter 1) of the *Ebari* ("Moon Thorn") tribe is in trouble, fending off 1d6+3 hungry *Raptors*. She speaks only the local *Moon Thorn* dialect.

**Raptor**, AC 13, HD 3, Bite 1d10, 19: another *Raptor* suddenly leaps out of the jungle! S14 D14 C10 I3 P10 W10 Ch4, L6, Mv 60 ft. *Raptors* gain advantage on attack rolls when flanking with another raptor or humanoid master.



11. A war party of 3d10+30 cannibals (as *Bandit*, spears, shortbows) are on the hunt for rival tribes to eat. The adventurers' exotic flesh would be a welcome change of diet, and with bonus trinkets.

12. 1d4+1 *Iguaato* exploring the outer regions, or patrolling grounds close to the ziggurat. They prefer to capture humans for sacrifice at Area 14, but will strike to kill if necessary.



## The Ziggurat

The *Quotaal Ziggurat* is a small stepped pyramid, 50 ft high, 150 ft on a side, fashioned of crumbling, grey igneous rock mined from *Mount Rokan* (a volcanic peak in the north eastern jungle). All doorways are mirror like black stone, 10 ft wide double doors that swing inward, with bronze pull rings on the reverse (the doors are well balanced, and do not swing closed by themselves). The interior is generally lit by recessed candles or flickering torch sconces.

Built by human slaves in the distant past, the ziggurat is a debased shrine to the *Nest Beyond the Stars*, occupied by resident *Iguaato* clerics, occasional *Serpentmen* pilgrims, and other more unique allies.


**Iguaato**, AC 14, HD 3, Bite 1d10+1 or weapon, 19: the *Iguaato* emits a nauseating stench (*Luck* (Con) save or lose 1d2 Str, S14 D8 C11 I8 P11 W10 Ch9, L6, Mv 30 ft inc up walls. May speak with reptiles.

*Iguaato* are bulky 7 ft reptile humanoids, with strong jaws, armoured scales, and spines running down their back. They are carrion feeders (including their own kind), leaving prey to rot before devouring it some days later. *Iguaato* may speak with other reptiles, and share an instinctive bond with *Serpentmen*. They are forced into hibernation in cold climates.

### Ziggurat Encounters

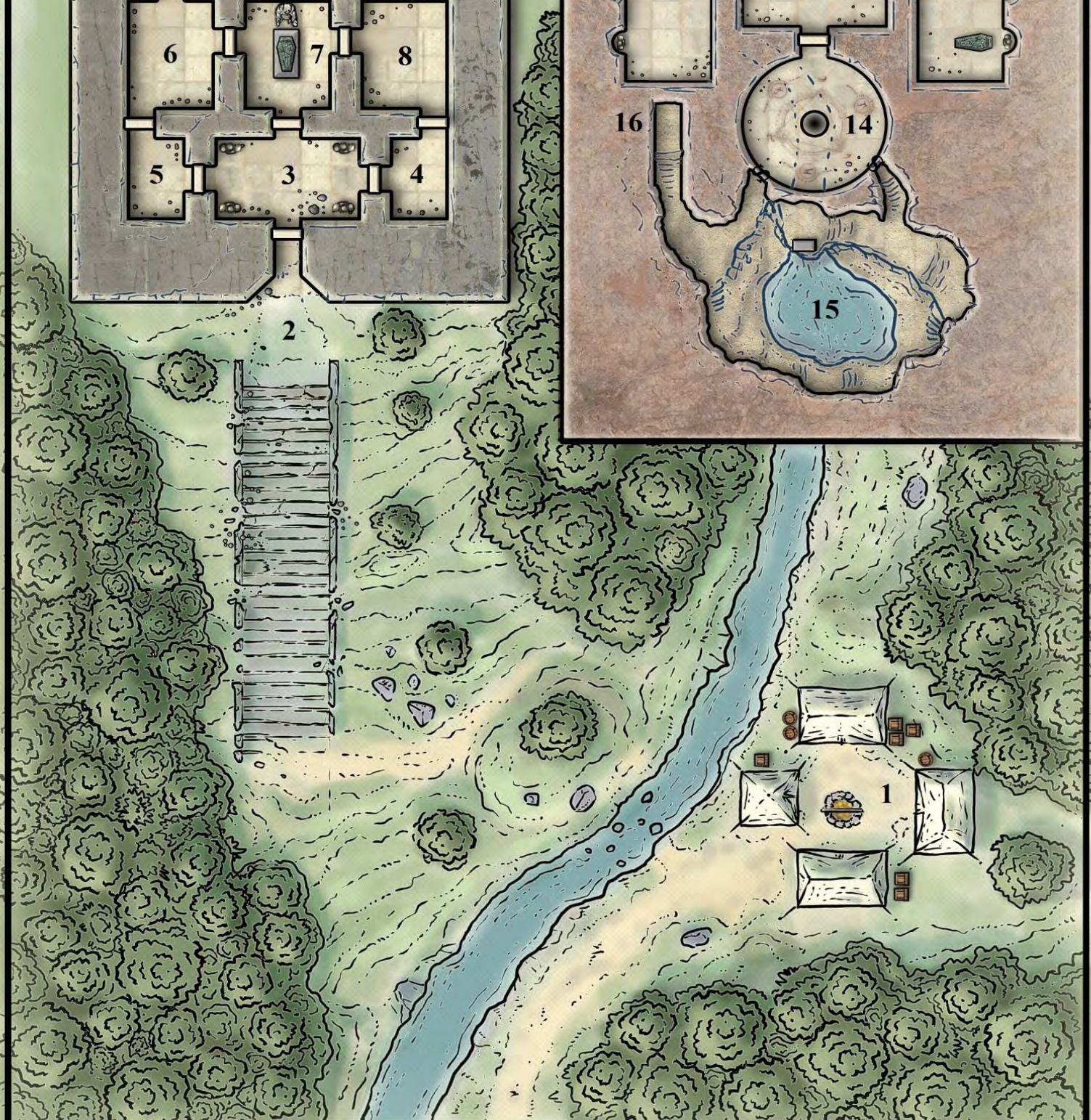
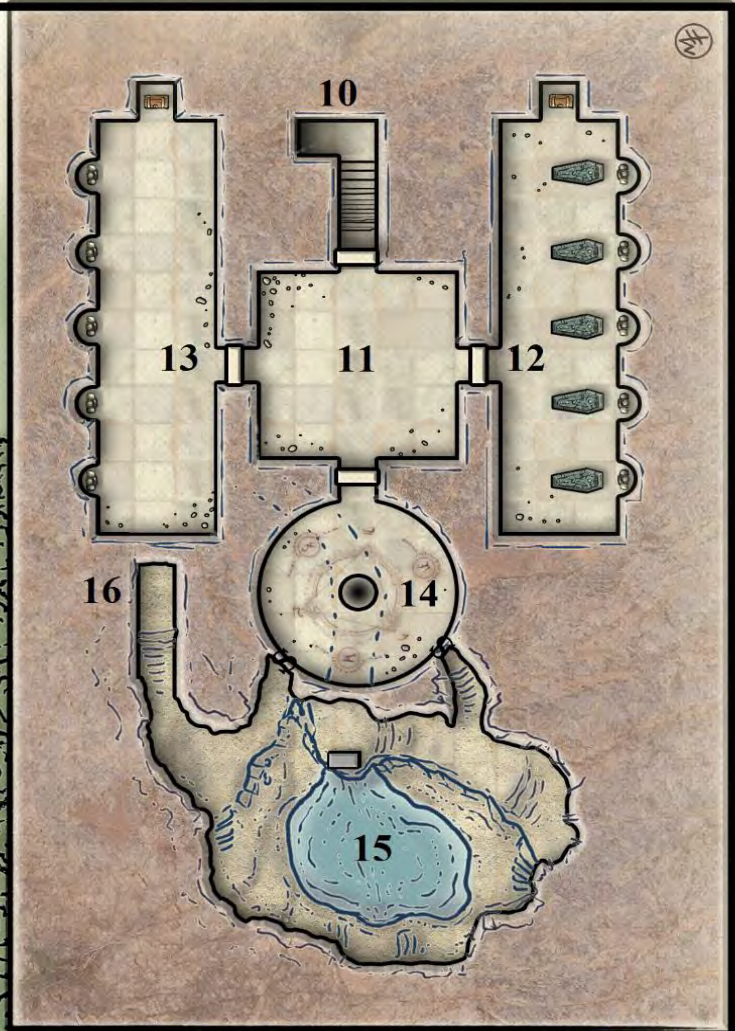
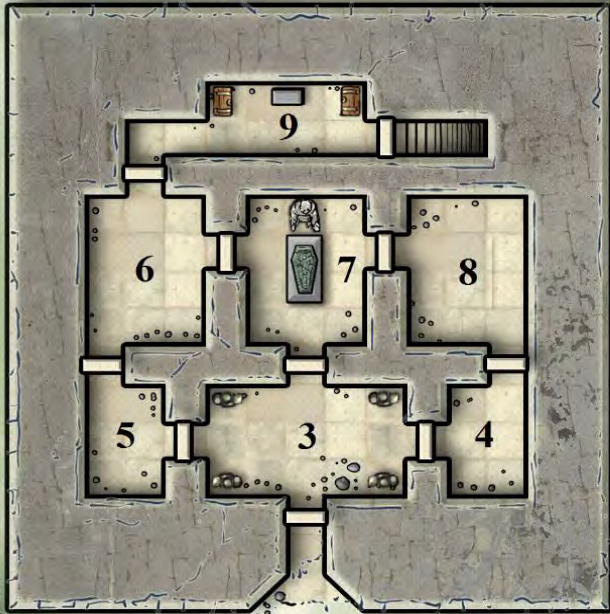
Random encounters reflecting the daily routine of the inhabitants are provided below. There is a 25% chance of an encounter every 15 minutes if the PCs are being stealthy.

If the party is not being particularly quiet, increase the chance to 50%. If the party is very loud, they automatically draw attention from adjacent rooms and/or the chance increases to 90%. If an encounter occurs, roll 1d8:

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1. A single *Iguaato* acolyte can be heard shuffling around the corner ahead, hissing to itself in deep contemplation of the *Crawling Host*.
  2. Curious snorting, scraping and clinking noises can be heard nearby. A snaggle-toothed *Giant Crocodile* (*Tetzal*, a long time *Iguaato* pet and lucky mascot of sorts) is trying to pull open a door with its jaws (the doors do not swing close of their own accord). *Tetzal* is well loved; if killed and the body found, all hell will break loose in the ziggurat.
  3. A prisoner from Area 8 (*Synderson*, if not yet found, else a tribesman) is being conveyed to Area 14 for sacrifice by 1d4 *Iguaato* novices. The prisoner is drugged and moaning loudly in an ecstatic state (forewarning of their approach).
  4. A 10 yr old tribal slave boy referred to by the *Iguaato* as *Mah-Nuku* ("crap carter") is dragging a copper pot with faeces in it to the jungle to empty it. His tongue was removed at an early age and he is ritually scarred in multiple places. *Mah-Nuku* is deathly afraid of his cruel masters, but might be persuaded to draw the PCs a map of the complex if he thinks they can help him escape (he longs to return to his tribe, which he has only fleeting memories of, before being snatched away one night).
  5. 1d4+2 *Iguaato* novices can be heard barking and hissing to each other in their reptilian tongue, about to turn the corner. They are in good spirits, with blood on their claws, having just finished a torture session with the prisoners in Area 4.
  6. 1d3 hatchling *Iguaato* (only 1 ft tall), recently born in Area 16, are hiding from the adventurers somewhere nearby (they did not have time to scuttle away). A Perc (Det) contest vs Dex 8 is required to spot them. If unnoticed, they alert their closest kin.
  7. 1d6+1 *Iguaato* acolytes are on their way from Area 13 to Area 8 to see the *High Priestess* (or vice versa). They are either well fed and content, lulled on jungle wine, or anxious about their impending meeting with their holy matron.
  8. *Nebbuchek* (Area 5) or *High Priestess Veskaal* (Area 7) is about to appear from a nearby entryway, on their way to Area 14 for ritual duties (or back to Area 5 or 7, having completed such).



# THE ZIGGURAT



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## Area 1 – Abandoned Camp

*Ballard's* expedition made it as far as the foothills of the ziggurat before being attacked by *Iguaato*. The four tents are marginally intact, stained and weather beaten, some with large tears.

Within each are bedrolls, backpacks, and other travel gear, bloodstained and broken. Tracks on the ground indicate bodies being dragged up the hill and grey stone steps, leading to the pyramid.

If the tents are thoroughly searched, roll 1d6 to determine what might be scavenged from each:

- i. 1 x Carry Loot.
- ii. A fire pot, still gripped by a half eaten porter's corpse.
- iii. A dropped lantern, full of oil.
- iv. A small pouch of iron rations (1d4 days), mixed up in the remains of a bedroll.
- v. A fine compass (5d10+50 gp) with a lion motif, hidden in a sock.
- vi. A recently arrived *Iguaato* pilgrim, quietly poking about inside one of the tents.

## Area 2 – Ziggurat Entrance

The large double door entrance is at the base of the ziggurat, inscribed with serpent and lizard icons, shedding their skins as a gigantic hydra towers above them. The doors are heavy but unlocked (Str (Athletics) check at adv to open).

Tracks on the ground suggest bipedal and slithering reptiles entering and exiting the ziggurat, along with drag marks of the captives from Area 1.

## Area 3 – Hall of Guardians

This 50 ft by 30 ft hall has a 20 ft ceiling, with faded black tiles on the walls and ceiling. A pink blue nebula mural, with multiple stardust tendrils, dominates the ceiling overhead (if it is a genuine star system, no human astronomer can identify it). A number of "stars" are in fact gemstones (1d6 x 100 gp worth if pried out).

In each corner of the chamber is a single *Reptile Golem* (bronze, dinosaur like humanoid in armour). The golems animate and attack, attempting to force out any humans that try to open the east, west or northern doors. The guardians cannot leave the ziggurat.

**Reptile Golem**, AC 15, HD 4, Claw 1d10+1, 19: special, S17 D8 C19 I- P10 W- Ch-, L7, Mv 30 ft. On a Nat 19, the target is grabbed and dragged towards the entry. Once within 10 ft, the target is hurled outside. The target cannot re-enter the ziggurat without making a *Luck* (Will) save (may attempt once per round).

## Area 4 – Holding Cells

This 30 ft by 40 ft chamber houses 1d3 thuels (barbarians) and *Synderson* (sole survivor of *Ballard's* first expedition, Fighter 2, 3 hp, her head and body shaved in preparation for her coming sacrifice), trussed up with ropes or locked in manacles attached to the walls. Each of them is in a poor state: blooded, missing limbs or teeth, etc; clearly tortured and broken.

If freed (Dex (Traps & Locks) check for manacles, or cut ropes) they are not fit for fighting, but half of them can provide information about Areas 6, 7, 9 and 11, which they have passed through on their way to Area 14 for sickening blood rituals. *Synderson* has been broken by the experience, and just wants to escape, but is smart enough to know her best chance is with the PCs.

## Area 5 – Waiting Room

This 20 by 30 ft chamber is used as a waiting room for visiting pilgrims or guests, until seen to by an Acolyte from Area 6. The walls are painted with a faded mural of reptile kin wading through swamp and jungle lands, raising skull lanterns to the night sky. Stone pews run around the western and southern walls.

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There is a 40% chance a visitor is in waiting when the PCs arrive at the ziggurat; if so roll 1d4:

1. 2d4 *Hraarsk Serpentmen* come to pay their respects.
2. 1d4 *Iguaato* with a recent hatchling, to be offered as a new initiate or perhaps sacrifice.
3. 1d4 *Ghouls* with a paralysed barbarian male in tow (a weekly tithe to the *Iguaato*, with whom they have a fragile neutrality agreement). The 2d10+5 member undead pack hunts in the region.
4. The blasphemous human exile *Nebbuchek* (Magic User 3), in league with the reptiles these many years. He has come to ask a favour of *High Priestess Veskaal*.

### Area 6 - Acolytes' Chambers

1d4+2 yellow robed *Iguaato* acolytes live in this 20 ft by 30 ft room, sleeping in decorated nests of soft bracken. 7 ft prayer staves (kapok wood, carved in the *Serpentmen* tongue, which *Iguaato* speak) line the walls.

There is a 50% chance the acolytes are here, otherwise they are in Area 9 or Area 11/14 performing a daily ritual. Searching the chamber reveals 2d4 vials of *Red Grin* (refined saliva from the highly rare *Crimson Horn Centipede*, one dose per vial). If imbibed *Luck* (Con) save or incapacitated with overwhelming ecstasy for 3d6 minutes, then lose 1d4 Con. Extremely addictive.

### Area 7 - Oceltol's Sarcophagus

This 30 ft by 40 ft chamber contains a stone statue (an imposing, leering serpentwoman) and sarcophagus, housing the remains of *Oceltol*, the first *Iguaato* priest to be sacrificed in the ziggurat.



*Oceltol's* spirit lingers here still, drifting through the corridors, invisible to all, but perhaps perceived as an inexplicable chill, the slightest ripple across one's shadow, or a momentary blockage of the throat (as if choking).

Opening the sarcophagus requires a Strength (Athletics) check. Inside are powder like bones wrapped in decayed linen, clutching a blue scaled egg. The magical egg is 8 inches long, bound to the Veil from which it siphons power from time to time. If attuned to, the user's DDM tally starts at 4 instead of 1, but once per week they may spend an action to invoke a spell (determined randomly, level 1d4, then 1d20; see LFG p.91). The user knows which spell is available before invoking it.

Humans are forbidden from touching the stone coffin, and what remains of *Oceltol's* consciousness will be incensed if the sarcophagus is opened. Anyone claiming the egg experiences signs of his presence, up until midnight, at which point his ghost manifests to kill them and reclaim the relic! If the egg is abandoned before midnight, he does not appear (and the egg mysteriously vanishes).

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**Oceltol, Ghost**, AC 12, HD 8, Touch 1d4 + special, 19: the target ages twice as much as usual, S- D15 C- I10 P13 W17 Ch3, L9, Mv 30 ft flying. *Incorporeal*. A ghost's awful caress instantly ages the target 3d10 years (no *Luck* save permitted) and requires a *Luck* (Will) save to resist suffering a serious madness. If a target is aged more than its expected lifespan, it dies a desiccated husk.

### Area 8 - High Priestess' Chamber

*High Priestess Veskaal's* chamber is 30 ft by 40 ft, decorated with a 20 ft tapestry. The hanging depicts a nest of snakes, *Serpentmen* and *Iguaato* whipping or murdering Neanderthal humans, beneath a sky of glittering reptile eyes. 8 ft prayer staves topped with gold line a rack on the northern wall (1d6 x 100 gp). There is a 50% chance *Veskaal* is here, otherwise she is in Area 14 performing one of her daily rituals. *Veskaal* is accompanied at all times by her unique pet, the 8 ft *Gorrhino*; a wicked joining of a saurian's armoured scales and a gorilla's rage, spawned from one of the sect's unholy rites.

**High Priestess Veskaal**, AC 14, HD 5 (29 hp), Bite 1d10+1 and Sword 1d8+1, 19: *Veskaal* emits a nauseating stench (*Luck* (Con) save at disad or lose 1d4 Str, S14 D8 C11 I13 P11 W14 Ch13, L8, Mv 30 ft inc up walls. May speak with reptiles. *Veskaal* has *Minor Exploit Protection* and may cast the following spells up to three times per combat: *Fusing of Flesh*, *Lash of Unerring Pain*, *Shennog's Blessing*, *Wings of the Starless Abyss*, *Strands of Ensnarement*, *A Wisp Unseen*, *Incantation of Exhaustion*.

**Gorrhino**, AC 15, HD 6+3, 2 x Fists 1d6+2 and Horn 2d4, 19: bear hug, S19 D12 C16 I3 P10 W15 Ch4, L8, Mv 30 ft. 10 ft reach. The *Gorrhino* flies into a rage when staggered, gaining *Off Turn Attacks*. A hit with both fist attacks draws the victim into a crushing hug, forcing a roll on the *Injuries & Setbacks* table (a *Luck* (Con) save resists).

Searching this chamber garners 1 x Carry Loot and 1 x Valuables, as well as a *Spellstaff* (as random magic scroll, but in 8 ft prayer staff form).

### Area 9 - Reading Alcove

This large reading nook includes a stone desk with wooden stools, and chests containing various tomes and scrolls in the *Serpentmen* tongue.

If examined by a PC, roll 1d12 to determine the most precious book (1d6 x 10 gp) they find (inferred from the illustrations, if not reading the words): (i) arcana, (ii) demons, (iii) torture and interrogation, (iv) humanoid flesh recipes, (v) curses, (vi) reptilian illnesses, (vii) astronomy, (viii) jungle herbalism, (ix) ziggurat history (x) expense accounts (xi) local human tribes (xii) random magical scroll.

### Area 10 - Trapped Corridor

The stairs descending to the lower level are trapped. Standing on the step before the landing (50% chance) on the way down causes it to depress, shooting bolts from above the doorway of Area 9 down the corridor (+8 to hit, 2d8+2 dmg). Inspecting relevant areas allows a Perc (Detection) check to notice concealed dart holes above the door, or that the step is particularly clean (the residents don't step on it).

### Area 11 - Worship Nave

This 50 ft square chamber is decorated with reptile symbols, hanging litany scrolls, and carved prayer poles. Wall murals depict a scaled worm crushing or devouring various humanoids and large beasts such as owlbears, giant scorpions, horses, etc.

3d6 *Iguaato* are worshipping here at any one time, hissing, swaying and fornicating amidst a haze of hallucinogenic incense (doesn't affect humans). The worshippers' drug induced stupor requires them to make a Perc test to even notice the PCs, and imposes disadvantage on tests to see through any deception the party attempts.

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## Area 12 - Sarcophagi Tomb

This enormous 120 ft by 30 ft catacomb holds 5 ancient sarcophagi, flanked by grey statues of prehistoric reptilian gods (similar to the adventure cover page, but also depicting a colossal scaled worm, a hydra, a dual headed humanoid crocodile, and a nest of intertwined serpents cradling a star).

The sarcophagi contain the fragile bones of early *Iguaato* clerics, laden with sacred writings from the earliest reptilian epoch. The remains are being examined by *Yex'Vorsu*, a young *Razkarrt Serpentman*, convinced that the scriptures contain some hidden secret of the multiverse. Like all serpentmen, *Yex* considers humans nothing more than ignorant man monkeys, worthy only of enslavement, torture and death.

**Yex'Vorsu, Young Razkarrt**, AC 15, HD 6, Bite 1d6 + Poison (*Luck* (Con) save or 1d6 and 1 Str loss), 19: the *Razkarrt* unleashes a potent charm effect, *Luck* (Will) save or *Malediction of Lunacy*, S10 D17 C12 I15 P14 W15 Ch14, L9, Mv 30 ft. *Yex* may spend an action to shift between human, noble and hybrid forms. He may cast the following spells up to four times per combat: *Pierce the Veil*, *Mantle of Many Faces*, *Arcane Aegis*, *None Shall Pass*, *Waking Dream*, *Spectral Transfixion*, *Channel Lightning*.

If *Yex* is defeated, and the sarcophagi looted, up to 2 x Carry Loot, 2 x Valuables and 1 x Trinkets & Curios is located.

## Area 13 - Gathering Chamber

This enormous 120 ft by 30 ft chamber has a 20 ft ceiling, where the occupants of the complex spend much of their free time when not attending to chores (or in the jungle). Sacred statues of past lizardkin clerics line the alcoves of the western wall, and the northern chest contains spoiling carrion (almost ready to eat). Small tables, chairs and sitting nests of bracken litter the area. Cooking

pots hang above coal fires in the corners, fumes disappearing up narrow ventilation shafts that vent to the surface. There are 3d6 *Iguaato* in here at any one time (acolytes, novices, pilgrims, etc), eating, socialising, carving their prayer staves, etc.

## Area 14 - Inner Sanctum

This 50 ft diameter circle chamber has a 20 ft ceiling. The meticulously tiled floor is inscribed with arcane rune circles, at the centre of which is a bloodstained, basalt altar.

1d4 *Iguaato* acolytes (and *Veskaal*, if not already dealt with) are here sacrificing a *Skorn* (beastman) to the reptile gods via a gruesome ritual. If the *High Priestess* is present, she attempts to flee to Area 15 while her novices keep the PCs busy.

Using magic within 10 ft of the altar draws heightened attention from dark forces beyond the Veil: double the chance of a DDM effect (ie, double the character's DDM tally, and add 2 per spell instead of 1).

Concealed doors in the southern wall (Perc (Det) check to spot) lead to narrow natural passages, and the ziggurat's most assiduously kept secret: the *Worm Pool*.

## Area 15 - Worm Pool

Twin natural passages descend steeply into an unlit, 90 ft by 60 ft underground cavern, with a 40 ft ceiling. At the base of the cavern is a small, crudely fashioned altar (in the shape of a wide, flat, snake like skull) cut from the surrounding stone, and a large 5 ft bronze gong (ringing the gong summons the worm).

A 40 ft wide pool is adjacent to the altar. The water is black and quietly rippling (it connects to the river adjacent to Area 1, and disappears deep underground). Lurking within is a colossal 80 ft *Scaled Worm* from the Second Age, covered in sharp spines.

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The reptiles worship the worm as an “avatar” of the gods, leaving it corpse offerings to devour (left on the skull altar for the worm to eat at its leisure). The monster generally dwells in the underground deeps; the river outlets here are too narrow for it to pass through.

**Scaled Worm**, AC 18, HD 14 (82 hp), Bite 6d6, 19: special, S21 D10 C20 I3 P8 W15 Ch2, L14, Mv 90 ft slithering or swimming. *Minor Exploit Protection. Fire Breath* 10 ft wide line up to 180 ft long, 10d8 damage (*Luck* (Dex) save for half), recharge 30%. Swallows targets on Nat 19-20. 15 ft reach.

A swallowed target may attack the monster’s guts with a small weapon such as a dagger, suffering 3d8 crushing and acidic damage on the monster’s turn. There is no treasure to be had in this area unless the worm is slain, in which case 1 x Carry Loot and 1 x Valuables may be found lodged in its innards, left over from centuries old meals.

A nest of 3d6 *Iguaato* eggs (worth 100 gp each to the right buyer) are half buried in fine earthen dunes, marked with finely inscribed runes (to receive the blessings of the acolytes, then collected by parents, or donated as novices or sacrifices).

## Aftermath

*Ballard* will be over the moon if *Synderson* lives, and/or any cultural artifacts are retrieved from the ziggurat (in particular any prayer staves, or books/scrolls from Area 9). If *Ballard* is killed, the *Antiquities Guild* will press for an explanation as to how, which may impact on the party’s reputation in certain circles.

If the present *Iguaato* retinue are wiped out, others take their place over time, fortifying the complex to resist any further incursions. If this is somehow prevented, the *Scaled Worm* eventually burrows its way through one of the secret passages, and emerges from the ziggurat, looking for food.



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# NIGHT AT THE GREEN GOBLIN



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## NIGHT AT THE GREEN GOBLIN

*The Green Goblin Inn & Taphouse? Yeah, I 'eard of it, down on Cinder Street if I remember right. What are you after the Goblin for? Not peace and quiet I hope. No? Didn't think so. Well, luck o' the Silver Wolf to you my friend. You'll be needin' it.*

### Green Goblin Inn

The *Green Goblin Inn & Taphouse* (typically shortened to the *Goblin*) is one of those establishments many have heard of, but few actually frequent, on account of its reputation for shady deals, questionable clientele, and regular rough housing.

But when the party needs to find someone, gather scuttlebutt and rumour, fence reclaimed goods, or procure gear frowned upon by members of the guard, the *Goblin* is open for business twenty four hours a day, seven days a week.

*Night at the Green Goblin* is a flexible, one night adventure site as opposed to an overarching plot scenario. Being a tavern, most PC activity involves interacting with NPCs, including: gathering information or rumours (**Area 10**), fencing goods or acquiring illegal equipment (**Area 7**), gambling (**Area 14**), recruiting hirelings (**Area 15**), drinking contests (**Area 13**), duelling in the street (**Area 6**), or good old fashioned bar brawls. The adventure also includes three set hooks however, as follows:

1. Tracking down *Vinceri* for her bounty (a spy of merchant house *Lorca*, carrying stolen accounts and schedules; **Area 20**),
2. Deciding what to do with the *Amulet of Agometh*, palmed off to them by *Kya* when the party first enters the *Goblin* (**Area 1**).

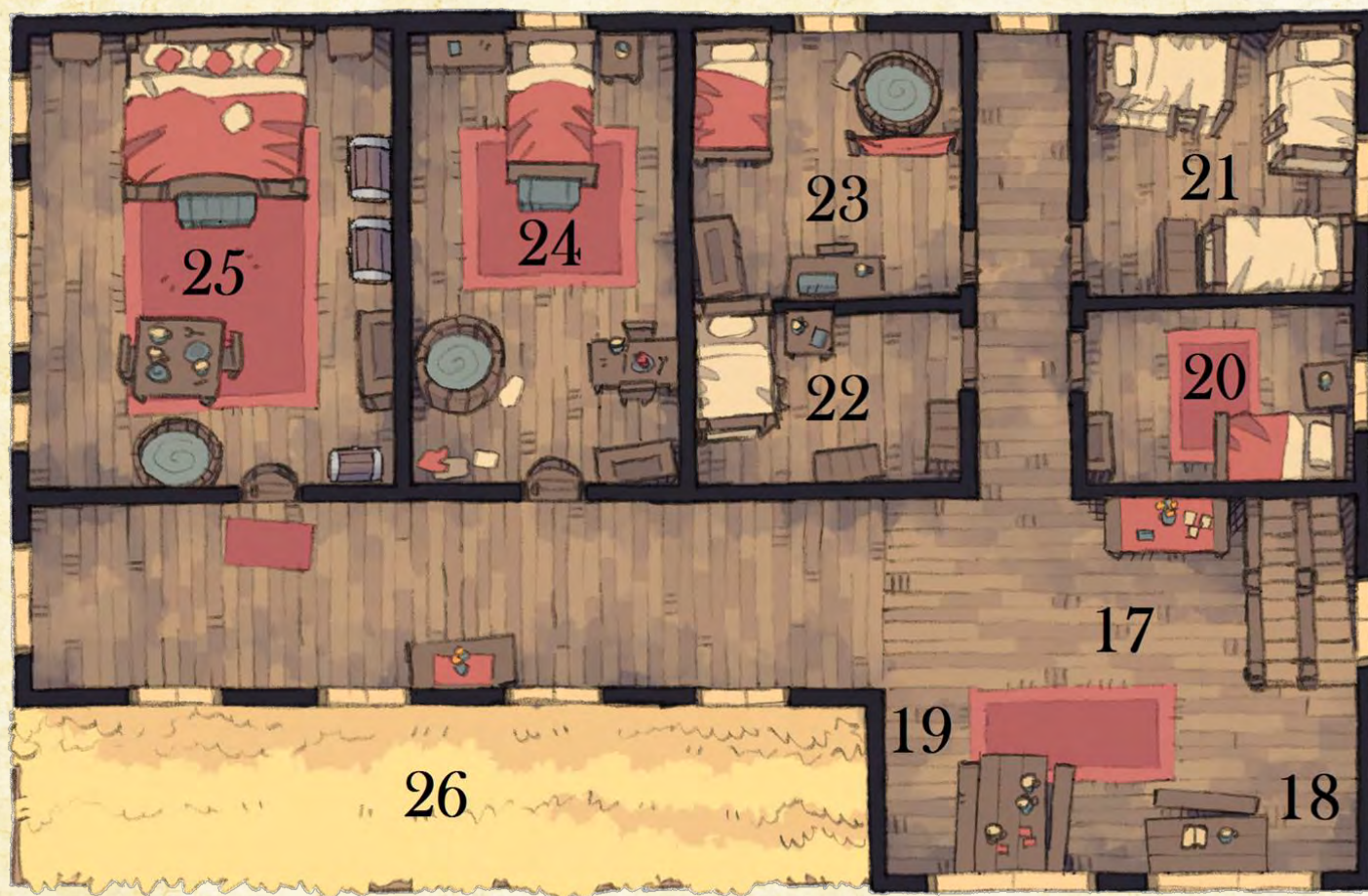
3. Dealing with an enraged, uncontrolled *Void Drifter* demon that is inadvertently summoned by *Federgeist* late in the night (**Area 8, 23**).



### Staff, Menu & Environs

By and large the inn is constructed of stone and timber, with plastered walls and mixed floors. Natural light enters via shuttered windows during the day, and there are candles, lanterns, the hearth, etc, to provide illumination at night. Unless noted otherwise all characters are human and all guest rooms have locks (one key for the tenant, otherwise the staff have keys).





Drinks at the *Goblin* run the gamut, from ales to meads to wines to whiskeys to cloudy, suspicious looking water. Their best brew is *Ironhook Ale*; (dark & bitter, full bodied). The menu choice tonight is:

1. Bison Stew with Tough Rind.
2. Back Alley Sausage & Greens.
3. Chary Cheese Pie.
4. Lucky Pigeon in Onion Broth.
5. Spicy Meatish Balls.

*Bishop* (40s, male, blonde moustache, twin gold earrings) is proprietor, an affable if sly fellow with more connections this side of town than a centipede's legs (inc the guard, thieves guilds, mercenary companies, information brokers, fences, etc). As manager, *Bishop* puts up with a lot, and keeps a cudgel behind the bar in case things get really out of hand. He has a soft spot for red heads and southern wines.

**Bishop**, AC 11, HD 4 (22 hp), Club 1d6+1, 19: target prone, S13 D13 C10 I14 P13 W12 Ch16 L7, Mv 30 ft. Bishop has *advantage* on social checks and may use the Bard ability *Inspire Greatness* twice per combat.

The other wait staff operating under *Bishop's* direction are:

- *Cylia* (female, 40s, dark hair, shapely, calls everyone "my love").
- *Cassie* (female, 20s, red hair, slender, mouth like a sailor).
- *Creya* (female, 20s, 6 ft pale skinned Varnori with blonde hair, boisterous).
- *Copelan* (male, 30s, dark hair, athletic, chef's apron with food stains, dry humour, sarcastic).

As the party explores the *Goblin*, GMs might make use of the *Rumours Table*, *Tavern Events Table* and *Tavern Brawl Table*. A list of random entertainers appears at **Area 6**, and barflies at **Area 10**. The Area 10 list might also be used for random

passers-by, or small groups of drinkers standing about in huddles. Otherwise each of the tables and rooms has their own Area descriptions.

### Rumours

PCs hunting for information or rumours are bound to pick up any number stories, some of which might even be true. Roll 1d10 and consult the table below (or insert your own rumour, adventure hook, etc).

1d10	RUMOUR
1	<i>Did ya hear about old Bengart's mill on the outskirts o' town? His fields are awash with rats big as your arm. Scary blighters! (True).</i>
2	<i>Thing about Bishop, ya unnerstand, is he's a wicked cruel son of a bitch. Loves nothin' more than beatin' honest folk with that soddin' club he keeps behind the bar. (GM's call; perhaps Bishop is overeager to lay about with his cudgel?).</i>
3	<i>Some say there's a warlock hiding out here in the Goblin. Baal's Balls! Imagine it! We'd have 'im trussed up and tossed into the hearth quicker 'an you can say Argona protects. No wizards here sister, I assure you." (False: see Area 23).</i>
4	<i>Lookin' for a good time, ye say? Speak with Hannah (Area 10), she'll sort something out for you, I expect. &lt;knowing wink&gt; (True).</i>
5	<i>Poor Rivertop, eh? Lost their barbarian friends, now they</i>

	<i>want sellswords to defend their shanty town against the Skorn. Hahaha! Ah good luck to 'em, says I. Crazy scobs the lot of 'em. (True).</i>
6	<i>Just ain't right, what happened to old Dunky (a dog). Eaten by giant leeches down by the docks. Horrifyin'! (True).</i>
7	<i>&lt;Whispered&gt; Cassie's a shudding witch! Red hair ye know - that's the sign. See 'ow she's lookin' at Gerbert just now, all squinty like. She looked at Suza just like that last week. Ain't no-one's seen Suz since. (False, Suza is playing cards in Area 14).</i>
8	<i>Some say the Goblin was built atop an ancient graveyard. (False).</i>
9	<i>I was just saying to m' wife the other day, not a good time for travel is it? Not with Pentegast and her brigands prowling the mountains. Hiding in the caves, hmm? (True).</i>
10	<i>I heard Cole and friends (Area 9, 25) got chests full of rich folk clothes stashed in their room upstairs. (True).</i>



### Tavern Events

At any stage the GM may call for a roll on the *Tavern Events* table to decide what happens next. Roll 1d8, plus 1 per hour that has passed. If an event has become impossible, roll again.

1d8	TAVERN EVENT
1	<i>Cylia</i> hand delivers one of the PCs a drink, courtesy of a potential hireling ( <b>Area 15</b> ).
2	One of the <i>Slap the Hog</i> players ( <b>Area 14</b> ) is caught cheating, causing <i>Bryce</i> to flip the table. Unless he is calmed, a <b>Tavern Brawl</b> erupts.
3	The prostitute <i>Hannah</i> ( <b>Area 21</b> ) propositions one of the PCs (male or female).
4	<i>Hangrief</i> ( <b>Area 7</b> ), upset at the attention <i>Cassie</i> is showing the bard <i>Artur</i> ( <b>Area 6</b> ) declares him a “filthy horse scrotum” and demands a duel in the street! <i>Artur</i> might ask one of the PCs to be his “champion” (he can’t risk marring his face, or injuring his playing hand, you understand).
5	Two antagonistic inebriates throw ale on each other, which swiftly escalates into a <b>Tavern Brawl</b> (random table or main bar).
6	The <i>Kribb Twins</i> ( <b>Area 3</b> ) finish up their meal and approach the PCs with an offer about <i>Vinceti</i> ’s bounty and location.
7	<i>Vinceti</i> ( <b>Area 20</b> ) appears from her room, looking for a meal and/or a quick drink.
8	<i>Federgeist</i> ( <b>Area 23</b> ) gets part way down the stairs, sees <i>Inquisitor Avernus</i> ( <b>Area 8</b> ), and swiftly returns to his room. Moments later, the <i>Void Drifter</i> is unleashed!

## Tavern Brawls

If a tavern brawl erupts (if, LOL, when), it engulfs everyone in the immediate vicinity and the next closest table. Each round the fight spreads to the next closest table, until eventually the whole tavern is in uproar.

PCs in the brawl must face off against 1d3 patrons each round for approx 2d6 rounds (if a PC knocks out all opponents, another 1d3 accost him next round). Additionally, have one random PC roll on the *Tavern Brawl* table each round.

**Brawling Patrons** AC 10, HD 1d6 hp, Fist 1d2 or chair 1d4, 19: grabbed, tripped or pushed, S10 D10 C10 I10 P10 W10 Ch10, L3, Mv 30 ft.

1d20	TAVERN BRAWL
1	<i>Break it up.</i> 3d6 guards enter the tavern, putting an end to the brawl.
2	<i>KO!</i> The PC is knocked out by a lucky haymaker for 2d6 rounds ( <i>Luck</i> (Con) save resists).
3	<i>Wear the Chair.</i> A brawler breaks a chair on the PC (roll on the <i>Injuries &amp; Setbacks</i> table, ignore permanent results, <i>Luck</i> (Con) save resists)
4	<i>Pile on!</i> 2d4 brawlers pile onto the PC, pinning them down (helpless, Str contest vs Str 16 to resist).
5	<i>Merrub</i> , one of the <i>Kribb Twins</i> (Area 2) skirting the edges of the brawl, yells out 3 to 1 odds on the PC being the last to be knocked out. 1d6 brawlers take up the wager and converge on the PC.
6	<i>Bloody ruffians!</i> One of the bar staff whacks a PC on the head with a skillet, stunning them (lose next action).
7	<i>Where'd you come from?</i> A small, old, grey haired dog, <i>Limpy</i> (Area 13) suddenly scuttles out from under a table, about to be crushed by a toppling brawler! (Dex check to intervene).

8	<i>Fire!</i> A shattered lantern flares in some spilt alcohol, setting part of the tavern on fire!
9	<i>Looters.</i> The PC glimpses <i>Bishop</i> (the proprietor) unconscious on the floor, being looted by an opportunistic brawler.
10	<i>Cat Projectile!</i> A flying feline ( <i>Ratsack, tabby, grumpy</i> ) rockets across the tavern, claws outstretched, latching onto the PC's head (blind, spend an action to make a Str check to remove).
11	<i>Duck!</i> A shower of mugs, bottles and plates hurtle across the tavern. All PCs must make a Dex check or suffer 1d8 damage.
12	<i>Gummy the Horn</i> (Area 13) yells above the din of the brawl: " <i>Hey! I'm tryin' ta drink here! Stop this ruckus and shut the hell up!</i> " Curiously, half the fighters pause to listen to her. If the PCs seize the opportunity, they might be able to end the brawl early.
13	The bard <i>Artur Excelsior</i> begins beating on a drum and shouting encouragement, inspiring the brawlers. All fighters gain advantage on their next attack.
14	<i>Kya</i> (Area 1) has snuck back into the tavern and attempts an opportunistic pick pocket (ideally against the PC she planted the amulet on, assuming that occurred (Perc (Detection) contest vs Dex 15)).
15	<i>Hard Steel.</i> One or more of the PC's opponents turns serious, pulling a knife.
16	The hulking <i>Hangrief</i> (Area 7) cracks the head of his current foe before pointing at the PC and nodding enthusiastically.
17	<i>Bitey.</i> An old man with crazy eyes suddenly bites at the PC from under a nearby table, causing 1d4 damage and tripping them (Dex check resists).
18	<i>Bar Slide!</i> The PC is grabbed by three brawlers and thrown across the bar, knocking off mugs and plates (1d6 damage and lose 1 Dex, <i>Luck</i> (Con) save resists).
19	<i>Window exit!</i> The PC is hurled out the nearest window into the street (Str contest

	vs Str 15 resists). 50% chance of being knocked out for 1d6 rounds.
20	<i>Surprise Refreshment.</i> In the rafters, a mischievous child pours a pitcher of ale on the PC, along with a cheeky grin. The PC restores 1d6 hp (regains consciousness if at zero hp, or if otherwise knocked out/incapacitated).

### Drunk & Disorderly

PCs that drink too much during the night risk becoming overly drunk. At the GM's option, after consuming a large quantity of alcohol, a PC must make a Con check or roll for a *Drunk & Disorderly* event. If the check is successful, any future d&d checks are at a cumulative -2 penalty. If unsuccessful, roll on the table below. Being drunk generally imposes a -2 penalty on combat actions (might provide a small bonus to social checks; GM's call).

1d12	DRUNK & DISORDERLY
1	<i>Dance Off.</i> The PC takes a shine to one of the Varnori sisters in <b>Area 12</b> , asking one of them to dance. In fact, all four get up to dance, and end up fighting over the PC; lose 1d4 hp in the fisticuffs.
2	<i>Hug It Out.</i> The PC is swept up by feelings of comradery and begins hugging their party members. The hugs soon expand to nearby "fellow drinkers!" and "fellow tavern lovers!" There is a 50% chance they attempt to embrace <i>Hangrief</i> (Area 7), who punches them instead (1d4 dmg).
3	<i>That Floaty Feeling.</i> The PC is feeling rather floaty for 1d2 hours, slurring their words and swaying gently in place as they concentrate to maintain balance. A Con check is required to avoid falling over if they have to fight or move quickly. On the plus side, if a bar brawl erupts, no-one pesters the PC once they fall over (Will check to get up).

4	<i>Rounds.</i> The PC becomes fast friends with the textile merchants in <b>Area 9</b> , with whom they begin shouting rounds (deduct 5 gp). Learn two rumours. On a successful Cha (Persuasion) check, <i>Cole</i> accidentally lets slip about their smuggling operation. The PC must make a Will check or give up a secret of their own (or of another party member perhaps; GM discretion).
5	<i>Gangway!</i> The PC is suddenly overcome by waves of potent nausea. Projectile vomiting is inevitable in 1d10 seconds. A successful Con check doubles the time. Might precipitate a tavern brawl.
6	<i>Fancy Meeting You Here.</i> The PC ends up under the stairs in a passionate tryst with a random tavern goer (50% chance it is <i>Gummy the Horn</i> , <b>Area 13</b> , otherwise <b>Area 10</b> list or random table).
7	<i>Merry Making.</i> The PC has a merry old time, making many new introductions and friendly acquaintances. Gain adv on social checks for the rest of the night.
8	<i>New Allies.</i> The PC has a grand time for 1d2 hours, making new friends amongst the regulars and potential hirelings in <b>Area 15</b> . In fact, by the end of it, the PC has signed up <i>Grogran</i> , <i>Samwick</i> , <i>Red &amp; Raquel</i> for their next adventure! (11 gp/day for all 4).
9	<i>Party Time.</i> The PC parties for the next 1d3 hours, making friends with half the patrons (learn two rumours). <i>Bishop</i> and the staff take a liking to them (adv on social checks with staff). At some point they make an enemy of <i>Inquisitor Avernus</i> ( <b>Area 8</b> ), declaring that he "smells like turnip" and "has a head like a bison's sack".
10	<i>Side Alley Shenanigans.</i> The PC somehow ends up in a side alley with <i>Hannah</i> ( <b>Area 10</b> ) for a brief intimate encounter (Will check to resist, deduct 1 gp). Add <i>Hannah</i> as a future street contact.
11	<i>Arm Wrestling.</i> The PC ends up in an arm wrestling contest with 2d4 regulars (Str 1d4

	+10). If the PC bests all these, <i>Lord Hargraves (Area 10)</i> gets involved (S16). The winner gains 2d6 gp and the grudging respect of other contenders.
12	<i>Passed Out.</i> The PC passes out where they are, head down on the table (or slumped against a wall, if not at a table). They awaken in 1d6 x 10 minutes, or if forcefully roused. If no-one is minding them, 50% chance any coins or valuables are stolen.

## Ground Floor

### Area 1 - Main Entry

After descending some short stone steps, an extra wide door is the main entry to the inn. A sign depicting the face of a green goblin hangs overhead. The smell of pipeweed and sounds of the crowd can clearly be heard from outside.



As the party approach to enter, the door slams open and *Kya* (solid female, late teens, scar on her nose) bursts outward, crashing into the lead PC (or a random PC, if the lead PC is unclear). The collision is a fortuitous accident, and *Kya* takes the opportunity to plant a metal amulet (stolen from

*Maldwin, Area 9*, only moments earlier) in the PC's backpack, pocket or other accessible location (Perc (Detection) check vs Dex 15; you might make this check on behalf of the PC so as not to tip off the players if they aren't already suspicious). *Kya* mistakenly believes one of the barflies in Area 10 saw her take the amulet, and wants to offload it ASAP.

Without a word of apology, *Kya* beats a hasty retreat, pushing her way past the PCs and out onto the street, glimpsing back once as she disappears down a dark lane (she might reappear later in the night, see **Tavern Brawl #14**).

### Area 2 - Maris & Grotnik

Sitting at this table are *Maris* (male, scrawny with thin lips, labourer's garb) and *Grotnik* (male Barb 2, 20 hp, S16 C15) with minimal clothes, sizable biceps and a toothy grin). The two are old buddies, amicably catching up on old times between ales. They might part with a rumour if the PCs are sociable. *Grotnik* in particular is happy to speak with any female PCs.

### Area 3 - The Kribb Twins

The *Kribb Twins* (*Merrub* & *Marco*, tanned, stocky dock workers with limp hair) are eating a meal, enjoying having just been paid. They eye off any intrusion with disinterest, but might be brought around with free drinks (bottle o' *Bodric's Finest* will do nicely).

The twins are here most nights, and keep a sharp eye on comings and goings. They know *Federgeist* has been living in **Area 23** for a week, for instance, and that *Vinceri* is hiding out in **Area 22** (they know about *Vinceri's* bounty, but aren't game to claim it. They'll spill her location for 30 gold however).

### Area 4 - Inquisitor's Lookout

A lone female (*Afena*, tanned, high ponytail, worn travel cloak) is sitting at this table, drinking from a flagon (water). She is one of *Avermus's* hired crew

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(Area 8), keeping an eye on both front doors for *Federgeist* (Area 23) or any magical happenings.

Being on duty, she's unlikely to engage in much chit chat, and will simply say she's waiting for someone. If pressed or somehow won over, she might discuss a recent rumour she's heard. Any signs of magic are reported to her boss.

### Area 5 - Common Room

The *Green Goblin's* "L" shaped common room has a long bar with stools, seven large tables and ample additional standing space. Tonight the tavern is moderately crowded; patrons mill around the bar and table areas, along with small standing groups. Pipeweed, the clinking of mugs, and general hubbub fills the air.

*Bishop* and *Creya* are behind the bar serving drinks at a cracking speed, whilst his other three staff (*Cylia*, *Cassie* & *Copelan*) manage table orders.

### Area 6 - Entertainer's Stage

The raised wooden stage is approximately a foot off the ground, giving patrons a better view of the night's entertainment. Curtains, screens and other props are available for use by the performers. Roll 1d6 every hour or so to determine which act is up next.

1. A travelling troupe of 2d4 *Mimes* hit the stage, pretending to be walking against strong winds, trapped in a box, etc. One of the mimes catches the eye of a PC, at which point they all mimic that character until their session ends. (Random? Part of the act? Something unsavoury and inexplicable? GM's call).
2. Wandering bard *Artur Excelsior* (long hair, handlebar moustache) plays his lute for the crowd, smiling and singing as he goes. He is actually quite skilled, and the crowd seem to like him well enough.

*Cassie* pays him special attention, much to the growing aggravation of *Hangrief* (Area 7).

3. *Grumpleton of the Seven Suns* (70's, thinning grey hair, jet black robe embroidered with seven golden suns) is a theatrical "wizard", making some extra coin whilst his travelling carnival is on hiatus. He employs a mix of flash powder, rudimentary fireworks and other parlour tricks to achieve his "magical" effects. He carries a curious staff, carved in the likeness of a serpent.
4. The "*Four Princes*", a capella quartet, *Merek*, *Vineburg*, *Arrat* and *Janice* (female, dressed as a male, including false beard, best performer of the night) manage to get the crowd singing along with their bawdy tunes and cheeky lyrics. Crowd favourite.
5. A pair of athletic gymnasts (*Romara* and *Entigo*) dazzle onlookers with their contortions, feats of balance, juggling, and spike throwing. Many a melon is split whilst being held aloft by volunteers (a random PC is asked to assist, perhaps a *Luck* check is required to avoid an accident?).
6. "*Dragon Born*" a dancer and fire eater, with prosthetics/make up to mimic green, reptilian scales. Bursts of flame, revealing clothing, and suggestive moves prove distracting to many patrons (at the GM's option, a pickpocket might take advantage, perhaps in cahoots with the dancer?).

### Area 7 - Lester & Hangrief

*Hangrief* (40s, hulking male, one white eye (prior disease), possessive of *Cassie*) a local enforcer/bodyguard is sitting with *Lester* (50s,

balding, shabby with a gold tooth), an infamous fence. They are here on business tonight, meeting with patrons in the common room before heading up to **Area 22** to finalise deals (note also their arrangement with *Hannah Area 10*). If the PCs are in search of any illegal goods (or want to offload any), chances are *Lester* can help. *Hangrief* has a recent failed relationship with *Cassie*, and has developed an unhealthy obsession/jealousy towards her (see **Tavern Event #4**).

**Lester**, AC 13, HD 3, Knife + poison, 19: extra strong dose of poison save at disad, S11 D13 C10 I15 P15 W15 Ch14 L9, Mv 30 ft. *Lester* has *Backstab*, *Skirmisher* and *Finisher* abilities like a 3rd level rogue, and may choose from the following tricks twice times per combat: *Hidden Blade*, *Quick Reflexes*, *Rapid Dose*. He has approx 200 gp on him (more in Area 22), and 1d4 doses of *Fireblood* poison.

**Hangrief**, AC 13, HD 3, Sap 1d4+3, 19: target hurled through nearby window, S17 D10 C11 I10 P10 W12 Ch10 L7, Mv 30 ft. *Hangrief* may choose from the following Fighter abilities twice per combat: *Charger*, *Unarmed*, *Dual Weapons*.

### Area 8 - Inquisitor Avernus

*Inquisitor Avernus* (dark skinned *Nydissian* male, bald head, brightly coloured monk robes) is a burnt out, unstable member of the *Ordo Malefactos* (witch hunters) come to flush out *Federgeist*, whom he suspects is hiding at the inn. He is accompanied by three men-at-arms (*Tommet*, *Windle* & *Mhegan*) not particularly loyal to the order, but fond of their coin).

Unfortunately for *Avernus*, he gets more than he bargained for (assuming *Federgeist* sees him first and the *Void Drifter* is unleashed - see **Area 23**). If the demon manifests, *Avernus* finally snaps, suffering a severe madness (homicidal rage) and attacks anyone nearby (including his own men).

**Inquisitor Avernus**, AC 13, HD 4, 2 x *Cold iron* shod staff 1d6+2, 19: target tripped, prone or disarmed, S15 D16 C14 I10 P11 W15 Ch10 L7, Mv 30 ft. *Avernus* has *Martial Arts* like a 4<sup>th</sup> level Monk, and may choose from the following techniques three times per combat: *Formless Water*, *Moon Shields*, *Sun*, *Heaven's Leap*, *Unchain the Dragon*, *Fork the River*.

**Tommet, Windle & Mhegan** (men-at-arms) AC 14 (chain & shield), HD 1+3, Sword/Axe 1d8, 19: as weapon, S14 D10 C12 I10 P10 W10 Ch9, L4, Mv 30 ft.

If the inquisitor is killed and his body searched, 1x Carry Loot and 1 x Valuables is found.

### Area 9 - Cole, Betheena & Maldwin

A trio of textile merchants (*Cole*, *Betheena* & *Maldwin*, 30's, finely dressed, faint accents) travelling together from a nearby city are eating at this table, enjoying some downtime between trades (and just a hint of smuggling, namely counterfeit coins). They are playing cards in an amicable way, swapping stories as they while away the hours.

When the party approaches, *Maldwin* has just become aware that his eye amulet has been stolen (cut from his belt by *Kya* (**Area 1**)). He stands up immediately and begins searching about for it, accusing nearby folk of taking it, getting angrier and angrier by the minute.

If the amulet is returned to him, things swiftly calm down and he offers the returner a reward (4d6+20 gp, plus he "owes them a favour"). If not returned, *Maldwin's* accusations eventually offend several members of the crowd, setting off a *Tavern Brawl*.

The amulet is in fact a magical talisman, a relic of the ancient *Suum* people, dedicated to the demon *Agometh* (*Fate Eater*). If attuned to, the user may turn back time for a brief moment (1 round) by making a *Luck* check (no action). Once used, the



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amulet vanishes and does not resurface for 10d10 years. Invoking the amulet ages the user 3d6 years and automatically triggers a *Dark & Dangerous Magic* effect.

At the GM's option, the amulet might be quasi sapient, with Will 16. If so, it does not wish to be returned to *Maldwin* and will attempt to influence the PC to keep it (assuming they try to return it), requiring a Will contest. What the amulet might want from the PC is left to the GM to determine.

### Area 10 - Bar

The large "L" shaped is tended to by the proprietor *Bishop* and *Creya*. The other three staff (*Copelan*, *Cassie* & *Cylia*) generally wait on the tables and floor.

Both *Bishop* and *Creya* are happy to take the party's orders or engage in general chit chat and rumours. If the party want lodging, only the bunk room is available (**Area 21**) for 3 sp per PC/night. Each PC gets a key.

The stools around the bar are mostly taken, but someone might leave just as the PCs approach, giving up a seat (50%). Roll 1d10 twice to determine who the PC sits next to (or they might scan the patrons and choose who to approach). The below entries might also be useful for random folk standing around the common room in small groups.

1. *Hannah* (30s, athletic, dark shoulder length hair, low cut dress, a little unkempt), regular prostitute for the *Goblin*, is soliciting patrons. She has an arrangement with *Bishop*, and uses *Lester's* room for any business (see **Area 7, 22**). Will share a rumour or local info for a drink. She charges 1 gp for a quick tryst upstairs (if she gets into any trouble, she seeks out *Hangrief* (**Area 7**)).

2. *Warrick* (male, 50s, corpulent, fine clothes, drinking away his failing marriage woes).
3. *Gwendolyn* (female, 30s, attractive smile that somehow isn't reflected in her eyes). A secret cultist, looking for a sacrificial victim to tempt into the alley where 1d4+1 accomplices are waiting in ambush).
4. One of tonight's entertainers is eating at the bar (**Area 6**).
5. *Saleria* (Bard 2, 5'9" female, albino Karok, hair pulled back in a ponytail) a *House Tergoza* agent (jewellery, gemstones, mining), accompanied by her servitor dwarf (*Mergrim*, Fighter 2, 24 hp, bald with crown sigil brand). She has a meeting to procure a certain gemstone.
6. *Wester* (lanky, fine brown hair in a man bun, neatly dressed, finishes every sentence with "ay") a professional gossip, is talking up a storm, giving and taking stories like a boss. He's happy to share a rumour with anyone who'll listen.
7. *Megosh* (13 yrs old, curly brown hair, I14, D14, quick witted, stout heart) is a street pickpocket in training, hoping to practice on some drunkards. He's not a bad guy, and *Bishop* has a soft spot for his sheer gall. *Megosh* waits till late in the night to ply his craft. If he's successful, he shares part of his gains with *Cylia* (whom he sees as a kind of mother figure, and vice versa). In the meantime, he's happy to swap rumours.
8. *Farris* (5'10", labourer's garb, stout, tattoos), just returned from a long voyage, is the unwitting carrier of *Simian Lumps* disease (hair falls out over 1d6 days, followed by painful glandular lumps, 1d3

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Cha and Dex loss). Touch and fluid vectors. *Luck* (Con) check to resist being infected if shake hands, etc. An apothecary might spot tell-tale signs.

9. *Lord Hargraves* (Fighter 3, 60s, 6'3", very heavy set with dark eyes and an impressive silver beard) infamous for his boozy bar crawls, is in full swing this evening, partying with local barflies. *Lady Hargraves* would be mortified.
10. *Deidra* (20s, female, fit, bold, red coat, S13, W14) lost her labouring job and is looking for better paid work. She recently heard about the clifftop outpost of *Rivertop* (**Rumour 5**), and is keen to investigate. She carries her grandfather's *cold iron* bastard sword, a family heirloom.



### Area 11 - Store Room

The large storage room is mostly foodstuffs and barrels of ale, whiskey and wine. The back door is kept locked at night, each of the staff members has a key.

### Area 12 - Haldi, Ragna, Asgrid & Yrsa

The four Varnori (viking) sisters, *Haldi*, *Ragna*, *Asgrid* & *Yrsa* (each 6 ft, athletic, pale skinned, blonde) are eating roast chickens, washing them down with flagons of ale. They are quite intoxicated and looking for a bit of fun. All four women are keen dancers and might grab hold of a PC or two for a dance when *Artur* or the *Four Princes* are playing (**Area 6**). Refusing a dance won't go down well, perhaps precipitating a tavern brawl.

### Area 13 - Gummy the Horn

At the GM's option, this table becomes free just as the PCs approach (*Gummy* finally passes out (see below), and is dragged away by one of the wait staff, who lay her down under the table on her "resting matt"). She is accompanied by *Limpy*, her small, grey muzzled hound (old, friendly but protective, vicious 1d8 bite).

Alternatively, *Gummy the Horn* (elderly female, thin, pale translucent skin, with few teeth, always carrying her drinking horn) is drinking here and heavily intoxicated. Despite the table being very large, she won't let anyone else sit unless they either (i) pay for her drinks, or (ii) best her in a drinking contest.

If the party pay for her drinks, they get *Gummy's* interjections from time to time ("*Ya know, you look like an old flame of mine, Jerrack Highbottom. Any relation?!*"). If challenged to a drinking contest, despite her inebriated state, *Gummy* still has a ways to go before passing out. Winning best of five rounds (Athletics (Con) check vs Con 10) will put her off to sleep (the PC becomes inebriated either way, -2 penalty on most checks (Con check for -1 instead).

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### Area 14 - Slap the Hog

Four people (*Larkan, Greeble, Renee* and *Suza*) are gambling at this table, watched over by dealer *Bryce* “stab ‘em twice” *Furlong* (tonight’s agent of the *Brewbakers*, a local gang running gambling, protection and house breaking operations - they have an arrangement with *Bishop* who gets a cut).

The game is *Slap the Hog*, a local variant of blackjack with a house rule as follows. Anyone who scores 20 on their cards is the Hog for that hand. If the Hog wins, the player on their left may slap them while the other players make pig noises (snorting, squealing, etc). Players that refuse to participate must drink a whiskey shot instead, or retire for the night.

*Bryce* only allows four players at once, so if PCs want to play, they’ll have to wait their turn. There is a 50% chance one player retires every half hour, increasing by 20% each interval.

If the PCs become involved, GMs might play out the game using a standard card deck, allocate a percentile chance of winning, or require a *Luck* check. Cheating requires a successful Dex (Sleight of Hand) check vs the other players (plus *Bryce*). Anyone caught cheating is ejected from the game, and might suffer a public reprisal from the gang at some later time.

At the end of the night, 1d6 other gang members attend to escort *Bryce* and any winnings to their guild house.

**Bryce “Stab ‘em Twice”** AC 11 (leather), HD 3, 2 x Knife 1d4+2, 19: target prone, S15 D10 C10 I10 P13 W10 Ch11, L6, Mv 30 ft. *Bryce* carries 3d6 x 10 gp in winnings.

**Brewbakers**, AC 11 (leather), HD 1, Knife 1d4, 19: NA, S10 D13 C10 I10 P11 W10 Ch10, L4, Mv 30 ft.

### Area 15 - Potential Hirelings

Four ambitious hirelings (*Grogan & Samwick*, mercenaries, and *Red & Raquel*, porters etc) are sharing a large chicken interspersed with mugs of mead. They just finished up a job with another adventuring company (most of whom died) and are looking for more work.

One of the four takes a shine to one of the PCs (determine randomly), and sends the PC a drink via the wait staff (*Tavern Event I*).

**Grogan & Samwick** (mercenaries) AC 14 (chain & shield), HD 1+3 (10, 8 hp) Spear 1d6+2, 19: NA, S14 D10 C12 I10 P10 W10 Ch9, L4, Mv 30 ft. Spear grants 10 ft reach.

### Area 16 - Alternate Front Entry

This secondary storage area contains crates and shelves with blankets, foodstuffs, candles, crockery and other inn keeping paraphernalia. The single door is usually left open but does have a lock (and bar).

## Upper Floor

### Area 17 - Hall

The upper hall is quieter and more dimly lit than the common room. On hot nights the east and west shutters are left open for a cross breeze.

### Area 18 - Reading Desk

A large reading desk and sitting bench. A number of books belonging to the inn are stacked here, including *Twelve Signs of Witchcraft*, *A Halfskorn’s Tale*, *Coves of the Pirate Kings*, and *Musings Beyond the Borderlands*.

### Area 19 - Bennin & Rogar

A pair of elderly men, *Bennin & Rogar*, are playing cards and drinking fortified wine. Non-guests are usually not permitted upstairs, but *Bennin & Rogar* are old friends of *Bishop*, so he makes an exception. The two are chatty enough, happy to

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discuss rumours or the people they've seen tonight. When the *Void Drifter* is loosed, *Bennin* and *Rogar* make a run for it downstairs, but get eaten halfway down.

### Area 20 - Vinceri

*Vinceri* (Female, 30s, athletic, hood, leather armour) is a spy for *House Lorca* (a mercantile noble family of the Mountain Fortress *Dol-Karok*, specialising in weapons and armour). She recently acquired accounts and shipping schedules of a major rival which she intends to hand off to a messenger later in the week. Unfortunately for *Vinceri*, one of *Lorca's* many enemies recently ousted her, and set a bounty on her head (150 gp dead, or 250 gp alive, to be delivered to the *Rinwolde* estate in *Crow's Keep*).

*Vinceri* has been around a long time however, and is no slouch when it comes to quick getaways and desperate melees. If pressed in her room, she uses her grapple line to escape out the shuttered windows to the street below (or to the roof, or an adjacent building).

**Vinceri, Boss Monster**, AC 14, HD 6 (41 hp), 2 x Short Swords 1d6+2, 19: target disarmed, S14 D17 C10 I14 P14 W13 Ch14 L12, Mv 30 ft. *Vinceri* is a *Boss Monster* with *Off Turn Attacks*, *Stronger Luck* and *Major Exploit Protection*. She has *Backstab*, *Skirmisher* and *Finisher* abilities like a 6th level rogue, and may choose from the following tricks three times per combat: *Cat's Grace*, *Hidden Blade*, *Quick Reflexes*, *Glue Pot*, *Rapid Dose*, *Unseen Whip*. 1d4 doses of *Ghoulshen Admixture*, caltrops (5 ft area, Dex check or half movement rate until short rest), knives, light crossbow (6 bolts) and grapple line.

*Vinceri's* short swords are custom made by *House Lorca's* finest smiths, of perfect length and balance for her body type and fighting style. When fighting with them she ignores fumbles.

### Area 21 - Bunk Room

The bunk room is currently empty, should the PCs wish to hire bedding for the night.

### Area 22 - Business Room

*Lester* (**Area 7**) the fence is operating out of this room tonight (along with *Hannah*, see below). Two chests of illegal wares are watched over by *Rollo* and *Nyrden* (both pale skinned, 6 ft Varnori, fur cloaks and platted beards). They keep the door locked, *Lester* has the key. They don't let anyone in except *Lester*, *Hangrief* or *Hannah*.

If the party do business with *Lester*, he has up to 900 gp worth of currency available (mostly in small gems), and an 80% chance of having any illegal items (poison etc) they might want (otherwise he can get it for them, but it will take 1d8 days). GM's call as to how many of each item, but not more than 2d4 doses/objects per request.

**Rollo & Nyrden** (muscle) AC 14 (reinforced leathers, shoulder guards), HD 3, Sword 1d8+2, 19: disarm, S15 D13 C12 I9 P11 W10 Ch10, L6, Mv 30 ft. *Rollo* and *Nyrden* are part of *Lester's* regular crew, gaining adv on morale checks. They may use the following Fighter abilities twice per combat: *Two Hander*, *Opportunist*, *Unarmed*.

Note the prostitute *Hannah* (**Area 10**) has an arrangement with *Lester* to use the room for clients tonight if he isn't using it. In that case, *Rollo* and *Nyrden* wait outside while *Hannah* conducts her transaction.

### Area 23 - Federgeist

*Federgeist* (Magic User 2, olive skin with neat dark hair, traveller's garb, well spoken) is a sorcerer and recent arrival to the region. He is in hiding, masquerading as a reclusive writer, seeking to throw off *Inquisitor Avernus* (**Area 8**) who is hunting him.

Regrettably for all at the tavern tonight, *Avernus* has successfully traced the sorcerer to the inn. By

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happenstance, at some point during the night, *Federgeist* descends the stairs and spots *Avernus's* men before they see him. Retreating back to his room, he attempts a panicked spell, catastrophically summoning a *Void Drifter* by accident.

The demon immediately eats *Federgeist* (with a horrifying death wail), then rampages through the tavern, slaughtering everyone it can get its claws on before being dragged back through the Veil (after approx 2d4 minutes).

**Void Drifter**, AC 11, HD 8, 6 x Claws 1d4 plus 1 Will drain, and 2 x Bite 1d6, 19: the *Void Drifter* saps 1d4 *Luck*, S12 D10 C18 I9 P14 W15 Ch4, L9, Mv 30 ft flying. Like all *Demons*, drifters are immune to non-magical weapons except those of *cold iron*. *Major Exploit Protection*.

The *void drifter* is a shocking affront to nature and sanity, a demonic fusing of eyes, mouths and spindly, grasping limbs. Seeing one for the first time threatens severe madness (*Luck* (Will) save resists). Beings of manifest hunger and cruelty, *drifters* seek to inflict as much suffering and pain as possible before devouring their terrified victim.

### Area 24 - Bishop's Room

*Bishop* resides here in this spacious room. Things are a little untidy but clean. A safe set into one of the cupboards (Dex (Traps & Locks) check at -3 penalty to open, *Bishop* has the key) contains 1 x Carry Loot and 1 x Valuables.

### Area 25 - Textile Merchant's Room

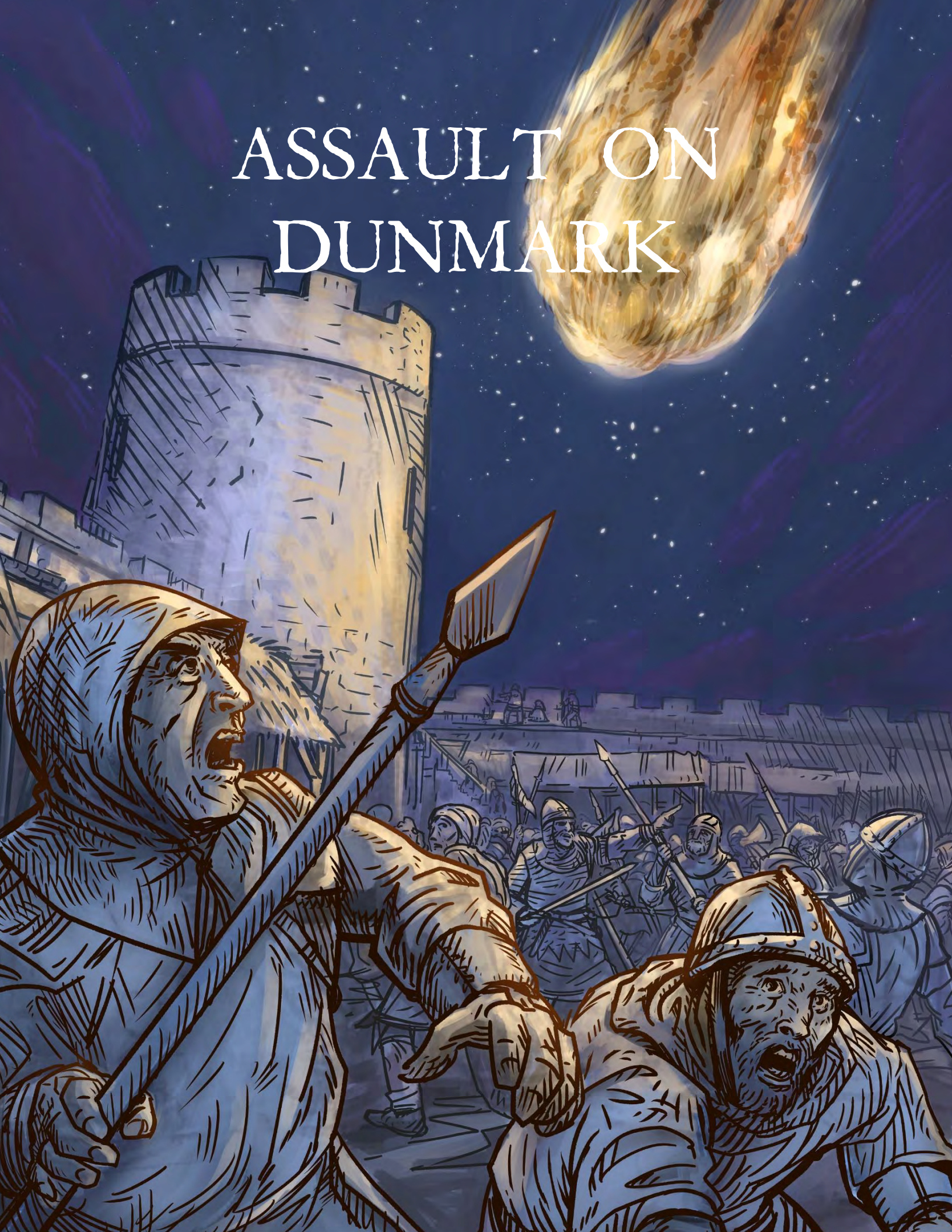
The three textile merchants *Cole*, *Betheena* and *Maldwin* (Area 9) are renting this room. Three locked chests contain their trade goods (various silks, clothes, etc) worth 1d100 + 300 gp each, plus 2,000 worth of counterfeit gold crowns. The door has a high quality lock, as do the shutters (disadvantage on Dex (Traps & Locks) checks). The door also has steel brackets and a wooden bar for additional security.



### Aftermath

Depending on how effectively the party is able to deal with the demon (if at all), the PCs might be the saviours of the *Goblin*. If the demon cannot be contained, it kills anyone who remains and damages the tavern such that the inn is closed for repairs for the next 10 months.

# ASSAULT ON DUNMARK



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## ASSAULT ON DUNMARK

*Aye, you heard it right; Lady Petria slew young Moson in a drunken duel - now Lord Foster is rallying his army to march on Dunmark, raze the keep, and execute his son's killer. Word is they're after sellswords to bolster their ranks. Good time to be a mercenary, I guess?*

### A Deadly Duel

Lord Aeron Foster, as impulsive as he is portly, is renowned for two things: hatred of the *Celdwyns*, and his unflagging capacity for revenge.

For generations, the *Fosters* and *Celdwyns* have been bitter rivals in politics, love and (above all) mercantile endeavours. Regrettably for both families, their feud recently came to a head when *Lady Celdwyn's* daughter *Petria* killed *Foster's* teenage son *Moson*, in a drunken, back alley duel.

When this adventure begins, *Petria* is already in exile at the outpost of *Dunmark*, while her mother pleads for clemency in the *Royal Court*. King *Uldred*, long allied with both families, is in a difficult position. The events leading to the duel are unclear, and until further investigations reveal what really happened, *Uldred* is unwilling to pass judgment.

Predictably, *Lord Foster* is waiting for no-one and has already rallied his army to march on *Dunmark*, intent on sacking the keep and executing *Petria*.

Equally unsurprisingly, *Lady Celdwyn* half expected as much, and has bolstered *Dunmark's* garrison with additional troops, commanded by the infamous *Sir Blaine* (the "*Green Knight*"), to repel the attack.

In summary, *Assault on Dunmark* is a "Mass Battle" scenario, involving hundreds of warriors fighting over the *Celdwyn's* isolated keep, nestled between *Drelnor Forest* and the *Trackless Moors*.



The party might become involved in this adventure as hired mercenaries, conscripts, or other appointed warriors, sent to bolster *Foster's* offensive - either through *Foster*, a bannerman ally, or other third party called to account for some past reckoning. Part way through the scenario, the PCs might have the chance to learn the truth of the deadly duel, which may (or may not) prompt them to switch sides.

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## Foster's Army

Foster's army is made up of approx 700 footmen, 200 archers and 100 heavy cavalry. They are led by *Lord Fontaine* (20s, golden armour with *Argona* star icon, brave, commanding presence) and *General Baritos* (60s, balding, stocky, missing one ear). *Baritos'* fighting days are long past, but he is a fine tactician and well respected by his men. *Lord Foster* himself is not in attendance.

**General Baritos**, AC 15, HD 2 (15 hp), Longsword 1d8+1, 19: 2d6 soldiers appear to aid *Baritos*, S13 D10 C12 I15 P15 W15 Ch13 L11, Mv 30 ft. *Baritos'* fighting days are long past, but he can still swing a sword if he must. He rides a warhorse and is accompanied at all times by three knights (AC 16, HD 3, sword & shield).

**Lord Fontaine, Champion**, AC 15, HD 4 (27 hp), Sword 1d6+3, 19: a random limb is disabled (*Luck* save negates), S15 D15 C14 I12 P13 W13 Ch13 L10, Mv 30 ft. *Lord Fontaine* rides a warhorse. Shield may negate one directional attack (once).

**Warhorse**, AC 15, HD 3, Hoof 1d8+1, 19: trample for double damage and knocked prone, S19 D13 C16 I2 P10 W13 Ch6 L6, Mv 60 ft.

**Cavalry**, AC 16, HD 1, Lance 2d4+2, 19: knock prone, S14 D10 C13 I10 P10 W10 Ch10 L4, Mv 60 ft mounted. Cavalry come with a warhorse and cause double damage on a mounted charge. Shield may negate one directional attack (once).

**Infantry**, AC 14, HD 1, Sword, Axe or Hammer 1d8+1, 19: as weapon, S13 D10 C12 I10 P12 W10 Ch10 L4, Mv 30 ft. Shield may negate one directional attack (once).

**Archer**, AC 11, HD 1, Longbow 1d8, 19: as weapon, S10 D11 C10 I10 P10 W10 Ch10 L4, Mv 30 ft. Archers also carry a shortsword.

## Celdwyn's Army

*Dunmark's* defenders usually consist of 150 outlanders (primarily silver miners, all willing and able to raise arms to defend against *Skorn*, barbarians, etc), and 150 permanent guard.

In expectation of attack, *Lady Celdwyn* increased the garrison by 50 light cavalry, 350 men-at-arms and 50 archers only days before *Foster's* army arrives. Although the defenders have smaller numbers than the invaders, they have the advantage of defending from a fortified position.



Celdwyn's forces are led by the dreaded *Sir Blaine* (6'7", ruthless, mirthless, calculating), *Captain Stanton* (Short, black breastplate, scarred, dark hair with grey streaks; confident) and *Brother Horren* (a cultist of *Graxus* (God of war, combat, struggle, glory), Half-Varnori, 5'10", stubborn and uncompromising). *Lady Celdwyn* herself is not in attendance.

**Sir Blaine, Boss Monster**, AC 16, HD 8 (81 hp), 2 x Sword 2d8+2, 19: disarm, S16 D10 C16 I11 P14 W16 Ch8 L11, Mv 30 ft. *Boss Monster: Off Turn Attacks, Stronger Luck, Reroll Pool, Major Exploit Protection.* *Sir Blaine* causes 2d8 base damage with a sword instead of 1d8. Choose from the following Fighter abilities 4 times/combat: *Opportunist, Two Hander, Charger, Long Reach.*



## Armour of Cartigo

Unbeknown to most, *Sir Blaine's* plate armour is magical (he is ignorant of its history). The *Armour of Cartigo* is only twenty years old, fashioned by a master smith and enchanted by a dying necromancer in the mountain fortress of *Dol-Karok*. Infused with a dark spirit, the plate has at least four attunements (the first three are unlocked by *Sir Blaine*):

1. The amour is impossibly quiet, buoyant and lightweight, negating all armour penalties.
2. The wearer no longer requires sleep, food or drink. Their skin turns pallid and cool to the touch.
3. Once every 1d4 days, upon being struck, the armour drains the attacker's vigour, reducing their Str by 2d4 points (*Luck* (Con) save for half).
4. Once every 1d6 months, the armour's central gem pulses green, generating a *Bane of Mortals* effect.

The armour is known to *House Lorca* (a powerful arms merchant in Dol-Karok), and the *Ordo Malefactos* (southern witch hunters). At the GM's option, agents of one or both might seek to acquire it at some future time.

**Captain Stanton**, AC 15, HD 6, Battleaxe 1d8+2, 19: injury roll (*Luck* (con) save resists), S16 D10 C14 I12 P13 W13 Ch10 L9, Mv 30 ft. *Major Exploit Protection*. Stanton may choose from the following Fighter abilities 3 times/combat: *Two Hander*, *Dual Weapons*, *Opportunist*, *Long Reach*.

**Brother Horren**, AC 15, HD 5, Flail 1d6+2, 19: trip or disarm, S14 D13 C10 I10 P10 W16 Ch11 L8, Mv 30 ft. *Major Exploit Protection*. *Brother Horren* may choose from the following blessings 3

times per combat: *Lay on Hands*, *Holy Smite*, *Sever Arcanum*, *Turning*.

## On the March

*Dunmark* is approximately 10 days march to the southwest of the city of *Crow's Keep*, nestled between *Drelnor Forest* to the west, and the *Trackless Moors* to the east.

Travelling with the army discourages attacks from smaller forces, mitigating the threat of combat related encounters. Instead there is a 30% chance of a Marching Encounter every 12 hours. If a Marching Encounter occurs, roll 1d12:

1. *Gambling*: One or more PCs are drawn into a game of dice, cards or other gambling with 1d6+3 soldiers. On a *Luck* save (or Dex (Sleight of Hand) check), the PC doubles their gold (capped at 3d6+20 gp).



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2. *Disease*: A swarm of diseased mosquitoes accosts the camp, threatening to infect the warm blooded. A *Luck* (Con) save is required to avoid *Bogland Shakes* (*Luck* (Con) save or moderate madness, plus 1d3 Dex loss due to involuntary shudders. 1d3 day incubation period).
  3. *Brawl*: 3d4 moderately intoxicated soldiers pick a fight with the PCs; hurling insults, urinating on their tents, stealing their food, etc.
  4. *Scouting*: The PCs are sent on advance scouting duties and encounter a large 5d6+50 *Skorn* warband; the *Kromoc*, faces painted in purple ichor. The *Skorn* will encircle and kill the scouts if possible, but will not pursue them more than a few miles if the PCs retreat back to the army (which the *Skorn* are aware of). Might be resolved as a Chase.
  5. *Skirmish*: A highly mobile skirmish force (3d6+30 light cavalry riders with short bows) from *Dunmark* makes a surprise assault during the night, seeking to maim army horses and set supply wagons on fire. PCs seeking to put out fires or protect horses will be shot at.
  6. *Downpour*: A heavy downpour turns the trails to thick, slippery mush, making travel particularly exhausting. PCs must make a Con check or suffer 1 Str loss.
  7. *Sparring Match*: The opportunity to spar with *Lord Fontaine* arises one evening while the cookfires are burning. If a PC wins the bout, word spreads through the camp like wildfire, earning the adventurer considerable renown amongst the troops (advantage on Cha and particularly leadership related checks until the siege is over).
  8. *Injured Soldier: Sorjan*, the best friend of an injured female soldier named *Hanne*, approaches the party for aid. *Hanne* has a pulled tendon (horse accident) and will miss the battle if the PCs cannot assist. An Int (Apothecary) check will cause the injury to sufficiently heal by the time the army arrives at *Dunmark*, much to *Hanne's* relief.
  9. *Talent Show*: An impromptu "talent show" manifests one evening while the troops are in good spirits. Contestants take turns standing atop a small rise in a natural amphitheatre, earning praise or ridicule, according to their performance. An impressive act by a PC earns them some celebrity amongst the men, and the approval of *Quartermaster Ridley* (female, 40s, wide berth, fearless, likes fine food, has access to all manner of military supplies).
  10. *Starving Wolf*: Whilst scouting a forested region, one or more PCs detects a faint, mournful animal cry (Perc check). Searching the area reveals a pit trap (set by *Thuel* or *Skorn*) a short distance away, with a starving grey wolf inside, too weak to stand. The wolf's pack abandoned it days ago and are long gone. If restored to health, the wolf might become a loyal pet (particularly powerful bite, 1d6+1).
  11. *Campfire Rumours*: The PCs have the opportunity to swap stories with other troops around the cookfires. If a PC offers at least one tale of their own, roll below for a rumour (1d6):
    - i. *Celia*, one of the camp cooks, is really a dirty thief, and deserves to 'ave 'er 'hands cut off! (true).
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- ii. *Stonebrook Castle*, in the *Ulgoth Foothills*, was abandoned centuries ago after a terrible pestilence swept the land. Some say her treasures still lie untouched (true).
- iii. I 'eard *Brother Horren*, with the *Celdwyn's*, is a genuine prophet of the *Iron God*. Never seen a real prophet, m'self. Never want to, neither (true).
- iv. *General Baritos* is blessed, they say. As long as he lives, he cannot lose a battle. It's his cloak, ye know, enchanted with the blood of the last unicorn. The *Celdwyns* will send agents to steal it, mark my words (false).
- v. Yeah the *Celdwyn's* are filthy dogs: they've got sludding *Thuel* hiding in *Dunmark's* northern woods, waiting to ambush us. Scouts picked 'em up. Now we've got a little surprise for them, instead, eh lads! (false).

- vi. *Moson* deserved what he got, dinne? Way I 'eard it, skirmy hobnob tried to force 'imself on *Petria's* friend in *Croftmon Alley* down by *Silver Gallows*, and she stabbed 'im in the lung for it. Little bastard died on the spot. One less asshole lord runnin' about. Thank you *Petria*, eh, hahar! (true, see **Event 21**)

12. *Thief!* A brazen thief posing as a cook (*Celia*, 20s, short dark hair, always carrying her wooden spoon) seeks to steal something from one of the PCs (from their tent, or person - coin pouch, potion, etc), ideally when they are distracted or asleep. A Perc (Detection) vs Dex 15 contest determines the outcome. The penalty for theft during a march is having a hand cut off.





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## The Battle

*Foster's* army arrives just north of the map about dawn, and the attack is underway by noon. Groups of soldiers swiftly assemble trebuchets and begin firing on the central keep, while battalions of infantry swarm the surrounds, clashing with *Celdwyn's* mercenaries in the field. When the battle reaches full tilt, more than a thousand warriors are fighting for their lives.

### Area Locations

As the mass combat unfolds, the party must deal with *Critical Events* at a number of different locations. The PCs do not get to choose where they go, or where these events occur; like everyone else in the conflict, the adventurers are swept up in the tide of battle, inexorably driven by waves of unrelenting warriors.

To determine which **Area** the PCs are at each Mass Battle turn, the GM rolls 1d8 + the party's *Event Points* (see p.73). After determining location, the GM rolls for *Critical Events*. Depending on where the adventurers are, certain events may be more or less difficult to resolve successfully. The *Final Confrontation* occurs at **Area 15**.

At the GM's option, PCs that go to great lengths to influence their location (eg being as stealthy as possible, using flying magic, doggedly fighting to reach a specific spot, etc) may choose a location one point either side of the rolled result (eg, on a total of 9, the PCs may choose to be at Area 8, 9 or 10). A *Luck* check or other roll might be required (GM's call).

### Areas 1, 2 - High Ground

Siege weapons are located here on high, rocky outcroppings, pummelling *Dunmark* with a steady barrage of boulders and flaming pitch. *Critical Events* occurring down at ground level are harder to reach in a timely manner.

### Area 3 - Raft Crossing

The deep and powerful *Grindstone River* carves its way through the lower flats here. Soldiers fell trees to the north and make rafts under cover of the rocks to cross to **Area 8**. Harvesting trees and navigating the river is hard work, imposing disadvantage on strength or endurance checks this Mass Battle turn.

### Areas 4, 5, 6, 7 - Bridge Crossings

Bridge choke points make defending easier and attacking more difficult, imposing a +2 or -2 penalty on related checks. Area effect attacks are particularly hard to avoid, imposing disadvantage on relevant saves.

### Areas 8, 12 - Woodlands

The various woodlands provide excellent cover against ranged attacks, and make stealth easier, granting a 3 point modifier on relevant *Critical Event* tests.

### Area 9 - Open Field

The northern field is in constant flux as a pitched battle rages between the *Foster* and *Celdwyn* forces. Bodies litter the ground, smoke hangs in the air, and arrows rain down indiscriminately, dropping both friend and foe. *Sudden Twists* occur twice as often here (p.73).

### Area 10 - Rising Trail

A moderately steep path rises upward here to *Dunmark*. Defenders from the keep hide along lengths of the trail, using steel poles to topple large boulders down on those below (*Luck* (Dex) save or 2d6 damage). Fighting along the path is crowded and treacherous, imposing disadvantage on resisting area effect attacks this Mass Battle turn.

### Area 11 - Foothills

A small contingent of camouflaged *Foster* scouts are climbing the side of the foothills, hoping to surprise the defenders from the west. Scaling the hills in this way grants advantage on stealth related

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*Critical Events*, but disadvantage on avoiding ranged attacks should the PCs be discovered (they are effectively pinned on the hillside, making it difficult to scamper down).

### Areas 13, 14 - Buildings

Hundreds of soldiers are battling in and around the buildings of this area, in medieval urban warfare style. The vast majority of the resident outlanders are here, defending their homes and facilities. Many of the wooden structures are on fire, the streets thick with smoke, bodies and battle cries. Catching your breath here is impossible (no short rests permitted).

### Area 15 - Dunmark Keep

The keep is garrisoned by two hundred soldiers, along with the General *Sir Blaine*. When the *Final Confrontation* is triggered, *Foster's* soldiers finally manage to enter the keep (breaching a wall or gates, scaling the ramparts, etc) and swarm inside, turning the interior into a maelstrom of blades and panicked shouts. If not already dead, *General Baritos* and *Lord Fontaine* both die in the final assault.

The climatic battle between the PCs and *Sir Blaine* (plus 1d6 *Cavalry*) occurs here. At the GM's option, *Captain Stanton* and *Brother Horren* might also make an appearance part way through the melee (if not already dealt with).

With the final battle raging around them, roll for a *Sudden Twist* (random PC) at the start of every round. Unless the GM determines otherwise, whichever side wins the *Final Confrontation* also wins the overall Mass Battle.

## Critical Events

The Mass Battle is mostly resolved in an abstract manner, spotlighting the PCs and their ability to handle *Critical Events* that occur as the attack unfolds.

Two *Critical Events* occur each Mass Battle turn, which might take several minutes to several hours to resolve. The GM rolls 1d20 to determine which events arise (or chooses them, perhaps according to location or a prior event). Most importantly, whatever occurs, the PCs are the only characters available to deal with it. NPC allies, if any, are too busy managing other emergencies.

The GM decides on a case by case basis whether a *Critical Event* happens to a specific PC(s), random PCs, or whether the players choose who is involved. Some turns might not involve the whole party; if so, PCs who miss out this Mass Battle turn are prioritized next turn.

Each entry includes a suggested resolution method, which the GM should tweak to taste. By way of assistance, a simple "Party Challenge" framework also appears below:

- GM rolls 2d6 or decides (moderate 5, difficult 8, hard 11) how many successes are needed to achieve the objective.
- Players suggest courses of action to progress the mission. GM decides what checks if any might be required.
- Subject to GM discretion, a PC cannot use the same attribute and/or skill twice in a row. This is intended to encourage variety in approach, rather than repeating the same high percentage tactic over and over (which whilst statistically prudent, makes for a dull session).
- *Great Successes* count as two successes, *Terrible Failures* count as two fails.
- If the PCs fail a total of 3 checks, the Party Challenge is unsuccessful.

### (1) Assume Command

A high ranking official (*Infantry Captain Fergus* (HD 3), *Scout Sergeant Merlo* (HD 2), *Lord Fontaine* or *General Baritos*) is dead, incapacitated or otherwise indisposed, their forces

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in disarray as the enemy threatens to charge. Can the PCs step in and take control?

*Resolution:* a mix of roleplaying and Party Challenge (difficult: 8 successes), focusing on Cha, Will, Leadership and Persuasion.

*Failure:* If the challenge is failed, PCs lose 1 point of Will or Cha (determine randomly).

### (2) A Worthy Foe

*Captain Stanton* appears from the chaos, driving back PC forces with his axe. Can the adventurer defeat the champion and turn the tide?



*Resolution:* play out a duel between the PC and *Captain Stanton*. If the PC is reduced to zero hp, they are automatically killed (*Stanton* ensures they are dead, in a manner calculated to devastate allied morale).

### (3) Death From Above

Siege weapons hammer the area the PCs are in with boulders, fire, toxic gas, ballista bolts, etc, raining death from above.

*Resolution:* A mix of roleplaying and Party Challenge (difficult: 8 successes), focusing on Dex, Will, Int, Con, Athletics and Acrobatics. Additionally, the PC must make a *Luck* (Dex) save or roll 1d12 on the *Injuries & Setbacks* table.

### (4) Fire & Flame!

A large blaze has broken out nearby (building, wagon, corpse pile, trees, grasslands, etc), thick smoke wafting through the air. If the PCs don't take action, the fire will swiftly spread/grow into a raging inferno.

*Resolution:* the PCs must put out the fire and/or convince others to break away from the fighting to help them. A mix of roleplaying and Party Challenge (hard: 11 successes), focusing on Cha, Will, Str, Con, Leadership, Persuasion and Athletics.

*Failure:* If the challenge is failed, PCs lose 1 point of Str or Con (determine randomly).

### (5) Innocent in Peril

As the wide ranging melee unfolds, an allied soldier's helm is knocked off ... revealing the warrior to be *Harl Wetherstone*, the underage heir of the highborn *Wetherstone* family. Will the PCs intervene?

*Resolution:* The PCs may choose not to intervene, but gain some infamy among their allies (imposing disadvantage on later Cha based checks) and possible reprisal by the *Wetherstone* family. Alternatively the PCs may attempt a Group *Rescue* exploit, then play out a combat with 2d4 infantry (per PC).

### (6) Hold the Line!

Enemies are about to break through the shield wall or other defensive line where the PCs are fighting, can they hold the line?

*Resolution:* play out the melee for 2d6 rounds (roll secretly). The PCs must avoid being incapacitated until reinforcements arrive, fighting 1d3 foes (per PC) per round. Foes that survive one round are added to the next.

### (7) A Friend in Need

Through the carnage, the PCs spot a wounded NPC friend (someone met during the march, hireling, pet, or other NPC), slowly but inevitably being encircled by enemies as his/her allies are cut down. Can the PC save their friend in time?

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*Resolution:* play out a melee with the NPC, the PCs, and 2d6 enemies (per PC).

### **(8) And My Axe**

During a furious melee, one PC spots an exhausted soldier drop to both knees after felling multiple foes. Behind him, another enemy readies her spear to skewer him. Will the PC intervene?

*Resolution:* The PC may choose not to intervene and fail this event. Alternatively, the PC may attempt a *Rescue* exploit to save the warrior, followed by combat with the female spearwoman (a champion; AC 15, 4 HD, 1d6+3 damage).

*PC Impact:* If saved, the grateful soldier pledges to repay his rescuer (PC gains a free random henchmen for 1 year). Once only, reroll repeats.

### **(9) Frantic Beasts**

Nearby animals (war dogs, mules, chargers, supply horses with carts, etc) have been spooked by the death of their handlers, siege weapons, fire, foul weather, etc. Can the PCs help calm the beasts, or will they break free and wreak havoc?

*Resolution:* A mix of roleplaying and Party Challenge (moderate: 5 successes), focusing on Cha, Will, Str, Animal Lore, Leadership, and Athletics.

*PC Impact:* If the challenge is failed, PCs lose 1 point of Con or *Luck* (player's choice)

### **(10) With Me Brothers!**

Soldiers fighting alongside the PC are losing heart due to recent setbacks (captain killed, suffered heavy losses, serious fatigue, etc), and are threatening to break. Can the PC rally them?

*Resolution:* Play out a melee with 1d4 enemies (heavy infantry, AC 15), all of whom must be defeated. If at least one foe is slain in spectacular fashion (player describes) using a *Major Exploit*, a Cha or Will (Leadership) test causes troop morale to soar.

### **(11) Traitorous Scum**

Traitors have been hired or coerced to kill the PCs mid battle by an old nemesis or *Lady Celdwyn's*

agents. Will the PCs survive the ambush from within?

*Resolution:* Determine surprise and play out the melee for 1d6+1 rounds. The PCs must avoid being incapacitated until help arrives, fighting 2d4 foes (per PC) armed with poison (50% *Fireblood*, 30% *Elderberry Toxin*, 20% *Ghoulshreen Admixture*).

### **(12) Fall Back!**

As the battle unfolds, PCs and nearby soldiers are forced to withdraw, driven back by overwhelming odds. Can the adventurers escape?

*Resolution:* The withdrawal might be resolved as a Chase, Party Retreat, or Party Challenge (difficult: 8 successes), focusing on Con, Int, Will, Athletics and Acrobatics.

### **(13) Behind Enemy Lines**

A fluke coincidence provides a fleeting chance to gain a battlefield advantage, if only the PCs can sneak behind enemy lines (to sabotage supply lines, steal orders, ambush a special unit, etc). Can the PCs infiltrate enemy territory, get the job done, and make it back in one piece?

*Resolution:* A mix of roleplaying and Party Challenge (hard: 11 successes), focusing on Int, Dex, Con, Stealth and Wilderness Lore. If the mission is failed, a Chase is required to avoid capture or death.

### **(14) Right Place, Right Time**

As the PC drops another foe, they spot disaster about to unfold a short distance away (battering ram or siege tower flounders when one of the handlers is killed, dying standard bearer can't raise her signal banner at a crucial moment, riderless messenger horse with orders still in the saddlebag). Can the PC complete the task in time?

*Resolution:* Reaching the spot quickly requires a Str (Athletics) or Dex (Acrobatics) check (player's choice). A Party Challenge (moderate: 5 successes) focusing on Str, Dex, Will, Con, Leadership and Athletics allows the PC to finish what was started.



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*Failure:* If the challenge is failed, PC loses 1 point of Dex overexerting themselves.

### (15) Magic Ritual

Word somehow reaches the PCs in the midst of combat that *Brother Horren* is performing a divine ritual elsewhere on the battlefield (gathering a bowl of hearts to offer to the Iron God). Can the PCs stop the ritual?

*Resolution:* A mix of roleplaying and Party Challenge (difficult: 8 successes), focusing on Int, Dex, Perc, Stealth, Arcane Lore and Gather Information. Once the secret ritual site is located, play out the combat with *Brother Horren*, plus 1d4 infantry per PC.

*Failure:* If unsuccessful, the ritual causes an accursed weakness to spread through *Foster's* army (all NPCs lose 1d6 Str, PCs may make a *Luck* (Will) save for half). The party loses 2 *Event Points*.

### (16) Sniper Hunt

A hidden sharpshooter (siege tower, tree line, valley ridge, high building, etc) is targeting the PC's area, protecting enemy champions and picking off key allied warriors (standard bearers, medics, etc). Can the PC eliminate the sniper?



*Resolution:* A mix of roleplaying and Party Challenge as the PC maneuvers for position (difficult: 8 successes), focusing on Perc, Dex, Int, Stealth, Wilderness Lore and Gather Information.

On a fail, the PC is shot at (+7/2d8+4). If the Party Challenge succeeds, the PC gets one shot to kill the sniper, otherwise they decamp to another battle location (attack roll vs AC 14, or a *Luck* (Dex) check, player's choice).

### (17) Medic!

Through the smoky haze, urgent cries for a medic ring out as a dying NPC named *Ruddock* (a messenger with critical orders, scout with information, highly respected sergeant good for morale, etc) is dragged to relative safety. The ally is critically injured and on the verge of death; can the PCs save him/her?

*Resolution:* A mix of roleplaying and Party Challenge (moderate: 5 successes), focusing on Int, Perc, Will, Apothecary, Insight and Gather Information. A healing kit or similar might be required at the GM's option. If successful, the NPC lives but remains unconsciousness. The PCs may choose to make a *Luck* (Int) check to stabilize the NPC at 1 hp (ie conscious) for a short time.

*Failure:* If the challenge is failed, PCs lose 1 point of *Luck*.

### (18) Shields Up!

A barrage of arrows, spears, bolts, fire pots and other personal ranged weapons target the PCs' location. Soldiers without shields or that can't find cover drop like flies.

*Resolution:* A *Luck* (Dex) save is required to avoid 2d8+2 damage. On a terrible failure, also roll on the *Injuries & Setbacks* table. At the players' option, they may face the projectile storm with overt defiance (eg: *Braveheart* style) and roll their *Luck* save with disadvantage. If they still succeed, gain a +1 bonus on this turn's *Final Confrontation* check, and fame amongst the troops.

### (19) Suicide Mission

A genuine suicide mission presents itself (hold the tide of enemies on a bridge or other choke point so allies can escape, collapse part of **Area 1** or **2**

down on enemy troops along with oneself, etc). Will the PC sacrifice themselves for the greater good?

**Resolution:** The player chooses whether to complete this task. If they don't the event automatically fails. If they do, a great success *Luck* (Will or Con) save is required to succeed. If successful gain a +1 bonus on this turn's *Final Confrontation* check, and the PC's heroics become legend.

Either way, the player rolls 1d6 to determine the fate of their PC: (1) dies gloriously, (2-3) rolls 1d10 on the *Injuries & Setbacks* table and is captured for interrogation and torture, (4-6) rolls 1d6 on the *Injuries & Setbacks* table, is reduced to zero hp, and left for dead. The GM might improvise a rescue mission/adventure if appropriate.

### (20) In the Thick of It

The PCs are battling where the fighting is fiercest, hewing enemies left and right in a desperate bid to survive. But as one foe falls, another takes its place. How much longer can the PCs endure?

**Resolution:** A mix of roleplaying and Party Challenge (hard: 11 successes), focusing on Str, Con, Will, Cha, Athletics and Leadership.

Additionally, PCs suffer 3d6 + PC level damage, and 1d4 Str, Con or Will loss (determine randomly). If the Party Challenge is successful, the damage and attribute loss is halved (round down).

### (21) Optional Event - Petria

At the GM's option, the PCs notice (Perc (Detection) check) a trio of knights (AC 16, 4 HD) escorting a fourth knight (slim build - on a great success Perc check, they deduce the figure is a woman in male plate armour).

If confronted, the female is revealed as *Lady Petria*. The PCs might be able to extract the full story of the duel from her (Rumour 6). Whether this changes anything is up to the PCs, but as far as *General Baritos* is concerned, *Dunmark* must be taken regardless.

## Event Points

The party's success or failure during *Critical Events* reflects the overall flow of the battle, moving PCs closer to (or further away from) the *Final Confrontation*.

The PCs gain *Event Points* as outlined below, accumulating turn to turn.

EVENT POINTS	
Party succeeds at both <i>Critical Events</i> .	Gain 1 <i>Event Point</i> , and a +1 bonus on this turn's <i>Final Confrontation</i> test.
Party succeeds at one <i>Critical Event</i> .	Gain 1 <i>Event Point</i> .
Party fails both <i>Critical Events</i> .	Lose 1 <i>Event Point</i> .

## Final Confrontation

After reaching **Area 15** (the keep), and spending at least 2 Mass Battle turns there, the *Final Confrontation* occurs (see **Area 15**).

## Incapacitated PCs

If all PCs are reduced to zero hp (or otherwise incapacitated) whilst dealing with a specific *Critical Event*, roll 1d6 for each character to determine their fate: (1) *Dead*, (2-3) *Captured* for interrogation/torture/ransom, or (4-6) *Left for Dead*, but somehow make it back to allied territory (player explains). The GM might improvise a rescue scenario if other PCs remain uncaptured.

## Sudden Twists

During a *Critical Event*, if combat is occurring nearby, the first time one of the PCs rolls a natural 1 or 20 on an attack roll (or other 1d20 check), a *Sudden Twist* is triggered. Roll 1d20:

SUDDEN TWIST	
1	<i>Duck!</i> A stray crossbow bolt or distant marksmen takes a pot shot at the PC (attack roll at +4, 2d8+1 damage).

2	<i>Incoming!</i> Somebody hurls a brace of fire pots in the PC's vicinity; a <i>Luck</i> (Dex) save is required to avoid 3d6 damage and being set on fire.
3	<i>Allied Reinforcements</i> appear from nearby trees, over a small rise, from another street, etc. If the PC is mid battle, enemies are automatically defeated (50% chance they are over run and slaughtered, else they flee).
4	<i>Dead Weight.</i> A hireling, henchmen, pet or important NPC accompanying the PC (if any) has been wounded and knocked unconscious for 1d3 hours. Can the PC keep them safe?
5	<i>Broken Weapon.</i> The PC's weapon is somehow destroyed (if magical it is damaged instead, not usable until repaired).
6	<i>Backstab.</i> A sneaky git stabs the PC in the back whilst they are preoccupied fighting others (1d6 + PC level damage).
7	<i>Lootin' Time.</i> The PC seizes the opportunity to quickly loot nearby bodies, gaining 1 x Carry Loot.
8	<i>Band of Brothers.</i> Rallying cheers from the PC's surrounding allies reinvigorates the adventurer (restore up to half of lost hit points).
9	<i>Corpse Hazard.</i> The PC threatens to become entangled in the growing pile of dead and dying underfoot (Dex (Acrobatics) check or fall prone, plus a further Str check to avoid dropping held items).
10	<i>Tide of Battle.</i> Sheer numbers threaten to force the PC and their opponent into dangerous terrain (eg toppled off a wall, thrown into a raging river, knocked down a steep slope, pinned against a rock, pushed down a sewer chute, etc). A Str (Athletics) or Dex (Acrobatics) check resists.

11	<i>Crushing Intervention.</i> A catapult stone, heavy warhorse, hurtling wagon, or other large moving object threatens to crush the PC. A <i>Luck</i> (Dex) save is required to avoid being reduced to zero hp.
12	<i>Selless Protector.</i> If the PC is reduced to zero hp sometime during the mass battle, a nameless soldier automatically intervenes to negate the attack. The soldier dies in the process (player describes). Once only, reroll repeats.
13	<i>World of Hurt.</i> A spear, javelin or blackpowder weapon strikes the PC in a vital location, causing serious injury (roll 1d6 on the <i>Injuries &amp; Setbacks</i> table).
14	<i>Spoils of War.</i> As the PC fells their latest foe, a valuable object is somehow revealed on their person (spills from a pouch, hangs about their neck, etc; 1 x Valuables).
15	<i>Shaken Soul.</i> A series of dreadful atrocities personally witnessed by the PC threatens to traumatize them. A <i>Luck</i> (Will) save avoids a serious madness: " <i>Fair warning sister, I fought well just now, but dare not rely on my blade. Sometimes I freeze mid battle, just for a few moments, my mind locked in old terrors.</i> "
16	<i>Fearsome Charge!</i> A small force of enemy cavalry or war hounds thunder through the area, leaving carnage in their wake! The PC must make a <i>Luck</i> (Con) save or roll on the <i>Injuries &amp; Setbacks</i> table. NPCs in the vicinity are killed or scattered.
17	<i>Extreme Terrain.</i> Terrain the PC is standing on or near becomes dangerous (a wall falls down, forest wildfire, bridge collapse, rockslide, choking smoke bomb, etc). The PC suffers 6d6 damage (an appropriate <i>Luck</i> save reduces damage by half). nearby NPCs are similarly affected.

18	<i>Obscurement.</i> A vision obscurement floods the area (heavy smoke from nearby fires, an alchemical smoke bomb, rolling fog, night time torches are extinguished by freak winds, etc), limiting vision to 20 ft and imposing a 33% miss chance on attacks. Checks relating to hiding or escape gain advantage.
19	<i>Snap Opportunity.</i> Captain Stanton or another important NPC is exposed for a moment through the melee. A Dex check allows the PC to take a single action against the NPC.
20	<i>Magic.</i> Brother Horren or a solider with a one shot magical item unleashes it upon the PC and nearby allies. Roll 1d6 (as 7 <sup>th</sup> level Magic User): (i) <i>Channel Lightning</i> , (ii) <i>Veil of the Balor</i> , (iii) <i>Strands of Ensnarement</i> , (iv) <i>Curse of Searing Steel</i> , (v) <i>Bound by the Black Spiral</i> , (vi) <i>Affliction of the Eyeless Host</i> . 20% chance of a DDM effect.

## Aftermath

Whichever family secures victory gains the upper hand at the *Royal Court* (along with their allies) for years to come. If the *Fosters* prevail, the PCs become famous in highborn circles, and are rewarded with a chest of gold, parcel of land, the *Armour of Cartigo*, or some other suitably grand reward (perhaps a title of some kind?).

If the *Fosters* are defeated, assuming the PCs survive, they are likely branded traitors to the Crown and sent into hiding (at least for a time).



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# A CREEPING TIDE



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## A CREEPING TIDE

*Saxford you say? Yea I know it. Small outpost on the far side o' Lake Argos. Sure you want to go there, stranger? Lot o' death in Saxford, I hear. Nay, not by beastmen nor barbarian... Saxfords' be taking their own lives. Why? Har! Might as well ask why the sun sets at dusk, eh? Wodon knows, wanderer. Wodon knows.*

### The Black Spire

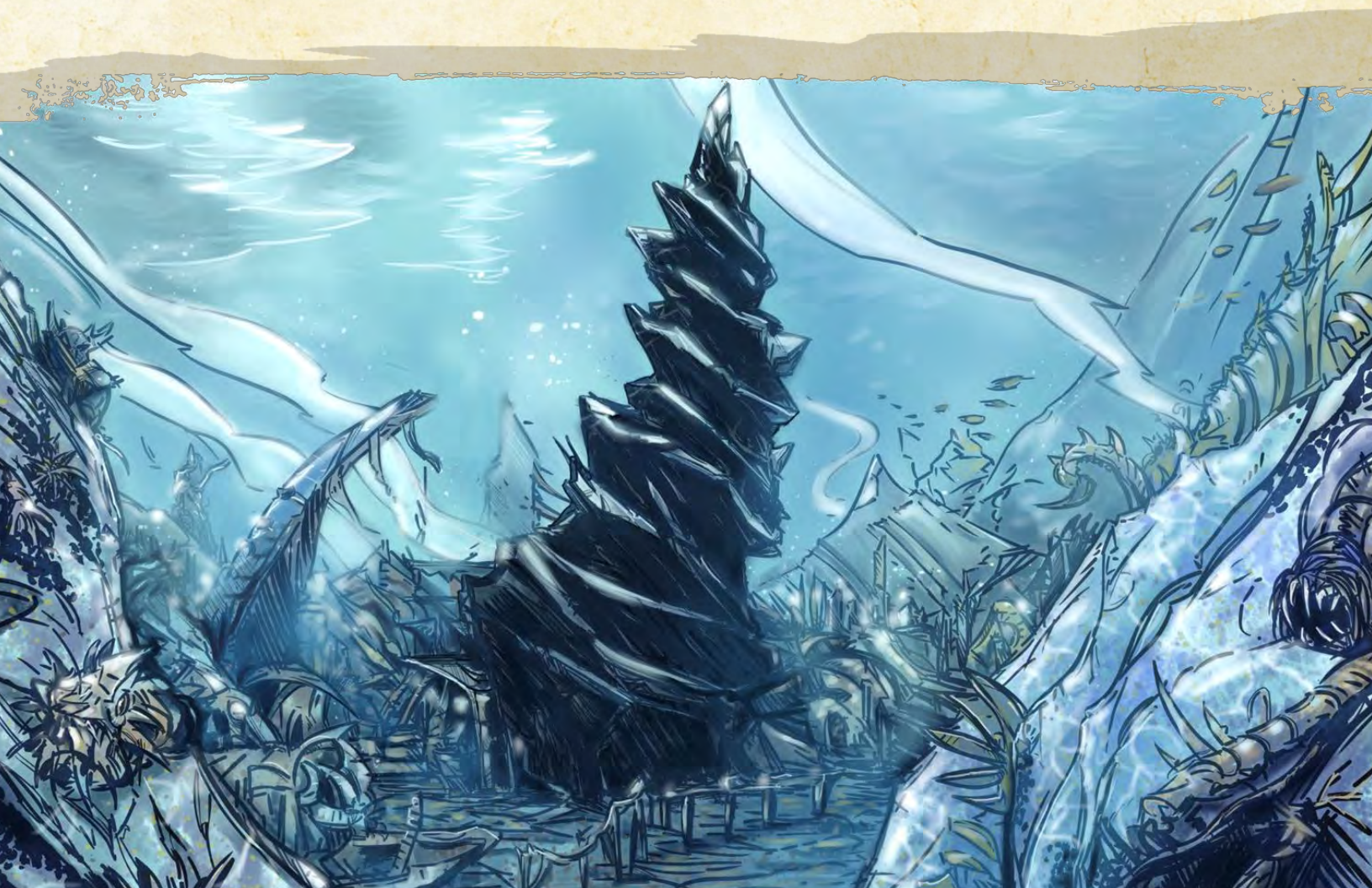
*Saxford*, a little known mineral harvesting outpost situated on the fringes of the inland sea known as *Lake Argos*, is in trouble.

But not trouble of the usual kind. Indeed, barbarian and skorn (beastmen) assaults on the settlement are curiously rare, such that the standard palisade and ditch defences have been dispensed with. *Saxford's* danger is much older, and vastly more insidious, than banal cannibal raiders.

Since before the *Second Age*, the lakeside region has been subject to a creeping and terrible doom, emanating from beneath the waters of *Lake Argos*. A few hundred metres from shore lurks a twisting *Spire* of black, alien stone, an exceedingly rare non-organic substance not of this galaxy.

The *Spire* acts as an unnatural amplifier, strengthening or weakening the Veil in millennia long cycles. Unfortunately for *Saxford*, the Veil has been in decline for centuries, and is now at its lowest ebb. Infinitely patient forces from beyond are aware of this, and mean to exert their influence on the region in cataclysmic fashion.

In this adventure, *Saxford's* outlanders, exposed to the *Spire's* subtle taint for many years, begin to engage in bizarre, hivemind like behaviour, as they unwittingly summon a tsunami that will destroy the outpost and everyone in it.



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The party might become involved in this adventure as (i) messengers delivering sealed letters from *House Menok* to the alchemist *Ramiro* (ordering him home immediately), (ii) as researchers hired to determine why raiders keep clear of the region, (iii) to study the hidden *Spire* after finding reference to it in the *Shenzu* tome *Yu Shan Mingyun (Libram of Five Fates)*, or (iv) taking shelter at the outpost during terrible weather on the road to elsewhere.

## Random Encounters

The GM decides *Saxford's* precise location in their campaign, and the distance that must be travelled to reach it. For the GM's assistance, some random encounters appear below (1d6, by land trek or water voyage).

### Land Trek Encounters

1. A small party of 1d6+1 *Skorn* can be heard hooting and yelling nearby, careful to stay out of bow range. Over the next few hours, they draw 2d6 more of their kind every hour, until the beastmen outnumber their prey by 5:1. Then they attack. PCs knocked unconscious are quickly snatched up and carried away for eating. If more than half the *Skorn* are killed, the remainder retreat. For now.
2. A searing *heatwave* settles in for a few days, threatening travellers with dehydration and heatstroke. A Con (Athletics or Wilderness Lore) check is required to avoid 1 Con loss (at advantage if the PCs take precautions such as not travelling in the middle of the day, drink lots of water, etc).
3. A low rumbling can suddenly be heard, as if the earth is shuddering. A sleeping *Bulette* is directly beneath the party. If the party moves carefully, they might slip away without waking the beast (Party Challenge,

8 successes, focusing on Dex (Stealth), Perc (Detection), Int (Animal Lore or Wilderness Lore).

4. Smoke signals a nearby campfire. 5d6 *Thuel* (barbarians) of the *Still Wolf* clan are settling in for a rest. *Cromot*, one of the teenage scouts out hunting for food, is hiding nearby (Perc (Det) check vs Dex 15 to spot him).
5. An archway made of two trees with intertwined branches stands in a small clearing. The trees are petrified with age, covered in vines, moss and other parasitic plants. *Pierce the Veil* reveals conjuration magic. Placing an offering of some kind draws a blessing from a forgotten spirit (a strange fruit drops from a petrified branch, if eaten it acts as a random potion, once only).
6. 2d6 *Ogres* are out hunting, famished for a meal and complaining loudly. There is a 50% chance they are upwind of the party and have already detected their scent. If defeated the *ogres* carry 1 x Carry Loot.

### Water Voyage Encounters

1. A lone *Argosan Strangler* attaches itself to the underside of the hull. Once darkness falls, it clambers aboard and seeks out a victim to drag beneath the depths. It attempts a degree of stealth, if possible.
2. In the midst of the night, 1d4 PCs notice a faint siren song can be heard drifting on the wind. A *Luck* (Will) save is required to resist going above deck and diving overboard to reach the source. If unsuccessful, a *Lake Harpy* (as *Harpy* but fish like and amphibious) is waiting to drown and devour the victim in her underwater lair. If all PCs save, an NPC crew member is lost instead.

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3. Favourable currents and strong winds gust today, doubling the ship's travel speed.
  4. A *Longship Raider* (4d6+30 pirate crew) appear on the horizon, making a bee line for the adventurers' ship. *Drar Ferthan* might be bought off with treasure if convinced he would suffer heavy losses during boarding.
  5. *Diseased* rats are found below deck in the ship's hard tack supply. All PCs must make a *Luck* (Con) check or suffer a random disease.
  6. Some of the crew get drunk one night playing cards and singing sea shanties. If any of the PCs join them, *Ruher* (Rogue 1, Dex 13) attempts to pilfer something from them (ideally someone intoxicated). If caught out, *Ruher* offers his services in lieu of having his hand cut off (the Captain's usual punishment for thievin').

## Somethin' Ain't Right

Once the party draws close to *Saxford* (within 1 day's travel), they begin to experience some unusual oddities. The oddities may be removed with *Purge the Accursed*, naturally subside in 1d6 months, or suspended for 2d6 rounds with *Sever Arcanum*. Roll 1d10 on the following table every 2d6 hours (or other period the GM determines).

1. A random PC starts to notice that anything they drink has a strong metallic tang (as if there were blood or iron in it).
2. Animals (excluding birds) become extremely scarce (they have vacated the area or are hiding in their lairs). Hunting for such becomes extremely difficult (disadvantage on Int (Wilderness Lore) checks, and a great success is required). Birds can still be found, but are eerily silent.

3. A hireling's or NPC's (including pets) hair turns damp and limp, no matter the sun, towel drying, etc.
4. A random PC leaves watery footprints between dusk and dawn. The water swiftly vanishes into soil or wood but lingers on stone. Wearing or removing boots has no effect.
5. A random PC is afflicted with coughing up water from their lungs every 4d6 hours (disadvantage on actions if it occurs during a combat round).
6. A hireling or other NPC (including pets) bleeds water in instead of blood. If injured, pouring water on the wound miraculously heals it within 1d8 hours. This effect ceases to operate if the character dies.
7. A random PC no longer casts a reflection in liquids of any kind, and develops a phobia of being exposed to such.
8. A random PC cannot quench their thirst, no matter how much they drink. After 24 hours, resisting a drink requires a Will check (if successful, do not check again that day).
9. Rain mixed with blood falls from the sky, staining everything for miles around. All PCs lose 1 *Luck*.
10. A random PC suffers a moderate madness: "*I never bathe, nor swim, nor enter water of any kind. The clinging wet attracts them, you see; the daemons of the deep.*"





## Saxford

The outpost of *Saxford* is nineteen years old, an enviable achievement in comparison to most outlander settlements, given the ever present threat of beastmen raiders.

Curiously, despite the potential dangers, assaults on *Saxford* are improbably rare. Protected only by a small stone fort, and standing retinue of soldiers, it's a wonder the outpost hasn't been razed many times over.

Yet the outlanders not only survive; they thrive. In addition to record fish stocks and gold panning success, *Saxford* is the unique supplier of *Void Salt*: a fine black mineral deposited on nearby shores (shed from the *Black Spire* hidden off the coast and washed inland). A closely guarded

secret, *Void Salt* has latent magical properties that may be unlocked with the correct alchemical processes (see Area 12).

Unbeknownst to her residents, *Saxford's* success is inextricably linked to the *Black Spire*. Hidden beneath the waves, the interdimensional edifice radiates an invisible field of sorcerous energy for approx two miles, subtly granting the residents good fortune, and dissuading invaders from attack.

While they don't comprehend the why, local *skorn* and thuel clans have suffered enough ill fortune to know that *Saxford* curses foreigners, and keep their distance. At least one elder skald recalls the dirge of the *Doom Tide* that swept through the region many generations ago.

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## The Joining

When the PCs arrive, the outlanders have been exposed to the *Spire's* energies for years, slowly but surely corrupting their minds in subtle ways.

With the *Doom Tide* imminent, forces beyond the Veil have dialled their influence up to eleven, usurping the residents' minds and effectively seizing control of the outpost.

Since the last caravan two months ago, the outlanders have been absorbed into a gestalt consciousness; an aberrant mind melding that the residents call the *Joining*. All of the townsfolk are merged to a greater or lesser extent, susceptible to instruction from Veil entities and able to feel each other's needs or emotions (sometimes even reading each other's thoughts).

The purpose of the *Joining* is twofold: (i) to ensure co-operation between residents to invoke the *Doom Tide*, and (ii) to influence and ensnare as many victims as possible. The entire town is bent upon these twin objectives. Once the party arrives, they will do everything in their power to prevent the PCs from leaving until the tide is summoned.

Signs of the outlanders' illness however are prevalent. Any time the party interacts with or observes the local NPCs, there is a 50% chance of strange behaviour. If such occurs, roll 1d20:

1. Two or more *Joined* speak in unison for a moment (a sentence), before reverting to normal. They are oblivious that they have done so.
2. A *Joined* mumbles to themselves from time to time. A Perc (Det) check catches "*Embrace the tide, none can hide.*"
3. One or more *Joined* suddenly clutch at their head, dropping to one knee in pain. It passes after a moment. If queried, they blame it on "bad meat".
4. A *Joined's* eyes take on a watery glaze for a moment, spilling drops onto the ground. The effect might be confused for tears.
5. All nearby *Joined* suddenly emit a shrill, keening wail. They then revert to normal, oblivious to what just happened.
6. A *Joined* in close vicinity projectile vomits up a large volume of lake water.
7. A *Joined* chants "*Into the deep, no retreat*" over and over for a few seconds, then scurries away, grinning inanely.
8. A *Joined* breaks into low, spluttering laughter for a few seconds for no apparent reason. If queried, they explain it's an inside joke they just remembered. Guess you had to be there.
9. All *Joined* in close vicinity adopt an unblinking gaze for several minutes.
10. A *Joined* blurts out an exasperated "*Yes! I'm listening!*" (either to apparently no-one, or midway through conversation with a PC).
11. A *Joined* bumps into a PC as if distracted, muttering something darkly beneath their breath (Perc (Det) check: "*Into the lake, no mistake.*")
12. Nearby *Joined* have black stained hands or clothes, as if from soot or similar (in fact *Void Salt*, from panning earlier in the day).
13. Two or more *Joined* meet and stare at each other for a long pause (enough time to exchange a few sentences), then immediately separate and head in opposite directions.

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14. All *Joined* in the immediate vicinity act in unison for just a moment (eg they all turn their head to look at the PCs, all take a drink from their mug, etc), then revert to normal, oblivious to their conduct.
  15. A pack of hounds, chickens or other animals silently pass by, walking in perfect single file. Nearby *Joined* pay no heed.
  16. A *Joined* the party is speaking to (or that can be overheard) suddenly shifts tone of voice, becoming flat and robot like. This continues for a few sentences, then the speaker reverts to normal, unaware of what occurred.
  17. For a short period, all *Joined* stop referring to each other by their names, instead calling one another "*Sethmul*". They refer to the PCs as "*Yan-Sethmul*". If queried afterwards, they deny it ever happened. An Int (Arcane Lore) check recalls legends of an ancient (now extinct) race of undersea dwellers named *Sethmul*.
  18. A nearby *Joined* pauses to squat down and make strange gurgling, croaking noises in their throat, then inexplicably sprints away.
  19. A nearby *Joined's* skin has a glistening sheen, as if wet. If touched however the effect disappears. The NPC and other *Joined* are oblivious.
  20. A *Joined* the PCs are speaking to interrupts them mid sentence to say "*Father Morverd does not approve*", then excuses themselves, and departs.

## Doom Tide Ritual

The tide ritual has been underway for weeks, once the *Joining* was strong enough to ensure the outpost would work together to achieve it.

Under the direction of *Father Morverd* (Priest of *Shennog* and *Overseer of Saxford*; see Area 15), large numbers of residents gather at the keep each night to participate. The ceremony takes 1d4 hours, extracting blood from the *Joined* and mixing it with refined *Void Salt* from Area 11. The foul smelling *Bloodsalt* is then rowed out onto *Lake Argos*, and poured into the waters above the *Spire*. Some *Joined* are so traumatized by their experience on the lake that they end their own lives shortly after.

When the PCs arrive, the tide ceremony has been conducted every night for the last month. Just one more offering is required to trigger the *Doom Tide*.



## Locations

*Saxford's* inhabitants are primarily fisherman and precious metal prospectors, until recently fierce, independent outlanders. Unwittingly tainted over the years by the *Black Spire*, they are now victims of the *Joining*, and wholly devoted to conjuring the *Doom Tide*. If a *Joined* must give their life to complete the alien ritual, they gladly do so.

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**Joined**, AC 10, HD 1, Axe 1d8, Spear 1d6+1, or Shortbow 1d6, 19: as weapon, S10 D10 C11 I10 P10 W9 Ch10 L4, Mv 30 ft. *Joined* never make morale checks and will sacrifice themselves to ensure the *Doom Tide* comes to pass.

### Area 1 - Docks

The docks are mostly empty, other than 1d2 small fishing craft (single mast sloops or whaleboats), and the PC's vessel (if they sailed to *Saxford*).

Most of the outlanders' ships were scuttled a few days before. The fishing boats that remain are chained beneath the hull to the wharf's underwater pylons. Freeing a ship is difficult but not impossible if the party is determined enough (requiring the padlocks beneath the water to be picked).

If the PCs arrive by ship, their craft's rudder is secretly disabled by *Joined* shortly afterwards. Repairs require the ship to be drydocked (taking at least a day).

3d4 dock workers are milling about, playing cards, repairing wharves, or otherwise seemingly making themselves useful (in fact they are present to keep watch for ships and help with *Void Salt* panning (see Area 2)).

### Area 2 - Warehouses

The large warehouse facilities include three portable loading cranes, shelving, crates and a multitude of buckets, barrels, etc, typically used for trade deals.

6d10+30 dock workers inhabit or linger about the warehouses (an inordinately large number, given *Saxford's* population of approx 150 to 200). In recent months, the labourers spend most of their time panning for *Void Salt* by the shore. If PCs are present during the day, they can't miss the many labourers loitering at the water's edge.

2d6+20 *guards* are on duty at the warehouses day and night, keeping watch over *Void Salt* hauls, and

escorting salt bottles to *Ramiro* (the alchemist in Area 12).

### Area 3 - Fishmongers' Hall

The wooden Fishmonger's hall has a carved shark idol hanging above the door (made by *Nersa*, 80's crone, leathery skin, "*I keeps them menfolk in line and on time*" as she is prone to say). Inside is a large open space for fish scaling, preparation and trade, plus an assortment of knives, nets, etc.

4d6 fishermen are half heartedly working on their catches, fishing gear, etc, but since most of the boats were scuttled, there's not a lot of fish to go around (highly unusual for *Saxford*; an Int (General Lore) check might recall such if the party did any research before leaving for the outpost).

Apart from knives, nets and fishing spears, a small two man rowboat is hanging from the ceiling. *Bloodsalt* delivered from Area 15 is conveyed to the *Spire* by fishermen using the rowboat after midnight.

### Area 4 - Domiciles

Various wooden homes are clustered together here, each containing 3d6 outlanders of several vocations (labourers, fishermen, woodsmen, etc). Each domicile contains a total of 1 x Carry Loot.

### Area 5 - Nebebon's Herbs

*Nebebon* (20's, clean shaven, ruddy complexion from too much drink) is the outpost's herbalist, a relative newcomer of two months, his predecessor a recent suicide. In addition to being an alcoholic, *Nebebon* is fond of *Marpleweed* (a pipeweed calmativ and disinhibitor), which he sells in small tins for 5 sp. Healing poultices, anti-toxins, and disease treatments are also available (50% chance of 1d4, otherwise they take a 4d6 hours to brew).

### Area 6 - Blacksmith

*Geraint* (short, heavy set, stubble, bad teeth) is *Saxford's* blacksmith, crafting tools, weapons, armour, horseshoes, etc. He has 1d4 apprentices working with him. There are generally 2d6

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random tools, weapons, armour or shields about the shop. Additionally, *Geraint* also has a *cold iron* mace, and enough silver ore to forge two *silvered* weapons.

### Area 7 - The Sword & Board

The *Sword & Board Inn & Tavern* is a wooden structure managed by *Master Thorpe* (30s, 6 ft, athletic, bullying), serving wench *Riga* (40s, dark haired, thin lipped, amicable) and cook *Oxley* (short and strong, mute, signs). At the time the PCs arrive, there are no other guests (pure coincidence) and plenty of vacant rooms (lock and key, baths, plus door bar if requested).

The common room is relatively spacious, if hard seated, with a generous fireplace. The *Sword's* best brew is *Silversack Old* (smoky whiskey with a strong aftertaste). On the menu this week is:

- Seared Perch & Big 'Taters.
- Chicken Thing with Sweet Grit.
- No Salad for Old Men.

### Area 8 - Food Market

The Food Market is made up of stalls in a wooden hall. Generally speaking 4d6 farmers have an assortment of meats and vegetables for sale or barter. With the *Doom Tide* imminent however, it's slim pickings (most of the *Joined* spend at least half of their day panning for *Void Salt*, instead of attending to their usual chores). Observant PCs (Perc (Det) check) might notice many of the farmers have black stained hands (similar to soot, but *Void Salt* residue).

### Area 9 - General Store

*Yelma* (plump lady, anaemic, prone to dizzy spells and fainting) owns the general store, running the gamut of odds and ends outlanders need: clothing, sewing gear, rope, lanterns, candles, oil, etc. There is a 50% chance *Yelma* suffers a fainting episode when the PCs are present. If so, and they attend to her, the party might notice multiple precise cutting marks around her calves (very fresh; made by

*Morverd* when extracting *Yelma's* blood tithing the night before, see Area 15).

### Area 10 - Panners' Association

*Saxford's* prospectors, drawn to the settlement on account of its extraordinarily high find rate, typically cut, polish, and make their precious metal trades here. *Oliver* the jeweller (lanky, glasses, crooked smile, fair dealer) buys much of the product, shipping it back to the closest city. In the last few weeks, the trade hall has generally been empty; all of the panners (and Oliver) are out collecting *Void Salt*. A strongbox in a hidden compartment (Perc (Det) check to locate) contains 2 x Valuables (quality lock, -2 penalty on Dex (Traps & Locks) checks).

### Area 11 - Temple

*Saxford's* wooden church has shrines dedicated to the Midlander pantheon, but the *Shennog* altar (goddess of night, darkness, mystery, deceit, madness) is the only one with offerings decorating it (flowers, coins, sealed prayer scrolls, etc). There are generally 2d6 *Joined* in the church day or night, attending to *Shennog* related ceremonies.

The church is maintained by *Brother Dunkley* (40's, 5' 8", prominent jaw, long winded), second in charge to *Father Morverd* who now spends most of his time in the keep as *Overseer*. If queried about *Shennog's* obvious favour, *Dunkley* explains *Captain Caera's* recent suicide has sparked a raft of offerings to appease the goddess.

### Area 12 - Alchemist

*Ramiro* the alchemist (tall 6'1", slim, Karok albino exile, with black dyed hair) lives here with his 1d4 apprentices, conducting the secret processes required to unlock the latent magic within the *Void Salt*.

1d4+3 *guards* are stationed here at all hours, the salt (refined and raw) kept in an iron strongbox bolted to the floor in a sealed room (very difficult locks, imposing disadvantage on Dex (Traps & Locks) checks and requiring a great success). At

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the time of the adventure, only a few small vials remain (3d6 x 100 gp worth); the rest have been consumed in the tide ritual (see Area 15).

**Ramiro**, AC 10, HD 3, Knife 1d4 + poison 19: as weapon, S7 D10 C8 I16 P10 W14 Ch11 L9, Mv 25 ft. *Ramiro* may add poison to his knife as part of an attack (*Ghoulshcen Admixture*, 3 doses). He never makes morale checks and will sacrifice himself to ensure *Doom Tide* comes to pass.



### Area 13 - Barracks

The western barracks house 2d6 + 30 soldiers at any one time, up to half of which will typically be on patrol or sentry duty in nearby borderlands.

*Sergeant Walker* (30s, balding with square features, dark red cloak, lion motif sword) leads the guard, after *Captain Caera* recently ended her own life.

**Guardsmen**, AC 14 (heavy chain), HD 1, Sword 1d8+1, Spear 1d6+2 or Shortbow 1d6 19: as weapon, S13 D10 C12 I10 P10 W10 Ch10 L4, Mv 30 ft. The guard never make morale checks and will sacrifice themselves to ensure the *Doom Tide* comes to pass.

**Sergeant Walker**, AC 16 (heavy chain & shield), HD 3, *Silvered* Sword 1d8+3 or Shortbow 1d6 19: as weapon, S17 D13 C12 I10 P13 W11 Ch14 L8, Mv 30 ft. Sgt Walker has the Fighter *Protector* style, and may choose from the following twice per combat: *Charger*, *Opportunist*, *Two Hander*. He is immune to morale and will sacrifice himself to ensure the *Doom Tide* comes to pass.

### Area 14 - Empty

This old brothel is now empty, the prior occupiers departed for the nearest city after one of their number recently suicided. The building is two storey, with locked front and rear, and boarded up windows.

If broken into, departed *Meedra's* belongings can be found sitting in a pile on her old bed (folded clothes, silver bracelets (13 gp) and dove brooch heirloom (17 gp). A journal in spidery handwriting keeps a ledger of her clients, but also refers to disturbing dreams in her last weeks (a tentacled titan that rises from the lake to swallow the land). The last entry is dated a month ago.

### Area 15 - Keep

This stone walled keep is *Saxford's* main defence against serious attack. Thick stone ramparts allow bowmen, boiling oil and four ballistae (one on each corner) to be unleashed against attackers.

Inside the walls is *Father Morverd's* residence, ration stores, guest quarters, additional barracks, five cell dungeon, and a private shrine to *Shennog*. In addition to *Morverd*, at least 4d6 *guards* are present. During a ritual, another 4d10 + 40 *Joined* are also in attendance.

The tide ritual is conducted here each night under *Morverd's* careful ministrations (when outsiders are present in the town, it is conducted in secret) and the *Bloodsalt* conveyed to Area 3 by *Morverd* and 1d6+6 *guards* (none of the *Joined* know that the *Doom Tide* will trigger tonight, only that it is imminent).

Suspicious PCs might prevent the midnight rowboat (see Area 3) from reaching the *Spire* to deliver the final offering. If so, the party postpones disaster until the offering can be made. If the offering is never made (because it is lost, and *Father Morverd* killed preventing new offerings, etc) the party successfully averts a terrible disaster (see **Aftermath** for more).

**Father Morverd**, *Boss Monster*, AC 12, HD 4 (46 hp), Staff 1d6+1, 19: *Morverd* channels the void, triggering a DDM effect, S13 D9 C9 I11 P9 W15 Ch15 L11, Mv 30 ft. *Morverd* has *Off Turn Attacks*, *Stronger Luck* and *Major Exploit Protection*. He may choose from the following Cultist Blessings three times per combat: *Unholy Smite*, *Lay on Hands*, *Sever Arcanum*, *Place of Perfect Night*, *Shennog's Blessing*.

If defeated, the Keep includes a strongbox (locked) in a hidden floor compartment (Perc (Detection check with -2 penalty to find), containing 1 x 5 HD Lair Treasure and 1 x Potion.

## Doom Tide Stage 1

Stage 1 of the *Doom Tide* involves a 40 ft high wave of water crashing into *Saxford* at dawn, surging inland for approximately 900 feet.

1d4+1 minutes before it arrives, the water on the beach recedes by several hundred feet, stranding boats and fish on the sand, and exposing the top half of the *Black Spire*. Thirty seconds before it strikes, the wave is preceded by a deafening roar (loud enough to wake anyone sleeping).

The tidal wave is similar to a surging river, sweeping away everything in its path. *Saxford* is obliterated; buildings, animals and people helpless against the devastating flood. The wave is too fast to be outrun (horseback or otherwise), and flattens all buildings other than the stone walls of the Keep.

The tide is magical in nature, and does not extend more than a mile either side of *Saxford*. All *Joined* are automatically killed and their bodies claimed by the lake, which drags their corpses back to the *Spire* (their bodies vanish). PCs knocked unconscious suffer a similar fate unless rendered aid.

Adventurers on the walls of the keep are safe from the tsunami. PCs anywhere else (including aboard ships, which are capsized and torn apart) are caught in the deadly tide.

For hirelings or other allied NPCs, roll d100: whatever percentage results is the percentage of survivors (randomly determine who). The party may choose to make a *Group Luck* save to prevent up to 1d3 specific NPCs from drowning, if desired.

For PCs, surviving the *Doom Tide* is run as a *Party Challenge* (hard; 11 successes), focusing on Athletics, Acrobatics, Sailing, Wilderness Lore, Leadership, and any other skills the GM determines appropriate (having regard to PC actions).

Each failed check requires a roll on the Tsunami table (all PCs must roll, separated in the turbulent waters). The first failed check is a d8, the second d10, and the third failed check d8+4.

Roll	TSUNAMI
1	Struck by fast moving building/tree debris; 1d12 damage.
2	Crushed against a building wall or other unyielding object; 3d6 damage.

3	Keeps head above water but utterly exhausted; lose 1d4 Str and Con.
4	If the PC survives they suffer an extreme phobia of water (applies whenever relevant, treat as a serious madness for recovery purposes).
5	Bruising and lacerations cause 2d6 damage, and the PC goes into shock (1d4 Int and Will loss).
6	The PC is injured by sharp debris; roll on the <i>Injuries &amp; Setbacks</i> table.
7	Sucked beneath a fallen tree or building rubble. Make a <i>Luck</i> (Dex) save to wriggle free each round. Check for drowning as if fighting underwater (the unrelenting water is exhausting to resist).
8	The PC is tumbled about underwater, slamming into various hard/sharp objects (2d6 damage). In addition, a valuable piece of equipment is lost (weapon, shield, or other item - determine randomly).
9	Pinned beneath the waves by a heavy object; a Str (Athletics) or Dex (Acrobatics) check at disadvantage is required to break free. Check for drowning as if fighting underwater (the turbulent water is exhausting).
10	1d3 7 ft <i>sharks</i> , whipped into a frenzy by all the broken bodies, attack the PC! (as <i>Giant Shark</i> but 3 HD, 2d6 dmg).
11	Driven below the surface and tumbled over and over for 1d4+2 rounds, suffering 1d8 damage each round. Check for drowning as if fighting underwater.
12	The PC is reduced to zero hp. Without help they will surely drown.

PCs rendered unconscious may be at risk of drowning depending on their location and circumstances. If it is necessary to determine where one PC is relative to another, roll 2d6 (modifiers at the GM's discretion):

2d6	PC LOCATIONS
2-3	On their own.
4-5	Within sight or hearing of at least one other PC (same building, or if outside 3d4 x 20 ft).
6-8	Within sight of at least one other PC (same room, or if outside 2d4 x 20 ft).
9-10	Within sight or hearing of at least one other PC (same building, or if outside 2d6 x 20 ft).
11-12	11-12: On their own. May make a <i>Luck</i> save to miraculously float into an ally's line of sight in 1d3 rounds.

If the PCs succeed in the Party Challenge, or otherwise survive, they have found themselves a safe place to wait out the flood waters. The tide recedes after a few minutes, vanishing as quickly as it came, leaving only ruin in its wake.

## Doom Tide Stage 2

4d6 minutes after the tide recedes (during which time the PCs might look for allies, survivors, retrieve their gear, retreat further from the shore, etc), 1d4+3 *Crabmen* and 1d4+1 *Monstrous Crabs* emerge from the lake.

The *Crabmen* are hunting for survivors, intending to drag them back to the *Spire* and drown them (the victims vanish, never to be seen again).

**Crabmen**, AC 14, HD 3, Claw 2d4, 19: the crabman's whip begins choking the PC (use suffocation rules), S17 D13 C12 I8 P10 W11 Ch7 L6, Mv 30 ft inc swimming.

*Crabmen* are the demonic merging of the drowned *Joined* in recent weeks, and the crabs that feasted on their corpses. They are immune to cold based damage and non-magical weapons other than *cold iron*. Fire causes double damage.



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**Monstrous Crab**, AC 16, HD 4, Claw 2d6, 19: the crab tears a random limb from the target (below elbow or knee, *Luck* (Dex or Con) save resists), S19 D10 C14 I3 P10 W10 Ch5 L7, Mv 40 ft inc swimming.

*Monstrous Crabs* are 8 ft behemoths with iron like carapaces and gigantic snapping claws. They are swift swimmers and equally quick on land, scurrying about with a sideways motion. They may burrow into soft sand at 10 ft per round.

## Aftermath

If *Father Morverd* is killed and the *Doom Tide* prevented, the *Joined* continue to act strangely for the next week. About half drown themselves in the lake, but the other half return to normal within the month. The *Spire's* energies wane, and otherworldly forces rue the day the adventurers

became embroiled in their plans! Within the year, the *Spire* sinks into the lake bed, and begins a new cycle of strengthening the Veil.

If the *Doom Tide* triggers, *Saxford* is destroyed with no trace remaining, save for the stone walls of the keep. Searching the decimated region has a 75% chance of locating some kind of loot (randomly determine from amongst the various buildings). A successful PC *Luck* check also allows adventurers to retrieve most personal items they might have lost during the tsunami. No outlanders bodies are ever found (absorbed by the *Spire* and transported elsewhere). As sole survivors of *Saxford's* cataclysm, the party might earn some fame/infamy at the GM's discretion.



# THE ASTRAVALI



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## THE ASTRAVALI

*“Good and mighty Sirs and Madams! What an honour this is! Please forgive my intrusion, but Master Rogarth, the esteemed Keeper of Relics, has urgent need of your services. I implore you, follow me now to Master Rogarth’s home that he may speak with you immediately. I regret to inform that time is already against us. Please good masters, gather up your belongings posthaste. I shall explain things further on the way.”*

### Fenrir’s Gift

In the First Age, when humans crawled from the divine crucible and emerged into the world, it is written that *Fenrir*, god of skill and luck, gifted a faltering queen with the *Astravali*, a divine relic that bends fate.

The queen’s crisis, and what became of her people, are lost to time, but the item itself persists as a genuine artifact of unique power. Every few centuries, the *Astravali* manifests somewhere in the world, reforming itself as an instrument of prophecy and chance.

In its latest iteration, the *Astravali* appeared as a faded deck of tarot/fate cards, washed up on the shores of *Crow’s Keep*. Acquired by a wealthy relic collector known as *Rogarth*, the deck stayed in his possession for some months before being stolen by agents of the *Ordo Malefactorum* forty eight hours ago. *Inquisitor Varro*, his *Giant Ape* guardian, and others of his retinue departed *Crow’s Keep* immediately thereafter, most likely heading for southern *Melek*.

### Utmost Urgency

This adventure begins with the PCs being accosted by a puffy cheeked messenger, *Marcus* (20’s, long dark hair, well groomed and practiced manner of speaking) who has obviously been scouring the city for them.

*Marcus* expounds that *Master Rogarth*, a collector of relics and other treasures, is in urgent need of their services. He bids them follow, leading the party to *Rogarth’s* home in a well to do quarter (GMs might roll for a random city encounter on the way). If the PCs decline the invitation, or fail to take up *Rogarth’s* offer (see below), the adventure ends before it begins (see *Aftermath*).

Although frail of body (80s, severely bruised, decrepit, walking cane, expensive robe) *Master Rogarth* remains mentally sharp, and his eyes light up upon meeting the party. He has knowledge of at least some of their exploits (via the rumour mill, common contacts, spies, or perhaps the party has worked for him before), and could think of none better to assist him at this desperate hour.



*Rogarth* explains that a deck of magical cards, the “*Deck of Many Things*” as he likes to call it, was stolen from him two days ago by members of the *Ordo Malefactorum*. The *Ordo* forced their way into

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his home, beat him to a pulp, and took the deck (nothing else). *Rogarth* believes the men thought him dead, but he survived (the deck's magic preserved him; a side effect of *The Undying* card). *Pierce the Veil* detects healing magic emanating from *Rogarth's* card tattoo, which has moved from his forearm to directly over his heart since the attack.

Inquiries have revealed that the leader was *Inquisitor Varro* (*Rogarth* can provide a description). Informants confirm the inquisitor left the city posthaste after acquiring the deck, and headed south (probably for *Melek, City of Shackles*, but *Rogarth* can't be sure).

*Rogarth* implores the PCs to catch up with *Varro*, retrieve the deck, and return it to him by any means possible (*Rogarth* already petitioned the guard, who flat out refused; they have zero interest in a wild goose chase across skorn/barbarian infested outlands). As a reward, he invites each PC to draw one of the deck's enchanted cards (or 300 gp, for those who will not truck with sorcery). Given their merciless attack upon him, and the vengeful nature of the *Ordo*, *Rogarth* suggests leaving no survivors.

In addition to the thieves' two day head start, there is one other complication: *Varro* is accompanied by a dozen guards and a towering 10 ft *Giant Ape*. On the bright side however, travelling with such a beast will make their quarry easier to track.

## Ordo Malefactos

*Inquisitor Varro* (30s, drab clothes, bald with scarred head, steely brown eyes) was raised by the *Ordo* from an early age, a true believer in the *Lucentum's* anti magic creed for the good of the Empire. He has been seeking the *Astravali* for some months and will do everything in his power to get it to *Melek*. *Varro* would rather die than draw from the deck.

**Inquisitor Varro** AC 13, HD 6, Staff 1d6+2 and Fist/Kick 1d6+2, 19: target tripped, prone or disarmed, S15 D16 C12 I12 P11 W15 Ch10 L10, Mv 30 ft. *Varro* has Martial Arts like a 6th level Monk, and may choose from the following techniques three times per combat: *Iron Fist*, *Formless Water*, *Moon Shields Sun*, *Heaven's Leap*, *Unchain the Dragon*, *Fork the River*, *Strength of One*.

**Guards** AC 12 (leathers & wooden shield), HD 1+3, Sword/Axe 1d8, 19: as weapon, S14 D10 C12 I10 P10 W10 Ch9, L4, Mv 30 ft.

*Mochugu* is unique, a *Giant Ape* snatched from the *Suurat Jungle* at birth, trained to protect its handler *Inquisitor Varro*. He is akin to a smart, loyal guard dog, but 10 ft tall, 2,000 pounds, and sporting opposable thumbs larger than one's hands.

**Mochugu, Giant Ape, Boss Monster**, AC 13, HD 6+3 (54 hp), 2 x Fists 1d6+4 and Bite 2d4, 19: special, S19 D14 C16 I5 P10 W15 Ch5 L10, Mv 40 ft. *Mochugu* is a *Boss Monster* with *Off Turn Attacks*, *Major Exploit Protection* and *Stronger Luck*. On a Nat 19-20 *Mochugu* grabs the target and slams/throws them into another enemy (both targets roll on the *Injuries & Setbacks* table, *Luck* (Con) save resists). Causes 20 hp damage on a crit. May throw boulders, branches or people up to 50 ft for 2d6 damage.

If the band is killed, *Varro* has the deck on his person in a sealed (stitched) pouch, plus 1 x Carry Loot and 1 x Valuables.

## Following the Trail

With a *Giant Ape* in tow, travelling by ship was not an option for *Varro*, and it's easier to disappear into the wilderness than it is the *Fennorn River* if required. Although the inquisitor does not expect a pursuit, interfering parties are a possibility, so he intends to travel at speed where possible.



Crow's Keep

elnor

Fennorn River

Trackless Moors

Melek

A

B

C

D

E

F

G

H

I

J

L

K

M



Crow's Keep

Belnor

Fennorn  
River

Trackless Moors

Melek

Inquiries at the docks and city gates confirm *Rogarth's* information that *Varro* departed on horseback and headed south. He was in the company of a dozen men, and the giant simian.

The *Giant Ape's* trail is relatively clear, granting advantage on Int (Wilderness Lore) checks to track them. A check is required each day, or other period determined by the GM. Failing the tracking check means losing half a day searching for tracks/following the wrong tracks/backtracking, etc, before a retry is permitted.

The red dots on the first map indicate the thieves' intended path, subject to intervention by the PCs or others. A second (unmarked) map is provided as a player handout. Each hex is approximately 20 miles. Travel speeds on foot (horses travel twice as fast) for an 8 hour period appear below.

TRAVEL SPEED	
ENVIRONMENT	8 HOURS TRAVEL
Roads & Trails	10 miles
Plains & Light Woods	8 miles
Forests, Hills, Subterranean	7 miles
Mountains, Jungles, Swamps, Deserts & Artic Ranges	5 miles
Ocean (large sea vessel at about 5 knots)	40 miles
River or Lake (rowboat, canoe, barge, small sailing vessel at about 3 knots)	24 miles

Parties may perform a forced march for 16 hours of travel, forgoing foraging/hunting, but require a Con check to keep up such a pace the following day (else they must resume normal speeds the next day, including riders on horses).

GMs might assume *Varro's* band travels by horse, and performs a forced march every second day

(the ape travels at horse speed). *Varro* has a 2 day head start on the PCs. Day 1 was a forced ride (32 miles through plains) to the southern border of Hex A. Day 2 was spent crossing the river (requiring half a day), and a further 8 hours riding through forest (travelling 7 miles), crossing into the northern border of Hex C. Assuming the PCs get lucky with a few double forced marches, they should catch *Varro* before he reaches Melek.

## Into The Wilds

Beyond the first hex (approx 20 miles), the wilds beyond *Crow's Keep's* borderlands are untamed, occupied by marauding *skorn* (beastmen), xenophobic thuel (barbarians), and ferocious beasts. Trade caravans with Melek are rare, well planned, heavily guarded affairs. The wilderness between the cities is uncharted; there are no roads to guide explorers, nor villages to provide respite.

Each hex travelled by *Varro* has been labelled, with suggested encounters or other details. Unmarked hexes are left for the GM to determine, guided by adjacent hexes and/or LFG exploration rules. GMs might employ LFG's *Weather* tables at their convenience (may affect travel speed, visibility, likely encounters, etc).

### Hex A - Plains

The plains adjacent to *Crow's Keep's* borderlands are the periphery of the western *Low Plains*. Grasses grow 3 - 4 ft high, with spotted groves of oaks and willows, populated by *skorn*, barbarians and wildlife such as horses and bison.

There is a 50% chance of a random encounter each day. If an encounter occurs, roll 1d8:

1. 5d6 *Riders* of the *Skull Drinkers* thuel tribe (their armour is adorned with bones) are on patrol in their territory, and will take immediate offence to any city dwellers they encounter. They might be persuaded to leave a well armed party alone for a significant tithe of gold or other



- valuables. But probably not. Claiming the skull of an *Unorta* (outsider) is a high honour amongst the clan.
2. A large flock of 3d4 *Giant Eagles* appear on the horizon, looking for a meal. If the party doesn't take action to conceal themselves, they will zero in on their location and attempt to snatch up a small target.
  3. Circling ravens telegraph a recent battlefield. More than two score half eaten corpses lie about the area (*barbarian* and *skorn*, both feasted upon by the victorious beastmen). Searching the remains turns up a Tribal Trinket (roll 1d12):
    - (i) A bowl crafted from a human skull.
    - (ii) A necklace of *skorn* ears (small and misshapen).
    - (iii) 2d6 gold concealed in the bottom of boot.
    - (iv) A stone knife buried deep in a barbarian ribcage, inscribed with icons of *Ulgoth* (skulls, the moon, fire, drums). The knife counts as magical but has no attunement properties.
    - (v) A clay flask of fermented milk.
    - (vi) A cracked but functional warhorn, carved of bison horn.
    - (vii) This dead barbarian possesses a primitive peg leg below the knee, fashioned of oak and horse sinew.
    - (viii) A wooden carving of a colossal frog swallowing a bison (see Hex G).
    - (ix) A burnt and splintered shield (still functional, but will shatter against a critical hit).
    - (x) A single barbarian corpse is peppered with 3d6 *skorn* arrows, half of which may be pulled free and reused.
    - (xi) A small hide map, the size of your palm, written in blood. There are no words, only pictures. An Int check suggests something hidden at the base of a tree with five faces (see Hex H).
    - (xii) This decomposing *skorn* skull has a false eye (carved from a thighbone), painted in the likeness of a cat's eye.
  4. This region has few animals (small or large, an Animal Lore (Perc) check notices the absence), many of whom have moved out of the area. Local water sources are infected with a diseased moss (an Int (Wilderness Lore) suspects as much if the water is inspected). Drinking the water requires a *Luck* (Con) save to resist a random disease.
  5. A series of 1d4 pit traps (15 ft drop) are concealed here (Perc (Detection) check to notice, set by barbarians to catch animals).
  6. A freak weather event occurs. Roll on the LFG *Shifting Weather* table and exaggerate the result (eg wetter becomes a major storm).
  7. A pack of hungry *Tigers* are prowling in the area, defending their patch of





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grasslands. Characters that act aggressively will be attacked, while those that retreat will be left alone (a Cha (Animal Lore) check may be required).

8. 3d10+30 *Giant Rats* have taken over this section of the plains, along with hundreds of normal rats, their warren tunnels stretching for a quarter mile. The vermin infestation is led by a wolf sized *Dire Rat*.

### Hex B - River Crossing & Forest

The border between Hex A and B involves descending some cliffs and crossing the powerful *Fennorn River*.

Scaling the ravine walls requires a Str (Athletics) check to avoid losing 1 Con, Str or Dex (determine randomly) due to strain and exhaustion.

Once at the bottom, crossing the 2 mile wide river (swimming, making rafts, etc) at a suitable point takes up to approximately 3-4 hours (depending on whether the party swims, builds rafts, etc).

A Party Challenge is required (difficult, 8 successes, focusing on Athletics, Sailing, Perception, Wilderness Lore). Each failed check suffers a random setback (roll 1d6):

- (i) A random weapon, shield or other piece of important gear is lost in the river (possibly not immediately obvious).
- (ii) A hireling, pet or NPC is swept off a raft, requiring rescue.
- (iii) A PC is dashed against rocks or suffers an injury felling logs, etc, suffering 2d6 damage.
- (iv) 3d4 *Giant Crocodiles* launch an attack against one of the rafts/swimmers, trying to drag it (and any passengers) beneath the water.

- (v) 1d2 horses suffer serious strains during the long swim, rendering them lame.

- (vi) The group is carried into dangerous rapids, requiring a Group Str (Sailing) check to avoid 1d4 PCs rolling 1d6+1 on the *Injuries & Setbacks* table.



*Drelnor Forest* is an ancient woodland, filled with oaks, yews and willows, its thick canopy shading the nettled undergrowth in mouldering half light. Navigating the trees has a 40% chance of an encounter each day. If an encounter occurs, roll 1d8:

- 1. 2d6 *Giant Tree Spiders* (as *Giant Spider*, but with special web attack) lurking in the high treetops launch an attack. The spiders may drop webs up to 90 ft, then pull their trapped prey up 30 ft/round to eat them; a *Luck* (Dex) save avoids, otherwise incapacitated. A victim may spend their action to make a Str check vs Str 17 to break free).

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2. The PCs stumble across a crumbling elven ruin, its once graceful arches collapsed. Searching the broken columns takes 1d4 hours and reveals 1 x Carry Loot and 1 x Valuables, but with a 75% chance of disturbing a vengeful *Banshee* (an age old priestess).
  3. A hideous wheezing can be heard emanating from a giant tree trunk, where an *Owlbear* is dying of old age. The silver beast is panting profusely and clearly in terrible pain. Easing its suffering (including ending its life humanely) grants +1 *Luck* from a lingering *Fey* spirit.
  4. The co-ordinated howls of a pack of 3d4 *Dire Wolves* (50%) or hideous *Urgot* (50%) can be heard nearby. Over the next two hours, the monsters move in for the kill.
  5. *Twin Hags*, *Sliven* and *Ylmere* live in this region of the forest. Their sister recently died, and they are looking to add a third member to complete their coven. They offer such to any *Magic User* or *Cultist* in the party (male or female). Acceptance leads to a horrible rite that transforms the PC into a *Hag* (player may control the hag PC until the end of the adventure, then they become an NPC). Refusal causes the twins to begrudge the party, but they take no immediate action against them. At the GM's option, they might reappear in another forest section to kidnap the prospect.
  6. 3d4 *Shades* from a long fallen civilization slide silently from the trees, eager to feast upon the lifeforce of the living. Any character with clear adornments of the gods are not targeted (except in self defence).
  7. The PCs pass close to an ancient *leyline* that has not been harnessed for centuries (check to sense magic, for anyone trained in Arcane Lore). If successful, the PC may perform a 1d4 hour ritual attuning to the site, siphoning the arcane energy for a future magical effect (no action, automatic maximum effect or invoke any 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> level spell). Harnessing the leyline requires a DDM check.
  8. A war party of 5d20 *Skorn* attempt to slowly encircle the party (whose scent they have picked up). A Group Perc (Detection) check is required to foil the ambush. When the *skorn* strike, they sound their warhorns simultaneously as they charge in for the kill. 50% chance one *skorn* is a *Werewolf*.

### Hex C – Plains & Forest

This hex is half plains, half forest. Use the encounter tables from Hex A and Hex B respectively.

Alternatively, the party must make a Group *Luck* check or their rations (50%), water supply (30%) or both (20%) run out (tainted by parasites, spoiled by disease, stolen by animals, overeaten after too many ales, dropped in a chase, etc).

Hunting for food and/or water requires a Party Challenge (focusing on Int, Perc, Wilderness Lore and Animal Lore). A success gathers sufficient supplies for the remainder of the trip. A failure means the PCs go without (or subsist on quarter rations), causing 1 Con loss. Alternatively, the PCs may consume tainted food/water, avoiding Con loss, but requiring a Con check to avoid contracting a random disease.

### Hex D – Plains (Landslide)

This Hex is effectively plains. Use the encounter table from Hex A, but the chance of an encounter is 75%.

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Alternatively, rain induces a landslide as the party traverses near slopes of the *Trackless Moors*. An Int (Wilderness Lore) check notices the danger, granting advantage on avoid the consequences of the slide. A *Luck* (Dex) check negates 4d8 damage and 1 point of Dex loss.

### Hex E - Plains, River & Forest

This hex involves a mix of plains, forest and a 300 ft wide river. Use the encounter tables from Hex A and Hex B respectively.

The river is relatively shallow but strong flowing, with numerous sharp rocks beneath the flow. Crossing it allows access to the pass leading up to the *Trackless Moors*, but requires a Dex (Acrobatics) test to avoid slipping and suffering a ankle or wrist injury (lose 1 Dex).

Part way up the pass are the recent bodies of twenty *Skull Drinker* thuel and horses, and three of *Varro's* leather clad warriors (and horses). Searching them yields 2x Tribal Trinkets (see Hex A). *Varro's* men were stripped of their valuables.



### Hex F - Moors

The fog addled fens and bogs of the *Trackless Moors* are covered in heather and crowberry, with pockets of birch, bald cypress and mangroves. Deer, otters and crocodiles are common, but pale

in comparison to the mosquito and leech infestation.

Tracking *Varro* through the fens is more difficult, given the large number of watery pools and byways (imposes disadvantage on tracking tests).

There is a 30% chance of an encounter every 12 hours in the fens. If an encounter occurs, roll 1d8:

1. 1d12 hideous *Moor Trolls* lurch from nearby pools to attack the PCs! The trolls have been hibernating beneath the pools for weeks, and are ravenous. They will not flee, unless faced with large amounts of fire/acid.
2. 2d4 *Giant Crocodiles* are lying in wait in these swampy shallows, only their nostrils visible above the lichen covered water (Perc (Det) vs *Crocodile* Dex 10, but the croc has advantage).
3. A buzzing swarm of disease carrying mosquitos besets the party, carried to them by unfortunate winds. PCs must make a *Luck* (Con) check or be infected with a random disease.
4. Slushy ground suddenly turns to quicksand for one unfortunate traveller, causing them to vanish beneath the marsh (*Luck* (Dex) save to avoid, otherwise treat as drowning, Str (Athletics) check at disadvantage to claw their way out). Pulling oneself out of the quicksand causes 1 Str loss.
5. Toxic gases are seeping from the sodden ground in this area. PCs must make a *Luck* (Con) save or be affected by a serious madness. The madness naturally subsides after 2d4 days.

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6. 1d3+1 waves of 3d10 *Stirges* descend upon the party each hour, drawn to their delicious, warm bodies.
  7. Shallow pools conceal 5d4 *Projectile Leeches* eagerly waiting to launch themselves at passing humanoids. The first half of the leeches launch themselves round 1, followed up by the second half in round 2 (they had to swim closer before launching).
  8. Far from *Varro's* trail but glimpsed through lingering fog, a mysterious obelisk can be seen. Investigating the area reveals ancient serpentmen ruins of the First Age. 1 x 4 HD Lair Treasure can be scavenged here, but is defended by 3d4 *Giant Serpents* that act with a strange, coordinated intelligence.

### Hex G - Moors (Colossal Frog)

This hex is largely marshy swamplands, with pockets of dry hillocks. Use the encounter tables from Hex F, but the chance of an encounter is 35% every 12 hours.

Alternatively, a *Colossal Frog* (20 ft tall) emerges from hibernation beneath the soggy earth with a deafening croak, eager to devour the PCs!

**Colossal Frog**, *Boss Monster*, AC 14, HD 14, Bite 2d12 and Leg Slap 1d8+3, 19: special, S21 D7 C19 I3 P8 W15 Ch7 L14, Mv 40 ft. The *Colossal Frog* is a *Boss Monster* with *Off Turn Attacks*, *Major Exploit Protection* and *Stronger Luck*. On a Nat 19-20 the target is swallowed (may attack the frog's guts with a small weapon, but suffers 3d6 crushing damage on the monster's turn). Tongue attack up to 60 ft drags a target into melee and prevents them moving away (Str contest resists). 10 ft reach.

### Hex H - Moors (Tree with Five Faces)

This hex is drier than most of the fens but still damp, with tall cliffs overlooking *Drelnor Forest*

to the west. Use the encounter tables from Hex F, but the chance of an encounter is 50% each day.

Alternatively, an old bald cyprus clings to life at the edge of one of the cliff-tops, bent by the fierce winds. If inspected more closely, five faces can be seen carved into the tree (thuel like countenances, representing the five winds; north, south, east, west and the spirit wind).

Buried at the base of the tree are the bones of a long dead shaman, plus 1 x Tribal Trinket (see Hex A), 1 x Valuables, and bison head runestone strapped up with a leather thong (as 1 x Scroll).

### Hex I - Moors (Kadimos Ruins)

Despite sections of this hex being particularly foggy, the ruins of *Kadimos* are clearly visible on a narrow plateau to the west. Use the encounter tables from Hex F, but the chance of an encounter is 50% each day.

*Kadimos* was a Nydissian city brought low thirty years earlier by a combination of barbarians, *skorn*, and finally Midlanders. Its pillared and domed villas have been torn down, streets and statues cracked and overgrown with creepers and bracken. Some old soldier skeletons still lie where they fell.

A nest of 3d6+30 *Swamp Beetles* (4 ft long, dark blue colouration, oversized mandibles) have taken control of the streets, and will attack any juicy humanoids they happen to cross paths with.

**Swamp Beetle**, AC 16, HD 4, Bite 2d4+2, 19: special, S17 D9 C13 I2 P11 W11 Ch8 L7, Mv 30 ft or 10 ft burrowing. May burrow through soft earth at 10 ft per round, and sense ground based creatures within 60 ft. On a Nat 19 another *Swamp Beetle* burrows out of the cracked street to aid this one!

The city was plundered when it fell, but some treasures still remain. A Party Challenge (difficult, 8 successes, focusing on Detection, General Lore,

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Wilderness Lore and Divine Lore) leads to a villa with a hidden cellar cache (1 x Valuables and a *cold iron* spear).

### Hex J - Moors (Large Pools)

This hex is particularly wet, with large tracts of pools 3 - 4 ft deep, mangrove trees stretching out across the water. Use the encounter tables from Hex F, but 60% chance of an encounter each day.

Alternatively, a small tribe of 2d12+20 *Urgot* (mutants with scaled skin, serrated teeth, and back spines) have taken up residence by the pools. They saw *Varro's* band pass, and might be willing to update the party with that info for something valuable. On the other hand, *Nirp'Tok*, the leader, would rather eat them.

**Urgot**, AC 11, HD 1+4, Club/Claw etc 1d6+1, 19: the target is cursed and loses 1 point of *Luck*, S13 D13 C16 I7 P9 W12 Ch6, L5, Mv 30 ft. Moan once/day, all creatures within 20 ft suffer a minor madness (*Luck* (Will) save resists).

### Hex K - Plains & Jungle

This hex is half plains, half jungle. Use the encounter tables from Hex A and Hex L respectively.

Alternatively, 2d6+20 Melek *Legionaries* are patrolling this region and will home in on the party. They are not necessarily aggressive, but will come to aid *Varro* if combat breaks out here with the PCs.

**Legionary**, AC 14 (chain & shield), HD 1, Spear 1d6+1, 19: the *legionary* may move to form ranks with another soldier without suffering an attack due to movement, S14 D10 C12 I10 P12 W10 Ch10 L4, Mv 30 ft. 10 ft reach. The guard's shield may be used to negate one attack.

### Hex L - Jungle

This green wilderness is an offshoot of the *Suurat Jungle*, tangled with towering kapok and ficus trees, strangler figs, flowery aroids and thick,

choking liana vines. The jungle is humid but generally well lit, the tree tops only partially shielding against the sun and frequent rain. Animal life is a plentiful, with many species of birds, small mammals and reptiles, including giant serpents and scorpions. Jaguars and sabre tooth tigers are not uncommon.

Horses may be led through the jungle, but the tangled undergrowth makes it too dangerous to ride for long periods (use normal walking speeds).

There is a 75% chance of an encounter each day. If an encounter occurs, roll 1d4:

1. 5d6 *Flesh Eating Vines* are growing in this region. They wait until the PCs are in the middle of them before striking.
2. A *Sabretooth Tiger* is stalking the party from behind, hoping to snatch one of them (or their horses) while they sleep. It is intelligent enough to recognise a sentry, and will approach from the opposite side.
3. Loud hissing foreshadows 2d4 *Giant Serpents* that are mating in the low branches nearby. If the serpents pick up the party's scent, there is a 50% chance they will break off to seek out a warm meal instead.
4. 5d6 *Man Eating Monkeys* attempt to ambush the party, ideally when they are sleeping, by dropping from the high branches. Their objective is to drag an unconscious PC into the undergrowth for later eating.

### Hex M - Foothills

Melek's western foothills are well patrolled by Nydissian *Legionaries*. If *Varro* has made it here before the PCs, he recruits a contingent of 3d20 soldiers to escort him into the city proper.

## The Deck of Many Things

The *Astravali* consists of twenty one fate cards as outlined below. A character may only draw one card at a time, resolving any immediate effects before drawing another card (if desired). Each card may only be drawn once, and vanishes forever after, indelibly marking the user with a tattoo reflecting the expended card. The brand, and any other effect brought about by the deck, cannot be removed or negated with mortal magic.

If players would like to draw cards from the deck, GMs might like to use cards from a normal playing deck, as indicated below (\* good, # bad):

PLAYING CARD	FATE CARD
Diamonds - Ace	Keeper of Time *
Diamonds - King	The Emperor *
Diamonds - Queen	The Empress *
Diamonds - Jack	Judgement #
Diamonds - Two	The Demon #
Hearts - Ace	The Undying *
Hearts - King	The Magician *
Hearts - Queen	The Sentinel *
Hearts - Jack	The Lovers #
Hearts - Two	The Juggernaut #
Spades - Ace	The Stars *
Spades - King	The Sun *
Spades - Queen	The Moon *
Spades - Jack	The Void #
Spades - Two	The Hanged Man #

Clubs - Ace	Wheel of Fortune *
Clubs - King	The Hierophant *
Clubs - Queen	The High Priestess *
Clubs - Jack	The Tower #
Clubs - Two	Death #
Joker (with TM)	The Fool #
Joker (without TM)	Unholy Avenger #

- **Death;** All living things within 120 ft of the PC instantly die (animals collapse, plants wither). Intelligent humanoids gain a *Luck* (Con) save to resist. The drawer is immune.
- **The Demon;** A *Balor* crosses the Veil somewhere in the world, called by the card's magic. The demon is instinctively drawn to the PC and will find them in 2d6 days, at which time it tortures and eats them. The PC experiences a building sense of foreboding until the *Balor* appears. The demon cannot be escaped via the standard Party Retreat rule.
- **The Emperor;** 2d6 flawless diamonds worth 2,000 gp each appear in the PC's hands.
- **The Empress;** The ghostly form of a human like empress manifests and hands the PC a magical mace of jagged red steel (an alien metal).

The *Red Mace of the Star Empress* grants three levels of attunement as follows:

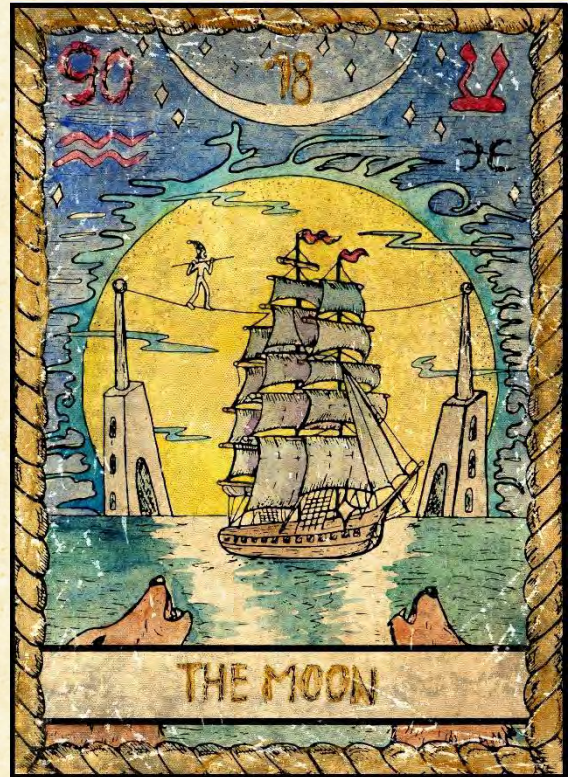
- The wielder may invoke *Strange Joining* at will (each use requires the usual DDM check).

- ii. When using the mace, the wielder's crit range increases by 1 point, and on a critical hit, add the user's full level to damage (instead of half).
- iii. Once every 1d4 days, the wielder may spend an action to invoke *Dimension Door*.

- **The Fool;** The PC is immediately stuck by a *Feeblemind* spell, but the *Luck* (Will) save is made at disadvantage.
- **The Hanged Man;** The PC is immediately suspended in the air and begins suffocating. A successful *Luck* (Con) save ends the effect before the PC dies (permanently lose 1 Con instead).
- **The Hierophant;** The PC may assume the form of a 15 HD *Elemental* once every 2d6 months (treat as the spell *Sudden Transmogrification* for 2d6 min, but ignore the HD cap and the PC gains relevant magical abilities).
- **The High Priestess;** The PC may use the Cultist *Turning* ability once per adventure. The card's brand appears on the character's palm, and may be presented instead of a holy symbol.
- **Judgement;** The cosmos judges the PC for their last six months of deeds. If the GM judges them benevolent or kind, the PC gains one level. If merciless or unkind, they lose one level. If neutral, the PC is compelled to draw again.
- **The Juggernaut;** A random monster bursts from the card with a thunderous roar to kill the PC. Roll 1d4: (i) *Mammoth*, (ii) *Bloodroot Treant*, (iii) *15 HD Elemental*, (iv) *Hydra*. The monster has *Major Exploit Protection* and *Off Turn Attacks*. The monster cannot be

escaped via the standard Party Retreat rule.

- **Keeper of Time;** The PC gains a one off ability to reverse time by up to 10 minutes (no action, but must be conscious). After invoking this boon, the PC immediately ages 2d10 years.



- **The Lovers;** The PC immediately falls in love with the next stranger of the same race and opposite sex, and vice versa. The magical attraction ends approximately nine months later, when a child is born. The infant displays magical powers, and grows increasingly alien as they mature.
- **The Magician;** The PC learns 1d3 random spells (level 1d4, roll for each), which they may cast once per adventure (treat the PC's level as caster level).
- **The Moon;** The PC may use an action to shapechange once per month, taking the

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form of a rat, wolf, or bear (treat as the spell *Sudden Transmogrification*). While in beast form, the PC gains *Lycanthropy* traits. If the beast form suffers *silvered* damage, the transformation ends in 1d3 rounds.

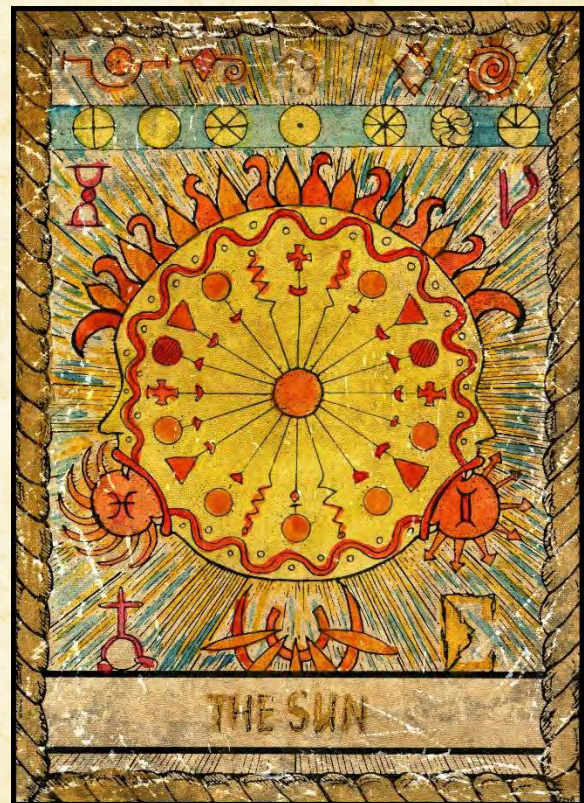
- **The Sentinel;** The card transforms into an 9 ft bronze warrior (as *Minotaur*) that follows the PC's orders (no action), and never checks for morale. The sentinel does not sleep, eat, or breathe, and is immune to mind based effects.
- **The Stars;** The PC may invoke a *Forbidden Wish* (no action). The wish may be used at any time. Once invoked, the *Deck* vanishes for 10d100 years.
- **The Sun;** The PC gains the ability to invoke *Gift of the Fiery Furnace* once per adventure.
- **The Tower;** The adventurer is instantly transported to a distant tower, naked and shackled. An evil sorcerer or sorceress treats them as their plaything until the character is rescued. Other PCs instinctively understand their ally's plight, and where to find them.
- **The Undying;** This card is no longer available, having been drawn by *Rogarth* when he first acquired the deck. The character no longer requires sleep, will not die from mundane causes (excluding devastating injury such as beheading), and ceases to age for 500 years.
- **Unholy Avenger;** A rent in space unleashes a *Gibbering Terror* that attacks the PC for 1d4 minutes. The *Terror* has *Major Exploit Protection* and *Off Turn Attacks*. The *Terror* cannot be escaped via the standard Party Retreat rule.

- **The Void;** The PC stares into the Void, learning secrets no mortal ought bear. The PC gains a random incurable pervasive madness. After 2d12 months the severity reduces to serious and stabilizes (no further reductions are possible).

## Aftermath

If *Varro* makes it to Melek before the PCs, the deck is handed over to the *Lucentum*, who swiftly secure it. Eventually it makes its way to *Osk* and the *Vault Eternal*.

If the PCs manage to retrieve the deck, and kill their opponents, there are no repercussions from the *Ordo*. If any of the Nydissians survive however, the *Ordo* eventually sends assassins (or other agents) after the party. True to his word, *Rogarth* is happy for the PCs to draw cards from the deck if they wish. He does insist on keeping the relic, however, which he intends to pass on to his granddaughter when she comes of age.





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# RISE OF THE STARBORN



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## RISE OF THE STARBORN

Rumour has it *Lady Shae*, a wealthy metal merchant in *Crow's Keep*, is looking to hire private investigators to sail to *Arran Isle*. Situated on the eastern shores of *Lake Argos*, *Shae's* son was a navy guard stationed on the island when he went missing. She wants him found ASAP.

The PCs might become involved in this adventure (i) as part of a merchant crew visiting the isle, (ii) independent explorers on an unplanned stopover, or (iii) investigators retained by a wealthy businesswoman to determine why her young son failed to return home for shore leave a week ago.

### The One

The waters of *Lake Argos* hold many secrets, but few quite so dangerous as the *Aboleth* that has slumbered in her depths since the First Age.

An exile from a distant galaxy, the *One* (as the *aboleth's* thralls refer to it, its real "name" unutterable by humans) is highly intelligent but wholly alien in thought. With a potential lifespan of hundreds of thousands of years, even the elves failed to divine its purpose.

Trapped on the present world, the *aboleth* wants nothing more than to escape banishment and return to the stars. But the celestial alignments required to open a wormhole remain 16,000 years distant, forcing the monstrosity to wait. In the meantime, it regards all terrestrial beings as insignificant blips at best, or momentary vexations are worst.

Having spent the past two Ages asleep beneath the waves, the monster has now entered a period of wakefulness. Rising to the surface for only the second time, the *One* has enslaved the residents of *Arran Isle*, aided by a devoted school of *Fishlings*.

Over the next few weeks, the *aboleth* will feed on the minds of its thralls until sufficiently reinvigorated to resume its dream like reverie. In the meantime, every waking moment is agony for the *One*, a shameful reminder of its intolerable confinement in this primitive, loathsome realm.



If the latter, *Lady Shae* offers the party 400 gp to find out what has happened to her 18 yr old son, guardsman *Mord Shae*. *Shae* doesn't trust the guard's superior, *Captain Higsor*, whom she believes he is "covering up" for *Mord*, and wants independent investigators to make discrete inquiries on her behalf.

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## Sailing to the Isle

The party must arrange their own passage to *Arran Isle*, which is approximately 200 miles northeast of *Crow's Keep*. Assuming the party board a sloop or larger, the ship might average 100 miles per 24 hours, completing the voyage in two days. Smaller vessels (skiffs, canoes, etc) travel about half as quickly, requiring four days.

Each day on the water requires a roll on the Voyage Events table (LFG p.135) or alternatively roll 1d8 and see below:

1. A particularly shady crew member (*Mortimer*, Rogue 2, Dex 14, dark haired, crooked smile, toothless whistler) attempts to steal a random PC's coin pouch at an opportune moment (ideally when they're asleep, drunk, seasick, or otherwise distracted).

If caught out, *Mortimer* offers secret information about a lost ruin or treasure, or introductions to his thieves' guild back in *Crow's Keep*, if the target doesn't do him in (GM determines details). If reported, the captain keel hauls him as punishment (terribly lacerated, but lives).

2. *Octavia* (dark skinned Nydissian, braided hair, curvy) a quasi bard/tale teller, breaks out a ghost story about a pair of *Argosan Stranglers* that crawled aboard the *Nightingale* two weeks earlier, killing ten men before the crew cut out one monster's eye, driving them back into the lake! Later that night, there is a 50% chance two *Argosan Stranglers* attack the ship, one missing an eye...
3. Turns out one of the ale barrels is off, tainted with some kind of foul sickness, the origin of which is unknown (a rival captain, *Chi Lhau*, paid one of the crew (*Millie*, cabin girl, whip thin, steely eyed

with a chip on her shoulder) to sabotage the barrel with a vial of tainted liquid (since thrown overboard). Anyone who has partaken of the ship's ale must make a *Luck (Con)* save or contract a random disease.

4. The weather turns merciless, whipping up a freak storm in a matter of hours. A *Group Luck* save is required for the boat to avoid being wrecked on a hidden reef. If failed, the crew must resort to the lifeboats, which only hold 8 men each (GM determines how many boats, based on the mother ship).

Assuming the ship avoids becoming a wreck, a single *Stormraven* takes the opportunity to attack when the winds are favourable.

**Stormraven** AC 14, HD 8+2, Bite 2d6 and 2 x Claws 1d10, 19: the *stormraven* unleashes a shocking blast, causing 3d6 lightning damage (no save), S19 D12 C14 I2 P13 W15 Ch8 L10, Mv 180 ft flying. A *stormraven* rides the lightning to attack their target in the initial ambush (usually auto surprise, and bonus 4d6 lightning damage). When slain, the raven calls a final lightning bolt to strike the killer (*Luck (Dex)* save or 8d6 damage and lose next action). Immune to lightning and cold damage.

*Stormravens* are massive, raven like avians with 30 ft wingspans, yellow head crests and thunder like cries. Roused from hibernation during thunderstorms, these aerial predators favour deer, horses, and oblivious humanoids. Intrinsicly bound to tempests and squalls, *stormravens* act as natural lightning rods, attracting and directing electrical blasts in concert with their attacks.

5. Drifting cargo (branded with *Shenzu* markings) is spotted near the horizon. Retrieving the goods garners 1 x Valuables

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worth of rare silks, sealed spices, woven rugs, etc).

6. A Varnori longship raider (4d6 + 30 crew) appears from behind a nearby inlet to attack. They might be appeased with an offering of special loot.
7. A 40 ft *Kronosaurus* surfaces from the deep waters at least 16 hours travel from *Crow's Keep*. It attempts to break the ship apart and eat half the crew before swimming away. The ship might be able to outrun it (treat as a Chase) or scare it off with artillery.
8. A pod of 3d6 hungry *Waterwings* launch from beneath the water, seeing to knock anyone on deck into the lake.

**Waterwing** AC 10, HD 1, Bite 1d8, 19: special, S13 D12 C9 I3 P10 W8 Ch5 L4, Mv 90 ft swim or 50 ft leap. If the target is in the water, the beast wraps its wings and hooked tail about the victim, immobilising them (Str contest at disadvantage to break free, drowning rules apply). If the victim is struggling, the beast will also attempt to bite them. Attacking a *waterwing* that has wrapped its target has a 50% chance of also damaging the victim.

*Waterwings* are 5 ft sea serpents with 9 ft membranous wings that also act as fins. They are meat eating marine hunters, generally content with fish, but are able to launch themselves 50 ft out of water to snag birds, above deck sailors, etc. Some *waterwings* have learnt that ships offer tasty humanoids, provided the target can be snatched and swiftly drowned beneath the waves. A *waterwing* stranded on land for more than two minutes dies of oxygen starvation.



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## Arran Isle

This small rocky islet ranges approximately half a mile end to end, located in the lake's eastern archipelago, colloquially known as the *Belt of Crowns*.

Protected by a fortified keep and stone walls, the isle acts as the Argosan navy's staging point for patrols of the eastern lake, as well as a friendly stopover for fisherman, and rare trading vessels.

By the time the PCs arrive, the *aboleth* has spent the last two weeks devouring about half of the original residents, leaving many domiciles empty (which may tip off curious PCs). All remaining residents are thralls (excepting *Mertin* in Area 8 and *Sir Franco* in Area 10) under the *One's* charm effect. Most residents have not seen the *aboleth* directly (see Area 15; the guards use a screening curtain) and assume their new overseer is human. Thralls act and appear normal, going about their daily routine. They radiate a charm aura if studied with *Pierce the Veil*. PCs that spend time to sense magic (LFG p.83) confirm its presence within 30 ft of a thrall.

In addition to the thralls, a school of *Fishlings* has arrived to worship and serve the *aboleth*. The *fishlings* mostly lurk in nearby waters (see Areas 1 and 16), but may venture onto land for short periods. The guard thralls are in league with the *fishlings*, but other thralls consider them monsters. The *One* prohibits any interference with the fish men, so most residents simply avoid them.

**Fishling** AC 11, HD 1d4 hp, Bite 1d4 + special or knife 1d4, 19: the fishling vomits spawn eggs over the target (*Luck* (Con) save or be infected with *Finfusing* disease, see below), S7 D14 C10 I6 P9 W9 Ch6 L3, Mv 20 ft or 30 ft swimming. 50% chance the bite carries *Finfusing* disease.

*Fishlings* are 2 ft piscine humanoids, with oversized fish heads and scaled bodies. They are marine based predators but may spend up to an

hour on land before dying of oxygen starvation. Fishlings are not unintelligent, communicating with dolphin like calls, and often craft tools and other basic gear. They generally subsist on krill, insects, crustaceans and sea worms, but will sometimes seize the opportunity to eat a human if presented with such (a party would feed a whole *fishling* school for a week).

*Fishlings* are asexual and if left to their own devices will multiply at an astounding rate. There is a 50% chance a fishling carries the terrifying *Finfusing* disease (if bitten, *Luck* (Con) save to resist). Infected humans or similar suffer a piscine mutation in 1d8 days (roll 1d6 and see below). An apothecary with the right medicines and surgery techniques can reverse the effect over 1d4 weeks (Int (Apothecary) check is required, if failed, the mutation is permanent).

- (i) Random arm (below the elbow) or leg (below the knee) turns into a fin,
- (ii) Grows gills and may breathe water as well as air,
- (iii) Round, unblinking fish eyes (lose 1d3 Cha),
- (iv) Scale like flesh granting +1 AC,
- (v) Loses power of speech, instead makes dolphin noises, or
- (vi) Turns asexual, and next time the PC is submerged in a lake, river or sea, they die as 2d6 infant *fishlings* are spawned (no save, they feast on the corpse and depart).

From time to time, particularly a night, *fishlings* might be spotted slinking about in the shadows of the outpost, primarily visiting to worship the *One* in Area 15. They are able to discern thralls from other humans by scent within 30 ft (all thralls exude a faint odour the piscines can detect). If taken by surprise by a non-thrall, the fishling will

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attempt to flee. If captured and brought to the attention of *Captain Higson* (Area 13) or *Sergeant Gibbot* (Area 4), they thank the PCs for their help with the “fishling menace”, then secretly return the creatures to the lake.

## Isle Encounters

Once the PCs arrive on the isle, a timeline begins to run. Within 36 hours, 2d6 + 20 guards attempt to arrest the PCs and take them before the *aboleth* (either to be charmed or devoured; maybe both). If the guards are defeated or avoided, the PCs become fugitives as the remaining forces (guards & *fishlings*) attempt to locate them. If the party manages to kill the *aboleth*, its charm is broken (see Aftermath).

Every 1d10 hours (or other time at the GM’s option) the party has an encounter on the street (or possibly in a building). Roll 1d8:

1. 3d6 guards emerge from a nearby building or around a corner. If they recognise the PCs as outsiders, they will investigate further, asking for weapons licences, the nature of their business, etc.
2. *Mertin* in Area 8 or *Sir Franco* in Area 10 is nearby (depending on where the PCs are), studying the PCs, and/or considering how best to make contact with them.
3. *Weesa* the baker (female, dark hair, kind, rambling) takes a shine to one of the male PCs (highest Cha), offering them a fresh roll. She inquires whether they’ll be at the *Lamp* later tonight?
4. *Captain Higson* (Area 13) is walking down the street, taking his much loathed (but doctor’s orders) daily constitutional. He seems a little puffed. And parched.
5. 2d6 *Fishlings* are hiding nearby, hoping to stay out of sight of the PCs whom they spotted moments earlier. A Perc (Detection) vs Dex 14 contest notices them. They flee for the nearest wall or

storm drain in an attempt to scurry back to the lake (possible chase).

6. 2d6+4 drunks abuse the party, accusing them of “*taking the isle’s women*”, “*making the place smell bad*” and “*sticking their noses in where they don’t belong*”. They attempt to grab hold of the party and march them to Area 15 (if they manage to get as far as Area 13, *Captain Higson* turns them away, obviously upset at their idiocy).
7. *Yermig* the beggar (shabby clothes, tangled beard, dirty nails) pesters the party for alms, asking “the *One*” for forgiveness and fortitude. *Yermig* is one of few residents who has seen the *aboleth*. If asked (and given a handful of coins), he describes it as a “*huge, friendly fish*.”
8. The *Aboleth* (Area 15) somehow “senses” that the party has intruded into its domain. Inexplicably, one random PC has “mindwaves” that are irresistible to the *One*, which savours the hunt as it tracks them down personally.

During the night, the monster emerges onto the streets to locate its target (10% cumulative chance each hour after dusk). If battle ensues, and goes poorly, the *One* summons its thralls to aid it (at the end of each round, roll 1d100: 40% 2d6 residents, 30% 1d8 guardsmen, 20% 2d4 *fishlings*).

## Isle Trinkets

For more “isle flavour” when looting residents’ bodies, or searching their abandoned domiciles, the GM might substitute a 1d12 roll on the below table instead of the usual Carry Loot or Trinkets & Curios tables:

- (i) A leather journal of daily affairs. The last week records how worried the author was about her lover who went



- missing five days earlier. The guards were reluctant to help.
- (ii) The severed hand of a *fishling*, several days old.
  - (iii) A 25 gp silver brooch with a kraken motif (the *Deep One*, tyrant god of the northern Varnori).
  - (iv) A beautiful spiral shell on a leather thong. If worn, the talisman increases the user's maximum *Luck* by 1. If the shell ever breaks, the *Luck* bonus is lost, and the owner rolls on the *Dark & Dangerous Magic* table.
  - (v) A copper pirate skull ring (8 gp).
  - (vi) Holy scriptures of *Graxus, the Iron God*, tied up with prayer beads (5 gp).
  - (vii) A leather satchel containing salted fish fillets wrapped in gauze.
  - (viii) A tarnished, *silvered* hook hand (80 gp).
  - (ix) A compact, extendable spyglass of fine construction, ornately decorated with a wind and sea motif (130 gp).
  - (x) 1d12 gp inside a black bandana.
  - (xi) A locked mahogany case. Inside is a map to a hidden temple of *Shennog* in the *Ulgoth Foothills* (Adventure Framework #10).
  - (xii) A dark leather pirate's hat (tricorn), with a moon & cutlass icon. The hat once belonged to *Captain Semper* of the *Argonaut* (a notorious reaver fifty years earlier).





# Arran Isle



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### Area 1 - Docks

On approach to the Isle, a single navy carrack (the *Vigilant*) is docked for repairs (unmanned but for 2d6 shipwrights, the warship is armed with onagers on the bow and stern, ballistae port and starboard). If at night, the light house beacon is lit (Area 8).

Anyone breaking away from the main dock to approach the island stealthily has a 50% chance of being attacked by 3d8 *fishlings*. Characters that are overcome are taken to the *aboleth* in Area 15.

Otherwise the PCs are met by *Dockmaster Lynch* (6'5", thin, bored look, monotone voice) and asked to sign the visitor register (he carries a number of scrolls with him, one is the register). *Lynch* advises the party that taking weapons into the fort (beyond the walls of Area 4) incurs a 2 gp fee.

### Area 2 - Domiciles

This collection of thatched roof buildings house some of the local dock workers (1d6 in each), although approximately half are now empty. Ferreting through the abandoned quarters reveals 1 x Carry Loot.

**Resident** AC 10, HD 1d6 hp, Knife 1d4, 19: as weapon, S11 D10 C10 I10 P10 W10 Ch10 L3, Mv 30 ft.

### Area 3 - Warehouses

This area includes the main warehouse, and three smaller storage buildings. The warehouses are double padlocked, with multiple patrols of 1d3+2 guards. *Dockmaster Lynch's* office is here, along with his many ledgers and weighing scales. Each warehouse contains scores of crates and barrels (foodstuffs, textiles, tools, etc) worth at least 1 x Valuables each (GM's call).

### Area 4 - Low Gate

The 12 ft high gatehouse is manned by 2d6 guardsmen. *Sergeant Gibbot* (6'2", heavy set, stubble, *cold iron* mace) decides who enters,

inquiring about the party's business. Unless openly hostile, the party will be allowed in (getting out is another matter). Weapon licences are required (see Area 1). Asking about guardsman *Mord Shae* receives a vague response (he's on leave, but still on the island somewhere (not in the barracks)).

**Guardsman** AC 14, HD 1, Sword 1d8+1, 19: as weapon, S13 D10 C12 I10 P12 W10 Ch10 L4, Mv 30 ft. Armed with swords and chainmail.

**Sergeant Gibbot** AC 17, HD 3, Sword 1d8+1, 19: disarm, S14 D10 C12 I12 P12 W10 Ch13 L6, Mv 30 ft. Has the Fighter *Charger* ability. *Cold iron* mace, half plate, may use his shield to negate a single directional attack.

### Area 5 - Fishing Quarter

Most of the port's fishermen live and work along the southwestern wharf. About half of the homes are now vacant (victims of the *aboleth*), their salted barrels beginning to reek. Up to 1d6 fishermen live in each of the remaining buildings. If asked about the empty homes, the fisherman suggest the inhabitants returned to the mainland.

### Area 6 - Food Market

This large wooden hall is the isle's food market, with many kinds of vegetables, fruits, meats, pies, pastries, spices, etc for sale. 4d6 residents are here at any one time, vendors and customers alike. There are quite a few empty stalls. If queried about this, vendors will suggest their colleagues are taking some time off, very ill, dealing with a family crisis, etc.

### Area 7 - Cataline's Supplies

*Cataline* (5' albino Karok with silver hair, sly smile, uses her hands when she talks) owns the general store. She stocks 2d6 pieces of most common gear, and 1d3 pieces of uncommon gear. Rare items are a 50% chance (single piece).

*Cataline* is one of the *aboleth's* primary informers, as many sailors visit her store to restock on supplies. She will ask the party questions about

their purpose on the isle, and show interest about their professions and past deeds. Any unusual information will be reported back to the *One*.



### Area 8 - Lighthouse

The lighthouse is a massive signal beacon at the top of a 50 ft tower, lit each night by one of the guards. The old keeper *Heyman* was one of the *aboleth*'s first victims. When he was taken away, *Mertin* (dark haired teen, daring, slight limp) understood something terrible was happening, and hid in a secret cellar (concealed under a rug). Having only arrived on the island the day before, the young teen was missed in the guards' round up of residents.

*Mertin*'s only concern is to get off the island. A competent and well armed party might spur him to make contact, hoping to leave with them. Otherwise he attempts to remain hidden (opposed Perc (Detection) vs Dex 14 contest). If the PCs coax information from him, *Mertin* knows the following:

- (i) During the last week, those who enter the Keep do not re-emerge (excluding guards),

- (ii) Residents are acting odd, as if unconcerned about their missing neighbours, and

- (iii) Visitors are eventually rounded up and taken to the Keep; no-one who makes it past *Low Gate* (Area 4) is allowed to leave.

### Area 9 - The Lucky Lamprey

The *Lucky Lamprey* (the "*Lamp*" to locals) is a large, single storey stone inn and taphouse, with a handful of rooms for let (large, with key locks). The original owner was eaten by the *aboleth* six days earlier, and the business taken over by the cook *Kerlack* (30s, Varnori, medium build, long blonde beard, jovial fellow but unaccustomed to the finer details of running an inn).

The common room is spacious, smoke addled and poorly lit, with a large stuffed shark hanging from the rafters. *Norton* (20s, sandy haired male, missing a digit on one hand) serves the patrons (2d6 at any one time).

There is an 80% chance *Old Ribba* is in (elderly lady, crooked back, gap toothed). The silver haired washerwoman is a thrall like the rest, but in the early stages of dementia. As a result, she might drop hints about their "*new overseer*" and "*how strange the One is, how wondrous. Such a strange and wondrous One.*" Other patrons fob *Ribba* off as crazy. After this encounter, the old woman is never seen again.

The *Lamp*'s best brew (well, memorable at least) is *Chugwuggit's Cheesebreaker* (black and bitter with an overpowering aftertaste of regret). Specials this week are:

- Choice Squid & Mash
- Leek Soup with Grub Float
- Salted Shank with Badishes<sup>3</sup>

<sup>3</sup> Bad Radishes. Best not to ask questions.

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## Area 10 – Temple of the Iron God

This bronze capped temple is dedicated to *Graxus* (god of war, courage, struggle, glory), overseen by *Sir Franco* (80s, elderly *Knight of the Iron God*, cloudy eyes, seemingly always parched and in need of water). The worship chamber houses a small iron altar imprinted with a skull, behind which are brackets to hold a sword (empty). By the time the adventurers arrive, *Franco's* acolytes have been devoured, leaving only the retired knight to maintain the shrine.

Once a formidable warrior, *Franco's* fighting days are long past, but his sermons of courage and tenacity are as potent than ever. Much beloved, *Franco* still wears his burnished plate during ceremonies, but otherwise gets about in a grey smock and sheathed sword.

Unbeknownst to the thralls and *fishlings*, the winter knight has managed to break the *aboleth's* enchantment care of his magical blade (see below). He is not certain what evil lurks in the Keep (it was screened off from him behind the curtain when he was taken to the Great Hall), but is fixed in his determination to end it. *Franco* has been waiting for a band of brave travellers to aid him in his quest. Assuming the PCs fit the bill, he will reveal:

- (i) Residents are under an “evil charm” caused by some manner of evil beast living in the Keep.
- (ii) His acolytes (and other residents) were rounded up and taken to the Keep, never to return.
- (iii) The guards are in league with the *fishlings*.

**Sir Franco** AC 14, HD 1 (6 hp), Sword 1d8+1, 19: disarm, S7(9) D7 C10 I14 P10 W14 Ch15 L7, Mv 20 ft. *Sir Franco* wears ancient half plate emblazoned with an iron fist. He wields his sword in both hands.

## Franco's Sword

*Franco's* sword is perfectly balanced and ever sharp, with a gold plated hilt and lion head pommel. Normally hung behind the altar, the old knight currently carries it. The weapon's origin is unknown, but some say it was forged by one of the first knights to defeat the vile sorceress *Tetrasûnae*.

Attunement takes 1d4 days, except by Fighters or followers of the Argosan pantheon who require 1d4 rounds. Once attuned, the user develops a strong sense of justice, so much so that the GM may call for an occasional Will check to resist taking action in the face of overt tyranny.



Attunement benefits are as follows:

1. Whilst in possession of the sword, the user's Str increases by 2 (max 19), and they are immune to adverse mind effects including charm, fear, madness, etc.

2. Once every 1d4 days, the user may drive the blade into the ground with both hands, causing a blast wave in a 20 ft radius. Man sized or smaller targets are automatically knocked prone and must make a *Luck* (Con) save or lose their next action. Larger than man size creatures are unaffected.
3. Once per month, the user may throw the sword, transforming it into a metal (gold) lion (requires an action, treat as *Tiger*, but AC 17, 28 hp, with *Golem* traits). The lion lasts up to 1d6 x 10 minutes, or until slain, when it reverts back to sword form.

### Area 11 - Main Strip

Winding up the hill are a mix of stone domiciles (1d10 residents in most, although some are empty) and services. Some store fronts are empty (eg: tanner, herbalist, weaver) but others are open, including:

- *Bannon* the Apothecary (6'6", solid build, booming voice, rascal).
- *Vindra* the Smith (6', athletic, pale skinned northerner, a kind pessimist).
- *Hussett* the Stone Mason (bald, wide shouldered, greedy and flirtatious).
- *Paglen* the Carpenter (5'10", dark wispy hair, repeats himself).
- *Valentia* the Potter (5'6", dark skinned Nydissian with cropped hair, remarkable green eyes, likes to spin a tale).
- *Madame Yelma* (dark haired, lithe, warm smile) runs the brothel, which is missing a few workers.

### Area 12 - Watch Tower

This 25 ft high tower adjoins the lower wall, with a rampart allowing access to Area 4. The walkways

are patrolled by 2d4 guardsmen, while another 4d6 are on duty within (training, maintaining equipment, going on patrols, etc). 2d6 crossbowmen on the upper level have fire arcs in all directions.

The watch tower includes a small armoury (locked) of excess gear, namely twelve swords, three spears, 1d6 firepots, two shields, and two quivers of 20 bolts. The soldiers here are under orders from *Sergeant Gibbot* (Area 4).

**Crossbowmen** AC 11, HD 1, Light Crossbow 2d4+1, 19: as weapon, S13 D10 C12 I10 P12 W10 Ch10 L4, Mv 30 ft. Armed with light crossbows, 10 bolts, shortswords, and chainmail.

### Area 13 - High Gate

High Gate consists of two reinforced iron portcullises, flanked by 25 ft stone fortifications, including burning oil and arrow slits (effectively providing full cover to the soldiers within, but allowing up to 12 soldiers to shoot out). Twin winches on the both sides of the gates (located on the upper levels) raise the gates.

*Captain Higson* (5'10", solid build, dark moustache, often on his warhorse *Ned*) oversees the gate and 4d6 soldiers. At present, no-one is allowed entry other than soldiers or known informants (such as *Cataline*, Area 7). Whilst under the *aboleth's* charm, *Higson* is resistant to bribes (disadvantage on such attempts).

*Higson* manages the guards' rosters and knows that soldier *Mord Shae* is dead (eaten by the *One*). He fobs off any inquiries from the PCs, stating that *Shae* departed the isle a day ago (if PCs check with *Dockmaster Lynch* in Area 1, there is no record of *Shae* leaving).

Trying to fight one's way through the gate house would be a bad idea. Many of the guards carry horns, and Area 14 houses scores of navy soldiers ready to assist. The armoury includes thirteen heavy crossbows, 2d6 fire pots, and three

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cauldrons of burning oil (10 ft area, causes 3d6 fire damage, *Luck* (Dex) save for half).

**Captain Higson** AC 15, HD 2, Sword 1d8+1, 19: prone, S14 D11 C9 I10 P11 W11 Ch9 L7, Mv 30 ft. *Higson* wears platemail and carries a sword. It's been a long time since he's had to use it.

**Ned, Warhorse** AC 15, HD 3, Hoof 1d6, 19: trample double damage and prone, S19 D13 C16 I2 P10 W13 Ch6 L5, Mv 60 ft. Ned wears plate barding.



### Area 14 - Main Barracks

The various buildings surrounding the Keep are primarily barracks for the isle's rotating navy crew, including mess hall, sleeping quarters, a brig, common room, small tap house, etc. Six 20 ft watch towers break up the 15 ft stone walls that surround the interior (each is manned by 1d4+1 guards).

Scouting might reveal small groups of *fishlings* (1d4+1) passing through the courtyards from time to time (reporting on boat movements, or come to worship). They emerge from a large grated sewer

drain near the northern most tower, then into the Keep (and vice versa).

Whilst many soldiers have been eaten by the *aboeth*, 5d10 + 80 thralls still remain, plus *Commander Moorback* (40s, 6' female with dark ponytail, strong build, glaring gaze) going about their daily duties, including lake and isle patrols.

*Arran Isle* is one of Argosa's primary navy training grounds, and there are large proportion of "green" recruits. Many spare uniforms including boots and cloaks may be found in chests in the domiciles. Training drills are run regularly in the courtyards.

**Green Recruits** AC 11, HD 1, Spear 1d6+1, 19: as weapon, S11 D10 C10 I10 P10 W10 Ch10 L4, Mv 30 ft. Leather armour and spear (10 ft reach).

**Commander Moorback** AC 17, HD 4, Sword 1d8+2, 19: special, S15 D13 C12 I12 P12 W10 Ch13 L9, Mv 30 ft. May choose from the following Fighter *Adaptable* abilities three times/combat: *Charger*, *Two Hander*, *Protector*, *Opportunist*. Longsword, *Adamantine Half Plate* (turns critical hits into normal hits), may use her shield to negate a single directional attack. *Moorback* has *Minor Exploit Protection* and *Off Turn Attacks*. On 19-20 attack rolls, *Moorback* lands a critical hit and disarms her foe.

### Area 15 - The Keep

The Keep stands on a steep rise, with an iron portcullis and thick wooden gates. Four 20 ft towers provide wide ranging cover fire reaching almost all of the interior. Inside, a series of rooms are occupied by approximately 4d6 guards (some have been eaten). The Grand Hall has been mostly cleared of tables, chairs, etc, the back half taken up by a newly dug pool of murky lake water. Two massive curtains divide the hall in half, concealing the *aboeth* if desired.

For the most part, the *One* dozes in the 20 ft diameter pool, conserving energy for beguiling or devouring thralls. Each morning and night, the

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guards deliver a resident for eating (the *One* peels away the victim's skull, siphons their "thought energy" from the exposed cerebral matter, then swallows them whole). Witnessing this gruesome ritual requires a *Luck* (Will) save to resist a minor madness.

**Aboleth**, AC 15, HD 16+3, 4 x Tentacles 1d6 + 1d3 Will drain, and Bite 3d6, 19: psychic scream; all enemies within 50 ft lose their next action (*Luck* (Will) save resists), S19 D7 C20 I15 P15 W22 Ch8 L15, Mv 30 ft or swim 60 ft. *Major Exploit Protection, Off Turn Attacks, Stronger Luck*, and may use following spell like effects at will: *Strange Joining, Waking Dream, Monstrous Subjugation* (but the charm renders victims obedient thralls and is permanent), *Delusions of Dark Recall*, and *Wave of Obedience*.

The *One* dominates the whole of the island; residents are obedient thralls (excluding *Mertin* hidden in Area 8, and *Sir Franco* in Area 10), and the *fishlings* devoted worshippers. As far as the *aboleth* is concerned, people are food and the *fishlings* barely sentient insects. After another week, when the alien is replenished, it will vanish back into the depths, ne'er to return.

Although the *aboleth* has no treasure per se, the Keep's vault (lower ground level, double high quality locks requiring great successes to open) contains 1 x 6 HD Lair Treasure. At the GM's option, one of the vault chests is trapped (random Simple Trap LFG p.231). Additionally, if the *aboleth* is slain, it's internal organs are worth 2d4 x 500 gp to the right buyer (herbalists, alchemists, etc).

## Area 16 - Northern Waters

The northern shoals conceal the underwater den of a school of 3d6 + 30 *Fishlings*, obedient worshippers of the *aboleth* since its arrival. The small marine creatures scout nearby waters for possible treasures that might please the *One* (shiny coral, sunken junk, etc), and report on any suspicious vessels loitering in the area.

The *fishlings* gain access to the Keep via a large storm drain that empties onto the northern rocks (see Area 14). Quietly scaling the slippery drain is difficult (Party Challenge, moderate: 5 successes, focusing on Str, Dex, Con, Athletics, Acrobatics, Perception, General Lore, Stealth). On a fail, guards in the courtyard of Area 14 hear something other than *fishlings* approaching, and prepare boiling oil (3d6 damage, *Luck* (Dex) save for half).

Investigating the *fishlings*' coral den reveals 1 x Carry Loot, 1 x Valuables, and an ancient scroll sealed in a waterproof tube (*Gift of the Fiery Furnace* and *Sever Arcanum*).

## Aftermath

If the *aboleth* is slain, its charm is broken and the people thank the PCs as heroes, throwing them a parade and offering 1 x 5 HD Lair Treasure as a reward (including at least one magic scroll and/or potion). If *Sir Franco* died in the exchange, they insist the PCs keep his sword.

If the *aboleth* lives, and the PCs escape the island, it finishes up eating the remainder of the residents within 48 hours. Then it slips back into the depths to sleep for another 16,000 years.

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# WELL OF DEMONS



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## WELL OF DEMONS

There are whispers in quiet corners that *Sister Millicent*, of *Northgate's Order of the Anointed*, is seeking stalwart mercenaries to escort her into the *Sunstone Ranges*. She is hoping to locate an abandoned observatory.

### The Observatory

Forty years ago, *Nocratha*, *Steward of Northgate* and sole *Wizard of the King's Court*, commissioned a series of remote observatories across the *Argos Basin*. Dedicated to *Wodon* (deity of knowledge, justice, and art), the monasteries were located on high vantage points to study the secrets of the night sky.

For three decades, a mix of *Wodon's* clergy and *Nocratha's Anointed* (the sorcerer's hand picked, most devoted disciples) controlled the temples, expanding their ken in astronomy by leaps and bounds. Then calamity struck, the facilities lost in an ongoing wave of disasters including deadly disease, fire, *skorn* invaders, and worse.

Of all the observatories, the *Tanat Celestium* nestled in the icy heights of the *Sunstone Ranges* suffered most. By accident, sabotage, or unbridled arrogance, the astronomers unleashed the demon *Uzr-Grom-Yrsha* into their midst. *Uzr* swiftly took control of the complex, transforming the residents into hapless *Gaunts* (the demons are bound to the facility and cannot leave). A handful of *anointed* escaped, but only one survived the trek to *Northgate* to report the horrors witnessed. He was swiftly put to death, the incident covered up, and the *Celestium* abandoned.

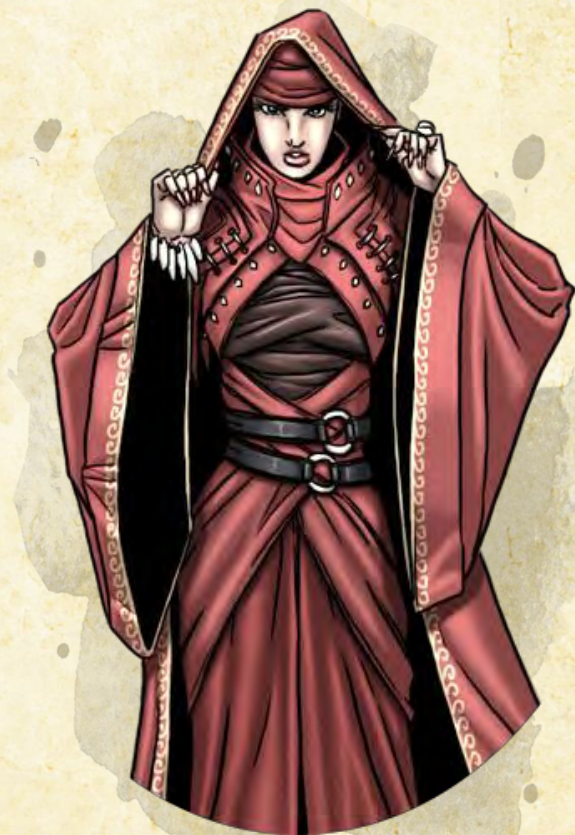
### Tanat Codex

A decade has since passed, and a relatively new *anointed*, *Sister Millicent*, chanced to hear about the deserted observatory whilst caring for the aging sorcerer during one of his fevered ramblings.

Investigating further, *Millicent* turned up records suggesting the *Tanat Celestium* was abandoned due to *skorn* invaders, and more importantly, that the observatory's prime codex was stored in a secret vault. *Millicent* has overheard her master muttering about the "*Tanat Codex*" during fits of troubled sleep, and is certain he will reward her if she retrieves it.

*Millicent's* first difficulty is that the *anointed* are prohibited from seeking out the observatory, care of a decade old decree from senior cabal members. As a result *Millicent's* mission must be a secret one.

Secondly, the journey is at least a month's duration (two weeks there and back), through monster infested wilds. The disciple would never survive alone, and she cannot risk taking any of her usual *anointed* warriors with her. Which is where the PCs come in.





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## Sister Millicent

*Sister Millicent* (late 20s, 6 ft, red robes, silver door signet ring, ambitious, paranoid) meets with the party away from the *anointed's* usual haunts to offer them 500 crowns to escort her to the *Tanat Celestium* in the *Sunstone Ranges*.

If queried about why others of the *Stargazer's* sect cannot assist, she explains her quest is secretive in nature and intended to bolster her status in the cabal; she doesn't want another disciple beating her to the prize. Her objective is to retrieve the astronomical codex in the observatory's vault and return to *Northgate* in one piece. *Millicent* is already on a short list to trial as one of the sorcerer's (coveted) apprentices next year; she hopes returning the codex will confirm her place.

**Sister Millicent** AC 12, HD 2, Spiked Mace 1d8+1, 19: as weapon, S9 D13 C14 I14 P10 W15 Ch14 L9, Mv 30 ft. *Millicent* is armed with 1 x *Purple Slime Pot* and 1 x *Blue Slime Pot*. Like all of *Nocratha's* disciples, *Millicent* has developed an unnatural loyalty to her master.

**Purple Slime** AC 11, HD 3+1, Pseudopod 1d6+1 up to 60 ft, 19: special, S12 D12 C15 I3 P8 W17 Ch1 L6, Mv 40 ft inc up walls, ceiling. On a Nat 19, the target's armour (50%) or held item (50%) is corroded (per the *Injuries & Setbacks* table, entry 9 or 10). When damaged, *purple slime* has a 50% chance of splitting into two *slimes* of half hp (no further splitting). The *slime* turns inert after 3d4 rounds, crumbling into flakes.

**Blue Slime** AC 12, HD 4+1, Crush 2d6, 19: special, S16 D10 C16 I3 P10 W14 Ch1 L7, Mv 40 ft inc up walls, ceiling. On a Nat 19, the target is engulfed by the *slime* and chokes, automatic 2d4 damage each round on the *slime's* turn. Target may spend an action to make an opposed Str check to escape. When damaged, there is a 50% chance *blue slime* disarms the attacker, absorbing its weapon (retrievable after the slime dies). Turns inert after 3d4 rounds, crumbling into flakes.

Every dawn, *Nocratha* vomits up a foul, bubbling mucus of varying coloration: the secret ingredient of his unique slime pots. After some alchemical tempering, the semi-sapient slime is bottled and distributed to disciples as a weapon/tool. When released to air, the slime balloons into a 4 ft glob of corrosive sludge that will follow basic instructions from the *anointed* (who have also, as part of their initiation rituals, ingested *Nocratha's* slime). Slime pots have a maximum shelf life of 1d2 months.

## Overland Trek

The journey to *Tanat Celestium* is approximately 160 miles northwest of *Northgate*, taking the most direct path through the *Wistwood* and *High Plains*, into the *Sunstone Ranges* beyond.

Subject to the GM's discretion, each day requires a roll on the *Overland Events* table (LFG p.131), or alternatively there is a 30% chance each day of a random encounter from the relevant table below (roll 1d6):

### High Plains

1. A flock of 2d6 *Griffons* are surveying the area from on high, far from their nest in distant hills. They are hungry and weary from the long flight. If possible they attempt to snatch up a small animal such as a dog, or if that is not possible, kill a horse (which they know the party will leave behind for them to feast on at their leisure). They attack humanoids as a last resort.
2. 2d4 *Ogres* are lying in wait in the long grass (by accident, they were sleeping, then happened to be downwind of the party as they approached). The PCs might hear their sniggering enthusiasm for the imminent ambush before they strike (Per check).

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3. 4d6 *barbarian* corpses of the *Half Crow* tribe are scattered about the area. The bodies are about a day old, many partially devoured or missing limbs (devoured by a *Skorn* warband or other scavengers). Any remaining weapons have been broken. Searching the bodies reveals 1 x *Trinkets & Curios* hidden in a boot.
  4. A large grassfire breaks out on the horizon and is fanned by strong winds in the party's direction. A Party Challenge (difficult: 8 successes) focusing on Int, Perception, Con, Athletics, Wilderness Lore, Animal Lore and Leadership allows the PCs to avoid the fire. If failed, they are caught up in it (all PCs lose 1 Con due to smoke and exhaustion, and 50% chance of suffering 1d12 damage due to burns or related injuries).
  5. A riderless horse can be seen cropping grass near a copse of trees. If investigated further, *Kraago*, a lost eleven year old barbarian child of the *Half Crow* clan (black tribal markings, adorned with feathers) is found sleeping with his back to a tree. *Kraago* speaks only his clan's thuel dialect (no common). He was separated from members of his tribe during a *skorn* raid. If returned to his mother *Drusa* she will be overjoyed (a day distant, but horse tracks lead the way; the tribe's search party is tracking him from the other direction). There is a 50% chance *Drusa* becomes Chieftain of the *Half Crows* in a few short years (otherwise she becomes an exile, and turns up as a mercenary in a nearby city).
  6. 3d4 *Centaurs* can be seen thundering across the plains, patrolling a sentry perimeter around a much larger tribe (4d10+30). The *centaurs* are armed with shortbows and spears, well aware they can harry intruders at a distance until they

force them to leave. They might allow the PCs to pass if offered gold or other valuables.

### Wistwood

1. A wide pond thick with moss marks a break in the trees. 5d4 *Projectile Leeches* lurk beneath the surface, ready to spring at anyone investigating the water's edge.
2. Huge webs begin to entangle parts of the trees, growing thicker and more frequent as the party presses further into the forest. Closer inspection reveals the webs are old, with many patchy holes and broken strands. The venerable *Giant Spider* that spun them died a week ago of natural causes. Delving into the heart of a web funnel locates the corpse, as well as some cocooned barbarians and 1 x *Carry Loot*.
3. Flittering butterflies and moths dance a strange duet in this unusual clearing dappled with warm sunlight. A fey abjuration of ancient origin protects the area, granting advantage on any recovery checks made, and disadvantage on the chance of a random encounter.
4. In the middle of the night, a procession of distant torches can be seen moving through the trees. Investigating further reveals 5d6 *skorn* performing a turning ceremony (whereby an exulted warrior is infected with lycanthropy, in this case wolf strain). After being savaged by a large wolf (*werewolf*) the infected is stabbed with spears to induce his transformation (at which time she kills two of her tribemates in a bestial rage!). Once the turning is complete, there is a 50% chance one of the *werewolves* detects the party's scent.
5. A war party of 4d6 *White Jaw* barbarians (sporting white paint and fanged

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talismans) have been tracking the party and mean to make an example of them, stringing their corpses up in the trees as a warning to encroaching outland rangers (who have become more frequent of late).

6. A great and terrible *Dire Wolf*, the size of an elephant (10 HD, *Off Turn Attacks*, Bite 3d6, Str 19) is stalking the party. It will attempt to snatch one of the PCs during the night, and retire to its den to feast (the den includes the bones of past victims; 2 x Carry Loot and 1 x Valuables).

### Sunstone Ranges

1. 1d12 *Snow Trolls* (as *Troll*, but white, stony hides AC 15, and only a single Bite attack causing 2d8 damage) are loping through the higher mountain passes, trying to keep the party in sight as they descend towards them.
2. A drop in temperature is accompanied by constant rain (or snow, if high enough) and howling winds that lash the upper passes for the next 36 hours. Resting is more difficult, imposing disadvantage on recovery tests. If the party presses on in the abysmal weather, a Con (Athletics) check is required to stave off exhaustion (lose 1 Con).
3. On a distant mountain, poking out from low lying cloud cover, the ruined buildings of a forgotten civilization can be seen (the *Ruins of Ashabat*, Adventure Framework #28).
4. A terrible roar sounds from behind a nearby peak. In 1d4 rounds, 1d3 *Manticores* appear from their den, sniffing at the air as if searching for an unfamiliar scent.

5. An elderly *Rock Grinder* lays dying within a shallow tunnel off the mountain pass (collapsed). The monster's breathing is laboured and the creature obviously in terrible pain (it will die in 1d6 hours, magic cannot save it given the natural cause).

If a PC puts an end to the monster's suffering, a particularly bright infant *Rock Grinder* (Int 5, 2 ft, 1 HD, 4 x Claws 1d2) burrows out of the collapsed tunnel and makes clicking noises at the character. If treated well, the *grinder* will accompany the party for a time, coming and going as it pleases (a kind of on again, off again pet. It will hang around for longer periods if offered gold and other gems to eat).

6. 1d6+1 *Hill Giants* can be heard around a bend in the mountain pass, boasting and laughing about their good fortune. If investigated further, the giants are playing a game similar to *quirts*, throwing rotting *skorn* heads at ground spikes surrounding a trussed up *skorn* captive. Whoever lands the most heads on spikes gets to eat the prisoner. At the moment, *Blargt* (older, almost hairless, black tooth grin) is winning.



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## Tanat Celestium

The observatory is set on a small plateau on the western side of one of the larger mountain faces, about 5,000 ft above sea level. Snow covers the ground here, stringy grass still grows beneath, but the tree line is 2,000 feet below.

Stone steps lead up to iron entry doors (locked), marked with the lion heraldry of *Northgate*. A steel plaque indicates "*Tanat Celestium*". 40 ft above is a wide balcony, and to the west, 50 ft from the ground, is a gigantic telescope (pointing northwest). The facility looks fully intact, no prints disturb nearby snow. A Perc check at disadvantage detects a very faint buzzing from above (Area 24). An Int (Wilderness Lore) check notices heavy snow gathering higher up the peak (see Area 8, Encounter 3).

Unless noted otherwise, the interior is made of finely cut stone, decorated with stylized astronomical glyphs on the floor. Ceilings are approx 10 ft high, and the interior doors made of wood (all doors are open, unless noted). Sconced torches and candles occupy most rooms and hallways, but are unlit (without a light source the inside is completely dark).

## Observatory Trinkets

When searching rooms for random gear, the GM might like to substitute a 1d12 roll on the following table instead of the usual Carry Loot or Trinkets & Curios tables:

- |       |   |        |   |
|-------|---|--------|---|
| (i)   | An ornate spherical astrolabe fashioned of steel and electrum (130 gp).               | (iv)   | A small coin purse containing 3d6 gold crowns and 4d10 silver florins.  |
| (ii)  | A brittle prayer book dedicated to <i>Wodon</i> (icon of a dual headed bust).         | (v)    | A scroll case containing rare musings of <i>Nocratha</i> in his early years (primarily ideas regarding the flow of time, the Veil, abjurations against demons, and spell research). A Magic User studying the scrolls for one month learns a new spell.                         |
| (iii) | An astroscope (octant) of heavy iron, decorated with silver star iconography (35 gp). | (vi)   | A handful of quills contained in a leather wrap.  |
|       |   | (vii)  | A small armillary sphere made of wood, with metal rings. The metal is black, laced with veins of dark green (not of this earth). Carrying the armillary (secretly) increases the character's DDM tally by 1 point (if studied, an Int (Arcane Lore) check confirms the effect). |
|       |   | (viii) | A heavy wooden case (locked) contains six bottles (three ink, one blood, one bile, and one random poison).  |
|       |   | (ix)   | A series of star charts focusing on different celestial quadrants. A stargazer might notice a major constellation missing from one quadrant, replaced with another (unfamiliar) set of stars.   |
|       |   | (x)    | A well thumbed book entitled " <i>The Truth about Turnips</i> ". Contains essays on the secret sapience of turnips, and their ancient nemeses; cabbages. Also some tasty recipes.   |
|       |   | (xi)   | A silver signet ring with the silver door motif of <i>Nocratha the Stargazer</i> (20 gp, only the <i>anointed</i> may legally possess one).   |

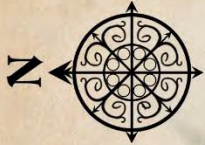
# TANAT CELESTIUM



OBSERVATORY



UPPER FLOOR



GROUND FLOOR



HIDDEN BASEMENT

- (xii) A steel censer on a long chain, complete with unburnt incense (myrrh). Lighting it produces an earthy, black liquorice like smoke.

### Area 1 - Main Entry

Entry is via the iron doors, or scaling the mountain to reach the balcony (Area 12) or study (Area 24). Climbing the mountain is automatic with appropriate gear, otherwise a Str (Athletics) check is required (if failed, the climber falls at the midway point).

Picking the locked iron doors requires a Dex (Traps & Locks) test, or they may be breached with a crowbar, pickaxe, or other similar tool with sufficient time. Making a noisy entrance in this way however awakens the *Gaunts* within, who will swarm the party after they pass Area 3, if they think they can trap the PCs inside.

### Area 2 - Entrance Hall

A raised iron portcullis looms ominously above the entrance to this 130 ft by 50 ft hall. Seven heavy crossbows (with 1d10 bolts each) hang from the walls, and a further five are scattered on the floor with broken bolts. Decades old blood stains mark parts of the floor and wall, but no flesh or bones are evident. Large droppings can be seen here and there (*Flue Beetles* have made parts of the complex their home, see Areas 6 - 11).

### Area 3 - Demon Well

A deep, dark well occupies the centre of this 30 ft chamber. Stairs to the upper floor are situated to the west. The well is 3 ft wide and descends 80 ft to draw from an underground stream that branches off from Area 9 (winch and bucket still intact). Hidden in the well are 2d6+10 hibernating *Gaunts* (possessed residents). If the party makes any loud noises on the ground level, a Perc check determines whether the demons awake.

**Gaunt** AC 12, HD 2+2, Touch 1d6, 19: special, S9 D13 C9 I5 P13 W13 Ch7 L5, Mv 30 ft inc climbing. *Gaunts* have the usual *Demon* traits (but

do breathe and sleep) and 20% magic resistance. On a Nat 19+ the *Gaunt* inhales part of the target's soul, causing 1d4 Will loss (*Luck* (Will) save for half).

*Gaunts* are unwilling half demons; humans forcibly possessed by demonic spirits. Within a short time they develop blue skin, an elongated physique, and a repulsive toothless maw. *Gaunts* cannot speak but do emit awful groaning, muttering and shrieking noises consistent with hunger. Pouring holy water down a *Gaunt's* throat exorcises the demon, permanently banishing it (the host suffers 2d6 damage in the process, enough to kill most people). *Purge the Accursed* also frees the host (same damage).



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#### Area 4 – Cells

This 50 ft by 30 ft room includes three barred cells to the north (all locked, keys lost). Two of the cells are empty, but one contains a sleeping *Gaunt* (an unfortunate barbarian captive, possessed like everyone else). The *Gaunt* has been trapped in the cell for ten years. If woken it alternates between boundless, impotent rage (sucking at the bars) and mewling misery (either way, it might alert others).

#### Area 5 – Materials Storage

This 20 ft square storage room includes shelves of candles, rope, 3d6 torches, a barrel of oil, spare robes, and so on.

#### Area 6 – Minor Chapel

This 50 ft diameter chapel has a stone altar to *Wodon* (a stacked tomes symbol marks the top), and statues to the east and west (one is a female *Wodon*, the other a fallen male; robed with a book in one hand and a sword in the other). The walls are inscribed with prayers of knowledge, insight and justice.

2d6 *Flue Beetles* have dug a shallow nest here (part of the basement colony). They will defend their territory against humanoids, but will flee from demons (if woken, the demons will seek out humanoids first, but will kill the beetles if no other victims are available).

**Flue Beetle** AC 14, HD 3, Mandibles 1d8+1, 19; special, S14 D11 C13 I2 P13 W10 Ch8 L5, Mv 30 ft inc swim, or 10 ft burrow. On a Nat 19, the beetle's skull spines emit a sickly yellow gas causing 1 Str, Dex or Con loss to the target (determine randomly, no save). When *Staggered*, the spines emit gas in a 40 ft radius, putting targets to sleep for 1d4 hrs (*Luck* (Will) save resists).

*Flue Beetles* are 3 ft omnivores with flexible, pipe organ like spines. When *Staggered*, their spines rise upwards and emit a haunting drone, causing creatures within 40 ft to fall asleep for 1d4 hours (*Luck* (Will) save resists, after the first save, target immune for the rest of the combat). They are

accomplished swimmers, able to hold their breath for two hours and propel themselves with their spines.

#### Area 7 – Writing Supplies

This 20 ft by 30 ft storage area includes shelves of paper, blank journals and charts, ink, quills, and so on. The “secret” door to the east has a large hole burrowed through it (care of the *Flue Beetles*).

#### Area 8 – River Dock

This 20 ft by 40 ft landing has barrels and crates of fishing lines, hooks, knives, spare oars, etc. The two canoes that once sat at the dock are long gone. Roll 1d6 to determine what happens when the PCs arrive here (the GM might also use this table for random encounters within the facility, if desired):

1. 1d4 *Argosan Stranglers* emerge from the slow moving river. They attempt to grab hold of a PC and drag them underneath (if the PCs are elsewhere in the complex, their sodden forms appear in a doorway).
2. 2d4 infant *Flue Beetles* (1 ft long, 3 hp, 1d2 dmg) are rummaging about the area, practicing their digging techniques. Some are attached to the ceiling, dropping stones onto the floor with a clatter.
3. A violent tremor seizes the building, shaking the foundations as an avalanche occurs outside. The entry doors are completely blocked with tonnes of snow. The PCs will have to exit via Areas 9, 12, or 24. Anyone in Areas 1, 12 or the exposed top of Area 25 are killed (*Luck* (Dex) save or Int (Wilderness Lore) check to scamper out of the way in time).
4. A *Gaunt* from Area 13 has awoken by coincidence, and is wandering nearby. Have both parties make a Perc check to see if they detect each other.

5. Fifty or so *Shock Wasps* from Area 24 are investigating the complex. If they detect the party, they emit a loud warning buzz, but do not attack unless threatened. More of their kind are drawn every round until after 2d6 rounds enough have gathered to form a *Swarm*, at which point they attack. They intend to kill the PCs and lay eggs inside their corpses.
6. Cracking noises foreshadow 1d3+2 *Flue Beetles* burrowing through the ceiling into the PCs' chamber. One of them pokes its head out of the ceiling/wall/floor and makes a strange clacking noise.

### Area 9 - Underground River

This slow winding river is 20 ft wide and about 8 ft deep. It flows eastward, reappearing at the surface two miles distant below the tree line in a series of winding inlets. The ceiling throughout is high enough to accommodate a canoe and passengers (or fit swimmers, about 2 - 3 hours with moderate gear, helped along by the current).

### Area 10 - Beetle Queen

This dug out warren is occupied by the *Flue Beetle Queen* (10 ft wide, with a darker orange colouration, and high flues). A score of eggs lay piled in one corner, bound with a light, stringy mucus mesh. The *Queen* will not tolerate interlopers, blaring her horn like flues to summon any remaining beetles from Areas 6 or 11 to aid her.

**Flue Beetle Queen** AC 20, HD 10, Mandibles 3d8, 19: special, S19 D8 C16 I2 P14 W17 Ch9 L11, Mv 40 ft inc swim, or 15 ft burrow. The Queen has *Major Exploit Protection* and *Off Turn Attacks*. On a Nat 19, the *Queen's* skull spines emit a sickly yellow gas causing 2 Str, Dex or Con loss in a 10 ft radius (determine randomly, no save).

There is no treasure here, but the *Queen's* ancient carapace may be made into an exceptionally

strong, light and flexible suit of armour or shield (GM determines special properties, if any).



### Area 11 - Flue Beetle Nest

This 30 ft by 20 ft chamber has two bookshelves filled with various tomes (cooking, astronomical works, treaties on the Veil, magic, the gods, etc).

3d6 *Flue Beetles* have dug out a nest here, which they have laid with some of the *Queen's* eggs (Area 10), covered in webbed mucus. They will defend the nest against all comers.

### Area 12 - Balcony

This 50 ft by 20 ft balcony is open to the cold mountain air, the tiled floor dusted with snow. Steps lead down to a locked door (a Dex (Traps & Locks) check opens it). The balcony is 40 ft above the ground floor entry.

### Area 13 - Sleeping Quarters

This 50 ft chamber contains eight large beds, each containing the hibernating form of a *Gaunt*, covered in thick dust. Traces of long dried blood stains spatter the beds and floor. There are exits to the north, east and west, and a partially collapsed tunnel to the south (requires some digging to allow



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a human through, but a halfling might just squeeze through as is).

#### **Area 14 - Library**

This large library contains the bulk of the observatory's astronomy records, as well as numerous books, scrolls and charts on a wide variety of topics (botany, climate, herbalism, poisons, history, etc).

On a high shelf, behind a locked *cold iron* cage, is an ivory covered tome (no other markings). A Dex (Traps & Locks) check opens the cage. The *White Book of Belemón* details the history of the *Belemón* before their transformation into the bestial *Cyclopes* of today, and contains 2 x random Scrolls within its brittle pages.

#### **Area 15 - Reading Room**

This 30 ft reading chamber includes a number of small desks and chairs. A series of old blood stains mar the area. If the area is searched, 1 x Trinkets & Curios is located.

#### **Area 16 - Chamber of Elders**

This 30 ft chamber is decorated with grey wall tiles and three ebony statues set into wall niches (one to the north, east and west). The northern statue depicts *Nocratha* (elderly, bald, frail, robes), the eastern idol *Magister Namurchan* (a saint of *Wodon*, naked, long beard, hunched with a staff) and the western *Canoness Rohir* (now deceased, a favoured *anointed*, hair in a bun, missing one arm below the elbow, armour, spiked mace, talisman with silver door icon).

Although this room appears undisturbed, the demons have tainted it, marking the idols with invisible malefice (*Pierce the Veil* radiates a cursed, evil aura). A living humanoid touching the statutes draws the attention of malignant forces beyond the Veil, invoking an immediate intercession (roll on the DDM table).

#### **Area 17 - Beetle Corpses**

The floor of this 70 ft by 30 ft hall is tiled with gigantic golden astronomical symbols, the walls decorated with murals of night sky constellations. Stairs descend to the northwest and southwest.

Scattered about the area are the shells of 3d6 *Flue Beetle* corpses, clustered around a shallow nest. The cause of the *beetles'* death is not obvious (*Word of Ending* via *Uzr-Grom-Yrsha*) but they appear to have died at the same time, some years earlier.

#### **Area 18 - Armillary Sphere**

This 50 ft by 20 ft hallway continues the murals of Area 17. A gigantic 9 ft armillary sphere fashioned of steel and copper dominates the centre (the ring framework and planets still rotate, etc, an iron footstool rests nearby to reach the top).

The sphere reflects contemporary theories of the planets and heavenly bodies, including the *Midland's* planet. Curiously, the model also includes a hinged silver sphere (hollow) formed of alienesque, geometric patterning. If the model is rearranged, it is possible to cause the hinged sphere to engulf the *Midland's* world.

A character skilled in Arcane Lore, Astronomy or Mathematics may study the formations to deduce that the conjunction will occur in the next 3 - 5 years (Int check at disadvantage). If *Millicent* is asked about this, she replies only that "*some believe the Silver Door is imminent*", shrugs non committedly, and moves away to study something else.

#### **Area 19 - Star Chart**

This 50 ft by 20 ft hallway continues the murals of Area 17. In the centre an 8 ft diameter star chart is set into the floor, representing the four celestial quadrants. The entire chart is encircled by a blood red corona (anyone skilled in Arcane or Divine Lore recognises it as the Veil).

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## Area 20 – Master Study & Vault

The doors to this 50 ft by 40 ft chamber are locked (Dex (Traps & Locks) to open. Within is an expertly carved study, the walls lined with bookshelves (laden with rare tomes on astronomy, arcana, the divinities, philosophy, physics, alchemy, and so on). A large work desk occupies the centre.

Upon entering this room, candles on the desk light of their own accord, and a deep chill settles over the entire area (causing shivering, PCs' breath condenses, etc). Moving further inside summons *Uzr-Grom-Yrsha*.

*Uzr-Grom-Yrsha* (8 ft muscular humanoid with goat legs, spiked armour, tentacle beard and horns) is evil and corruption manifest. *Uzr's* fetish is for suffering, helplessness, and the enslavement of others. Wherever possible he infuses his victims with demonic spirits, transforming them into bestial *Gaunts*. Bound to the confines of the Areas 17 – 20, he wastes no time attempting to make thralls of the PCs.

**Uzr-Grom-Yrsha**, *Boss Monster* AC 18, HD 10 (88 hp), Polearm 2d6+2 or Horns 2d4 and *Demonic Gaze*, 19: special, S19 D14 C20 I13 P16 W19 Ch10 L13, Mv 40 ft. *Boss Monster* and *Demon* will the usual benefits. 70% magic resistance. *Uzr's Demonic Gaze* attack affects one target up to 30 ft, transforming them into a *Gaunt* (*Luck* (Will) save negates, otherwise the PC becomes an NPC under the GM's control). May cast the following spells once per week: *Word of Ending* (a target bearing any *cold iron* is immune to this effect), *Veil of the Balor*, *Sight Beyond Sight*, *Beseech the Ancient Ones*.

If *Uzr* is defeated, *Millicent* knows the secret vault is in the study, but isn't sure where. Searching the bookcase on the eastern wall reveals a crescent moon bookend, that if twisted, causes a panel to slide away. Picking the lock requires a Dex (Traps & Locks) check great success (alternatively the key is in the desk drawer). Within is 1 x 5 HD Lair

Treasure and the *Tanat Codex* (bound in jet black felt, nonmagical, unique astronomical records, worth 800 gp to a collector).

## Area 21 – Reading Nook

This small reading and meditation nook contains a chair (bloodstained), desk and shelves. A half written thesis on the existence of the gods is on the desk. There is a 50% chance of rolling on the Area 8 encounter table when the PCs arrive here.

## Area 22 – Dining Hall

This large kitchen and dining area includes a stove and heavy oak dining table. Old blood splatters are scattered about the area. A small barrel of oil stands beside one wall.

## Area 23 – Wodon Temple

This 120 ft by 40 ft temple has a 30 ft ceiling decorated with divine hieroglyphs of knowledge, art and justice. 1d6+4 *Gaunts* stand motionless in the darkness at the base of the raised dais at the southern end, as if asleep on their feet (hibernating).

The dais includes an obsidian altar stained with old blood. A cloth covering with an owl and scales icon (one of *Wodon's* symbols) is discarded in the corner, torn and defiled with faeces. Shattered stone idols of *Wodon's* male and female forms flank the steps on either side.

A compartment under the altar contains 1d6 vials of holy water, and a *cold iron* holy symbol of *Wodon* (stack of tomes icon), consecrated before the observatory fell to catastrophe.

## Area 24 – Observatory Study

This 50 ft octagonal chamber includes writing desks, records, star charts, writing implements and so on. Small 1 ft windows look out onto the icy mountain. Encasing most of the ceiling is a massive wasp's nest.

A *Shock Wasp Swarm* have made their home here. They are highly territorial insects and will attempt to kill any intruders. Unless continuing to be attacked, they will not pursue opponents that

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approach Area 13. If the *wasps* are defeated, 1 x Trinkets & Curios and 1 x Potion is found here.

**Shock Wasp Swarm** AC 13, HD 4, Shocking Sting 1d8, 19: the target is overwhelmed (helpless for 1d3 rounds, *Luck* (Str or Dex) save negates), S3 D18 C5 I2 P10 W10 Ch4 L8, Mv 90 ft flying. *Swarms* suffer half damage from weapons, double damage from AoE, and split in two when *Staggered* (once only, same stats but half hp).

*Shock Wasp Swarms* are made of hundreds of angry, buzzing 16 inch wasps. They are particularly territorial and aggressive, chasing fleeing opponents for up to half a mile before breaking off their pursuit. If threatened with open fire (torches etc), the *wasps* might be held at bay for 1d6 rounds (Will check).



## Area 25 - Telescope

A huge steel telescope coated with snow and aimed towards the sky stands here (in working order, may be recalibrated using fine tuning rings and a turning rig).

Descending the stairs into Area 24 requires bypassing an iron trapdoor. The trapdoor is barred from below, requiring a crowbar (or similar) to break open, after about 10 minutes of loud, strenuous work (drawing the attention of the *Wasps* in Area 24 and perhaps the *Gaunts* in Area 13).

## Aftermath

If *Millicent* retrieves the codex, she pays the party their agreed fee, keeps them in mind for future work, and feels she “owes them” for keeping her alive throughout their ordeal. As hoped, she becomes one of the sorcerer’s rare apprentices, wielding great political clout within the sect.

If *Millicent* dies, but the party retrieves the codex, other *anointed* eventually learn of her plans and comes asking questions. The PCs might be able to sell the book directly to *Nocratha* or his sect (or other interested collectors) at the GM’s option (*Nocratha* will gladly trade a permanent magical item for the tome).

If *Uzr-Grom-Yrsha* is not dealt with, some years later he manages to develop a spell that allows him to leave the complex. He heads for the closest barbarian village and begins transforming as many residents as possible into *Gaunts*, moving through the *High Plains* gathering an army of half demons to invade the *Argos* basin.

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# SHADOW OVER WISTWOOD



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## SHADOW OVER WISTWOOD

Recurrent dreams intrude on one or more members of the party, suggesting a magical crown might be plundered from a bygone stronghold, deep within the boughs of the *Wistwood*.

### A Lost Crown

Worn by the first, and last, *Magus Queen of Argosa*, the *Crown of Belidbarazûl* is a relic of the Second Age; a golden coronet with curling wings and a tapered spire. Before the Queen was executed by her own people, *Belidbarazûl's* sorcery all but erased the city of *Westrum*, swallowing it beneath the *Sunstone Ranges*. When the Queen's head finally fell, both it and her accursed headpiece vanished forever. Or so it was written.

In truth, the crown has resurfaced several times in the millennia that followed, the ghost of the *Magus Queen* somehow persisting within. Attunement grants the bearer sorcerous insights and spells, but requires a perilous joining with the Queen's spirit. As the bond strengthens, so do the powers granted, until a tipping point is reached and *Belidbarazûl* attempts to usurp the wearer's body. Unfortunately for the Queen, no prior host has survived long enough to allow her to reincarnate.

In recent centuries, the crown made its way to *Côrterra*, a forgotten stronghold in the pine forests of the *Wistwood*. Once an outpost for an early human civilization of the *Ironhull Mountains*, the complex later fell to bandits before seismic shifts

flooded most of the chambers. During the last eighteen months, the waters have receded enough to allow people to return.

### Strange Calling

The party might become involved in this adventure in a number of ways, including finding reference to the crown in an old text, rumours of Varnori raiders hiding in the woods, or stumbling across the fort whilst exploring the forest at large. Alternatively however, the GM might decide one or more PCs receive prophetic dreams of the crown's location, as *Belidbarazûl's* spirit tempts



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them from across the Veil. Of course the PCs are free to simply ignore the dreams (eventually the spirit relents, turning its attention to more willing prey instead).

## Varnori Warband

As fate would have it, a contingent of Varnori scouts (tall, pale skinned raiders from across the northern sea) have begun using the partially flooded stronghold as a base of operations.

Led by *Yrid Halgaard* (6'2", red hair, studded leather, abrupt) the infiltrators are employing maximum stealth, conscious that a larger force could wipe them out at any time. The captain and her 2d6 veteran scouts are under orders to surveil the *Wistwood* in its entirety, mapping the land and gauging enemy numbers (*skorn*, barbarians, etc). After several careful weeks, the job is about half done.

**Yrid Halgaard**, *Boss Monster* AC 15, HD 6, Sword 1d8+1, 19: disarm, S13 D17 C13 I14 P15 W15 Ch13 L10, Mv 30 ft. *Yrid* is a *Boss Monster* with *Off Turn Attacks* and *Major Exploit Protection*. She has *Backstab*, *Finisher* and *Skirmisher* abilities like a 6<sup>th</sup> level Rogue. May choose from the following Rogue tricks three times per combat: *Hidden Blade*, *Unseen Whip*, *Smoke Bomb*, *Glue Pot*, *Cat's Grace*, *Quick Reflexes*, *Rapid Dose*. She has 1d4+1 doses of *Ghoulshen Admixture*, and may use her shield to negate one attack.

**Veteran Scouts**, AC 14, HD 3, Axe 1d8+2 or Short bow 1d6+1, 19: as weapon, S15 D13 C11 I12 P13 W10 Ch10 L6, Mv 30 ft. The scouts are armed with axes, swords and short bows.

*Rovald* is the squad's sergeant, a hulking 6½ ft brute with a tusked helmet, heavy armour and furs. He brooks no dissention in the ranks and is quick to slap or shout down any whining or complaining.

**Rovald**, AC 17, HD 4+2, Spear 1d6+4, 19: the target is tripped, S17 D14 C13 I9 P9 W12 Ch11 L8, Mv 30 ft. *Rovald* has *Major Exploit Protection* and the *Fighter Adaptable* ability; may choose from the following styles twice per combat: *Charger*, *Long Reach*, *Two Hander*, *Unarmed*. *Rovald* may use his shield to negate a single attack.

## Lake Wyrms

Additionally, unbeknownst to all involved, two adult *Lake Wyrms* have made a new lair in the eastern tunnels of the keep (the Varnori are unaware of the hidden passages connecting to the subterranean river beneath the keep). The *wyrms* and their recent clutch of newborns are detailed in Areas 15 & 16. As the adventure progresses, the *Lake Wyrms* begin to search the complex for food; inevitably bringing them into conflict with either the PCs, the Varnori, or both.

## Forest Journey

*Wistwood* is one of the colder and more austere forests of the *Argos* basin, a mix of grand pine, fir and cedar trees. Morning mist is common, lifting with the rising sun and lakeside breezes. Sunlight is generally prevalent, providing good visibility once the haze disperses.

*Côrterra* is hidden towards the centre of the wood, about 20 miles in (a journey of about 3 days from the closest boundary). Each day of travel requires a roll on the *Overland Events* table (LFG p.131), or alternatively there is a 50% chance every 12 hours of a random encounter (roll 1d10):

1. A light fog envelops the area at dusk or dawn. A barely perceivable hum seems to resonate from within the mist, a quiet droning that somehow elicits feelings of loss and loneliness.
2. A *Veil Spider* is hunting in the region, observing the PCs from a place between worlds. It waits until one or two of the

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party are separated before striking to kill. Unlike most of its kind, this spider can drag a target into a dimensional pocket for up to 1d4 rounds at a time (triggers on a Nat 19).



3. A warband of 4d6 *Skorn* are moving stealthily through a distant copse of trees, hoping to locate some barbarians to kill and eat. If they detect the party, they split into two and attempt to ambush them from different directions. The warband's leader, *Mrut*, is particularly large, vicious and voracious (3 HD, 2d6 damage).
4. A towering pine with a 4 ft wide, mildew spotted trunk grows in a stony clearing. Closer examination reveals the "stones" are in fact weathered shards of bone, teeth and nails/claws (human and otherwise). A tribe of 6d6 corrupted *Pixies* (flesh eaters) lair within the tree (concealed 6" access hatches can be found in the high branches). If disturbed, they demand a tribute of gems or other shiny objects "for the *gilderfane*". If defeated, the base of the tree stores 1 x 4 HD Lair Treasure worth of precious stones and trinkets.

5. A pack of 2d6 *Wild Boars* are snuffling about in nearby underbrush, seeking out berries, bulbs and mice to eat. They are territorial and will challenge the party in an attempt to drive them away.
6. A dim grotto conceals a *Banshee* (a 5 ft primeval elf, missing its ears, terribly emaciated, with a distended jaw). The creature (unable to tell whether male or female) is wholly consumed by shame and grief, existing partly in the physical world, and partly elsewhere. It has an implacable hatred for all sapient humanoids, and dwarves in particular.
7. A large, mossy pool attracts birds and other animals to this location. The water is surprisingly clear and free of impurities (an unground spring feeds it). Tracks reveal humanoids were in the area within the last few hours (3d6 *Thuels* (*Barbarians*) of the *Green Boar* tribe).
8. A 10 yr old human boy (a thuel, no clan markings, wears woven plant clothes) can be seen riding a gigantic, silver striped *Dire Wolf* (4+2 HD, Bite 2d6) through distant trees. The child keeps its distance, but follows the party for up to a day before disappearing back into the forest. The boy speaks only in a wolf like growling. If offered gifts or made to laugh, he might guide the party through this section of the woods (no random encounters while he accompanies them). The wolf is an ancient, snaggletoothed beast, hostile to all but her "cub".
9. This part of the forest forms a valley, tightly cluttered with trees and grasping roots. At the deepest part of the ravine, where the sunlight has trouble reaching, is a colony of 2d4 *Yellow Mould* (most growing in the bodies of decaying animal carcasses). There is a 50% chance of a

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*Bloodroot Treant* in hibernation here, with *Yellow Mould* growing on it.

10. High pitched cries foreshadow 1d4 *Giant Eagles* gliding in the thermals high above. They are hunting for something to eat, and will investigate further if they spot the party (they are especially interested in any pets, mules or horses the party has).

## Cōrterra

*Cōrterra* keep is built into the side of a steep rise somewhere towards the centre of the *Wistwood*. Unless otherwise noted, corridors are 7 ft high, and chambers 10 ft tall, the interiors fashioned of dressed stone. Any original ostentation has dulled to obscurity or been stolen by various occupants over time. The air inside is cool and smells damp throughout the entire complex (overwhelmingly so in the flooded chambers). Lighting supplies are scarce; the Varnori use makeshift torches in an effort to preserve their limited candle and lamp oil reserves.

When the adventure begins, *Yrid* and her crew have taken up residence in the western half of the complex. They are unaware of the secret door in Area 8, the secret vault in Area 9, or the tunnels beyond.

## Stronghold Trinkets

If the PCs end up looting parts of the complex, the GM might substitute a 1d12 roll on the following table instead of the usual LFG Carry Loot or Trinkets & Curios tables:

1. A burnished war horn made from a mammoth's tusk (35 gp).
2. A carefully hand drawn map, on a piece of ancient hide, tied up with string. The map marks out various islands in the *Boreal* sea. If compared to modern maps, it appears to denote a small, hitherto unknown volcanic island in far northern oceans.
3. A wooden shield in the Varnori style, painted with black and red halves, and a steel centre cap.
4. A *cold iron* medallion with the wave icon of the Deep One (Varnori god) stamped upon it.
5. A gold brooch in the likeness of two crossed sturgeon, with tiny blue topaz eyes (124 gp).
6. A small 3" box, hand carved of yew, with a trapped lock (random poison needle). The key is lost. Inside is a pouch of rune bones (restore 1 *Luck*).
7. A squat, copper, waterproof lantern, with a wooden base and line weight to keep it upright on water. Contains whale oil (lasts twice as long).
8. A throwing axe in the Varnori style, with a razor sharp edge. A black rune is inscribed on the blade's spine (roll on the *Minor Charms* table).
9. A grey furred, water resistant cloak with a deep cowl (12 gp).
10. A tin flask with a screw cap; something sloshes inside (70% random potion, otherwise potent whisky).
11. A slim money belt, that can be concealed beneath one's pants' hem, containing a mix of gold and silver coins (5d6 gp) in the Varnori currency (*gulder* and *sild*, respectively).
12. A pair of sturdy, waterproof boots, with a hidden spring blade in the back of the left heel (twisting the heel pops the blade out).





# Cõrterra



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### Area 1 - Main Entry

Crumbling sandstone steps lead to a stone entry door, any prior adornments long worn away. The door is open (the locking mechanism is missing; a bronze bar that turned on a handle), but very heavy (requires a Str check to move).

Checking the area for tracks reveals recent signs of a small humanoid group (under a dozen) leading to/from the area (Int (Wilderness Lore) check). A great success reveals the most recent tracks lead away into the forest.

When the PCs arrive, the Varnori are out scouting (except for *Agmundar* in Area 6), leaving the stronghold unmanned. The northerners travel light and keep most of their gear with them; the keep is primarily a secure rest location between expeditions.

After the adventurers enter the complex however, roll 1d6 every 15 minutes, adding 1 for each prior roll, until both the northerners and the *Lake Wyrms* make an appearance.

How the scouts respond to the PCs' intrusion is left to the GM. Most likely *Yrid* will simply attempt to kill them all, but depending on when (and how) the *Lake Wyrms* are revealed, they might form a temporary alliance with the party (especially if PCs have a northerner among them).

1. Only the distant splashes of *Projectile Leeches* frolicking in their spawn pool (Area 4).
2. A series of low, rapid dolphin like clicks can be heard echoing from a distant chamber (*Lake Wyrms* noise).
3. *Agmundar* from Area 6 comes stumbling around the corner/through a doorway, in a delirious state.

4. A long, whale like vocalisation drones throughout the entire complex (*Lake Wyrms* noise).
5. A grinding noise announces the return of the scouts, followed by muffled human voices (opening the stone door in Area 1, and speaking in Varnori). The scouts will have noticed the PCs' tracks (unless disguised) and are confident they outnumber them.
6. With a whale like bellow, the male *Lake Wyrms* (see Area 19) issues a challenge to the party (it has detected their scent, etc) from a nearby chamber (or 20% chance it appears from a nearby doorway to charge the PCs, thirsting for their blood!).

### Area 2 - Flooded Hall

This 35 ft by 15 ft entry hall is 12 ft high, with cedar doors (closed, but in various states of decay) leading off to the east and west. The complex has shifted somewhat over the years, causing the chamber to tilt on a slight decline. Most of the room is flooded with three inches of water (relatively clear looking if inspected under torch light), with a large well at the southern end. A shoal of small two inch semi luminous fish swim about eating plankton and tiny water insects.

If the party takes a moment to listen carefully for sounds (Perc (Detection) check), they might hear sounds of splashing from Area 4, or barely audible moaning from Area 6).

### Area 3 - Broken Well

This 5 ft ceremonial well is broken at the base contributing to the flooding. The well is connected to an unpredictable subterranean river that flows southeast beneath the stronghold. Recent downpours have caused the water level to rise dramatically, waterlogging some chamber floors (primarily Area 2, but also via cracks and seepages in Area 4, 12, 14, 16).

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Diving into the well leads to the river below. Natural currents will tend to pull a swimmer towards either Area 12, or the 3 ft wide tunnel leading to Area 14.

#### Area 4 - Main Storage Hall

This 35 ft by 15 ft alcoved hall contains a variety of wooden boxes, crates and barrels, left over from bandit raids in centuries past. Most of the floor is flooded in three inches of water. 5d4 *Projectile Leeches* have made a temporary spawning ground here (the Varnori are aware and keep the doors closed). The south eastern corner of the chamber includes a 3 ft wide underwater tunnel to Area 14.

**Projectile Leech**, AC 10, HD 1, Bite 1d3 + blood drain, 19: the leech latches onto the target's face, causing an eye injury (*Luck* (Con) save resists, with advantage if wearing a helm), S10 D10 C16 I2 P14 W8 Ch3 L3, Mv 20 ft inc walls, ceiling, etc. May launch up to 10 feet to attack. Immune to bludgeoning damage. On a hit, latches on automatically causing 1d4 damage and 1 Con loss each turn. A Str contest (Str 16) at disadvantage removes the parasite. Alternatively, salt, fire or acid automatically kills the leech.

If the barrels etc are searched, roll 1d6 to determine their contents:

1. Mildewed, moth eaten reams of silk and cotton.
2. Four inches of orange dust (long decayed spices).
3. Bare husks of rotted grain.
4. 2d6 clay flasks of ancient whiskey (long gone bad; syrupy with a pungent odour, but highly flammable).
5. A dormant *Yellow Mould* occupies the bottom of this crate. It awakens 1 round after opening.

6. Bags of old coins (or perhaps even ancient metal "ring" currency) worth 1 x Valuables.

#### Area 5 - Sleeping Chamber

Two double bunks occupy this 15 ft square sleeping chamber, the southwestern corner of which is under 2 inches of water. The bedding is relatively new and obviously slept in in recent weeks.



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#### Area 6 - Infirmary

This 15 ft chamber is lit by a low burning lantern, and has been turned into an infirmary for a wounded scout (*Agmundar*, 6 ft, lower torso wrapped in bloody bandages). *Agmundar* lies on a bunk in a sweat soaked delirium, drifting in and out of consciousness as his body tries to heal a pestilent wound (the scout medic did his best, but the outcome is far from certain. *Purge the Accursed* will save him).

In his diseased haze, *Agmundar* mistakes the party for his comrades (calling them *Lothar*, *Magna*,

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*Tjorvi, Drofenn*, etc), complaining of his pain, why has the *Deep One* abandoned him, cursing *Jarl Osgerd* for sending them on this mission, and so on. He also reports a strange, low “clicking” noise echoing through the complex whilst his allies were out (the male *Lake Wyrn*).

### Area 7 – Curtained Alcoves

These three curtained off alcoves contain a large basket (lengths of rope), a barrel (salted meat the scouts have hunted), and drawers (hunting tools the scouts have left behind for now) respectively.

### Area 8 – Kitchen

This 20 ft by 15 ft kitchen has a table (some stools tucked underneath), oven, a barrel (empty, traces of oil), a wash bucket and some shelving. Behind the shelving is a secret door (a fake stone conceals a pull handle to unlock a swinging section of wall). The door is not difficult to spot once the shelving is moved out of the way (Perc (Detection) check). The scouts have never bothered to move the shelf and are unaware of the door.

### Area 9 – Secret Vault

An old bandit “king” had this secret room constructed to house his growing collection of spoils. Several chests contain 2 x Carry Loot, 1 x Valuables, and 1 x 3 HD Lair Treasure. A barred door to the north leads to the old bandits’ tunnels.

The chests are obviously trapped; two inch holes are scattered across the ceiling above the chests and thereabouts. Emptying the chests, or moving them from their location, causes the floor they sit on to rise, triggering arrow traps. Luckily for the adventurers, the traps are so old they malfunction (a series of dull “clicks” is heard, but nothing eventuates).

### Area 10 – Hounds

This 10 ft chamber includes a bunk, two hounds, and two empty food and water bowls. The hounds were shut in this morning by *Agmundar* as he dipped into fevered delirium (the dogs were keeping him awake).

Two hounds are sleeping here after being on watch the prior night. The dogs are used to *Agmundar*’s delirious mutterings, but will bark at any unfamiliar human voices they hear. They will not allow anyone to pass beyond them into their master’s room whilst *Yrid* is away.

**Hound**, AC 12, HD 1+2, Bite 1d4+1, 19: prone, S13 D14 C15 I4 P12 W10 Ch6 L4, Mv 60 ft. Advantage when tracking by scent or when flanking opponents.

### Area 11 – Yrid’s Quarters

*Yrid* and her sergeant *Rovald* use this 15 ft chamber as their quarters when the scouts are in residence. A search of the bunk, crates and barrels garners 1 x Carry Loot, several recent skins, two coils of rope, 2d6 candles, a lantern, and 1d6 flasks of lantern oil.

### Area 12 – Central Cavern

Roughhewn steps descend to a 10 ft cavern that the ancient bandits used as auxiliary storage, and a rally point if the complex fell to enemies. The northern section has dropped and is now flooded with three inches of water (large cracks have allowed water to seep up from below/Area 3).

A small cache of random weapons and armour have been left here for quick rearmament by fleeing bandits (sitting on a low table, wrapped in disintegrating oil cloths). Roll 1d6:

1. 2d4 short swords and hand axes.
2. 1d3 shortbows and quivers of twenty arrows.
3. 1d6+1 firepots.
4. 3d6 throwing knives.
5. A primitive ballista, and three spear like bolts, aimed at the stairway (no longer functions, but might be repaired if the PCs have the right tools).

6. 2d6 spears and 1d3 shields.

### Area 13 - Crypt

This 6 ft cave has a low 4 ft ceiling. Inside are the bones of a human, laid to rest by the earliest occupants of the complex. Nothing remains but yellowed bones, dust, and (a successful Perception (Detection) Check notices) a bronze ring set with blue agate stones (35 gp, or at the GM's option, the ring has a random Minor Charm).

### Area 14 - Tracks Pool

This 8 ft pool connects to Areas 4 & 15 by way of 3 ft wide tunnels. The pool itself opens into a 3 ft wide, 4 ft high tunnel to the southwest that quickly turns south. The tracks of a large creature are evident (still wet, displaying the clawed feet and dragging body/tail of the *Lake Wym*).



### Area 15 - Male Lake Wym Den

The male *Lake Wym* made a temporary den here after the female gave birth (see Area 16). Drawn to investigate the *Projectile Leeches* in

Area 4, the monster is hunting for food, and eventually enters the complex proper via Area 3/4.

**Lake Wym**, AC 16, HD 10 (51 hp), Bite 2d10+1, 19: special, S19 D16 C18 I3 P13 W13 Ch6 L12, Mv 120 ft swimming or 30 ft on land. *Major Exploit Protection, Off Turn Attacks, Cause Injuries* on 19-20 attack rolls. May use its action to breath scalding steam in a 60 ft cone (15 ft at the base) causing 10d6 damage (*Luck (Dex)* save for half, 30% recharge, max twice/hour).

*Lake Wyrms* are 18 ft predators with twin forelimbs and a surprisingly flexible body, able to squeeze into spaces only 3 feet wide. Their diet usually consists of dolphins, sharks and other large marine creatures, but they will gladly eat juicy humans. *Lake wyrms* prefer underwater environs but can survive on land for up to an hour, slithering and dragging themselves about on their foreclaws.

There is no treasure here, but a *Lake Wym's* gills are a rare herbalist commodity, able to be brewed into a mixture that mimics *One With The Deep* (the effects are permanent, but the imbiber suffers 1d2 Cha loss due to a strangeness creeping into the timbre of their voice).

### Area 16 - Female Lake Wym Pool

This 6 ft pool houses the female *Lake Wym* (67 hp) and 2d6 newborn *Infant Wyrms*. The mother is in a bad mood; hungry and concerned about whether she might have to kill the father (who has retreated to his own den in Area 15) to feed her young (as sometimes occurs when the father cannot provide sufficient food). If the male *wym* is killed, the female emerges into the complex to find food herself. She might simply take the corpse of the male, if allowed to do so, and disappear back to Area 16. If attacked however she flies into an insatiable rage.

**Infant Wym**, AC 10, HD 1 hp, Bite 1d4, 19: disarm, S6 D18 C7 I3 P10 W7 Ch6 L3, Mv 60 ft swimming. *Infant Wyrms* are 2 ft tadpole like creatures with toothy beaks (no foreclaws). They are helpless on land.

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### Area 17 - Escape Tunnel

This tunnel climbs to a concealed exit that emerges into the *Wistwood*, kept secure by a large rock (Str (Athletics) check to move). The exit is several hundred yards distant, on top of the rise the keep is dug into.

### Area 18 - Green Slime Cavern

This 10 ft cavern has a 15 ft ceiling and contains a colony of inert 2d6 *Green Slime* in a darkened recess (disadvantage on checks to spot them). They have been in stasis like hibernation for centuries, but awaken within 1d4 rounds if a warm bodied humanoid moves within 60 ft (the *Lake Wyrn* is cold blooded and does not trigger them).

**Green Slime**, AC 10, HD 2, Pseudopod or Fling Slime 30 ft 1d6 + special, 19: the target is struck in the head (*Luck* (Con) save or death, with adv if wearing a helm), S13 D13 C13 I2 P2 W16 Ch1 L5, Mv immobile. Metal or organics touched by the slime transform into *green slime* within 1 round (*Luck* (Con) save resists). If a limb or object becomes slime, it attaches to the host and spreads each round, transforming more of the victim. Destroyed by sunlight, fire, extreme cold, or *Purge the Accursed*.

### Area 19 - Cavern of the Crown

The passage leading to this cavern is under a protective enchantment, conjured by a magician that had been in the bandit king's employ. Living creatures other than the bandit king are repelled (a *Luck* (Will) save negates - originally no save was permitted, but the abjuration has weakened with time). The *Lake Wyrn* (if active when the PCs reach this area) has not entered here (failed its *Luck* save).

Inside the cavern is the bandit king's greatest prize: the *Crown of Belidbarazûl*. The relic sits atop an armoured mannequin (iron ring mail), in helmet form, with a wooden shield below (decayed but still usable in a pinch). Scattered about the room are hundreds of brittle scrolls; spidery records of muddled discourses with the *Magus Queen's* ghost.

Most of the writings crumble if touched, but 1d3 are random magical scrolls (able to be unfurled and read without breaking apart).



### Crown of Belidbarazûl

Attunement takes 1d4 months except by Magic Users or Cultists who require 1d4 weeks. During this time the user begins to hear *Belidbarazûl's* voice from beyond the grave, offering camaraderie and wise counsel (treat as a severe madness, incurable as long as the *Crown* remains attuned). Once attuned, the *Crown* may take any shape the user wishes (helmet, circlet, head cowl, etc).

Attunement benefits are as follows:

1. The user learns two random spells (determine as if a scroll), which they may cast once per adventure.
2. The user forms a direct connection with the Veil. Once per week, they may spend an action to unleash an abomination within 30 ft (treat as DDM effect #11; ie the monster is uncontrolled). Using this power increases the user's DDM tally by 3 points.

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3. Once per month, the user may spend an action to invoke the *Magus Queen's* fury (as *Word of Ending*).
  4. At this level of attunement, the user may assume other forms (as *Sudden Transmogrification*, requires an action). This power may be used at will, but each transformation drains a level from the user until the end of the adventure. The third time this power is used, *Belidbarazûl* attempts to possess the user's flesh, requiring a *Luck* (Will) save at disadvantage. If failed, the user's soul is permanently banished, and the *Magus Queen* lives again in a new body. If the save is successful, the *Crown* vanishes for  $1d100 + 500$  years.

## Aftermath

If the party do not deal with the Varnori or the *Lake Wyrms*, it is likely the wyrms kill the scouts and devour them, before following the underground rivers to *Lake Argos*.

If the party and *Yrid* part on amicable terms, they might find her a useful contact in *Vorngard*, should they ever venture to the northern city. Reciprocally, if parted as enemies, the captain can make life difficult for the PCs in her hometown.

Any PC in possession of the crown is in danger of (eventual) possession by *Belidbarazûl*, assuming they survive long enough to unlock the fourth attunement. If the sorceress reincarnates (Magic User 9), she departs at the first opportunity, sequestering herself in the ruins of *Westrun* (where she plans the ritual to release the buried city, and her people, from stasis beneath the earth).



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# FENS OF MÖLOT BAAT





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## FENS OF MÖLOT BAAT

Sibling mercenaries *Myrra* and *Cason* are seeking reliable warriors to accompany them into the *Trackless Moors*, to plunder an ancient ruin.

### Myrra & Cason

The *Trackless Moors*; just the name is enough to cause most Midlanders to shake their heads in consternation. No right minded Argosan ventures into those fog addled fens, least none who value their lives.

The vast moors extend fifty leagues from *Crow's Keep* to southern *Melek*, and sprawl almost as wide; bordered by *Drelnor Forest* to the west, and the *Spine of Ulgoth* in the east. Home to xenophobic thuels, bestial skorn, and disease riddled vermin, the mires are no place for civilized men.

Yet the marshlands are not without value. Rare herbs, mineral deposits, and ley line crossings have drawn past civilizations to the drier regions, constructing settlements and outstations to harvest such resources.

In this adventure, *Myrra* and *Cason* (Midlander siblings, bandanas, *Myrra* long dark hair and stubborn, *Cason* balding with a very hoarse voice; recently damaged by throat leeches), a pair of treasure hunting mercenaries, seek to recruit the party to accompany them into the swamplands to find *Myrra's* partner, *Finnel*.

The pair explain the trio and six others were scavenging in the moors (the *Mölot Baat* ruins) for artefacts when they were set upon by thuels. Only *Myrra* and *Cason* managed to escape, the others killed or captured by barbarians.



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**Myrra**, AC 13, HD 3 (18 hp), *cold iron* Sword 1d8+1, 19: disarm, S14 D16 C11 I10 P15 W17 Ch11 L8, Mv 30 ft. *Myrra* has Backstab, Finisher and Skirmisher abilities like a 3<sup>rd</sup> level Rogue. May choose from the following Rogue tricks twice per combat: *Hidden Blade*, *Unseen Whip*, *Cat's Grace*, *Quick Reflexes*.

**Cason**, AC 16, HD 3 (21 hp), Mace 1d8+3, 19: prone or push 10 ft, S17 D13 C14 I11 P11 W11 Ch9 L7, Mv 30 ft. *Cason* has the Fighter Adaptable ability; may choose from the following styles twice per combat: *Charger*, *Two Hander*, *Opportunist*, *Protector*. *Cason* may attempt Rescues relating to *Myrra* only.

*Myrra* believes she knows *Finnel* still lives because of their enchanted rings. Each wears an oak ring with a heart emblem; if concentrated upon (requires an action and Cha check), the bearer of one ring may detect the other's approximate direction, and "feel" their heartbeat for 1d4 rounds. As far as *Myrra* can tell, *Finnel* is still alive. Of course, a thuel might be wearing the ring by now, but *Myrra* rejects any such suggestion, insisting she "knows" what *Finnel's* heart sounds like. The rings are *Minor Charms* and do not require attunement.

*Mölot Baat* is a two week journey (approx 70 miles, assuming 5 miles per day) across the wetlands, through areas mostly incompatible with horses. As payment, the duo offer first pick of artefacts from the ruins, and/or (if push comes to shove) the enchanted heart rings (assuming they find *Finnel's* ring).

## Into the Swamplands

The immense, fog addled moors are covered in bracken and crowberry, interspersed with pockets of forested willow, birch, bald cypress and mangrove trees. Over the centuries, a thick layer of peat has built up, enabling bogs and fens to form. Fungi of a wide range of toxicity can be found throughout.

Deer, otter and hare are common, as are wolves in the drier regions. Small barbarian and skorn tribes are spread throughout, fighting over the drier tracts and game trails. Serpents and crocodiles are numerous, including terrifying man eaters up to 20 ft long. Blood sucking parasites infest the region, and hapless explorers might face their giant sized cousins.

*Mölot Baat* is about 70 miles into the swamplands, approximately 14 days travel on foot (assuming 5 miles/day, LFG p.130). Each day requires a roll on the *Overland Events* table (LFG p.131), or alternatively there is a 40% chance every 12 hours of a random encounter (roll 1d12):

1. A small colony of 1d3 *Marsh Oozes* are concealing themselves in nearby fens. They have detected the PCs and are creeping after them at a distance. They try and wait until a PC isolates themselves, or settles in to sleep, before attacking.

**Marsh Ooze**, AC 13, HD 5, 2 x Pseudopods 1d10 + special, 19: flesh melting spray causing 2d6 damage and a random disease (no save), S16 D16 C18 I3 P12 W15 Ch1 L7, Mv 30 ft inc swimming, and may climb walls, ceilings, etc.

*Marsh oozes* are 6 ft masses of flesh eating sludge. They are chameleonic, matching their surface colouration and shape to the surrounding wetlands, including faux mud and grasses (advantage when hiding). Their skins are surprisingly rubbery, immune to fire and bludgeoning attacks, but suffer double damage from acid which also cause them to spasm for 1d2 rounds (lose their turn, no save). The monster's pseudopods cause flesh to melt and impose a random disease (*Luck* (Con) save resists for the whole combat).

2. Fell winds converge on the PCs' area, causing nearby pools to ripple and torches to sputter (50% chance extinguished each hour). The howling air persists for 4d6

hours. Any sleep during this time is restless at best.

3. From time to time, a random PC notices a shadow in distant trees or crowberry bushes; a 3 ft humanoid shape, with an elongated nose. A Perc (Detection) check notices a blue tinge to the skin (*Blue Fey*, see Area 5).
4. A hunting party of 5d6 *Skorn* armed with clubs and javelins are trekking through the watery pools in search of prey. They haven't eaten properly in more than 48 hours, and are particularly determined (advantage on morale checks and chase related Con checks).
5. 2d4 towering *Swamp Bison* are grazing in nearby pools. As long as the PCs don't threaten them in some way, the bison will allow the party to skirt around their feeding area.

**Swamp Bison**, AC 14, HD 9, Gore 2d8 and Tail 1d8+2, 19; target trampled, roll on the *Injuries & Setbacks* table, S20 D9 C19 I3 P10 W11 Ch8, L10, 60 ft. 10 ft reach. If the *swamp bison* moves at least 30 ft, it may trample a foe, causing double damage and requiring a roll on the *Injuries & Setbacks* table. Immune to disease.

*Swamp "bison"* are 8½ ft high at the shoulder, 25 ft long bison like beasts with shaggy bodies, scaled heads and long hammer ball tails. They are naturally peaceful, but will attack intruders to protect young or if provoked. *Swamp bison* horn is highly prized by herbalists as an ingredient in many disease related curatives (a set of horns is worth 2d4 x 50 gp to the right buyer).

6. 2d6 *Projectile Leeches* are lurking in nearby pools or crouched beneath bracken, ready to pounce on unsuspecting PCs.

**Projectile Leech**, AC 10, HD 1, Bite 1d3 + blood drain, 19; the leech latches onto the target's face, causing an eye injury; (*Luck* (Con) save resists, with advantage if wearing a helm), S10 D10 C16 I2 P14 W8 Ch3 L3, Mv 20 ft inc walls, ceiling, etc. May launch up to 10 feet to attack. Immune to bludgeoning damage. On a hit, latches on automatically causing 1d4 damage and 1 Con loss each turn. A Str contest (Str 16) at disadvantage removes the parasite. Alternatively, salt, fire or acid automatically kills the leech.

7. While wading through an enormous, murky pool, a random PC slips into a deep trench, dunking them beneath the water for a short time (Dex (Acrobatics) check resists). If failed, *Throat Leeches* take the opportunity to attack (LFG p.125).
8. 2d10 thuels, with a trained *Giant Crocodile* of the *White Gator* tribe (see Area 2), are scouting this area for food or enemies. They are extreme xenophobes, and will attack the PCs on sight. They might give pause if the party includes a barbarian or ranger with an unusual beast companion.



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9. A primitive, 8 ft *Minotaur* with a stone club has emerged from an island den in adjacent fens. It has caught the party's scent. If the den is looted, 1 x Carry Loot and 1 x Valuables is found amongst the refuse (*Luck* (Con) save to avoid contracting a random disease).
  10. An old mangrove tree, with enormous roots and a face like trunk, stands amidst a black pool. The tree has been carved with hundreds of strange, scratchy icons (not arcane, not in any known language). The tree is in fact a colossal *Swamp Treant* in hibernation (as *Bloodroot Treant*, but *Boss Monster* with *Off Turn Attacks* and *Minor Exploit Protection*). The tree is in deep hibernation, but will awaken in 1d4+1 turns if prodded, climbed or set alight.
  11. The party must pass through a particularly taxing section of thick bog (up to their waist). All PCs must make a Con (Athletics) check or lose 1 Str, Dex or Con due to exhaustion (determine randomly).
  12. The buzzing of 3d10 *Stirges* can be heard long before the swarm appears in high trees, scanning the area for warm bodies to drain.

## Mölot Baat

*Mölot Baat* is the sprawling ruin of the *Thom*, a human civilization that fell at the dawn of the Second Age, so old most of the stonework has sunk beneath the boggy depths. The hardened sandstone architecture is characterised by stepped tiers, a diversity of bas reliefs (depicting all manner of strange deities, spirits and beasts) and tall, free standing towers with rounded turrets.

Undone by royal infighting and constant war with increasingly hostile neighbours (including the *Hag Queen Menethorü*, *Swamp Giants*, and the *Mud*

*Men*), the ways of the *Thom* passed into the black of antiquity millennia ago.

The *Thom* built about half of their small city in stone; important buildings such as temples, halls, seats of power and noble residences still partially survive. Half buried in sodden soil or murky pools, most structures are overgrown with kapok and bald cyprus trees, their living root formations stalling the stone's inevitable descent into the mire.

Much of the 1 mile x 1 mile ruin is a foot below water, intertwined with hidden roots that will trip the unwary (running requires a Dex (Acrobatics) check to avoid falling). Numerous pockets of high ground are also present however. The mosquitoes and leeches here are particularly vexing; multiplying in large numbers, and drawn to the creatures inhabiting the city. Any PC remaining in the area for longer than half a day must make a *Luck* (Con) save or contract a random disease (once only).

## Random Ruin Encounters

As the PCs move from one city district to another, there is a 40% chance of a random ruin encounter. The GM might also like to make a check if the PCs are being very loud, or linger in any one place for more than a few hours. If an encounter occurs, roll 1d8:

1. A curious, clinging fog with a slight purple tinge (enchanted by the leyline crossing, see Area 5), seeps up from the bogs to envelop the party. A *Luck* (Will) save is required to avoid suffering a moderate madness.
2. The weather turns foul, pouring down for hours then shifting into a thick fog that blankets the entire city. Fighting during the storm is especially treacherous, causing fumbles on a 1 or 2, and the fog reduces visibility to 60 ft during the day.

3. The *Wollhound* pack (see Area 8) have picked up the party's trail, and begin howling as they close in for the kill.
4. A 14 ft *Giant Chameleon* is concealed in nearby bogs and reeds, matching its colouration to the surrounding terrain. It attempts to snatch a PC with its elongated tongue and escape to a hidden lair.

**Giant Chameleon**, AC 14, HD 5, Grasping Tongue (special) or Bite 2d6, 19: target is hit by the chameleon's tongue, S19 D12 C16 I3 P12 W12 Ch8, L8, Mv 40 inc climbing. *Giant chameleons* have advantage on hiding checks. May use an action to shoot their grasping tongue up to 35 ft, causing 1d10 damage, target helpless and drawn into the monster's maw, automatically suffering bite damage at the start of the monster's turn (victim may use an action to make a Str contest vs Str 18 to break free).

5. 1d6+1 *White Gator* warriors are scouting, hunting or patrolling nearby. They are on their way back after a difficult shift (more than half their number were killed), and are exhausted. They will avoid combat unless there is no other option.
6. A hidden *Blue Fey* uses its *Waking Dream* ability to conjure the illusion of a thuel child lost in the bogs. If the party try engage with it, the "child" it runs off towards Area 5.
7. The party passes through mud issuing a headache inducing, subterranean gas. A *Luck* (Con) save is required to avoid 1d2 Int or Will loss (determine randomly).
8. The *Troll Abomination* (Area 9) has awoken, and is tracking the PCs, eager to squeeze the life out of them, then feast on their succulent innards.

## Ruin Trinkets

As the party explores the ruins, the GM might substitute a 1d12 roll on the following table instead of the usual LFG Carry Loot or Trinkets & Curios tables:

1. A primitive pouch, made from an animal bladder, containing a handful of blue powder (*Blue Fey* dust, see Area 2).
2. A necklace of *Skorn* teeth (flat, but slightly larger than human teeth).
3. The gold signet ring of a long fallen house (twin hawks carrying a snake; 44 gp).
4. An 10" moonstone idol, carved in the likeness of a faceless, humanoid god, with an eye in his chest and six arms (a forgotten Thom deity, worth 900 gp to the right buyer).
5. 4d12 copper currency rings, the ancient coinage of the Thom, not seen in millennia (each ring is worth 10 gp to a collector).
6. A bronze knife with a kris blade. The dagger is of Thom origin and has a *Minor Charm*: the blade turns icy if *Skorn* are within 240 ft, and the user may point the knife to sense their approximate direction.
7. A mummified troll finger on a bronze chain (good luck charm; increase the wearer's maximum *Luck* by 1 point, requires three days to take effect).
8. A rare healing poultice in a clay jar (one use, grants a new *Luck* save to resist an illness, disease or poison).
9. A flute carved from crocodile bone.

- 10. A waterskin filled with wriggling leeches.
- 11. A bronze torc studded with small obsidian stones (57 gp).
- 12. A poison unguent wrapped in waterproof cloth (two applications, roll 1d10 on the Poison Trap table, LFG p.235).

## Ruin Districts

There is no map for *Mölot Baat*. Instead, the sprawling city is divided up into a 3 x 3 grid; three northern districts, three middle districts, and three southern districts.

1	2	3
4	5	6
7	8	9

The PCs may make their approach from any direction, and navigate between the sectors as they see fit (subject to the inhabitants' response). Naturally the "boundaries" are fairly loose, and some encounters might drift into adjacent districts.

In broad strokes, the *White Gator* thuels (the most numerous faction) rule the northern ruins, a small family of *Trolls* hunt in the south, and a clan of *Blue Fey* control the centre.

### Area 1 - Thuel Sentries

The northwest district is mostly two ft deep pools and mangrove trees, with a few collapsed towers and other buildings just poking above the murky waters. From time to time, the PCs will notice gator skulls hanging from tree branches or atop wooden poles.

3d6 *Barbarians* of the *White Gator* tribe are on sentry duty in the region, armed with spears, short bows and war horns. They are hostile to outsiders, but might attempt to lure intruders close to rob and/or kill them. Using their horns draws another 2d6 reinforcements from nearby (3d4 rounds).

**Barbarians**, AC 13, HD 1, Spear 1d6+1 or Short Bow 1d6, 19: as weapon, S12 D10 C13 I10 P10 W12 Ch11, L4, Mv 30 ft. 10% of the thuels are berserkers: S13, +2 bonus to attack, Spear 1d6+2, and never check for morale.

Defeating the barbarians turns up 1 x Carry Loot.

### Area 2 - White Gator Tribe

The central northern district is characterised by a large swath of higher ground, upon which the *White Gator* thuels have made their home. About a half dozen ruined stone villas still stand here in the *Thom* residential style (square topped and pillared, with bas reliefs of people hunting, dancing, etc). Curiously there are no depictions of funeral rites.



The 3d10+50 barbarians that live here have set up two dozen huts in a clearing enclosed by mangrove and banyan trees. Smoke can be seen issuing from the area. The tribe is led by *Gator Queen Khutett* (6 ft, strong, red streaked hair, white face tattoos, skull shield). *Khutett* is an especially xenophobic matriarch and is most likely to rob the adventurers and offer them as sacrifices to the *Dreygu* (“blue imps”, the *Blue Fey* in Area 5).

The *Gator Queen* no longer has *Finneck*; they traded her to the *Dreygu* a few days ago in return for some imp dust. The drug is a unique euphoric hallucinogen the *Blue Fey* concoct, and its effects last a few hours. Afterwards the user feels a deep sense of loss, which the fey feed off (the mixture includes their tears, connecting them to the user). 60% of the tribe is addicted to “dreygu dust”, and *Khutett* in particular. If a PC tries the powder, a Will check is required to avoid cravings (if cravings are ignored, the PC becomes sullen and defiant for 1 week, then reverts to normal. The GM might call for a Will check to resist such conduct; treat as a minor madness).

*Slaugott* (dark topknot and beard, muscular, tattoos on right arm/chest, manacle on left wrist) is one of the 40% of the clan who refuse the dust. They are appalled by the tribe’s growing obeisance to the “dust demons”, and plan to kill *Khutett* and seize control. If the PCs pick up on the tension between the two camps, they might find an ally in one or the other. If *Slaugott* prevails, he might be persuaded to join the PCs against the *Blue Fey*.

The *White Gators* have a cautious truce with the *Moor Trolls* to the south (Area 7). In essence, the two groups tend to leave each other alone as much as possible; the trolls are clearly more powerful individuals, but the tribesmen are cunning guerrilla warriors and have much greater numbers. The truce doesn’t apply to the *Troll Abomination* in the Area 9; that unthinking behemoth is feared by everyone.

**Khutett the Gator Queen**, AC 12, HD 4, Axe 1d8+2, 19: target’s weapon broken (*Luck* save resists, magical weapons damaged instead, unusable until repaired), S15 D13 C13 I12 P13 W14 Ch14, L8, Mv 30 ft. *Khutett* is a *Boss Monster* with *Off Turn Attacks* and *Minor Exploit Protection*. May negate one attack with her shield.

**Slaugott**, AC 14, HD 3, Great Axe 1d12+2, 19: as weapon, S16 D15 C15 I10 P10 W13 Ch12, L7, Mv 30 ft. *Slaugott* may *Rage* like a Barbarian for 3 rounds once per combat.

If the tribe is wiped out, 1 x Carry Loot and 1 x Valuables may be recovered from a small strongbox hidden in *Khutett*’s stone dwelling.

### Area 3 – Foam Fever Curse

This tract of mostly dry and open moors is spotted with shallow pools. Wildlife is common, including hare, otter and wolves. Despite such attractions the thuels avoid the area on account of an ongoing “curse”; a local leech strain spreads *Foam Fever* (LFG p.123). Any PCs moving through here must make a *Luck* (Con) save or contract the malady.

### Area 4 – Giant Crocodiles

The western district contains an abundance of *Giant Crocodiles*, 2d6 of which take an active interest in the party. They generally prey on local wildlife but are also fond of foolish humanoids that draw too close. A single *Blue Fey* keeps watch over this area, hidden in the boughs of a tall banyan tree. If it notices the PCs, it studies them for a time, then slips away to report back to *Mloggnu* (see Area 5).

**Giant Crocodile**, AC 14, HD 6, Bite 2d6+2, 19: the target loses a limb (*Luck* (Dex) save resists), S20 D10 C19 I3 P10 W12 Ch5, L8, Mv 30 or swim 50 ft. On a 19+ the target is caught in the gator’s jaws and rolled/drowned if water present (lose action each turn until successful *Luck* (Dex) save).

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## Area 5 - Blue Fey Tower

The centre of the ruins is submerged in ankle high water, with scattered trees throughout. The tallest surviving structure of the city stands on a stony rise; a sacred tower, built at the intersection of two invisible leylines. Magic in this sector is especially dangerous: apply advantage or disadvantage to any effects as appropriate, and all PCs increase their DDM check by 1 upon entering the area.

The tower is approx 110 ft tall and 30 ft wide at the base, with five internal levels (open spaces, any interior walls have been demolished) connected by winding steps. *Pierce the Veil* reveals a transmutation aura (the tower is magically preserved, though the abjuration has greatly diminished over time).

The *Blue Fey* control the tower, ruled over by the despot *Mloggnu* (5 HD, *Minor Exploit Protection*, short 2 ft, obese, sadistic). *Mloggnu* wants to convert all of the *White Gators* to imp dust addicts, so that the clan can feed on them for years to come. He might be persuaded to join forces with the party if *Slaugott's* plans against *Khutett* are revealed. The fey consider the *Moor Trolls* and *Abomination* serious dangers to be avoided as much as possible.

**Blue Fey**, AC 11, HD 2+3, Vampiric Touch 1d6 + special, 19: soul drain causing 1 level loss until end of the adventure (no save), S9 D18 C9 I7 P17 W10 Ch9, L6, Mv 30 ft inc through trees, brush, etc. A touch drains 1d2 Will or Cha (determine randomly), and a target reduced to zero in either stat immediately ends their own life in horrifying fashion. May use the following spell like effects once per day: *Shadows & Dust*, *Writhing Fog*, *Sorcerous Misdirection*, *Waking Dream* and *Lash of Long Night* (as *Lash of Unerring Pain*, but made of shadow and drains 1d2 Will).

*Blue Fey* are 3 ft, gangly, blue-grey humanoids with large noses and pointy ears. Dwellers of hidden grottos and dark hollows, they are manifestations of nature's sometimes cruel, capricious, and

unforgiving aspects. They may linger for hundreds or thousands of years, subsisting on berries and nectar, but are empathic vampires, preferring to feed on a victim's emotions (in particular those of despair, rage, helplessness, loss, and confusion).

If asked about *Finnel*, *Mloggnu* indicates he remembers a soft human woman, but hasn't seen her for a few days. He believes she is at the top of the tower. If the PCs want her, all they have to do is go up and get her (*Mloggnu* knows she is a prisoner, dying or dead, at the top of the tower; the fey have been feeding on her suffering for the last few days). If asked about the tower, *Mloggnu* encourages them to "see for yourselves, hmm!"

The fey have been through this feeding ritual many, many times. Captured humans are coerced into the tower and made to climb to the top. All the while the *Blue Fey* use their magical powers to trick, beguile and terrorize the victim, feeding on their emotions (high and low) as they do so. Upon reaching the top, the victim is either taken prisoner or encouraged to leap from the tower to end their suffering. Some, like *Finnel*, are tortured for days before being "set free".

Entry to the tower is via an archway at the base (the door disintegrated long ago). Examination of the ground reveals many old bloodstains. Any attempt to scale the building from the outside is resisted by the fey (using *Lash of Long Night*). The humans "Mustn't cheat if you want the prize, mmm?"

The GM determines the nature of the mental terrors that await the party inside the tower, but some ideas are provided below. In summary, there are 3d6 *Blue Fey* hidden about the building (perched on windows or rafters, peeking out from under decaying tables, concealed behind false walls using *Shadows & Dust*, etc). The chambers shrink in width with each level, and each has a 20 to 25 ft ceiling. The stone walls are ancient cut stone, any internal lining was torn down many years ago. Light filters into most levels via arched windows.



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### Level 1

Using *Writhing Fog*, the fey fill the ground floor (about 30 ft wide, 20 ft ceiling) with thick, sorcerous mist. Once the PCs are inside, they release 2d6 agitated *bog vipers* into the room (AC 10, 1 hp, +2 to hit, 1 damage plus poison 2d6 damage, *Luck* (Con) save resists). The vipers detect the PCs' body heat and do not suffer any sight related penalties due to the fog. Using *Waking Dream*, the fey conjure the sounds of many scores of snakes. Stairs winding up to the next level are on the far side of the chamber (this is the case for all of the chambers; to proceed to the next level, the PCs must cross the room).

### Level 2

The floor of this 30 ft chamber appears to be lined with thick, viscous blood, bile and bodily fluids. Parts of the walls are also smeared. Illusory buzzing flies fill the room. The "blood" squelches underfoot and sticks to one's boots, etc. In fact the liquids are conjured via *Waking Dream*, and the texture simulated with mud.

### Level 3

This 20 ft room contains 3d6 rotting corpses, only half of which are real (care of *Waking Dream*), all which look and smell terrible. Flies (real and illusory) swarm the area. The illusory bodies include perfect clones of the PCs (as well as *Myrra* and *Cason*, if they are with them). Adventurers observing/smelling their own rotting cadaver must make a Will or Con check (player's choice) to avoid feeling sick (passing nausea).

At least one of the real bodies is slumped on the stairs that proceed upwards. The corpse is bloated and infested with *Flesh Grubs*, which will burst forth if the body is moved or prodded, burrowing straight for the heart (the fey are careful to avoid touching it). A *Luck* (Con) save is required to avoid death in 1d4 rounds. Fire or acid can kill the grubs, but requires an Int (Apothecary) check to apply correctly (2d4 damage, halved if the check is successful).

### Level 4

This 20 ft chamber includes a large circular table (of recent construction) on which sit 2d6 sacks, pouches and satchels. The edge of the table is inscribed with silver runes. Anyone may reach over and take any of the bags, but only one at a time (an invisible force prevents taking two or more at once). Roll 1d6 to determine what each bag contains: (i-iii) Carry Loot, (iv) Blue Dust, (v) Trinket or Curio, (vi) Valuables. Taking a bag invokes a fey curse (roll on the *Divine Rebuke* table, LFG p.88).

### Level 5

*Fimmel* is here on the 15 ft wide rooftop, chained and naked on a stone slab. There is a 10% chance she dies just before the PCs arrive, plus 10% per Area the party visited on their way here (max 80%). Otherwise she is sunburnt and dehydrated, having been exposed to the elements without food or water for several days. 1d4 *Blue Fey* are crouched nearby, feeding on her despair (or in a gluttonous haze if *Fimmel* has just passed).

Alive or dead, the fey let the PCs take *Fimmel* without resistance (whether joy, rage or sadness, the emotions still feed them). *Fimmel* still wears the wooden heart ring on her finger.

If the *Blue Fey* are defeated, 1 x 3 HD Lair treasure, 1 x Potion and 1 x Scroll are hidden in the roots of a nearby banyan tree (the spoils of past victims, and scavenging amongst the ruins).

### Area 6 - Pond Runners

This eastern section of the ruins is inundated with 2 ft deep pools and little tree cover. Small islands pock mark the waters, on which hundreds of small, ten inch lizards can be seen, sunbaking as best they can.

The lizards are aggressive, voracious devils, attacking by swarming larger enemies with superior numbers. Their extremely hydrophobic skin, large paddle like feet, and swishing tail, allow

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them to “run” across the tops of the pools at high speed. There are up to 1d4 swarms present.

**Pond Runner Swarm**, AC 12, HD 2, Bites 1d6, 19: the target is overwhelmed (helpless for 1d3 rounds, *Luck* (Str or Dex) save resists), S4 D15 C5 I3 P9 W10 Ch5, L5, Mv 30 ft inc pond running. *Swarm* rules apply. When *Staggered*, there is a 50% chance a *Giant Crocodile* is attracted by the bloodshed (they love the taste of *Pond Runners*, but usually can't catch them).



### Area 7 – Moor Trolls

This region is particularly wet, with large pools forming up to 3 ft deep. Mangrove and similar trees are common in small clusters, allowing for a series of open and closed spaces. PCs wading through here might notice a lack of crocodiles and other large animals (Perc (Animal Lore) check).

The lack of wildlife is because 2d6 *Moor Trolls* use this area as their primary hunting and hibernation ground. When the PCs arrive, the monsters are sleeping beneath the dark waters, waiting for warm bodied morsels to approach and rouse them. Each time the district is passed through, there is a 50% chance the trolls awake. If roused from their weeks long slumber, the trolls' hunger is all consuming (immune to morale).

**Moor Troll**, AC 13, HD 8, Claw 1d10 and Bite 1d10+1, 19: if the target is accompanied by a pet or henchmen, the pet/ally is eaten by the troll (or has a limb torn off), S19 D12 C17 I7 P8 W10 Ch6, L10, Mv 30 ft inc swimming. *Moor Trolls* breathe water and air, and have webbed claws. They regenerate all damage at the start of their next turn, or in 1d6 rounds if reduced to zero hit points. Damage from fire or acid is not regenerated. A *troll* reduced to zero hit points and completely burnt or buried does not regenerate. 10 ft reach.

A 9 ft tall, rake thin monster with an iron like hide by the name of *Kreef* (Int 8, 52 hp) rules the trolls. *Kreef* generally believes the truce with the *White Gators* is in both clans' interests, but is not above the occasional kidnapping and murder of thuel sentries.

*Kreef* considers the *Blue Fey* treacherous, poisonous parasites at best. For the most part he orders his fellows to stay away from them (their Wis draining touch will kill a troll as swiftly as a human). Of all the swamp creatures however, *Kreef* hates the *Troll Abomination* most; with its unbridled hunger and acidic tentacles, the abomination has slain many a troll in recent years. If sorely threatened, *Kreef* might even join forces with the PCs to ensure he survives.

### Area 8 – Wolfhound Pack

A pack of 4d6 feral wolfhounds are travelling through this section of relatively dry moorlands, sniffing at the grasses in search of easy prey. They are unlikely to attack a well armed group of adventurers, but might do so if anyone isolates themselves, or show signs of recent injury (limping, *Staggered*, etc).

**Wolfhound**, AC 12, HD 1+2, Bite 1d4+1, 19: target is knocked prone, S13 D14 C15 I2 P12 W10 Ch6, L4, 60 ft. Advantage when tracking and on attack rolls when flanking.



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## Area 9 – Troll Abomination

The southeast corner is home to a 15 ft *Troll Abomination*; a three eyed fusing of troll, tentacle, and uncontrolled gluttony. Transformed by the death curse of a vengeful hag, the abomination is barely more intelligent than the nearby crocodiles, but ten times as cruel. Shallow pools litter the area, but much of the land is above water and trees relatively few between (roots are easily spotted and avoided, for the most part).

The monstrosity spends much of its time in its lair (a fallen bald cyprus tree, overgrown with other younger trees to form a muddy cave with a bed of bones), sleeping away the weeks and months between feasting episodes. When the PCs arrive, the beast is hibernating, but close to waking.

If the PCs enter this district, roll for a random ruin encounter. At the GM's option, if the party deals with the encounter in a loud manner, they might awaken the mutant (takes 2d4 rounds; it issues a shuddering, gurgling moan when it does so).

**Troll Abomination, Boss Monster, AC 14, HD 10 (76 hp), Tentacle Crush/Acid 3d8, 19: if the target is accompanied by a pet or henchmen, the pet/ally is eaten by the troll (or has a limb torn off), S20 D9 C20 I5 P10 W15 Ch4, L11, Mv 30 ft. Boss Monster with *Off Turn Attacks* and *Minor Exploit Protection*. Breathes water and air, and its tentacles exude a flesh eating acid (self immune). It regenerates all damage at the start of its next turn, or in 1d6 rounds if reduced to zero hit points. Damage from fire is not regenerated. If reduced to zero hit points and completely burnt or buried it dies. 10 ft reach.**

Searching the den returns 1 x Cary Loot and 1 x Valuables scattered amongst the broken skeletons.

## Aftermath

If *Finnel* is rescued (dead or alive), the party make themselves allies for life. *Cason*, *Myrra* and *Finnel* live in *Crow's Keep*, but might turn up in other cities or outposts. If the PCs ask, they may agree to accompany them on future adventures (as hirelings, henchmen, etc).

If *Finnel*, *Cason* and/or *Myrra* die, the families mourn their loss, but do not attribute any blame to the party. The three mercenaries knew the risks; indeed their relatives warned them against such reckless ventures many a time. Still, their loss might affect the PCs' reputation in certain circles for a period.

*Mloggnu*, *Kreef* and the *Abomination* have no interest leaving the swamplands. Depending on how the party leave the *White Gators*, they might have allies to guide them through the moors in future expeditions, or deadly enemies to be avoided at all costs!



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# CLIFFS OF ELLETARN



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## CLIFFS OF ELLETARN

*Swig Kerrit*, one of many bounty hunters operating in the *Port Brax* underworld, is seeking assistance in his latest endeavour. Word is out that the ex borderlands scout is planning to capture a griffon from the *Great Plains*.

### A Curious Beast

*Griffons* are a strange and curious beast, a vicious amalgam of hunting bird and giant cat. Precise traits vary from flock to flock, but most exhibit the body of a horse sized lion or tiger, with an eagle's head, fore talons, and powerful wings.

Inclined towards high mountains and clifftop eyries, *griffons* may range hundreds of miles in a single hunting expedition, scouring the seas, plains and open forest in search of suitable quarry. Wolves, deer, dolphins and small bison are their favourite meals, along with barbarians and *skorn* in small numbers. All adult *griffons* understand that humans carry weapons, and will attack from cloud cover or from behind to maximise their chances of a successful ambush.

In this adventure, the PCs are offered 500 crowns by veteran scout *Swig Kerrit* (human male, 30s, bald, man of few words, lightweight travelling garb, bow and scimitar) to assist him to in capturing a live griffon, and return it to *Port Brax*.

**Swig Kerrit**, AC 14, HD 3 (20 hp), Scimitar 1d8+2, 19: disarm, S14 D15 C13 I10 P15 W11 Ch8 L9, Mv 30 ft. *Swig* has advantage on Wilderness Lore related checks, and may choose from the following Rangercraft talents twice per combat: *Sharpshooter*, *Cover Fire*, *Veteran Scout* (applies to whole party) or *Slip Away*.

*Swig* explains the *griffon* must be white in colouration (a special rarity) and returned alive. His employer, who wishes to remain anonymous, has provided him with six vials of potent tranquilizer to pacify the creature. In addition to the drugs, *Swig* has three nets, some grapple ropes, and one horse sized set of steel manacles.

### Over Land or Lake

*Swig's* instructions are that there is a flock of *griffons* nesting along the *Cliffs of Elletarn*, north of the *Stimbark* river that divides the *Great Plains*, about 60 miles northwest of *Port Brax*.



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At least two options present themselves as travelling routes. PCs may hire a boat and sail around the coast of *Lake Argos* and into the river inlet, a voyage of about 80 miles, with the final 20 miles on foot (assuming 20 mile hexes on the below overland map). Or they might travel 60 miles on foot straight across the plains (crossing the river about 35 miles in).

If the party wish to travel by ship, they might find a captain willing to drop them at a particular point along the river, and return at a specific time, but no vessel will drop anchor and wait in the wilds. The risk of attack by barbarians, *skorn* or worse is simply too great.



The plains are dominated by verdant grasses that grow up to four feet high. Whilst the borderlands of *Port Brax* are farmed and the outskirts patrolled, beyond this rudimentary taming the rolling expanse runs unchecked. Xenophobic thuel clans such as the *Skull Drinkers*, *Burnt Ones* and *Half Crows* ride the plains, taking advantage of their mobility to avoid the *skorn* horde that controls the region. Horses, bison, wolves and similar animal life are abundant. Many birds of

prey, including giant variants, are also plentiful. A wide variety of small game live and hide within.

Unfortunate travellers might encounter more monstrous foes, including the last of the territorial *centaurs*, burrowing *bulettes* and belligerent *ogre* tribes. Outsiders are not welcome here, and civilized folk keep to the eastern fringes under heavy escort.

Each day of travel requires a roll on the *Overland* or *Voyage Events* table (LFG p.131 or 135), or alternatively there is a 60% chance of a random encounter every 24 hrs (roll 1d6):

### Voyage

1. A massive 16 ft *Giant Serpent* (or perhaps *Sea Serpent*, either way 10 HD, Bite 2d10, *Boss Monster* with *Major Exploit Protection* and *Off Turn Attacks*) attempts to snatch a PC or other crew member from the ship's deck. If successful, it attempts to constrict and drown the target whilst swimming away.
2. The *Steward's Eye*, a patrolling warship from *Northgate*, appears on the horizon and hails the party's ship. They want to board and search for contraband (60 crew, *Carrack* with twin onagers and ballistae, LFG p.121).
3. A secret enemy is aboard the ship and targets one of the PCs, roll 1d3: (i) pickpocket, (ii) poisoner, (iii) bounty hunter on behalf of a prior enemy or rival.
4. Many of the crew engage in gambling with dice and cards, which the PCs are invited to join. Roll on the *Gambling* table (Companion p.17) or make a *Luck* check. If successful, the PC doubles their wager (up to 50 gp).

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5. Descending from the clouds is a buzzing hunting party of 3d6 *Waspmen*. They are intent on taking back at least 1d4+1 captives to their coastal hive.

**Waspmen**, AC 15, HD 2+2, 4 x Claw 1d4 and Bite 1d4+1, 19: special, S16 D13 C12 I4 P10 W10 Ch6 L10, Mv 60 ft flying or 30 ft.

*Waspmen* are insect like 7 ft humanoids with chitinous carapaces, four clawed arms, and a wasp head. Entirely driven by the needs of the hive, these voracious carnivores target anything they think they can carry away (which include horses or similar if the monsters co-operate to lift them). On a Nat 19, the waspman grabs hold of the target and flies away with it (up to 60 ft). Entirely insectoid in nature, they communicate only the most basic concepts via clicking and chemical pheromones. *Waspmen* have no sense of self preservation and will die rather than fail the needs of the hive.



6. One of the crew members is carrying a slow acting (1d6 days instead of normal incubation time) random disease they picked up last voyage, and is only now beginning to manifest. 1d4 random PCs must make a *Luck* (Con) save or contract the malady.

## Overland

1. Cresting a low hill, the party spy 4d6 mounted thuel warriors nearby (as human *Barbarian* with spears and short bows). They are clearly marked as the *Half Crow* tribe (decorated with black feathers, crow skull/feet totem fetishes, and so on). The band is out scouting and will pounce on outsiders.
2. A large warparty of 3d6+20 *Skorn* are making their way through nearby grasslands. There is a 50% chance the hunting party already has the PCs' scent and is tracking them.

3. This region of the plains has shorter grass (one ft high) and a colossal herd of thousands of bison feeding within. Going around the herd will take an extra day of travel. Going through is easy enough, provided the bison don't stampede for some reason (the beasts are twitchy after recent *western panther* attacks; 25% chance of a stampede, *Luck* save to avoid rolling on the *Injuries & Setbacks* table).
4. A large waterhole lies nearby, attracting a wide range of animal and humanoid life to the area. 4d6 creatures arrive at about the same time as the party, roll 1d6: (i) wolves, (ii) bison, (iii) deer, (iv) *giant wasps*, (v) *giant ants*, (vi) *ogres*. The animals have come for water and pay the party little heed. The monsters on the other hand would appreciate some food to go with their drink.
5. A storm rolls in over the plains, blanketing the region in rain, thunder and lightning. Accompanying the weather is a 30 ft *Stormraven* (Companion p.154), scouring the land for a meal.



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6. The overgrown mounds of old cairns can be found here (six mounds, each about fifteen years old). Careful inspection reveals Varnori names on the graves (*Ingvar, Gnut, Idonea, Siggd, Eir* and *Dagmyr*), but no animal prints are found in the immediate area. The graves contain a combined total of 1 x Carry Loot and 1 x Valuables, but interfering with them conjures the angry *Ghost of Dagmyr* (slain by thuels, whom the spirit hates above all others).



## Griffon Cliffs

*Elletarn's* sandstone cliffs range from about 500 to 1,000 ft in height, rocky escarpments overlooking the green grasslands and central lake below. Several small *griffon* flocks live in the region, as do *ogres, skorn* and thuel of the *Burnt Ones* tribe. Bison, deer, wolves and a variety of birds are common throughout, particularly around watering holes.

## Random Encounters

Every twelve hours, there is a 30% chance of a random encounter in the basin. If an encounter occurs, roll 1d8 (+1 if the party are in the top half of the map).

1. A large warband of 5d10 *Ugathi skorn* (see Area 5) are camped at a small waterhole nearby. They have sentries set around the perimeter with crude horns, and are on the lookout for thuels to eat.
2. A heavy downpour settles in over the region, bringing with it clinging mists. The odds of a random encounter are reduced to 10% for the next 48 hours.
3. 2d4 of *Ybaak's Ogres* (Area 9) are chasing three young bison that were separated from the herd. One animal has already been snagged and is being torn apart by two of the monsters (they are clearly ravenous).
4. During the coming night, a *Cave Stalker* (Companion p.127) begins tracking the PCs, intent on snatching one away to devour in their hidden cave. The *stalker* will strike swiftly, and attempt to choke the sentry to prevent them alerting others.
5. 2d4 *Giant Eagles* appear overhead, riding the high winds as they survey the land for something edible. They are happy to target small bison, humans and *skorn*. Shiny humans glinting in the sun will attract their interest.
6. A *Western Panther* (Midlands p.101) lurking in nearby grasses suddenly leaps on the rear PC! A Perc



- (Detection) vs Dex 16 test determines whether the PC is taken by surprise.
7. 2d6 *Giant Worker Ants* and a single *Solider* ant are scurrying about here, scouting out new areas for possible food sources before they return to their subterranean colony (Area 1).
  8. Far overhead, the party spot 1d3 *griffons* flying across the sky, carrying small bison corpses, en route to Area 8. A Perc (Detection) check at disadvantage suggests that one of the beasts is of white coloration.
  9. A lone griffon is flying relatively low (but outside of bow range) across the northern sky. If studied carefully (Perc (Detection) check), an observer notices that it appears to be wearing some kind of saddle.
  5. A hand carved ten inch wooden statuette of an owl standing upright with its wings tucked in. The idol is perfectly painted and astoundingly lifelike (40 gp).
  6. A shrunken and blackened six inch griffon's talon, bound up with tiny beads of quartz. The claw acts as a good luck charm (one off, temporarily increases the PC's *Luck* by 2 points).
  7. A leather wrapped flask with a toggle lid. The liquid inside smells absolutely rank and is sure to make anyone drinking it very ill.
  8. An ancient talisman of stamped copper in the shape of a blazing sun. If presently forcefully towards *Undead*, the user may invoke *Turning* like a Cultist of their level (once every 1d4 days, requires attunement over 1d6 hours). Any further attunements are at the GM's discretion.

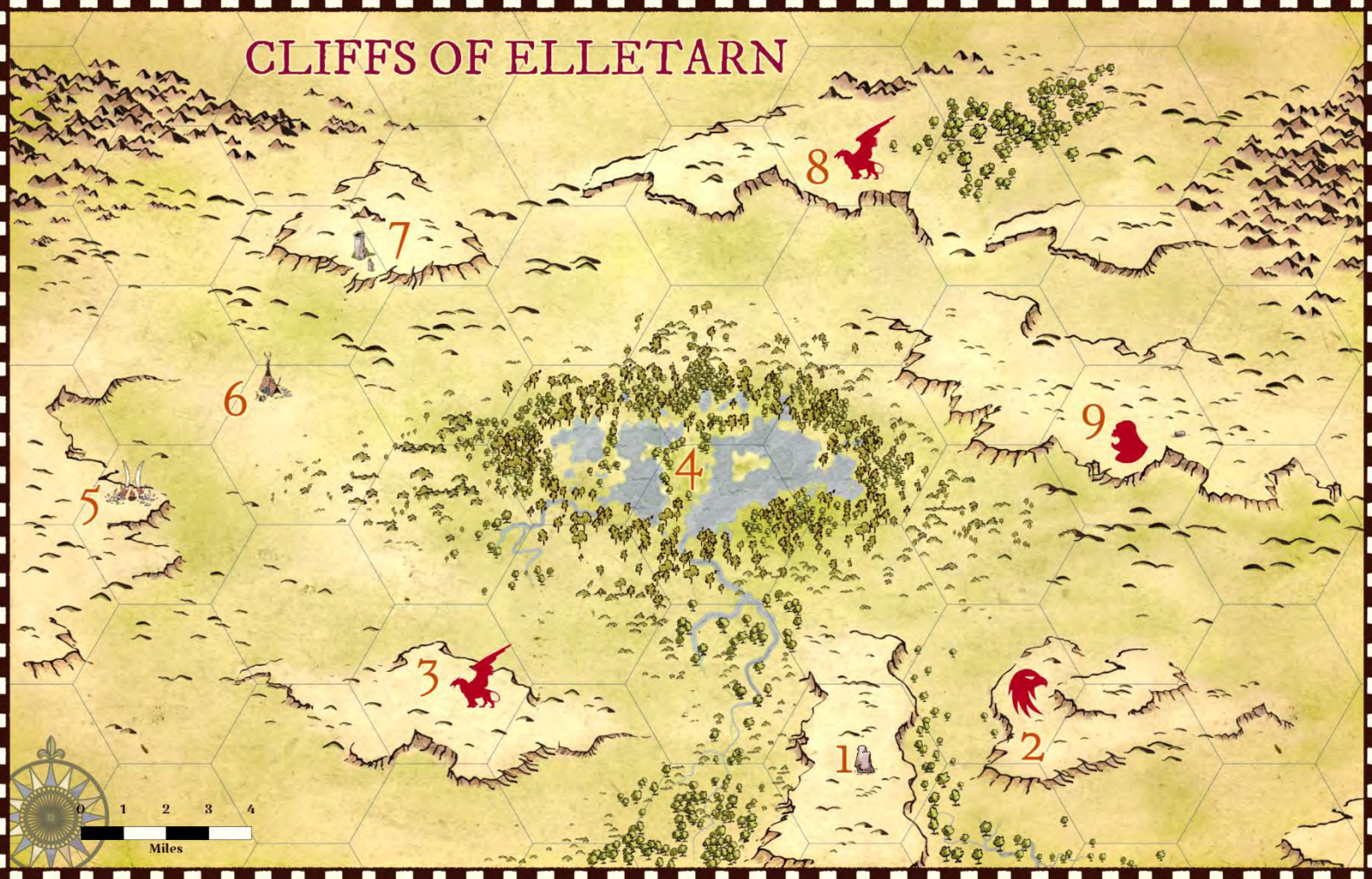
## Trinkets of the Plains

As the party explores the plains and plateaus, the GM might substitute a 1d12 roll on the following table instead of the usual LFG *Carry Loot* or *Trinkets & Curios* tables:

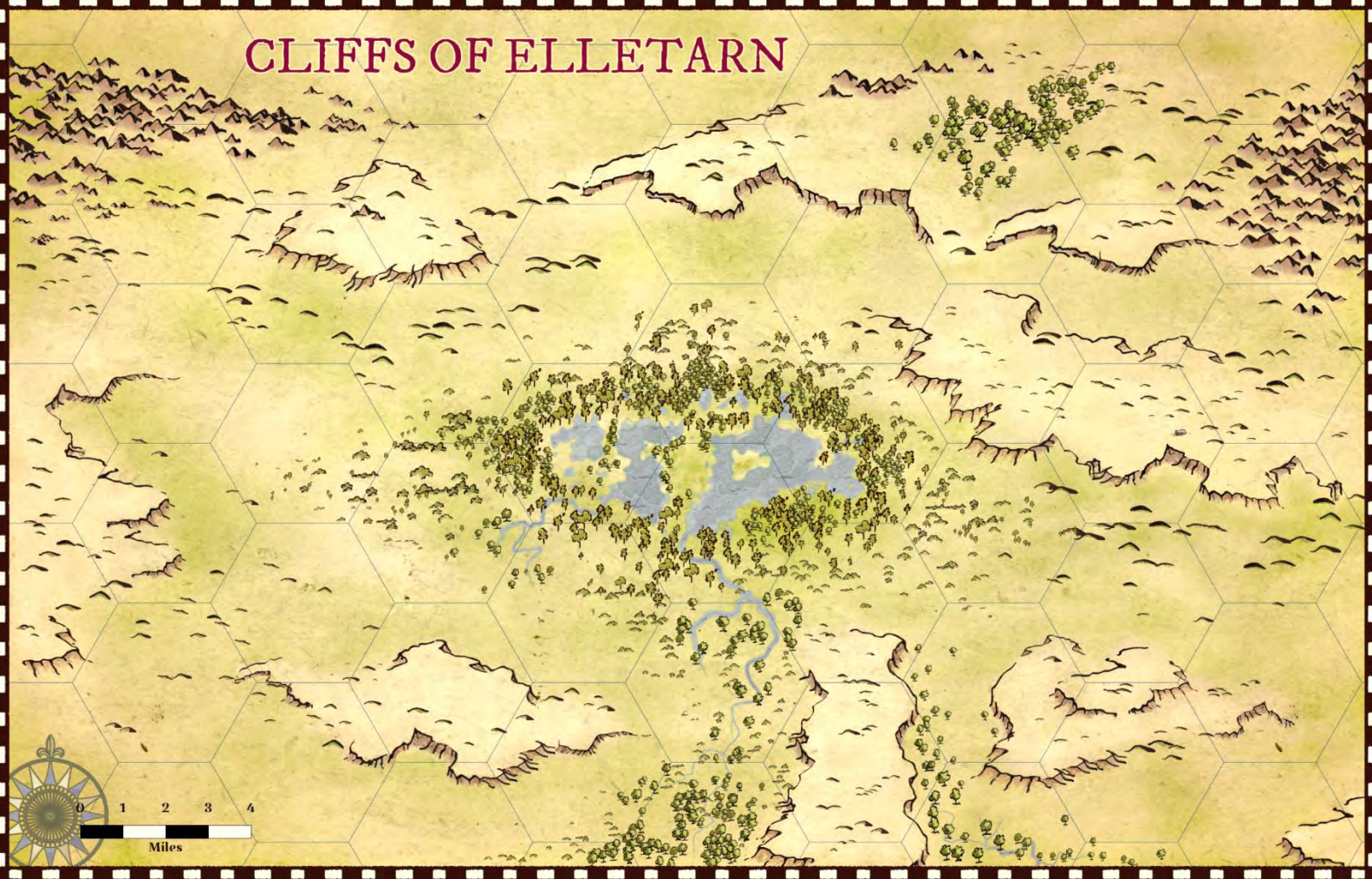
1. A feathered headdress decorated with crow's feathers (23 gp).
2. A *skorn* skull painted ink black, with a series of intricate and unfamiliar purple star constellations (31 gp).
3. A dagger crafted from the tooth of a *wyvem*. Touching the blade to spoiled or poisoned material (or a thing or creature) causes the user to feel pain in their chest (*Minor Charm*).
4. A ratskin pouch of 6d6 silvers.
9. A brown leather helm with stag horns. Could double as an awkward weapon in a pinch (18 gp).
10. A bison skin drum painted with grasslands and sky motifs (15 gp).
11. A satchel of dried fish, bison jerky and two small pouches (salt and aromatic spices).
12. A crudely fashioned *cold iron* heavy mace with a bald ball head. Parts of the weapon are rusting and pitted, but it remains serviceable (300 gp).



# CLIFFS OF ELLETARN



# CLIFFS OF ELLETARN



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### Area 1 – Giant Ant Colony

These 1,000 ft tall cliffs gradually flatten off towards the north, easing into the central basin of the plains. A *Giant Ant* colony lives beneath the plateau, many hundreds of man eating insects that scour the rockface and grassy tracts for food, often feeding on horses and bison. Towering anthills up to 60 ft tall and 20 ft wide dot the landscape, growing increasingly common as one nears the main hive, where the queen resides.

Worker and sentry ants range far afield (many miles) and will almost certainly make contact with the PCs before they begin to notice to tell tale hive mounds. Initial encounters will be with 2d6 worker ants, increasing by a further 1d6 every mile until reaching the centre (labelled “1”). Any ant encounter has a 50% chance of 1d4 *Soldier Ants* as well.

**Worker Ant**, AC 13, HD 2, Bite 1d6, 19: the worker knocks the target prone, S16 D10 C16 I1 P10 W10 Ch4, L5, Mv 40 ft and may climb walls, ceilings etc. Workers may swarm a target, gaining +1 to hit for each additional ant beyond the first (maximum +4).

**Soldier Ant**, AC 15, HD 3+3, Bite 2d4 + poison, 19: the soldier spits acid on the target, causing 2d4 damage, S19 D12 C16 I1 P12 W12 Ch8, L6, Mv 40 ft and may climb walls, ceilings etc. Soldiers have a venomous bite that requires a *Luck* (Con) save or the target loses 1d4 Con. May swarm a target like a worker.

Dead barbarians, *skorn* and others sometimes produce valuables dropped or discarded by the ants, particularly around the hive mounds. There is a 50% chance of 1 x Carry Loot /Plains Trinket.

### Area 2 – Giant Eagle Nests

Many *Giant Eagles* nest in these high cliffs, clashing from time to time with the smaller griffon populations over hunting grounds. For the most part however the two species studiously avoid each other.

The *eagle* eyries are situated on the faces of the cliffs themselves, not dissimilar to *griffon* nests, and are easily mistaken for such in the absence of any live sentries to ward off intruders. Each mile investigated will generally turn up 1d2 *giant eagle* nests, with a 50% chance of an encounter (otherwise the nest is old and long abandoned). If an encounter occurs, roll 1d4:

1. Female sitting on 1d4 eggs (worth 200 gp each to the right buyer).
2. Female and 1d4 hatchlings; will defend the nest vigorously.
3. Flock of 1d4+1 *Giant Eagles* (some younger, but use the normal stats).
4. Empty nest. Roll 1d3: (i-iii) twigs and feathers, (iv) broken eggs, (v) 1 x Carry Loot/Plains Trinket, (vi) 1 x Valuables.





**Giant Eagle**, AC 13, HD 3+3, Bite 2d4 and 2 x Claws 1d6, 19: the target is grabbed and may be carried away, S16 D14 C14 I2 P15 W14 Ch7, L6, Mv 90 flying.

### Area 3 - Brown Griffons

This plateau is approximately 12 miles long and 4 miles wide, filled with large outcroppings of uneven stone and scabbling scree. A series of griffon nests may be found on the northern cliff faces, 1d3 every mile or so, jutting out on ledges or set into large cave mouths. Each nest has a 40% chance of an encounter (otherwise the nest is long abandoned). Importantly, all of these *griffons* are brown, grey or black in colouration. There are no white *griffons* to be found here.

**Griffon**, AC 14, HD 4, 2 Claws 1d4+1 and Bite 2d4, 19: special, S19 D15 C16 I2 P14 W13 Ch8, L7, Mv 120 ft flying. On a natural 19-20 a humanoid target is grabbed and may be flown away with (victims may use their action to make a Str or Dex Contest to break free).

If an encounter occurs, roll 1d8:

1. 1d6 newborn hatchlings waiting for their *griffon* parents to return. They are squawky and look hungry (worth 200 gp

each to the right buyer). If investigated, 25% chance mother and/or father *griffon* swoops in to kill the intruders!

2. 1d4 broken eggs (50%) or 1d2 live eggs (50%, worth 300 gp each to a collector) seemingly undefended.
3. 1d3 infant *griffons* are learning to fly, copying the flapping movements of their mother and father. Upon sighting the PCs, the parents either (i) land nearby and screech threateningly, or (ii) swoop in for the kill, encouraging their young to do the same!
4. An injured *griffon* is sleeping in this nest, its wing clearly savaged by some dangerous beast.
5. A recently dead griffon is rotting here, some manner of metallic object beneath it (requires a Perc (Detection) check to spot, 1 x Carry Loot). Disturbing the griffon risks infection of some kind (50% random disease, otherwise *Flesh Grubs*, LFG p.123).

6. A sizable family of 2d6 *griffons* are returning from hunting, carrying a number of *skorn* among them (including children), 1d100% of whom are still alive. The beasts land in the nest the PCs were intending to investigate, and begin dropping the beastman in the centre and screeching loudly.
7. A pair of griffons are sleeping in this nest, huddled together against the wind. It's not clear if there are any eggs or other interesting items beneath their bulk.
8. A brown griffon with white flecks, *Tutha*, is feeding on the dismembered body of a *Rising Dust* barbarian (its former handler, see Area 8). The beast is wearing a crude saddle (two seats, one behind the other) and does not appear startled by the PCs (it is quasi trained, but like all monstrous beasts, not at all safe).

If the PCs allow *Tutha* to satiate her hunger, she might permit them to ride her (Cha (Animal Lore) check at a -2 penalty). The *griffon* can carry up to four people (two in the saddles, one in each talon). No matter the PCs' attempts at control, *Tutha* will only (willingly) take them one place: Area 8. On the way there however, the PCs might be able to coax the *griffon* to take a circuitous route, allowing them to scout parts of the region.

#### Area 4 - Central Lakes

This large lake receives run off from nearby plateaus and rising ground water, drawing many creatures to drink. Bison, deer, horses etc are here in large numbers, keeping a careful eye out for predators. As far as animal predators (such as panthers and wolves) are concerned, small mammals usually make more appealing prey than armoured PCs (10% chance something attempts to stalk the PCs, roll 1d4: (i) *Western Panther*, (ii) *Giant Crocodile*, (iii) *War Wombat*, (iv) *Owlbear*).

There is however one exception. Hibernating on the easternmost island is a dreaded *Purple Worm*. This 100 ft column of rubbery flesh, man shredding maw, and poison stinger is a terrifying behemoth of the highest order. Slumbering atop the one mile island for decades, long grasses have overgrown its balled, centipede like shape. Over the years, the animals have forgotten the danger, but no *skorn* or barbarian dares set foot here.

If the PCs explore the island, there is a 60% base chance the worm awakens, plus 10% per hour (it detects their sweet man scent and is hungry beyond measure). Inexperienced players might benefit from a reminder about the *Party Retreat* rule. If the worm is somehow defeated (or outwitted), its guts (or perhaps petrified faeces) include 1 x Carry Loot, 1 x Valuables and the *Leathers of Agmundr*.

#### Leathers of Agmundr

Enscrolled two centuries ago by *Runescer Agmundr*, this surprisingly flexible leather armour is imbued with incantations of elementalism, doom and defiance. Exiled by the *Council of Varmor* for crimes unspoken, the unaging warlock died forty winters ago in a *bulette* ambush on the *High Plains* (eaten in turn by the *Purple Worm*).



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Attunement takes 2d6 weeks except by Magic Users who require 2d6 days. Once attuned, the user finds their ability to sense magic improves dramatically (when attempting to sense magic p.83 LFG they automatically succeed). This enhanced connection to the Veil however also increases the user's starting DDM by 2 points. Both of these traits fade over 1d12 months if attunement ends.

Attunement benefits are as follows:

1. The wearer may sacrifice *Reroll* dice to cast spells they know instead of expending spell uses. The number of *Reroll* dice required is equal to the spell level plus one (eg a 2<sup>nd</sup> level spell costs three *Reroll* dice).
2. Once every 1d4 days, the user may change the element of one magical effect to another (eg from fire to frost, wind or stone, etc).
3. Once per week, the user may spend an action to invoke *Channel Lightning*, *Gift of the Fiery Furnace*, or *Blast of Frozen Ruin* (at the user's level or minimum caster level, whichever is higher).
4. Once per month, upon being *Staggered*, the user may unleash an immediate backlash against their attacker. For each point of Con the user gives up, the attacker suffers 1d10 elemental damage (no save, the user chooses the element). Con points lost in this way cannot be restored until the next Downtime period.

### Area 5 - Ugathi Skorn

The *Ugathi Skorn*, numbering in the high thousands (including women and children), effectively control the entire region. Their permanent village is located on the western plateau and adjacent cliffs, 1,000 ft above the grasslands, constructed of mud bricks, bison bone and occasional pieces of wood.

Hunting parties search the grasslands day and night (80% chance of an encounter with 4d10 *skorn* every 6 hours within 4 miles of Area 5), returning with live victims for *Karg Khorob* and the tribe to feast upon. Humans and rival beastmen are favoured, but the *skorn* will resort to animals or cannibalism rather than go hungry.

The karg and his younger brother *Hornuk* are infected with *skorn* lycanthropy and are *Werebison*.

**Skorn**, AC 11, HD 2, Club 1d6+1, 19: the target is clubbed in the head, losing its next action (*Luck* (Will) save resists), S15 D10 C13 I7 P12 W8 Ch8, L5, Mv 30 ft. Rudimentary dark vision, advantage when detecting danger or scents.

**Werebison**, AC 13, HD 8, Big Club 2d8, 10 ft reach, 19: a *bison* comes to the lycanthrope's aid, S19 D9 C17 I7 P14 W11 Ch7, L10, Mv 30 ft. *Lycanthrope* with all the usual benefits, *Cause Injuries* on 19-20 attack rolls. May spend an action to exert control and issue orders to *bison*, which are compelled to obey. Rudimentary dark vision, advantage when detecting danger or scents. *Skorn* lycanthropy cannot be spread to non *skorn*.

**Bison**, AC 11, HD 4, Horns 2d4, 19: target is pushed backwards 10 ft, drops anything they are holding, and is prone, S19 D8 C15 I3 P12 W10 Ch7, L7, Mv 40 ft. On a critical hit, the target is gored, requiring a *Luck* (Dex) save to avoid rolling on the *Injuries & Setbacks* table.

In truth there is little for the party in the *skorn* village. Attempting to defeat the *Ugathi* in a pitched battle is obvious suicide and doomed to failure, even with the assistance of the *Burnt Ones* and *Ybaak Ogres* combined. If the karg's tent can be infiltrated however, there is a basket of spoils that the leader has amassed over the years (1 x 5 HD *Lair Treasure*, plus 1 x Scroll and 1 x Potion).

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## Area 6 - Burnt Ones

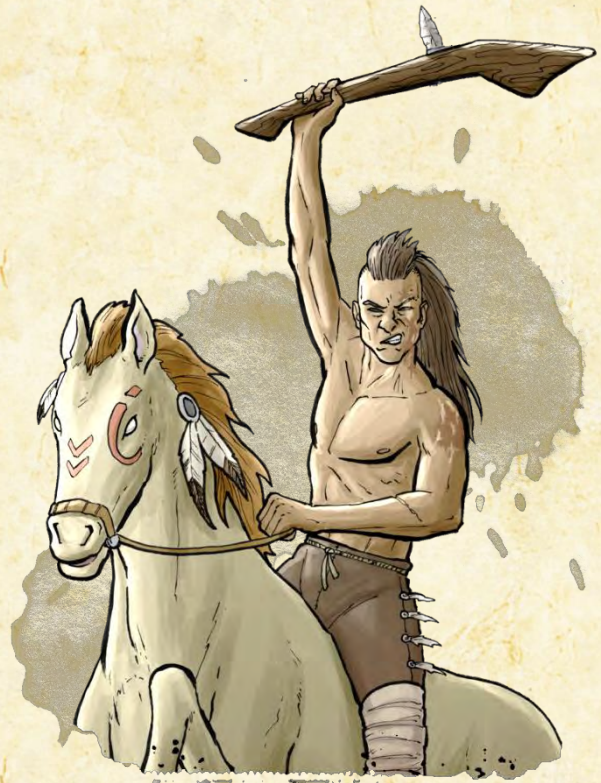
Two thousand barbarians of the nomadic *Burnt Ones* tribe have set up a temporary encampment here, scores of portable oilskinned tents surrounded by sleek horses. The thuels survive the numerous *skorn* by way of mounted mobility, punishing archery and unmatched horsemanship.

*Chief Batousa* (young, athletic, shaved head with topknot, one side of his face burnt, loud and ruthless) and his clan are xenophobic and distrusting of outsiders, reserving a special prejudice for the cowardly humans holed up in their walled cities ("*Suuda Nor*" or "rabbit men"). For an adventurer willing to demonstrate their grit however, they might be willing to talk instead of skewer.

If the PCs display true toughness, *Batousa* brings them into the camp for further study (he isn't asking). He questions them about city life and what they have seen in their travels, especially any intel on *skorn* movements. Over the course of the night, the PCs may attempt to impress the chief to persuade him (i) not to imprison or kill them, and (ii) gain some useful information.

A Party Challenge (difficult: 8 successes, focusing on Cha, Will, Int, Con, Athletics, Acrobatics, Persuasion, Leadership) resolves how much the chief ultimately likes or dislikes them. Each failure requires a valuable tithe to prevent falling into disfavour (eg a steel weapon, healing kit, etc).

If the challenge is failed, the PCs are put to death. If successful, *Batousa* decides he likes them (for now) and offers one PC a "good burning" to cement their favour with the tribe. Any use of magic is instantly seized upon as dark sorcery, and the transgressor beaten unconsciousness (reduced to zero hp, make an *All Dead or Mostly Dead* check as normal). All of the barbarians are marked with burn scars, enduring marks of their warrior heritage. A "good" burning must be visible, typically on the forearm, back of the hand, or neck. A PC willing to accept such a brand suffers



a *Minor Scar* (per the *Injuries & Setbacks* table, but *Luck* (Con) save to avoid permanently reducing their Cha by 1), and buys safe passage through the *Burnt Ones*' lands (as much as they can claim such).

If at least one PC goes through the branding, they secure the party's release and elicit some useful information about the region, including the *Rising Dust* clan in Area 8. *Batousa* confirms seeing a white griffon among their sky riders.

**Burnt Ones**, AC 13, HD 1, Spear 1d6+1, Axe 1d8+1, Sword 1d8+1 or Short Bow 1d6, 19: as weapon, S12 D10 C13 I10 P10 W12 Ch11, L4, Mv 30 ft. 30% of the tribe are berserkers, with S13, +2 bonus to attack, Spear 1d6+2, and never check for morale.

**Chief Batousa**, AC 13, HD 4, Spear 2d6, 19: 2d6 barbarians appear from nearby to aid the chief! S15 D14 C14 I13 P12 W17 Ch14, L10, Mv 30 ft. *Batousa* never checks for morale.



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### Area 7 – Ruined Tower

Rising above the cliffs of the north western plateau is a 120 ft tower of cracked and weathered stone. The structure is mostly intact, but some sections have crumbled or broken away over time, exposing the interior to sunlight, wind and rain.

The tower's former owner was a reclusive sorcerer who perished in an aerial battle with local griffons over a three decades ago. Astride his winged horse, the pair were set upon by the northern flock (Area 8) and quickly torn apart. As fate would have it the battle took place near the tower, and some of the sorcerer's bones fell in the vicinity (including his skull, which is cracked and now heavily overgrown with creeper vines).

The sorcerer's vengeful spirit, and that of his flying horse, now haunt the tower and surrounding area (up to a quarter mile). The *spectre* is unable to rest until it exacts vengeance against the *griffons* (by exterminating the flock) or his skull is destroyed. Every few months (at seemingly random intervals) the sorcerer is able to push beyond the half mile boundary and attack the griffons in Area 8, killing several before being forced to return.

The *spectre* retains scant memory of its former life and is wholly consumed with vengeance. It displays little interest in humans, but will emerge from the skull like a demonic genie if the tower is intruded upon.

During the night, the spectre may remain for as long as necessary, but during the day, he is limited to periods of 1 hour (then dissipating for another hour before being capable of reforming). The winged horse may manifest similarly, but only outside the tower within a quarter mile. The horse pays men no heed unless disturbed or set upon, in which case it attacks.

The tower has three levels, with no other creatures of note. Animals can sense the undead present and do not enter within 1,000 ft. Similarly, *skorn* and *thuel* know of the tower's curse and give the region wide berth. The interior is water logged and decaying, with broken wooden furniture, rotting books and linen. The second level holds the only treasure of note; an iron bound chest containing 1 x Carry Loot, 1 x Valuables and 2 x Scrolls.



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If either *spectre* is reduced to zero hp, they revert to a mist state and fly back to the sorcerer's skull, which absorbs them and prevents re-manifesting for 7 days. Smashing the skull while the spirits are within destroys them utterly. Given the speed at which the spectres move, some manner of flying (including riding a *griffon*) is required to follow them back to the skull. Finding the skull by way of pure luck is like finding a needle in a haystack.

**Nameless Sorcerer Spectre**, AC 15, HD 7, Touch 1d8 + level drain, 19: the spectre and target vanish to a nightmare realm of dark sorcery to finish their duel. If the spectre is destroyed, the target reappears, S- D15 C- I10 P13 W15 Ch8, L9, Mv 90 ft in any direction. *Incorporeal Undead*, passes through solid objects like water. A *spectre's* icy touch drains one level until the end of the adventure (*Luck* (Will) save resists).

**Winged Horse Spectre**, AC 13, HD 5, Kick 1d10 + level drain, 19: the *spectre* "tramples" the target draining two levels instead of one, S- D15 C- I3 P13 W13 Ch5, L7, Mv 120 ft in any direction. *Incorporeal Undead*, passes through solid objects like water. A *spectre's* icy touch drains one level until the end of the adventure (*Luck* (Will) save resists).

### Area 8 – Rising Dust Clan

The northern clifftops are approximately 900 feet above the plains, the least empty of the plateaus with scattered copses of trees along the ridges, and a central woodland.

The area is largely controlled by the *Ugathi skorn*, but a small tribe of thuel known as *Rising Dust* (about 80 members) have managed to avoid extinction by allying with the local *griffons*. Every now and again the *skorn* attempt to eat the clan, only to be frustrated by their ability to anticipate attack and relocate elsewhere (care of their semi-domesticated *griffons*).

In fact the tribe has been dwindling for decades, and it's only a matter of time before the *skorn* trap

and slaughter them. But until that day, the chief (known only as "*Sky Caller*"; a secret shaman in his 60s, thin, stringy unkempt hair, toothless grin, kind but firm) works tirelessly to keep them safe.

The tribe shelters in a warren of cliffside caves, separate to but close by a series of large *griffon* nests. At any one time, the tribe is able to call on approximately twenty *griffons*; enough to whisk them away from danger or make short range sorties in the hunt for food.

**Rising Dust Warriors**, AC 12, HD 1, Short sword 1d6 or Sling 1d4, 19: disarm, S10 D12 C11 I10 P10 W11 Ch11, L4, Mv 30 ft. 30% of the tribe are berserkers, with S13, +2 bonus to attack, Short sword 1d6+2, and never check for morale.

**Sky Caller**, AC 11, HD 5, Spear 1d6+1, 19: a *griffon* swoops in to aid the shaman! S9 D11 C12 I15 P15 W15 Ch13, L13, Mv 30 ft. *Sky Caller* may invoke the following spells up to twice per encounter: *Bestial Communion* (winged creatures only, does not trigger a DDM check), *Shadows & Dust*, *Soothing Edict*, *Riddle of Bones*.

### Spectre Problem

When the adventurers arrive, the *Dust* are highly suspicious, yet also interested in potential trade (or pillaging!), especially if the PCs possess any steel. In particular, *Sky Caller* is interested to know if the party possess any *cold iron*.

The reason for this is the tribe fears *Neb Dakar*, the "*Dark Ghost*" (Area 7) is overdue for another attack, and the *Dust* are bereft of weapons to defend against him. If the PCs make a favourable impression on the chief, *Sky Caller* offers to trade them the *white griffon* if they swear to destroy the *spectres*.

That very night, the *spectres* attack. If the party reduce the spirits to zero hp, they adopt gaseous form and fly back to the skull with a base move rate of 120 ft. An Int (Arcane Lore) check reveals the nature of the misty transformation and likely

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return to a phylactery of some kind. Unless the PCs have another way to track them, *Sky Caller* points at a pair of saddled griffons and barks “GO!”... If the PCs’ jump aboard, resolve this as a Chase (LFG p.69, treating a “capture” as successfully tracking their quarry to the skull).



### “Trained” Griffons

A *griffon* is not like a horse or a dog. Whilst they appreciate the grooming humans provide, their instinctive aggressiveness and proclivity for violence makes them dangerous “pets” at the best of times (apply the *Monstrous Instincts* rules, *Companion* p.25). In truth, *Sky Caller*’s secret use of *Bestial Communion* is what holds the alliance together. Despite this, from time to time the monsters will turn on the humans (see for example Area 3, Entry 8).

The tribe has only one *white griffon*: *Shūga*, a full grown female with a feisty and combative nature.

She will initially co-operate with the party if *Sky Caller* coaxes her to, but after 24 hours requires Cha (Animal Handling) vs Will 15 checks to keep her in line. Administering one dose of *Swig*’s tranquilizer drug imposes a -4 penalty on *Shūga*’s roll for 8 hours (cumulative, if her Will is reduced to 0, she is rendered unconscious).

### Area 9 – Ybaak’s Ogres

The eastern plateau is 800 ft above the grasslands and home to a large tribe of 5d10 *Ogres*. Strictly speaking the *ogres* are nomadic, but in recent months have set up a camp of sorts around a series of deep caves.

Lead by the two headed “ogre” *Ybaak* (technically one head is *Baak*, the other *Yaak*), the 12 ft *Ettin* dominates her 9 ft minions with overt cruelty and malice. In fact, things have gotten so bad the most harassed *ogres* are planning to murder *Ybaak* in her sleep. Unfortunately for them the *ettin* never fully sleeps (she’s paranoid), keeping one head awake at all times. Like all *ogres* the monsters generally eat first and ask questions never, but if the right circumstances arise, the PCs might just find some unlikely allies here.

**Baak & Yaak, Ettin**, AC 13, HD 10+3, 2 x Big Club 2d10, 19: target is knocked prone and mercilessly mocked by both heads, S19 D10 C15 I8 P9 W14 Ch8, L10, Mv 40 ft. 10 ft reach, *Cause Injuries* on criticals, *Minor Exploit Protection*, *Off Turn Attacks*.

**Ogre**, AC 12, HD 4+3, Spiked Club 2d8, 19: special, S19 D8 C15 I6 P7 W8 Ch7, L7, Mv 40 ft. When *Staggered*, an *ogre* enters a murderous rage, gaining a free attack against every foe within reach. On a 19+ attack roll, the target rolls on the *Injuries & Setbacks* table (*Luck* (Con) save resists). 10 foot reach.

The *ettin* jealously hoards her spoils, storing them in a hemp sack in the back of her private cave (1 x *Carry Loot*, 1 x *Plains Trinket*, 1 x 5 HD *Lair Treasure*).

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## Aftermath

If the party return with the white *griffon*, *Swig* pays them their due and they gain some fame as skilled monster hunters in *Port Brax* (*Swig* may offer them more monster hunting work in the future, if they're interested). Some months later they hear that a white *griffon* is the prize attraction in *Delecarte's Carnival of Wonders* (AF #16).

If PCs return empty handed, their reputations are unblemished; the odds of successfully capturing a live *griffon* are incredibly low. PCs returning with eggs or hatchlings might sell them or even attempt to train them (see *Companion* p.24).

If *Swig* died in the wilds, his girlfriend *Manildra* is upset but appreciates any information and/or accoutrements the party can provide. If they treat her kindly, other bounty hunters might approach the PCs with work.

If not, *Manildra* becomes an enemy, blaming the PCs for her partner's death, blinded by her pain and need to lash out (see *Companion* p.13, *Enemies & Rivals* for inspiration).



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# PROPHET OF THE PIT PEOPLE



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## PROPHET OF THE PIT PEOPLE

*Maunt Thamond*, a successful cartographer in *Dol-Karok*, is said to be dying of lung rot. Rumour has it *Thamond* is seeking capable warriors to escort him into the *Ironhull Mountains* on a mission of great personal importance.

### Pit of Belmogg

Beneath the shadows of the *Ironhull Mountains* lies a pit deep and dark, encircled by the last stones of a forgotten temple to a forgotten god; *Belmogg the Unbidden*.

Venerated during the Second Age by the now extinct *Surothi* people, *Belmogg* was an enigmatic and bloody handed deity of three dominions; (i) divine prophecy, (ii) trial by combat, and (iii) communion with the spirit realm.

In *Belmogg's* halls, sacrifices for holy divinations were common, and ritual combat revered as a means of inferring the *Unbidden Lord's* judgment. To this end the *Surothi* constructed a great fighting pit and sacred ziggurat beneath their hallowed house; a place where worshippers could witness the priests' oracles and blood soaked proclamations.

As all civilizations must, the *Surothi* eventually perished, and their temple was lost to decay. Now thousands of years later, little remains but scattered foundations, and a silent pit descending into darkness.

### Dwellers Below

The present inhabitants of the subterranean complex are the *Enmesh*; an *Urgot* tribe of mutant humans cursed by centuries of corruption. Drawn to pit's eldritch emanations, the *urgot* feel more alive here; the deep tunnels somehow buoying their cruel moods and vile gratifications.

Of all the mutants, *Emegak the Urgozer* has been affected most of all. *Emegak* was the first to feel the pit's call, and it was he that led the tribe to the temple thirty years ago. Over time the chieftain developed a genuine second sight, able to foresee future events, and draw secret knowledge from hungering forces beyond the Veil (see **Area 3**).

### A Prophecy Sought

When this adventure begins, the elderly cartographer *Maunt Thamond* (grey hair and beard, slim build, plain clothed, never without his garnet topped walking staff to prop himself up) is dying of lung disease (he wheezes and coughs up bloody phlegm from time to time).



Before he dies, *Thamond* desperately wants to know if his reclusive son, *Dracent*, will produce an heir to continue the family name. The cartographer is willing to offer up to 500 crowns to be escorted into the *Ironhull Mountains* to locate the *urgot* prophet, and obtain a reading.

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**Maunt Thamond**, AC 10, HD 1 (5 hp), Staff 1d6+1, 19: NA, S10 D10 C8 I14 P14 W17 Ch13 L10, Mv 30 ft. *Maunt* is no combatant by any stretch of the imagination, and relies entirely on the party to keep him safe from harm. Any time the party is attempting stealth, *Maunt* must make a *Luck* check to avoid breaking into a coughing fit.

Alternatively, the PCs might become involved in this adventure by learning about the mutant prophet from a newly arrived explorer, and seek him out for a prophecy or other information (eg how to craft a magic item, the identity of a hidden nemesis, etc).

## Across the Ironhulls

The *Ironhulls* are mostly basalt and granite, surrounded at lower altitudes by copses of juniper, redwood and similar conifers. Crossing the mountains is hazardous and often deadly even for the well prepared. The lower ranges are *skorn* hunting grounds, the higher peaks oxygen poor and magnets for foul weather, lorded over by feuding giant kin.

The pit is located approximately forty miles to the north of *Dol-Karok*, at the base of a land locked series of tapering spires. Most of the terrain is unsuitable for horses, and parts of the journey may require climbing gear.

Assuming the party travels at 5 to 7 miles per day (doubled on a forced march, LFG p.130), it might take up to eight days to reach the pit. Each day of travel requires a roll on the *Overland Events* table (LFG p.131), or alternatively there is a 40% chance of a random encounter each day. If an encounter occurs, roll 1d8:

1. A single horn sounds, then another, and another, until a multitude can be heard echoing to the north, south, east and west. A large party of *Skorn* (4d10+30) are hunting in the area, and are signalling to each other to encircle the party, whose

scent they have caught about a mile away. Within 10 minutes, the *skorn* converge on the adventurers, and attempt to attack them from all sides (split up into equal numbered war parties).

2. Bad weather befalls the party, pummeling the travellers with heavy rain as lightning clashes overhead. The ferocious storm dislodges parts of the mountain, requiring a group *Luck* save to avoid a rockslide (PCs with Wilderness Lore gain advantage on the check). If failed, characters suffer 2d6 damage (if 10+ damage, also roll on the *Injuries & Setbacks* table).
3. A 15 ft cave set into the mountainside is strewn with bones, including those of thuels and skorn. Some glinting can be seen amongst the remains (1 x Carry Loot). A slumbering *War Wombat* sleeps inside. If she awakes, she will be enraged to find human interlopers so close to her lair. Deeper in the den are 1d3 baby *war wombats*, and further corpses (another 1 x Carry Loot).
4. A pair of thuels (*Barrag*, hulking with one eye, and *Motaa*, female with narrow hips and good teeth) are bloodied and beaten, lying against nearby trees. They've been exiled and left for dead by the *Stone Beak* clan for stealing from the chief (*Motaa* is Rogue 2, Dex 14). They speak thuel, but no common. They know the mountains well, and the location of the pit (if they travel with the party, the party may choose to automatically avoid a single random encounter).
5. The party notice a two foot, door like inscription on the mountain, beneath the shelter of a large crag. The inscription is striated and outlined with geometric glyphs, long worn and almost

imperceivable. Perhaps the “door” leads to the *Lost Roads*, a magic gate that opens once a year to *Mount Rokan*, or the winding catacombs of the *Quagran* (diminutive earth spriggans, long extinct). Or perhaps the door is nought but the deluded scratchings of a long departed soul.

6. A hateful and voracious ogre, *Krodt*, lives in this area, eating *skorn* or any other travellers that happen his way. Cursed by a nomadic hag years ago, the 12 ft mutant sports a vicious nose horn and rubbery skin plates. *Krodt* loves to impale foes on his horn, then tear them apart with his hands whilst roaring “*KRODT WINS!*” He has a volcanic hatred for spell casters and other users of magic.



**Krodt, Corrupted Ogre**, AC 14 HD 6+3 (52 hp), Horn/Fist 3d6, 19: special, S19 D8 C16 I5 P8 W10 Ch7 L13, Mv 40 ft. *Krodt* is a *Boss Monster* with all the usual benefits. On a Nat 19, he impales the target on his horn then rips them apart (*Luck* (Dex) save or die; if successful, suffer *Internal Bleeding* or *Broken Ribs* instead (even chance). When *Staggered*, *Krodt* enters a murderous rage, gaining a free attack against every foe within reach. *Krodt* causes an extra 1d12 damage on a charge.

7. As dusk falls, the PCs notice a low campfire nearby. 3d6 albino Karok miners are crossing the mountains with an equal number of sure footed goats and servitors (enslaved dwarves, marked with the crown sigil of *House Tergoza*) carrying copper ore. They are accompanied by 4d6 chain clad guards with axes, shields and heavy crossbows. The leader, *Pascal* (bald, heavy set, with a constantly furrowed brow) might be willing to trade or share their campfires for a night.
8. 1d4+2 *Giant Eagles* swoop out of low lying cloud cover to attack the party with piercing shrieks. They will attempt to snatch up at least one PC, and fly them back to their eyrie to eat them. Anyone who struggles too much is dropped from a great height.

## Into the Pit

The pit is situated at the base of a trio of rock spires, which surround the ruins in three directions. The ground is mostly scabble and scree, but patches of grass and alpine groves are scattered about. Entry is generally from the south.

Despite no real walls remaining, the ruin’s location is quickly apparent. Boot prints litter the area, and 2d6 humanoid sentries (*urgot*) can be seen sitting on what remains of the last building blocks. The pit itself is approximately 30 ft wide, and dark. The *Enmesh* cannot see in the dark and usually carry oil lamps with them (the flickering of which does not reach around the bend in Area 2).

**Urgot**, AC 11, HD 1+4, Club 1d6+1 or Bow 1d6, 19: as weapon, S13 D13 C16 I7 P9 W12 Ch6, L5, Mv 30 ft. A group of *urgot* may issue a simultaneous howl or chitter once/day, causing creatures within 20 ft to suffer a minor madness (*Luck* (Will) save resists).



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*Emmesh* corruptions are varied, but primarily manifest as fleshy growths, stooped postures, elongated arms and extra limbs. Some rare members display bestial claws, hooves, teeth, or the like. As all *urgot*, the *Emmesh* delight in power and cruelty, regularly eating or sacrificing others to entities beyond the Veil.

Unlike most *urgot* however, under *Emegak's* reign, the tribe is willing to trade with outsiders brave enough to make contact with them. For the most part, the *Emmesh* have nothing to offer but the *urgozer's* prophecies (a commodity that appeals to a select few).

If the PCs indicate such an intention, the guards will take them to *Emegak* in Area 3 (the *Emmesh* speak their own clicking and cooing dialect, and a smattering of common). They make no demands with respect to weapons etc; the tribesmen are confident they have the numbers if things turn sour. If attacked, the *urgot* respond in kind, but for one or two who retreat into the pit to alert the others.

#### **Four Trials of Belmogg**

Before *Emegak* can use his soothsaying for others, a very specific ritual must be engaged in by the supplicant to earn *Belmogg's* favour. Luckily for *Thamond* (assuming the PCs are with him), help is permitted.

*Emegak* explains the party will need to prevail in four sacred trials as follows:

- (i) Survive the Arena (Area 18),
- (ii) Navigate the Maze (Areas 20-23),
- (iii) Climb the Pyramid and gaze into the Silver Mirror (Area 24), and
- (iv) Return with a live sacrifice for use in the soothsaying ritual. And not just any living creature; it must be sapient (see Areas 27, 29).

If asked about what kinds of dangers await in the tunnels, *Emegak* smiles slyly, and responds only that the adventurers must discover this for themselves.

#### **Blood Roach Assault**

Assuming the PCs complete the four trials and take one of the *blood roaches* to be *Emegak's* sapient sacrifice (Area 27, 29), part way through his lengthy ritual (during which *Thamond* and the party are required to be present), the *roaches* make a counter attack via the secret pool entrance in Area 19. This assumes at least some *roaches* remain in Area 27 or 29 (perhaps reinforced by another colony beyond Area 33). If the party kill all the *roaches*, or use the *Tentacle Spawn* as the sacrifice, the assault is avoided.

If the attack occurs, as the screams of the dying reach those in Area 3, the *urgozer* demands the party fend off the invaders. If push comes to shove, *Emegak* will offer the *Coil of the Worm* as payment (see Area 11).

By the time the PCs learn what's happening, the *roaches* are already spreading through the eastern complex. GMs are encouraged to run a series of skirmishes as they please, but the idea is to have the party battling in and around the *urgot* tunnels. In all the commotion, particularly devious PCs might take the opportunity to secretly loot Areas 8 or 11.

As the party moves through the complex, roll 1d10 to determine which events befall them. Add 1 for each subsequent roll:

1. Nothing but bloody *urgot* corpses.
2. *Standoff*: 2d6 *Urgot* are silently creeping through this room, pointing at a far door or archway (through which 1d4 *Roaches* can be heard softly clicking to each other).

3. *Dorovyr!* 1d4 *Dorovyr Swarms* are here (an invading *roach* accidentally opened the door in Area 18).
4. *Backstabbers!* 3d6 *Urgot* attempt to ambush the PCs from behind, blaming them for the attack, and greedy for their flesh and trinkets.
5. *Fire Bug:* Smoke and a horrible keening drone foreshadows an oversized *roach* (6 HD) barrelling down the corridor - it's on fire!
6. *Feeding:* 1d4+2 *Roaches* are silently feeding on dead *Urgot*, draining them with throbbing proboscises.
7. 2d6 *Urgot* are desperately fighting 1d6+2 *Roaches*. They look to the party to rescue them from their predicament.
8. A massive 16 ft *Giant Centipede* crawls into view, drawn by all the excitement (as usual but AC 14, 10 HD, Bite 2d10, Str 19, *Luck* 10, Stinger Poison causes 1d3 Dex loss, *Major Exploit Protection*).
9. *Save Emegak!* The *Urgozer* runs past a nearby doorway or intersection. He is being chased by 2d6 *Roaches!*
10. *The Queen:* The *Roach Queen* bursts into view, the thrumming of her skull plates deafening! She is accompanied by 1d4 *roaches*. Any nearby *Urgot* break and flee for their lives.
11. *Roach Withdrawal:* A loud thrumming echoes throughout the tunnels as all remaining *roaches* skitter back to the western catacombs, their vengeance slaked.

If the party survive until the *roaches* withdraw, *Emegak* finishes the ritual (see Aftermath).

## Random Encounters

Note that many locations on the map are unnumbered. When exploring these areas, the GM might choose to roll on the following tables to simulate random encounters and determine further details. The encounters are divided up into the eastern tunnels (*urgot* controlled) and western catacombs (monster infested).

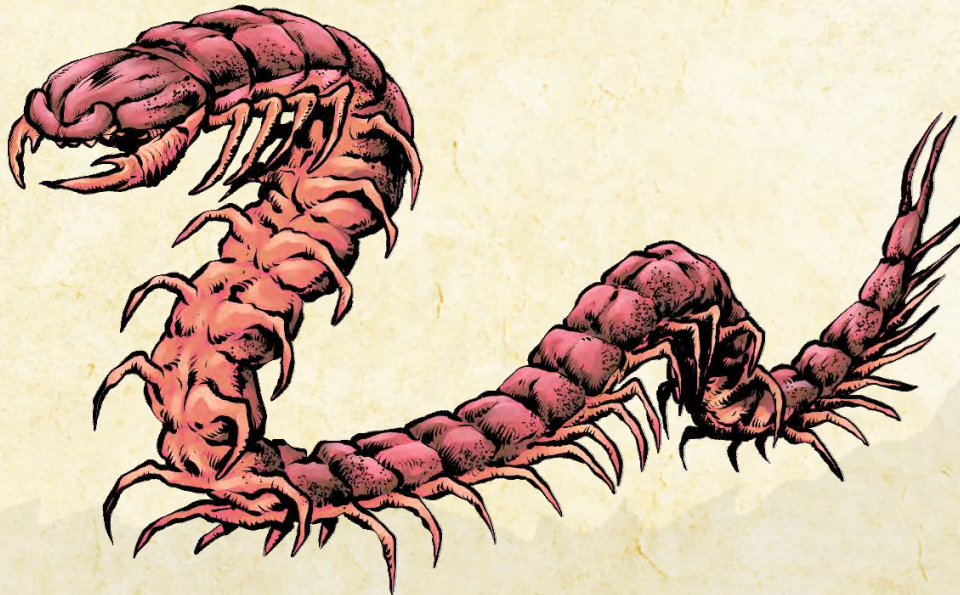
### Eastern Tunnels (1d6)

1. *Sleeping Chamber:* A domicile of some kind (1d6 sleeping blankets, wooden cots, woven mats, perhaps a wooden bath, etc). 1d4-1 *urgot* are here resting, socialising or lazing around.
2. *Living Quarters:* wooden chairs, tables, cooking utensils, bowls, mugs, etc, occupy this room, along with 1d6 *urgot* eating, gambling or socialising.
3. *Pantry:* 1d4 barrels or crates of foodstuffs, roll 1d6: (i) fruit, (ii) brined meat, (iii) seeds, (iv) fermented wine, (v) mouldy bread, (vi) repugnant smelling soup.
4. *Storage:* tables and chairs, along with 1d4 *urgot* sorting or working on gear, 1d6: (i) ropes, makeshift ladders, wooden poles, (ii) crudely woven clothes or other textiles, (iii) spears and knives being finished, (iv) nets in need of repair, (v) eating bowls, mugs and other utensils, (vi) straw mats.
5. *Shrine:* a small, temporary shrine or meditation area to *Belmogg* (to ward off bad luck, mark the passing of a tribe member, etc). Eg: animal skulls in a circle of silver filings, candles burning above a bowl of blood, stacked thuel limbs bound with braided cords, and so on. 50% chance of an *urgot* praying and/or smoking *Cormorat* (see Area 12).

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6. *Bog Hole*: a foul pit for the effluxion of evil smelling excrement, and other pungent bodily fluids. 50% chance 1d3 *urgot* in the midst of business, laughing and chattering with each other.

### Western Catacombs (1d10)

- 1d4 dead *Urgot* are here, the flesh stripped from their bones (courtesy of the *Dorovyr* swarms, see Area 21).
- 2d6 *Giant Centipedes* are curled up into balls, drained of blood (*roach* left overs).
- A colony of 1d6 *Yellow Mould* are growing high on the ceiling (1d3 x 10 ft high).
- With a thunderous breaking noise, rocks and dust shower the party as a *Bulette* (40%) or 1d3 *Rock Grinders* (60%) break through the closest wall! A *Luck* (Dex) save is required to avoid being smashed by flying debris for 2d6 damage.
- 2d6 *Shrieker Fungi* are growing nearby. There is a 50% chance they are murmuring quietly amongst themselves, otherwise they are silent.
- A *Tentacle Spawn*, starving, delirious and disorientated, has wandered up from the bowels of the earth, exiled from its home dimension. It is hungry beyond understanding and weakened by an otherworldly disease (22 hp out of 47, move 15 ft, Str 7, Con 8). It will attempt to lure a PC close enough to devour their brain, then flee.
- A *Giant Scorpion* is skittering about in the tunnels ahead, scratching around for something soft bodied to eat.
- Scraping noises can be heard from a bend up ahead. A *Blood Roach* is dragging the corpse of a *giant centipede* towards their nest in Area 29.
- The air smells off here (Perc check to notice) due to a lingering gas pocket, issuing through a nearby fissure in the earth (around the next bend, perhaps). If undetected, any open flame causes the gas to explode (4d6 damage, *Luck* (Dex) save for half).
- A loud thrumming echoes throughout the complex (care of the *Roach Queen* in Area 29).



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## Pit Trinkets

As the party explores the temple, the GM might substitute a 1d12 roll on the following table instead of the usual LFG *Carry Loot* or *Trinkets & Curios* tables:

1. A tin scroll tightly furled and bound with a copper clasp. Unwinding its 3 ft length requires 1d3+3 rounds, revealing lines of stamped glyphs (1 x Scroll).
2. A 1 ft silver urn with a heavy base, decorated with bands of black hieroglyphs (123 gp).
3. A mummified dwarven nose, hanging on a wire thong. If worn as a talisman, the user can smell nearby gold or gems like a dwarf (Minor Charm).
4. A leather bound tome of the current age, entitled *Lucentum* in gold leaf, extolling the virtues of the Nydissian order of the same name (47 gp).
5. A pouch containing 2d6 pieces of polished obsidian (9 gp per stone).
6. A chipped drinking horn edged with gold. The outside of the horn is etched with prayers to the Deep One (77 gp).
7. A waterproof satchel containing a jar of spices, several hardtack biscuits, and a block of salt (8 gp).
8. A foul smelling paste sealed in a clay flask. Shaking it doesn't produce much noise, but the shifting weight is noticeable. If spread onto a diseased limb or organ, there is a 50% chance the paste cures it. Otherwise the sickness is bolstered to twice normal strength and imposes disadvantage on subsequent healing attempts.
9. A small leather pouch containing four brass dice with rounded edges, stamped with black pips (28 gp).
10. A glossy faience pottery egg. One side depicts stony hills and valleys, the other side is jet black. Straddling both is the image of a silver door (86 gp).
11. An intricate 1½ ft brass scroll tube with a screw cap. Inside is the femur bone of a long dead holy woman. The bone is *blessed* (treat like holy water vs demons/undead), may be used as a club, but breaks on a fumble (66 gp).
12. A hemp sack containing strips of salted meat, dried fish, and a string of onion bulbs (5 gp).







TEMPLE OF BELMOGG

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## Eastern Tunnels

The eastern tunnels are controlled by the *urgot*, lit primarily by oil lamps that the mutants carry from room to room (some major intersections might have a standing lantern or lamp). The *Enmesh* number about three hundred (half women and children), most of whom are located in Areas 9 and 9a. If there is a major disturbance however (eg during the *Blood Roach Assault*) they all venture out to assist and/or flee.

The temple's man made corridors are dressed stone, generally 5 ft wide and 8 ft high. Doors are corroding iron, heavy but most will swing open with some effort. The air is cool and smells rather unpleasant (the *urgot* do not care for cleaning).

### Area 1 - Stone Steps

Well worn stone steps lead down into darkness about 200 ft before reaching Area 1. The barest hint of flicking lamplight can be seen emanating around the eastern bend. Speaking can be heard from Area 2 (*Enmesh* dialect, exhibits frequent clicking sounds).

### Area 2 - Barracks

2d6 *Urgot* guards (with spears, shields, and patchwork armour) are on duty here at all times. A lantern burns on the wall, providing adequate light. The guards are inclined to kill first and eat later, but know that some explorers come to negotiate a prophecy with *Emegak*, and are willing to talk. They speak their own dialect, a smattering of thuel, and very basic common.

**Urgot Guards**, AC 12, HD 1+4, Spear 1d6+2, 19: the *urgot* howl (see below), S13 D13 C16 I7 P9 W12 Ch6, L5, Mv 30 ft. May use their shield to negate a single attack. A group of *urgot* may issue a simultaneous howl or chitter once/day, causing creatures within 20 ft to suffer a minor madness (*Luck* (Will) save resists).

If battle commences, further occupants (eg from Areas 9 and 9a) will start appearing to reinforce the guards (initially 1d10 *urgot* every three rounds). One of these guards has the key to the armoury (Area 7).



### Area 3 - Pool of Sacrifice

This approximately 25 ft by 35 ft platform is in a giant cavern, rising out of a black pool. Flickering candles are set on plinths around the perimeter, leading to a raised dais and 6 ft stack of skulls (mostly humans or humanoid, but not exclusively). The platform and pool are used for the *urgot's* blasphemous rituals, including *Emegak's* prophecies. Blood stains much of the area.

The *urgot* sentries will bring PCs here to meet with the *urgozer* if they seek a prophecy or other reading. *Emegak* (hideously deformed face, bloated with purple pustules and clawed fingers) speaks common in a wretched gurgling, and explains that supplicants must prove themselves worthy of *Belmogg* before a prophecy may be divined (the Four Trials).

Assuming the PCs agree, the *urgozer* makes preparations for the adventurers to battle in the

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Arena (Area 18). The PCs have about an hour to wait. They are free to explore the eastern tunnels during this time.

**Emegak, Urgozer**, AC 11, HD 4+3, Knife 1d4+2, 19: uncontrolled magic, roll on the *Dark & Dangerous Magic* table, S16 D9 C16 I14 P14 W14 Ch9, L7, Mv 30 ft. May choose from the following spells three times per combat (5<sup>th</sup> level): *Shennog's Blessing*, *Waking Dream*, *Lash of Unerring Pain*, *Arcane Aegis*, *Runic Rite of Wonderment*. Has the key to Area 11.

#### Area 4 - Waiting Chamber

This 15 ft by 10 ft chamber has a 15 ft ceiling. A central square pillar has a lantern hanging from it. The pillar is inscribed with silver lettering (prayers to *Belmogg* in old *Surothi*). Ancient 3 ft bronze urns occupy each corner (empty). The wide stone staircase to the west rises upwards.

#### Area 5 - Prison Guard

A single *urgot* jailor is snoozing here, back to the wall beside a low burning oil lamp. *Cenmod* is supposed to be making sure no-one has access to the two infected *urgot* in Area 6. There is a bar across the door, keeping it shut.

#### Area 6 - Infirmary

Two *urgot* are quarantined here, *Bhash* and *Tulm*, who are infected with *Skorn Weeze* (LFG p.124). Their ragged breathing can be heard through the door. Sitting on their bedrolls, they look thin and emaciated. The disease includes body fluid and airborne vectors; just entering the room requires a *Luck* (Con) save to resist contamination.

#### Area 7 - Armoury

This room's iron door is locked (one of the guards in Area 2 has the key). Breaking it down is not impossible but would take quite some time and the right tools. The armoury includes twelve spears, three swords, a suit of chain (the *urgots'* deformities prevent them from wearing it), two shields, a heavy crossbow and five bolts.

#### Area 8 - Unholy Crypt

This 25 ft crypt is sealed with two bronze doors, each emblazoned with a blood red glyph. The doors are magically closed. *Emegak* understands that only a person of *Surothi* blood may open them without harm, and has forbidden the *Enmesh* to enter. Opening either door requires a Str check great success, and a *Luck* (Will) save to resist being transformed into a giraffe like turnip with four legs for 1d12 days (as *Sudden Transmogrification*, see page 2).

The chamber within has a 15 ft ceiling and a small mausoleum made of black brick, as if somehow charred by fire. An open archway allows entry into the crypt. Peering in reveals recessed shelves, each containing the yellowed bones and bejewelled accoutrements of long departed priests. Standing in the centre is a six foot *Iron Sentinel* (iron statue of a priest in ancient regalia). The sentinel animates and attacks anyone that attempts to disturb the bones, or to protect itself. Once awakened the golem turns on everyone in the complex, attempting to purge all intruders, before returning to the mausoleum.

If the bones are plundered, 1 x 4 HD Lair Treasure may be scavenged.

**Iron Sentinel**, AC 16, HD 9 (87 hp), 2 x Fists 2d6, 19: bear hug, S20 D9 C23 I- P12 W- Ch-, L14, Mv 30 ft. *Boss Monster* with *Off Turn Attacks* and *Minor Exploit Protection*. *Golem* traits apply. 50% *Magic Resistance*, except against lightning which stuns it for one round (loses its action), and fire which slows its movement to 10 ft for 1d6 rounds (magical fire only). A target struck by both fist attacks is crushed (*Luck* (Con) save to avoid rolling on the *Injuries & Setbacks* table).

#### Area 8a - Unstable Tunnel

This incomplete tunnel is highly unstable and ends in large chunks of half excavated rubble. Rock debris from the ceiling and walls litter the ground. Each night there is a 10% chance of a cave in.



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### Areas 9 & 9a - Greater Warren

The bulk of the *Urgot* (4d6+300) live in caverns that branch off from these two tunnels. Sleeping and living quarters fill most of this space. Searching this entire area garners 1 x 3 HD Lair Treasure.

### Area 10 - Storage

Wooden crates of wild foodstuffs (mushrooms, fruits, grains, etc) and crude textiles take up most of this cave. Also included are 2d6 barrels of oil. The food and textiles are worth 2 x Carry loot if able to be carted away.

### Area 11 - Urgozer's Chambers

The iron door to this chamber is locked (*Emegak* has the key). It contains a large wooden cot, reading desk with numerous religious scrolls and other writings (50 gp worth), and an oversized iron key (see Area 30). Up a few steps, in the northwest corner, is a hanging tapestry of bone and tanned flesh that somehow resembles the night sky (the *urgozer's* personal shrine to *Belmogg*). At the base of the shrine is the *Coil of the Worm*. *Emegak* has unlocked the item's first two attunements.

### Coil of the Worm

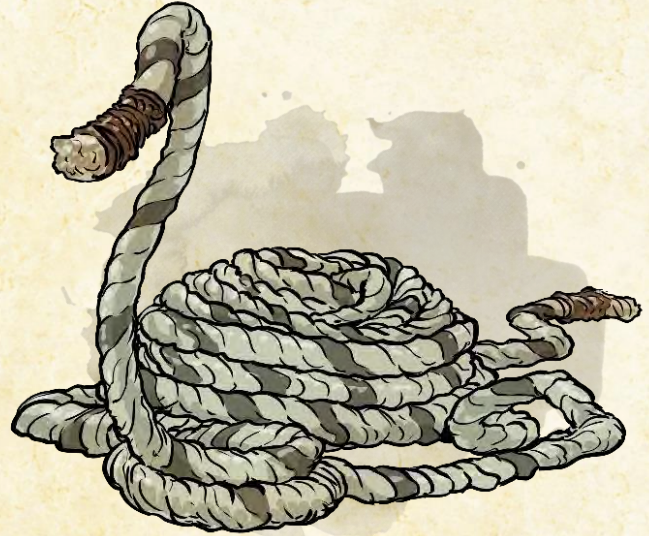
This compact coil of pasty coloured, grey striped rope stretches up to 60 ft long, and is wrapped at both ends. Fashioned from the silk of a giant silkworm, the rope was enchanted by a long dead *skorn* exile. Imbued with the beastman's loathing for "soft" races, the rope is a potent weapon and tool, but difficult to control.

Attunement takes 1d4 weeks, except by half-*skorn* who require 1d4 minutes. When invoking any of the rope's powers, those lacking *skorn* blood must make a Will check. If failed, the rope refuses to co-operate, instead causing the user to roll on the *Dark & Dangerous Magic* table. Attunement benefits are as follows:

1. The rope cannot be broken, cut, or burnt. Extremely heavy loads, or creatures with Str 19+ may "stretch" the rope (for

example to break free of it), but will not sever it.

2. Once every week, the user may cause all ropes within 20 ft to snap or untie (no action).



3. Once every 1d4 days, the user may spend an action to animate and command the rope for 1d6 minutes (treat as *Infuse Animus*).
4. Once only, the user may spend an action to transform the rope into a *Purple Worm* (LFG p.210). The worm is ravenous and requires an action and Will check each round to direct it, otherwise it becomes uncontrolled for the duration. The transformation lasts 1d6 x 10 minutes, after which the rope falls dormant for 10d10 years.

### Area 12 - Meditation Room

1d6 *urgot* are in this chamber meditating, hoping to experience a drug induced revelation. The air is thick with a purplish, rancid smelling smoke. Woven mats are spread about the floor, along with ceramic bowls containing purplish powder.

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The bowls contain *Cormorat*, a potent hallucinogen from a rare flower in the *Suurat* Jungle (2d6 x 30 gp worth of doses). If smoked, treat as a pervasive madness for 1d6 hours, with a half hour onset. A character that wishes to resist the drug's effects requires a Con check great success.

The southern wall of this chamber is in danger of collapse, foreshadowed by rocks and scree littering the ground. A character with a pickaxe could cause the wall to crumble if they wish (Str (Athletics) check great success). If successful, a crawl sized tunnel forms between Area 12 and the southeast tunnel adjacent to Area 11 (where the rubble markings are on the map). After passing through the tunnel, a similar Str check may be made to collapse it entirely.



### Area 13 - Trophy Room

This trophy room is adorned with skulls and other tokens from past arena combatants. The items are spread about on small wooden tables, as well as stone carved wall shelves. The items range from

the very old (thousand year old *manticores* skull, worth 2d6 x 50 gp to a collector) to very recent (severed hands of a thuel).

### Area 14 - Hall of Champions

This large hall is lit by the lamplight of 1d6+3 *Urgan* who are eating a meal (raw thuel shanks, and a potent spirit). Four square pillars run down the centre, the faces of which are set with tiled murals depicting legendary battles from the arena (a human spearing a minotaur through the eye, a werewolf tearing the head off of a golden gladiator, a female warrior snaring an ogre in a net, etc).

### Area 15 - Champion's Quarters

The 8 ft *Urgan Champion* named *S'nelgug* (three arms) lairs here in relative luxury; a pillowed bed and blankets, plates of generous flesh for feasting, a barrel of wine, and a full bowl of *Cormorat* (see Area 12). A gilded lantern keeps the area well lit. A locked strongbox holds *S'nelgug's* treasures (Dex (Locks & Traps) to pick the lock, contains 1 x Carry Loot, 1 x Valuables).

**S'nelgug**, AC 15, HD 4 (41 hp), 3 x Claw d8+1, 19: target is cursed and loses 2 *Luck* (no save, once per target only), S18 D13 C18 I7 P9 W12 Ch6, L10, Mv 30 ft. *Boss Monster* with all the usual benefits. Once per combat use action to *Acid Vomit* (10 ft, single target, 6d6 damage, *Luck* (Dex) save for half). When *Staggered*, *S'nelgug* exudes a cloud of noxious spores, causing his attacker (if in melee) to lose 1d4 Str, (*Luck* (Con) save for half). Has the key to his strongbox.

### Area 16 - Holding Cells

These holding cells (three to the north and five to the south) contain various creatures or things. Roll 1d8 to determine what is within (reroll repeats):

1. An empty cell.
2. Empty apart from a threadbare blanket and random piece of gear (roll 1d6: (i)

great sword, (ii) 10 ft chain, (iii) net, (iv) metal pot, (v) shield, (vi) shiv).

3. The corpse of a karok miner (by coincidence just died of a heart attack).
4. *Jobe* (black haired, strong backed tile merchant from *Northgate*; “*I get the Jobe done*”) was taken hostage after becoming separated from his caravan two weeks ago. A surprisingly determined and desperate fighter when his life is on the line.
5. A female thuel warrior, *Fengra* of the *Stone Beaks* (tall, bald shaved head, emaciated, broken left arm, speaks thuel only). *Fengra* is in bad shape and will not survive much longer (1d4 days max).
6. *Grabbok* a *Skorn* raider, somewhat bruised, but ready to murder anyone who enters his cell.
7. *Lorf* the *Ogre*, drugged, barely conscious, but otherwise in good condition.
8. A 12 ft *Giant Serpent* is sleeping here, curled up in a straw nest.

**Jobe**, AC 11, HD 1d6 hp, S14 D10 C10 I10 P10 W15 Ch10 L5, Mv 30 ft.

**Fengra**, AC 12, HD 1, S8 D7 C6 I10 P10 W11 Ch10 L3, Mv 20 ft.

**Grabbok, Skorn**, AC 11, HD 1, Club 1d6+1, 19: the target is clubbed in the head, losing its next action (*Luck* (Will) save resists), S15 D10 C13 I7 P12 W8 Ch8, L4, Mv 30 ft. Rudimentary dark vision, advantage to sense danger/detect scents.

**Lorf, Ogre**, AC 12, HD 4+3, Spiked Club 2d8, 19: special, S19 D8 C15 I6 P7 W8 Ch7, L7, Mv 40 ft. When *Staggered*, an *ogre* enters a murderous rage, gaining a free attack against every

foe within reach. On a 19+ attack roll, the target rolls on the *Injuries & Setbacks* table (*Luck* (Con) save resists). 10 foot reach.

**Giant Serpent**, AC 13, HD 5, Bite 1d8 + poison, 19: special, S19 D16 C13 I3 P10 W12 Ch5 L8, Mv 30 ft. Poison causes 1d6 damage and 1d4 Dex loss (a *Luck* (Con) save resists). On a natural 19-20 attack roll, the target is constricted, rendering it helpless. A trapped victim may spend their action to make an opposed Str check to break free.

### Area 17 - Butchery

Corpses and carcasses hang from ceiling hooks in this makeshift butchery. Knives rest atop bloodstained tables, along with large shanks of meat that are being salted by 1d4 *urgot* labouring here. A large barrel is filled with salt, another with brine. 2d4 stacked crates along the eastern wall contain preserved cuts (5 gp per crate).

### Area 18 - Arena

This 100 ft diameter arena is cracked and worn, stained with the blood of countless combatants and sacrifices to the *Unbidden Lord*. 20 ft above the fighting pit is the tiered amphitheatre (rising 20 ft over 4 oversized steps), and a high eastern balcony 45 ft above the pit.

Iron gates to the north, south and east allow access to the holding cells (Area 16), while the western gate opens to the *Western Catacombs* (Area 20). All of the gates are operated by chain winches. The winches are located on the lower level near the entry tunnels, except for the western gate (its winch is located on the eastern balcony).

The PCs' first trial (along with *Thamond*, whom they must protect) is to fight in the arena against *S'nelgug* (see Area 15) and 1d4+2 *Urgot Gladiators*. The battle is to the death. Before the bout begins, more than two hundred *urgot* pack the amphitheatre, eager to experience the blood letting. The party are lead to the lower level to enter from the southern gate. *S'nelgug* and the

*urgot gladiators* enter from the northern gate. Once the wailing, gnashing, and chittering crowd has gathered, *Emegak* intones a prayer from the eastern balcony, and battle commences!

**Urgot Gladiators**, AC 14 (patchwork armour), HD 3, Great Axe 1d12+1, 19; target dazed and acts last in initiative next round, S15 D13 C16 I7 P9 W13 Ch6, L8, Mv 30 ft. A group of *urgot* may issue a simultaneous howl or chitter once/day, causing creatures within 20 ft to suffer a minor madness (*Luck* (Will) save resists).

Each round of the bout, ask one PC to roll 1d10 for an *Arena Complication*:

1. *S'nelgug* visibly swells with power from some dark force beyond the Veil (his next successful attack causes 20 damage).
2. Someone in the crowd hurls a clay bottle at the PC's head; make a *Luck* (Dex) save or stunned (lose next action).
3. The East Gate opens, and *Lorf the Ogre* (Area 16) comes charging out!
4. The North Gate opens and *Grabbok the Skorn* (Area 16) lopes into the arena, sizing up his closest opponent.
5. The South Gate opens and the *Giant Serpent* (Area 16) slithers out to snap at the closest humanoid!
6. The crowd begin a spine chilling moaning in discordant unison. All humans must make a *Luck* (Will) save or suffer a minor madness.
7. A horn sounds from the high balcony, and 2d6 members of the crowd hurl fire pots into the pit! (determine targets randomly, if missed, use 1d8 for compass scatter direction and 1d3 x 5 ft).
8. The stone beneath the PC's next step depresses, activating a crossbow trap from the closest wall (might strike another combatant if between the PC and the firing port). Target must make a *Luck* (Dex) save or suffer 2d8 damage.
9. Yellow gas issues from the large cracks depicted on the pit map. All creatures within 10 ft must make a *Luck* (Con) save or suffer *Malediction of Lunacy* (but roll the effect every round, the *urgot* are immune).
10. A booming drum sounds from the high balcony as *Emegak* appears and stretches his hands out towards the pit. The four pieces of equipment shown on the pit map (sword, great sword, flail, shield) all animate and attack the closest creature for 2d6 rounds (or until destroyed, treat as *Animated Object*, Companion p.122).

Assuming the PCs prevail, *Emegak* opens the western gate to Area 20. The PCs receive no respite; they must enter the tunnels immediately if they wish to complete trials two, three and four. The *urgot* seal the door behind them.

### Area 19 - Leech Pool

This dark pool is 10 ft deep and connects to Area 21 via a 4 ft wide tunnel at the base of the northwest corner (a swimmer feeling about the walls by hand will find it eventually). A small nest of *Throat Leeches* live in the water (4 inch parasites).

Anyone swimming must make a *Luck* (Dex) save to avoid the little wrigglers entering their mouth, nose and throat. If failed, the leeches feed on PC's gullet, causing 1d4 Str or Con loss (even chance) each day until the attribute reaches half (LFG p.125 for more).

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## Western Catacombs

Sealed off from the *Enmesh*, the western catacombs are home to a number of dangerous monsters (including *Oozes*, *Dorovyr*, and *Blood Roaches* at the least). The tunnels are cold and completely unlit, but not silent. Echoes of distant rustling, skittering, and flapping are common throughout. A damp smell clings to the passages.

### Area 20 – Western Arena Door

The tunnel from the Arena (Area 18) branches out into a maze of winding passages. The sound of flapping and fluttering can be heard from time to time (a Perc (Det) check also picks up a faint hissing). At the GM's option there might be droplet sounds (north western ooze, see Area 22).

### Area 21a – Dorovyr Caverns

1d4+2 *Dorovyr Swarms* are nesting in each of these caverns, hanging upside down from stalactites. There is a 50% chance the swarms are sleeping. If awake, they will be drawn to investigate any noises the party make, but are naturally wary of open flames (inc torches, but not lanterns).

**Dorovyr Swarm**, AC 12, HD 3, Bite 1d8+1, 19: overwhelmed and helpless for 1d3 rounds (*Luck* (Str or Dex) save resists), S5 D14 C6 I3 P14 W10 Ch4, L6, Mv 120 ft flying. *Swarm* rules apply. On a critical the target suffers a toxic tail lash; *Luck* (Con) save or lose 1 Dex.

*Dorovyr*, also known as *flappers*, are 10 inch flesh eaters with wings; bald, bat like mammals that hiss and spit when threatened. From a distance they are often mistaken for ordinary bats (they employ echolocation), but on closer inspection their hideous faces and barbed tails are revealed.

*Dorovyr* attack with overwhelming numbers, something akin to flying piranhas, stripping the flesh from their hapless prey. On a critical, the target is lashed by a *dorovyr's* barbed tail, which secretes a numbing toxin (*Luck* (Con) save or lose 1 point of Dex).

### Area 21 – Dorovyr Colony

A colony of 2d6 *Dorovyr swarms* lair here in the stalactites, above a large, dark pool that connects to Area 19. The *Throat Leeches* living in the waters were carried here by the *flappers* years ago, and feast on their dead.

The rubble to the northeast of the cavern may be cleared away with determined effort (from either side), allowing access to the small chamber west of the Arena (Area 18).



If/when the *roaches* make their assault on the *urgot*, they use decoys to lure the *flappers* north before going through the pool to Area 19.

### Area 22 – Ooze

A *Splinter Ooze* has risen up through cracks in the earth here, and is presently in a state of semi hibernation. The tremors of heavy footfalls within 60 ft will rouse it from its sleep.

**Splinter Ooze**, AC 12, HD 8, Pseudopod 1d10, 19: the ooze swells in size, doubling its HD (max 8), S15 D17 C15 I4 P10 W16 Ch1, L9, Mv 50 ft may climb walls, etc. The ooze makes one pseudopod attack per target within 5 ft (poison based, anti-toxin or similar halves damage). When struck, the ooze splits in half (see below).

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The *splinter ooze* is an 8 ft, flesh absorbing blob of white colouration, with a swift rippling motion. Upon sensing suitable prey, it sprouts whip like pseudopods to attack (one per target within 5 ft), causing 1d10 poison based damage on a hit. A character with anti-toxin or similar suffers half damage.

When struck, a *splinter ooze* divides in half, forming two monsters (halve HD, same attack bonus and damage). It continues splitting in this way until reaching 1 HD segments. A 1 HD segment reduced to zero hp is destroyed (turns black and shrivels up). A segment may spend its action to merge with another segment. Fire and lightning cause a splinter ooze no damage, but disorients them momentarily (lose next turn). Cold damage freezes the ooze solid for 1 round. If struck during this time, they shatter and die.

### Area 23 - Fallen Explorers

Two aged human skeletons lie here in the dirt, yellowed but mostly intact. If inspected, the bones display hundreds of tiny teeth marks (victims of the *dorovyx*). Amongst the remains are a rusted shortsword, a steel shield (pitted but serviceable), a steel case of 10 *cold iron* bolts, a rotted crossbow (breaks on a natural 1-5 attack roll), and 1 x Carry Loot.

### Area 24 - Ziggurat of Belmogg

A low ziggurat (two tiered, about 18 ft tall) occupies the centre of this 70 ft flagstoned square. The 35 ft wide monument is adorned with carved hieroglyphs and sacred scriptures in ancient *Surothi*. Oversized steps provide access to the raised tiers above. An oval shaped mirror, as big as a man, sits atop the second tier.

The ziggurat was enchanted by the priests to separate the chaff from the wheat. A true disciple of *Belmogg* may ascend the steps without pause. Others must make a *Luck* (Con) save to reach the first level, the muscles in their legs growing increasingly heavy as they climb. On a failed save,

the PC loses 1 Str and cannot reach the next level under their own power.

To reach the top tier, a *Luck* (Per) save is required, as the climber is assaulted by an overwhelming attack of vertigo. On a fail, the character loses 1d4 Dex and stumbles about, falling off the lower tier (about 10 ft, 1d6 damage).

At the top is a 7 ft two faced mirror, fashioned of silver and set into the stone. The surface is similar to brushed steel, partially reflective, but the images blurred and distorted. The edges of the mirror are decorated with stars, comets, and constellations, most of which of familiar, but not all (Int (Arcane or Wilderness Lore) check).

As might be expected, the mirror is magical. If two sapient beings stare into the mirror from opposite sides for seven seconds, their minds swap bodies permanently. A *Luck* (will) save resists, but both parties must succeed. Otherwise treat as *Sudden Transmogrification* (may be ended via *Sever Arcanum* or *Purge the Accursed*). A person may not repeat this effect for forty years (some of the ancient priests extended their lives by rehousing themselves in younger bodies).

If a single person who has fought in the arena stares into the mirror for seven seconds, the surface ripples in a strange manner, as if something is disturbing it from the other side. The character restores 1 *Luck*, and is now ready to receive a reading from *Emegak*.

If the character continues to stare into the mirror, a hand like indentation (palm forward, fingers outstretched) pushes out of the surface just slightly. The hand is bigger than the mirror, with three uneven, multijointed fingers, one ending in a claw. If the PC touches the hand, they are “blessed” by a power beyond the Veil. Each effect occurs once only, is permanent, and cannot be reversed by mortal magic. Roll 1d10:

1. *Blood of My Blood*: If the PC dies, a horrible monster bursts from their corpse (treat as entry 11 on the DDM table).
2. *Ineffable*: Roll on the *Holgrim's Chest* table (Companion p.99).
3. *Overstepped*: Roll on the *Divine Rebuke* table.
4. *Dark Disturbance*: Roll on the DDM table.
5. *Shining One*: The PC naturally glows when in complete darkness; very dimly, but enough to see a few feet ahead (disadv on sight checks, 33% miss chance, dispels magical darkness). The glow cannot be controlled and does not occur if the PC is at zero hp. The first time the PC is *Staggered* in a combat, they may spend a *Reroll* die to flash brightly, blinding one melee enemy until the end of the target's next turn (no save).
6. *Bender of Fate*: The PC increases their maximum *Luck* by 1.
7. *Bauble*: The hand passes the PC a permanent magical item through the mirror (25% *Minor Charm*, 75% random *Major Item*).
8. *Lost Lore*: The PC learns a random 1st level spell they may cast once per adventure. Their DDM tally begins at 3 instead of 1.
9. *Tainted Boon*: Gain 2 points to any one attribute of the player's choosing (max 19). Small children that come within 30 ft of the PC inexplicably recoil from them for just a moment.

10. *Void Soul*: The PC gains 50% magic resistance (always operating, even against beneficial effects).

### Area 25 - Haunted Pool

In ages past, many an arena coward was dismembered and cast into this dark pool to die in abject shame. The waters are now cursed, haunted by a malignant spirit; a *Drowned Soul* that remembers nothing and knows only blind hatred for the living.

Similar to *wraiths*, a *Drowned Soul* may shift between physical and *Incorporeal* forms. If given the opportunity, it will attempt to drag an adventurer to the bottom of the waters and drown them. The *Drowned Soul* cannot leave the confines of Area 25 (and connecting tunnel).

**Drowned Soul**, AC 14, HD 6+4, Claw 1d12 + special, 19: all active light sources within 60 ft are extinguished as if soaked with water, and cannot be relit until dried, S- D17 C- I10 P10 W13 Ch6, L10, Mv 30. *Undead* and *Incorporeal*. May take physical form for short periods (no action, but painful, gains Str 14, Con 18). On a claw attack (ghostly or real) the target's maximum hp is reduced by half the damage suffered (returns in 2d4 months, or by being doused in *holy water*).

### Area 26, a, b & c - Inner Sanctum

The rusting iron door to this room is locked (the key is lost, a Dex (Traps & Locks) check with a -2 penalty opens it). Beyond is a 15 ft by 12 ft chamber with a 10 ft ceiling. The walls are finely plastered, stamped with long and intricate *Surothi* prayers to otherworldly entities. Faded meditation mats lie on the floor, crumbling to dust if set upon.

26a includes a circular iron table, surrounded by six iron chairs. Atop the table is the dusty debris of disintegrated books and maps. If the inch thick layer of dust is removed, a single scroll remains beneath (yellowed but in remarkably good condition; 1 x Scroll).

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26b may be accessed via a secret door (Perc (Det) check to notice, the door opens by sliding it up into the ceiling where it clicks into place. Pressing it again releases it down slowly via weighted chain). Within is a small chamber lined with lead. A wooden table has collapsed, but 1 x Valuables, 1 x Trinkets & Curios, and an *adamantine* breastplate remain behind (may be used as medium armour, or part of heavy armour).

The door to 26c is locked (Dex (Traps & Locks) check to open). The small cave beyond contains a humanoid skeleton, its leg encased in a *cold iron* manacle attached to the wall. An Int (Wilderness Lore) check confirms the skeleton is not human. An Int (Arcane Lore) check reveals the truth; *Hag* bones are an important ingredient in certain potions and admixtures, worth 2d6 x 100 gp to the right buyer.

### Area 27 - Blood Roach Nest

See Area 29.

### Area 28 - Blood Roach Graveyard

A large 4 ft high, 8 ft wide earthen mound with a hardened, crust like surface occupies the centre of this cavern. Close inspection reveals crude scratchings, akin to some form of rudimentary hieroglyphs in uneven, diverging lines. The *roach* markings record some detail of their buried dead, and might suggest to the adventurers that they are

sapient. Numerous sections of the floor are churned; digging down reveals the decaying bodies (shallow) and old bones (deeper) of dead *roaches*.

When the PCs visit here, there is a 50% chance of a *roach* hiding behind the mound, trying to keep out of sight (it was inscribing something with its claws until suddenly disturbed).

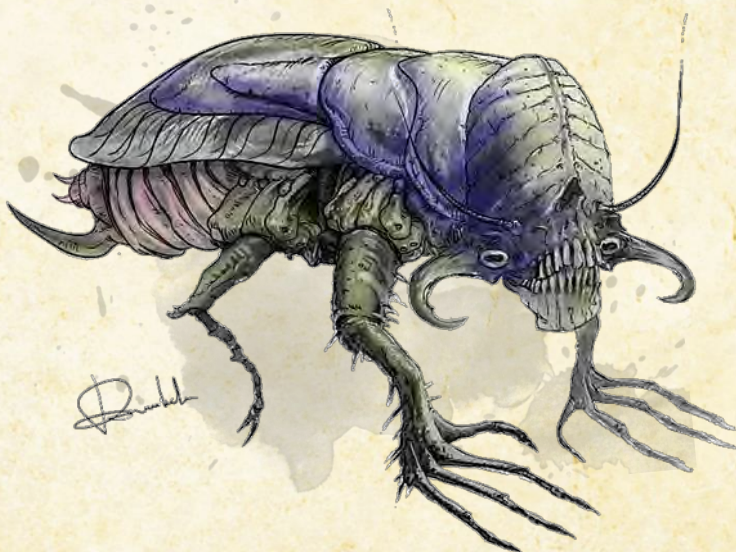
### Area 29 - Blood Roach Nests

The cavern in Area 27, and the eastern and western caverns in Area 29 (the largest about 25 ft wide, with a 50 ft ceiling) contain 2d6 *Blood Roaches*. The central cavern of Area 29 contains the *Roach Queen*.

Also known as *scrabblers*, *blood roaches* are 5 ft carapaced plasma drinkers, with silk shooting spinnerets and human like forelimbs. Gripping prey with their teeth and claws, the insects employ a stabbing tongue proboscis to drain their victim's vital juices. *Blood roaches* possess an alienesque sapience and rudimentary psionics; demonstrating primitive language, social rites, and lore keeping. They gather in nests, presided over by an egg laying queen (9 ft long, with four claws instead of two).

If the party has been loud, most of the *scrabblers* are hiding in shallow burrows (the entrances concealed with silk hardened doors, similar to a trap door spider; Perc (Det) check at disadvantage to spot), and one or two on the ceiling (outside of ordinary 30 ft torch range), ready to spring an ambush. If the party surprise them, most of *roaches* are moving about or resting in their burrows, gorging on two foot worms or clicking to each other (with their teeth, or making a deep thrumming by vibrating their skull plates).

The raised mounds on the map appear freshly piled, with strands of silk binding them together. Inside are the preserved corpses of giant worms, *flappers*, *thuels*, *skorn*, and other juicy creatures from above and below ground (the *roaches* access the surface via Area 33, generally at night).





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If the larders are emptied, there is a 50% chance of human remains with 1 x Carry Loot (75%) or 1 x Trinkets & Curios (25%). If the queen is defeated, 2d6 eggs are buried nearby (the embryos die without the queen, but the corpses are worth 50 gp each to a collector).

Assuming the party take one of the *roaches* alive for *Emegak's* ritual, the queen rounds up any survivors to make a counter attack via Area 19.

**Blood Roach**, AC 12, HD 4, Bite 1d6 and Horn 1d8 plus *Silk Grapple* (special) 19: psionic thrumming; enemies within 5 ft must make a *Luck* (Will) save or suffer a *Head Injury* (*Injuries & Setbacks* table) S10 D14 C11 I4 P13 W13 Ch8, L7, Mv 40 ft inc up walls, ceiling, etc. As part of an attack action its spinnerets may fire a silk grapple line: single target, range 60 ft, *Luck* (Dex) save or entangled. An entangled target has a -2 penalty to hit, and may be pulled up to 30 ft each round (Str contest vs Str 16 to break free on target's turn, no action). A PC reduced to zero hp must be recovered from a *roach* in one round or they die (proboscis blood drain).

**Roach Queen**, AC 13, HD 9 (76 hp), 4 x Claw 1d12 plus *Silk Grapple* (special) 19: psionic thrumming; enemies within 15 ft suffer a *Head Injury* (*Injuries & Setbacks* table), S14 D13 C15 I5 P13 W16 Ch11, L12, Mv 40 ft inc walls, ceiling, etc. *Boss Monster* with all the usual benefits. As *Blood Roach*, but entangle up to 120 ft and Str 20.

### Area 30 - Drop Wall

This 25 ft wide, 150 ft long hall has a vertical indentation in the ground at about the mid point. Looking at the 15 ft ceilings reveals a raised iron wall (operated by chains and winches hidden behind the stonework).

A single iron faceplate with a large keyhole is set into the northern wall. Turning the oversized key from Area 11 in the lock triggers the mechanism, slowly lowering or raising the wall (moves 1 ft per

round). PCs without the key might be able to manipulate the lock to work without it (Dex (Traps & Locks) check at a -3 penalty).

### Area 31 - Giant Centipede Nest

2d12 *Giant Centipedes* have a nest here beneath a rocky outcropping on the northern wall. They crawl about in a large, oval shaped ball, eating their latest kill (a pasty white giant worm).

The northeastern cavern contains the bones of past meals, as well as a dug out hole containing 4d6 eggs (Int (Wilderness Lore) check suggests they are worth 10 gp each to a collector).

**Giant Centipede**, AC 13, HD 2, Bite 1d4 and Stinger (*Luck* (Con) save or suffer 1 Dex loss), 19: extra strong dose of poison requiring two *Luck* saves instead of one, S14 D14 C10 I1 P10 W10 Ch2, L5, Mv 30 ft. An adventurer has a 25% chance of harvesting one dose of poison from a dead *centipede*.

### Area 32 - Guard Post

The rusting iron doors to these two chambers are locked (Dex (Traps & Locks) check to open). Within the first room are decaying chairs, tables, and crates. Within the remains are 2d6 weapons (iron maces and hammers).

The southern door is also locked. The room beyond contains three suits of ancient iron scale armour, fallen from rotten wooden dummies. Two metal shields with white bridge motifs are hung on the wall (pitted but functional).

### Area 33 - Greater Tunnels

This passage quickly diverges into many winding branches, some of which lead to the surface, others deep beneath the earth. The various denizens of the western catacombs use the tunnels to hunt both above and below ground.

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## Aftermath

Assuming the party pass the Four Trials and repel (or avoid) the *roach* assault, *Emegak* provides the prophesy or information desired.

If *Maud* is involved and still alive, the PCs receive double their promised reward, and are lauded in merchant circles for their prowess. If *Maud* dies, word eventually spreads around Dol-Karok's merchant quarter, sullyng the party's reputation for a short period. If *Maud* lives but the prophesy is unable to be obtained, the old fool is disappointed but thankful to be alive, and pays the party their agreed fee regardless.

## Special Thanks

Finally, a very special thank you to cartographer **Rafal Zatwarnicki** of **New Horizons** for very

*generously* allowing us to use his amazing map for this adventure! I hope folks have as much fun exploring the dungeon as we had populating it! :D For more incredible maps like these, be sure to join **New Horizon's Patreon** for the absolute bargain price of *\$1 per month!* I guarantee you won't regret it 😊

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*Note: I made some very minor cosmetic adjustments to the map (removed a few doors, moved the mirror icon), to match up with the adventure as it came together.*



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# WINTERWOLD



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## WINTERWOLD

For better or worse, this is one of those adventures that imposes itself on party whether they like it or not; the companions are simply in the wrong place at the wrong time. Once inside *Winterwold's* borders, the PCs will have to find a way to deal with the crisis as best they can. The *undead* don't care how the adventurers arrived, or where they came from. They just want to eat them.

### House of the Undying

It is said that the last of the elves died in the Second Age, eradicated by the serpentmen in their genocidal war against the fey. Whilst it is true that no living elf remains in the Midlands, that is not to say they are without presence; for not all who died deigned to remain so.

*Gilchanar Laeril*, long exiled by the *Elf Queen Ninsorva* for experiments calculated to restore the animus in dead flesh, was never one to bow to fate. As the elves fell in great numbers, it became clear to the apostate that the only means of winning the war against the cursed *Aregass* would be to turn the dead against them. And so it was in *Winterwold*, *Laeril's* secret refuge, that the sorcerer perfected his potent but forbidden rites, transforming large numbers of fallen into risen avengers.

But magic is an unforgiving mistress. The infusions took a toll far greater than *Laeril* had bargained for, siphoning his own vital energies until he too joined the ranks of the unliving to finish his crucial work.

Despite the necromancer's sacrifice, the undead proved too little too late; and in time there were no living elves left to defend. Gripped in ever tightening grief and madness, *Laeril* sealed *Winterwold* against the outside world, binding himself and the last unliving elves into stasis.



### Just Lucky I Guess

*Laeril's* abjuration has kept the grove hidden and in stasis for millennia, causing travellers to circle by and forget any trace of its existence. But the magic has a dual purpose; in addition to confounding humans, it traps reptile kin inside *Winterwold's* borders, then awakens the occupants to feed upon them in grisly retribution.

When this adventure begins, the party happen to be passing by the outpost when a band of *serpentmen* are entering from the opposite side. This highly unfortunate coincidence causes both parties to be trapped within *Laeril's* barrier, with only a short time to decipher the mystery of their containment, and perhaps find a way out. Whilst not apparent at first, time will be of the essence as more and more undead wake from the crypts beneath the necromancer's sanctuary.

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## Forest Encounters

The GM is free to drop *Winterwold* into any forest or woodland of their choosing, although remote locations would be more consistent with the site's original purpose. The Midland's *Forest of Drelnor* or *Wistwood* would certainly suffice.

The GM decides how many days pass before the party stumbles upon the outpost (or alternatively 2d6 days). Each day of travel requires a roll on the *Overland Events* table (LFG p.131), or alternatively there is a 30% chance of a random encounter each day. If an encounter occurs, roll 1d10:

1. Thundering feet foreshadow two immense, dark coloured beasts breaking out of the trees: a bloody beaked *Owlbear* and roaring *Hookfurgle!* The two monsters are clearly in the midst of a savage melee and bleeding from several cuts. There is a 50% chance the creatures view the party as further challenges to their territory, and also attack them. A character with the Animal Lore skill might know the right postures to avoid confrontation.
2. A giant serpent skin, some 17 ft long, is wound through the limbs of a nearby tree. A 10 HD *Giant Serpent* with *Off Turn Attacks* is nearby, and will strike from the trees later that night.
3. Distant sorcery has inadvertently summoned cursed weather, causing a diseased rain to fall for several hours. A Perc (Detection) or Perc (Wilderness Lore) test notices the water is tinged with yellowed, phlegm like specks. A *Luck* (Con) save is required to avoid a random disease (with advantage, if the PCs take precautions to minimise contact).

4. A pack of 4d6 wolves begin tracking the party, following from a distance. The beasts are hungry but will not attack unless one of the PCs is already wounded. There is a 50% chance each night the wolves disappear by dawn, switching to easier prey. If the party provides them with food, they are suspicious, but will take it with minimal convincing. If so, at the GM's option, the pack will turn up at some later point in the adventure (or later adventure in the same forest) to help the party.
5. A solitary wolf begins following the party, keeping to distant undergrowth and dark shadows (disadvantage on Perc checks to spot it). The beast is a relatively new *Werewolf*, waiting for an opportune time to launch an attack. If the PCs approach it, it howls, as if summoning others to its side, then flees (a ruse; the creature is a lone wolf, it killed its non lycan packmates during the last full moon).



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6. As night falls, panicked bleating can be heard in the trees ahead, until suddenly cut off. The long banished thuel sorcerer *Slegmod* is in the midst of performing a 1d4 hour blood ritual, offering a goat's corpse to *Nen'thopargaa of the Five Shands*. If the intricate ceremony is interrupted, several horrible creatures break through the Veil to attack! (Treat as DDM entry 11, but 2d4 creatures instead of 1).

7. A band of capricious *Forest Sprites* have taken an interest in the blundering big folk and constructed a trap for them: a spider silk trip wire, connecting to a hornet's nest in the high branches. A *Luck* (Perc) save at disadvantage is required to avoid the wire, else the unfortunate PC is struck by the falling nest and enveloped by the angry swarm! (1 hp damage, and 1d2 Dex loss due to painful swelling). After the commotion has settled, high pitched, mocking laughter can be heard from high in the trees (2d6 sprites).



8. 2d6 *Ogres* are singing a war chant, their spirits high on bloodlust after having recently defeated a *skorn* hunting party. A few *ogres* are gnawing on some tasty limbs, while another is dragging a large sack (an unconscious *skorn* female; a snack for later).

9. 1d6+2 *Giant Worker Ants* are scavenging nearby, the clicking of their mandibles audible over the usual forest sounds. If the party have any smaller animals they attempt to take one each and leave (or if there are horses, one horse). Fighting causes 2d4 *Giant Solider Ants* to appear in 1d6 x 10 seconds. The hive is quite distant, some 2d6 hours away.

10. A colossal oak tree with a man size hollow is nearby. Tinkling sounds can be heard emanating from within, and upon closer inspection, a woven ladder can be seen, dropping down into the earth beneath the tree.



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## Passing Through the Ward

*Laeril's* ward is invisible to normal vision and all magical divinations other than *Wodon's Eye*. The barrier is a circular dome about 1 inch thick, covering most of the mapped area. Any sentient creatures observing from the outside see only thick forest, and thoughts of entering are moulded into circumnavigating instead.

The only exception is with respect to sapient reptile kin; *Serpentmen*, *Iguaato*, *Dracor*, and so on. For these creatures, the barrier allows entry, then traps them inside.

For the purposes of this adventure, the PCs happen to be around the southern Area 1 at the same time a party of *serpentmen* move through the north western forest. Whilst this is happening, the barrier is briefly suspended, felt as a gentle ripple in the earth (Perc (Detection) check at disadvantage to notice) allowing both parties to enter before becoming trapped. Within a minute the forest illusion lifts from the travellers' minds, and the hidden settlement is revealed.

Those trapped inside find that leaving the mapped area is impossible. The invisible dome dims sunlight within, and quietens all sounds from outside. Most tellingly, it is physically impossible for anything to move through the barrier (excluding the river and unintelligent fish, etc). If caught in the river, the circular barrier shunts swimmers and rafts etc off to the eastern bank.

### Destroying the Barrier

There are three ways to destroy or suspend the barrier long enough to escape *Winterwold* (the barrier is otherwise indestructible short of a *Forbidden Wish*).

1. If *Laeril* is destroyed, so is the barrier (see Area 12 and *Aftermath*).
2. If the *Serpentmen* are killed, the barrier malfunctions and is lifted for 1d4 hours,

allowing the party to make a hasty exit (see *Enclave Encounters* and *Aftermath*).

3. Destroying the *Tree of Awakening* with the oil barrels from Area 5 destroys the barrier (see Area 3 and *Aftermath*).

If the PCs somehow manage to avoid entering *Winterwold* they bypass this adventure, and may continue on to wherever it was they were going!

## Winterwold

The elven enclave of *Winterwold* has stood for thousands of years, more or less preserved by *Laeril's* magical dome. The buildings are primarily wood, with leaf, tree and moon themes, as well as the *Laeril* family crest (a white tree fashioned of tiny bones, set upon a yellowed curtain). The sorcerer and his extended family of forty or so sheltered here during the war (see Area 7).

Whilst the necromancer's exclusory ward continues to operate strongly, the preserving effect has grown increasingly unstable over time. All magic use in *Winterwold* increases the user's DDM tally by 2 instead of 1. The buildings still stand, but centuries of weather have left them in varying states of disrepair (washed out colours, warping wood, leaky roofs, stuck doors, etc).

Immediately apparent is the complete lack of inhabitants. Apart from surrounding forest sounds (including the river *Belsuva*, which is fast flowing and loud), *Winterwold* is seemingly long abandoned. Nothing stirs but the leaves, dancing to the jig of the forest winds.

### Enclave Encounters

As the PCs explore the outpost, the *serpentmen* are also scouting the area, and the *undead* gradually awakening in Area 11. As time moves on, the party will encounter ever increasing numbers of *undead*, and eventually face either the *serpentmen* or *Laeril* (or both). If either are defeated, the barrier will fail, allowing the PCs a chance to escape (see *Aftermath*).

Roll 1d6 on the following table as the adventurers visit each numbered location, and/or every half hour or other time interval the GM determines. Add 1 to the roll for each location visited or time interval passed.

- 1-3 Strong winds cause the trees to bend and the old buildings to creak, but nothing else seems to stir.
4. A faint snarling can be heard from the western outpost (*flesh feasters* waking from stasis, and venturing out).
5. An *Animus Husk* is thrashing about nearby, caught on a low tree branch it accidentally impaled itself on. It can't get free without help.
6. A series of rasping barks reverberates through the complex 1d4 minutes before 2d6+3 *Ghoul Hounds* thunder around a corner to attack the party!

**Ghoul Hound**, AC 14, HD 3, Bite 2d4+1 + paralysis, 19: 1d4 *flesh feasters* charge from nearby cover to attack! S17 D14 C18 I2 P12 W- Ch4, L6, 60 ft. *Ghoul hounds* are *Undead*. Their bite causes magical paralysis for 1d6 x 10 minutes (*Luck* (Con) save resists).

7. 2d6 *Flesh Feasters* come running into view, mouths open wide, their arms flailing behind them as they sprint towards the party! If this encounter occurs again, add 1d6 *Flesh Feasters*.
8. 2d6 *Ghouls* appear from a neighbouring building or forest, loping across the grounds in search of living things to devour. They have not spotted the party yet, but will do any moment if the PCs don't take action immediately. If this encounter occurs again, add 1d6 *Ghouls*.



9. 5d6 *Flesh Feasters* burst from nearby cover, snarling viciously as they drive towards the adventurers, jaws stretched to gorge on their flesh! If this encounter occurs again, add 1d6 *Flesh Feasters*.
10. 2d6 *Shadow Fey* glide from between the trees or under the door of a building, unerringly moving straight toward the adventurers... If this encounter occurs again, add 1d6 *Shadow Fey*.
11. 2d6 *Serpentmen Ssurlocs* (hybrid) and 1 *Razkarrt* (noble caste, sorcerer) can be seen nearby, perhaps moving between distant trees or around another building (50%) or fighting off a small band of *Flesh Feasters* (50%). They have not noticed the party as yet.

**Ssurloc**, AC 16, HD 6+3, Bite 1d6 + Poison or Spear 1d6+3 + Poison, 19: tail whip 1d8 and knocked prone, S18 D16 C14 I10 P11 W13 Ch10, L8, Mv 40 ft. *Ssurloc* poison causes 1d6 damage and 1 Dex loss (*Luck* (Con) save resists).

The scaled ones are led by the cruel sorceress *Nepher'Aat*; an arrogant and skilled magician of many years. *Nepher'Aat* loathes the *Tah Krii* (fire



monkeys, aka humans) like all her kin, but might in desperate circumstances be persuaded to join with them to stave off the *undead* (she speaks some common, and the *Serpentmen* tongue). At least until they figure out a way to escape.

**Nepher'Aat, Razkarrt**, AC 18, HD 9+4 (48 hp), *Magic Staff* 2d6 + special, 19: the *Razkarrt* unleashes a potent charm effect, *Luck* (Will) save or *Malediction of Lunacy*, S12 D19 C14 I18 P16 W18 Ch14, L10, Mv 30 ft. *Nepher'Aat* has *Major Exploit Protection* and *Stronger Luck*. She may spend an action to shift between human, noble and hybrid forms. May choose from the following spells five times per encounter (8<sup>th</sup> level): *Gaze of Beguilement*, *Fusing of Flesh*, *Pierce the Veil*, *Mantle of Many Faces*, *Arcane Aegis*, *None Shall Pass*, *Inescapable Unmasking*, *Waking Dream*, *Bestial Communion*, *Nightcrawler's Boon*, *Spectral Transfixion*, *Channel Lightning*, *Gift of the Fiery Furnace*, *Riddle of Bones*, *Soothing Edict*, *Wall of the White Wastes*.

The *Razkarrt* has studied the barrier and understands it is linked to them. *Nepher'Aat* already tried killing one of her *Ssurlocs* to no effect, but suspects the truth (that all of the scaled folk must die before the ward will lift - clearly a pathetic attempt by the *Sithru* (old rot; aka elves) to exact a sliver of revenge against them).

An Int (General Lore) check at disadvantage recalls the serpentmen wars, and the extinction of the fey. *Pierce the Veil* reveals a barely perceivable link between the serpentmen and the barrier; a faint synchronizing of auras suggestive of connection. In addition, if a situation arises in which the undead may choose between attacking humans or serpentmen, they always target the reptiles first (perhaps even breaking off from attacking humans to assault the scaled folk). The above might provide some inkling as to what is going on.

The sorceress won't volunteer her suspicions to the PCs under any circumstances, but will watch them carefully for signs that they might already know.

Any bargain with the PCs will be temporary at best. The *serpentmen* race remains in hiding deep in the *Suurat Jungle*, and it is far too early to reveal themselves to the wider world.

*Nepher'Aat's Staff* requires two hands, has a 10 ft reach, and causes 2d6 damage on a hit. The staff is enchanted and allows the user to spend a point of *Luck* to paralyse the target for 2d6 rounds (*Luck* (Con) save resists). This effect may be used twice per 24 hours.

12. On a 12+, *Laeril* (Area 12) appears from around a nearby building, corner or copse of trees, running towards the PCs at unnatural speed. The PCs are not the *serpentmen* he expected to reap vengeance upon... but he will gladly drink their blood just the same.



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## Elven Trinkets

As the party investigates *Winterwold* and its surrounds, the GM might substitute a 1d12 roll on the following table instead of the usual LFG *Carry Loot* or *Trinkets & Curios* tables:

1. A bronze dagger with a T-Rex handled motif (8 gp).
2. A 60 ft coil of elven rope (imposes a -2 penalty on checks to break it, and weighs only a third of silk rope).
3. A life sized hummingbird carved from a piece of fine willow (34 gp).
4. A pair of elven made leather boots, strong and supple, with silver tracings on the heels. When attempting to move silently, a user unskilled in stealth gains access to their *Reroll Pool*. A skilled user may access their *Reroll Pool* up to twice (78 gp).
5. An elven cloak; dark green, almost black cloth with a high collar and intricate embroidery. When attempting to hide, a user unskilled in stealth gains access to their *Reroll Pool*. A skilled user may access their *Reroll Pool* up to twice (244 gp).
6. A rough cut, bright yellow gemstone of unknown species. If exposed to the sun during the day, the stone glows dimly in the dark (weaker than a candle). The next time the user is struck by an *undead* attack with a drain effect, the drain is negated, and the stone shatters (90 gp).
7. A waterproof satchel contains a series of unbound pages detailing the last days of *Winterwold*. The account is amateurish, perhaps written by a child, but clearly conveys the terror and despair of residents as *Laeril* fell into madness. The last entry indicates *Laeril* has a plan to raise more immortal guardians, but just how is unclear (800 gp to the right collector).
8. A pair of green saplings with curious purple veins growing in a small terracotta pot. An Int (Wilderness Lore) check great success identifies them as the rare *Violet Irifass* plant. Once grown, its flowers may be turned into a tonic that boosts memory and resists dementia (66 gp).
9. An old elven lute with many wonderful etchings of flying pteranodons, clouds, rivers and trees (40 gp). Still playable but needs a tuning.
10. A leather skull cap made of grey brown, noduled dinosaur hide (22 gp).
11. A circular bronze shield with a studded rim in good repair (24 gp).
12. A mummified raptor claw with a strap to hang from one's belt strap (10 gp).



# WINTERWOLD



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## Numbered Locations

### Area 1 – Sentry Post

This arched wooden outpost is split and sagging, the front door swollen into the frame (Str check to open). A number of arrow slits cover each wall. The interior is mostly dark but a few sunbeams filter through the damaged roof.

Inside are 2d6 elves who were transformed into *Flesh Feasters*, a zombie variant. The *feasters* are initially motionless but awaken if living creatures come within 60 ft. They are unable to make sense of the stuck door, and will instead bite at the arrow slits, snarling horribly.

**Flesh Feaster**, AC 11, HD 2+2, Bite 1d6+2 + infection, 19: special, S15 D10 C14 I2 P12 W-Ch-L5, Mv 30 ft. On a natural 19, another *flesh feaster* appears from nearby (or reanimates)! Immune to missile fire other than head shots (Major Exploit) which kill them instantly. Anyone bitten must make a *Luck* (Con) save at the end of the combat or transform into a *flesh feaster* in 2d4 hours (*Purge the Accursed*, or treatment with the rare *Desert Moon* flower within 2d6 days reverses the effect). An adventurer reduced to zero hp automatically fails the *Luck* save.

Unlike ordinary zombies *Flesh feasters* are fast and aggressive, driven by an overpowering compulsion to eat living flesh. They possess only the most basic animal intelligence, discarding weapons or tools to run at targets head first, jaws gaping wide.

If the *feasters* are cleared out, the sentry post contains 1 x Carry Loot, 1d6 swords, and 1d6+3 short bows (10 arrows each). To the north is a 90 ft cliff, with carved steps ascending to the settlement proper.

### Area 2 – River Bridges

The northern and southern bridges are fashioned of stone and in good repair, wide enough for several people to stand abreast. The river *Belsuva* (in ancient elven) is powerful and loud, coursing

through the settlement to the south. Falling from a waterfall requires a *Luck* save to avoid being reduced to zero hp (dashed on rocks hidden in the depths, if successful 1d12 damage from being knocked about instead).

### Area 3 – Tree of Awakening

A towering 50 ft oak tree looms over this pathed area, surrounded by eight evenly spaced gazebos. The tree is leafless and covered in a white, chalk like substance (the tree is made of it; with each raising of the dead, the tree “grows” a little larger). Scraping away the chalk reveals a hard, bone like structure beneath (cutting a branch is like cutting through ancient bone).

The bone tree is part of *Laeril's* raising ritual and radiates necromantic energy if examined with *Pierce the Veil*. Using any kind of magic here adds 3 to the caster's DDM tally. Whilst limbs may be broken etc, the trunk is impervious to weapons but is susceptible to a very large and ongoing conflagration. Using all of the oil barrels in Area 5 will eventually cause the trunk to burn, destroying it in 2d6 x 10 minutes (see *Aftermath*).

The wooden gazebos are starting to rot, and contain piled elven corpses (2d6 per gazebo). The bodies were part way through the raising ritual (which takes several days) when the necromancer placed the settlement into stasis. The dead are a mix of civilians and soldiers (according to their dress, they are unarmed). The vast majority of the civilians had their throat cut, but the soldiers appear to have died in battle.

### Area 4 – Corpse Sheds

These two dilapidated buildings were once domiciles but were converted into corpse sheds during *Laeril's* efforts to mobilize as many fallen as possible. Inside the larger building are 5d10+50 bodies, and in the smaller 5d6+20. The bodies are laid out on the ground, on mildewed couches, etc, in various states of decay (some seem as if they died only today, whilst others are skeletal). Similar to Area 3 there is a mix of civilians and soldiers.

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Standing to attention inside the entry hall and large common room are 2d6 *Animus Husks*. These elf zombie variants are charged with guarding the bodies and animate only if attacked or the bodies are damaged in some way.

**Animus Husk**, AC 11, HD 2+2, Bite or Claw 1d8, 19: special, S15 D10 C14 I- P12 W- Ch- L5, Mv 20 ft. Immune to missile fire. On a natural 19, an animated claw drops from the rafters to attack! When reduced to zero hp, an *Animus Husk*'s clawed arms and head tear free of the body and continue to attack (same AC, crawling or rolling speed 20 ft). A single melee hit on a mobile appendage destroys it. An adventurer reduced to zero hp must be recovered from a *husk* in one round or be torn apart.

*Animus Husks* are lifeless cadavers given motion by dark magic. They move in a jerky, unnatural manner, similar to ordinary zombies, but their limbs and head continue to attack even when the torso is destroyed. *Husks* are mindless in their assault, and will pound or scratch on doors rather



than open them with the handle, etc. They dismember a fallen victim before moving onto the next target. If searched top to bottom, each building contains 1 x Carry Loot and 1 x Elven Trinket.

### Area 5 - Supplies

These two buildings contain supplies for the outpost; sacks of grain, crates of cloth, etc, as well as 2d6+6 barrels of oil (see Area 3). The goods are in relatively good condition, well preserved by *Laeril's* abjuration. There are 1d6+3 *Flesh Feasters* hibernating inside in separate rooms. They quickly awaken if any PCs enter the buildings.

### Area 6 - Carpentry Hall

This old carpentry hall is particularly well crafted, with many intricate embellishments around the doorframes and pillars. Inside are half finished doors, mantles, and artworks of graceful elf warriors, soaring pteranodons, and lithe fey hounds. Woodworking tools (including 2d6 axes), glue and other supplies are scattered about on the many work tables.

3d6 elven *Ghouls* are stirring in the upper levels of the hall, swiftly reanimating if PCs make themselves known in some way (granting the *ghouls* a Perception check). The ghouls are ravenously hungry and will swarm the PCs as fast as they are able.

**Ghoul**, AC 13, HD 3, Claw 1d6+1 and Bite 1d4, 19: the target is subject to the equivalent of a *Incantation of Exhaustion* for 1d6 rounds (*Luck* (Con) save resists), S16 D13 C12 I10 P13 W14 Ch8, L6, Mv 40 ft. *Ghouls* are *Undead* with the usual benefits (LFG p.183). Their touch magically paralyzes a victim for 1d6 x 10 minutes (*Luck* (Con) save resists).

If the upper level is searched, a locked strongbox contains 1 x Carry Loot and 1 x Elven Trinket (requires a Dex (Traps & Locks) check to open).

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### Area 7 - Domiciles

The north western domiciles held the last of the *Laeril* family, some 4d6+20 individuals transformed into undead terrors like everyone else (in this instance, *Flesh Feasters*). The monsters awaken if anyone dares to enter, descending from various bedrooms and common areas. Searching the two buildings garners 1 x Carry Loot and 1 x Valuables.

### Area 8 - Chapel

This bronze domed chapel venerates two *Unseelie* spirits; the *Bruhga of Still Dreams*, and the *Exarg of Barren Skies*. An Int (Religious Lore) check at disadvantage recalls the pair are agents of unremitting hatred and retribution against *Rin Domû* (non fey). As is elven custom, the spirits themselves are not depicted in any direct manner, instead referenced by abstruse symbology (birds falling from the sky with broken wings, a triceratops trampling the moon, etc).

The main prayer room is decorated with wood panelling, bronze prayer wheels, and a living altar of shaped oak (still sprouting small green shoots). Humans entering here feel an immediate unease, but there are no undead to be found. Anyone defiling the temple must make a *Luck* save or immediately roll on the *Divine Rebuke* table. Looting the chapel turns up several valuable offerings (2 x Valuables, and a blessed seed in a silk pouch (if eaten, treat as a random Potion).

Making a heartfelt prayer or valuable offering to the gods might just draw the attention of a curious spirit. On a *Luck* (Cha) save, the character finds one weapon of their choosing glows with momentary radiance (permanently gains the equivalent of the *cold iron* property, even if it already has other special metal properties).

### Area 9 - Pool of the Fading Sun

This area contains a huge tiled gazebo (white and orange, with a fading sun motif) that covers a circular pool filled with opaque grey water. If tested the pool proves to be a uniform nine feet

deep. Mindless undead that fall in will likely become trapped (at least for a time, until there are so many inside that they climb up each other to escape). Alternatively, desperate PCs might be able to hide beneath the waters.

### Area 10 - Barracks

These two domiciles were converted to barracks during the *serpentman* war. Prior to stasis, the remaining guards were transformed into *Shadow Fey*. The undead have no memory of their former lives, only an insatiable hunger for the life spark of the living.

Approaching either building or climbing the northern cliff steps summons the 2d6 *Shadow Fey*, which glide along the ground and/or up the cliff walls to attack!

**Shadow Fey**, AC 12, HD 4, Touch 1d6+1 + Str drain 19: the target's weapon or armour (50%) is transformed into shadow (*Luck* save resists), S-D16 C-I10 P13 W10 Ch7, L7, Mv 40 ft inc walls, ceiling, etc. *Shadow Fey* are immune to non magical weapons other than *cold iron* and fire (torches cause them 1d6 damage). On a hit, the target loses 1 Str. Targets reduced to zero Str are slain (50% chance rising as *shades*).

Searching the barracks reveals 2d6 swords, 2d6 shorts bows (10 arrows each), 3 shields, a suit of *nithral* chainmail, 4 fire pots, and 2 x Carry Loot.

### Area 11 - House of the Undying

The largest and most decrepit building in the complex is *Laeril's* sprawling manor. The residence is two storey, with multiple bedrooms, sitting rooms and so on, appointed with what were once rich adornments, but the tapestries and paintings are long decayed. Nevertheless, precious vases, statuettes and other durable objects can be found on shelves, plinths, etc (worth 2 x Valuables).

The manor is conspicuously empty of inhabitants, and no undead occupy the ground or upper level.

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However, beneath the manor, in a colossal underground network of caverns, are several hundred (if not close to a thousand) *Flesh Feasters* in hibernation. As noted in the introduction, after first entering *Winterwold*, the *feasters* slowly emerge in greater and greater numbers to eat the intruders. Four different 10 ft wide stairwells lead to the caverns, none of them barred by doors or gates of any kind (removed long ago). Descending into the caverns with the intention of “clearing” them of monsters is certain death.

### Area 12 – Laeril’s Tower

*Laeril* lives in this 50 ft tower, which has three upper levels and a basement. Entry is via a heavy oak door at the base (unlocked) or by scaling the outside to reach the shuttered windows on each level. The tower is completely shut up.

The **Ground Level** is a large reception area littered with rotting chairs, couches, display tables with small trinkets, and so on. Wall paintings lie fallen on the floor, and the carpets are blood stained and moth eaten. Stone steps around the circumference lead to the second storey, and a pull ring trapdoor to the basement (barred from below; it cannot be opened except by breaking it, which would take some time and awaken *Laeril* if he is not already active).

The **Second Storey** is a bedchamber that has clearly been set on fire. A collapsed cot is set against one side, surrounded by charcoal bookshelves and the ashen remains of what must have been scores (maybe hundreds) of books. The stone steps continue to the top level. Searching the room locates a bronze tube containing 1 x Scroll.

The **Top Level** contains the ruins of *Laeril’s* laboratory, which he destroyed in a fit of manic grief in the final days of the elven kingdoms. Burnt detritus, glass shards, and broken pottery occupy every corner. Locked in a bronze cage hanging from the ceiling is a 1 ft *Forest Gremlin* named *Quaglob*.



*Quaglob* was originally to be experimented on by *Laeril* but was forgotten about after the laboratory was torched. In stasis like the others, the *gremlin* awakens as the PCs observe the room. He is trapped in the cage and rattles it, motioning for the adventurers to set him free.

The *gremlin* understands fey and elven only (no common). If the party do not know these languages, interactions with him will have to be via sign language. *Quaglob* simply wants to be free, and will depart if given the chance (upon determining that he cannot leave, however, he will return to aid the party in bringing down the barrier, if possible).

**Quaglob, Forest Gremlin**, AC 13, HD 6 hp, Claws 1d2 + poison, 19: *Quaglob* channels a burst of uncontrolled magic, target rolls on the DDM table, S3 D15 C6 I14 P14 W15 C8, L6, Mv 30 ft inc walls, ceiling, etc, and leap 20 ft. *Forest Gremlins* gain advantage on stealth related checks and are innate magic users. May cast the following spells once per day (as 6<sup>th</sup> level): *Insidious Slumber*, *Lash of Unerring Pain*, *Writhing Fog*, *Arcane Aegis*, *Affliction of the Eyeless Host*, *Curse of Scaring Steel*, *Waking Dream*, *Channel Lightning (outdoors only)*.

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In terms of information, *Quaglob* knows that *Laeril* is a vampire, and destroyed his own lab, but is otherwise unfamiliar with what is going on in *Winterwold*.

The **Basement** has been turned into a small crypt, the trapdoor barred from below with a heavy wooden beam. *Laeril* sleeps in his stone tomb until roused (per the *Enclave Encounters* table or 2d6 rounds after the party enters the tower). Upon awakening, the insane vampire seeks out the adventurers and the *serpentmen* to feed upon. If he catches sight of the *serpentmen*, he flies into a bestial rage, ignoring all others to kill them first.

**Laeril, Vampire Boss Monster**, AC 15, HD 9 (94 hp), Bite 1d12 + level drain, 19: the bite is especially potent, draining 2 levels instead of 1, S20 D19 C17 I16 P18 W17 Ch16, L10, Mv 30 ft or 60 ft in gaseous form. *Undead Boss Monster* with all the usual benefits (LFG p.184). May spend an action to invoke *Cradle of Formlessness*, 30% recharge at the start of the *Laeril's* turn. Immune to non-magical weapons, except those of *cold iron*. Regenerates 1d12 damage at the start of his turn, fire or acid suspends this effect for 1d6 rounds.

If reduced to zero hit points, *Laeril* turns to mist and flees to the basement of Area 12, where he slowly regenerates over 1d4 hours. The only way to permanently slay the vampire is to drive a wooden stake through his heart (Major Exploit once *Staggered*, at the GM's option *Laeril* might get a *Luck* save to avoid, per the *Stronger Luck Boss Monster* trait).

Any spell casting ability the apostate once had was lost during his transformation into undeath. Located in *Laeril's* sarcophagus is 1 x Valuables, and a fire opal talisman (red colouration) with a spiderweb filigree (enchanted, upon attuning, once per week, the user may transform into a *Hook Spider* (treat as *Sudden Transmogrification*).

If *Laeril* is destroyed, see *Aftermath*.

## Aftermath

If *Laeril* or the *Tree of Awakening* are destroyed, the barrier ends. The effect is immediately observable (sunlight is no longer dimmed, and sounds from outside are unmuted). If all of the *serpentmen* are killed, the barrier is suspended for 1d4 hours instead.

Either way, the undead horde beneath Area 11 is immediately released, swarming out to kill the party in an unstoppable wave! Treat as a *Chase* scene (LFG p.69); if the party escape they survive to tell the tale with any loot they might have scavenged in the meantime. If not, play out the combat until the PCs either create another opportunity to flee, or are overwhelmed and die. If the PCs freed *Quaglob*, the GM might have him reappear at a timely moment to provide a secondary chance at escape.

*Undead* that venture outside *Winterwold* for more than 1d4 hours crumble to dust or otherwise vanish after 1d4 hours, leaving no trace of their passing.





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