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SHATTERED SKIES

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ADVENTURES

BEASTS OF BRIGHT MOUNTAIN

WHISPERS
OF THE
DARK MOTHER
6 of 6

By Derek Blakely



PUBLISHING

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BEASTS OF BRIGHT MOUNTAIN

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ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

Centuries ago within Bright Mountain the Ebon Dawn cult practiced the ideology and philosophy of the Sharpened Horn, performing many orgiastic and violent rites, until finally achieving immortality. At the time, Thatchraayeen, a fiendish chimera, led the cult. Divinations foretold that through her blood, the Deathless Masters of Shub-Niggurath would be born.

With her demon servant Raukma'am, Thatchraayeen began guiding her transformed acolytes in the use of their new bodies and powers. The mehrim was drawn to the site during its construction, and bound to it until all the leaders both gained immortality and accustomed to their new forms. As they were still adapting, Dustwardens of the Grey Maiden attacked, and sealed the remaining Ebon Dawn members within their mountain temple.

However, not all was lost. Before the vault was sealed, Fotthor, the newest member of the cult, managed to escape with the concubines of the former leader of the Ebon Dawn. The partially altered trio went into hiding in the foothills around Bright Mountain, and learned to master their dark gifts. The "Beast", a howler bestowed to the cult by Shub-Niggurath also managed to evade the crusaders, and resumed its role as guardian, protecting them during their self-education.

Fotthor vowed to free Thatchraayeen and the Deathless Masters. Together with the concubines and the Beast, they compiled their collected knowledge into the tome that would become *The Whispers of the Dark Mother*. Over the passing centuries, Fotthor would pen many copies of the foul book, distributing them via the Beast into the gear of unwary travelers through the jungle forest. This allowed the cult's rites and secrets to permeate throughout Brynndell, calling new worshippers to the fold.

Then the dreams began. Visions spoke to Fotthor, telling him that the time was soon nigh, and that a Skinless One would soon appear to free the Deathless Masters. He and his immortal concubines prepared for his arrival. Meanwhile, plagued by nightmares of Shub-Niggurath, Hexos tasked his lieutenant to retrieve a copy of the *Lamentations of the Fungus Men*, which he believed the dreams were telling him to obtain. He became convinced the book was the key to unlocking the Vault and to unfathomable power. He gathered his faithful and set out to Bright Mountain to await Corvun and the book.

When Hexos Vell and his entourage found Fotthor, the immortal cultist taught them what he could about the Ebon Dawn and their unholy practices. Bragr, the least

monstrous of Fotthor's concubines, was hesitant to follow Hexos, citing other, stranger dreams she experienced, but relented, knowing he held the key to releasing the Hidden Masters.

With Shub-Niggurath's guidance through nightmares and dreams, Hexos Vell discovered The Vault of the Hidden Masters. Like other temples, the Vault had been built in homage to the Womb, but was far less deadly. Over the following days, Hexos learned the necessary aspects of the ritual so that he could release the Deathless Masters. Much to his relief, the magic needed to dismiss the Vault's wards were not contained in the book, but known to Fotthor. It was only through the mass culling of willing followers could the wards be overpowered. Hexos commanded his most powerful priest, the ogre Gorshnop, to conquer the nearby ogre and orc tribes, indoctrinate, and prepare them for sacrifice.

Corvun Baerg has other plans however. He has adapted to his new transformed body, and heads toward the mountain temple with his own company of devotees to Shub-Niggurath, ritual book in hand. His loyalists believe him to be the true and rightful leader of the Ebon Dawn cult. He plans to remove Hexos from power, take out the Hidden Masters, and become the new cult leader.

ADVENTURE SYNOPSIS

The party traverses the secret tunnel they found and are led to a valley within the Mist Peaks, not far from Bright Mountain. Corvun Baerg, who had escaped the party not long ago, did not expect anyone to follow him down the tunnel so he did not try to hide his tracks. Once the path he took is discovered, the party follows it to Bright Mountain. During their travels, they are secretly stalked by The Beast of Bright Mountain Valley, who has gained significant power since it was last documented 20 years ago. Before it gets tired with playing with his prey and decides to finally devour them, they must do battle with the mythical creature.

After fighting with the beast, the group comes across a small patrol of whisper knights looking for additional sacrifices to add to the prison inside the lair. The PCs can allow themselves to be captured or they can fight their way through.

Entering the cavernous temple, they immediately encounter some of the new cultists staving off boredom by playing a game of cards instead of performing their guard duties. It is here that they learn that the mountain is a temple to Shub-Niggurath, and likely the Vault they learned about prior. There is a shrine with a bone effigy of Shub-Niggurath and a prison holding those who seem



immune to the mental poisons Hexos fed to those he planned to convert through manipulation. The remaining prisoners will be blood sacrifices used for that evening's ritual, while the others turned to fanatical brain-washed followers of Shub-Niggurath.

While moving throughout the extensive tunnels, the party encounters the surviving cultists that were found by Hexos Vell. As well, they discover that Corvun Baerg and his devotees are in the middle of a coup to remove Hexos from power. In a secret chamber, the chimera, Thatchraayeen, is resting in her lair chewing on some cultists Corvun found to be too power hungry for his liking. She is currently waiting for the ritual to be completed by Corvun so that she may once again take her place as the leader of the Ebon Dawn, and help overthrow the insane half-orc witch. She believes if she eats Hexos that her power will grow once more.

As the party reaches the sanctum where the rituals are being performed, they encounter the newly transformed Corvun Baerg who is now a dark satyr. Entering the

garden, the final battle with Hexos and the awakened Hidden Masters begins.

ADVANCEMENT TRACK

The player characters begin this adventure at 6th level. They should reach 7th level before they encounter Hexos Vell. The events in this adventure should grant enough experience for fast or medium advancement. For slow advancement or larger parties, feel free to add any encounters from the random encounter chart found in part 1 of *Whispers of the Dark Mother: Seeds of Evil* or with any monster found in underground or mountain terrain, so that the PCs gain the needed XP to advance in level before the final battle.

PART ONE: HUNTED BY THE BEAST

The PCs use the tunnel they found at the end of Book 5, leading them through an underground passage that carries on for a few miles before opening into a large cavern.

THE PASSAGE (CR 7)

Bioluminescent mold grants dim lighting in the chamber. Present is a small, 30-ft deep underground lake filled with brackish water that is home to a cave leech. The creature had a quarrel with its original pack and broke away, eventually finding itself here. Over time, the corrupted energies of the area have seeped into it, transforming it and turning it evil. When the PC's reach the cave, read or paraphrase the following.

The corridor ahead open into a large, dank cavern. Eerie yellow light gleams from fruiting bodies that cling to the walls in ragged splotches. A slimy pool glistens near the far side where another corridor runs on into darkness.

Cave Leech CR 6

XP 2,400

NE Medium magical beast

Init +4; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision, tremorsense 60 ft.; **Perception** +7

DEFENSE

AC 16, touch 10, flat-footed 16 (+6 natural)

hp 76 (8d10+24 plus 8)

Fort +9; **Ref** +6; **Will** +3

DR 10/piercing or slashing

OFFENSE

Speed 40 ft., swim 30 ft.

Melee 8 tentacles +11 (1d4+2 plus grab), bite +10 (1d6+2 plus grab and blood drain)

Space 5 ft.; **Reach** 5 ft. (10 ft. with tentacles)

Special Attacks blood drain (1d4 Con), constrict (1d4+2)

TACTICS

Before Combat If the cave leech hears danger approaching, it lowers itself just below the surface of the lake and uses stealth to hide.

During Combat The cave leech attacks with its tentacles grabbing for the least armored target. Once it successfully grapples a foe, it drags its victim into the water, constricting it and waiting for it to drown.

Morale if reduced to fewer than 6 hit points, the cave leech breaks off from combat and swims to the bottom of the lake to recover.

STATISTICS

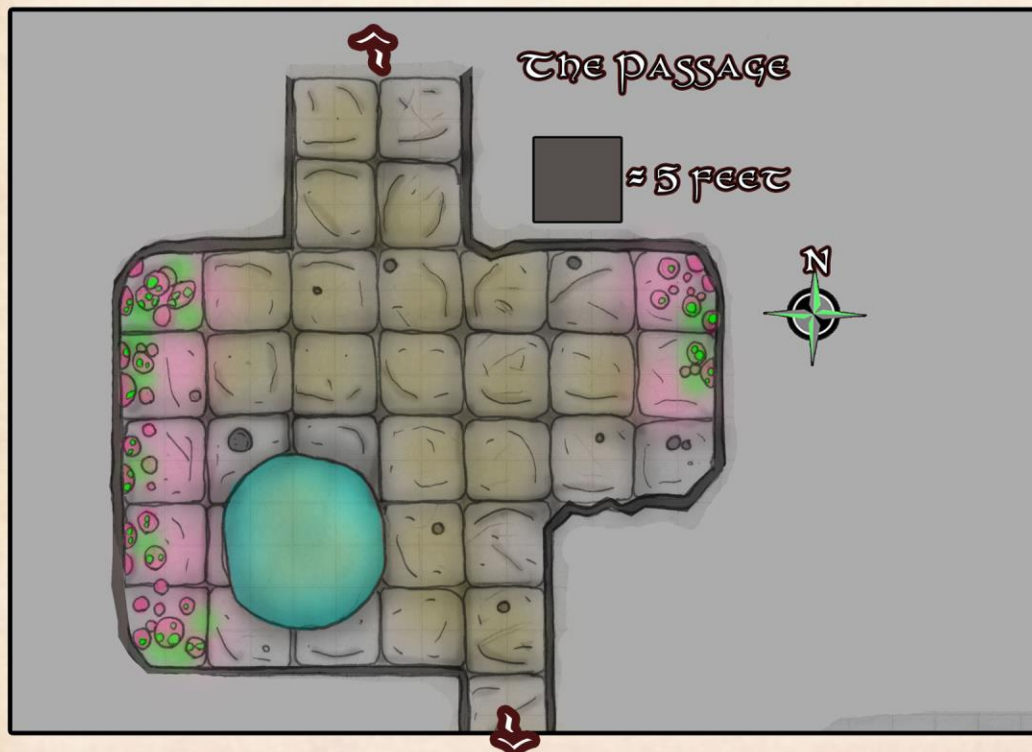
Str 15, **Dex** 11, **Con** 17, **Int** 3, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 6

Base Atk +8; **CMB** +10 (+14 grapple); **CMD** 20 (can't be tripped)

Feats Improved Initiative, **Skill Focus** (Stealth), Toughness, **Weapon Focus** (tentacle)

Skills Perception +7, Stealth +10, Swim +14

Treasure: A few feet below the surface of the water is a natural shelf jutting out from the wall. Scattered along it are remnants of the items carried by previous victims. While the foul, musty water has tarnished and rusted most of the coins and weapons, an adamantite dagger has survived.



GUARDED CHAMBER (CR 8)

After the PC's deal with the cave leech, they reenter cramped tunnels for another few miles before reaching the following room. When they enter, read or paraphrase the following.

The soot-stained, skeletal remains of two men dressed in decayed buff coats lie sprawled on the left and right of a closed wooden door set in the north wall of this rectangular chamber. Light glints off the bronze hilts of four gladiuses— swords stick through the ribcages, and swords rest in rotting scabbards tangled around the hipbones of each dead man.

The skeletons rise and attack anyone who approaches within 10 feet of the door unless someone displays an unholy symbol of Shub-Niggurath and says:

"Ia Ia Shub-Niggurath! The Black Goat of the Woods with a Thousand Young!"

Black Skeleton CR 5

XP 1,600

CE Medium undead

Init +8; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +10

Aura frightful presence (60 ft., DC 15)

DEFENSE

AC 20, touch 14, flat-footed 16 (+4 Dex, +6 natural)

hp 45 (7d8+14)

Fort +4, **Ref** +6, **Will** +5

Defensive Abilities channel resistance +4;

DR 10/bludgeoning and good; **Immune** undead traits

OFFENSE

Speed 40 ft.

Melee 2 short swords +10 (1d6/19-20 plus 1d3 Strength damage) or 2 claws +9 (1d4 plus 1d3 Strength damage)

Special Attacks superior two-weapon fighting

TACTICS

During Combat The skeletons move to flank opponents.

Morale The skeletons fight until destroyed.

STATISTICS

Str 11, **Dex** 19, **Con** --, **Int** 13, **Wis** 10, **Cha** 14

Base Atk +5; **CMB** +5; **CMD** 19

Feats Improved Initiative, Two-Weapon Fighting, Weapon Finesse, Weapon Focus (short sword)

Skills Acrobatics +11, Climb +10, Escape Artist +11, Perception +10, Stealth +14

Languages Abyssal, Common

Combat gear twin short swords

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Superior Two-Weapon Fighting (Ex): A black skeleton



usually fights with a short sword in each hand. Because of its magical nature, its Two-Weapon Fighting feat allows it to attack with both weapons at no penalty.

Treasure: Each skeleton wears a wooden unholy symbol of Shub-Niggurath and carries two short swords.

Development: The door to the ascending stairway, is locked and trapped. A PC can open the rusty lock with a DC 20 Disable Device check.

Trapped Door CR 6

XP 2,400

Type mechanical; Perception DC 25; Disable Device DC 25

EFFECTS

Trigger touch; Reset no reset

Effect poison cloud (affects all creatures in room; Fort DC 15; 1d4 Wis/2d6 Wis).

THE UPPER CHAMBER

The stagnant air smells of this cavern stinks of rotten eggs and dried meat, but looking about, you see no spoiled food— only splintered, gnawed bones and clods of dung strewn on the stone floor. Rows of deep scratches mark several places along the rough walls, running from near the floor to man-height, as if some creature had sharpened its claws against the rock.

The Beast of Bright Mountain Valley lairs here—but it's not at home just now. Its den is in the upper part of the cavern.

Treasure: Searching the lair with a DC 20 Perception check discovers a small hoard. Amongst the half eaten carrion and discarded bones is a masterwork cold iron longsword, a masterwork composite shortbow (+2 Str), masterwork breastplate, a potion of *remove fear*, a potion of *sanctuary*, a case containing scrolls of *mage armor* and *identify*, a wand of *cure light wounds* (11 charges), a wand of *pass without trace* (13 charges), a black pearl worth 400 gold, and a topaz gem worth 450 gold.

THE SAVAGE HUNT (CR 8)

When the PC's reach the tunnel exit and enter the secluded valley, read or paraphrase the following.

Weak light gleams ahead. The foul stench in the air weakens. Going up the sloping tunnel and pushing through a screen of deadwood, you clamber out of a widening gap and onto open ground, the sky above you in place of the oppressive weight of the mountain. All around the cave mouth spreads a wide, forested valley fenced in by mountains whose heights fade from sight, lost in blue-gray mists.



Exiting the cave the party emerges into a vast valley within the Mist Peaks. A DC 15 Survival check discovers that a small party recently headed in a northerly direction. This trail belongs to Corvun Baerg and two of his devotees. In his newly transformed state, his madness has grown—and he hasn't considered anyone would be able to track him this far. The path is quite easy to follow, requiring only a DC 12 Survival check every hour to pursue him through the thick brush. Due to the thick brush, all creatures have partial concealment within 10 feet and full concealment beyond 20 feet.

While the PCs trek through the secluded valley, they catch the attention of the Beast of Bright Mountain Valley. The Beast has already eaten, so it will still stalk them while digesting its previous meal. It tracks the group, looking to set up multiple ambush sites along the path to the temple. It uses its *greensight* power and its mastery over its home terrain to gain maximum advantage.

Beast of Bright Mountain Valley CR 8/MR 3

XP 2,400

Unique Advanced mythic howler

CE Large outsider (chaotic, evil, extraplanar, mythic)

Init +10; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., greensight 60 ft.;

Perception +19

DEFENSE

AC 22, touch 13, flat-footed 18 (+4 Dex, +9 natural, -1 size)

hp 114 (8d10+70)

Fort +11, **Ref** +10, **Will** +7

Defensive Abilities fortification (50%), quill defense;

DR 5/epic

OFFENSE

Speed 60 ft.

Melee bite +14 (1d8+7), quills +9 (1d6+3 plus pain)

Space 10 ft.; **Reach** 5 ft.

Special Attacks feral savagery (full attack), horrific appearance (DC 16), howl, mythic power (surge 2/day, +1d6)

TACTICS

Before Combat The Beast delights in cat and mouse games, enjoying the smell of its victims' fear. Every hour it releases its howler howl curse. After a few hours, it uses the concealment of the terrain to gain a surprise attack on the group, attacking either a separated party member or anyone who looks to have been unaffected by its howl.

During Combat The Beast stays long enough for the party to see its horrific visage, then darts away the next round. It continues to do this, adding additional time before it strikes next. After an hour, it howls once more, repeating its previous hit-and-run scare tactics for

another hour. The more resources the party uses, the happier the Beast becomes. It hopes to leave the more insane prey until last, savoring their fear. If it can kill an opponent, it does so and takes the body away. As the party continues their original course to Bright Mountain, the Beast leaves the headless, gutted remains of their fallen party member in their direct path, arranging the parts to look like a broken puzzle. If surrounded, the Beast tries to escape.

Morale The beast flees if reduce to 20 hp or more, waiting until it recovers before seeking revenge. If forced, it fights to the death.

STATISTICS

Str 24, **Dex** 18, **Con** 20, **Int** 10, **Wis** 20, **Cha** 14

Base Atk +8; **CMB** +16; **CMD** 30

Feats Combat ReflexesM, Improved InitiativeM, Improved Natural Attack (quills), Skill Focus (Perception)

Skills Acrobatics +15 (+27 jump), Climb +18, Perception +19, Sense Motive +14, Stealth +15, Survival +14

Languages Abyssal

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Abyssal Strike (Ex): The Beast's natural weapons are considered chaotic and evil for the purposes of bypassing damage reduction.

Feral Savagery (Su): When it makes a full attack, the Beast can immediately attempt an additional attack against an opponent. This attack is made using the creature's full base attack bonus, plus any modifiers appropriate to the situation. This additional attack doesn't stack with similar means of gaining additional attacks, such as the haste spell or a speed weapon. This ability doesn't grant an extra action, so the beast can't use it to cast a second spell or otherwise take an extra action in the round.

Greensight (Su): The Beast can see through thick plant matter as though it were transparent. Leaves, vines, greenery, and undergrowth offer no concealment to the monster's sight, though solid wood still blocks its line of sight.

Horrific Appearance (Su): The Beast has such a horrific and mind-rending presence that those who gaze upon it are driven momentarily insane. This results in 2 points of Charisma damage and leaves the victim confused for 1d3 rounds.

Howl (Su): The Beast's constant howling is a grating, exhausting baying that can drive listeners insane. All beings other than outsiders within 120 feet of a howling howler must succeed on a DC 18 Will save or become cursed by the creature's howl. Once a creature becomes cursed in this way, she takes no additional penalty for being exposed to additional howlers' howls until the current howler curse is lifted. This is a sonic mind-affecting effect. The save DC is Charisma-based and includes a +2 racial bonus.

Howler Howl: Curse—howl; save Will DC 18 negates; frequency 1/hour; effect 1 Wis damage; cure 1 save.

Pain (Ex): Whenever a creature takes damage from the Beast's quill attack or its quill defense, that creature must make a successful DC 16 Reflex save or one quill breaks off in its flesh, causing the target to become sickened until all embedded quills are removed. Removing one quill requires a DC 15 Heal check made as a full-round action. For every 5 by which the check is exceeded, one additional quill can be removed. On a failed check, a quill is still removed, but the process deals 1d6+3 points of damage to the victim. The save DC is Dexterity-based.

Quill Defense (Ex): Any creature that strikes the Beast with a non-reach melee weapon, unarmed strike, or natural weapon takes 1d6+1 points of piercing damage from the howler's quills and suffers from the howler's pain attack.

Surge (Su): The Beast can call upon its mythic power to overcome difficult challenges. It can expend one use of mythic power to increase any d20 roll it just made by rolling 1d6 and adding it to the result. Using this ability is an immediate action taken after the original roll is made and the results are revealed.

For more information knowledge on the Beast of Bright Mountain Valley, see the *Knowledge chart on page 7 of Town of Brighton pdf from Wayward Rogues Publishing.*

ABANDONED CAMPSITE

The trail winds through boulders and wind-twisted pines, widening out into a flattened patch of earth walled on one side by the mountainside, a rampart of boulders on the other, and screened above by two interlaced pines. A charred log and some blackened pinecones rest in a shallow pit near the center of the space. The trail continues on the far side of the open ground, snaking out of sight among tumbled slabs of rock.

Following the path that Corvun took leads to an enclosed area, safe from the elements. The embers inside are half a day old. By this time, a day will have passed and the PCs will have walked over 24 miles (or 16, if a dwarf or small characters are in the party). If the party wishes to continue they will need to make Fortitude saves against fatigue.



If the PCs are low on experience or are using the slow track, this would be an opportune time to add any encounters from the random encounter chart found in part 1 of *Whispers of the Dark Mother: Seeds of Evil*.

THE PATROL (CR 8)

The next day, the PCs encounter three mounted whisper knights currently on patrol a few miles from the entrance to the mountain temple. Hexos Vell sent them looking for additional sacrifices to add to the night's ritual. They don't immediately attack the PCs, hoping to lure them into a false sense of security, and catch them unawares. Instead, they act as passing adventurers looking for directions to Brighton (Bluff +2). Whether the ruse succeeds or fails, they attack.

Ahead, the trail almost vanishes in the thicket of thorny shrubs and scraggly pine. Picking your way through the dense cover, you hear the bleating of sheep or goats, and muffled voices.

Unless the PC's use Stealth to hide, or otherwise avoid detection, they are spotted by the patrol.

Whisper Knight CR 5

XP 1,200

Male variant half-elf cavalier 6

LE Medium humanoid (elf, human)

Init +1; **Senses** low-light vision; Perception +8

DEFENSE

AC 16, touch 11, flat-footed 15 (+5 armor; +1 Dex)

hp 55 (6d10+18)

Fort +8, Ref +4, Will +5; +2 vs. enchantments

Defensive Abilities dual-minded; Immune sleep

OFFENSE

Speed 20 ft. (30 ft. base)

Space 5 ft.; **Reach** 5 ft. (10 ft. with ram staff)

Melee mwk ram staff +11 (1d8+4) or
mwk longsword +10 (1d8+3/19–20) or
spiked iron-shod boot +9 (1d4+3)

Ranged mwk composite longbow +8 (1d8+3)

Special Attacks banner +2/+1, cavalier's charge, challenge 2/day (–2 penalty), lesser whisper

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 6th; concentration +8)
3/day—command (DC 13)

At will—touch of fatigue (DC 12)

TACTICS

Before Combat The whisper knights use their lesser whisper on the more capable and armored looking target, then command them to "fall" to the ground.

During Combat The whisper knights charge or attack the nearest target with their ram staff, hoping the oblivion dust poison will take effect. In close quarters combat they will use their longsword. If the battle goes against them, they will do lethal damage, otherwise they will attempt one round of nonlethal. Whisper knights and their mounts fight to the death.

STATISTICS

Str 16, **Dex** 12, **Con** 14, **Int** 10, **Wis** 10, **Cha** 14

Base Atk +6; **CMB** +9; **CMD** 20

Feats Mounted Combat, Outflank, Ride-By Attack, Spirited Charge, Weapon Focus (ram staff)

Skills Handle Animal +11, Knowledge (religion) +9, Perception +8, Ride +10;

Racial Modifiers Perception +2

Languages Common, Elven

SQ mount (Shubian mountain goat), multitalented, order

of the whispers, tactician 2/day (Outflank, 6 rounds)

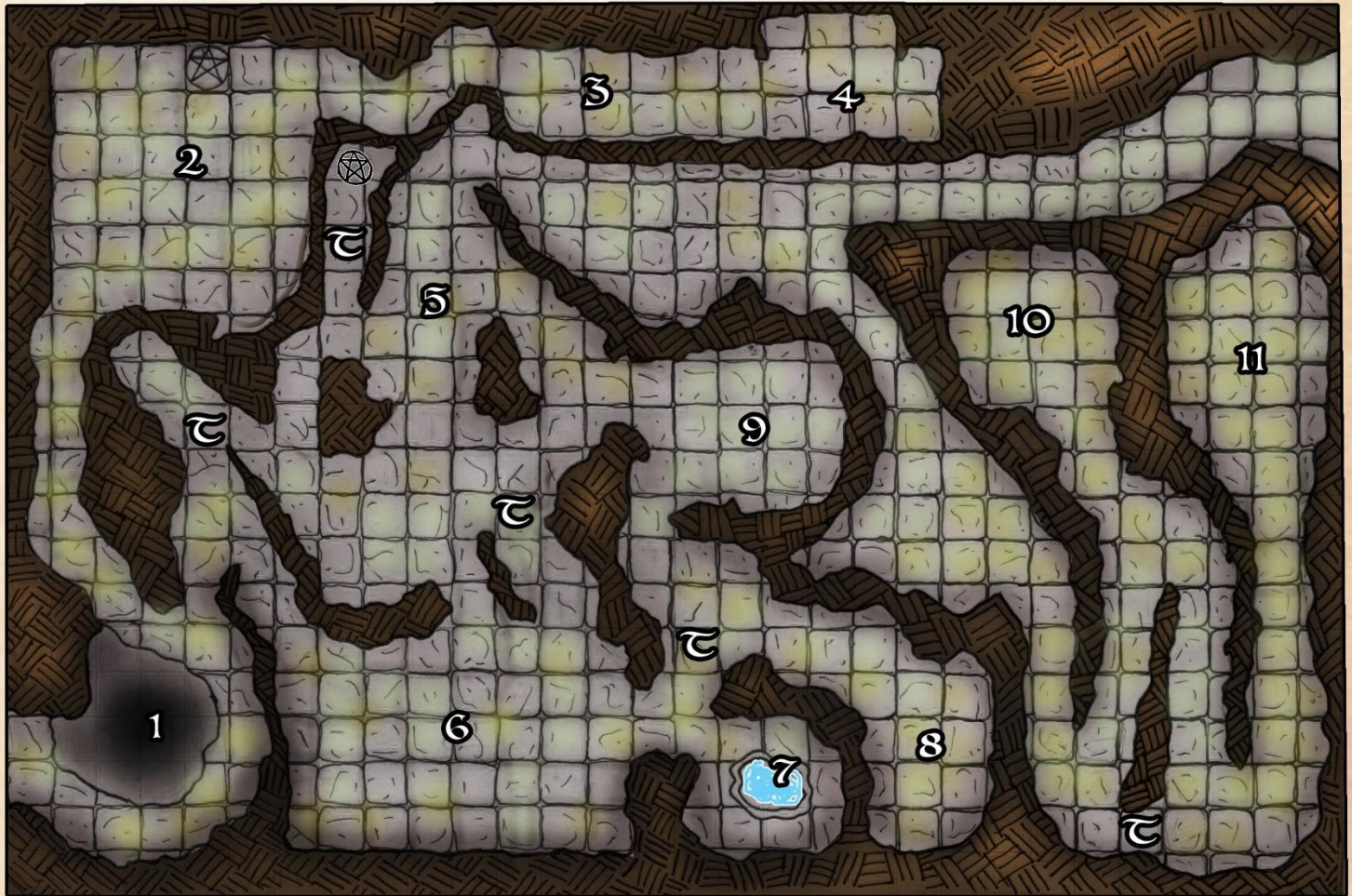
Combat Gear oil of magic weapon (2), potion of *cure light wounds*, potion of *cure moderate wounds*, alchemist's fire; **Other Gear** +1 hide, mwk ram staff with oblivion dust, mwk cold iron longsword, spiked iron-shod boot (2), mwk composite longbow (+3 Str) with 20 arrows, cloak of resistance +1, ioun torch, vial of oblivion dust, signal horn, wooden unholy symbol of Shub-Niggurath, 15 gp

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Dual Minded (Ex): The mixed ancestry of some half-elves makes them resistant to mental attacks.

Half-elves with this racial trait gain a +2 bonus on all Will saving throws. This racial trait replaces the adaptability racial trait.





CHAPTER 2: THE MOUNTAIN TEMPLE OF THE DARK MOTHER

As the trees begins to thin, a single stone spire comes into view. From the exterior, it looks like the other mountains within Mist Peaks. Bright Mountain rises hundreds of feet above the ground, covered in moss and vines. Its chiseled form looks as if it was carved by a gargantuan stone mason eons ago, its foliage a painted canvass.

DUNGEON FEATURES

The main entrance into the Vault resembles a jagged toothed maw, like other temples of Shub-Niggurath. Unless otherwise noted, the caverns and tunnels of this adventure all possess the following features:

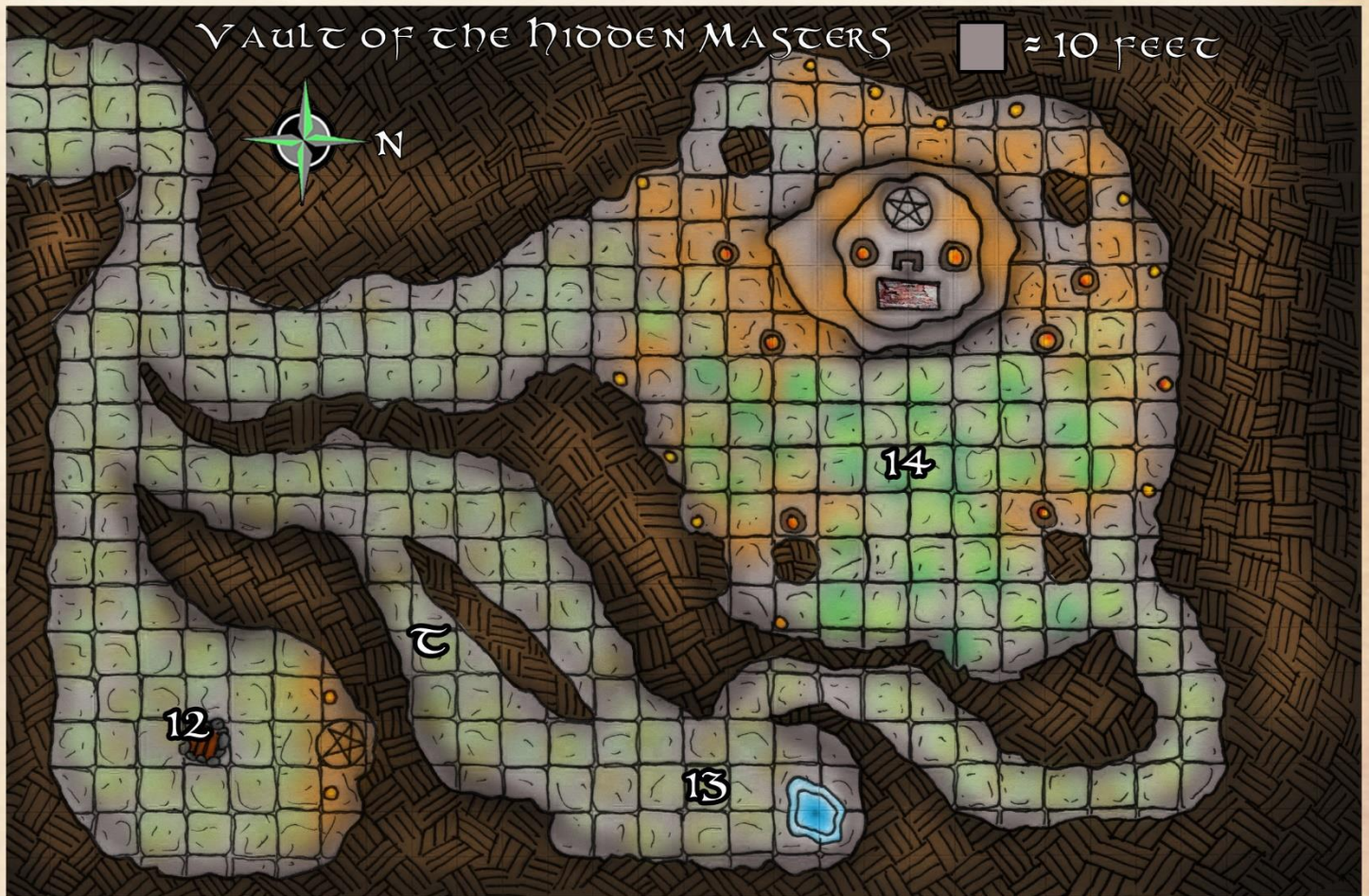
Illumination: The areas are either dimly lit by patches of luminescent greenish-brown fungus or in braziers with continual flame spells. Dispelled braziers relight themselves a day later.

Doors: Wood. Doors are unlocked and open easily with a moderate push. If they are locked, the Disable Device DC check required will be noted.

Ceilings: Most The majority of the tunnels have a 12 feet high ceiling.

SUMMONING TRAPS (CR 6)

Throughout the sinister complex are summoning traps (T) that each of the cultists know about. They were placed there long ago to protect the complex from invaders who decided to venture in where they weren't welcome. When the cult was first discovered, the raiders had expert trackers who could detect inconsistencies, figured out all the places that the cultists avoided, thus allowing them to do the same. The traps were never triggered and remain to this day. With the ritual coming



soon, and not wanting a recurrence of last time, the cultists have been ordered to clean around the areas they normally don't travel.

Unfortunately, time has passed and the circles aren't as effective as they once were. Where they would have summoned powerful succubi, only dretches come. However, the augmentation is still in effect. The traps are also programmed to always summon three of the creature in a pincer-like formation around the trap location. Two of them will always appear flanking the target.

Each dretch summoned gains a +4 enhancement bonus to Strength and Constitution and a +1 deflection bonus to AC. They know not to attack anyone wearing the unholy symbol of Shub-Niggurath, even if they are who trigger the trap. Because they know that all of the cultists are aware of the traps, they are immediately suspicious (unfriendly attitude) of anyone wearing the unholy symbol standing before them, and not an invading target. If told to aid the cultists in battle, they will do so immediately. They do not disappear until they are either defeated or the condition for their summoning is completed.

Defender Trap CR 6

XP 2,400

Type magic; Perception DC 31; Disable Device DC 31

EFFECTS

Trigger proximity (alarm); Reset none

Effect spell effect (summon monster V, summons 3 augmented dretches)

Champion Beast (3) CR 2

XP 600

CE Small outsider (chaotic, demon, evil, extraplanar)

Init +0; Senses darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +5

DEFENSE

AC 15, touch 12, flat-footed 15 (+1 deflection, +3 natural, +1 size)

hp 22 (2d10+11)

Fort +7, Ref +0, Will +3

DR 5/cold iron or good; Immune electricity, poison;

Resist acid 10, cold 10, fire 10

OFFENSE

Speed 20 ft.

Space 5; Reach 5

Melee 2 claws +6 (1d4+3), bite +6 (1d4+3)
Spell-Like Abilities (CL 2nd; concentration +3)
 1/day—*cause fear* (DC 11), *stinking cloud* (DC 13),
STATISTICS
Str 16, **Dex** 10, **Con** 18, **Int** 5, **Wis** 11, **Cha** 11
Base Atk +2; **CMB** +2; **CMD** 12
Feats Toughness
Skills Escape Artist +5, Perception +5, Stealth +9
Languages Abyssal (cannot speak); telepathy 100 ft.
 (limited to Abyssal-speaking targets)

1. ENTRANCE TO THE VAULT (CR 6)

This circular chamber is covered in green luminescent moss on the west side. To the east a tunnel leads further into the deep.

Four cultists loyal to Hexos Vell have been given guard duty by Corvun, who wanted them out of the way, and spread out. While the half-orc witch has told them to be on alert, they don't see the need with the whisper knights outside patrolling. As such, they currently have a table set up and are playing a drinking game.

Ebon Dawn Cultist CR 2 XP 600

Male or Female human cleric of Shub-Niggurath 3
 NE Medium humanoid
Init +2; **Senses** Perception +3
DEFENSE
AC 16, touch 11, flat-footed 15 (+4 armor, +1 Dex, +1 shield)
hp 19 (3d8+6)
Fort +4, **Ref** +3, **Will** +5
OFFENSE
Speed 20 ft. (30 ft. base)
Melee mwk dagger +3 (1d4+1/19–20), mwk spiked iron-shod boot +3 (1d4) or mwk spiked iron-shod boot +3 (1d4+1), mwk spiked iron-shod boot +3 (1d4) or mwk dagger +5 (1d4+1/19–20)
Ranged dart +4 (1d4+1)
Special Attacks channel negative energy 5/day (DC 13, 2d6)
Domain Spell-Like Abilities (CL 3rd; concentration +5)
 6/day—*predator's grace* (1 round), touch of evil (1 round)
Cleric Spells Prepared (CL 3rd; concentration +5)
 2nd—*align weapon* (evil only)D, *hold person* (DC 14), *summon monster II*

1st—*bane* (DC 13), *command* (DC 13), *doom* (DC 13), *protection from good*D

0 (at will)—*bleed* (DC 12), *guidance*, *light*, *resistance*
D domain spell; **Domains** Animal (Fur), Evil

TACTICS

The cultists start by dealing nonlethal to the intruders so that they can be made into a sacrifice, but will resort to lethal damage if they feel their life is in danger. If at least two cultists fall in battle, one tries to escape to warn Hexos about the intruders, but not before setting off at least one trap along the way and have the dretches attack the PCs.

STATISTICS

Str 12, **Dex** 15, **Con** 12, **Int** 8, **Wis** 14, **Cha** 14
Base Atk +2; **CMB** +3; **CMD** 14
Feats Selective Channeling, Two-Weapon Fighting, Weapon Finesse
Skills Knowledge (planes) +4, Knowledge (religion) +4, Linguistics +4, Perception +3, Sense Motive +6, Spellcraft +3
Languages Abyssal, Common, Infernal
Combat Gear wand of *cure light wounds* (9 charges), bloodroot poison (2 doses), vial of unholy water (2);
Other Gear mwk hide, mwk light wooden shield, darts (8), masterwork dagger, masterwork spiked iron-shod boots (2), silver unholy symbol

Treasure: Besides the deck of cards they were using, one of the cultists had a marked set of cards.

Development: Traveling all through the complex, the PCs see that the tunnels are expansive. A DC 25 Survival check realizes that there is foot traffic going down all the tunnels, but the more traveled paths appear to have bits of soil and grass sprinkled along them. The cultists have been careful to make all the tunnels look used, in hopes that unknowledgeable invaders will set off the summoning traps.

2. TEMPLE OF THE BLACK GOAT

This gloomy dark chamber appears to be a shrine. Inside rests a stone altar, sacrificial slab, and a 10-foot-tall black stone statue of a goat woman. The crest of a three-headed goat is carved onto the chest of the statue.

A PC who succeeds on a DC 10 Knowledge (religion) check identifies the triple-headed unholy symbol as belonging to Shub-Niggurath.

This room has no light source. Resting on the slab is an effigy of the black goat made entire out of the bones of animals and humanoids that were sacrificed since the creation of the temple. The effigy activates and attacks anyone who steps within 5 feet of the altar unless someone displays an unholy symbol of Shub-Niggurath and utters her sacred prayer:

"Ia Ia Shub-Niggurath! The Black Goat of the Woods with a Thousand Young!"

Bone Golem CR 8

XP 4,800

N Large construct

Init +6; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; Perception +0

DEFENSE

AC 21, touch 11, flat-footed 19 (+2 Dex, +10 natural, -1 size)

hp 90 (11d10+30)

Fort +3, **Ref** +5, **Will** +3

DR 5/adamantine and bludgeoning; **Immune** construct traits, magic

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee bite +14 (1d8+4), 2 slams +14 (2d6+4)

Space 10 ft.; Reach 10 ft.

Special Attacks bone prison (ranged touch +12)

TACTICS

The golem attacks anyone not wearing unholy symbol of Shub-Niggurath. It attempts to trap one enemy and to kill any others.

STATISTICS

Str 18, **Dex** 15, **Con** —, **Int** —, **Wis** 10, **Cha** 1

Base Atk +11; **CMB** +16 (+20 disarm or grapple);

CMD 28

Feats Improved InitiativeB

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Bone Prison (Ex): As a standard action, a bone golem can throw some of its bones at a creature within 30 feet—it must make a ranged touch attack to hit. These bones magically duplicate and form a cage surrounding struck creatures. Each round, the cage makes a combat maneuver check to deal the golem's slam damage, using the golem's CMB. If the check fails, the target is still trapped but takes no damage. The target can escape the grapple normally, or can break out of the bones by dealing 15 points of damage to the prison, which has the same AC, DR, and saves as the bone golem itself. Damage to the prison has no effect on the golem. The golem can only have one bone prison active at a time. If it wishes to create a second one, it (or some other creature) must first destroy the existing one.

Immunity to Magic (Ex): A bone golem is immune to any spell or spell-like ability that allows spell resistance. In addition, certain spells and abilities function differently against the creature, as noted below. Magical effects that heal living creatures slow a bone golem (as the slow spell) for 1d4 rounds (no save). A magical attack that deals negative energy damage breaks any slow effect on the golem and heals 1 point of damage for every 3 points of damage the attack would otherwise deal. If the healing would cause the golem to exceed its full normal hit points, it gains any excess as temporary hit points. A bone golem gets no saving throw against attacks that deal negative energy damage. A raise dead, resurrection, or true resurrection spell negates its DR and immunity to magic for 1 minute.

Development: A detect magic reveals that the statue detects as faint divination. Anyone wearing an unholy symbol of Shub-Niggurath who recites her sacred prayer, receives the benefits of *guidance* on them for 1 hour.

Treasure: A crate in the corner holds three silver unholy symbols of Shub-Niggurath. These belonged to the Hidden Masters before they were slain long ago. The adjacent barrel is half full with unholy water.

3. THE TRAPPED HALLWAY

A wide, unobstructed stone hall runs to a closed wooden door set with a small, bronze-barred window.

The hallway is trapped 20 feet from the entrance (marked on the map as area number 3). The satyrs in area 4 know how to reset the trap using two hidden switches, one at either end of the hallway.

Flame Strike Trap CR 6

XP 2,400

Type magic; **Perception** DC 30; **Disable Device** DC 30

EFFECTS

Trigger proximity (alarm); **Reset** none

Effect spell effect (*flame strike*, 8d6 fire damage, DC 17

Reflex save for half damage); multiple targets (all targets

in a 10-ft.-radius cylinder)



4A. THE GUARDS (CR 8)

Two ugly goat-men prance across the stone floor of this torch-lit dungeon chamber, making lewd gestures towards a cell. Prisoners within plead with the monsters to stop.

This rectangular chamber houses a single wooden door with small barred window. On either side of the frame is a single torch with continual flame. Two blighted fey satyrs dwell here. It is their charge to guard the kidnap victims and bring them to the Garden once the time of the ritual is at hand.

Blighted Fey Satyr CR 6
XP 2,400
 CE Medium fey

Init +2; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; Perception +20

DEFENSE

AC 20, touch 13, flat-footed 17 (+2 Dex, +1 dodge, +7 natural)

hp 76 (8d8+40)

Fort +6, **Ref** +8, **Will** +8

Defensive Abilities fungal rejuvenation; **DR** 10/cold iron and good; **Immune** disease, paralysis, poison, polymorph; **Resist** cold 10, electricity 10; **SR** 17

OFFENSE

Speed 40 ft.

Melee dagger +6 (1d4+4/19–20), horns +1 (1d6+2)

Ranged shortbow +6 (1d6/x3)

Special Attacks parasitic bond, pipes, thorn throw

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 8th; concentration +13)

At will—*charm person* (DC 16), *dancing lights*, *ghost sound* (DC 15), *sleep* (DC 16), *suggestion* (DC 17)

1/day—*fear* (DC 18), *summon nature's ally III*

TACTICS

The satyrs have been given specific orders to not kill

intruders or escapees unless their lives are at risk. They engage in combat using their shortbows employing nonlethal damage with their blunt arrows. If faced with a foe that can bypass their DR, they use regular arrows or move into melee and attack with their dagger.

STATISTICS

Str 18, **Dex** 15, **Con** 19, **Int** 12, **Wis** 14, **Cha** 21

Base Atk +4; **CMB** +8; **CMD** 21

Feats Dodge, Mobility, Skill Focus (Perception), ToughnessB, Weapon Finesse

Skills Bluff +16, Diplomacy +16, Disguise +10, Intimidate +10, Knowledge (nature) +12, Perception +20, Perform (wind) +20, Stealth +19, Survival +7; **Racial Modifiers** +2 Knowledge (nature), +6 Perception, +4 Perform (wind), +6 Stealth

Languages Common, Sylvan

SQ hive mind, tainted blood

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Pipes (Su): A satyr can focus and empower his magic by playing haunting melodies on his panpipes. When he plays, all creatures within a 60-foot radius must make a successful DC 18 Will save or be affected by charm person, fear, sleep, or suggestion, depending on which tune the satyr chooses. A creature that successfully saves against any of the pipes' effects cannot be affected by the same set of pipes for 24 hours, but can still be affected by the satyr's other spell-like abilities as normal. The satyr's use of his pipes does not count toward his uses per day of his spell-like abilities, and if separated from them, he may continue to use his standard abilities. The pipes themselves are masterwork, and a satyr can craft a replacement with 1 week of labor. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Hive Mind (Su): Blighted fey within 100 feet of each other can communicate through a shared fungal hive mind. This does not permit blighted fey to see and hear through each other's senses, but they can share specific situational information and tactics through telepathy. If one blighted fey within range is aware of danger, they are all aware of danger and cannot be surprised.

4B. THE PRISONERS

The vile goat-men dispatched, you get a better look at the three captives in the cell: an old man who hacks and coughs as he mumbles his thanks to you, a sullen dwarf with chopped and scorched scraps of beard clinging to his face, and a scrawny elf who stares at you and whimpers.

The door is locked with a good lock (Disable Device DC 30). The cell key is placed on a peg embedded in the wall, just out of arm's reach of the door. The interior of the small, rectangular cell has a single barred window in the wall, allowing a minimal amount of light in so that the prisoners don't go blind.

Three captives from Brighton: Daartin (old human warrior [militia guard] 2), Ikor (dwarf expert [blacksmith] 3), and Caurtem (elf wizard 1) languish in this cell. They are currently fatigued from lack of food and water. Feeding and providing them drink, halves the stat penalties and allows them to run or charge. The prisoners explain that once their captors realized that the poison in their daily rations wasn't affecting them as the rest of the prisoners, the cultists stopped feeding them.

Note: If a paladin uses a *mercy* on the captives, it will negate the condition, but only if it is performed outside of the mountain. Otherwise it provides the same effect as giving them food and water.

Story Award: Award the PCs a CR 5 reward (1,600 XP) for rescuing the prisoners and seeing that they exit the complex safely.

5. THE MOUNTED GUARDS (CR 7)

This chamber has several tunnels exiting from it; two to the east and one to the west. The ceiling is much higher here than the rest of the level.

Guarding the chamber are two whisper knights. They attack anyone not wearing an unholy symbol of Shub-Niggurath. The CR of their mounts is calculated into the overall CR of the encounter.

The chamber vaults to a height of 50 feet.

Whisper Knights (2) CR 5

hp 55 (page 9)

TACTICS

Before Combat The whisper knights use their lesser whisper on the more capable and armored looking targets, then command them to "fall" to the floor.

During Combat The whisper knights charge or attack the nearest target with their ram staff, hoping the oblivion dust poison will take effect. In close quarters combat they will use their longswords. If the battle goes against them, they will do lethal damage,

otherwise they will attempt one round of nonlethal attacks. If brought down to less than half hp, the knight will blow his signal horn to warn the rest of the complex that the Vault has been invaded. Whisper knights and their mounts fight to the death.

Shubian Mountain Goat Mounts

N Large animal

Init +3; Senses darkvision 60 ft., scent; Perception +6

DEFENSE

AC 23, touch 12, flat-footed 20 (+3 armor, +3 Dex, +8 natural, -1 size)

hp 45 (6d8+18)

Fort +8, Ref +8, Will +3; +4 vs. enchantments

Defensive Abilities evasion

OFFENSE

Speed 50 ft.

Space 10 ft.; Reach 5 ft.

Melee gore +9 (1d8+5)

Special Attacks powerful charge (+11 attack, 2d8+7)

STATISTICS

Str 20, Dex 16, Con 17, Int 2, Wis 12, Cha 6

Base Atk +4; CMB +9; CMD 21

Feats Blind-Fight, Light Armor ProficiencyB, Skill Focus (Climb), Weapon Focus (gore)

Skills Acrobatics +8, Climb +8, Perception +6, Survival +5

SQ devotion, link, tricks (attack [any], combat riding, come, defend, down, guard, heel, stay, watch)

Gear bit and bridle, exotic military saddle, mwk studded leather barding

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Wicked Horns (Ex) The horns of a Shubian mountain goat are gnarled and jagged, dealing both bludgeoning and piercing damage.

6. SLEEPING AREA

This chamber has a domed ceiling. The musty air smells of sweat and sex.

This is the sleeping quarters of the cultists. There are 14 furred cots, which have not aged well with time. On one the end of the room are two barrels with drinking water and a table for food preparation. There is currently no one present in this area.

Treasure: Searching this chamber garners two masterwork daggers.

7. DRINKING POOL

A rectangular pool covers most of the floor of this chamber, with cut stone walkway running round on all sides. Silvery fish flit through the clear water. Even with a torch thrust over the water's surface, you cannot make out the bottom of the submerged shaft—the rock walls run down deep, out of sight.

This room contains a large pool with clear water filled with fish. The bottom of the pool cannot be seen.

8. MEETING ROOM

The stone walls of this chamber are shaped smooth. Two lit braziers stand on either side of a 10-foot-tall black stone statue of a goat woman. The fire illuminate the room, but something is being burned in each. The crest of a three-headed goat is carved onto the chest of the statue. In the center of the room is a hand-carved wood table surrounded by numerous wooden chairs.

This room is the assembly area for only the highest members of the Ebon Dawn. Corvun Baerg tricked six of the cultists loyal to Hexos into coming here by telling them that they had been nominated for a promotion. He individually told each of them that if they wanted the new position that they were to meet Hexos in the room right away. However, as they entered, they were struck down by four of Corun's loyal devotees.

The PCs enter what looks to be a meeting room where they discover infighting between the cultists. There are six bloodied bodies piled into the southeast corner. Corvun's devotees are debating on whether they should throw the bodies on the braziers or leave them where they lay.

Corvun's Ebon Dawn Cultists (4) CR 2

hp 19 each (see page 12)

TACTICS

When the cultists see the PCs, they drink their potion of *rage*. With Corvun already having achieved his perfect form, they don't see the need for keeping the PCs alive to be later used as sacrifices. Corvun's devotees are savage fanatics who fight to the death.

Development: A *detect magic* reveals that the statue detects as faint divination. Anyone wearing an unholy symbol of Shub-Niggurath and recites her sacred prayer receives the casting of *guidance* on them for 1 hour.

Treasure: Corvun's cultists do not have a wand of *cure light wounds*. Most of the other cultists were stripped of all their gear, which was tossed into each of the braziers. One cultist still has theirs.

9. PRIEST QUARTERS

(If the party fails to surprise Bragr, darkness covers most of this chamber, obscuring details.)

A woman sits at a bench drawn up beside one of the two tables in this chamber, looking over papers by the light of a small brazier.

This room once belonged to the previous cult leader. Two tables with writing utensils and papers, a brazier, a bench, a furred cot, occupies the room. A stone statue dedicated to Shub-Niggurath stands against the far wall.

Bragr does not trust Hexos, and knows the deceptive veil he is using to entice his followers. Corvun has told her of his plans to overthrow the half-orc witch, and she sees no reason to stop him. She's sure that he intends to kill off the previous Hidden Masters as well, so that he has no competition from the previous sect. Once Hexos has been overthrown, she plans to kill Corvun, and give the position to her half-sister, Aarna, while she takes the role of key advisor. Bragr believes that Aarna is destined to rule over the cult, as their father once had.

Looking about the sanctum for anything of use, Bragr discovered her father's old room. When the PCs meet her, she has only managed to find some notes her father left regarding the poisons used to condition his parishioners into

absolute obedience. She learned striped toadstools and nightmare vapor can entrance victims into hallucinogenic pleasures while stripping them of the ability to reject suggestions. She passed this info along and it has been used liberally on the cultists.

Her father's diary contains lurid details of the worship of the Dark Mother and Gof-Dupog.

(The information contained can be found in *The Guide to the Cult of Shub-Niggurath* under Unholy Sites, Proverbs and Demonic Servitors/Planar Allies. The proverbs were lessons that he would have to recite to his followers so that they could fully conform to their devotion and debauchery.)



Bragr Nar CR 6
XP 2,400

Female variant tiefling alchemist (larval progenitor) 7

CE Medium outsider (native)

Init +7; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +9

DEFENSE

AC 17, touch 13, flat-footed 14 (+4 armor, +3 Dex)

hp 60 (7d8+28)

Fort +7, **Ref** +8, **Will** +3; +4 vs. poison

Resist cold 5, electricity 5, fire 5

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee dagger +5 (1d4)

Ranged bombs +8 (4d6+4 fire)

Special Attacks cyst bomb 11/day (4d6+4 fire, DC 17)

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 7th; concentration +6)

1/day—*darkness*

Alchemist Extracts

Prepared (CL 7th)

3rd—*displacement, haste*

2nd—*aid, barkskin, fox's cunning, vomit swarm*

1st—*bomber's eye, cure light wounds,*

illusion of calm, shield, true strike

TACTICS

Before Combat Bragr uses her *darkness* spell-like to conceal her presence, then drinks a mutagen. If the PCs don't seem to be able to find her, or she was made aware of their presence before entering the room, she drinks her *aid, barkskin*, and *haste*

extracts.

During Combat Bragr uses her clonespaw discovery to defend her and then a bone spur bomb to slow down the PCs, before exhaling a vomit swarm. Afterwards, she will repeatedly launch bombs. Bragr is not a fanatic. She still has things she wants to do. If reduced to less than 20 hp, she tries to escape. If given no other options, she surrenders and tells of Corvun's plan to kill Hexos.

STATISTICS

Str 10, Dex 16, Con 14, Int 18, Wis 8, Cha 8

Base Atk +5; CMB +5; CMD 18

Feats Brew PotionB, Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Point-Blank Shot, Throw AnythingB, Toughness

Skills Appraise +12, Bluff +1, Craft (alchemy) +14, Disable Device +15, Heal +5, Knowledge (arcana) +14, Knowledge (nature) +11, Perception +9, Spellcraft +14, Stealth +5, Survival +4, Use Magic Device +9; **Racial**

Modifiers +2 Bluff, +2 Stealth

Languages Abyssal, Common, Draconic, Elven, Infernal, Orc

SQ alchemy (alchemy crafting +7), discovery (bone spur, clonespaw discovery, explosive bomb), mutagen (+4/-2, +2 natural armor, 70 minutes), poison use, prehensile tail, swift alchemy, swift poisoning

Combat Gear boro bead (1st level), potion of *cure moderate wounds*, wand of *see invisibility* (2 charges), acid (3), liquid ice (3), tangleburn bag (2);

Other Gear +1 studded leather, dagger (2), cloak of resistance +1, handy haversack, drow poison (1 dose), formula book (contains all prepared extracts as well as the following: 1st level—*comprehend languages*, *crafters' fortune*, *detect secret doors*, *identify*; 2nd level—*cure moderate wounds*, *skinsend*), mwk thieves' tools, wooden unholy symbol of Shub-Niggurath, 6 gp

A *detect magic* reveals that the statue detects as faint divination. Anyone wearing an unholy symbol of Shub-Niggurath and recites her sacred prayer receives the casting of *guidance* on them for 1 hour.

Treasure: With a DC 20 Perception check, the PCs find a hidden secret compartment inside the bench. Within are a lesser strand of prayer beads with one bead remaining (*bless*), two vials of unholy water, three acid flasks, and a copy of *Lamentations of the Fungus Men*. Reading this text gives someone a +2 circumstance bonus on Knowledge (religion) checks regarding Shub-Niggurath.

10. FOTTOR'S ROOM

This chamber features a large bed with foul-smelling, soiled blankets, a book shelf, and a desk covered with papers and writing implements. A small music box on the desk plays a barely audible, somber tune.

This is Fottor's personal chamber. He's spent centuries here penning copies of the *Whispers of the Dark Mother* to disseminate throughout Brynndell. The shelf contains a dozen blank books. The papers on the desk represent a copy of the evil book in progress.

Treasure: A DC 20 Perception check discovers a potion of *cure moderate wounds* and a +1 aberration bane dagger.

11. THE ARMORY (CR 8)

This room appears to be a blacksmith's forge. Two racks for weapons and armor lean against the northern wall.

Corvun Baerg, in his transformed state, is currently in the armory, gathering as many weapons as he can for his own cultists. What weapons and armor he can't carry, he tosses into the forge to be destroyed. He wants to make the fight against Hexos as one-sided as possible. When the PCs arrive, he is about to leave for the meeting room and see how his cultists are doing against the ones loyal to Hexos.

Corvun Baerg CR 8

XP 4,800

Male dark satyr cleric of Shub-Niggurath 7
CE Medium outsider (extraplanar)

Init +1; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; Perception +14

DEFENSE

AC 20, touch 11, flat-footed 19 (+2 armor, +1 Dex, +8 natural)

hp 82 (4d10+7d8+29)

Fort +8, **Ref** +8, **Will** +12

DR 10/lawful; **Resist** acid 15, fire 15; **SR** 13

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee 2 claws +11 (1d6+3), 4 tentacles +9 (1d4+2)

WHISPERS OF THE DARK MOTHER

PART SIX

Ranged mwk light crossbow (1d8/19–20)

Special Attacks channel negative energy 4/day (DC 16, 4d6), smite law 1/day (+1 attack and AC, +4 damage)

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 4th; concentration +5)
3/day—heat metal (DC 12)

Domain Spell-Like Abilities (CL 7th; concentration +11)

6/day—bleeding touch (3 rounds), touch of darkness (3 rounds)

Cleric Spells Prepared (CL 7th; concentration +11)

4th—*poison* (DC 19), *shadow conjuration*D (DC 18), *summon monster IV*

3rd—*bestow curse* (DC 18), *contagion* (DC 18), *deeper darkness*D, *dispel magic*

2nd—*blindness/deafness*D (blindness only, DC 17), *darkness*, *desecrate*, *eagle's splendor*, *silence* (DC 16)

1st—*black goat's influence*, *command* (DC 15), *divine favor*, *doom* (DC 16), *obscuring mist*D, *shield of faith*

0th (at will)—*bleed* (DC 15), *detect magic*, *guidance*, *read magic*

D Domain spell; **Domains** Darkness, Death

TACTICS

Before Combat Corvun casts *summon monster IV* to bring about 1d3 dretches to protect him, then casts *eagle's splendor* to increase the DC of his channel and spells. If he has time, he'll also casts *divine favor* and *shield of faith*.

During Combat Corvun casts *doom* and *darkness*. If anyone has a large weapon, he casts *command* and has them drop it, while anyone heavily armored is told to fall. From the minimum distance, Corvun channels negative energy. If anyone can see in the dark, he uses *obscuring mist*. If forced out of the *darkness* or *mist*, he disables targets with *bestow curse*, *blindness*, and *poison*, then uses his natural attacks. Corvun is arrogant and believes he can't possibly lose in this new body. As such, he fights to the death.

STATISTICS

Str 16, **Dex** 12, **Con** 14,
Int 8, **Wis** 18, **Cha** 12

Base Atk +7; **CMB** +10; **CMD** 22

Feats Blind-Fight, Combat Casting, Improved Channel, MultiattackB, Skill Focus (Perception), Spell Focus (necromancy), Weapon Focus (claw, tentacle)

Skills Acrobatics +8, Diplomacy +5, Knowledge (planes) +6, Knowledge (religion) +6, Perception +14, Spellcraft +5, Stealth +8 (+12 Stealth in forests); Racial Modifiers +4 Stealth in forests

Languages Common, Aklo

SQ aura

Combat Gear potion of cure moderate wounds, flask of acid (2), smokesticks (2); **Other Gear** mwk light



Base Atk +7; **CMB** +10; **CMD** 22

Feats Blind-Fight, Combat Casting, Improved Channel, MultiattackB, Skill Focus (Perception), Spell Focus (necromancy), Weapon Focus (claw, tentacle)

Skills Acrobatics +8, Diplomacy +5, Knowledge (planes) +6, Knowledge (religion) +6, Perception +14, Spellcraft +5, Stealth +8 (+12 Stealth in forests); Racial Modifiers +4 Stealth in forests

Languages Common, Aklo

SQ aura

Combat Gear potion of *cure moderate wounds*, flask of acid (2), smokesticks (2); **Other Gear** mwk light crossbow with 20 bolts, amulet of natural armor +1, bracers of armor +2, cloak of resistance +1, The *Whispers of the Dark Mother* tome, vial of unholy water, silver unholy symbol, 14 gp

Treasure: Corvun threw a large amount of items into the forge, ruining them forever, but the remaining rack still has two sets masterwork hide armor, six daggers, one ram staff, a mother's harness, a set of swaddling plate, and one pair of spiked iron-shod boots. On the table rests a set of masterwork artisan tools.

12. THE KENNEL

Two large cages with thick iron bars stand to the left and right ends of this large chamber. At the far side of the room, behind a black stone slab, rises a stone idol resembling a pregnant ogress fused with a she-goat.

This chamber houses two large cages used to hold summoned creatures. At the end of the room is a sacrificial slab, and a black stone statue of a goat woman with the crest of a three-headed goat carved onto the chest. In days of old, certain demons required a blood sacrifice in order to be summoned by powerful priests.

When he first lived in the temple, Fotthor was shown this room by his previous master. Here, a summoning circle was placed in each cage so that when a beast was summoned, they could not attack their handler before properly disciplined.

While Hexos was readying for the evening's ritual, Fotthor stayed here performing his own. Due to his inexperience and only knowing how to summon fiendish forest creatures, it took him a couple of days to successfully bring in two yeth hounds. The beasts tried to scare Fotthor away, but he and his goat companion, Daak,

were not so easily frightened. Over the next day, Fotthor managed to win over the beasts. They are currently indifferent to him.

Fotthor and Daak have already made their saves against the yeth hounds, and are temporarily immune to their bay ability.

Fotthor CR 6

XP 2,400

Male fiendish human cave druid 6

NE Medium humanoid (human)

Init +1; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +12

DEFENSE

AC 17, touch 12, flat-footed 15 (+5 armor, +1 Dex, +1 dodge)

hp 40 (6d8+12)

Fort +6, **Ref** +3, **Will** +8; +2 vs. aberration and ooze effects

DR 5/good; **Resist** cold 10, fire 10; **SR** 10

OFFENSE

Speed 20 ft. (30 ft. base)

Melee mwk scimitar +6 (1d6/18–20)

Ranged sling +5 (1d4)

Special Attacks wild shape 2/day (no plant form), smite good 1/day (+2 attack and AC, +6 damage)

Druid Spells Prepared (CL 6th; concentration +9)

3rd—*greater magic fang*, *swarm of fangs*

2nd—*barkskin*, *bull's strength*, *cat's grace*

1st—*bristle*, *entangle* (DC 14), *goodberry*

0 (at will)—*detect magic*, *guidance*, *know direction*, *resistance*

TACTICS

Before Combat If Fotthor is aware of the PCs approaching, he buffs himself with *barkskin*, *bull's strength*, *cat's grace*, and *resistance*, and shares the spells with Daak.

During Combat Fotthor casts *greater magic fang* on Daak, then uses *entangle* on anyone that didn't run from the yeth hounds, followed by *swarm of fangs*. If the PCs are still a threat, he casts *bristle* so that he and Daak and maximize their damage output.

STATISTICS

Str 10, **Dex** 13, **Con** 12, **Int** 10, **Wis** 16, **Cha** 14

Base Atk +4; **CMB** +4; **CMD** 15

Feats Dodge, Evolved Companion, Natural Spell, Weapon Finesse

Skills Climb +4, Handle Animal +11, Heal +9, Knowledge (dungeoneering) +8, Knowledge (nature) +6, Perception +12, Ride +8, Survival +12; ACP –2

Languages Common, Druidic

SQ nature bond (goat animal companion [Daak]), cavesense (+2 Knowledge [dungeoneering]) and

Survival), lightfoot, wild empathy +8 (+4 vs. oozes), tunnelrunner

Combat Gear oil of magic weapon; **Other Gear** +1 hide, mwk scimitar, sling with 10 bullets, druid's vestment, wooden holy symbol of Shub-Niggurath

Daak (Animal Companion) CR —

N Large animal

Male shubian mountain goat companion

Init +3; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., scent; Perception +6

DEFENSE

AC 21, touch 11, flat-footed 19 (+2 armor, +2 Dex, +8 natural, -1 size)

hp 45 (6d8+18)

Fort +8, **Ref** +8, **Will** +3; +4 vs. enchantments

Defensive Abilities evasion; **Resist** fire 10

OFFENSE

Speed 50 ft.

Space 10 ft.; Reach 5 ft.

Melee gore +9 (1d8+5)

Special Attacks powerful charge (+11 atk, 2d8+7)

STATISTICS

Str 20, **Dex** 16, **Con** 17, **Int** 2, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 6

Base Atk +4; **CMB** +9; **CMD** 21

Feats Blind-Fight, Light Armor ProficiencyB, Skill Focus (Climb), Weapon Focus (gore)

Skills Acrobatics +8, Climb +8, Perception +6, Survival +5

SQ devotion, evolution (resistance), link, tricks (attack [any], come, defend, down, flank, guard, heel, seek, track), share spells

Other Gear exotic military saddle, leather barding

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Wicked Horns (Ex): The horns of a Shubian mountain goat are gnarled and jagged, dealing both bludgeoning and piercing damage.

Yeth Hound CR 3 (2)

XP 800

NE Medium outsider (evil, extraplanar)

Init +6; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., scent; Perception +9

DEFENSE

AC 15, touch 12, flat-footed 13 (+2 Dex, +3 natural)

hp 30 (4d10+8)

Fort +3, **Ref** +6, **Will** +6

DR 5/silver

OFFENSE

Speed 40 ft., fly 60 ft. (good)

Melee bite +7 (2d6+4 plus sinister bite and trip)

Special Attacks bay

TACTICS

Before Combat The yeth hounds bay at their targets, hoping to split the party.

During Combat If anyone has run away in a panic, the yeth hounds chase after their prey. They flank an opponent to increase their chance of biting and tripping their target.

STATISTICS

Str 17, **Dex** 15, **Con** 15, **Int** 6, **Wis** 14, **Cha** 10

Base Atk +4; **CMB** +7; **CMD** 19 (23 vs. trip)

Feats Improved Initiative, Skill Focus (Fly)

Skills Fly +16, Perception +9, Stealth +9, Survival +9

Languages Abyssal or Infernal (cannot speak)

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Bay (Su): When a yeth hound howls or barks, all creatures except other evil outsiders within a 300-foot spread must succeed on a DC 12 Will save or become panicked for 2d4 rounds. This is a sonic mind-affecting fear effect. Whether or not the save is successful, an affected creature is immune to the same hound's bay for 24 hours. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Flight (Su): A yeth hound can cease or resume its flight as a free action.

Sinister Bite (Su): A yeth hound's bite is treated as evil-aligned for the purpose of overcoming damage reduction. In addition, a good-aligned creature bitten by a yeth hound must make a DC 14 Will save or be shaken for 1 round. If the victim is already suffering from a fear effect (such as the hound's bay attack), the victim is instead completely overcome with fear and can do nothing but cower for 1 round. This is a mind-affecting fear effect. The save DC is Constitution-based.

As with previous chambers, a *detect magic* reveals that the statue detects as faint divination. Anyone wearing an unholy symbol of Shub-Niggurath and recites her sacred prayer receives the casting of *guidance* on them for 1 hour.

Treasure: Each kennel can cast *summon monster IV*, but can only bring forth neutral or evil creatures.

13. THE CHIMERA'S LAIR (CR 9 AND 7)

A massive beast squats on all fours in the midst of this drafty, high-roofed chamber. The creature fans its shaggy sides with great batwings as it chews and rips a heap of mangled human corpses. It lifts its malformed goat-like head sniffing the air, and bleats in a convincing imitation of a normal goat. Then a second head rises beside the first on a maned neck, leonine jaws dropping gore...

To the west is a large cave mouth opening in the shape of a jagged toothed maw, covered in vines, and pale foliage. A small watering hole lies to the east.

With the mountain sealed, the chimera is forced to subsist on rodents and other vermin that enter her lair. Recently, Corvun Baerg managed to send her an actual meal; cultists. Corvun made a deal that once the barrier has come down, that the chimera would join him and help take down his witch rival, making him the new leader of the Ebon Dawn. Seeing the newly transformed Corvun, the chimera agreed, on the condition that he sent her a proper meal. Corvun had a couple of cultists that seemed too eager to please him as of late, and wrongfully suspected them of possible treachery. Not wanting to take any chances that one of them would someday try to usurp him as he was doing to Hexos, he chose them to be the necessary sacrifices.

When the PCs arrive at cavern floor and face off against the chimera, she is currently finishing her cultist meal. However, she has not properly feasted in a long time, and is not satisfied with two measly humans. The PCs invading her territory would make for a substantial enough meal.

Thatchraayeen CR 9

XP 3,200

Female Advanced fiendish chimera

CE Large magical beast

Init +7; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision, scent; Perception +10

DEFENSE

AC 23, touch 12, flat-footed 20 (+3 Dex, +11 natural, -1 size)

hp 103 (9d10+54)

Fort +11, **Ref** +9, **Will** +8

DR 5/good; **Resist** cold 10, fire 10;

SR 14

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft., fly 50 ft. (poor)

Melee bite +14 (2d6+6), bite +14 (1d8+6) gore +14 (1d8+6), 2 claws +14 (1d6+6)

Space 10 ft.; **Reach** 5 ft.

Special Attacks breath weapon (20-ft. cone, DC 21, acid), smite good 1/day (+2 attack and +2 AC, +9 damage)

TACTICS

During Combat Thatchraayeen releases her acid breath then declares a smite on the most armored opponent. She slowly maneuvers to the door so that anyone who tries to leave will provoke an attack from her.

Morale Thatchraayeen cannot escape so she fights to the death.

STATISTICS

Str 23, **Dex** 16, **Con** 21, **Int** 8, **Wis** 17, **Cha** 14

Base Atk +9; **CMB** +16; **CMD** 29 (33 vs. trip)

Feats Hover, Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Skill Focus (Perception), Toughness

Skills Fly +4, Perception +12, Stealth +6 (+10 in



scrubland or brush); Racial Modifiers +2 Perception, +4 Stealth in scrubland or brush

Languages Draconic

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Breath Weapon (Su): Thatchraayeen has the head of a green dragon. His breath weapon is usable once every 1d4 rounds, deals 6d8 points of acid damage, and allows a DC 19 Reflex save for half damage. The save DC is Constitution-based.

After defeating the chimera, a sudden chill fills the air as necrotic energy swirls around the watering hole. All the rats and vermin that the chimera had been feeding on over the years turn into an undead swarm and attack the PCs. It is divine retribution sent by Shub-Niggurath for the PCs having now killed two of her favorite beastly children. The swarm takes a round to form. Anyone making a Perception DC 15 is not surprised.

Apocalypse Shadow Rat Swarm CR 7

XP 3,200

NE Tiny undead (evil, swarm)

Init +8; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., scent; Perception +11

Aura fear (100 ft., DC 17, 10 rounds)

DEFENSE

AC 18, touch 17, flat-footed 13 (+4 Dex, +1 dodge, +1 natural, +2 size)

hp 71 (11d8+22); fast healing 10

Fort +5; **Ref** +9; **Will** +10

Defensive Abilities half damage from piercing and slashing, incorporeal form, shadow blend, split (11 damage, 5 hp); **Immune** swarm traits, undead traits;

SR 16

Weaknesses swarm traits

OFFENSE

Speed 80 ft., climb 120 ft.

Melee swarm (5d6 plus 1d4 Strength damage plus disease)

Space 10 ft.; **Reach** 0 ft.

Special Attacks greater distraction (DC 19)

STATISTICS

Str 6, **Dex** 19, **Con** —, **Int** 2, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 14

Base Atk +8; **CMB** —; **CMD** —

Feats Ability Focus (greater distraction)B, Dodge, Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Lightning Reflexes, Skill Focus (Perception), Wind Stance

Skills Acrobatics +8, Climb +10, Perception +11, Stealth +22; Racial Modifiers +4 Stealth

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Disease (Ex): Filth fever: **Bite**—injury; **save** Fort DC 17, **onset** 1d3 days, **frequency** 1/day, **effect** 1d3 Dex damage and 1d3 Con damage, cure 2 consecutive saves.

The save DC is Charisma-based.

Greater Distraction (Ex): Any living creature that takes damage from an apocalypse rat swarm's swarm attack is nauseated for 1d4 rounds; a successful Fortitude save (DC 17) negates the effect.

Incorporeal Form (Su): A shadow rat swarm can, as a standard action, assume an incorporeal form for up to 1 hour per day. In this form, the swarm loses its natural AC bonus but gains a +2 deflection bonus to AC. While in this form, the shadow rat swarm is AC 19 (+2 deflection, +4 Dex, +1 dodge, +2 size), touch 19, flat-footed 14. The shadow rat swarm can still swarm attack corporeal opponents while in its incorporeal form, but its attack only inflicts Strength damage and cannot distract foes or cause physical damage. The shadow rat swarm gains the incorporeal subtype while using this ability.

Shadow Blend (Ex): A shadow rat swarm can disappear into the shadows as a move action, gaining total concealment in all levels of illumination save bright light.

Strength Damage (Su): A shadow rat swarm deals Strength damage to living foes over which it swarms. A creature reduced to 0 Strength cannot move but does not die—at least, not until the swarm's physical damage takes its toll.

Treasure: The gear worn by the cultists is strewn about the lair.

Development: Before the characters arrive at the ritual to face off against Hexos Vell, they should have reached 7th level. If they still haven't reached this mark, have them encounter more random summoning traps and groups of cultists until they do.

14. THE GARDEN (CR 10)

This expansive green chamber is filled with the smells of the forest. Thick, 30-foot tall stone columns are placed at each corner of the room. Dozens of whirling and chanting humanoids fill this massive field of grass and dirt. Each is dressed in furs and covered in what looks like crimson body paint or blood, with their faces obscured by a black paper mask of a goat. Numerous lit braziers engulf the room in a brilliant, fiery light, casting large shadows of the dancers across the high walls and ceiling. A raised dais compliments the vast chamber, a throne in the center and a stone altar placed before it. Behind, a towering statue to the Dark Mother begins to glow.



Hexos Vell

The three soil enclosures within the garden are filled with a congregation of regular and fiendish commoner converts being stripped of their sanity with a tonic made of striped toadstools (1d3 Wis and 1 Int) and incense burners with *nightmare vapor* (1 Wis and confused 1 round).

Hexos has Aarna keep him safe while he performs the rituals. The bloodrager is currently unaware of her sister's plans to take out both Hexos and Corvun so she faithfully protects the witch while he is at his most vulnerable.

The sanctum is also guarded by the mehrim cleric, Raukma'am, who was summoned and bound to the garden since its creation. She helps Hexos perform the ritual properly so that Shub-Niggurath's true reign can be released upon the land.

If the PCs didn't rescue the prisoners, then a fatigued Daartin is currently bound to the altar while the other two await their own fates. If they did rescue the three prisoners, then Hexos is performing an awakening ceremony using Thatchraayeen's blood, and is impatiently waiting on the satyrs to bring the captives to the sacrificial altars.

A *detect magic* reveals that the statue detects as faint divination. Normally, anyone wearing a silver, gold, or onyx unholy symbol of Shub-Niggurath that recites her sacred prayer would receive the casting of *augury* on himself. Hexos has used this spell when he noticed that a few of his loyal cultists were not in the Garden at the start of the ritual. He'd had his suspicions, but didn't expect Baerg's betrayal during the ritual to release the Hidden Masters. He asked the statue if it was a mistake to not have demanded Corvun be present during the ritual. He was answered with "woe". He assumed that it was because of Corvun's betraying him, but it was because his being there might have swayed the battle in their favor against the PCs.

Creatures: Each of the dancing creatures drank a portion given to them and are still inhaling the fumes given off by the *nightmare vapor* (Fort DC 20). They are barely aware of their surroundings. They do not notice the PCs, and do not defend themselves if attacked, but instead cower and try to crawl away to a corner of the room. There are 15 regular humans and 10 fiendish humans in this chamber.

At the end of the cavern, standing behind an altar, is a boneless humanoid form. Behind it, sitting on a throne made of bone and hide, is the skinless corpse of a half-orc wearing a fur loin cloth. Perched by the left shoulder is a rat with a human-like face. This is Hexos Vell's true body.

A DC 17 Spellcraft check realizes that Hexos is using the *skinsend* spell.

Hazard: When the PCs first enter this room, they are exposed to the *nightmare vapor*. Due to the expansive size of the chamber, the vapor is partly thinned out by the time it reaches the entrance ways, lowering the effectiveness.

Distilled Nightmare Vapor

Type poison (inhaled); **Save** Fortitude DC 15

Frequency 1/round for 6 rounds

Effect 1 Wis damage and confused for 1 round; **Cure** 1 save.

There are several combatants during this final encounter, and things can become confusing for GM's if they are not familiar with the abilities and tactics of the cultists. Below, the tactics have been represented first to give GM's a clearer idea of how combat can occur. As always, GM's are free to adjust or change tactics as she sees fit.

TACTICS

Before Combat

Hexos casts *protection from good* and uses a charge of *mage armor* from his wand.

Raukma'am casts *protection from good* and *divine favor*.

The hidden masters cast *protection from good* from their wands and then *resistance*.

Aarna Ran casts *enlarge person*, *mirror strike*, and *shield* on herself

During Combat

Hexos begins combat by summoning *black tentacles* to catch as many PCs in its radius as possible. He uses *command* on any warriors to make them leave, give up the fight, or drop prone so that others can attack them with ease. Anyone resistant to his charms is hexed. If given time, he will use his *pearl of power* to get back his *command* or *ray of enfeeblement* spell and cast them again on strong but weak-willed opponents. Should a PC come close to his body, he returns to it, and continues to fight.

Raukma'am casts *darkness* on her unholy symbol, then charges into battle, biting with her diseased bite, and slashing with her front hooves. Against good-aligned foes that are susceptible, she uses her *dispel good* attack.

The Hidden Masters cast *darkness* on various areas of the chamber to obscure the entire space. They cast *hold person* on the PC's hoping to incapacitate as many as possible, following up by channeling negative energy

and summon monster II before entering melee. They will smite good when able.

Morale all the combatants are fiercely fanatical and fight to the death—except for the rat thing familiar, Black Tom. If things look like they are going poorly for Hexos and the cult, Black Tom will use the cover of the darkness spells to make his escape. He will hide in a pocket dimension the Dark Mother provides for him, awaiting a time when he will serve a new master.

Hexos Vell CR 7

XP 3,200

Male half-orc witch (beast-bonded) 6/devotee of evil 2 CE humanoid (human, orc)

Init +6; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +5

DEFENSE

AC 13, touch 13, flat-footed 10 (+2 Dex, +1 dodge)

hp 52 (8d6+22)

Fort +8*, **Ref** +6, **Will** +7; +1 vs. necromancy and negative energy spells

Defensive Abilities orc ferocity

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee mwk dagger +5 (1d4/19–20)

Ranged light crossbow +6 (1d8/19–20)

Special Attacks hexes (beast of ill-omen, charm, evil eye)

Witch Spells Prepared (CL 8th; concentration +13)

4th—*black goat's blessing* (DC 20), *black tentacles* (CMB +13), *dark young's appendages* (DC 20)

3rd—*aura of cannibalism* (DC 19), *bestow curse* (DC 19), *oneiric horror* (DC 18), *ray of exhaustion* (DC 19)

2nd—*blood blaze* (DC 18), *death knell* (DC 18), *detect thoughts* (DC 17), *exhaust of Shub-Niggurath* (DC 17), *skinsend* (already cast)

1st—*burning hands* (DC 16), *command* (DC 16), *hex vulnerability* (DC 17), *protection from good*, *ray of enfeeblement* (DC 17), *sleep* (DC 16)

0 (at will)—*detect magic*, *guidance*, *message*, *read magic*

Patron Nightmares

Skinsend Statistics While in his possessed skin, Hexos' statistics are **hp** 24; **Immune** construct traits;

DR 10/piercing or slashing; **Str** 3; **Con** —;

SQ compression

STATISTICS

Str 10, **Dex** 14, **Con** 14, **Int** 20, **Wis** 10, **Cha** 10

Base Atk +4; **CMB** +4; **CMD** 16

Feats Alertness*, Dodge, Improved Initiative, Spell Focus (necromancy, transmutation)

Skills Bluff +6, Diplomacy +8 (+10 to gather information), Intimidate +10, Knowledge (arcana) +13, Knowledge (geography) +10, Knowledge (local) +8, Knowledge (nature) +13, Knowledge (planes) +13, Knowledge (religion) +11, Perception +5*,

Sense Motive +6*, Spellcraft +12, Use Magic Device +8; Racial Modifiers +2 Intimidate

Languages Abyssal, Common, Draconic, Giant, Goblin, Orc

SQ enhanced familiar, evil devotion, hypothesis (evil may be destruction), questions, research (+2 to evil knowledge checks), transfer feats, weapon familiarity, witch's familiar (rat named Black Tom)

Combat Gear oil of magic weapon, potion of bear's endurance, scroll of extended summon monster III, scroll of detect secret doors, wand of comprehend languages (4 charges), wand of cure light wounds (10 charges), wand of mage armor (10 charges); **Other Gear** mwk dagger, light crossbow with 20 bolts, cloak of resistance +1, headband of vast intelligence +2 (Diplomacy), pearl of power (1st level), spell component pouch, backpack, silver unholy symbol, waterskin

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Evil May be Destruction (Su): When Hexos casts necromancy or negative energy spells, they gain the evil descriptor and are +1 caster level.

Black Tom (Familiar) CR —

NE Tiny animal

Init +2; **Senses** low-light vision, scent; Perception +1

DEFENSE

AC 18, touch 14, flat-footed 16 (+2 Dex, +4 natural, +2 size)

hp 24

Fort +3, **Ref** +5, **Will** +7

Defensive Abilities improved evasion

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee bite +4 (1d3–4)

Space 2-1/2 ft.; Reach 0 ft.

Special Attacks deliver hexes and touch spells

STATISTICS

Str 2, **Dex** 15, **Con** 11, **Int** 9, **Wis** 13, **Cha** 2

Base Atk +0; **CMB** –6; **CMD** 6 (10 vs. trip)

Feats Weapon Finesse

Skills Climb +10, Stealth +18, Swim +10; **Racial Modifiers** +4 Stealth

SQ Alertness, empathic link, share spells, speak with master, speak with rodents, store spells

Special Hexos gains a +2 bonus on Fortitude saves while within 1 mile of Black Tom.

Whispers of the Dark Mother

PART SIX

Raukma'am CR 5

XP 1,600

Female mehrim cleric creature of Gof-DuPog
CE Medium outsider (chaotic, demon, evil, extraplanar)
Init +2; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., scent; Perception +12

DEFENSE

AC 19, touch 12, flat-footed 17 (+2 Dex, +7 natural)

hp 33 (6d10)

Fort +5, **Ref** +4, **Will** +10

DR 10/cold iron; **Immune** electricity, poison;

Resist acid 10, cold 10, fire 10; **SR** 15

OFFENSE

Speed 40 ft.

Melee bite +11 (2d6+5 plus disease), 2 hooves +11 (1d6+5)

Special Attacks channel negative energy 6/day (DC 15, 2d6)

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 8th; concentration +11)

At will—*darkness*, *protection from good*, *see invisibility*

1/day—*dispel good* (DC 18), *dispel magic*, *summon monster III* (2d10 dretches or 1 mehrim 30%)

Cleric Spells Prepared (CL 6th, concentration +9)

2nd—*bear's endurance*

1st—*curse water* (already cast), *divine favor*

0 (at will)—*detect magic*, *read magic*

STATISTICS

Str 21, **Dex** 14, **Con** 10,

Int 12, **Wis** 17, **Cha** 16

Base Atk +6; **CMB** +11;

CMD 23 (27 vs. trip)

Feats Cleave, Iron Will, Power Attack

Skills Acrobatics +6,

Bluff +12, Escape Artist +11,

Intimidate +12, Knowledge

(local) +10, Knowledge (planes) +10,

Perception +12, Sense Motive +10,

Survival +10; **Racial Modifiers** +4

Acrobatics, +8 Perception

Languages Abyssal, Celestial, Common

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Disease (Su): Demon Fever: **Bite**—injury; **save** Fort DC 18; **onset** 1 day; **frequency** 1/day; effect 1d6 Con damage, target must make second Fort save or 1 point of damage is drain instead; cure 2 consecutive saves. The save DC is Constitution-based and includes a +5 racial bonus.

Aarna Ran CR 5

XP 1,200

Female fiendish human thousand young bloodrager 5
CE Medium humanoid (human)

Init +1; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +8

DEFENSE

AC 13, touch 9, flat-footed 12 (+4 armor, +1 Dex, -2 rage)

hp 62 (5d10+30)

Fort +8, **Ref** +2, **Will** +3

Defensive Abilities blood sanctuary, improved uncanny dodge, uncanny dodge; **DR** 5/good; **Resist** cold 10, fire 10; **SR** 10

OFFENSE

Speed 50 ft.



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Melee +1 greataxe +12 (1d12+8) or dagger +10 (1d4+5/19–20) or armor spikes +10 (1d6+5)

Ranged dagger +6 (1d4+5/19–20)

Special Attacks bloodline power (dark horns), bloodrage (14 rounds/day), smite good 1/day (+2 attack and AC, +5 damage)

Bloodrager Spells Known (CL 2nd; concentration +2) 1st (2/day)—enlarge person, mirror strike, shield

Base Statistics When not bloodraging, Aarna has the following statistics: AC 15, touch 11, flat-footed 14;

hp 52 (5d10+20); **Fort** +6, **Will** +1; **Melee** +1 greataxe +10 (1d12+5) or dagger +8 (1d4+3) or armor spikes +8 (1d6+3); **Ranged** dagger +6 (1d4+3); **CMB** +8; **CMD** 21;

Str 16, **Con** 14; **Skills** Climb +7

STATISTICS

Str 20, **Dex** 12, **Con** 18, **Int** 8, **Wis** 10, **Cha** 14

Base Atk +5; **CMB** +10; **CMD** 21

Feats Eschew MaterialsB, Furious Focus, Power Attack, Toughness, Weapon Focus (greataxe)

Skills Acrobatics +9, Climb +9, Intimidate +10, Knowledge (arcana) +3, Perception +8, Spellcraft +3, Survival +5

Languages Common

SQ blood casting, bloodline (thousand young), fast movement, long knobby legs

Combat Gear potion of *cure moderate wounds*, acid (3);

Other Gear +1 studded leather with armor spikes, +1 greataxe, dagger (5), wooden unholy symbol of Shub-Niggurath, 64 gp

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Dark Horns (Su): Aarna can grow horns as a free action. These horns are treated as a natural weapon, allowing her to make a single gore attack as a standard attack action using her full base attack bonus. This attack deals 1d8 damage plus her Strength modifier. These horns are considered a magic weapon for the purpose of overcoming DR. Aarna can use her horns for 5 rounds per day. These rounds do not need to be consecutive.

Long Knobby Legs (Su): Aarna's height increased 2 feet when her legs elongated, increasing her land speed by 10 feet. The ability only works when she wears light or no armor.

Hidden Masters (3) (Awakened) CR 4

XP 1,200

Male half-fiend variant human cleric of Shub-Niggurath 3/expert 1

NE Medium outsider (native)

Init +5; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +10

DEFENSE

AC 21, touch 14, flat-footed 16 (+4 armor, +5 Dex, +1 natural, +1 shield)

hp 32 (4d8+11)

Fort +5, **Ref** +6, **Will** +10

DR 5/magic; **Immune** poison; **Resist** acid 10, cold 10, electricity 10, fire 10; **SR** 14

OFFENSE

Speed 20 ft. (30 ft. base), fly (good) 40 ft. (60 ft. base)

Melee mwk dagger +6 (1d4+2/19–20), mwk spiked iron-shod boot +6 (1d4+1), bite +2 (1d6+1), claw +2 (1d4+1)

or mwk spiked iron-shod boot +5 (1d4+2),

mwk spiked iron-shod boot +6 (1d4+1), bite +2 (1d6+1), 2 claws +2 (1d4+1)

or mwk dagger +8 (1d4+2/19–20), bite +2 (1d6+1), claw +2 (1d4+1)

or bite +7 (1d6+2), 2 claws +7 (1d4+2)

Ranged dart +7 (1d4+2)

Special Attacks channel negative energy 8/day (DC 16, 2d6), smite good 1/day (+5 attack and AC, +4 damage)

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 4th; concentration +9)

3/day—*darkness*

1/day—*desecrate*

Domain Spell-Like Abilities (CL 3rd; concentration +8) 8/day—*predator's grace* (1 round), *touch of evil* (1 round)

Cleric Spells Prepared (CL 3rd; concentration +7)

2nd—*align weapon* (evil only)D, *hold person* (DC 17), *summon monster II*

1st—*bane* (DC 16), *command* (DC 16), *cure light wounds*, *doom* (DC 16), *magic fang*D

0 (at will)—*bleed* (DC 15), *guidance*, *light*, *resistance*

D domain spell; **Domains** Animal (Fur), Evil

STATISTICS

Str 14, **Dex** 20, **Con** 14, **Int** 12, **Wis** 20, **Cha** 20

Base Atk +2; **CMB** +4; **CMD** 19

Feats Declaration of EvilB, Selective Channeling, Two-Weapon Fighting, Weapon Finesse

Skills Bluff +8, Fly +14, Knowledge (history) +6,

Knowledge (nature) +6, Knowledge (planes) +8,

Knowledge (religion) +8, Linguistics +6, Perception

+10, Sense Motive +9, Spellcraft +5, Survival +9; ACP -2

Languages Abyssal, Common, Infernal

Combat Gear wand of *cure light wounds* (18 charges), wand of *protection from good* (13 charges), bloodroot

poison (2 doses), vials of unholy water (2); **Other Gear** mwk hide, mwk light wooden shield, masterwork dagger,

masterwork spiked iron-shod boots (2), darts (8), catching cloak, onyx unholy symbol worth 200 gp

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Awakened (Ex): The Hidden Masters have +2 to all three of their mental ability scores and gain Declaration of Evil as a bonus feat.

Declaration of Evil (Su): Whenever a Hidden Master

invokes the name of Shub-Niggurath and strike down a foe, he gains a +2 Profane bonus on damage for 4 rounds.

The Beast of Bright Mountain, now an undead haunt, begins to attack more travelers. How the players decide to deal with this mythical threat may make for an exciting new campaign.

CONCLUSION

Once the cultists have been defeated, the PCs can return to Brighton. The victims need restoration to their Wisdom scores. Sheriff Byron Tate is all too happy in gathering a force to destroy the mountain entrances, forever sealing the temple. Once back home, the PCs are rewarded for their troubles and heralded as heroes. Lady Canterville and all the other victims who'd been struck down by the Ebon Dawn were avenged.

If Hexos, Corvun, or the half-sisters escaped, they will each try to bring back the Ebon Dawn, with them as the cult leader. Heedless of the danger, they will go to the Eternal Womb to perform the rituals with new followers.

The body of the Beast of Bright Mountain mysteriously vanishes. The creature who plagued the valley for so long, is destined to continue, now as a haunt.

Story Award: Award the PCs a CR 7 reward (3,200 XP) if Hexos and the rest of the would-be cultists leaders were defeated.

FUTURE ADVENTURES

While the Ebon Dawn has been defeated, Shub-Niggurath's worship was once popular among the orcs who ruled north of the kingdom of Faramaar. There are old ruins which may contain horrors and evils linked to the Dark Mother.

The PCs have the ritual books, and can do with them as they please, but if Sheriff Tate and others discover this, they implore them to find a way to destroy the books. It's likely that members of the Dustwardens of the Grey Maiden contact the PCs and have them aid in taking down other sects of Shub-Niggurath. If the PCs have the locations of other unholy sites, they are tasked to destroy those as well.



THE CREATOR

Alignment: True Neutral

Domains: Animal, Earth, Glory, Knowledge, Plant, Sun

Symbol: A leafless white branch

Favored Weapon: club

Typical Worshipers: Druids, dryads, hunters, nymphs and awakened animals

Center of Worship: The Mortar, the Birth Tree

Description: The Creator exists as an invisible presence, that can take on the form of any animal or plant native to Celmae, a power which the druids claim as proof of their doctrine that all life on Celmae began with the Creator.

The Creator forgoes having a realm all its own. The world of Celmae is the perfect playground to fight off its endless boredom.

The Creator walks the world of Celmae spurring individuals to act. The consequences spiral in tight patterns of coincidence. These chain-reactions unfold with subtle ministrations of the Creator. The resulting events feeds the next act like a brilliantly unending fractal. Heroes rise to the challenge of villains. Heroes turn to tyrants. Which pulls the next set of would be-heroes. The conflict escalates, feeding scavengers. These scavengers grow and swell. Predators move in and gorge on the scavengers.

While the Creator favors no specific conclusion as each outcome is fascinating to it. The Creator accepts no sacrifices to influence events further. It simply pushes and watches mortals shove back ensuring that every action has an equal reaction.

The Religion: The followers of the Creator call themselves Witnesses. They observe the acts of this god, and witness the natural order take place. Leaders of such groups call themselves Father's. These Fathers take on the role of guide. The council of Fathers are sought out because of the deep-rooted connection to events of the past, and events of the now. Followers of the Creator often display an unusual understanding of cause and effect. Fathers and Witnesses sustain themselves by hunting and scavenging. As the seasons march onwards, the cults of the Creator diminish and swell. Cults consider death sacrosanct, and do not act to prevent the death of its members. The death of a member is accepted as the natural flow of events and the will of the creator. Resurrection or animation is not taboo. These events are seen as impetus of another chain of events.

Temples and Shrines: Followers of the Creator build shrines and temples where they feel the Creator's touch strongest. The Creator often visits sites of surreal natural



beauty. The cult's predilection to letting events unfold naturally often leads to dilapidation and overgrowth. The oldest of shrines and temples are mistaken for ruins by outsiders of the faith.

Important holy sites are guarded by giant, awakened animals. These creatures, called Guardians often communicate telepathically, warning potential transgressors of their presence as they approach. They act as wardens for the region, and protect the sites from defilement. The Mortar and the Birth Tree are the two holiest sites of the faith, and their Guardians are the most powerful, and wise of their kind.

The Birth Tree stands in the ancient Feywyld Forest. This massive tree's bark is as smooth and hard as stone. Its leaves are dry, crumpled husks and the fruit it bears is musky, foul-smelling, and seedless. A mighty bull named Begetter stands vigil over the ancient tree. Some clerics claim the first copy of Great Grandfather's Rest was found here, buried in the tree's shadow. Some zealous followers believe the Birth Tree was the first living thing the Creator made, and consider it the genesis of all life on Celmae.

The Mortar can be found just east of the Shadow Sands. It is a single corundum pillar towering out of a serene pool of water inside a smooth basalt crater. The symbol of the Creator is carved upon the stone monolith. The pillar projects dazzling kaleidoscope-like light that dances on the walls of the crater. The great wurm Pestle rests within the water. He emerges to those deemed worthy, goading them to act on his behalf. The Mortar and Pestle create heroes bound for greatness. Those unworth are ground into dust by his tasks.

A Priest's Role: Fathers observe what the call, the natural flow, guiding events as they transpire. Each Father supplies wisdom from the holy texts as needed. They guide and inspire followers to care for the natural world.

Fathers also recognize acting forces and inspire those who could rise to act in opposition to them. Fathers act as rebels, wise-men, and instigators all in one. Some Cult-leaders act as fulcrums for events. Pushing events to the next level to please their deity. The faithful know that there is no such thing as overdoing something. They know that something or someone will act to oppose them, just as the Creator would want.

Adventurers: Some witnesses seek to emulate the endless pilgrimages of the Creator across Celmea. They journey to meet the Creator himself. This wanderlust is considered a blessing of divine will. The reward for giving into this desire is great. Some pilgrims experience unique natural pleasures. Others crash into history with daring deeds. Most simply restore balance.

Adventurers in the name of the Creator amuse the deity to no end. The repercussions of these deeds spread like fractal waves. Each consequence further spirals into larger and grander events. It's only a matter of time before events collapse under the weight of interactivity restoring balance once more.

Holy Texts: The Great Clockwork is a several thousand page tome. It describes Celmae in obscure metaphor. The interconnection of all life and unlife woven together in masterful poetry. It goes into detail on how each cycle feeds into the next. The brilliant interplay of each detail on one another makes it hard for scholars to discern. Since discovery, sects have circulated it with individual translations. Such translations are smaller.

The Great Clockwork's metaphors often conflict with passages in Great Grandfather's Rest. The Great Grandfather's Rest is a smaller book. It describes the events the Creator took to create the world. The language of the text is simple and straightforward. Descriptions are sparse, archaic, and primal. Each found copy has conflicting passages. These conflicting passages are often debated among Fathers. The tomes are the base of splintering among cults.

Holidays: The most celebrated day is the Day of Awakening on the first bloom of spring. It is the day when Guardians appear to any mortal who journeys to meet with them. Any new Guardians are born at dawn. Most individuals celebrate this day by releasing animals into the wild, and giving chase. It is possible that these animals cross the path of the Creator; these lucky beasts are gifted with intelligence. Some festivals host grand feasts for potters, builders, and hunters. Such professions are celebrated for the similarity of the Creator's most Divine acts.



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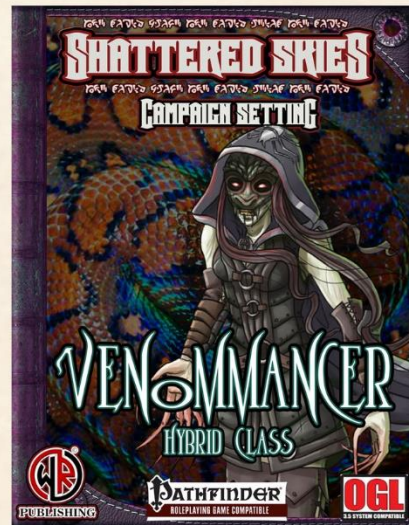
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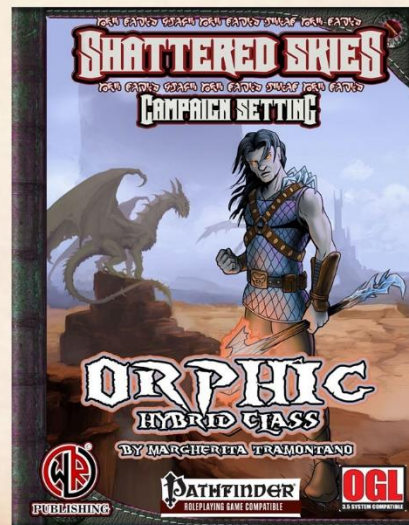
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SHATTERED SKIES

הַאֲדָרָה הַיְמָנִית הַקְּדוֹנָה הַיְמָנִית הַקְּדוֹנָה הַיְמָנִית הַקְּדוֹנָה

BEASTS OF BRIGHT MOUNTAIN

The Whispers of the Dark Mother Conclude!

The heroes have driven away the ogre army attacking Brighton. All that remains to defeat the Cult of Shub-Niggurath is to confront a transformed Corvun Baerg and his Witch master Hexos Vell-The Skinless One!

After the party travels through miles of tunnels, they discover a fertile valley, and the entrance to the secret temple of the Ebon dawn cult. But before they enter the ancient place, they are attacked by legendary Beast of Bright Mountain.

Will the demonic entity succeed in stalking and assassinating the heroes one-by-one? Or will they thwart the mythical monster in time to stop The Skinless One?

Beasts of Bright Mountain is the conclusion of the *Whispers of the Dark Mother Adventure Path*. A Level 6 adventure for 4-5 players. Written by Derek Blakely

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