

האיורים והטקסט הם יצירותיהם של המחברים והמאיירים

SHATTERED SKIES

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ADVENTURES



**WHISPERS
OF THE
DARK MOTHER**
4 of 6

Belly of Rot

BY RODNEY SLOAN



BELLY OF ROT

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ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

As an influential merchant within Brynndell's religious quarter, Corvun Baerg was able to secretly obtain a complete copy of *The Whispers of the Dark Mother* shortly before Hexos Vell learned of the fragment in Lady Canterville's possession. Seeing it as the perfect opportunity to surpass his witch lord in power, Corvun began preparations for the nefarious ritual that would transform him into a dark satyr; the chosen spawn of the Dark Mother.

Now with his vile preparations set, the PCs arrive on Corvun's doorstep. Will they be able to stop the madman...or is it already too late?

ADVENTURE SYNOPSIS

Traveling to Brynndell, the capital of Brynny, the PCs track Corvun Baerg—an associate of the cultist Martin Bhestos—to his store in the religious quarter. Baerg is rumored to own a second copy of *Whispers of the Dark Mother*. In a chase through the city, the PCs capture a charlatan impersonating Baerg and learn that Baerg has already escaped the city. Further interrogation reveals that Baerg is second in command to Hexos Vell, the half-orc leader of the Ebon Dawn cult. Using the book, Corvun plans to perform a ritual that will turn him into one of Shub-Niggurath's Dark Young.

Making their way down a forested grotto—into a network of caves known as the Eternal Womb—the PCs find a blighted grove guarded by corrupted dryads. Further down, after fighting off a warped snallygaster, they come to an ancient temple dedicated to the Dark Mother; the spot chosen by Corvun for his transformation ritual.

As they clear the temple they learn that Corvun Baerg has escaped, and that the cult of the Ebon Dawn plans to open a sealed vault containing the sect's deathless masters, located somewhere in Bright Mountain.

ADVANCEMENT TRACK

The players begin this adventure at fourth level. They should reach fifth level by the end of the adventure. Feel free to add in any encounters from the random encounter chart found in part 1 of *Whispers of the Dark Mother adventure path: Seeds of Evil*, or other sources to ensure that the PCs gain the needed xp to advance in level before beginning the next adventure.

CHAPTER ONE: HUNTING CORVUN BAERG

The adventure begins once the players arrive in Brynndell. Read or paraphrase the following to get the adventure underway.

Ahead, silhouetted against the slate-gray sky from the sprawling labyrinth of hovels and houses below, is the walled city of Brynndell. It is as ominous as it is impressive; a great leviathan of human construction perched atop a vast granite mesa. Even from this distance, Brynndell's keep is unmistakable, a fortress within a fortress. To the south, a great cathedral of black-gray stone claws at the sky—the divine Cathedral of the Grey Maiden, goddess of death.

Somewhere within Brynndell's high walls is the man you seek—Corvun Baerg, an associate of the cultist Maartin Bhestos. As rumor has it, Baerg owns a copy of the heretical tome known as *The Lamentations of the Fungus Men*. If the rumors are true, then there is no time to waste.

Seeking Corvun Baerg, the party will need to inquire around the capital, based on what they already know of Baerg and his connection to Maartin Bhestos. For more information about Maartin, see part 3 of *the Whispers of the Dark Mother adventure path: Despicable Deeds*.

A DC 20 Knowledge (local) Skill check gives a PC prior knowledge of Shub-Niggurath cultists operating out of the religious quarter.

Using Diplomacy to gather information reveals the following information about Baerg:

DC 10+ "Corvun Baerg owns and runs the Os Domus, a well-known establishment from where he sells religious artifacts and relics. He's situated within the religious quarter of Brynndell".

DC 15+ "The collection of holy relics within Os Domus is extensive. If you dug deep enough, you'd probably find more than a few trinkets, even from the dark days of Ekos the Unclean. Who knows what else you might find in the vaults of the Os Domus".

DC 20+ "Be careful of prying too deep stranger, Baerg has more than a few dangerous associates. You can go ask your questions elsewhere, I want no part in this."

DC 25+ "Baerg is one slippery character and hard to get near. He keeps some thugs hanging around the front of the



Os Domus, disguised as penitent worshippers, and leaves the Os through a backdoor whenever someone comes snooping.”

DC 30+ “Baerg recently took collection of a large shipment of ropes and pitons. Looks like he’s planning a trip.”

If the PCs are indiscreet, or are having a hard time of finding Baerg’s establishment, an encounter with a few minor cultists could provide a push in the right direction. Their investigation should eventually lead them to the religious quarter and the steps of the Os Domus.

THE OS DOMUS

Situated within the religious quarter and swathed in the shadows of the grandiose Cathedral of the Grey Maiden, the equally imposing Os Domus is not easily missed. When the PCs arrive, read or paraphrase the following:

The large, dark structure of what can only be the Os Domus is fronted by thirty foot high pillars studded with human skulls. Between the macabre pillars, zealous

worshippers and merchants come and go in a frenzy of religious commerce. In the gloom beyond the monolithic pillars, enormous doors lead into a darkened space beyond, an ominous welcome to those who wish for a piece of the gods.

Os Domus, known as the House of Bones, is part museum, part purveyor of holy relics. Apart from selling the usual religious trinkets coveted by the pious, Os Domus holds a number of rare artifacts and reliquary. Most notably, the Os Domus is rumored to hold the charred bridal of Jos the Loyal, the famous pegasus of the heroic twins, Gran and Brynn.

Holy symbols of most of the major and minor deities can easily be purchased in the Os Domus, save for deities of an Evil alignment. While symbols for some of the most vile deities can be found in the Os Domus, their sale is forbidden by civil law, and Corvun Baerg trades these only through secret channels.

Relics, on the other hand, come from a diverse number of sources. About 80% of the relics are fakes; although there is often no real way to prove their authenticity outside of

necromantic means, and even this proves near impossible as piecing together an entire skeleton is a monumental task.

CORVUN BAERG

Corvun Baerg is a loyal follower of the Dark Mother, a lieutenant within her Ebon Dawn cult and a mad man. He uses the Os Domus as a cover for collecting powerful artifacts related to his vile goddess. Through his dealings he received a copy of *The Whispers of the Dark Mother*, the text he requires to perform a dark ritual to become one of Shub-Niggurath's dark young. Having completed his preparations, Corvun set out a day before the PCs arrived in the capital. To cover his tracks, he employed "Barnabus", a skilled charlatan, to impersonate himself and keep the doors of the Os open for business.

THE IMPOSTER. CR 3

Disguised as Baerg, Barnabus (an assumed name) has so far succeeded in convincing everyone, including the staff of the Os Domus, that he is Corvun Baerg. He accidentally discovered the cult of the Ebon Dawn and its true intentions. Thus, he now fears for his life.

When the PCs come calling, Barnabus, fearing that cultists have come to silence him, attempts to flee through the back door. Unless the PCs have a suitable plan to prevent his escape, the chase is on, see *The Chase* section below.

Barnabus is an experienced charlatan and is accustomed to balancing risk and reward for maximum profit. If he can collect from Baerg, the PCs and possibly the Bryndell Watch, while playing each group against the other, he'll attempt to do so, as long as he can ensure he'll be alive long enough to enjoy the rewards. Barnabus knows that Corvun Baerg headed west, and assumes that he's looking for some form of grotto or cave. Through interactions with cultists who believed he was their superior, he also knows that Baerg is lieutenant to a half-orc named Hexos Vell—the leader of the Ebon Dawn cult.

The circumstances of his capture will influence which cards he decides to play; continuing to assume the identity of Baerg may be helpful in the right situation, while turning on his former employer may give him more options at a later stage.



False Corvun Baerg CR3

XP 800

Human Rogue 4

CN Medium humanoid (human)

Init +2; **Senses** Perception +8

DEFENSE

AC 16, touch 12, flat-footed 14 (+4 armor, +2 Dex)

hp 21 (4d8)

Fort +1, **Ref** +6, **Will** +2

Defensive Abilities evasion, trap sense +1, uncanny dodge

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee *mwk rapier* +3
(1d6-1/18-20)

Ranged *light crossbow* +5
(1d8/19-20)

Special Attacks sneak attack +2d6

Rogue Spell-Like Abilities

(CL 4th, concentration +5)

3/day—*prestidigitation*

2/day—*disguise self*

TACTICS

Before Combat Using Bluff or Disguise, Barnabus avoids combat.

During Combat Barnabus uses Improved Feint to make sneak attacks while trying to escape.

STATISTICS

Str 8, **Dex** 14, **Con** 10, **Int** 13, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 18

Base Atk +3; **CMB** +2; **CMD** 14

Feats Combat Expertise, Deceitful, Improved Feint

Skills Bluff +13, Diplomacy +11, Disable Device +9, Disguise +13, Heal +3, Knowledge (local) +8, Perception +8, Perform (sing) +9, Sense Motive +8, Sleight of Hand +9, Stealth +9, Use Magic Device +11

Languages Common, Gnome

SQ rogue talents (major magic, minor magic), trapfinding +2

Combat Gear potion of cure moderate wounds, scroll of bless, scroll of burning hands, scroll of cure light wounds, scroll of magic missile, alchemist's fire (2), holy water, thunderstone; **Other Gear** +1 studded leather, light crossbow with 10 bolts, masterwork rapier, disguise kit, everburning torch, healer's kit, thieves' tools, wizard's spellbook, wooden holy symbol, 129 gp

WHISPERS OF THE DARK MOTHER

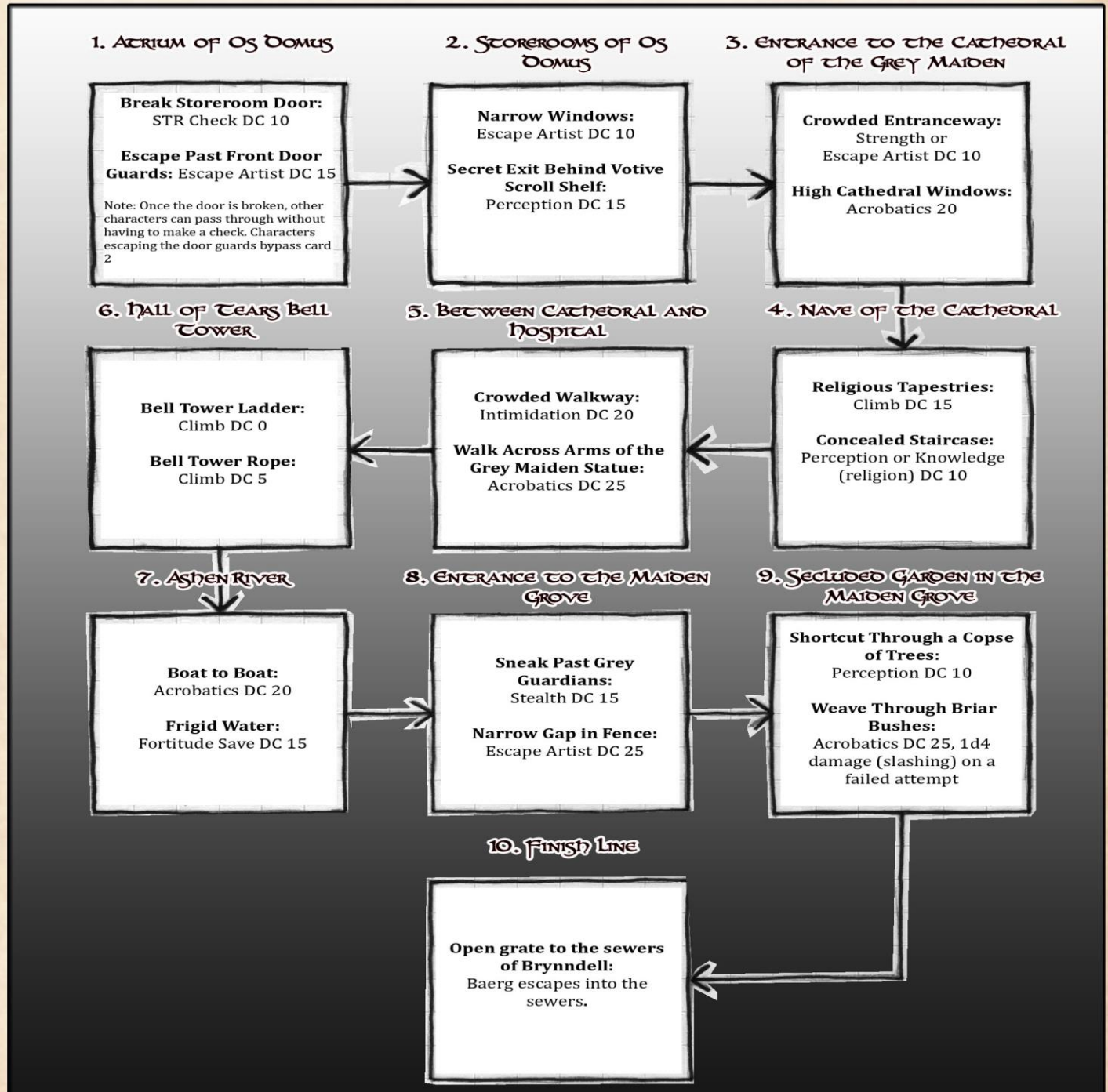
PART FOUR

THE CHASE CR 4

The chase uses the chase rules (see part 1 of the Whispers of the Dark Mother adventure path, Seeds of Evil). Each stage of the chase is given below, along with a name of the area and two options for progressing to the next step.

Because of his head start, Barnabus begins on rectangle or card number 3 and goes first. Because he assumes that the PCs are cultists who are intent on killing him, he pulls no punches unless convinced that the PCs are willing to spare his life.

This chase assumes that each rectangle or card is roughly 30 feet apart. For each 10 feet below 30 feet base speed a PC possesses imposes a -2 penalty to checks to overcome obstacles presented on a rectangle. For each 10 feet increase in speed beyond 30 feet a +2 bonus is bestowed. Barnabus has a base speed of 30 feet.



GUARDS! CR 4

Baerg employs several heavies to protect his establishment. Disguised as worshipers relaxing in the public square near the Os Domus, they use slings on anyone attempting to harm their boss.

Corvun's Goons (2) CR 2

XP 600

Male human rogue 1/fighter 1
NE Medium humanoid (human)

Init +4; **Senses** Perception +4

DEFENSE

AC 16, touch 13, flat-footed 13 (+3 armor, +2 Dex, +1 dodge)

hp 12 (1d8+1d10+2)

Fort +3, **Ref** +4, **Will** +0

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee *masterwork short sword* +7 (1d6+4/19-20), or *masterwork short sword* +5 (1d6+4/19-20) and *masterwork short sword* +5 (1d6+2/19-20)

Ranged *masterwork sling* +5 (1d4/x2)

Special Attacks sneak attack +1d6

TACTICS

Before Combat The goons guzzle their potions of bull's strength (included in stat block).

During Combat These goons fire their slings at anyone chasing their boss. In melee, they drop their bows and fight with both of their shortswords.

Morale The goons aren't paid enough to die. if reduced to 3 hp or less they flee or surrender.

STATISTICS

Str 18, **Dex** 14, **Con** 12, **Int** 8, **Wis** 10, **Cha** 11

Base Atk +1; **CMB** +5; **CMD** 17

Feats Dodge, Weapon Focus (short sword), Two-Weapon Fighting

Skills Acrobatics +6, Bluff +4, Climb +8, Escape Artist +6, Intimidate +5, Perception +4, Stealth +6

Languages Common

SQ trapfinding

Combat Gear potion of bull's strength, potion of cure light wounds (2); **Other Gear** masterwork short swords (2), masterwork studded leather armor, masterwork light crossbow and 10 bolts, dice and playing cards, purse with 10 sp, a wineskin, waterskin, and a week's rations.

The chase through Brynndell is likely to alert the Brynndell watch, who, although slow to respond, will be ready to mop up any trouble makers loitering on the streets after the commotion caused in the usually somber Cathedral of the Grey Maiden. Patrols of two watchmen arrive every 1d4 rounds after Barnabus escapes. A full squad of 6 watchmen, led by an officer of the watch, arrives 5 minutes later. They arrest everyone on sight, saving questions for after a night in the cells. The Brynndell watch have no desire to chase anyone into the sewers



Bryndell watchman CR 1 (2)

XP 400

Human warrior 3

LN Medium humanoid

Init +0; **Senses** Perception +3

DEFENSE

AC 18, touch 10, flat-footed 18 (+8 armor)

hp 19 (3d10+3)

Fort +4, **Ref** +1, **Will** +1

OFFENSE

Speed 20 ft.

Melee *halberd* +5 (1d10+3/x3) or *heavy flail* +5

(1d10+3/19-20) or *sap* +5 (1d6+2 nonlethal)

Ranged *heavy crossbow* +3 (1d10/19-20)

STATISTICS

Str 14, **Dex** 11, **Con** 13, **Int** 9, **Wis** 10, **Cha** 8

Base Atk +3; **CMB** +5 (+7 sunder); **CMD** 15 (17 vs. sunder)

Feats Alertness, Improved Sunder, Power Attack

Skills Intimidate +5, Perception +3, Ride -3, Sense Motive +2

Languages Common

Combat Gear potions of cure light wounds (2); **Other**

Gear half-plate, heavy crossbow with 10 bolts, halberd, heavy flail, sap, 5 gp.

BAERG'S JOURNEY

Baerg and two cultists took a wagon and five horses to make the four-day journey to the grotto known to Shub-Niggurath's cultists as the Eternal Womb. Having left a day before the PCs, they will complete the journey in three days, kill and burn their mounts, and then descend into the grotto. Their tracks would not be easy to follow except that, in their haste, they leave several clues along the road.

THE PC'S JOURNEY

During the character's pursuit of Corvun Baerg and his cultist's, they run the risk of encountering the dangerous wildlife that inhabits Bright Mountain Valley. Consult the following table for random encounters the party might have during their trip. There is a 25% chance of an encounter each day, but the PC's automatically have one before they reach the *Farmstead* during day one. There is a 75% chance of an encounter after they reach the *Desecrated Shrine*. If they do not have an encounter during the day, there is a 50% chance every three hours, that they will have one during the night. If they do encounter danger during the day, there is only a single, 50% chance of encountering a creature at night.

Random Encounters in Bright Mountain Valley

Not an all-inclusive list but a sampling of some of the dangerous wildlife living within the valley.

D20	Creature	percentile
1	Huge Earth Elemental	01%-05%
2	Wyrmling Green Dragon	06%-10%
3	Giant Scorpion	11%-15%
4	Decapus	16%-20%
5	Dire Wolf	21%-25%
6	Assassin Vine	26%-30%
7	4 x Yellow Musk Creeper	31%-35%
8	3 x Werewolf	36%-40%
9	4 x Giant Wasp	41%-45%
10	5 x Spider Swarm	46%-50%
11	Ogre	51%-55%
12	Centipede Swarm	56%-60%
13	Large Earth Elemental	61%-65%
14	Gate Willow	66%-70%
15	2 x Korred	71%-75%
16	Unicorn	76%-80%
17	3 x Whipvine	81%-85%
18	Chupacabra	86%-90%
19	Ivy Sprite	91%-95%
20	Treant	96%-00%

THE FARMSTEAD

On the first day of their journey, the PCs pass a farmstead with a crowd of farmers and sobbing farmwives clustered around the tiny hovel of an elderly couple. Within, the scene is a gruesome tableau of slaughter. One of the cultists, wishing to bless the journey with the blood of innocents, stopped in here and killed the couple, before making off with their only prized possession, a wooden box decorated with mother of pearl inlay. The contents of the box, sentimental trinkets of no monetary value, lie strewn on the floor and soaked in blood. A successful Survival DC 15 check allows a PC to discern a single boot print of an adult male humanoid.

Returning to the farm with evidence of the cultist's defeat is worth 800 xp.

THE DESECRATED SHRINE

Late in the afternoon on the first day the PCs arrive at a shrine to the Traveler. The simple shrine of a carved stone lies smashed, and the trees around the shrine bear a bloody image of a red circle with three sets of out-facing horns radiating from the circumference. A DC 17 Knowledge (religion) Skill check reveals that the mark is a symbol of Shub-Niggurath. The shrine is blighted, as if a desecrate spell had been cast on the area. Dispelling it and removing the unholy symbols is worth 100 xp. Although it takes time, the Traveler blesses anyone who aids in the upkeep of his shrine with a +2 divine bonus on Fortitude saves during the next 12 hours.

THE CAMPSITE

A thin wisp of smoke (Perception DC 15) rises from a clump of trees a few paces from a bend in the road.

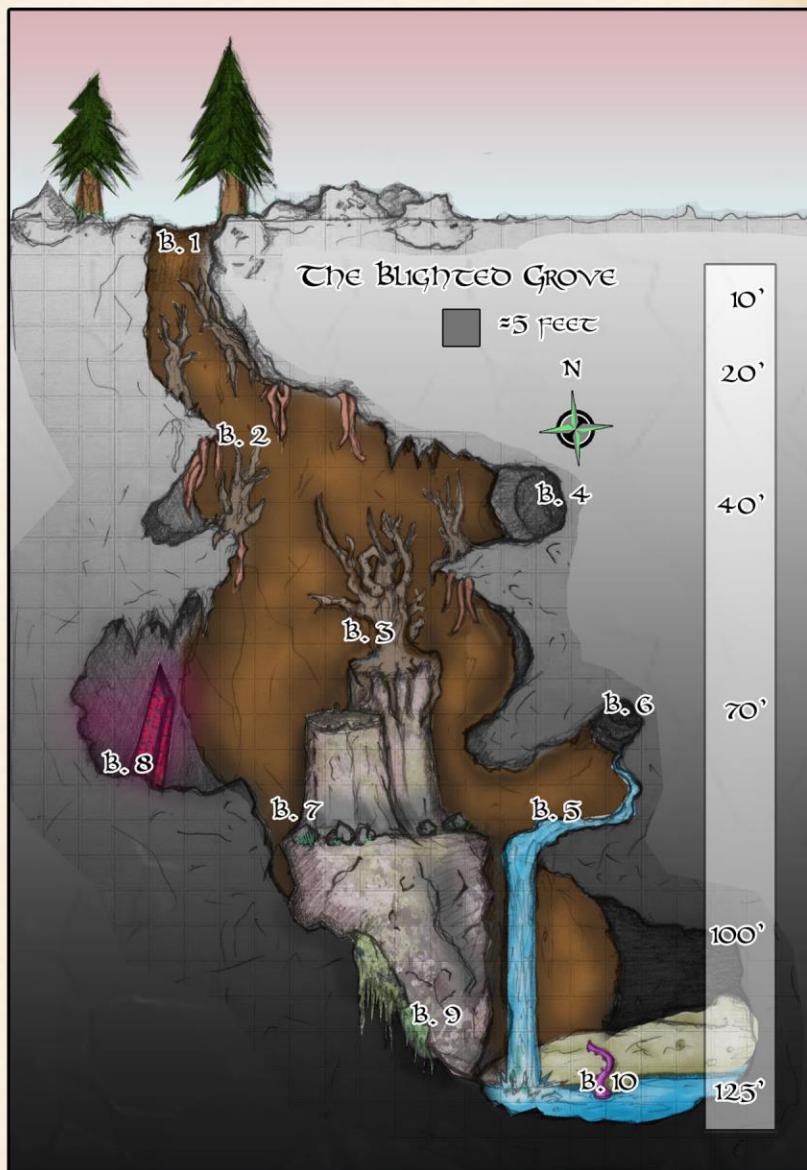
Baerg and his cultists made camp late on the first night of their journey, and in leaving early made a poor attempt at disguising their trail. The campsite marks the point from which the cultists left the road. Their cart lies in a ditch, 50 feet away (Perception DC 8 to spot). The cart sustained only minor damage as it tumbled down into the ditch and can be recovered with a successful DC 15 Strength check to haul it back up. Repairing the damage requires a DC 10 Craft (carpentry) check.

Following the cultist's horses along a narrow bush trail into the foothills is a DC 15 Survival Skill check.

THE HORSE PYRE

Oily black smoke dances over the ground from a massive heap of charred, smoldering horse carcasses.

The tracks of three men can clearly be discerned in the bloody dirt surrounding the pyre, and can be followed up to a rocky outcrop that hides the mouth of the grotto entrance of the Eternal Womb.



CHAPTER TWO: THE BLIGHTED GROVE

The endless network of tunnels and caverns that form the Eternal Womb branch out from the blighted forest grotto. Several corrupted dryads and a mutated snallygaster make the already treacherous route of cliffs and overhangs a perilous journey into the dark bowels of the earth.

B.1 ENTRANCE

Leafless, blighted trees cling to the rocky sides within an oval cleft in the ground; their black roots exposed to the damp air rising from a dark and musty grotto below.

Getting down through the grotto entrance, using the gnarled and twisted trees, requires a DC 10 Climb check. The distance to the next section is 20 feet.

B.2 ROOT INFESTED LEDGE

Thin, sickened and twisted roots cascade down from the ledge here. A DC 15 Climb check is required to descend the 10 feet into more blighted trees below.

B.3 MELIAE, THE WITCH WIDOW CR 5

Two meliae dryads sit hidden in the trees (Perception DC 25).

A great tree spreads its twisted, clawing branches below you. No tree has ever seemed more menacing, as if age and darkness has corrupted it to the very root.

Moving about the branches requires a Climb DC 15. The drop from the branches down to the grotto floor below is 30 feet.

Meliae (the tree) and her dryads were corrupted ages ago, when the Dark Mother first passed through this holy grove. Witnessing the anguish and destruction unleashed by Shub-Niggurath, Meliae cried out, and the hillock upon which she and her children rested was cast into the dark pit that formed about her roots. Shub-Niggurath's loyal clerics profaned the grove over many years, casting Meliae's mind into darkness. She has a starting attitude of hostile for the purposes of speak with plants or similar abilities. If she and her dryads are not harmed, and she can be reminded of her past self, it is possible that she can overcome the corruption in her boughs, although the scars will forever mar her bark.

Fermenting sap from the tree has a high alcohol content and can be collected. Drinking the sap bestows the sickened condition (DC 14 Fort save to negate). The sap is a favorite food of the snallygaster hiding in area B6.

Meliae Dryad (2) CR 3

XP 800

CG Medium fey

Init +4; **Senses** low-light vision; Perception +11

DEFENSE

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

hp 27 (6d6+6)

Fort +5, **Ref** +9, **Will** +7

DR 5/cold iron

Weaknesses tree dependent

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee whip +7 (1d3)

Ranged masterwork longbow +8 (1d8)

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 6th)

Constant—*speak with plants*

At will—*entangle* (DC 15), *tree shape*, *wood shape* (1 lb. only)

3/day—*charm person* (DC 15), *deep slumber* (DC 17), *tree stride*

1/day—*suggestion* (DC 17)

TACTICS

During Combat The dryads attack with their whips, trying to force trespassers to fall from the branches down into the grotto below.

STATISTICS

Str 10, **Dex** 19, **Con** 13, **Int** 14, **Wis** 15, **Cha** 18

Base Atk +3; **CMB** +3; **CMD** 17

Feats Skill Focus (Acrobatics), Stealthy, Weapon Finesse

Skills Acrobatics +14, Climb +9, Craft (sculpture) +11, Escape Artist +15, Handle Animal +6, Knowledge (nature) +11, Perception +11, Stealth +15, Survival +8; Racial Modifiers +6 Craft (wood)

Languages Common, Elven, Sylvan; *speak with plants*

SQ tree meld, wild empathy, woodcraft

Combat Gear whip, masterwork longbow with 20 arrows, **Other Gear** 2 onyx gems worth 50 gp each.

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Tree Meld (Su) A dryad can meld with any tree, similar to how the spell meld into stone functions. She can remain melded with a tree as long as she wishes.

Tree Dependent (Su) A dryad is mystically bonded to a single, enormous tree and must never stray more than 300 yards from it. Most dryad trees are oak trees, but other trees function as well (often having subtle influences on a specific dryad's personality and appearance). A dryad who moves 300 yards beyond her bonded tree immediately becomes sickened. Every hour thereafter, she must make a DC 15 Fortitude save to resist becoming nauseated for an hour. A dryad that is out of range of her bonded tree for 24 hours takes 1d6 points of Constitution damage, and another 1d6 points of Constitution damage every day that



follows—eventually, this separation kills the dryad. A dryad can forge a new bond with a new tree by performing a 24-hour ritual and making a successful DC 20 Will save.

Wild Empathy (Su) This works like the druid's wild empathy class feature, except the dryad has a +6 racial bonus on the check. Dryads with druid levels add this racial modifier to their wild empathy checks.

Woodcraft (Ex) A dryad has a +6 racial bonus to Craft checks involving wood, and is always treated as if she had masterwork artisan's woodworking tools when making such checks.

B.4 DARK RECESS CR 5

Two meliae dryads lie hidden in the tunnel (Perception DC 25). Cunning and patient hunters, they wait for the PCs to approach before reveal themselves.

The branches reaching up from Meliae and hanging roots from above require a successful DC 15 Climb check to reach the recess.

A tunnel (Perception DC 15 to notice, +1 per 10 feet of distance) leads to area B6. It is 5 feet high and 3 feet wide, making it difficult to employ slashing weapons, which incur a –2 penalty on attack rolls.

B.5 CLEAN SPRING

Water flows from within the rock here and cascades down into the lake below.

The water is perfectly clean drinking water.

B.6 SLICK RECESS. CR 4

Even in darkness, the ledge glistens with slime. Ropes of slick moss hang down into the darkness below like the wet fur of some gigantic beast. Beyond that, more stunted trees with moss covered bows stand like silent sentinels.

Kakaron, a vile tempered snallygaster tainted by the Dark Mother hides in the tunnel at the back of the recess. A DC 25 Perception check is required to notice the creature.

A DC 30 Climb check is required to descend the 10 feet of cliff below the mouth of the tunnel.

Slick, Mossy strands: A DC 20 Climb check is required to climb down 10 feet, followed by a 10 foot drop into the water below.

Secluded Tunnel: A tunnel leads to area B4 (Perception check DC 15 +1 per 10 feet to notice). Kakaron, a snallygaster, hides here, resting.

When the PC's reach the landing to area B4, unless they took precautions to stealth, Kakaron is alert, and ready for trouble. When the snallygaster becomes aware of the PC's, read or paraphrase the following.

A single red orb flashes in the darkness. Without further warning, a beaked maw snaps out of the darkness, extended on a long, sinuous neck. The creature is an abomination of bat wings, scales, horns and a fanged beak below an intense, hateful eye.

Kakaron

Giant Entropic Fey-Touched Snallygaster CR 5
XP 1600

CE Large aberration (fey)

Init +2; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., scent; Perception +7

DEFENSE

AC 19, touch 14, flat-footed 15 (+3 Dex, +5 natural)

hp 38 (4d8+20)

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

DR 2/cold iron; **Resist** acid 5, fire 5; **SR** 10

OFFENSE

Speed 20 ft., fly 60 ft. (good)

Melee *bite* +10 (1d10+7/x3 plus bleed),

2 *claws* +10 (1d6+7), *sucking tentacles* +3 (1d6+7 plus grab)

Special Attacks aerial charge, bleed (1d6), smite (law) 1/day (swift +5 attack, +5 damage), sucking tentacles

STATISTICS

Str 25, **Dex** 17, **Con** 20, **Int** 5, **Wis** 14, **Cha** 9

Base Atk +3; **CMB** +10 (+14 grapple); **CMD** 24 (26 vs. trip)

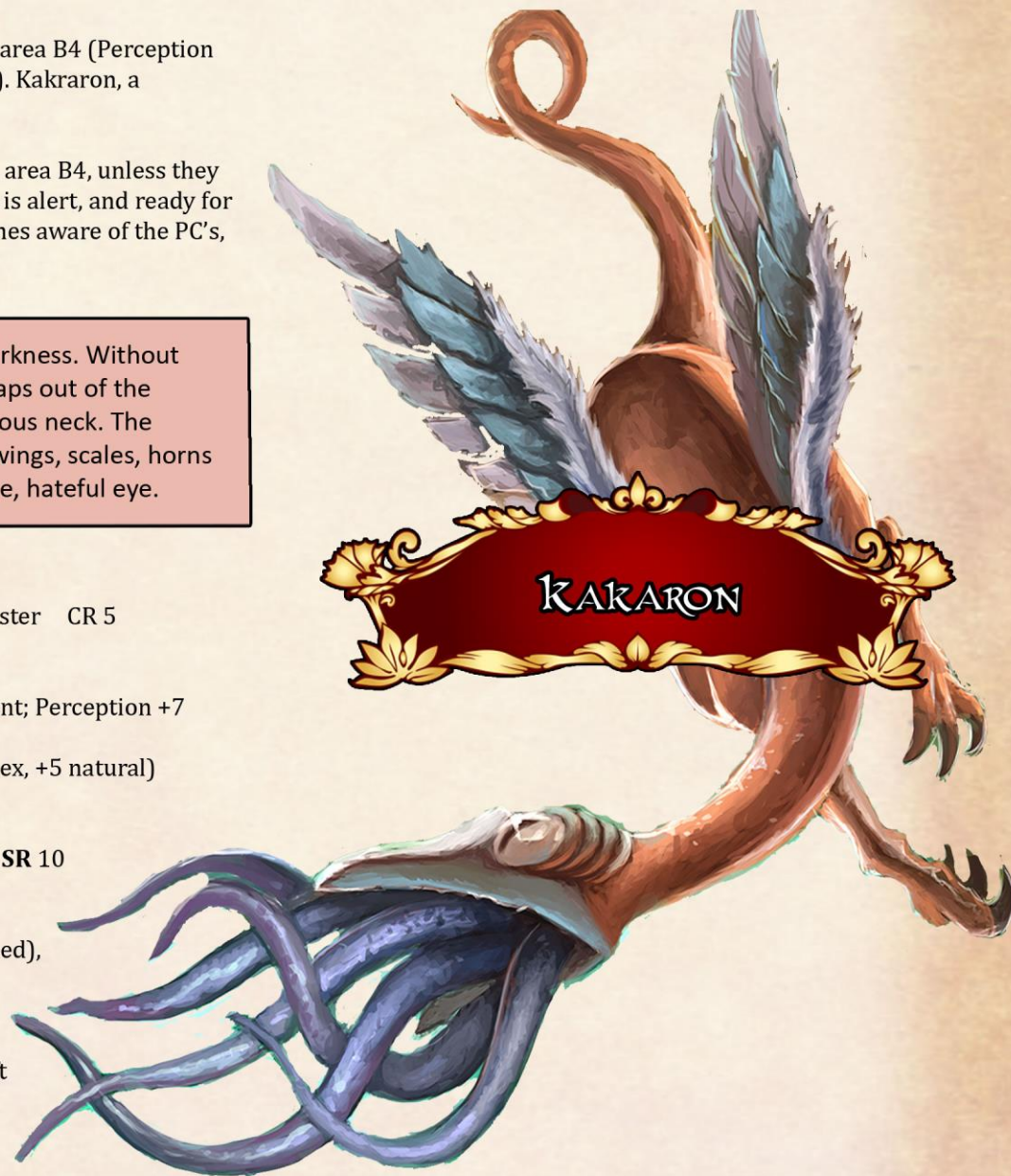
Feats Flyby Attack, Skill Focus (Stealth)

Skills Fly +10, Perception +7, Stealth +11 (+15 in forests);
Racial Modifiers +4 Stealth in forests

Languages Aklo, (can't speak)

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Aerial Charge (Ex): When a snallygaster charges downward at an angle of 45 degrees or more, its bite attack deals double damage (or triple damage on a critical hit). Bleed damage is not multiplied for this attack.



Sucking Tentacles (Ex): A snallygaster uses its retractable tentacles to suck blood from its victim's bleeding wounds. If a target has a bleed effect and the snallygaster grabs it with tentacles or maintains a grapple against it, the target takes double the normal bleed damage at the beginning of its next turn. When the snallygaster is using its tentacles, it cannot make bite attacks.

B.7 OVERGROWN LEDGE

A 15 foot jump (DC 15 Acrobatics) takes a character from the base of the Meliae tree to an overgrown ledge and another, similar jump, to area B8. The drop between each ledge is 20 feet.

The thick weeds on the ledge count as difficult terrain.

B.8 ANCIENT PILLAR

A great, jagged obelisk of dark stone juts out from a gloomy, dark recess, its upper half having toppled over and smashed centuries ago.

Ancient inscriptions: etchings within a cartouche on the front of the pillar record the prophecies of Ekos, the Great Unclean One (DC 25 Linguistics to decipher). The text is given below.

"In the dying light of the second sun, the first messenger of damnation shall fall upon the earth. Death and destruction shall know no end. Remember well, for this is the eternal prophecy of Ekos, the Great Unclean One, Seer of Mysteries, Voice of Doom."

The true meaning of Ekos's prophecy relates to future events that will plague the *Shattered Skies Campaign Setting*, keep a watchful eye out for future publications.

Assembling the broken fragments of the pillar and deciphering the entire text takes roughly 3 months, but earns any PCs undertaking the project a +5 competence bonus on Knowledge (history) checks involving Ekos the Unclean, as the etchings relate directly to him and his many dark deeds, including his mysterious disappearance following his final defeat at the hands of Brynn and Gran.

B.9 Slope

A 20 foot high slope runs down to the bottom of the

grotto. Because of loose gravel, the slope requires a successful DC 20 Climb check to traverse.

B.10 CORPSE LAKE

A black, tentacle-like tree protrudes from the water. On closer inspection, the nodes that cover its length are the stumps of missing branches.

A number of corpses float on the water's surface, surrounded by other detritus. A successful DC 15 Survival or DC 20 Knowledge (dungeoneering or nature) check reveals that the waste belongs to a large beaked creature; a snallygaster.

A DC 15 Survival check also spots humanoid tracks entering and exiting the water surround the lake.

Despite the pollution on the water's surface, the water below is relatively clean and the water is not stagnant (Perception DC 10).

Anyone under the water can attempt a DC 15 Perception check to discover a submerged tunnel leading to the Temple of the Mother's Maw in Chapter 3.

Treasure: Various valuables have fallen from Kakaron's victims, and now lie scattered under the sediment on the lake bottom (DC 15 Perception to notice). This small horde includes a *tree feather token*, 1 vial of *silversheen*, a *darkwood shield*, moonstone fragments worth 100gp, gold jewelry worth 100 gp, and 48gp in loose coins.

Development

The party doesn't have much time to rest or resupply, unless they are willing to risk Baerg escaping. Additionally, resting PCs are a tempting target for scouting dryads, cultist prowlers or the other vile denizens of the grotto.

The PCs will need to think carefully about what they drag through the waters with them, or risk damaging spell books, maps and similar items. Torches that pass through the lake unprotected simply won't work until dried out.

Consult the following aquatic terrain rules for when the party enters the water.

Non-Flowing Water: Lakes and oceans simply require a swim speed or successful Swim checks to move through (DC 10 in calm water, DC 15 in rough water, DC 20 in stormy water). Characters need a way to breathe if they're underwater; failing that, they risk drowning. When underwater, characters can move in any direction.

It takes three successful DC 10 swim checks for each PC to reach the exit of the tunnel pool and emerge in the petrified forest before the temple of the Dark Mother. A failed check costs the PC 2 additional rounds towards suffocation. They cannot take 10 on this check as there is a penalty for failure.

CHAPTER THREE: TEMPLE OF THE DARK MOTHER.

A short series of paths through an underground petrified forest leads from the unguarded lake entrance to the Temple of the Mother's Maw. When the PC's emerge from the lake, read or paraphrase the following.

You find yourself in a vaulted, lightless room which is neither a natural cavern nor man made. Lifeless stone trees tower above you, their branches reaching high into the darkness like grasping claws.

A path leads on, into the mysterious dead forest.

The trip through the petrified forest takes an hour, but the path is easy to follow. It is not far along the path before the party arrives on the edge of the Temple of the Mother's Maw.

FANGED ENTRANCE CR 5

Ahead the trees have been shaped to form an archway that resembles a many fanged maw. The stalagmites and stalactites each bear deep gouges along their faces, and milk-white pearls have been set into the sockets, and glare like a hundred angry eyes.

One of the stalagmites is a Graven Guardian carved to look like a roper. It animates and attacks anyone who passes through the archway unless someone displays a holy symbol of Shub-Niggurath and utters her sacred prayer:

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

GRAVEN GUARDIAN CR 5

XP 1,600

N Medium construct

Init +2; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; Perception +1

DEFENSE

AC 20, touch 12, flat-footed 18 (+2 Dex, +8 natural)

hp 53 (6d10+20); **fast healing** 2

Fort +2, **Ref** +4, **Will** +3

DR 5/adamantine; **Immune** construct traits; **SR** 16, *beast ward*

Weaknesses faith bound

OFFENSE

Speed 40 ft.

Melee *slam* +9 (1d6+4 plus 1d6 vs good aligned foes)

Special Attacks evil weapons, magic weapon, rest eternal

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 6th; concentration +0)

1/day—*haste* (self only)

TACTICS

During Combat The guardian casts *haste* on itself on the first round of combat and moves towards enemies. It attacks anyone displaying holy symbols first, focusing its assault until the victim dies, before moving on to the next target.

Morale Unless one of the PC's displays an unholy symbol of Shub-Niggurath and utters her sacred prayer, the guardian attacks until destroyed.

STATISTICS

Str 16, **Dex** 15, **Con** —, **Int** —, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 1

Base Atk +6; **CMB** +9; **CMD** 21

SQ guardian domains (animal, evil)

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Faith Bound (Su) A graven guardian cannot attack any creature that openly wears or displays the holy or unholy symbol of the deity to which the graven guardian is dedicated unless that creature first attacks the graven guardian.

Magic Weapon (Su) A graven guardian that carries its deity's favored weapon treats that weapon as a +1 weapon as long as it is wielded by the guardian. If the weapon is a melee weapon, it gains the keen weapon special ability (even if the weapon is a bludgeoning weapon). If it is a thrown weapon, it gains the returning weapon special ability. If it is a ranged weapon, it gains the seeking weapon special ability, and generates new ammunition with each attack (this ammunition is destroyed whether or not it hits).

Domain Abilities

Animal: Beast Ward (Su)—Animals must make a Will save before they can attack the graven guardian. Any attack on an animal (but not its allies) by the graven guardian breaks this protection. Once the animal makes this Will save, it need not save again against that particular graven guardian on subsequent attacks.

Evil: Evil Weapons (Su)—The graven guardian's weapon and slam attacks are treated as evil-aligned. Its magic weapon deals +1d6 points of damage to good targets.

Rest Eternal (Sp)—When a graven guardian slays a foe it places a curse upon the dead creature that bars its spirit from returning. Anyone casting a spell that would communicate with the dead creature, return it to life, or turn it into an undead creature must succeed on a caster level check with a DC of 17. Rest eternal cannot be dispelled, but it can be negated with remove curse or break enchantment.

DEVELOPMENT

After they pass through the archway, the party continues forward for 200 yards through more fossilized forest. However, these trees all resemble horrific offspring of the Dark Mother. Seeing such gruesome monstrosities attacks the minds of sane individuals. Each PC must make a DC 14 Will save or gain the shaken condition for the following an hour.

At this point the PC's should be 5th level. If they haven't gained enough xp yet, add random encounters within the fossilized forest to ensure they do. Once reach 5th level, allow the characters to level immediately.

CHAPTER THREE: TEMPLE OF THE DARK MOTHER CR 8

Once they characters pass through fossilized forest, read or paraphrase the following.

Ominous chanting reverberates from the path ahead. The chanting grows louder and a man's pained screams pierce the air. Through thick, choking smoke you see a ring of bonfires at the edge of an immense cavern-glade.

Beyond two supplicating satyr statues standing on either side of the path, a man covered in milky liquid and strung on ropes from claw-like stone pillars, writhes in agony over an impossibly dark pit. Surrounding the pit, cultists in soiled furs raise their hands and curved daggers in adoration to some unseen god. Nearby on a natural dais, two horned females lounge, oblivious to the activity below them.

Above you, the acrid smoke clouds churn in a violent vortex, drawn down in a cyclone towards the pit and the man shrieking in ecstatic agony.

There is a lot going on in this encounter so GM's are encouraged to read over the following details to ensure they properly run the finale.

THE WATCHER

Mehron, a satyr slayer, hides in the cavern and acts as a guardian over the ritual. The "watcher" is an important role for the ritual, and the satyr considers his assignment an honor. He has had the time and safety to take 20 on his stealth skill check so unless the PC's spot him he attempts an ambush. He targets religiously attired characters first followed by martial ones. He is hiding south of the pit among the shadows.

Mehron

Satyr Slayer 1 CR 5

XP 1,600

CN Medium fey

Init +2; **Senses** low-light vision; Perception +18

DEFENSE

AC 18, touch 13, flat-footed 15 (+2 Dex, +1 dodge, +5 natural)

hp 45 (8d6+1d10+16)

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

DR 5/cold iron

OFFENSE

Speed 40 ft.

Melee dagger +7 (1d4+2/19–20), horns +2 (1d6+1)

Ranged mwk short bow +9 (1d6/×3)

Special Attacks pipes, studied target,

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 8th)

At will—*charm person* (DC 15), *dancing lights*, *ghost sound* (DC 14), *sleep* (DC 15), *suggestion* (DC 17)

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

TACTICS

Before Combat the satyr hides in the shadows south of the pit (stealth 38). Once he spots the PC's he studies the most religious-looking character with his studied target ability.

During Combat The satyr stays at range, firing his bow at the intruders. He uses fear on armored foes, and suggestion to get them to jump into the pit. In melee, he uses his dagger. If it looks like Melee is inevitable, he casts *sumon nature's ally III* to call a fiendish wolverine to aid him.

Morale He fights to the death.

STATISTICS

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

Base Atk +5; **CMB** +7; **CMD** 19

Feats Dodge, Mobility, Skill Focus (Perception), Weapon Finesse, Weapon Focus (short bow)

Skills Bluff +15, Diplomacy +15, Disguise +10, Intimidate +10, Knowledge (nature) +11, Perception +19, Perform (wind instruments) +20, Stealth +18, Survival +8 (+9 to follow tracks); Racial Modifiers +4 Perception, +4 Perform, +4 Stealth

Languages Common, Sylvan

Treasure standard (dagger, mwk short bow plus 20 arrows, mwk panpipes, other treasure)

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 DC 18 Will save or be affected by charm person, fear, sleep, or suggestion, depending on what 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.

Studied Target (Ex) A slayer can study an opponent he can see as a move action. The slayer then gains a +1 bonus on Bluff, Knowledge, Perception, Sense Motive, and Survival checks attempted against that opponent, and a +1 bonus on weapon attack and damage rolls against it. The DCs of slayer class abilities against that opponent increase by 1. A slayer can only maintain these bonuses against one opponent at a time; these bonuses remain in effect until either the opponent is dead or the slayer studies a new target.

If a slayer deals sneak attack damage to a target, he can study that target as an immediate action, allowing him to apply his studied target bonuses against that target (including to the normal weapon damage roll).

The Cultist's

Six cultists stand around the gaping pit, chanting in unwholesome verse. A seventh cultist, suspended from ropes over the pit is being pulled from an unseen force into the pit. One of the cultists wears a headdress of goat horns and is directing the ritual from the nearby stone stairs. Unless attacked, they focus on the ritual. The two horned females lounging on the rugs are forlorn consorts of the cult, and are in an opium induced haze and do not engage the PC's in combat.

The PC's have a chance to notice a horned figure standing on writhing tentacles in the shadows at the

back of the cavern (Perception DC 10). As initiative begins, the creature withdraws into the tunnels.

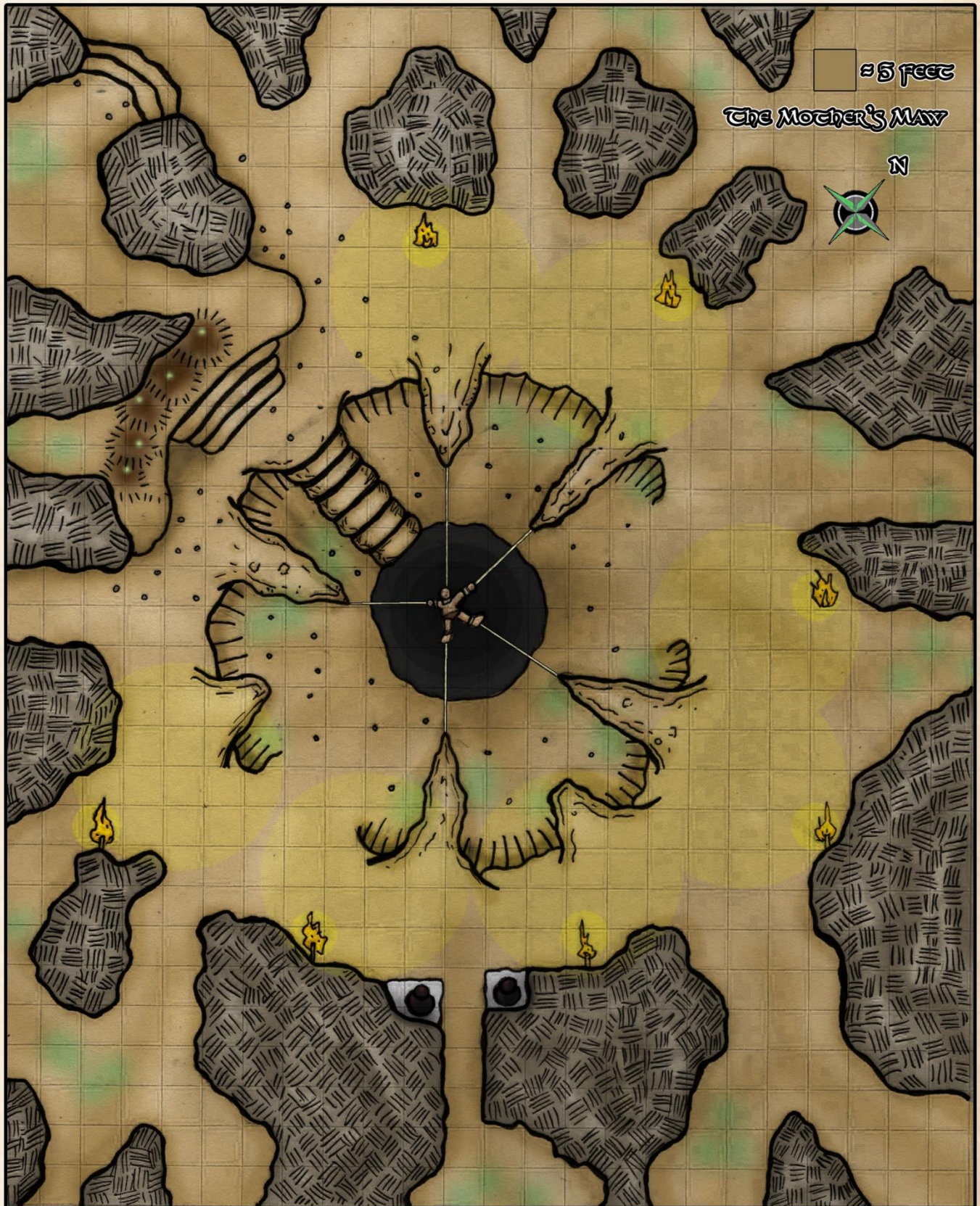
See appendix 1 for stats for the cultists.

THE MOTHER'S MAW

Plunging to unknown depths, the pit, known to the faithful as the Mother's Maw, is home to a powerful avatar of Shub-Niggurath.



Belly of ROT



It draws characters and projectiles in. Ranged attacks that pass within 15 feet of the Maw have a 25% miss chance. Ammunition lost in this way falls down the pit and is unrecoverable. Characters in the temple are pulled 5 foot closer to the Maw after their round ends, unless they are Large sized or bigger.

Characters falling down the pit reappear, outside the temple entrance, after 1d4 + 1 days. They have no recollection of the events that transpired after their fall. Apart from being filthy, the character appears healthy, but begins to suffer terrible nightmares after 1d4 weeks. There is a 20% chance a character suffering from nightmares gains no rest while sleeping, and awakens the next day with the fatigued condition, and is unable to regain arcane spells for the next 24 hours. These nightmares can be cured with either remove curse or dispel evil. or suppressed with remove fear or restful sleep.

The avatar of Shub-Niggurath is a vile and mysterious entity that keeps itself hidden in darkness. The PC's are unable to physically interact with this incarnation of the Dark Mother, though a consecrate spell followed by attacking a clawed pillar with a melee attack charged by dispel evil, banishes the avatar from the pit. The PC's are unlikely to possess the spell, but informing church officials back in the Capital-city results in a platoon of Dust-Wardens laying waste to the temple and casting the appropriate spells. Once the avatar is banished, award the PC's 2400 xp as if they had overcome a CR 6 encounter.

Ropes. CR 1

A second initiate of the Ebon Dawn is suspended from five ropes connected to a series of pillars around the pit. When the PCs arrive, the initiate is half way through the same ritual Baerg undertook. By cutting the initiate down, the PCs can end the ritual and the pull effect emanating from the Maw. Four ropes (AC 9, 2 hp each, Break DC 23) must be cut, at which point the fifth rope snaps.

Attacking the ropes causes the chanting cultists to enter initiative.

CLAW - PILLARS

Stone pillars (DC 20 Climb) curve inwards, surrounding the pit. Each pillar is 20 feet high from the cavern floor and 30 feet high from its tip to the indentation around the pit. The ropes are tied through holes carved into the stone.

Occult runes and pictograms carved into the pillars describe the great feats and victories of Shub-Niggurath and her most loyal followers.

BONFIRES

Each bonfire is 5 feet in diameter and fills the air above with thick, black smoke. There are 7 bonfires. Smoke: The thick smoke sickens anyone flying above the pillars (Fortitude DC 14 save to avoid). It obscures all sight, including darkvision, beyond 5 feet. A creature within 5 feet has concealment while creatures farther away have total concealment. The smoke can only be dispersed once 4 or more bonfires have been extinguished. If the Maw's pull effect is ended before the bonfires are extinguished, then the cavern fills with smoke after 1d6 + 1 rounds.

SATYR STATUES

The statues are carved from the very rock of the cavern, and are immovable.

DAIS

A long platform rises 5 feet above the cavern floor and is covered in rotting animal furs. Two of Baerg's forlarren concubines lie here, paying little attention to their surroundings. Each concubine has a dagger, an opium pipe and 1d3 - 1 doses of opium. They are all addicted to the drug and have their Constitution and Wisdom scores reduced by -2. They are so intoxicated that they do not join combat, and readily admit what they know if promised more of the drug while questioned.

Furs: A deactivated immovable rod lies underneath the pelts, wrapped in fox furs. Baerg used the rod to survive his own transformation and discarded it here.

Treasure: The cultists have a small collection of valuables kept behind the platform. This horde includes 450 gp worth of some of the obscenest religious artifacts from Baerg's personal collection, 240 gp worth of fine clothes, 150 gp in gold ingots and 2 potions of cure moderate wounds. This is Baerg's payment to the cultist's for aiding him.

CONCLUSION

Once the cultists have been dispatched, a wounded acolyte or one of the concubines can be questioned, though the following information can also be gleaned from a personal diary kept by the ritual leader. Several major topics are covered below from the perspective of an interrogated cultist.

Concerning Baerg:

"The cultists' eyes glaze over as he laughs.

"Success! Oh, such blessed success! He is truly one of Hers now. The Mother be praised!"

If pressed to explain, the cultist boasts about how Baerg was transformed, and describes his new form as *"fitting for one of the Mother's most loyal servants"*.

Concerning The Whispers of the Dark Mother:

"The book. Your flayed skin would be unworthy to add to its pages. But know this, enemy of Shub-Niggurath; it is more than knowledge. It is more than the cooed words of our Dark Mother. It is power, power to those who have true faith, and it is a key, a key to the doom of Her enemies!"

The cultists believe that the book is the key to freeing the deathless masters trapped somewhere within Bright Mountain, and are determined to keep this fact from anyone who would try to halt their plans. A successful Intimidate DC 10 + the target's Hit Dice + the target's Wisdom modifier is required to persuade the cultist to reveal this information.

Baerg took the book with him when he left.

Concerning the Ritual:

The cultist can explain with infinite detail the various rites required for the transformation of a devout follower of Shub-Niggurath, but without *The Whispers of the Dark Mother*, the knowledge is practically useless, except for one fact. The ritual requires a substance—referred to as Dark Mother's Milk—which can only be found deeper within the Eternal Womb. The lake from which this fluid comes is one of the Ebon Dawn's most sacred sites and a place of true horror. Although the cultists could acquire enough of the milk for the ritual, they lost several members on the expedition.

Concerning Shub-Niggurath:

"The Dark Mother will rise again! Nothing you can do shall stop her ascent to ultimate power!"

The cultist explains that the Black Goat of the Woods with a Thousand Young, the *Matron of Monsters*, will birth a tide of horrible spawn to devour the world.

DEVELOPMENT

Having transformed into a favored spawn, Baerg's next move is to travel to Bright Mountain. He intends that his arrival and transformation will provide the impetus for overthrowing Hexos Vell as leader of the cult.

The PCs may wish to explore deeper into the Eternal Womb, but all indications are that it would be a perilous journey at this point in their careers.

With all the signs pointing to Corvum Baerg's traveling to Bright Mountain, the PCs best bet is to return to Brighton to resupply and recruit allies for the coming battle.

The adventure continues in: ***Whispers of the Dark Mother part 5: Call to War.***



CULTIST STATS

Ebon Dawn strong-arm CR 3 (2)

XP 800

Human Adept 5

NE Medium humanoid (human)

Init +1; **Senses** Perception +4

DEFENSE

AC 15, touch 11, flat-footed 14 (+4 armor, +1 Dex)

hp 27 (5d6+10)

Fort +2, **Ref** +5, **Will** +7

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee *mwk club* +7 (1d6+6)

Ranged *kukri* +3 (1d4+4/18–20)

Adept Spells Prepared (CL 5th; concentration +7)

2nd—*bull's strength*, *mirror image*

1st—*cause fear* (DC 13), *command* (DC 13), *cure light wounds*

0th (at will)—*ghost sound* (DC 12), *light*, *stabilize*

TACTICS

Before Combat The cultist adept casts *bull's strength*.

During Combat The cultist adept casts *mirror image*, then attacks with his club. If he has trouble landing blows, he switches to his wand of *burning hands*.

Base Statistics

Without *bull's strength*, the adept's statistics are **Melee** *mwk club* +5 (1d6+3); **Ranged** *dagger* +3 (1d4+2/19–20); **Str** 14; **CMB** +4; **CMD** 15.

STATISTICS

Str 18, **Dex** 12, **Con** 11, **Int** 9, **Wis** 14, **Cha** 8

Base Atk +2; **CMB** +6; **CMD** 17

Feats Cleave, Light Armor Proficiency, Power Attack, Toughness

Skills Intimidate +4, Knowledge (local) +4, Knowledge (religion) +3, Perception +4

Languages Common

SQ summon familiar (weasel)

Combat Gear scroll of *cure moderate wounds*, wand of *burning hands* (CL 5th, 9 charges), alchemist's fire (3), tanglefoot bag; **Other Gear** chain shirt, dagger, masterwork club, cloak of resistance +1, belt pouch, manacles (2), silver unholy symbol, spell component pouch, 2 gp

Initiate of the Ebon Dawn CR 1

XP 400

Human Adept 3

CE Medium humanoid (human)

Init +0; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +2

DEFENSE

AC 12, touch 10, flat-footed 12 (+2 armor); +2 vs. good
hp 16 (3d6+6)

Fort +4, **Ref** +1, **Will** +4; +2 vs. good

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee *spear* +1 (1d8/×3) or *mwk cold iron kukri* +2 (1d4/18–20)

Ranged *dart* +1 (1d4)

Adept Spells Prepared (CL 3rd; concentration +4)

1st—*burning hands* (DC 12), *detect good*, *protection from good*

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

TACTICS

Before Combat The cultist adept casts *protection from good*.

During Combat The cultist adept casts *burning hands* whenever she can catch two or more foes in the area. When she runs out of spells, scrolls, and acid, she fights with her spear.

Base Statistics

Without *protection from good*, the adept's statistics are **AC** no bonus vs. good; **Saves** no bonus vs. good.

STATISTICS

Str 10, **Dex** 11, **Con** 12, **Int** 8, **Wis** 13, **Cha** 11

Base Atk +1; **CMB** +1; **CMD** 11

Feats Combat Casting, Great Fortitude, Scribe Scroll

Skills Knowledge (arcana, local, planes) +3, Knowledge (religion) +5, Spellcraft +5

Languages Common

SQ summon familiar (toad)

Combat Gear scrolls of *burning hands* (2, CL 3rd), scrolls of *cure light wounds* (2), scroll of *obscuring mist* (CL 3rd), scroll of *sleep* (CL 3rd), acid (2); **Other Gear** leather armor, darts (6), masterwork cold iron dagger, spear, belt pouch, masterwork manacles, scroll case, silver unholy symbol, spell component pouch, 9 gp

Acolyte of the Ebon Dawn CR 1/3 (3)

XP 135

Human Adept 1

N Medium humanoid (human)

Init +1; **Senses** Perception +1

DEFENSE

AC 14, touch 11, flat-footed 13 (+3 armor, +1 Dex)

hp 5 (1d6+2)

Fort -1, **Ref** +1, **Will** +3

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee *morningstar* +0 (1d8) or *silver kukri* +0 (1d4-1/18-20)

Ranged *silver kukri* +1 (1d4-1/18-20)

Adept Spells Prepared (CL 1st; concentration +2)

1st—*bless*, *cure light wounds*

0th (at will)—*guidance*, *light*, *mending*

TACTICS

During Combat The cultist adept reads her scroll of *sleep*. She then casts *bless* and attacks with her morningstar.

STATISTICS

Str 10, **Dex** 12, **Con** 8, **Int** 9, **Wis** 13, **Cha** 10

Base Atk +0; **CMB** +0; **CMD** 11

Feats Skill Focus (Handle Animal), Toughness

Skills Handle Animal +7, Heal +7, Spellcraft +3

Languages Common

Combat Gear scroll of *cure light wounds*, scroll of *sleep*, alchemist's fire;

Other Gear studded leather, morningstar, silver dagger, healer's kit, silver unholy symbol, smokestick, spell component pouch, tindertwig, 9 gp

Fiendish Wolverine CR 2

XP 600

N Medium animal

Init +2; **Senses** darkvision 60', scent; Perception +10

DEFENSE

AC 14, touch 12, flat-footed 12 (+2 Dex, +2 natural)

hp 22 (3d8+9)

Fort +5, **Ref** +5, **Will** +2

Resist cold 5, fire 5; **SR** 7

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft., burrow 10 ft., climb 10 ft.

Melee 2 *claws* +4 (1d6+2), *bite* +4 (1d4+2)

Special Attacks rage, smite good 1/day

STATISTICS

Str 15, **Dex** 15, **Con** 15, **Int** 2, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 10

Base Atk +2; **CMB** +4; **CMD** 16 (20 vs. trip)

Feats Skill Focus (Perception), Toughness

Skills Climb +10, Perception +10

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Rage (Ex): A wolverine that takes damage in combat flies into a rage on its next turn, clawing and biting madly until either it or its opponent is dead. It gains +4 to Strength, +4 to Constitution, and -2 to AC. The creature cannot end its rage voluntarily.

Smite Good (Su): Once per day, the fiendish wolverine may smite a good-aligned creature. As a swift action, the wolverine chooses one target within sight to smite. If this target is good, the creature adds its Charisma bonus (if any) to attack rolls and gains a damage bonus equal to its HD against that foe. This effect persists until the target is dead or the creature rests.



THE TRAVELER

Alignment: Neutral Good

Domains: Good, Liberation, Travel, Void

Subdomains: Friendship, Freedom, Exploration, Stars

Symbol: A night sky with stars and a road travelling up the center.

Garb: Followers of the traveler tend to wear sturdy functional clothing. Boots, gear appropriate to the weather and a walking staff. Clerics usually dress in browns and beiges, the colors of the roads they walk.

Favored Weapon: Quarterstaff

Worship and Holidays: The traveler doesn't have an organized worship; most people give him a silent prayer at the beginning or ending of a journey. Roadside shrines where wanderers can leave a tribute for safe passage are also quite common.

Description: It is said that The Traveler walked out of the void after the other gods created the world. He is neither of this realm or an ascended god like Ametus. Whether these tales are true or not are known to The Traveler only, and he doesn't speak of such things.

When The Traveler appears, which he does more frequently than anyone realizes, he seems quite ordinary. The first words on the lips of anyone asked to recount his appearance would be nondescript. He is of average height and average weight for whatever race he chooses to take, although he prefers humans, gnomes, and oyapok. His hair and eyes are neither exceptionally light nor dark, and his age is equally hard to determine. He is dressed in rugged leathers and travelling clothes with an old worn staff for a walking stick.

The Traveler is never at rest and even his constellation moves with alacrity across the sky, as if trying to see the world from every angle. It is said every road has seen the tread of his boots in some form and that it was he who taught men to navigate by stars before there were roads. He could never stand a sedentary life, reveling in freedom to go anywhere at a moment's notice. Because of this he despises slavery and captivity in any form and his clerics work to free enslaved people both physically and by working to change the laws that allow the practice.

The road is his friend and it is made better by travelling companions. It is said that, unlike the other gods who stay in the heavens, The Traveler wanders the roads even now. He joins up with groups traveling from place to place and always loves a good story. Wanderers will almost always spin yarns among groups of



strangers with the belief that if The Traveler is secretly among them he will bless their journey for a tale well told.

The Church: Most clerics of The Traveler are themselves wanderers and can sometimes seem gruffer or less civilized than clerics of other gods. This outward appearance hides jovial itinerants who want nothing more than to share the road with others. Although his faith isn't centralized, with most autonomous clerics there are a few small groups which share common goals.

The Seekers of the Stars focus on The Traveler's role of celestial navigator. They work to make accurate star charts -- because not every journey has a road. It is rumored that there is an observatory secreted away on a mountain top where any Seeker may come to look at the stars through a large telescope. A copy of every chart the organization has ever made is said to be housed here as well.

The Friends of the Road are a group of roadside inn owners who are also clerics of the wandering god. Their small inns are a refuge during long journeys, offering travelers a soft bed and good meal. The Friends also offer an unofficial mail service, any message left at one inn can be picked up at any other of the senders choosing. Each year the Friends of the Road gather at one of the inns for a rowdy party. Although the date of the party remains the same every year, only the friends know at which inn it will be held and it's become a game amongst travelers to guess which one.

Clerics of The Traveler pray for their spells under the night sky while gazing up at the stars.

Temples and Shrines: Being a god of roads The Traveler doesn't have a central place of worship and he

very rarely has churches. Road markers and crossroad benches serve as his shrines and often bear his symbol, or an affirmation. Leaving provisions for other travelers at these places pleases the god. His priests are mostly itinerants, travelling from town to town and inn to inn.

A Priests Role: Clerics spend most of their time traveling unknown roads to map them and as wayfarers for adventuring parties. They help pass the time during their wanderings by whistling, singing, and telling entertaining (or not) tales to those around them. All clerics view leaving water at crossroads, and transporting letters from settlement to settlement a sacred duty.

Adventurers: Those who travel from one place to another, often honor the god of roads, regardless of their core faith. Merchants, rangers, gypsies, gnome troupes, and astronomers make up the bulk of his faithful. His clerics are jovial folk that eagerly join adventuring bands to honor the god. The swamp-dwelling oyapok revere the Traveler as the ambassador of civilization and credit him for leading their people out of barbarism.

Clothing: There is no uniform coloring for worshipers of the Traveler, though brown and grey are common. Backpacks and pouches are in theory the most important items followers wear, and many carry a walking stick or sextant. His symbol is a curved road under a starry night sky leading toward an unknown future. This symbolizes the Traveler's many adventures along both earthly roads and the infinite gulfs of space.

Holy Text: The traveler has no official holy book, but dozens of aphorisms are commonly spoken by those on the road. Below are four of the most common.

"The world is a book and those who do not travel read only one page."

"Traveling is a brutality. It forces you to trust strangers and to lose sight of all that familiar comfort of home and friends. You are constantly off balance. Nothing is yours except the essential things – air, sleep, dreams, the sea, the sky – all things tending towards the eternal or what we imagine of it."

"When you travel, remember that a foreign country is not designed to make you comfortable. It is designed to make its own people comfortable."

"He who does not travel does not know the value of men."

Holidays: The Traveler has no specific holiday associated with his worship, however, any festive event or vacation where people voyage to visit friends, family, or new vistas is incomplete without a small celebration dedicated to the god.



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SHATTERED SKIES

הַיְאָרָה וְהַיְאָרָה אֶתְּחַלֵּף הַיְאָרָה וְהַיְאָרָה אֶתְּחַלֵּף הַיְאָרָה וְהַיְאָרָה אֶתְּחַלֵּף

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