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MORRICK MANSION

by Patrick Lawinger

A d20 adventure for 4 to 6 characters of 3rd to 5th level

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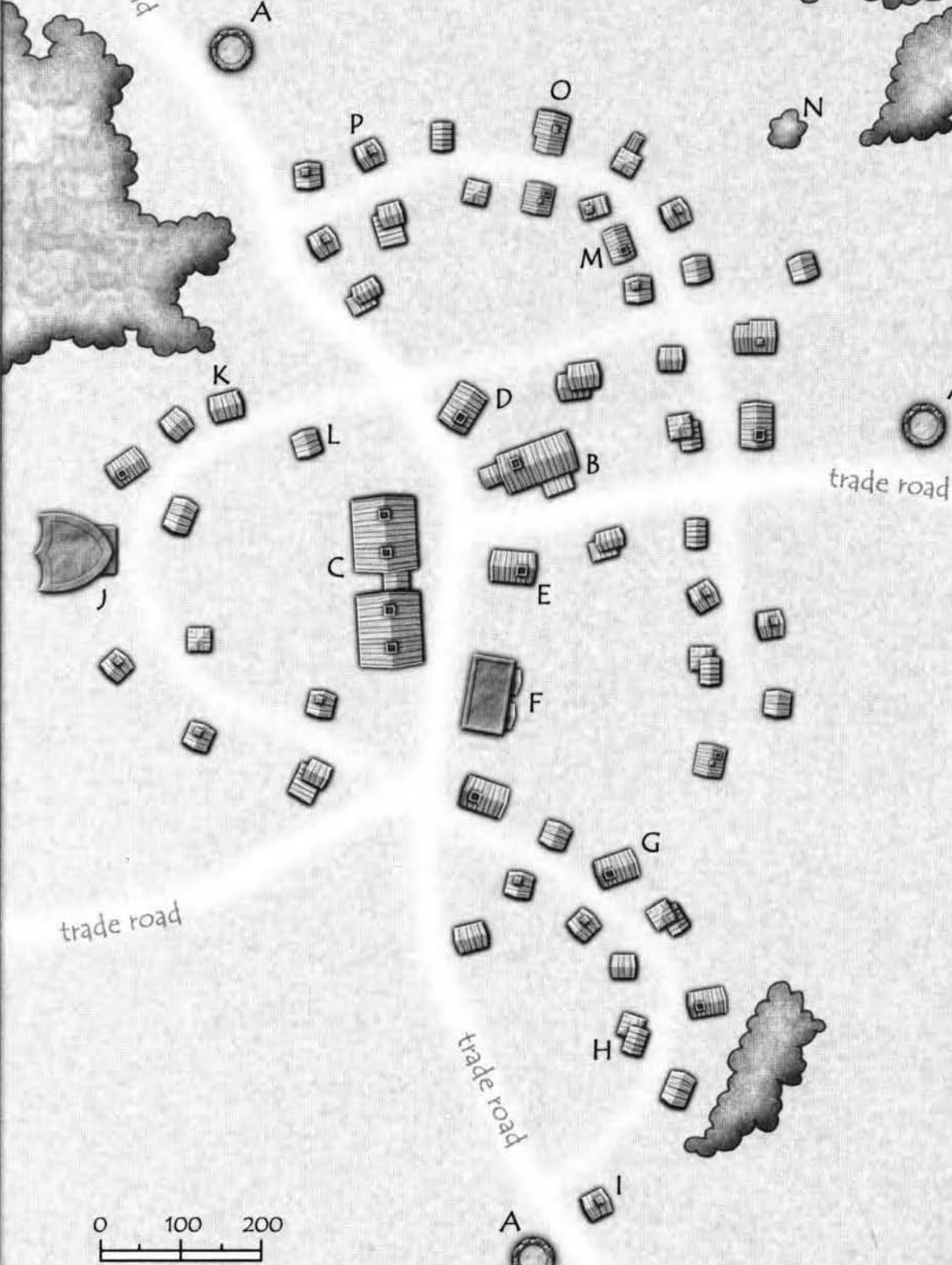
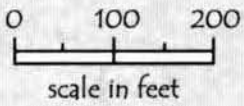
Grollek's Grove

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MORRICK

MANSION

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Thanks to Melanie for putting up with my addiction and my boys, Anthony and Alexander, for helping me see the wonder of the world through children's eyes. Thanks also go to the entire Necromancer Games crew for making the whole writing process so much fun.

Product Update Password for **Morrick Mansion**: Eldoran.

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Introduction

Morrick Mansion is a challenging adventure designed for 4 to 6 player characters (PCs) of 3rd to 5th level. Beginning parties should possess a minimum of 12 to 15 levels and be balanced with respect to magic and combat.

Geographically, the adventure revolves around a mansion, its surrounding grounds, and a nearby village that can easily be placed into any game world. The PCs become involved in the investigation of a curse placed upon the mansion and the property surrounding it. Their exploration exposes them to the very curse they are investigating and the horrible realization that the curse is indeed spreading. Several routes to stop the spread of the curse — or remove it entirely — are provided, with some methods requiring delicate negotiations and compromises with powerful individuals.

Adventure Background

Lord Arvath Morricks, a well-liked businessman and vineyard owner, used his knowledge of weather, trade routes, and the varying values of items in different parts of the world to amass a vast fortune. His wealth supported many charities and employed a large number of well-paid servants and gardeners. Because Lord Morricks had a reputation as a kind, fair man, even jealous competitors would not dare to speak ill of him. Lord Morricks's power and influence expanded further with the engagement of his eldest daughter Larissa to Lord Byron Beval, the son of a major shipping magnate in a nearby port.

Held in Lord Morricks's magnificent mansion, the wedding included many of the nobles and merchants from the surrounding area as guests. Lord Kyran Eldoran, one of Lord Morricks's neighbors, never had a good relationship with Morricks and was not invited to the wedding. Elderly and bitter, Lord Eldoran made use of his extensive library of magic texts to contact a demon. Although successful in his efforts, the demon Eldoran contacted instantly recognized the elderly man was using powers far beyond his understanding. Lord Eldoran wanted to curse the food at the wedding party, but the demon tricked him into creating a curse that went much further, permanently tainting the water in the ponds, fountains, and wells and mutating the plants in and around the grounds. Anyone and anything that ate cursed food or drank cursed liquids mutated into horrible, twisted versions of their previous selves. A number of wedding guests did escape, but not without suffering some effects of the curse.

In the 5 years since the night of the wedding, rumors surrounding the curse and its effects have drawn a great deal of attention. Families of victims that did not escape hired adventurers to enter the mansion on rescue missions, but none of those adventurers returned. A party of guardsmen approached the mansion grounds only to retreat before reaching the mansion, with survivors describing terrifying creatures and the horror of watching their friends succumb to the curse. Stories grow with each telling, and the mansion now has such a fearful reputation that many say quiet prayers when they hear it named. Lord Eldoran's recent death released the few restraints holding the curse to Lord Morricks's property, and it now spreads slowly to nearby vineyards and farms, causing overwhelming fear

and concern. Calls for help have been issued far and wide in search of people courageous enough to investigate the curse and find a way to put an end to it.

Although Byron Beval died, his father Lord Alistair Beval escaped. Lord Beval believes the curse was an attack against his family and is offering a large reward to anyone able to end the curse and a greater reward to anyone providing proof of who actually created it. While a number of people have examined the cursed grounds over the years, nobody has provided the slightest clue about the curse's source or ways to dispel it. Unfortunately, those adventurers seeking answers (and treasure) in the cursed mansion who do actually return describe scenes of terror that leave them shaken to the core of their being. Most never return at all. A few learned individuals live in town and study the curse from afar, not daring to investigate personally.

The PCs come through town on their way to other parts of the world or have heard rumors about the curse. While eating in a local tavern, they hear rumors about the curse spreading and about the different people investigating it. Further rumors suggest great hidden treasures, while other rumors claim Lord Morricks was in league with demons. Tactful questioning reveals the reward that has been offered, the names of the different individuals who are supposedly researching the curse, and ways to remove it. Exactly how the adventure ends depends on which pieces of information the party discovers and which NPCs the party aligns itself with, if any.

At the conclusion of the adventure, the PCs should acquire some new magical items, some spellbooks, and quite a bit of treasure. They also have the opportunity to forge friendships and alliances with members of some powerful organizations and families, potentially leading into further adventures.

Module Organization

The module is organized into several chapters. This chapter provides background information and character hooks designed to get the PCs involved in the adventure as well as details on the curse's creation, its effects, the different clues the PCs might discover, and different solutions for stopping or eliminating the curse. The second chapter details Grollek's Grove and the rumors found there, as well as NPCs with whom the PCs might interact to gather information. The third and fourth chapters provide keyed encounter locations in the mansion and the surrounding grounds, including locations for different pieces of evidence the PCs might collect. The final chapter describes various possible conclusions and rewards and is followed by appendices with information on NPCs, monsters, and new magic items.

Character Hooks

While the DM must provide her own reasons for the PCs to arrive in Grollek's Grove, a variety of tactics can be used. The PCs might just be passing through as part of a trade caravan or on their way to another location and stop for the night. They might have heard stories about the

curse, rumors of treasure in the mansion, or tales about the rewards offered for finding a way to end the curse. Perhaps they have friends or family members who were lost on the fateful night of the wedding; or, a distraught family seeking answers might hire them. Once in Grollek's Grove, the following NPCs might influence the PCs:

Richard Arien, Baron Beval's representative in town, is interested in finding adventurers willing to search for evidence proving who created the curse as well as ways to end it.

Leah Redoak, a representative from a local druid's circle, wants someone to help her investigate the curse. Her circle has ordered her to remain outside the cursed area, so she needs brave volunteers to collect samples for her.

Miriam Kriel, the local magistrate, is concerned about rumors that the curse is spreading and concerned about what happened to her parents, who attended the wedding. She encourages adventurers to investigate by telling them about the rewards offered by Richard Arien.

Thyran Whiteoak, a bookish wizard, is looking for someone to help him research the curse. He offers to let the PCs keep all rewards and treasures in exchange for the knowledge he gathers from them.

Alternately, the PCs might decide to investigate on their own based on rumors of hidden treasures and large rewards.

DM Notes

While some encounters are relatively easy for organized parties, the curse plays a role in the difficulty of almost every encounter. There is a distinct chance that the PCs become cursed, forcing them to act swiftly and decisively to ensure the effects are not permanent. The adventure presumes that players are familiar with their PCs' skills, spells, and other abilities. Adjusting the adventure for lower levels requires reducing PC exposure to the curse and reducing the number and strength of combat encounters. Adjusting the adventure for higher levels requires the addition of more encounters, adding levels to certain creatures, and/or the inclusion of dire and fiendish mutant creatures instead of the mutated animals described here.

The DM should read the adventure a couple of times and become familiar with the town of Grollek's Grove and the major NPCs there. The DM should also be familiar with the curse, its effects, and ways of overcoming it (see below). Game play in the mansion goes more quickly if the DM is familiar with it, but the keyed locations and descriptions should be fairly straightforward.

Eldoran's Curse

Lord Eldoran used several scrolls and special magic items to contact a half-flesh demon named Vrylick Wrezkel in search of a way to strike out at Lord Morricks and his family. The demon realized it had an opportunity to wreak great havoc on the Material Plane. While Lord Eldoran was intelligent enough to avoid actually summoning the demon, he was easily tricked into believing what the demon told him. Vrylick used Lord Eldoran's hatred to convince him to cast spells and use magic he did not really understand in order to create a powerful, long-lasting curse that would eventually create a rift to the Abyss. Patience

is a virtue few demons bother with, but Vrylick's long-term plan would sow chaos and confusion from the beginning and simply grow over time. Lord Eldoran believed the curse would only target Lord Morricks and his immediate family rather than the entire grounds and everything on them. Spells used were restrained to Lord Morricks's property, but these restraints ended with Lord Eldoran's death. Vrylick's complex curse is designed to spread slowly but surely throughout the land. When it gains enough power and has created enough chaos, tears to the Abyss begin to open that allow demons to pour into the Material Plane.

The complex rituals and spells used were focused on a small, plain stone. Once the stone was prepared, Lord Eldoran hired a thief to sneak onto the grounds and drop the stone into a fountain or some other large body of water, as well as to steal certain papers. The thief entered the grounds and dropped the stone into a large pond in the gardens behind the mansion (Area 20). The thief fell victim to the curse and was never seen again. As luck would have it, the stone was dropped into the pond before the main meal was served. All food on Lord Morricks's property was instantly tainted with the invisible, undetectable curse. Several hours later, during the toasts that follow such events, people began to fall victim to the horrible mutations and madness brought on by the curse. Some guests and servants fled during the ensuing madness, but many were killed by the curse — or by the cursed people around them.

Curse Effects

The curse bears the chaotic nature of its demon creator and has a wide range of effects. Creatures often die from the strange combinations of features the curse inflicts on them, while survivors can display visible mutations or possess mutations with no outward effect. The pebble at the bottom of the pond acts as a powerful magnet to chaotic evil creatures and creatures affected by the curse because it is a source of chaos. Cursed creatures have no desire to move very far from the stone, as its chaotic emanations are somehow comforting to them.

Most of the creatures changed by the curse have the following special abilities:

SA—Curse (Ex): A creature with this special attack can pass on the curse through wounds caused by a successful bite or claw attack. See Curse Transmission, below, for details on the Fortitude save DC to resist this special attack.

SQ—Curse (Ex): Cursed creatures are often somewhat paranoid and in some cases completely insane. Such creatures are difficult to communicate with, even through the use of spells. Cursed creatures receive a +6 morale bonus to all saving throws against *charm* spells and mind-influencing effects.

Curse Transmission

The curse is transmitted through food and water or by being bitten or clawed by a cursed creature. Every bite of food and drink of water and each successful bite or claw attack by a cursed creature forces a Fortitude saving throw to avoid being cursed. The saving throw starts with a DC of 5, but each additional bite of food, drink of water, and successful bite or claw attack by a cursed creature increases

Curse Effects

PCs failing to save against the curse must roll 1d20 on this table.

d20	Effect
1	Go insane: wander around aimlessly as if under a <i>confusion</i> spell.
2	Left arm mutates into a scaly arm ending with a claw (1d4 unarmed damage).
3	Right arm mutates into a scaly arm ending with a claw (1d4 unarmed damage).
4-5	Both arms mutate as above.
6	Body covered in scales: +1 natural AC.
7	Ears elongate and become sensitive: +4 to Listen checks, -4 to all saving throws vs. sound-based effects.
8	Nose disappears; lose all sense of smell.
9	Face mutates and twists, becoming covered with scales (-2 to any checks involving communication and +10% spell failure for spells involving verbal components).
10	Body covered with fur.
11	Lose ears, subject is deaf: -4 Initiative, and spellcasters suffer +20% spell failure for spells with verbal components.
12	Blinded.
13	Eyes more acute; can see twice as far as normal.
14	Feet become clawed; can no longer wear boots.
15	Lose all body hair.
16	Obtain supernatural strength and go insane: +2d4 points of permanent Strength and permanent insanity; curing one effect cures the other.
17	Go insane: attack nearest creature.
18	"Fiery blood": body temperature increases to the point that all forms of clothing and armor are uncomfortable to wear; cold resistance 10.
19	"Frozen blood": body temperature decreases until the creature has an overwhelming desire to bathe in fire; fire resistance 10.
20	Roll twice to obtain 2 results from above

At the DM's discretion, certain results can be repeated, while others cannot. Some results, such as 18 and 19, potentially cancel each other out, at the DM's discretion.

the DC by 1. A PC eating 5 bites of an apple found on the mansion grounds is forced to make 5 saving throws (i.e., DC 5, DC 6, DC 7, DC 8, and DC 9). Lengthy battles could conceivably force a number of saving throws. The amount of die rolling is easily reduced by simply adding the different successful attacks against a PC and making the PC save against the highest value, such as DC 9 in the example above. A *remove curse* spell resets the starting point for saving throws to DC 5. A PC, familiar, or animal companion beginning to mutate must receive a *remove curse* spell within 2 days or the effects become permanent and can only be removed with a *limited wish*, *miracle*, or *wish*. When failing a saving throw, a PC must roll 1d20 to obtain a curse result from the Curse Effects table.

Each mutation takes effect slowly over a period of approximately 1 hour. Every 12 hours after the first failed saving throw, the PC must make an additional Fortitude saving throw (DC 10) until 3 mutations have been obtained or a *remove curse* has been cast. Twelve hours after the third mutation takes effect, the victim must make an additional Fortitude saving throw (DC 15). Failure indicates the mutations kill the subject. Once victims are cursed, the curse continues to affect them even if they leave the grounds. Creatures accumulating 3 or more mutations have no desire to leave the grounds, unable to explain why; they simply feel drawn to the mansion,

particularly the pond behind the mansion. In addition, the 3 mutations and the madness that invariably accompanies them are permanent and cannot be removed by anything short of a *limited wish*, *wish*, or *miracle*.

Any food and water brought onto the grounds remains safe as long as none of it comes into contact with food or water from the mansion or grounds. Cursed PCs do not taint food or water they come into contact with unless they bleed on it. Food or drink found on the mansion grounds remains tainted by the curse when removed from the grounds, but that taint can be removed with a *purify food and drink* spell once the food or drink is well away from the cursed area.

Learning About the Curse

The PCs should learn more about the curse while wandering the mansion and grounds. Knowledge and Intelligence checks made while studying the plants and animals on the grounds and in the mansion can be used to help reveal different aspects of the curse. Mutations and changes caused by the curse are random and chaotic in nature, leading to the easy presumption that some sort of chaotic force is involved. Plants and creatures near the pond behind the mansion (Area 20) are more heavily altered by the curse, hinting that the pond itself might be the source of the curse.

Alternatively, the major NPCs provided can be used to help impart information. Samples of cursed plants and animals given to either Leah Redoak or Thyran Whiteoak reveal the curse has a demonic source and could not have been cast without the aid of a powerful demon. Discussions with Sarah Lyrean reveal demonic magic is both chaotic and evil in nature and that items used in such spells can be detected by examining their altered auras with *detect evil* or *detect chaos* spells. Conversations with Sarah, Leah, or even Thyran suggest the curse has a source somewhere in the mansion or on the grounds. Sarah or Leah might suggest using a *hallow* spell in the area to disrupt the curse. Either of them can supply a *divine scroll of hallow* for this purpose.

Ending the Curse

The curse is brought to an end or prevented from spreading in several different ways. Some solutions might require input from NPCs in Grollek's Grove. The DM can avoid relying upon NPCs through the use of Knowledge and Intelligence checks or the PCs' use of *augury* and other Divination spells.

The first (and least likely) method to be chosen is to contact the demon providing the power behind the curse and offer it some sort of payment to bring the curse to an end. While the PCs are almost certain to avoid such a dark deal, the wizard **Thyran Whiteoak** has his own reasons for allying himself with a demon and tries to make such a deal on his own (see Area H in the Grollek's Grove chapter for a description of Thyran and his plans). If he is brought to the source of the curse, Thyran can contact Vrylick Werezkel and begin negotiations. Given proper inducements and several souls (probably the PCs') to play with, Vrylick provides a solution that completely suppresses the curse and even seems to reverse its effects for 50 years. While cursed creatures still suffer its effects, they can no longer spread the curse, and all food and water on the grounds are instantly free of the curse. Plants return to normal after a full season of growth.

The second method is to cast *hallow* on the pond containing the stone. While this spell is higher in level than the PCs are able to cast, **Sarah Lyrean** (Area J), the high cleric of Kudrak in Grollek's Grove, or **Leah Redoak** (Area N) can offer this suggestion as well as a scroll containing the spell. This strategy prevents the curse from spreading to other properties but does not remove the curse from the food, water, and wine on the grounds, nor does it prevent cursed creatures from spreading it. Cursed creatures must be destroyed, and *purify food and drink* spells must be used throughout the entire cursed area to control the curse. While this method is fairly easy, it does require the aid of NPCs and has its own risks. The PCs are almost certainly not of the proper level to use the *hallow* scroll and

so run the risk of a scroll mishap as described in Chapter 8: Magic Items of the DMG.

The third and most effective method is to find the pebble acting as the source of the curse and destroy it. The PCs might arrive at this conclusion on their own through studying the grounds and the evidence they discover or by putting together comments from several different people. The pebble lies among hundreds of other rocks at the bottom of a pond; it can be separated from its neighbors through the use of either *detect evil* or *detect chaos* spells. Breaking the stone into fragments by any method prevents the further spread of the curse and makes all flowing water in fountains, wells, and ponds on the grounds safe to drink again. Food, wine, plants, and creatures on the grounds are still cursed but *purify* spells can remove the curse from food and liquid, and the cursed plants and creatures can be destroyed. While this method bears certain risks, it is extremely effective and allows the PCs to accomplish their goal without outside help.

If the PCs use the second or third method after someone has used the first, the grounds are returned to normal permanently, and the PCs earn the watchful eye and hatred of a very powerful demon.

Running the Adventure

After arriving in Grollek's Grove, the party learns about the curse on Morricks Mansion and hears rumors that it is spreading. Conflicting rumors lead them into conversations with several of the major characters mentioned above. That everyone is afraid to enter the mansion and its grounds becomes clear, but the only way to collect evidence about the curse is actually to explore the grounds in search of the curse's source.

A detailed investigation of the mansion and grounds exposes the PCs to the curse while allowing them to learn what happened. During their exploring, the PCs have the opportunity to rescue members of Lord Morricks family, acquire several pieces of evidence pointing to Lord Eldoran's involvement, and collect further information on the curse itself. Collaboration with different NPCs in town or their own research and consultation leads the PCs to one of several different ways to end the curse and remove its taint from the mansion and grounds.

Once the PCs have collected certain evidence against Lord Eldoran, they can find and interview one of Lord Eldoran's former servants. The evidence he provides, combined with evidence collected at the mansion, proves Lord Eldoran somehow created the curse, but final proof of Lord Eldoran's involvement entails the highly illegal search of his daughter's home in Grollek's Grove and, finally, the presentation of the evidence to Richard Arien.

Grollek's Grove

Grollek's Grove is a peaceful trade village spread out over a series of rolling hills near the juncture of two major trade routes. The village is far from any borders or other dangers and has no walls to speak of. A number of orchards are nearby, as well as fields of wheat, but the most significant product is wine. Many of the major vineyards in the area are known for hundreds of miles in every direction just based on their wine and brandy. Magistrate Miriam Kriel oversees the laws of the village, which tends toward neutral good in overall alignment. The map provided marks the location of an inn, taverns, stores, and other sites of importance throughout the village.

If using a different village from another campaign, the DM should place the following NPCs somewhere in the new village: Richard Arien, Sheila Eldoran, Sarah Lyrean, Leah Redoak, Aaron Rye, Jasmine Welk, and Thyran Whiteoak. These characters may be renamed or replaced as the DM chooses, but the information they possess could prove important to the PCs' success.

The high amount of trade traffic coming through Grollek's Grove makes the town attractive to thieves and brigands, resulting in more guards than usual. Guards run mounted patrols through the hills surrounding the town and maintain lookouts at several watchtowers to keep the area free of brigands. Fear has only begun to grip the town in the past few months when people began to notice the curse on Lord Morrnick's land spreading to neighboring properties. People are afraid the curse will spread over everyone's land and that it might swallow the entire town.

Guards are paid through taxes on passing caravans and wagon trains, as well as taxes paid by nobles and merchants with offices in town. Magistrate Miriam Kriel hired Lauren Darkbrow to oversee all military matters and trusts her in every way. Lauren, her lieutenant Brent Westlight, and a total of 60 guards (War1) circulate through the surrounding area on horseback as well as patrol through town on foot. In the event of a major battle, Lauren can call upon citizens for assistance. These people include Sarah Lyrean and other clerics in the temple to Kudrak, as well as some of the merchant houses that can provide more guards and several wizards (10 War3, 15 War2, 20 War1; 2 Wiz5, 1 Wiz3, 5 Wiz1).

Rumors and Information

The spreading curse is a topic of many conversations in Grollek's Grove, leading to a variety of rumors, some that are true and some that are not. This situation makes collecting information about the curse easier; unfortunately, most of the information is not really very helpful. The DM might decide simply to give the list of rumors to the players or use the brief descriptions of NPCs in town to role-play information gathering. The only steady and completely trustworthy information the PCs discover is that Lord Morrnick's mansion and grounds were either cursed or poisoned on the night of his daughter Larissa's wedding to Lord Byron Beval, son of a powerful merchant family. Surviving witnesses, including Lord Alistair Beval, testified to Byron's death. Many of the following summarized rumors are difficult to verify or disprove.

Grollek's Grove (Village): Conventional; AL NG; 1,000 gp limit; Assets 55,000 gp; Population 853; Mixed (Human 92%, Halfling 4%, Elf 2%, Dwarf 1%, Half-elf 1%).

Authority Figures: Magistrate Miriam Kriel (Ari6); Lauren Darkbrow, Captain of the Guard (Ftr5); Sarah Lyrean, priestess of Kudrak (Clr8).

Important Characters: Richard Arien, Sheila Eldoran, Sarah Lyrean, Leah Redoak, Aaron Rye, Jasmine Welk, and Thyran Whiteoak. Sheila Eldoran's statistics are provided at Area P, below; stats for the other characters are listed in the NPC Appendix.

DC 6: There is a large reward for finding a cure for the curse.

DC 8: "That crazy druid lady with the huge tiger probably did it. Did you see that tree she lives in? She grew it in a single day."

DC 10: "Lord Morrnick cheated a druid council, and everyone knows you don't mess with druids if your livelihood depends on growing things."

DC 10: "Richard Arien only claims to be offering a reward. He is really just another damn noble tricking people into finding their deaths at the mansion."

DC 10: "Lord Morrnick was a rich, rich man. His mansion is full of treasure."

DC 10: "Lord Morrnick's wife was a beautiful woman, perhaps too beautiful. Maybe she was a demon, and maybe she cast the curse."

DC 10: "The curse is just a story the nobles are using to cover up the murder of Lord Morrnick and his family."

DC 12: "One of Lord Alistair Beval's enemies hired a powerful wizard to curse everyone at the wedding as a way to strike at his family. After all, the curse did kill his son."

DC 12: "Lord Morrnick was a dark mage who used pacts with demons to further his own goals. One of his bargains went wrong, and a demon did this to his family in retribution."

DC 12: "Lord Beval cast the curse to get rid of his son and the entire Morrnick family."

DC 14: "Lord Eldoran, Lord Morrnick's next door neighbor and competitor, hired a wizard to curse the wedding."

The DM is welcome to devise additional rumors that fit better with his or her game world. Rumors should add to the mystery of the curse and whoever cast it. Further rumors should reveal the names of Leah Redoak and Thyran Whiteoak as people who came to town to study the curse. Very little questioning is needed to reveal that Sarah Lyrean and Jasmine Welk are also excellent sources of information about the town and the area around it.

Keyed Locations in Grollek's Grove

The following locations are marked on the map of Grollek's Grove. Lettered locations are briefly described along with minor NPCs who can be found there. Major NPCs are listed after this section along with the various locations where

they may be encountered. One location, the home of Lady Sheila Eldoran, has an additional map along with keyed encounters; this map is provided in the event the PCs attempt to complete one of the minor quests.

Descriptions of some minor NPCs are provided to give the DM and the players an opportunity to role-play information gathering. The DM may simply choose to provide the PCs with the list of rumors detailed above. If the PCs end up in combat with an NPC, the DM decides which spells any spellcasting NPCs have prepared.

Area A: Guard Towers

These stone guard towers rise up to a height of 40 feet and give a clear view of the surrounding hills and valleys. At each tower, 10 guards are always on duty (2 War2, 8 War1), 5 resting or sleeping with their weapons nearby and the other 5 standing watch either on top of the tower or patrolling around its base. The guards do not shout greetings at travelers unless they are greeted first. Their main job is to watch for large wagon trains and caravans as well as for groups of potential bandits. There is a 20% chance that Lauren Darkbrow is checking on the guards in the tower when the PCs pass by.

Each tower has 3 levels. The first level is devoted to the horses and is filled with hay, grain, and several stalls. A narrow stairway leads up to a rest area on the second level containing cots, tables, and chairs for the guards who are not on duty. The third level is devoted to storing a number of heavy crossbows, longbows, shortbows, and ammunition. A stairway leads through a trapdoor to the top of the tower that looks out over the town as well as the roads leading into it. Doors big enough for large warhorses lead into the tower. The doors are made of thick oak reinforced with iron bands and are barred from the inside when closed.

Reinforced Doors: 3 in. thick; Hardness 5; hp 60; Break (DC 28).

Area B: The Waving Hand

The Waving Hand is the town's finest inn simply by virtue of the fact that it is also the village's only inn. If the PCs want to stay elsewhere, they must rent a house. In truth, the massive inn is clean, well cared for, and reasonably priced. **Markus Brek** (male human Exp3; 12 hp; Profession [innkeeper] +7), the proprietor, has made an agreement with the local thieves' guild that keeps any of his renters safe from theft — while they are in the inn, that is. This protection agreement extends to all theft at the inn. Anyone robbing patrons at the inn is hunted down by the thieves' guild. The inn has 45 rooms, far more than one would expect for a small village, but this is because so many travelers pass through Grollek's Grove. Though clean and safe, the inn and rooms are almost devoid of decorations, making it feel drab and plain. While the inn does not have any stables, Whitebrand Stables across the road is large enough to keep any horses the PCs may have.

Markus maintains a bar and a small restaurant as a convenience to his renters, as he makes most of his money from rent. Most people prefer to attend the much larger and more boisterous Prancing Unicorn for food

and fun. Markus' daughters Helen and Rita (Com1, 3 hp each) take care of serving food, and his wife Ellen (Com3, 8 hp) cooks.

Markus is a friendly, balding man with a pudgy face and a massive belly. Wrinkles have begun to pull at his cheeks and the skin around his eyes, and his belly sags over his belt. Markus is very friendly to travelers, as they are his business, and he is happy to give them directions to any place in town. While he knows a little about both Lord Morricks and Lord Eldoran, he does not like to talk about them. All he knows about the curse is that it exists and that people are terrified of it. He prefers not to discuss the curse and constantly makes signs to ward away evil when it is mentioned.

Area C: Whitebrand Stables

Martin Whitebrand runs the largest stables in the area. The building is easily 3 times the size of any other stable building, with a large area behind the stables for storing wagons and additional animals if needed. Over 200 individual stalls are built into the massive building, and each stall has hooks and pegs to hold saddles, reins, and other personal equipment if people trust enough to leave it behind. Martin has an agreement with the thieves' guild: the guild watches people as they go in and out of the stables, but does not steal anything from the stables themselves and exacts revenge on anyone who does. Horse theft in Grollek's Grove is considered a capital offense. Guards check on the stables almost once an hour. Martin has 8 stable hands (each Exp2; 7 hp; Handle Animal +5) and charges standard rates for housing animals.

Area D: The Prancing Unicorn

The Prancing Unicorn has a reputation for fine food, excellent wine, and even better brandy. While prices are about double standard, everything here is of the highest quality. In addition to the fine food, **Jasmine Welk** entertains here every night, bringing in large crowds. The place is run by a halfling named **Lorath Quill**, who employs a number of different serving girls and bartenders to keep up with the crowds. Lorath's wife Mirabelle (Exp4; 14 hp; Profession [cook] +8) does all of the cooking, with help from their three daughters Laura, Rianna, and Bethany (each Exp1; 5 hp; Profession [cook] +4, Profession [waitress] +4). The Prancing Unicorn is an excellent place to meet people in town and hear a number of different rumors about the curse. The large crowds generally force Lorath to hire bouncers to keep everything under control. The bouncers are usually hired through his brother Brandarb and are almost always members of the thieves' guild (2 bouncers: Rog1, 6 hp each). There is a 30% chance that **Richard Arien** is here on any given night.

The boisterous crowds are a rich source of rumors and stories, so all Gather Information checks in the Prancing Unicorn receive a +3 circumstance bonus.

Area E: Quill's Handy Travel Supplies

Brandarb Quill, brother to Lorath Quill (Area D), runs this deceptively small shop. While not many

goods are on display, a hidden trapdoor leads down into a massive storeroom holding a wide variety of mundane supplies. Brandarb sells any of the standard traveling supplies listed in the PHB at standard prices. He is willing to purchase more expensive items, but he is willing to pay only about 1/3 their normal value. Unknown to the guards or almost anyone else in town, Brandarb is the guildmaster of the thieves' guild and acts as a fence. He makes absolutely sure that stolen or rare items are sold somewhere else and never holds valuable property anywhere in his store to avoid bringing suspicion upon himself. By making certain that most robberies are done well out of town or at least not noticed until the victim has left Grollek's Grove, Brandarb ensures that the thieves' guild maintains a low profile. Anyone giving the proper signals is told of the "rules of the town" and allowed to purchase thieving tools.

Area F: The Village Hall

This building contains offices for **Miriam Kriel**, the magistrate, as well as **Lauren Darkbrow** and **Brent Westlight**. Guard barracks are next to the jail cells, making escape unlikely. Magistrate Kriel's offices and a large courtroom take up the center of the building, while Lauren's offices and living quarters are in the back. The magistrate acts as the village organizer, mayor, treasurer, and judge. She took over for her father, who never returned from the wedding at Morricks Mansion. A minimum of 15 guards is always on duty here, sometimes more when the weather is bad and the number of guard patrols is cut down. Guards within have access to a variety of weapons and can ring a large bell to alert other guards in the village if there is an attack or an escape.

The village hall is a stone structure unlike any other in the village. Thick slabs of granite form the walls, and massive stone doors (8 in. thick; Hardness 8; hp 90; Break DC 30 when barred) framed in steel provide the only entrance into the building, while thick iron bars block off the narrow slots in the stone walls that claim to be windows. The building is designed to be imposing as well as threatening, and it succeeds in every way.

Area G: Karlugron's Armory

One end of this long building is set aside as living quarters while the rest is taken up by a massive forge and a vast number of blacksmith's tools. Barrels containing oil, water, and salted water are lined up near the forge itself, and various chunks of metal and coal are piled in different bins and hoppers. **Karlugron** sells metal weapons and armor up to masterwork quality. He has one human apprentice named Warren (male human Exp1; 5 hp; Craft [blacksmithing] +5, Craft [weaponsmithing] +4) and one dwarven apprentice named Hilgran (female dwarf Exp1; 6 hp; Craft [armorsmithing] +4, Craft [blacksmithing] +5).

Area H: Thyran Whiteoak's Home

Thyran rented this small home when he first moved to Grollek's Grove because he knew his research would take time. Two of the three small rooms in the cottage have been devoted to his research, while the third is his bedroom. Thyran stores various potion-making materials in several large trunks in one of his rooms and keeps a number of spellbooks and research texts hidden in a trunk upon which he has cast *arcane lock*. Despite his wealthy appearance and fine clothing, Thyran does not store any money in the cottage. He either carries it with him or has it stored someplace else, much to the annoyance of the thieves' guild, which has spent many hours going over everything in the cottage while Thyran is out.

Area I: Mike's Leather Shop

Placed well out of town because the awful stench of the tanning process has a tendency to turn good neighbors into enemies, the leather shop makes and sells fine leather goods. The building has 2 rooms, one devoted to tanning and drying leather and the other used for making and selling the final products. Vats of foul smelling chemicals fill the tanning room while racks for stretching and drying leather take up all of the walls. **Michael Brath** is found here during the day along with his apprentices, Jen and Kyle (female and male human Exp1; 4 hp; Craft [leatherworking] +4). Mike sells leather clothing, bags, boots, backpacks, and armor. The armor he sells is masterwork quality, for he refuses to make anything less, and he charges twice what others would for the same armor. All of his leather goods bear impressions of eagles, hawks, or other birds, as well as his particular symbol. Most of his trade is now in the leather clothing that has come into fashion in some of the larger cities.

Michael does not live here, the smell too awful even for him to bear, so he cannot be encountered here at night. He bars the windows from the inside (1 in. thick; Hardness 4; 10 hp; Break DC 25 when barred) and locks the heavy oak doors (4 in. thick; Hardness 4; 20 hp; Break DC 22; Open Lock DC 25). Michael pays protection money to the thieves' guild and keeps his store goods in an unlocked chest.

Area J: Temple to Kudrak

A massive, shield-shaped temple rises near the road. **Sarah Lyrean**, the high cleric in town, as well as a number of other junior priests (2 Clr3, 2 Clr1/Pal1, 5 Clr1) live in small rooms off to the side of the main altar room. The altar is shaped like a shield and draped with a red velvet covering. Rich tapestries decorating the walls depict numerous battles, usually focusing on individuals protecting innocent children. While the temple is not officially protected by the thieves' guild, few thieves are bold enough to risk angering a god. There has never been a reported theft, but several young men have mysteriously died while "praying" in the temple in the middle of the night. At least 2 clerics and 2d6 worshippers can be found here at any time during the day and 4 or more clerics and 1d4 worshippers at night.

Kudrak, Lesser God of Guardians

Alignment: Lawful Good

Domains: Good, Protection, Strength

Symbol: A stone hammer on a silver shield

Worshippers: Farmers, guardsmen

Kudrak is usually depicted as a large male human in silver plate mail and holding a large silver shield and a massive stone hammer. His priests often wear armor during celebrations and always wear their armor at least one day a week. Kudrak is worshipped by guards and farmers, who are thought of as "protectors of the fields," and wizards who focus on Abjuration spells. Clerics of Kudrak consider themselves protectors of whatever community they live in and are always willing to assist the city militia in any manner. Unlike many gods, Kudrak demands little in the way of ceremonies, instead focusing on the actions of his followers. Those who pray do so at any time of the day or night. Clerics usually lead prayer ceremonies at both dawn and dusk, but participation is always considered optional. Almost as many paladins worship Kudrak as clerics, and Kudrak's clerics may take several levels of paladin without any penalties.

Area K: The Deadly Arrow

Jacob Rain keeps his store and workshop impeccable and organized. Woodworking tools line the walls in order of their size, shape, and purpose, and the special wood and bone he uses are stacked in individual lots. Jacob's bows and arrows are of the highest quality, enabling him to ask for and receive premium prices. Jacob works here alone, and, since his wife's death, does not go out at all, so he can be encountered here at any time during the day or night.

Jacob makes masterwork bows and crossbows as well as masterwork mighty bows up to a Strength value of 15. He charges twice what these bows would normally cost because he needs to import some of his materials and because merchant caravans are always ready to purchase a few bows at these prices.

Area L: Mistwright's Gems

Known for his gem cutting and jewelry making skills, **Furnk Mistwright** lives and works in this small but solid building. Furnk pays a large sum to the thieves' guild for protection. Between the guild and the village guards, he has very little fear of robbery. He leaves his doors unlocked but stores all of his gems and products in a massive vault in the back of the store when he is not home.

Vault: 10 in. thick; Hardness 10; hp 150; Break DC 30; Open Lock DC 35.

The enchanted steel vault can be opened only with a special key. Opening the vault without the key or breaking it open triggers a **paint trap**. The paint identifies thieves without causing any permanent damage to any of the items stored in the vault.

Paint Trap: CR 1/4; paint sprays all over anyone within a 10-ft. radius of the vault; no saving throw; Search DC 30; Disable Device DC 35.

The paint takes at least 1 hour of scrubbing to remove from skin and hair and 2-3 hours to remove from clothing.

Treasure: The vault contains over 8,500 gp worth of gold and gems. Paint marks any thieves for easy identification. Robbing Furnk makes the PCs a target for the thieves' guild as well as the village guards, and thieves are generally rewarded with an early grave before they have a chance to spend their ill-gotten gains.

Area M: Richard Arien's Home

Richard Arien purchased this small cottage when he moved into town. He knew it would be some time before questions surrounding the curse were properly answered. Though small, the cottage is beautifully decorated. The PCs can find Richard here during the day, but at night there is a 30% chance he is at the Prancing Unicorn.

Richard keeps a great deal of treasure in a sturdy wood chest beneath his bed. Many suspect the reward money is hidden here; they are wrong, but after 3 thieves died trying to find out, nobody else has dared to open it. Richard is rather confident in the traps the chest possesses and with good reason. Although the items he stores here are valuable, he does not see why anyone would risk their life for them.

Steel Reinforced Wood Chest: 2 in. thick; Hardness 5; hp 75; Break DC 27; Open Lock DC 30.

The chest is squat, ugly, and incredibly sturdy. Attempting to move or open the chest without the key triggers a **poison gas trap**. Magic wards on the chest keep the lock attuned to a special key that Richard has with him at all times.

Poison Gas Trap: CR 8; 10-ft. radius spread of poisonous gas (Fort save [DC 19]; 3d6/2d6 Con damage on a failed save, 1d6 Con damage on a successful save), Search DC 30; Disable Device DC 35.

A failed Disable Device check instantly triggers the trap and forces the thief to succeed at 2 saving throws to survive. The magical trap resets after 10 rounds.

Treasure: The chest contains a *cloak of resistance +2*, gold and gems totaling 6,000 gp, and spellbooks containing the following spells: 1st—*alarm, charm person, color spray, mage armor, shield*; 2nd—*blur, flaming sphere, ghoul touch, glitterdust, pyrotechnics, spectral hand*; 3rd—*fireball, flame arrow, gentle repose, hold person, Leomund's tiny hut, lightning bolt*; 4th—*dimensional anchor, improved invisibility*.

The spellbooks are of no value to Richard; a friend gave them to him many years ago, and he simply has not found anyone he felt like passing them on to. He offers the books to any wizard PCs who assist in the rescue of **Larissa Morricks**.

Area N: Leah Redoak's Tree

Leah picked a small area at the edge of town to grow her home. Several weeks of spells and hard work encouraged an oak tree to grow to a massive size. She created a home in the base of the tree through the use of wood shaping spells and possibly other magic as well. Beautiful flowerbeds and small bushes provide an intricate, peaceful garden

where she and her dire tiger companion **Shriluc** are usually found resting. She makes some trips into the village, but Shriluc rarely lets her go alone and he tends to frighten people. There is a 10% chance that Sarah Lyrean is visiting Leah when the PCs come to call and a 30% chance that a villager is visiting her seeking potions or healing.

Area O: Culpec's Potions

Culpec sells a variety of potions to travelers and merchants. While clerics at the Temple of Kudrak sell potions as well, they do not have the same selection as Culpec and they tend to ask questions, something Culpec never does. Vials and jars full of various herbs and mysterious concoctions line shelves along all his walls, and a number of labeled potions sit on one of his shelves. People know well that Culpec does not properly label a potion until he sells it; most of the labels are nonsense to anyone other than him or misleading if they are understandable. There is a 50% chance that a stolen potion is poison (Ingested, Fort DC 18, 2d6 Con/1d6 Con).

The curse has increased the demand for potions to the point that Culpec has a hard time keeping many potions in stock. He generally charges premium prices for his potions. Culpec sells the following potions: *cure light wounds* (100 gp), *bull's strength* (200 gp), *cat's grace* (200 gp), *cure moderate wounds* (600 gp), and *remove curse* (1,000 gp). Sarah Lyrean and Leah Redoak might be able to convince Culpec to cut his prices for the PCs if they believe the PCs are honest about their goals. Despite living here for almost a dozen years, Culpec is considered a "foreigner" due to his extremely pale skin, yellow eyes, and brightly colored robes. He visits the Prancing Unicorn at least once a week and has many friends, but he does not participate in gossip about the curse. He is somewhat frightened that providing any sort of opinion on what happened might make people somehow suspect him.

Area P: Lady Sheila Eldoran's Home

Lady Sheila Eldoran took over all of her uncle's businesses and property when he died. Rather than living in the mansion out in the vineyards, she lives in the small house that acted as an office for Lord Eldoran when he met with merchants or did other business in the village. Her move to the village started a number of rumors. At first, the rumors suggested she was having an affair with a married man in town. News of the slowly spreading curse has led to new rumors that she is afraid to live next door to Lord Morricks' cursed property. Her home, while relatively small, does have several rooms the PCs may decide to investigate. A vault in her office contains notes Lord Eldoran made while planning his curse against Lord Morricks. These papers provide definitive proof that he cast the curse and could lead to the dissolution of his estate if they are discovered. Lady Eldoran has kept them in the hopes she can find a way to prevent the curse from taking over her inherited lands.

Breaking into the home is a very touchy, dangerous matter. While Richard Arien might suggest it in an off-hand way, he is certainly unwilling to admit to telling the PCs to do anything illegal. If the PCs are caught invading

Lady Eldoran's home, the guards arrest them. If the PCs kill anyone in the home while trying to find evidence against Lord Eldoran, they might end up standing trial for murder. During daylight hours, a number of servants work in the home and there are several additional guards. Descriptions and encounters detailed below presume the PCs make a robbery attempt late at night when the servants are away.

Two doors provide entrance into the home, and there are glass windows for all rooms, including rooms on the second floor. Windows on the second floor are barred shut and need to be broken in order to obtain entry.

Pa — Oak Double Doors: 2 in. thick; Hardness 5; hp 20; Break DC 25 when barred.

The doors are barred shut from the inside and there is no way to unlock them. Breaking down the doors creates enough noise to wake the neighbors and alert the guards.

Pb — Steel Reinforced Door: 2 in. thick; Hardness 8; hp 20; Break DC 25 when barred; Open Lock DC 20.

A gap along the door allows a successful Open Lock check (DC 20) with a thin dagger or short sword to raise the bar and open the door. Using this method gives the guards in Area P2 a chance to detect what is happening with a Listen check (DC 18).

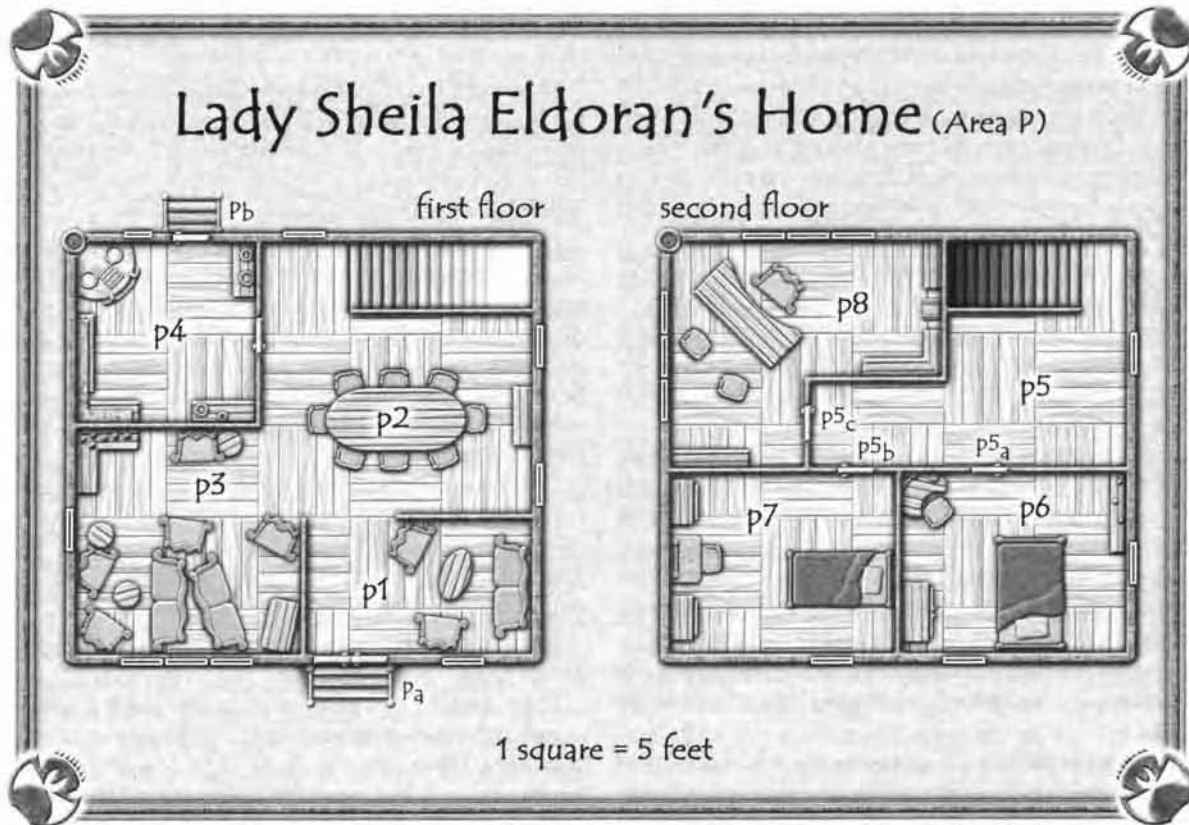
Area Pr: A Grand Foyer

The foyer acts as a sitting room for merchants and businessmen who come by to make transactions or agreements during the day. It opens into a wide sitting room with comfortable sofas and chairs placed around a small table. Small niches in the paneled walls hold porcelain vases containing beautiful flower arrangements. Tapestries bearing abstract designs adorn the walls between the niches, leaving almost none of the pale wood paneling bare. At night, the foyer is deserted, but during the day there is at least one servant (Com1, 2 hp) and most likely several guests. Each of the porcelain vases is a unique specimen specially made for the Eldoran family. Not even the thieves' guild would likely risk selling them. The foyer opens up into a large dining room to the north as well as into a living room off to the west.

Area P2: The Dining Room (EL 3)

This room — in fact, the entire house — is designed for entertaining important guests, and it is decorated to show off a great deal of wealth. An oval mahogany dining table surrounded by 8 chairs fills most of this rather small room. An ornate china cabinet against the east wall displays a number of unique porcelain plates, and statues and small paintings depicting arrangements of fruits and flowers adorn the walls. While some of the items would be worth stealing, selling them would be almost impossible. The PCs risk their theft being discovered and prosecuted if they attempt to steal goods from here.

At night, **2 guards** are always on duty here. They are paid to be alert and do a very good job of it. They play cards together, checking the kitchen and front entry at random intervals. If they hear broken glass or banging on one of the doors, they investigate immediately. If they discover PCs inside the home, they begin shouting and making noise while they attack. Lady Eldoran (Area P6) wakes up and



comes to assist them within 4 rounds of their initial shouts. Getting past the guards and up to the second floor is very difficult without a great deal of planning.

Ingrid, female human Ftr2: CR 2; SZM; HD 2d10+2; hp 17; Init +0; Spd 30 ft.; AC 15; Atk +5 melee (1d8+2, masterwork longsword, crit 19-20) or +2 ranged (1d6, composite shortbow, crit x3, 70 ft.); AL N; SV Fort +6, Ref +0, Will +1; Str 14, Dex 11, Con 13, Int 16, Wis 12, Cha 8.

Skills: Appraise +5, Handle Animal +3, Heal +1.5, Knowledge (local history) +5, Profession (guard) +3, Search +4, Wilderness Lore +3. **Feats:** Blind-Fight, Great Fortitude, Quick Draw, Weapon Focus (longsword).

Possessions: Masterwork longsword, chainmail, pouch with 27 gp and 43 sp.

Gerald, male human War2: CR 1; SZM; HD 2d8+4; hp 19; Init +1; Spd 20 ft.; AC 16; Atk +4 melee (1d8+2, longsword, crit 19-20) or +3 ranged (1d6, composite shortbow, crit x3, 70 ft.); AL NE; SV Fort +5, Ref +3, Will +1; Str 14, Dex 13, Con 14, Int 13, Wis 12, Cha 9.

Skills: Escape Artist +2, Handle Animal +4, Intimidate +4, Sense Motive +3. **Feats:** Lightning Reflexes, Quick Draw.

Possessions: Longsword, chainmail, pouch with 12 gp and 15 sp.

Combat Tactics: Both guards simply charge forward and attack, making as much noise as possible. They focus attacks on anyone they believe is attempting to cast a spell.

Area P3: A Cozy Living Room

This room is an opulent display of wealth. Plush chairs and velvet-covered sofas surround small tables to create separate areas for ongoing discussions. An ornate bar in the northwest corner displays several bottles of expensive brandy (6 bottles of extremely expensive brandy worth 45

gp each). Large plate glass windows look out over the street, and delicate silk tapestries decorate the walls.

Area P4: A Small Kitchen

Pots and pans hang from hooks on the ceiling, leaving a single clear area near the pot-bellied stove standing in the northwest corner. A great deal of cooking must be done in this kitchen, because it is impeccably clean and well cared for. Cabinets around the edges of the room must hold other cooking utensils as well as plates and silverware. A door in the east wall leads into the rest of the house. Extremely tall PCs need to watch their heads and make certain they do not bump any of the pots and pans as they walk through the kitchen because any noise immediately alerts the guards in the dining room. The door to the rest of the home is set on special spring-loaded hinges and opens and closes silently.

Area P5: The Second Floor Landing.

A wide landing extends into a narrow hallway to the west. Three matching wood doors (1 in. thick; Hardness 4; hp 10; Break DC 15) spaced along the walls lead into the bedrooms and the office. Paintings of boats and ocean scenes adorn the walls, but there is a surprising lack of other decorations. The 3 doors are unlocked. Lady Eldoran simply does not believe anyone can pass by the guards to reach the second floor without making any noise.

Area P6: Lady Eldoran's Bedroom (EL 4)

Ornate mahogany furniture fills the room, and beautiful paintings depicting water falls and forest scenes decorate the walls. If the PCs enter at night, Lady Eldoran is sleeping on the massive bed in the center of the room. She

GROLLEK'S GROVE

is a light sleeper, and a failed Move Silently check (DC 8) awakens her. If awakened, she screams for her guards and creates as much noise as possible. A childhood fear of the dark forces her to keep the room lit at all times, even when she is sleeping. Lady Eldoran also wakes if the guards downstairs begin shouting. If the guards wake her, she gets up, loads the light crossbow hidden beneath her bed, casts *mage armor* on herself, and heads downstairs.

Lady Sheila Eldoran, female human Wiz4: CR 4; SZ M; HD 4d4+4; hp 19; Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; AC 14; Atk +6 melee (1d4+4, +1 dagger, crit 19-20) or +3 ranged (1d8, light crossbow, crit 19-20, 80 ft.); SA spells; AL NE; SV Fort +2, Ref +2, Will +4; Str 17, Dex 12, Con 13, Int 17, Wis 11, Cha 11.

Skills: Concentration +10, Knowledge (arcana) +10, Knowledge (religion) +10, Profession (merchant) +7, Scry +10, Spellcraft +10. **Feats:** Combat Casting, Scribe Scroll, Silent Spell, Toughness.

Arcane Spells Prepared (4/4/3): 0—dancing lights, daze, detect magic, read magic; 1st—burning hands, *mage armor*, shield, shocking grasp; 2nd—blur, Mel's acid arrow (x2).

Possessions: Ring of protection +2, amulet of natural armor +1, cloak of resistance +1, +1 dagger, light crossbow, 20 bolts.

Description and Personality: Sheila wears a pinched, pained expression everywhere she goes. Heavy make-up covers her worst features, but her sarcastic and rather cruel personality keeps her from making any friends. Despite many rumors about her having affairs with married men, she has not had relations with any men at all and is unlikely to in the future.

She never goes out, and her snobbery means that she will likely not even give the PCs an audience.

Knowledge: Lady Eldoran knows her uncle is responsible for the curse, though she is unwilling to admit this knowledge to anyone. If confronted with papers stolen from her home, she claims they are forgeries, and proving otherwise is difficult without also admitting to the theft.

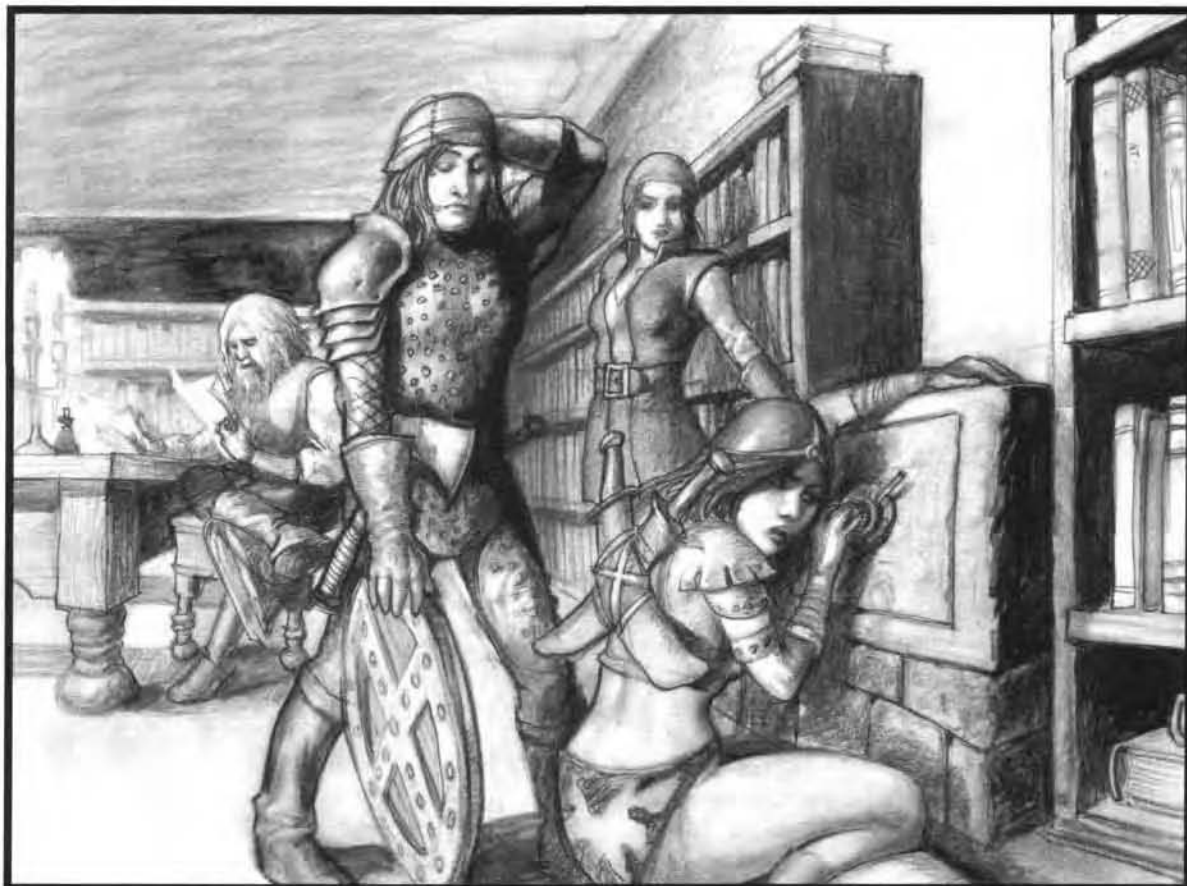
Combat Tactics: Lady Eldoran uses *burning hands* on any PCs attempting to close for melee combat with her and screams her loudest to alert both her guards as well as the neighbors about the attack. If possible, she casts *blur* and *mage armor* on herself before going into combat. She tries to use Mel's acid arrow and *shocking grasp* spells on individual PCs, resorting to *burning hands* when several PCs are standing together.

DM Note: If the PCs kill Lady Eldoran for any reason, they need to be extremely certain there is no evidence connecting them to the crime. Despite whatever evidence they find against Lord Eldoran, the Magistrate does not tolerate the murder of one person to find evidence against another.

Jewelry Box: Hardness 4; hp 25; Break DC 20; Open Lock DC 22.

Lady Eldoran keeps a few jewels in a jewelry box hidden in one of the dresser drawers. Opening the drawers quietly requires a Move Silently check (DC 15), with failure awakening Lady Eldoran if she is sleeping in the room.

Treasure: The box contains emerald pendant earrings (250 gp), a matching emerald necklace (1,500 gp), and a pearl brooch (280 gp). All of the items are easily identified as Lady Eldoran's and must be sold in a distant city.



MORRICK MANSION

Area P7: A Guest Room

Although clean and well cared for, the room has the hollow feel of a place that is not being lived in. An elegant marble-topped vanity stands against one wall, flanked by 2 dressers made of an extremely dark wood with pale brown veins. A sturdy bed in the center of the room is topped with maroon blankets that match the several maroon tapestries hanging on the walls. The drawers are all empty. Lady Eldoran has not entertained any guests since she moved into the house. Despite its lack of use, the cleaning staff cleans this room every morning. Anyone hiding here during the day is almost certainly discovered by one of the servants.

Area P8: The Office

This grand office is clearly where most of the real negotiations occur. A massive wood desk with a slate top stands in the center. A large brown leather chair rests behind the desk, which faces two smaller leather chairs. Bookcases line all of the inner walls, while large plate glass windows look out over small gardens to the north and west. A squat steel safe standing between 2 bookcases at the far east wall holds numerous business papers as well as the notes Lord Eldoran made while planning the curse. Squat, ugly, and almost impervious to damage, the safe is not trapped and is relatively easy — though time consuming — to open.

Steel Safe: 12 in. thick; Hardness 10; hp 150; Break (DC 30); Open Lock (special).

The heavy safe is made of enchanted steel but has a combination lock that can be opened by making 3 consecutive Open Lock checks (DC 20 each). Each successful skill check reveals another portion of the combination.

Treasure: The safe contains a vast number of boring business documents of no use to anyone other than Sheila Eldoran. It also contains detailed notes written by Lord Eldoran describing his contact with Vrylick Werekkel and the various things the demon told him were required to curse Lord Morricks and his family. These documents provide definitive proof that Lord Eldoran is responsible for the curse and make clear that finding and destroying the pebble used as a source for the curse should end it completely. In addition, the safe holds a bag containing 850 gp and 1,396 sp, as well as 2 spellbooks containing the following spells:

0—all; 1st—burning hands, change self, color spray, endure elements, erase, expeditious retreat, grease, hypnotism, jump, magic weapon, obscuring mist, shield, shocking grasp, Tensor's floating disc; 2nd—arcane lock, blur, cat's grace, darkvision, detect thoughts, fog cloud, invisibility, Mel's acid arrow, resist elements, shatter, spectral hand; 3rd—explosive runes, gust of wind, halt undead, Leomand's tiny hut, shrink item, vampiric touch; 4th—bestow curse, contagion, enervation, Evar's black tentacles, ice storm. The DM should decide whether to add or subtract from the above list.



The Mansion and Grounds

Lord Morricks mansion is set on a low hill near the center of his property. Beautiful gardens surrounding the home were his pride and joy. A stone wall separates the gardens from the light forest to the south and the vast vineyards that surround the mansion on all sides. Horses were stabled outside the gardens because Lord Morricks owned several exotic wildcats that prowled the gardens.

The mansion and grounds are afflicted with a curse (see the Introduction), which extends to the very borders of Lord Morricks property. Even the vineyards are tainted. All of the creatures in the gardens and the forest south of the mansion are also cursed. Most of the creatures are far more dangerous and aggressive than their normal counterparts.

When the PCs enter the grounds and begin to explore, they become potential victims of the very curse they are investigating. They also become targets for some of the mutant people, animals, and plants that now occupy both the mansion and the grounds. Many of the mutant creatures roaming the mansion and grounds were once servants or guests who came for the wedding. Some of the mutant servants and guests retain a small part of their sanity and can be reasoned with, while others have gone completely insane but still retain some of their skills. Creatures on the grounds and in the mansion are organized into keyed encounters at particular locations.

The DM should feel free to move creatures based on the PCs' actions. A random events table at the beginning of each sub-section provides additional creatures and events that the PCs might encounter during their investigations. Any new creatures the DM decides to add to the mansion or grounds are considered cursed and have the special abilities related to the curse described in the Introduction.

Locations and encounters throughout the entire grounds and mansion are numbered sequentially to prevent any confusion about different locations. The PCs probably need to rest several times while searching the area and might need to return to town several times for healing and care.

Morricks Mansion Grounds

The mansions grounds include the light forest around the road leading up to the mansion, the vineyards, certain buildings, and the walled gardens. The curse has twisted and mutated all of the plants, which possess a wide variety of different features including strangely colored leaves, branches, or flowers. Traveling through the area is thus an eerie, disconcerting experience.

The Main Road

The road leading up to the mansion was once a wide cobble stone road fit for carts and horses. The light forest now grows over the road; stones are misplaced by growing tree roots and erosion. When the PCs first enter the path, the twisting branches and mutated trunks of the trees they

Random Events

Roll 1d20 for every hour the PCs explore the forest to determine if one of the following events occurs:

1d20	Event
1-3	A cursed boar (CR 4) charges through the undergrowth and attacks the PCs.
4-5	You hear the sound of distant laughter over the rustling leaves. The laughter fades as the breeze picks up and cannot be heard again.
6-7	The PCs pass close to the burrow of a cursed badger (CR 2) that rushes out and attacks.
8-9	The shrill cry of a distant eagle filters through the branches overhead.
10-12	A cursed weasel (CR 2) attacks the PCs.
13-14	Branches and bushes shudder and ripple as a massive dark shape flees into the forest.
15-20	No encounter.

The above events should be used once, if the DM decides to use them at all. If the PCs are wounded, the DM can choose to avoid combat situations by having the cursed creatures flee from the PCs or by making it obvious a creature is protecting its home and allowing the PCs to retreat.

see easily confirm rumors about the curse. Leaves on the trees vary in color, ranging from a depressing ash gray to bright yellow, and some of the trees bear strange, twisted fruit. Flowers on several bushes look more frightening than beautiful, but the forest is peaceful and quiet. The cobblestone road heading north has fallen into disrepair; tree roots stretch their way beneath the stones, and plants are beginning to creep over their surface. A few more years of growth and the road itself will be difficult to find.

The Light Forest

Soil on the southern edge of Lord Morricks property is rocky and poor in nutrients. The light forest that grows there has been left alone because none of the owners saw any value in attempting to plant vines or other crops there. A number of flowering trees and bushes grow wild in the forest, along with many wild animals. The curse extends to include all of the plants and animals living in the forest, making even small animals potentially dangerous.

PCs who wander the forest may come upon several dangerous creatures, but they also have the opportunity to collect a number of mutant fruits and flowers that Leah Redoak or Thyran Whiteoak might want to study.

The Vineyard

Walking through the vineyard is an eerie, disconcerting experience. The grapevines have suffered the same way

Random Events

Roll 1d20 for each hour the PCs explore the vineyard to choose one of the following encounters:

1d20	Event
1-2	You hear the blood-curdling screams of a dying creature, followed by a sudden, uneasy silence.
3	A cursed rogue (CR 2) sneaks up on the PCs and attacks.
4	A flock of cursed ravens (12 x CR 1/6 each) swarms the PCs, attempting to drive them away for some reason.
5-6	The PCs discover the scene of a recent battle. Fresh, wet blood soaks the ground and broken vines nearby still ooze sticky pitch.
7	A cursed monk (CR 2) looking for food decides to defend his territory by attacking the PCs.
8-9	You hear someone crying softly nearby. The gentle sobs barely make it through the thick vines before suddenly stopping.
10	A cursed eagle (CR 1/2) dives at the PCs in an attempt to drive them away from its nest. If the PCs investigate and find the bird's nest, they see rotting eggs that will never hatch.
11-12	A cursed halfling (CR 2) emerges from the vines and attempts to speak. After making several unintelligible sounds, she flees back into the vines, crying.
13	A cursed giant bat (CR 2) dives silently from the night sky to make a surprise attack (night only).
14	A cursed bugbear (CR 2) screams a challenge as it emerges from the vines and points at a single PC in a clear attempt to challenge that PC to a one-on-one battle.
15-20	No encounter.

The DM can choose to ignore any particular result or add creatures to make encounters more difficult. In general, the encounters are designed to make the area seem more frightening and eerie rather than to cause the PCs major problems.

trees and bushes in the forest have suffered. The vines are twisted, sometimes moving into the openings between rows, and their leaves have changed to a multitude of different colors. The vines still produce grapes, but some of the grapes have odd shapes and colors. Although the grapes are sweet and juicy, anyone eating them runs the risk of becoming cursed. Few of the creatures that wander the vineyard cause the PCs any trouble; most flee as they approach. The PCs might want to investigate several buildings in the vineyard.

Numbered Encounter Areas

The following numbered encounters from the Mansion Grounds map are detailed below.

Area 1: The Wolverine's Burrow (EL 2)

A large, twisted tree beside the path conceals the burrow of a mutant wolverine. If one of the PCs makes a successful Spot check (DC 18), he notices signs of the burrow. Cleverly constructed, the burrow is perfectly placed beneath the thorny branches of the surrounding bushes so that anyone trying to examine it would be subject to painful pricks. The wolverine's thick skin allows it to pass by the thorns without any ill effects. Short, squat, and evil-tempered to begin with, the curse has only strengthened the wolverine's bad points. Its skin is now a hard shell of thick scales, and it has gained a great deal of strength over the past few years.

Cursed Wolverine: CR 2; SZ M Animal; HD 5d8+20; hp 42; Init +2; Spd 30 ft., burrow 10 ft., climb 10 ft.; AC 16; Atk +5 melee (1d4+2 [x2], claws) and +0 melee (1d6+1, bite); SA curse, rage; SQ curse, scent; AL N; SV Fort +8, Ref +6, Will +3; Str 14, Dex 15, Con 19, Int 2, Wis 12, Cha 10.

Skills: Climb +15, Listen +8, Spot +8.

Combat Tactics: While not very intelligent, this wolverine has lived far longer than any normal wolverine and has adopted several tactics that have benefited it in the past. If the PCs are on horseback, it attacks and startles horses at the rear of the party. Horses shy from the mutant creature and attempt to buck their riders and run. PCs must make a Ride (horse) check (DC 16) to remain seated and an additional check (DC 12) to control their mounts. The wolverine attacks any PC thrown to the ground first. If the PCs are on foot, the wolverine waits until the party passes and attacks the last PC in the group.

Area 2: An Intersection (EL 4)

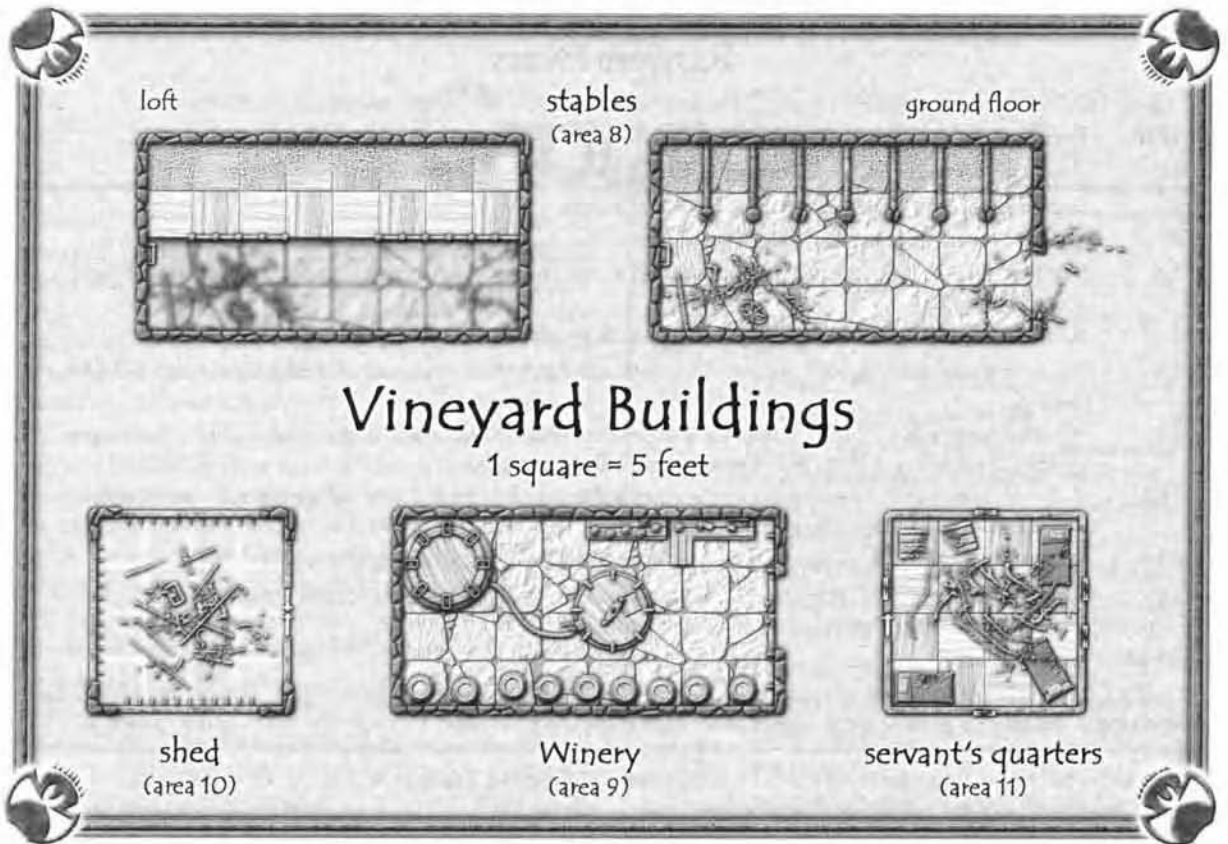
As the PCs travel down the path, they approach an intersection outside the main gates. Carts and wagons for the vineyard simply took the east road toward the stables and vineyard while guests and staff continued north to the mansion. Now, 2 cursed bugbears wait in ambush at the intersection. Their camouflaged hideouts are just south of the intersection on both sides of the road. These 2 bugbears belonged to a group of adventurers that made its way to the region several years ago. Foolishly thinking they would be immune to the curse, the adventurers decided to loot the mansion before moving on. The curse mutated all of them; some died, and some moved to other areas in and around the mansion.

Cursed Bugbears (2): CR 2; SZ M (Goblinoid); HD 3d8+3; hp 16; Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; AC 17; Atk +4 melee (1d8+2, morningstar) or +4 melee (1d4+2, claw) or +3 ranged (1d6+2, javelin, 30 ft.); SA curse; SQ curse, darkvision (60 ft.); AL CE; SV Fort +2, Ref +4, Will +1; Str 15, Dex 12, Con 13, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 9.

Skills: Climb +3, Hide +2, Listen +3, Move Silently +6, Spot +3. Feats: Alertness.

Possessions: Morningstar, 3 javelins.

Combat Tactics: The bugbears are hidden on both sides of the road (PCs' Spot check opposed to bugbears' Hide



Vineyard Buildings

1 square = 5 feet

check to avoid surprise). They wait until the main body of the party is between them before throwing their javelins. After they throw their javelins, they rush into battle shouting and screaming in an effort to demoralize their enemies. Both bugbears use their morningstars in battle, so there is no danger of being cursed by these particular creatures. If the battle goes poorly, the bugbears flee into the forest and try to meet up again at their hut (Area 4).

Area 3: The Main Gates

Well-worn granite flagstones line the ground beneath the imposing walls that extend to the east and west. The grand archway beneath the wall is tranquil but ominous. Although many visitors once passed through these grand gates, there is no sign that anyone has visited this place for many years. Dwarven handiwork is evident in both the walls and the heavy stone gates. Openings in the gates themselves reveal a large mansion towering over an overgrown garden.

The heavy stone gates are counter weighted. They require only minimal strength to open, but swing shut on their own. Dwarven construction makes them immune to the lack of care they have experienced, so the gates still move soundlessly. If the PCs proceed through the gates, the DM should move to “The Gardens” section, below, for further keyed entries and descriptions. The PCs may also choose to roam the forest a little further, where they might find some clues about the curse.

Area 4: A Small Hut

The 2 bugbears that set up the ambush at Area 2 make their home here in a small rough hut. PCs within 40 feet of the hut notice it with a successful Spot check (DC 15).

Anyone within 30 feet notices it immediately. Twisting branches cut from trees in different parts of the forest were used to construct the hut, making it appear very unstable.

Although small, squat, and rather ugly, the hut is surprisingly clean. The bugbears keep their hut clean to avoid attracting the attention of other creatures in the forest. Twisted branches are split and tied together to create 2 low cots that are propped up against the walls. Natural peg-like protrusions on the wall hold up various tattered cloaks and an old halfling-sized suit of leather armor.

Treasure #1: Of the cloaks hanging on the wall, 2 bear Lord Morrnick’s coat of arms; they came from 2 of his guards. The suit of armor is masterwork leather armor sized for a halfling, gnome, or other Small humanoid.

Treasure #2: A careful search (Search DC 20) beneath the blankets and cots turns up 3 masterwork daggers, a masterwork longsword, and 45 gp.

Area 5: A Rotting Corpse

The PCs immediately recognize something is wrong when they pass within 30 feet of the corpse. An overpowering stench of rot and decay fills the area, this oily, sickening odor coming from a lone corpse in an advanced stage of decomposition. An adventurer exploring the mansion suffered horribly from the curse, which eventually killed him; the curse mutated him so badly, even the maggots refused to consume his body. The slow rotting decay, combined with the curse, creates an odor that could frighten even the boldest adventurers. Examining the corpse and its decaying items requires a Fortitude save (DC 16) to avoid being overcome by the smell. Failure means the PC begins to feel nauseous, suffering a -2 penalty to attack and damage rolls



as long as she remains within 30 feet of the rotting corpse. Searching the corpse turns up an interesting diary.

Treasure: The corpse contains a pouch with 3 pp, 32 gp, 123 sp, and 91 cp. A bag tied to the rotting leather belt around its waist holds a small book.

Kraluk's Diary: The cover of the book is inscribed with the name "Kraluk." While the book is not dated, it contains information about places Kraluk traveled to, including Grollek's Grove. Names and locations mentioned on the few pages that can be read suggest the book is 3 to 4 years old. While most of the pages are rotting, a few of the moist pages are legible, including one page that the PCs should find most interesting:

"Benrun says it is a curse, not a disease, and whoever placed the curse must live nearby. He says the curse is on the land and everything on it, not just people. I am not sure, but I expect he should know. We were attacked this morning by creatures the likes of which I have never seen. Fenrich says they seemed almost demon-like. Whether or not she is right, the beasts had claws as sharp as steel. They ripped right through . . ."

Area 6: An Abandoned Well (EL 2)

Bushes, trees, and grasses are cleared away from the sides of an ancient stone well. Twisted trees stretch their winding branches in a canopy cloaking the well in darkness. Fresh footprints mark the soft earth beside the crumbling walls, a clear indication that someone or something was here quite recently. Close examination of the footprints determines that whatever made them was wearing boots. The prints are actually those of a cursed adventurer named Gwen, whose mutations changed her in very subtle ways. She heard the party wandering around and has kept herself hidden (PCs'

opposed Spot check vs. Gwen's Hide check). When one of the PCs leans over the well to look inside it or stands close to it, Gwen charges from her cover, screaming "Murderer!" and attempting to knock the PC into the well.

Gwen was part of an adventuring party that tried to explore the mansion several years ago. Her party never proceeded further than the gardens. The curse has made her insane but has also given her enhanced hearing, eyesight, and incredible strength. She is a thin human woman, almost frail in appearance, bearing no outward sign of the curse's effects.

Gwen, Cursed Adventurer, Female Human Ftr2: CR 2; SZ M; HD 2d10+11; hp 23; Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; AC 14; Atk +9 melee (1d8+6, longsword, crit 19-20); SA curse; SQ curse, darkvision (60 ft.); AL N; SV Fort +7, Ref +2, Will +2; Str 22, Dex 13, Con 18, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 8.

Skills: Climb +4, Jump +3, Listen +4, Spot +4, Swim +3. **Feats:** Alertness, Blind-Fight, Toughness, Weapon Focus (longsword).

Possessions: Studded leather armor, longsword, pouch with 3 small rubies worth 45 gp each, and an ivory scroll case containing an illegible piece of parchment.

Combat Tactics: Gwen hides and waits until a PC is looking at the well or at least standing next to it before attempting a bull rush to knock the PC into the well. Whether or not she is successful, Gwen draws her longsword and attacks the nearest PC. If the PCs notice her hiding, she comes forward and acts peacefully until she is close enough to draw her sword and attack. Her insane state is one of the curse's effects, and she believes the PCs are murderers and that they must die. Fortunately, her insanity keeps her from fighting tactically or fleeing when the battle goes against her.

The Well: The well is very old; the stone walls that surround it are only 3 feet high. The mortar holding the stones

together is decayed to the point that anyone leaning or pushing against the rocks easily knocks them over. If Gwen succeeds in pushing a PC against the wall, it crumbles and the PC falls into the well. The water is only 10 feet down, so very little falling damage is suffered (1d4 points, with a successful Tumble check [DC 16] avoiding all damage). Unfortunately, the water is tainted by the curse. PCs immersed in it must make a Fortitude save for every minute they are immersed to avoid the curse's effects (see the description of the curse in the Introduction). PCs can climb out of the well on their own (Climb DC 8) or party members can assist them.

Area 7: A Strange Clearing (EL 4)

Investigation of the forest brings the PCs to a small clearing. Grass in the center of the clearing is pressed down as if a large animal slept here. A Wilderness Lore check (DC 10) identifies tracks that look very much like those of a bear. The cursed bear heard the PCs wandering through the forest and is now hiding just outside the clearing (PCs' opposed Spot check vs. the bear's Hide check). Possessing only mild intelligence, the bear has slowly accumulated several shiny items it finds attractive and has hidden them beneath a small log in the clearing's center. If the PCs begin to rummage around and search through its home, the bear gets angry and charges into the clearing to attack.

Ugly patches of scales and tufts of gray fur dot this creature's rather odd-looking skin. The strange combination improves the bear's ability to hide in the forest, but also certainly makes it extremely ugly. The curse has given the bear extremely

sharp claws and very acute hearing (+3 competence bonus to Listen checks), but age has made it rather frail.

Cursed Bear (1): CR 4; SZ L Animal (10 ft. long); HD 6d8+24; hp 51; Init +1; Spd 40 ft.; AC 15; Atk +11 melee (1d8+8 [x2], claws) and +6 melee (2d8+4, bite); SA curse, improved grab; SQ curse, scent; AL N; SV Fort +9, Ref +6, Will +3; Str 27, Dex 13, Con 19, Int 2, Wis 12, Cha 6.

Skills: Listen +4, Spot +7, Swim +14.

Combat Tactics: The bear charges forward to attack if the PCs come near the log hiding its treasure. The bear simply charges at and attempts to kill the PC closest to the log. If the PCs flee, the bear stays close to its home.

Treasure: Hidden beneath a small log (Search DC 18), the PCs find several interesting items: a gold chalice studded with rubies (350 gp), a jeweled scabbard for a longsword (350 gp), a jade vase (100 gp), and a scroll case made of ivory decorated with gold leaf (95 gp).

Area 8: The Stables (EL 4)

While wandering the vineyard or even the forest or gardens, the PCs notice the large stables that once housed the horses and carts for Lord Morricks and his guests. The building looks abandoned and decrepit now, and the doors stand wide open, beckoning the PCs to enter. When the PCs enter, they come upon an appalling amount of destruction. Horse skeletons collect dust in the stalls lining the northern wall, suggesting that many of the beasts were simply abandoned here to starve to death. Some of the bones show scratches made by teeth or claws, indicating some of the horses made their way into the stomach of a larger creature. Deep gouges



in fragments of broken carriages and wagons show where powerful claws tore and splintered the wood.

A cursed griffon is hiding in the loft when the PCs enter. It came here shortly after the curse and fed on the horses that were left tethered in their stalls. Its wings are twisted and mutated by the curse, so it cannot fly, but it can jump extremely well. Once all of the PCs have entered the building, the griffon leaps down from the loft in an attempt to pounce on one of the PCs. It has not found as much food as it would like lately and so is extremely hungry.

This griffon is a sorry, rather disgusting specimen. The curse has mutated its wings, leaving them worthless for anything more than stability while jumping, and it has caused most of its feathers to fall out.

Cursed Griffon: CR 4; SZ L Beast; HD 7d10+21; hp 59; Init +2; Spd 40 ft.*; AC 17; Atk +8 melee (2d6+4, bite) and +3 melee (1d4+2 [x2], claws); Face/Reach 5 ft. x 10 ft./5 ft.; SA curse, pounce, rake (1d4+2); SQ curse, scent; AL N; SV Fort +8, Ref +7, Will +3; Str 18, Dex 15, Con 16, Int 5, Wis 13, Cha 8.

Skills: Jump +16*, Listen +6, Spot +11.

*Mutations prevent the griffon from flying, but it runs faster than normal and can jump very far.

Combat Tactics: The griffon hides in the loft at the end closest to the entrance to the stables. It waits until all of the PCs have entered and pounces on the last PC to enter the building. The griffon can run much faster than normal and jump higher and farther. It defends its home but has no desire to die and flees if the battle goes against it, although its lack of flying ability makes escape difficult.

Treasure: The griffon has hidden in the loft several items pulled from the carriages it tore apart. Careful searching of the loose straw (Search DC 22) turns up a small ivory statue (35 gp), a twisted gold emblem (15 gp), and a bag of tricks (gray).

Area 9: The Winery

This large building, where the grapes were pressed and fermented into fine wine, is one of the sturdiest buildings on the grounds. The doors remain intact and closed. When the PCs approach the building, they immediately notice its solid construction. While the doors are not locked, they have not been used in many years, so the hinges are quite rusty. If the PCs combine their efforts, they open the doors easily to reveal a dark, dusty building abandoned for a very long time. Massive casks for the initial fermentation of wine line the southern wall, and bottling facilities are located in the northeast corner. A giant grape press stands in the center of the room attached to a rusted pump used to force the resulting juice into a massive tank in the northwest corner. Unlike other areas, time and neglect are the only causes of damage here.

A careful exploration of the entire building turns up some bottles of wine. The wine is of the highest quality and tastes wonderful, but it is a potent vehicle for the curse. Further searching locates a secret panel behind one of the wine racks (Search DC 25) that opens easily to reveal a small niche holding several papers. One of the papers includes the directions used to create Lord Morricks award winning wine. This recipe is one of the items Lord Eldoran wanted to obtain, but his curse was so powerful even he was afraid to try to locate it. The recipe is written

in a complex code that might be decipherable with the proper key. PCs that examine Lord Morricks library (Area 28) and discover his vault should be able to use the key found there to decipher the recipe.

Treasure: One of the pieces of parchment clearly has a wine recipe written on it in code. This recipe, if translated, is worth 1,000 gp to a qualified vintner.

Area 10: A Storage Shed (EL 2)

This sturdy, squat building is noticeable from a distance. It has no windows and a single door. The door is closed but unlocked and opens easily, revealing a shed full of odd farming implements and buckets. Pegs on the walls are clearly designed for hanging tools, but all of the items in the shed are on the ground. Some time in the distant past, someone threw all of the tools and buckets into the center of the room while searching for something along the walls.

When the PCs enter the room, the pile of tools moves slightly, possibly due to their opening of the door. PCs that pause to listen carefully (Listen DC 15) hear some scrabbling and squeaking from amidst the jumble of tools in the center of the shed. A group of 6 cursed dire rats has made its home here. The rats are rather upset at the invasion of their home but wait several rounds before attacking to give the PCs a chance to leave.

Cursed Dire Rats (6): CR 1/3; SZ S Animal; HD 1d8+1; hp 7, 6, 6, 5, 5, 4; Init +3; Spd 40 ft., climb 20 ft.; AC 15; Atk +4 melee (1d4, bite); SA curse; SQ curse, scent; AL N; SV Fort +3, Ref +5, Will +3; Str 10, Dex 17, Con 12, Int 2, Wis 12, Cha 4.

Skills: Climb +11, Hide +11, Move Silently +6. Feats: Weapon Finesse (bite).

Combat Tactics: The rats are not intelligent enough to have special tactics. They are cautious and wait several rounds before attacking in hopes the PCs leave on their own. If the PCs approach the center of the room, the rats attack immediately.

Area 11: Servants' Quarters (EL 2)

This building housed the servants who worked the vineyard as well as the extra workers hired when it was time to harvest and begin pressing the grapes. PCs approaching the building immediately notice that the windows are broken and that the door is ripped off its hinges. A close inspection of the outside of the building determines that the damage is old — rainwater soaked into the wood near the windows, and the wood now begins to rot. PCs who listen closely (Listen DC 19) can hear movement inside the building. As they enter the building, the party comes upon a scene of complete destruction, with piles of broken and splintered beds, tables, and other furniture spread across the large room. A stale, wet odor comes from the mildew that eats away the torn curtains and blankets. Some of the wood furniture withstood the initial damage, only to suffer from rainwater and lack of care. The building was clearly looted and destroyed a very long time ago.

A cursed bugbear hides in a corner behind some of the furniture (PCs opposed Spot check vs. the bugbear's Hide check). He is terrified of the PCs and does not attack them unless they begin rummaging around in the servants'

quarters or notice him. He found a fine wood chest during some of his explorations and keeps it hidden with him. The chest has never been opened; he simply liked the wood it was made of and carried it back with him.

The curse has horribly mutated this bugbear's skull and face, and his entire body is covered with iridescent fish scales, so that identifying what he once was is almost impossible. Normally, he would be very good at hiding, but his shiny skin makes him much easier to spot for the PCs. While he is somewhat cowardly, he is very hardy and puts up a good fight if forced into combat. He speaks a small amount of Common and speaks Goblin fluently, but changes to his face and skull brought about by the curse make him difficult to understand. He tells the PCs anything he thinks they want to know in order to make them leave, making up details if he must. The truth is that he knows absolutely nothing about the curse, nor does he really know much about the mansion. He does know about the griffon in the stables because he has run away from it before, and he knows that several more bugbears were in his party when they attempted to loot the mansion.

Cursed Bugbear: CR 2; hp 24; see Area 2, above.

*This creature is sturdier than usual and has additional hit points.

Combat Tactics: This area is the bugbear's home; he fights to the death in its defense, but avoids combat if he can. If the PCs advance on him or threaten him, he throws the 2 javelins he still has with him before closing for melee combat. He still uses a shield but fights with his claw because he lost his morningstar a long time ago.

Wood Chest: 1 in. thick; Hardness 5; hp 20; Break DC 20; Open Lock DC 26.

The chest is made of a beautiful red-hued wood with light purple veins. While the chest is small, it is very well made and the lock is extremely complex. PCs that choose to break open the chest rather than pick the lock destroy several of the potions inside (as determined by the DM).

Treasure: The chest contains a *potion of heroism*, a *potion of cure serious wounds*, 3 *potions of cure light wounds*, and a *potion of love*. All of the potion vials are unmarked.

Area 12: The Side Gates

Deep scratches and gouges mar the heavy stone gates, but the damage is only cosmetic. Dwarven construction is evident throughout the length of the tall stone walls that enclose the overgrown garden which lies beyond the heavy gates. Strangely, one of the heavy flagstones beneath the gates is shattered into small, sharp bits of gravel while stones near it show no damage at all.

The heavy stone gates are slightly wider than the main gates (Area 3) but are constructed in a similar manner. They are counter-weighted so that only minimal strength is required to open them, but they slowly close on their own if they are not wedged open. These gates are exactly like the main gates, but they lack Lord Morricks' coat of arms and bear scratches where someone tried to damage them. The sturdy dwarven construction has withstood the efforts to damage the gates, as well as the lack of care over the years. If the PCs proceed through the gates, the DM should move to "The Gardens" section, below, for further keyed entries and descriptions.

The Gardens

Numbered encounters and areas in this section are organized in a clockwise manner from the main entrance (Area 3). The gardens can be entered through the main entrance (Area 3) or the side entrance (Area 12), or the PCs can climb over the wall and enter from a different angle. Walls surrounding the garden are made of stone and stand a full 12 feet high. They are designed to set the gardens apart from the vineyard and help contain the wild and exotic animals that Lord Morricks added to his garden. Plants and animals occupying the garden are cursed in the same way as plants and animals in other parts of the mansion and grounds.

Though not as overgrown and dark as the light forest to the south, the plants here have a twisted aspect to them that matches the forest and perhaps even magnifies its strangeness. Time, the curse, and neglect have allowed the plants to become overgrown to the point that they fight each other for light and food. The curse seems to have festered and grown in strength here. The mansion itself has a twisted facade with broken windows and gargoyles that dangle over its entryway. Thin gravel paths circle through the overgrown gardens, passing hidden benches guests once rested on while viewing the plants.

Random Events

Roll 1d20 for every hour the PCs explore the forest to determine if one of the following events occurs:

1d20	Event
1-3	A cursed leopard (CR 2) leaps out of hiding to attack a PC at the rear of the party.
4-5	Loud roars echo off the garden walls. The echoes fade to an uneasy silence that even the breeze seems afraid to disturb.
6-7	Two cursed servants (CR 1) looking for food see the PCs and decide to attack.
8	The PCs notice a cursed guest (CR 2) at the same time as she notices them. She immediately flees deeper into the garden and hides.
9-10	A cursed alligator (CR 2) emerges from the undergrowth, hisses at the PCs, and begins to back away.
11-12	The PCs hear sounds of a pitched battle somewhere deep in the garden. Loud guttural grunts and harsh laughter mark the end of the battle and a return to the uneasy silence that hangs over the garden.
13	A demon mist (CR 2; see Area 19, below) attacks the PCs in an effort to drive them mad. For complete details on the demon mist, see the New Creatures section in the Monsters Appendix.
14	Loud laughter echoes from somewhere in side the mansion.
15-20	No encounter.

The DM might need to adjust the random events above based on where the PCs have explored and what they have accomplished.

Area 13: Before a Grand Fountain (EL 4)

The carriage path splits into a large circle passing in front of the now decrepit looking mansion. Twisted plants surround a grand fountain standing in the center of the circle. A thin coat of green algae covers the water in the fountain, yet the plants and algae cannot hide the grand splendor the fountain once possessed. Sitting on a large rock playing different instruments are 5 mermaids. When water was pumped through the fountain, it must have spilled out of holes in the instruments to fall over the mermaids' bodies before splashing into a wide basin. Roots or tendrils from some of the thick flowering bushes surrounding the fountain reach into the stagnant water pooled in the basin.

Several small pet alligators lived in the basin of the fountain when it was cleaned and maintained. The curse mutated all of them, some horribly. One alligator eventually dominated by killing or chasing away all of the others. It travels outside the fountain to hunt and sometimes hides in or around the bushes that surround the fountain. It has grown to a considerable size and is extremely strong. Mutations caused by the curse add extra layers of mud-brown armored scales to its already thick hide and give it longer and sharper claws than normal. Although its teeth are a venomous yellow-brown color, it has no venom or poison other than the curse.

Cursed Alligator (1): CR 4; SZ H Animal (Aquatic); HD 7d8+28; hp 59; Init +1; Spd 20 ft., swim 30 ft.; AC 16; Atk +11 melee (2d8+12, bite) or +11 melee (1d12+12, tail slap); Face/Reach 10 ft. x 20 ft./10 ft.; SA curse,

improved grab; SQ curse; AL N; SV Fort +9, Ref +6, Will +3; Str 27, Dex 12, Con 19, Int 1, Wis 12, Cha 2.

Skills: Hide +0*, Listen +5, Spot +5. *A giant crocodile gains a +12 racial bonus to Hide checks when submerged.

Combat Tactics: This creature hides beneath the bushes surrounding the fountain. It waits until the PCs are within 10 feet before darting out with a great burst of speed to attack. If it successfully grabs one character, it attempts to drag her back through the bushes toward the fountain.

Treasure: Some of the alligators' past victims had jewelry or other items with them that are now hidden beneath the fountain's waters. Searching the fountain is hazardous because this water is tainted by the curse. PCs reaching into or entering the fountain must make Fortitude saving throws against the curse for every 5 minutes of exposure (see details of the curse in the Introduction). After 20 minutes of searching, the PCs discover an obsidian necklace (50 gp); a small silver ring (5 gp); a thin gold chain used as a bracelet (4 gp); a copper bracer (1 gp); a gold signet ring (10 gp); and coins totaling 2 pp, 12 gp, 32 sp, and 71 cp.

Area 14: Before the Front Steps (EL 2)

Elegant white marble steps lead up to the doorway into the mansion (see Area 26, below). The sturdy marble shows the wear of many feet, but broken windows along the front of the mansion and the lack of any lanterns suggest the steps have not seen use for quite a long time. Gardens extending to the north, south, and west were once a place of wonder, bearing the elegance that the wealthy use to impress each other. That time is long past; now the gardens are so overgrown that not even the finest gardener could rescue them. The plants are intertwined



THE MANSION AND GROUNDS

and appear to be in some sort of quiet struggle, slowly strangling each other out of existence.

A cursed leopard hides beside the steps and ambushes any creature that comes near.

Cursed Leopard: CR 2; SZ M Animal; HD 3d8+6; hp 19; Init +4; Spd 40 ft., climb 20 ft.; AC 15; Atk +6 melee (1d6+3, bite) and +1 melee (1d3+1 [x2], claws); SA curse, pounce, improved grab, rake (1d3+1); SQ curse, scent; AL N; SV Fort +5, Ref +7, Will +2; Str 16, Dex 19, Con 15, Int 2, Wis 12, Cha 6.

Skills: Balance +12, Climb +11, Hide +9*, Listen +6, Move Silently +9, Spot +6. **Feats:** Weapon Finesse (bite, claw). *In areas of tall grass or heavy undergrowth, leopards receive a +8 racial bonus to Hide checks.

Combat Tactics: The leopard simply attacks any creature within 20 feet of the steps. It is extremely hungry and does not flee from combat.

Area 15: A Pale Blue Fountain

Water still trickles through this small, pale blue fountain hidden beneath the branches of several overgrown shrubs. The nearby plants swallow the gentle splashing sounds almost as effectively as they swallow the fountain. Flowers in varying shades of blue and purple surround the fountain. Where there was once beauty and tranquility, there is now a sense of twisted rage. Branches from the many bushes seem to tear at each other in a silent struggle for dominance. The gentle sound of splashing water cannot overcome the dark, sinister feeling brought upon this once peaceful place by the curse.

Magic pumps within the fountain still cause the water to flow. A *detect magic* spell reveals a strong magic aura surrounding the entire fountain. The powerful magic of the fountain keeps the water within free of the curse. This water is the only water in the mansion or on its grounds that is safe to use for drinking or washing wounds.

Area 16: A Muddy Clearing (EL 4)

Deep gouges scratch the ground and broken flagstones, and trees and bushes are tossed aside like bits of shredded cloth. Fresh sap dripping from several of the mangled plants provides a tell-tale sign that whatever battle occurred here was very recent. In fact, 2 cursed ogres had an argument earlier in the day. They are resting nearby and notice the PCs entering the clearing. Cautious PCs might notice the ogres before they rise to their feet and charge forward to attack (PCs' opposed Spot check vs. the ogres' Hide check), but in either case, neither group surprises the other.

Lizard-like scales cover both ogres in a bizarre pattern, though neither of the ogres has suffered much from the curse. Both were relatively insane and stupid to begin with. Aside from the lizard-like scales and slightly enhanced hearing, they fight as standard ogres.

Cursed Ogres (2): CR 2; SZ L Giant; HD 4d8+8; hp 30, 26; Init -1; Spd 30 ft.; AC 16; Atk +8 melee (2d6+7, Huge greatclub); Reach 10 ft.; SA curse; SQ curse; AL CE; SV Fort +6, Ref +0, Will +1; Str 21, Dex 8, Con 15, Int 6, Wis 10, Cha 7.

Skills: Climb +4, Listen +2, Spot +2. **Feats:** Weapon Focus (greatclub).

Combat Tactics: These ogres lost their spears in a battle with the patrol guards who chased them onto the grounds, so they fight only with their Huge greatclubs. They are not intelligent enough to pick and choose the opponent who can hurt them the most; they simply attack the nearest PC. Complete confidence in their strength and power makes these ogres ferocious in battle — they fight to the death.

Area 17: A Short Path Beside the Mansion

Plants near the base of the mansion are trimmed and cared for, and the gravel paths are raked. Such care does not extend far, however, nor does it reduce the twisted nature of the plants, but it is a clear sign that someone still works in the gardens. A thin gravel path passes along the base of the mansion, providing a protected passage for anyone approaching one of the 2 doors in the mansion wall. The lack of windows on the ground floor provides no clue as to its use. The northernmost door is barred shut from the outside.

Argrim White (see Area 49, below) cares for the plants and path here. The southern door leads into Argrim's room (Area 49), which connects to other servants' rooms and storage areas on the ground level, and the northernmost door leads into a storeroom.

17a — Wood Door: This door is barred from the opposite side. It leads into Argrim White's room (Area 49). If the PCs knock on the door or attempt to open it, Argrim shouts from the other side in Common, "Best be leaving me alone if you don't want trouble!" Argrim lets the PCs in if they announce themselves. Argrim is both trusting and confident in his abilities and is not afraid to open the door to speak to the PCs. See Area 49 for Argrim's statistics, skills, and personality.

17b — Wood Door: The door is barred from the outside in an effort to keep something trapped in the room beyond. A successful Listen check (DC 16) detects scuffling and sounds and some squeaking. The PCs can easily unbar and open the door to get into the gardener's storage room (Area 48) that lies beyond.

Area 18: A Marble Fountain (EL 4)

Benches at the base of this fountain made of dark blue marble face outward toward the gardens like squat guards defending a great treasure. Thin cracks lining the marble basin of the now still fountain let water flow through freely; not even rainwater remains. Plants nearby are almost uniformly gray in color, even the leaves and flowers. Other than the fountain, the only splash of color is a single bush with blood red flowers and deep, dark green leaves. Unfortunately, the colorful bush is a horrible mutation of a blood bush. Blood bushes normally have bright, sweet-smelling flowers with sharp barbed tips. The flowers are actually seed pods, and animals that brush against the bush get seed pods attached to them that they carry away. This plant developed a different way to spread its seeds: it launches its flowers at creatures within 5 to 10



feet of the plant; the flowers then attach to the victim and inject their seeds.

The bush has deep green leaves and beautiful blood-red flowers. It looks harmless until a victim comes close to it. As soon as the PCs come within 5 to 10 feet, the bush begins launching its seeds at them.

Eldoran's Blood Bush: CR 4; SZ S Plant; HD 6d8+30; hp 57; Init +0; Spd 0 ft.; AC 18; Atk +6 melee (1d2+2 [x4], branch whip); Reach 2 1/2 ft.; SA curse, flower dart; SQ curse, plant, blindsight (15 ft.), cold and fire resistance (20); ALN; Fort +9, Ref +1, Will +1; Str 15, Dex 10, Con 20, Int —, Wis 12, Cha 8

Combat Tactics: The bush is simply attempting to spread its seeds. Its attacks are aimed only at that purpose. If the PCs retreat beyond 15 feet away, the bush can no longer detect them and ceases its attacks. The plant has no intelligence to speak of and continues to fight until dead if the PCs attempt to destroy it.

Area 19: A Marble Statue (EL 2)

Tendrils of pale mist pour from the glowing pond to curl around the base of the large marble statue of a naked woman. Once carefully cultivated, trees and bushes grow wild here, tearing at each other in a silent battle. Every breath of the humid air makes the place feel more malevolent and sinister. The tendrils of pale mist are actually 2 demon mists, creatures made through the influence of demons specifically to spread chaos and madness throughout the world. The creatures float around here, moving slowly toward the PCs to make a surprise attack.

Demon Mists (2): CR 2; SZ S Aberration (Incorporeal); HD 2d8+2; hp 11; Init +2; Spd fly 30 ft. (average);

AC 16; Atk +2 melee (1d4 plus chaos touch, tendril of mist); SA chaos touch; SQ incorporeal, immune to fear, darkvision (60 ft.); AL CE; SV Fort +1, Ref +2, Will +6; Str 11, Dex 15, Con 13, Int 15, Wis 18, Cha 12.

Skills: Hide +5*, Listen +10, Move Silently +6, Search +7, Spot +10. **Feats:** Alertness.

Combat Tactics: The mists fight without fear, though they intend only to drive the PCs insane and do not continue their attacks on an insane PC unless they must. Their goal is not to cause death but rather to spread madness and chaos.

Area 20: A Glowing Pond (EL 2)

Glowing water swirls and bubbles within the granite enclosure of this specially constructed pond. Tendrils of pale mist escape the glowing water to pour through the surrounding trees and bushes. The pond was clearly constructed for bathing and playing during the warm summer months, but a sinister, deadly aura now surrounds the pool, and the water within is positively ominous.

This pool bears the highest concentration of the curse. A rogue hired by Lord Eldoran dropped the source for the curse — a small pebble — into the pond. Detect magic reveals an almost blinding aura surrounding the water. The pale mist coming off the pond also glows with magic. One of the ways to prevent the curse from having any further effects is to find the stone used as its source (such as with a detect chaos spell) and destroy it. This requires entering the pond itself and risking exposure to the curse.

As the source of the curse, this area is a weak point between the Material Plane and the Abyss, thus 2 demon mists are always in the area. If the PCs defeat one pair of

demon mists and depart the area for more than 4 hours, 2 more demon mists form in their place. The creation of demon mists only stops when the curse is brought to an end.

Demon Mists (2): CR 2; 11 hp each; see Area 19, above.

Area 21: Before a Marble Stairway (EL 4 or 0)

Smooth marble steps climb to a wide marble terrace along the rear of the mansion. Representations of different instruments are carved on the railings on each side of the stairway. Vines and plants from the garden are beginning to overgrow the steps and railings, but the marble has withstood the elements quite well. A cursed tiger roams the area below the stairway. If the PCs climb up or down the stairs, the tiger spots them easily and comes to investigate. If the PCs go up the stairs, the tiger makes a single leap up to the terrace and attacks them there (Area 22). If the PCs are spotted moving down the stairs, the tiger moves in and attacks them when they reach the bottom of the steps.

The cursed tiger was once the prize pet of the gardens. It was chained up on the night of the wedding to prevent any "mistakes" from happening. Broken chain links still cling to its heavy leather collar, making a soft jingling noise as it moves. Unlike most creatures, the curse has weakened the tiger: its rear paws have been turned into club-like appendages rather than razor-sharp tearing devices, and its skin is much thinner and softer than normal.

Cursed Tiger: CR 4; SZ L Animal; HD 6d8+18; hp 45; Init +3; Spd 40 ft.; AC 14; Atk +9 melee (1d6+6 [x2],

claws) and +4 melee (2d4+3, bite); Face/Reach 5 ft. x 10 ft./5 ft.; SA curse, pounce, improved grab, rake (+6 melee, 1d2+3)**; SQ curse; AL N; SV Fort +8, Ref +7, Will +3; Str 23, Dex 15, Con 17, Int 2, Wis 13, Cha 10.

Skills: Balance +12, Climb +8, Hide +5*, Jump +5, Listen +5, Move Silently +5*, Spot +5. **Feats:** Weapon Finesse (bite, claw). *In areas of tall grass or heavy undergrowth, tigers receive a +8 racial bonus to Hide checks.

The curse and a broken chain dangling from the tiger's neck make it difficult for the tiger to Hide or Move Silently; skills listed already take those penalties into account.

**The tiger's rear claws are mutated into club-like appendages and do not deal as much damage as normal in a rake attack.

Combat Tactics: Strange colors on its skin and the jangling chain links hanging from its neck make sneaking up on someone almost impossible for this creature. The tiger instead uses its speed simply to charge forward and attack. Its rear paws do very little good in combat, so it rarely pounces unless its victim is completely alone. The tiger flees when badly injured.

Area 22: A Long Marble Terrace (EL 0 or 4)

The terrace provides a high vantage point from which to look over the garden. Intricate carvings mark the trellis of the balustrade, and the entire terrace is made of precious white marble. Tasteful, skilled stonework gives a sign of



incredible wealth without being gaudy or overbearing. Rather than beauty and peace, the plants in the gardens below display an ugly darkness that one senses in a deep, primitive manner. Broken glass lines the ground, as all of the windows and glass doors leading into the mansion are shattered, opening the once beautiful home to the weather and anyone that wishes to enter.

If the PCs are seen climbing the stairs in Area 21, the cursed tiger in Area 21 attacks them on the terrace. Tables and chairs that once occupied the terrace are either broken or thrown into the thick vegetation of the garden. The PCs can easily enter the mansion by passing through the broken windows and shattered glass doors that lead into the Great Room (Area 34).

Area 23: A Small Clearing (EL 3)

The bushes and flowers are torn up and moved aside to create a small, clear dirt surface that a pair of mutated leopards used as a den. They have since moved to another location because a larger cursed puma moved into the area. The puma does not make its home here, but it is usually nearby. It sneaks up on the PCs as they are studying the clearing and attacks the first PC leaving.

While the puma is not visibly mutated, the curse gives it a much thicker skin, better hearing and eyesight, and an unfortunate willingness to kill simply for pleasure. Its low body and dark skin keep it almost invisible as it moves silently through the garden.

Cursed Puma (1): CR 3; SZL Animal; HD 5d8+10; hp 32; Init +3; Spd 40 ft.; AC 15; Atk +7 melee (1d4+5 [x2], claws) and +2 melee (1d8+2, bite); SA curse, pounce, improved grab, rake (1d4+2); SQ curse, scent; AL N; SV Fort +6, Ref +7, Will +2; Str 21, Dex 17, Con 15, Int 2, Wis 12, Cha 6.

Skills: Balance +7, Hide +4*, Jump +5, Listen +5, Move Silently +11, Spot +5. *In areas of tall grass or heavy undergrowth, pumas receive a +8 racial bonus to Hide checks.

Possessions: The puma wears a gold collar with silver studs worth 25 gp.

Combat Tactics: The puma approaches silently as the PCs are exploring the clearing. It pounces on the first PC who leaves the clearing. It focuses all of its attacks on one PC at a time. The puma flees if it is brought below 10 hp.

Treasure: The leopards buried several trinkets when they were living here. A thorough search of the area (Search DC 29) notices the spot where some digging has been done. Hidden just beneath the dirt are a heavy gold bracelet studded with emeralds (120 gp), a gold chain (8 gp), and a silver amulet shaped like an eagle (5 gp).

Area 24: A Flagstone Path (EL 2)

The mansion hangs over its lower level here, leaving a narrow flagstone path along the ground level protected from the elements but also cloaked in shadows. Plants in the garden to the east are growing over the stone paths winding through the garden, completely hiding some in

places. The ground floor of the mansion has no windows, but a single wood door stands in the center of the wall, allowing entrance to whatever storage rooms might lie beyond.

While the wood door is not barred or locked in any way, lack of use makes it stick slightly. A solid shove opens the door but not without making a great deal of noise. A cursed bugbear hiding in the garden comes to investigate when he hears the door forced open. Paranoia leads it to believe the PCs are hunting it, so it decides to kill them first.

Cursed Bugbear (1): CR 2; hp 16; see Area 2, above.

Possessions: 3 javelins, morningstar, gold necklace (40 gp).

Combat Tactics: If the PCs let him, the bugbear throws all 3 of his javelins before closing for melee combat. He is convinced the PCs are hunting him and fights to the death.

Area 25: A White Marble Fountain (EL 4)

Thick vines and sturdy bushes surround the shattered remains of a white marble fountain. Normal plants do sometimes grow through the rock, breaking it during the slow pressure of time, but the plants here appear to direct an intangible rage at their surroundings. A twisted, desiccated corpse is trapped within some of the powerful vines; how it died or why is hard to tell, but the vines themselves appear to have drained the life from it.

While the vines and plants did indeed shatter the fountain, they do not actively hunt prey, nor are they carnivores. The corpse was left wrapped in vines as a warning by a deadly monster created by the curse. This creature appears to be a man made of stone. Hearing the PCs, the cursed stone man comes to investigate. The PCs easily hear it shuffling through the undergrowth and are alerted to its impending arrival.

The stone man was once a wedding guest. Stripped of all humanity by the curse, it possesses incredible strength and a layer of gray stone in place of skin. Its face is frozen in a grotesque mask of pain and rage.

Cursed Stone Man: CR 4; SZ M Monstrous Humanoid; HD 4d8+12; hp 30; Init +0; Spd 30 ft. (can't run); AC 16; Atk +8 melee (1d6+4, slam); SA curse; SQ curse, damage reduction 4/-; darkvision (60 ft.); AL CE; SV Fort +9, Ref +1, Will +1; Str 18, Dex 11, Con 17, Int 8, Wis 10, Cha 6.

Skills: Hide +2, Listen +6, Search +2, Spot +6. Feats: Alertness, Great Fortitude.

Combat Tactics: The curse drained any intelligence this man once possessed. It is used to being impervious to attack due to the magical nature of its stone-like skin, so it simply closes for melee combat with the nearest PC. Due to its thick, stone-like skin, the creature cannot run and can only follow fleeing PCs at its base land speed. If necessary, it pursues the PCs anywhere in the gardens or even into the mansion. Once it is set on a target, it simply does not stop.

Inside The Mansion

The mansion has suffered a great deal of damage from insane guests and creatures that destroyed things simply for no apparent reason. Despite the damage, the PCs can easily see the high quality of the workmanship that went into the mansion's construction. The outer walls of the mansion are made of granite, while the interior walls are a combination of stone and wood paneling. All of the wood and stone used were imported from distant places. The mansion may not be as large as some homes, and the decorations were never gaudy or showy, but anyone with a skilled eye at appraisal can see that the mansion cost a fortune to build, furnish, and maintain.

Most of the windows are now broken. The PCs may choose to enter through one of the windows by climbing or flying up to them. The ground level of the mansion housed the servants, gardeners, and the few guards that Lord Morrnick once employed, and it has several side entrances but no windows. The first floor is the main floor of the home. It can be entered through the front doors, from the patio at the back of the home, or by the stairway from the ground level. The second floor contains bedrooms and guest bedrooms, and it can be entered through broken windows or by stairways from the first floor.

All of the doors should be considered unlocked or broken in, unless otherwise noted. All of the doors are made of a pale, creamy wood with light brown veins; the wood is particularly hard and sturdy. All doors in the mansion have the following characteristics, unless otherwise noted:

Wood Doors: 1 in. thick; Hardness 5; hp 20; Break DC 20.

Ground Floor

Area 26: Before the Mansion Doors (EL 4)

An elegant though understated marble stairway leads up to a set of magnificent double doors made of black marble. Carved deep into the thick marble doors is an intricate coat of arms and the words, "Peace and Prosperity to All Visitors." Flanking the doors are 2 stone gargoyles, and large windows, now broken, are evenly spaced along the walls as they stretch away from the doors. A layer of dirt and dust coats the landing before the doors, but the doors themselves look as though they were recently polished. The stone gargoyles are magic constructs that attack anything attempting to enter or leave through the doors.

Stone Gargoyle Statues (2): CR 2; SZ M Construct; HD 2d10; hp 11; Init +0; Spd 30 ft.; AC 14; Atk +2 melee (1d6+1, slam); SQ construct, blindsight, damage reduction 5/+1; AL N; Fort +0, Ref +0, Will -5; Str 12, Dex 10, Con —, Int —, Wis 1, Cha 1.

Combat Tactics: The mindless statues fight with the single purpose of repelling unwelcome visitors. They do not leave the landing area to follow fleeing characters down the stairs, but they do follow anyone who goes through the doors. They fight until they are destroyed. The statues need to receive specific commands from Lord

Morrnick or one of his guards every day or they simply attack any creature attempting to enter or exit through the doors. Only Lord Morrnick or someone displaying his coat of arms is immune from attack. A PC displaying Lord Morrnick's coat of arms can order the statues to "stay," "attack," or "guard." If ordered to "stay," the statues do not attack anyone for the rest of the day. Orders to "guard" or "attack" cause the statues to attack anyone not displaying Lord Morrnick's coat of arms.

Area 27: A Large Foyer

Couches that once lined the grand entryway into the mansion are shredded, their stuffing thrown about the foyer. Dead, dried husks of the plants that once decorated the small niches in the walls droop down from their heavy stone planters. The destruction is appalling, but rather old. When guests and servants began to mutate, they went mad, tearing up many of the things around them. Some were enraged by the curse itself; others blamed Lord Morrnick for their problems and deliberately destroyed things in a strange attempt at revenge. The hallway to the east passes a small closet before it turns north toward the doors for several guestrooms. The main hallway heads north past the thick double doors that lead into Lord Morrnick's library.

Wood Double Doors: 2 in. thick; Hardness 5; hp 30; Break DC 20; Open Lock DC 20.

The doors are decorated with Lord Morrnick's coat of arms. The doors are locked, and the lock contains a poison needle trap that is triggered when door is not opened with the proper key.

Poison Needle Trap: CR 1; +4 ranged (1 plus poison [injury, Fort DC 12, 1d4 Con/1d4 Con]; Search DC 20; Disable Device DC 20.

Area 28: The Library (EL 5)

Carefully organized sets of wood bookcases line the walls between the windows and bracket the large desk in the middle of the room. Books line the shelves in neat, even rows and are organized by subject. Wood plaques on the shelves identify subjects ranging from farming to warfare and even collections of poetry. Most are devoted to trade, mercantile exchange, and the making of fine wines. The sturdy doors, animated statues, and enchanted windows protected this room from destruction.

The library is protected by 2 large wood statues that attack anyone who is not either a member of the Morrnick family or wearing the Morrnick family coat of arms. The statues are carved in the form of massive human warriors wearing plate mail and holding maces in each hand.

Large Wood Statue (2): CR 3; SZ L Construct; HD 4d10; hp 22; Init +0; Spd 30 ft.; AC 14; Atk +5 melee (1d8+4, slam); Reach 10 ft.; SQ construct, blindsight, damage reduction 5/+1, immune to cold and electricity, fire vulnerability (double damage from fire attacks); AL N; Fort +1, Ref +1, Will -4; Str 16, Dex 10, Con —, Int —, Wis 1, Cha 1.

Combat Tactics: Unlike the stone gargoyles in Area 26, these statues can only be commanded by Lord Morrnick, his



Mansion Interior

1 square = 5 feet

wife (Area 46), or his eldest daughter Larissa (Area 43). The statues ignore the boys (Area 46) but do not take orders from them. They attack anyone not wearing the Morricks' family coat of arms and do not stop unless they are destroyed or their opponents leave the library.

Enchanted Windows: 1/2 in. thick; Hardness 8; hp 30; Break DC 18.

Lord Morricks paid a handsome fee to have several wizards enchant the glass and prevent it from breaking.

Lord Morricks retreated to the library when he realized that someone or something had either cursed or poisoned his family and guests. While his library is vast, his knowledge of magic is relatively lacking. His few scrolls and books were unable to help him find any sort of cure. He did, though, have several scrolls of *flesh to stone* and *stone to flesh*. Confident he could find a way to end the curse, he used the *flesh to stone* scrolls to turn his family into inanimate statues and hid them in the bedrooms upstairs. Then he returned to the library and locked himself in, hoping to find a cure so that he could reverse the spells and return his family to normal. Several days of failures left him both starving and desperate, leading him to consume several unidentified potions at once. The unusual combination reduced him and

then killed him. When the PCs look behind the desk, they see a tiny, desiccated corpse the size of a small fairy spread-eagled on the floor. Despite the corpse's awkward position, the PCs can easily see that it is clothed in an ornate, formal suit perfectly fit to its tiny form.

The dry air and enclosed space of the library have helped preserve the corpse, but the PCs may take some time to realize it is Lord Morricks. Searching the corpse turns up a miniature signet ring bearing the Morricks' family seal. Combined with a Knowledge (arcana) check (DC 15), the ring allows the PCs to determine Lord Morricks was reduced before dying and for some reason the spell did not fade after his death. The age and advanced decay of the corpse make determining exactly what killed Lord Morricks impossible.

Careful, thorough exploration turns up a number of different treasures in the room. Papers on top of the desk include notes left by Lord Morricks that solidify the identity of the corpse on the floor and several scrolls (treasure #1). Secret compartments in several desk drawers contain some potions and gold coins (treasure #2), and a secret safe is hidden behind one of the bookcases in the northern wall (Search DC 24; treasure #3).

INSIDE THE MANSION

Treasure #1: Several arcane scrolls with a total of 7 stone to flesh spells (caster level 11) are scattered on the desk along with an arcane scroll of mirror image. Several pieces of paper on the desk bear notes Lord Morrnick wrote while trying to determine what was happening.

DMNote: The PCs are a much lower level than the stone to flesh spell requires. Successfully casting a spell from one of the scrolls requires a caster level check (DC 12).

Notes: One piece of paper reads:

"After the second toast, everyone began to go crazy. People started screaming about scales and scratching at their skin while others began to pull out their hair or scream that they were suddenly blind. I took Larissa, Alandra, and the boys upstairs, and not a moment too soon. I turned them into statues with some of my scrolls and came here to figure out what is going on."

After a break, the message continues:

"Everyone is going insane out there. Thank the gods I have the doors and golems to protect me. I shudder to think of what might happen to the family if the crowd outside the doors finds their statues. They are breaking everything out there. I can't understand it. Is this some sort of poison?"

A second piece of paper reads:

"What is this? I thought it was poison, poison in the food or wine, but I have used every potion and antidote I have and scales are still appearing on my arms. They look like silvery fish scales, but they are a bit thicker and flake off when I scratch them. My arms itch like crazy. The scales are spreading.

"It has to be the food, maybe the wine. Everybody went crazy after the second toast. If it isn't poison, what is it? A

curse? Nothing in my books describes a curse anything like this. This is madness. I haven't eaten for two days; I have to eat soon or try to escape. I still hear screams and pounding beyond the doors. I am afraid to risk it."

Treasure #2: The desk in the room is very large and has a number of drawers. Most of the drawers contain papers dealing with the harvesting of grapes, the making of wine, and delivery schedules. Two of the drawers have secret bottoms (Search DC 24): one of them hides 3 *potions of cure serious wounds*; the other conceals a small bag containing 100 gp.

Safe: 4 in. thick; Hardness 10; hp 90; Break DC 30.

While the safe is not very difficult to find, it is difficult to open. A dial in the middle of the safe door has 6 symbols on it. The dial must be turned to 3 particular symbols in the correct order to unlock the safe. Turning the dial to the wrong symbol results in an electric shock dealing 3d4 points of electricity damage to the PC turning the dial. PCs that do a thorough search of the papers in Lord Morrnick's desk (Search DC 30) find a piece of paper that lists the symbols in order. Opening the safe without knowing the proper sequence requires 3 successful Listen checks (DC 18 each) as the dial is turned to hear the tumblers fall into place. Failure of any check results in the electricity damage listed above.

Electric Shock Trap: CR 2; 3d4 points of electricity damage to the person touching the safe; no save; Search DC 22; Disable Device (special, see above).

Treasure #3: The safe contains several ledgers listing some of Lord Morrnick's holdings useful to his heirs. In addition, it contains a *wand of wonder* (6 charges; no identifying marks, but the word "krasit" is engraved on the stem; use the rod of wonder description in Chapter 8 of the



DMG to determine this wand's effects), 2 flasks of *holy water*, a *Quaal's feather token* (whip), 3 masterwork daggers, a bag with 200 pp, and a sheet of paper with a key to interpret Lord Morricks personal code. This key allows the translation of the wine recipe found in Area 9.

Area 29: A Short Hallway

A narrow hallway runs away from the foyer to travel past a number of doors that must lead into closets and guest rooms. Small niches along the walls must once have held vases, statues, or other decorations, but they are now empty. Refuse is scattered throughout the hallway, and the sharp aroma of fresh urine wafts through the air.

The narrow hallway runs away from the foyer past several guest rooms before reaching the Great Room (Area 34). Small niches along the walls once held vases, statues, or other decorations, but they are now empty, and broken fragments of some of the decorative items are strewn across the floor. Garbage and waste from the group of cursed individuals living in the Great Room dot the floor in small piles. There is a 20% chance that the cursed people in the Great Room (Area 34) decide to attack the PCs as they explore the hallway and the rooms connected to it. Door 29a leads into a small coat closet (Area 30), while doors 29b, c, and d lead into guest rooms. Doors 29a-c are standard wood doors; they are closed but not locked in any way. Door 29d is barred from the other side.

29d. Wood Door: 2 in. thick; Hardness 8; hp 60; Break DC 20.

Gouges and scratches cover the door, a clear sign that a number of attempts have been made to open it. The door has extra hit points due to the blockage behind it. Fourale (see Area 33) has moved a dresser behind the door. Breaking through the door thus requires pushing the dresser out of the way as well. If the PCs listen at the door, they hear (Listen DC 15) Fourale muttering to himself in the room beyond. If the PCs knock on the door or have a loud battle in or near the hallway with the group in the Great Room (Area 34), Fourale knows they are there and screams at them.

Fourale thinks the PCs are the cursed individuals living in the Great Room (Area 34). If the PCs calm him down and explain that they are adventurers seeking to end the curse, he may let them in (Diplomacy DC 7). Fourale has not spoken to another individual for around 5 years, so simply hearing a calm rational voice helps him believe he is finally being rescued. See Area 33 for the description of and statistics for Fourale.

Fourale's shouts and any noise the PCs make trying to get through the door increase by 30% the chance the group of cursed people in the Great Room (Area 34) charges down the hall and attacks.

Area 30: A Small Coat Closet

A blast of stale air flows outward as the door opens to reveal a small coat closet. Long lines of hooks and rods for hanging all varieties of coats and cloaks fill the small room, along with shelves for boots and shoes. While the cedar-

lined closet may have protected the clothing from insects, something has pulled down all of the garments and left them on the floor in piles of shredded cloth.

When guests would enter the mansion, a servant would take their coats, cloaks, and hats and place them in this narrow closet. Although the door has been left closed, someone or something has torn to shreds all of the clothing that was in the closet. PCs who decide to go through all of the tattered garments need to spend a half-hour searching before they find anything worthwhile.

Treasure: A secret pocket in one of the torn coats contains 25 gp (Search DC 25). A masterwork flute wrapped in soft lambskin can be found at the bottom of a pile of shredded clothing (Search DC 26).

Area 31: An Abandoned Guest Room (EL1)

The few things that remain intact give the impression that this room was once quite beautifully decorated. Nothing small enough to be carried remains in the room, and all of the large items are destroyed. The bed was destroyed with such force that wood splinters have impaled the wood paneling of the ceiling. The dresser lies in shambles, its marble top and a small mirror lying broken on top of the shattered wood. Windows looking out over the gardens are shattered, the broken glass spread across the room and windowsills.

Observant PCs realize (Spot DC 15) that water damage to the woodwork indicates rain has been coming through the broken windows for several years. The once beautiful view of the gardens through the windows in the south and west walls is now simply a depressing reminder of the powerful curse — a reminder highlighted by the cursed centipede coiled up amid the bed's shattered remains.

Cursed Large Monstrous Centipede: CR 1; SZ L Vermin; HD 2d8; hp 9; Init +2; Spd 40 ft.; AC 14; Atk +2 melee (1d8+1 and poison, bite); SA curse, poison (bite, Fort DC 16, 1d4/1d4 Dex); SQ curse, vermin; AL N; SV Fort +3, Ref +2, Will +0; Str 13, Dex 15, Con 10, Int —, Wis 10, Cha 2.

Skills: Climb +10, Hide +3, Spot +8. **Feats:** Weapon Finesse (bite).

Combat Tactics: The mindless creature charges forward to attack after someone enters the room.

Area 32: An Abandoned Guest Room

The odor of fresh feces and urine fills the room, indicating it has seen recent use. Trash and piles of feces are strewn about the room, making it seem like nothing more than a giant toilet. Nothing worthwhile is left in the room. The furniture is destroyed, but not with the same fury and power as seen in Area 31. This room is simply a waste repository for the group of cursed people in the Great Room (Area 34) as well as Fourale (Area 33). If the PCs have not encountered the cursed people in the Great Room (Area 34), there is a 50% chance that they rush down the hall to attack the PCs after they enter this room.

Area 33: Fourale's Room

If the PCs talk Fourale into opening the door and allowing them to enter, they are greeted by a small, thin man with long black hair. He keeps a firm hold on his mace while nervously studying the PCs. Fourale Krev was a guest at the wedding. When he realized a curse was touching everyone in the mansion, he barricaded himself in this room and used his remove curse spells to keep himself free of the curse. His cowardice and fear have kept him here for the 5 years since the wedding. Always expecting rescue, he uses his spells to keep away the other cursed guests, servants, and monsters. His daily remove curse on himself and the fact that all the food and water he consumes comes from create food and water spells keep Fourale free of the curse. Constant solitude brings about its own problems, however. Fourale now talks to himself constantly, sometimes shouting and screaming for no particular reason. He keeps himself busy cleaning the room, which was not his initially, and praying.

Fourale Krev, Male Human Clr5: CR 5; SZ M; HD 5d8+10; hp 42; Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; AC 12; Atk +3 (1d8, heavy mace); SA spells, turn undead; AL NG; SV Fort +6, Ref +2, Will +7; Str 11, Dex 13, Con 14, Int 9, Wis 17, Cha 11.

Skills: Concentration +7, Heal +8, Knowledge (religion) +2, Listen +5, Spellcraft +4, Spot +5. **Feats:** Alertness, Extra Turning, Scribe Scroll.

Divine Spells Prepared (5/4/3/2): 0—create water (x2), purify food and drink (x2), resistance; 1st—bless water, cure light wounds, divine favor, shield of faith; 2nd—cure moderate wounds (x2), sound burst; 3rd—create food and water, remove curse.

Domain Spells (Good, Strength): 1st—protection from evil; 2nd—bull's strength; 3rd—magic circle against evil.

Possessions: Heavy mace, ring of protection +1, 18 gp, 28 sp, 43 cp.

Description: Fourale is a thin man with dark brown hair and light brown eyes. The wide smile on his face seems frozen there by impending madness. His eyes twitch around nervously and he constantly wrings his hands. Years of fear and paranoia make him nervous and jumpy, while loneliness makes him talkative and a bit mad. His clothing is worn and faded, but still serviceable.

Personality: Plainly put, Fourale is a coward. Fear kept him from attempting to escape in the 5 years he has lived here. Quick trips to empty his chamber pot across the hall fill him with fear. His overblown feelings of self-importance lead him to believe that a rescue party is coming for him. He is convinced that anyone he meets is sent specifically to rescue him and demands the party escort him away from the mansion immediately.

Knowledge: Fourale used some of the time spent here to contemplate what happened and how. He has determined that the affliction that touched the mansion and grounds is definitely a curse. In his mind, a curse is by definition evil, though he has no evidence that the curse itself is evil in nature. Fourale is also certain that the curse was placed on the food that people ate at the banquet. While this conclusion is not precisely true, it has kept him free of the curse.

Combat Tactics: Fourale casts bull's strength on himself before the PCs enter the room, as he needs the strength



to move the dresser out of the way. If he is pressed into combat with or alongside the PCs, he uses his feat of strength domain ability during the 1st round of melee combat and begins using his other spells to protect himself.

Area 34: The Great Room (EL 5)

Beautiful parquet flooring extends throughout this vast room. Long dining tables from the wedding party still fill the room. Broken dishes and shattered glasses cover the room, and the once elegant table linens are torn beyond recognition. Enchanted crystal chandeliers still shed a dim magical light, and a vast wall of windows in the north wall looks out over a marble terrace into the gardens behind the mansion. Before the curse, before the destruction, this room was a truly magnificent piece of work. The destruction and overpowering stench of decaying flesh now give it an odd, ominous feel.

Most of the chairs are damaged, but the sturdy dining tables withstood the abuse they received. Plain wood panel doors in the east wall lead into the kitchen. All of the windows and glass doors looking out over the marble terrace are shattered. The floor-length openings make it easy to leave for the terrace overlooking the gardens. Wind, rain, and sunshine are starting to damage some of the exposed woodwork, and a number of horrible scratches mar the beautifully paneled inner walls. A large, open spiral staircase in the northwest corner leads up to the second floor. The staircase was designed to allow Lord Morricks and his family to make grand entrances to their parties. A collection of torn sofas and chairs close to the staircase marks the location of a small sitting area.

Living here are 4 cursed servants and 2 cursed guests, essentially surviving as a pack of wild animals. Although all of them have suffered from the curse in different ways, all of them have lost any vestige of civilized behavior as well as the ability to communicate. They store several rotting corpses and a number of skeletons and bones beneath one of the tables. Many of the corpses are fresh enough to be used as meals. They sleep in the group of sofas and chairs near the stairway and store "food" beneath the table for reasons even they do not understand. They attack anything entering the room, believing it is after their stored food and treasure. Although they make occasional forays into the garden and vineyard in search of food, these particular creatures are found here by the PCs, or they attack the PCs in Areas 29 or 32.

Cursed Servants (4): CR 1; SZ M; HD 1d8+6, hp 12; Init +2; Spd 30 ft.; AC 16; Atk +3 melee (1d6+2, club); SA curse; SQ curse; AL N; SV Fort +5, Ref +2, Will +1; Str 15, Dex 14, Con 16, Int 5, Wis 13, Cha 6.

Skills: Balance +4, Hide +2, Jump +3, Listen +1, Move Silently +2, Spot +1, Swim +4. *Feats:* Dodge, Toughness.

Cursed Guests (2): CR 2; SZ M; HD 3d8+9; hp 18; Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; AC 14; Atk +6 melee (1d6+3, club); SA curse; SQ curse; AL N; SV Fort +5, Ref +1, Will +0; Str 17, Dex 11, Con 14, Int 5, Wis 8, Cha 8.

Skills: Balance +4, Climb +7, Jump +5, Listen +1, Spot +1, Swim +4. *Feats:* Blind-Fight, Endurance, Toughness.

Combat Tactics: The cursed servants and guests attack like wild animals, swarming toward 1 or 2 targets at a time. If they attack the PCs in a different room and are severely injured, they retreat back to this room. If the PCs fight



them in this room, they fight to the death. The curse has driven them to such a deep insanity that no attempt to negotiate with them can possibly meet with success.

Treasure: The odd, makeshift home that the cursed pack has created for itself contains a few items that did not get destroyed. The only fragile item surviving is a small porcelain statue of a naked woman (30 gp). The more sturdy items include 3 uncut rubies (100 gp each; a gem cutter charges 500 gp to attempt cutting each gem, and a successful Craft [gemcutting] check at DC 18 produces a flawless ruby worth 1,000 gp, while failure produces a flawed ruby worth 650 gp); an ornate gold necklace (100 gp); an obsidian bracer (20 gp); 6 silver goblets (10 gp each); a silver bracelet (10 gp); a gold ring (5 gp); a silver ring (3 gp); an obsidian ring (3 gp); a set of blue wool robes trimmed in gold; a damaged chain shirt; a suit of masterwork studded leather armor; and loose coins totaling 22 pp, 168 gp, 1,243 sp, and 842 cp.

Area 35: The Kitchen (EL 2)

The kitchen is stark, cold, and dark because the spells that kept it lit and kept the stoves warm have faded. A massive stove, capable of cooking food for almost 100 people, rests against the east wall. Droppings from the colony of bats living here line the long, thin vents in the wall above the stove as well as the stove's surface and the floor nearby. Pots and pans made of high quality steel are thrown in a jumble on the floor. A large basin for cleaning the pots and pans is in the southeast corner of the room, and broken carts and dishes bracket the panel doors in the west wall.

An opening in the northeast corner of the room leads to a stairway heading down to the ground level where the servants' quarters and storage areas are located. A door in the north wall is torn open to reveal a staircase heading up to the bedrooms. Both stairways appear to be in good repair.

A colony of bats hides here during the day. Using a light source when the bats are present wakes them and causes them to swarm. Most of the bats have very little in the way of visible mutations, because profound mutations keep a bat from being able to fly, thus bats that undergo such changes usually die. The bats are able to make their way through the vents in the east wall, so the dark kitchen has provided them with a useful, dark cave in which to hide. If the PCs enter at night, there is a 70% chance the colony is out searching for food and the PCs can pass unmolested.

Cursed Bats (30): CR 1/10; SZ D Animal; HD 1/4d8; hp 1; Init +2; Spd 5 ft., fly 40 ft. (good); AC 16; Atk +0 melee (1d2-5, bite); Face/Reach 1 ft. x 1 ft./0 ft.; SA curse; SQ curse, blindsight; AL N; SV Fort +2, Ref +4, Will +2; Str 1, Dex 15, Con 10, Int 2, Wis 14, Cha 4.

Skills: Listen +9, Move Silently +6, Spot +9.

Combat Tactics: The bats swarm over the PCs, concentrating on any PC holding a light source. They screech and bite in an attempt to drive the PCs away. While their bites do little more than scratch the skin, each bite can pass on the curse. The bats flee if more than 1/3 of them are killed.

The Second Floor

Area 36: The Second Floor Landing (EL 7 or 0)

Ornate wood doors (3 in. thick; Hardness 8 [metal core]; hp 40; Break DC 20; Open Lock DC 24) in the east wall face a wide spiral stairway heading down to a large room below. The double doors lead into Lord and Lady Morricks' private bedchambers. Scratches and dents mark the doors, but a core of magically treated iron makes them very sturdy. Moreover, a complex lock means they are difficult—but not impossible—to open without the proper key.

Fragments of glass from the shattered windows along the north and west walls cover the steps and the landing, making quiet movement almost impossible (-10 circumstance penalty to all Move Silently checks). With the wind whispering through the shattered windows, the landing feels exposed to the outside. A narrow hallway along the west wall heads toward the front of the mansion.

The group of cursed people in the Great Room (Area 34) does not come up here anymore. They were unable to get through the many closed doors and are afraid of Koriela, a cursed air mephit that makes her home on the second floor. Koriela was summoned by a wizard exploring the mansion grounds on her own several years ago. Something went wrong during a battle, the wizard was slain, and Koriela ended up cursed and unable to return home. Koriela suffers from the curse in several different ways. Outward signs of the curse are restrained to her pale white skin, which now has dark green splotches. Inside, Koriela suffers deeply, for the curse has bent and changed parts of her body, causing her pain during every waking moment. This pain makes her subject to great fits of anger and depression that she barely manages to control. Her magical abilities keep her safe from other creatures in and around the mansion, but she is unable to return to her home plane for reasons she does not understand. Koriela claims the second floor of the mansion as hers and rabidly defends her territory against interlopers. Any battle in Area 34 alerts Koriela to possible intruders, so she comes to keep watch on the stairway. If the PCs climb the stairs at a different time, the broken glass along the stairs and landing helps warn Koriela of unwelcome visitors. If the PCs reach the second floor through the servant's stairs and begin exploring from that direction, they meet the Koriela in Area 37.

Koriela, Cursed Air Mephit Sor4: CR 7; SZ S Outsider (Air)*; HD 3d8 plus 4d4; hp 23; Init +7; Spd 30 ft., fly 60 ft. (perfect); AC 17; Atk +6 melee (1d3 [x2], claws); SA curse, breath weapon (cone of grit, 15 ft., 1d8, Reflex DC 12), spell-like abilities (1/hour—blur; 1/day—gust of wind), summon mephit*; SQ curse*, fast healing (2), damage reduction (5/+1); AL N; SV Fort +4, Ref +7, Will +7; Str 10, Dex 17, Con 10, Int 12, Wis 11, Cha 16.

Skills: Bluff +7, Concentration +4, Hide +12, Knowledge (arcana) +5, Listen +8, Move Silently +9, Spellcraft +5, Spot +8. **Feats:** Alertness, Extend Spell, Improved Initiative.



Arcane Spells Known (Cast Per Day: 6/7/4): 0—detect magic, ghost sound, light, open/close, ray of frost, resistance; 1st—burning hands, cause fear, magic missile; 2nd—web.

*Special: The curse has made this plane Koriela's native plane of existence, so spells against outsiders no longer affect her. Her summon mephrit ability functions as a summon monster II spell and has a 50% chance of success.

Combat Tactics: Koriela hides from and observes the PCs as long as she can. She waits until they are all close together and casts *web* on them. When the PCs are caught in the web, she uses *magic missile* on the most heavily armored PC and then sets the web on fire with *burning hands*, dealing 2d4 points of fire damage to anyone caught in the web as well as the normal spell damage to anyone she attacks directly. She uses her *blur* ability as the web burns and flies out one of the broken windows. She hovers outside the windows and demands that the PCs leave. If the PCs do not leave, or if they directly attack her, she uses *web* spells to trap them and then magic missile and ray of frost to try to kill them. When she runs out of spells or gets hurt, she retreats to the roof to let the breeze help her heal and then to one of the locked guestrooms (Area 41) to rest and recover. Koriela has suffered from the curse, but has not completely lost her mind. She fights intelligently and methodically, only closing for melee combat with single, poorly armed PCs. If the PCs do chase her off and loot her treasure stored in Area 37, she hunts them until either she or they are dead.

Speaking with Koriela: Koriela's madness and pain make communication with her very difficult. A successful Diplomacy check (DC 17) calms her down enough to

speak to the PCs from a distance, but only if they stay away from the second floor. She considers anyone entering the second floor an enemy.

Area 37: Koriela's Room (EL 7 or 0)

Koriela (see Area 36) makes her home in this small sitting room. Damaged sofas and chairs surround a small fountain in the center of the room. Bright light shines from a glowing stone above the fountain, but the fountain itself no longer flows. Koriela organized some of the sofas into a small sleeping area and cleared broken glass away from the center of the room.

If the PCs take the servants' stairs to the second floor, they meet Koriela (Area 36) in this room, which has served as her home for quite some time and which she defends using the tactics described in Area 36, above. Koriela has amassed a great deal of wealth due to her ability to explore areas the cursed guests and servants were not able to damage. Some of her treasures are hidden elsewhere, but much of her accumulated wealth is concealed in the sofas and chairs. Many of the items include vases and other small, delicate items.

Treasure: A number of items can be found on the chairs and sofas or hidden beneath their cushions. These items include a gold statue of a knight on horseback (200 gp), a porcelain statue of a human woman holding a baby (125 gp), 6 crystal vases (25 gp each), a crystal figurine of a horse (15 gp), a sapphire-studded silver bracelet (150 gp), a gold ring studded with tiny diamonds (80 gp), 2 matching gold rings (10 gp each), an elegantly carved ivory scrollcase

(empty, 20 gp), a suit of masterwork chainmail emblazoned with a gold sun in the center of the chest, and a cracked shortbow with ornate carvings (if mended, it is a masterwork mighty shortbow [Str 15]). The PCs also find loose coins totaling 48 pp and 176 gp.

Area 38: A Long Hallway

While the hallway is now very plain, it clearly was once carefully decorated. A small amount of light comes through a single small window at the very end of the hallway, but all other decorations and lamps have been destroyed. Only the ornate doors evenly spaced along the south wall and the paneled niches for vases and statues along the north wall remain. Fragments of porcelain and crystal from broken figurines and vases coat the floor. Only one of the 3 doors along the south wall is opened (38a). The other two doors, 38b and c, were *arcane locked* by one of the guests in an effort to protect himself and several of his friends from the cursed guests and servants rampaging through the mansion.

38b and c. Wood Doors: 1 in. thick; Hardness 5; hp 20; Break DC 30.

These doors were *arcane locked* by a 7th-level wizard. A knock spell suppresses the *arcane lock* for 10 minutes.

38d. Secret Door: Servants used this door to get to the guestrooms for cleaning. It is unlocked but difficult to notice (Search DC 15) because the wood panels are so well constructed. Koriela found this door but was unable to get through the doors beyond it, so she left it closed.

Area 39: A Guest Room

Shredded cloth and bleached feathers cloak the decimated room. A small desk in one corner remains whole, but the dresser and bed have been destroyed. Feathers from the shredded pillows and mattress lie around the room like giant snowflakes. The windows are remarkably intact, while several windowpanes are cracked; only one pane of glass is broken. Only the fatigue of the cursed guests and servants rampaging through the mansion saved the windows in this room. They simply were exhausted from constantly breaking things by the time they reached this room. The desk in the room has a locked drawer.

Locked Desk Drawer: 1/2 in. thick; Hardness 4; hp 10; Break DC 15; Open Lock DC 20.

The small drawer contains several fragile vials sealed with wax. Bashing open the drawer results in a 75% chance of breaking each vial.

Treasure: The 4 vials hidden in the drawer are marked with a skull. Each vial contains shirac berry extract, a rare contact poison used by assassins (Fort DC 14, paralysis). Laws in most civilized areas carry substantial penalties for simply possessing this poison. There is no clue as to who left the poison here or what they intended to do with it. Guards in Grollek's Grove are willing to give a reward of 50 gp for each vial turned over to them. An assassins' guild might be willing to purchase the vials for 200 gp each, but only under conditions of absolute secrecy.

Area 40: A Guest Room

Only one of the two large windows in the southern wall has been broken; all of the furniture is intact. Dust covers a large bed in the center of the room. Large and small roses have been embroidered on the linen bedcovers, and several tapestries depicting flowering gardens hang on the walls. A small dresser made of creamy brown wood stands in the northeast corner, and 2 desiccated corpses sit in chairs near the windows.

Koriela looted this room. Unable to pass the arcane lock on the door, she broke the window from the outside and flew in. She looted the rings from the corpses but was rather frightened of the dead bodies and never completely examined them. The corpses are Magistrate Horace Kriel and his wife Elena. They both poisoned themselves when they realized the curse was beginning to change them and they would not be rescued. The door into the room was *arcane locked* by a 7th-level wizard (see 38b and c, above) named Yorvash Green, who was staying in the room next door (Area 41). If the PCs have defeated Koriela, this room is a safe place to rest.

Koriela was very diligent in her looting of this room. She knew that nobody else had looted or destroyed it and so took her time picking all of the locks and searching through all of the drawers. The cedar-lined drawers in the dresser preserved several fine pieces of clothing in which Koriela had no interest.

Treasure #1: The fine linen and silk clothing has a total value of 300 gp, or 100 gp when sold to a clothing merchant.

Treasure #2: Searching the magistrate's body turns up (Search DC 18) an ornate brass key and a gold chain with a snake-shaped amulet (25 gp).

Area 41: A Guest Room

The desiccated corpse of Yorvash Green lies peacefully in the center of a massive canopied bed in the middle of the room. The room has suffered minor damage from birds and animals that made their way through the single broken window in the southern wall, but most of the room is in remarkable shape. The ornate mahogany desk, dresser, and bed need only be dusted to return them to their original beauty.

Yorvash Green, a wizard and merchant, was one of the many guests attending the wedding ceremony. He rapidly realized that something was going wrong. He and his friends, Magistrate Horace Kriel and his wife Elena Kriel, escaped to their rooms. Yorvash *arcane locked* their room and then returned to his own. He intended to return to the Kriel's room to plot their escape. Fearing for his life, he cast *arcane lock* on his door as well. He realized some sort of poison or curse was beginning to affect him when he suddenly lost his hearing. After desperately using several healing potions and casting *dispel magic* on himself, he began to despair. When scales erupted on his skin, he refused to suffer further effects and swallowed a vial of poison and lay down to die.

Koriela knows a great deal about this room, as she has investigated it thoroughly; if she flees the PCs after fight-

ing them in either Areas 36 or 37, she comes to this room to rest and recuperate. If the PCs enter this room while she is here, she leaves through the window again to find a different place to recover. Once she has recovered, she actively searches for the PCs with plans of attacking them. This room is a safe place to rest only if Koriela is slain.

Treasure: Koriela is rather frightened of searching long-dead corpses. She removed Yorvash's rings but not his amulet, nor did she find the hidden gold coins in his money belt. The dragon-shaped amulet he wears is made of gold studded with sapphires and is worth 450 gp (Search DC 18), and his money belt contains 30 gp (Search DC 25).

Area 42: A Hidden Hallway (EL2)

This hallway connects the private rooms of the Morricks family to a stairway leading to the kitchen and servants' quarters and was never meant to be viewed by guests. The few decorations here are not stolen or damaged, making this hallway seem far more elegant than the damaged and looted hallways and rooms. A few tapestries hang on the walls, and small crystal vases have been tucked into niches along the hallway's length. Dried-up flowers in the vases dropped their petals long ago. A thick layer of dust covers the floor as the hallway continues past several wood doors to end at a wide landing surrounding a staircase that leads down.

Servants used this hidden hallway and the back stairway to bring food or other items to the different family members and to enter rooms for cleaning. The skeleton of the family guard who protected the stairway as Lord Morricks turned his family to stone remains at the bottom of the stairway where it reaches the kitchen (Area 35). While the guard did not last long, he kept the marauding looters from entering the private rooms long enough that they forgot about the back stairway.

A large cursed snake recently found its way here. Although not particularly hungry after its most recent meal, it considers the hallway its home and defends it fiercely.

Cursed Viper (1): CR 2; SZ L Animal; CR 2; HD 3d8; hp 12; Init +3; Spd 20 ft., climb 20 ft., swim 20 ft.; AC 15; Atk +4 melee (1d4 and poison, bite); Reach 10 ft.; SA curse, poison (Fort DC 11, 1d6/1d6 Con); SQ curse, scent; AL N; SV Fort +3, Ref +6, Will +2; Str 10, Dex 17, Con 11, Int 1, Wis 12, Cha 2.

Skills: Balance +11, Climb +11*, Hide +8, Listen +9, Spot +9. **Feats:** Weapon Finesse (bite). *Vipers can use either their Strength or Dexterity modifiers for Climb checks, whichever is better.

Combat Tactics: The snake strikes with lightning speed, biting the nearest character and injecting its venom. When seriously injured, the snake backs into a corner in tight coils and rises up, attempting to frighten away its adversaries.

42a-d. Doors: The 4 wood doors in the hallway were locked to protect Lord Morricks's family. While none of the doors are trapped, they are thick and they have good, solid locks. Each of the wood doors is decorated with the Morricks family coat of arms.

Wood Doors: 2 in. thick; Hardness 5; hp 20; Break DC 20; Open Lock DC 24.

Treasure: Each crystal vase is slightly different in shape and design, but all are beautiful and worth a fair amount. There are 6 crystal vases, each worth 10 gp each. Three tapestries hang on the walls: one depicts a lone knight riding a large horse (50 gp), a second simply has a representation of the Morricks family coat of arms (30 gp), and the third depicts a collection of mixed flowers (60 gp).

Area 43: A Large Bedroom

Dust covers a large bed with an elegant purple silk canopy situated against the north wall, beside a small marble vanity. Small niches for combs, brushes, and makeup are lined up along the marble top of the canopy beneath a large mirror. Paintings of different flower arrangements decorate the plain wood panel walls, and a marble planter in the northeast corner contains a dead plant. Two massive windows in the east wall overlook the overgrown gardens down below; one of the windows is broken, but the other remains intact.

Deep purple blankets conceal the stone figure of Larissa Morricks, a beautiful teenage girl. Details of her jewelry and clothing are so perfect that one is forced to believe that this young woman was once alive and that the curse or a spell was used to turn her to stone. In fact, Lord Morricks turned her to stone to protect her from the curse, and the statue's intricate details allow the PCs to realize easily that she has been turned to stone. If they have not investigated Lord Morricks's library, they might believe the curse is what turned her to stone rather than her father. Larissa's fiancé is nowhere to be seen; the curse took such a vicious hold of him that he committed suicide in a fit of insanity.

If the PCs use a *stone to flesh* scroll or spell to return Larissa to life, she is thankful but concerned about the rest of her family. She is still affected by the curse and succumbs to it completely within 24 hours of being returned to flesh unless she receives a *remove curse* spell. Fortunately, time spent as a stone statue does not count as time spent cursed.

Larissa Morricks, Female Human Sor1: CR 1; SZ M; HD 1d4+4; hp 8; Init +2; Spd 30 ft.; AC 12; Atk -1 melee (1d4-1, dagger, crit 19-20) or +1 ranged (1d4-1, dagger, crit 19-20); SA spells; AL CN; SV Fort +3, Ref +2, Will +3; Str 8, Dex 14, Con 13, Int 11, Wis 12, Cha 18.

Skills: Concentration +5, Spellcraft +4. **Feats:** Great Fortitude, Toughness.

Arcane Spells Known (Cast Per Day: 5/4): 0—detect magic, light, mending, read magic; 1st—mage armor, true strike.

Possessions: A jeweled dagger (250 gp), a pearl necklace (450 gp), and an ornate gold ring (35 gp).

Description: Larissa is an incredibly beautiful, delicate young woman. Her pale skin is a sharp contrast to her black hair and deep blue eyes. Although short and very thin, she has been blessed with a curvaceous figure that easily distinguishes her from other children her size.

Personality: Larissa is determined to make certain her family is safe. If the PCs give her news that her father has died, she is very sad but saves her sorrow for later. Her last memory before being brought upstairs and turned to stone by her father is the image of her new groom impaling himself on a large silver knife. The memory haunts her and

makes her determined to find a way to end the curse — a curse with which she knows she is already afflicted. Determined to see the rest of her family brought to safety, she gladly abandons the mansion and its mysteries to the PCs if her mother and brothers are turned back to flesh (see Area 46). Her devotion to her family and to ending the curse leads her to promise treasures and riches that she truly cannot deliver in return for the PCs' help. She has no qualms about lying to get what she wants.

Koriela looted this room, but most of Larissa's clothing and personal items were left behind. If the PCs revive Larissa, she puts on a set of sturdy robes she uses for traveling. She is so concerned about the rest of her family and the death of her fiancé that she does not notice the missing items. If Koriela has been defeated, this room is a safe place for the PCs to rest.

Area 44: A Large Nursery

The nursery has not seen use since the Morricks' twin boys were old enough for their own room. This dark, elegant room is now a storage room holding stacks of books and several large wood crates beneath the 2 walnut cribs. Several rolled-up rugs rest along the north wall, and some paintings lean against the south wall. Decorations were often rotated and changed during the year to give the mansion added flavor and elegance, so unused decorations were simply stored here. A secret door (Search DC 18) in the west wall leads directly to Lord and Lady Morrick's private bedroom (Area 46). This room is a safe place to rest if Koriela has been defeated.

Treasure: The paintings and rugs are large and heavy and would require a wagon to remove from the mansion. Few traders would purchase anything from the mansion for

fear of the curse, so these items would need to be transported quite a distance to find a willing merchant. Total value of the items in the room is 3,000 gp, but the PCs would be lucky to obtain 1,000 gp for them anywhere close to Grollek's Grove.

Area 45: A Small Bedroom

Lord and Lady Morrick's two twin boys Eric and Edmund shared this room. A set of bunked beds stands in the southwest corner of the room, squatting beneath the burden of several large blankets tossed in a heap on the top bed. Toy swords lie around the room along with wood figures of horses and soldiers. A large tapestry hanging on the south wall depicts a massive battle between a large group of dwarves and an immense black dragon. Matching dressers flank the large broken window in the north wall, and several pieces of clothing lie rotting in the space between them. Koriela broke through this window as well. She did not find anything worthwhile here and neither will the PCs. If Koriela has been defeated, this room is a safe place for the PCs to rest.

Area 46: Lord and Lady Morrick's Private Bedchambers

This gigantic, elegantly appointed bedroom gives a true hint as to the beauty that the entire mansion must once have possessed. Delicate porcelain statues and graceful crystal vases occupy niches in the walls and stand on various tables and pieces of furniture. Every single decoration in the room was carefully considered; statues and vases, for instance, match the themes and colors of the tapestries and paintings that hang on the walls. Even the



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upholstered sofas and chairs that face the massive windows along the north wall match well with their surroundings. Of all the rooms in the mansion, this room is completely intact. None of the windows has even the slightest crack, and, although dusty, the room retains the beauty it had before the curse took over the mansion.

Windows for this room are enchanted to make breaking them almost impossible, so Koriela (Area 36) could not enter here despite all of her efforts.

Enchanted Windows: 1/2 in. thick; Hardness 8; hp 30; Break DC 18.

The 3 stone statues on the bed are Lady Alandra Morricks and her twin sons Eric and Edmund. Lord Morricks turned them to stone using *flesh to stone* scrolls in an effort to protect them from the curse. PCs can use *stone to flesh* scrolls and/or spells to return them to their natural form. The boys were 8 years old when they were turned to stone and did not really understand what was happening. They were so busy playing that they did not eat anything at the party, so they are unaffected by the curse. Lady Morricks, however, is affected by the curse. Her vision is already far more acute than normal, but no other changes have taken place. Unless cured, she fully succumbs to the curse 24 hours after being turned back to flesh.

Lady Alandra Morricks, Female Human Sor5: CR 5; SZ M; HD 5d4+8; hp 19; Init +1, Spd 30 ft.; AC 12; Atk +2 melee (1d4, dagger, crit 19-20) or +3 ranged (1d4, dagger, crit 19-20, 10 ft.); SA spells; AL CN; SV Fort +4, Ref +2, Will +6; Str 10, Dex 14, Con 12, Int 12, Wis 14, Cha 19.

Skills: Concentration +9, Diplomacy +8, Spellcraft +9. **Feats:** Empower Spell, Great Fortitude, Toughness.

Arcane Spells Known (Cast Per Day): 0—dancing lights, daze, detect magic, light, mending, read magic; 1st—mage armor, magic missile, sleep, true strike; 2nd—Mel's acid arrow, invisibility.

Possessions: A thin, silver dagger; several small keys; a ring of protection +1; a pearl necklace (450 gp); and a diamond ring (600 gp).

Description: Alandra is of average height but thin enough that she appears to be somewhat smaller than she really is. Light brown hair drops to her shoulders in broad curls and waves to frame her thin face. Her bright green eyes pierce anything she looks at. When first returned to flesh, she is wearing a very elegant gown made of pale blue silk. She rapidly changes into thicker traveling clothes made of linen, but all of her clothing is of the highest quality and cut in ways that accentuate her beauty.

Personality: Lady Morricks is a pleasant, good-humored woman, or was before the curse took hold of her family and property. At first angry with her husband for leaving them here so long, she is extremely upset when she finds out he is dead. Her single, over-powering goal is to get herself and her children safely away from the mansion and cured of all effects of the curse. While she does not know if it is a curse or some sort of poison, she knows her vision has changed and is afraid that other changes will occur if she is not cured soon. Not knowing the source of the curse or what all of its effects might be, she is unaware that her boys are not cursed. She offers the PCs a variety of rewards for helping

her get her family to safety. If the PCs do help rescue her, Larissa, and the boys, they are rewarded with a great deal of money and even some property. While it is clear that Alandra loves beautiful things and wealth, she completely ignores the destruction around her to focus on her family.

Knowledge: Alandra does not know about the curse or who cast it. The only major rival she can think of is Lord Eldoran, but Lord Beval's family is rumored to have several powerful rivals. She can tell the PCs that the effects of the poison — she believes it is a poison — began to hit everyone in the mansion during the second toast to the bride and groom after dinner was over but before dessert was served.

Eric and Edmund are 8-year old identical twins whom only family members seem able to tell apart. Their pale blue eyes and light brown hair contrast sharply with their deeply tanned skins. The boys clearly enjoy playing outside a great deal. Their clothing is made of thick, sturdy linen, but cut and dyed to look like formal clothing. Though young, the boys are far from passive or frightened. While saddened by their father's death, they seem excited by the adventure of leaving the mansion. They have a wild streak and an inquisitive nature that are easily associated with the adventuring lifestyle. If asked, both boys claim they want to be "explorers" — much to their mother's chagrin.

Paintings, tapestries, and statues throughout the room are worth a great deal of money. Smaller vases and statues are relatively easy to move, while transporting the paintings and other items would require a large wagon. A small jewelry box is hidden in one of the dresser drawers (Search DC 22).

Jewelry Box: 1 in. thick; Hardness 5; Break DC 20; hp 25; Open Lock DC 25.

The box is small but heavy, and it has a very sturdy lock. Alandra Morricks keeps the key hidden in one of the hairpins she was wearing when she was turned to stone. She opens the box herself and takes out the bracers of armor +1 and puts them on when she prepares to leave. If the PCs have already opened the box and taken out its contents, she eyes them suspiciously but says nothing about it. The lock has a rather dangerous trap that is triggered when it is not opened with the proper key. The box contains treasure #2 listed below.

Trap: Any attempt to open the box without the key releases an acidic gas. The gas dissipates within several rounds, but anyone breathing it suffers a great deal of damage.

Acidic Gas Trap: CR 2; 10-ft. radius around the box (3d4 acid damage, Reflex save [DC 15] for half); Search DC 23; Disable Device DC 23.

Treasure #1: Small vases and statues scattered throughout the room have a total value of 3,000 gp.

Treasure #2: The jewelry box contains bracers of armor +1, a diamond pendant (1,000 gp), a pair of emerald earrings (500 gp), and a silver bracelet studded with tiny emeralds (400 gp).

Area 47: A Large Closet

Long rods span the distance of this large room. Suits, cloaks, and fine men's clothing hang from several of the rods, while the rest are devoted to opulent dresses and beautiful gowns. Although the clothing is a bit out of style, it is all made of the finest fabrics and is remarkably well preserved. Clothing along the north side of the closet has been pushed to one side to reveal a heavy steel safe hidden in the northwest corner.

Vault: 10 in. thick; Hardness 10; hp 150; Break DC 30.

The enchanted vault uses the same combination and symbols found on the safe in the Library (Area 28). If the PCs have not visited Lord Morricks Library (Area 28), Lady Morricks knows the combination and opens the vault if asked to. A dial in the middle of the vault door has 6 symbols on it. The dial must be turned to 3 particular symbols in the correct order to unlock the safe. The vault is trapped: turning the dial to the wrong symbol results in an electric shock that deals 3d4 points of electricity damage to the person turning the dial. Opening the safe without knowing the proper sequence requires 3 successful Listen checks (DC 18 each) as the dial is turned to hear the tumblers fall into place. Failure of any check triggers the trap and forces the PC to start over again.

Electric Shock Trap: CR 2; 3d4 points of electricity damage to the person touching the vault; no save; Search DC 22; Disable Device (special, see above).

Treasure: While the vault does contain several valuable treasures, the items of greatest value include titles to several pieces of property, secret recipes for making fine wine and brandy, and documents showing ownership of a number of different business ventures. Most of the papers are not worth much to the PCs, but they are invaluable to Lady Morricks if she is turned to flesh and cured of the curse. The vault also contains a beautifully made +1 *longsword of frost*, *Rokon's amulet* (see the Magic Items Appendix), a suit of *elven chain*, 40 gold bars (20 gp each), a bag of gemstones (contains 10 gems worth 4d4 gp each, 8 gems worth 4d4 x 10 gp each, 5 gems worth 2d4 x 100 gp each, and one perfect emerald worth 7,000 gp), and a bag containing 340 gp and 1,000 sp.

If Lady Morricks is with the PCs when the vault is opened, she insists on taking the gemstones for herself and tells the PCs that the rest of the items are theirs if they get her and her children back to safety.

The Ground Floor

While investigating the ground floor of the mansion, the PCs will not encounter any wandering monsters or events. Aside from Areas 48 and 49, most of the areas on the ground floor have become home to a large colony of giant beetles. If the PCs explore this area thoroughly, they might find additional hints of who may have cast the curse.

Area 48: The Gardener's Storage Room (EL4)

Various garden tools lie around the room; most are broken and rusting. Several rake handles have chunks

bitten out of them. Shredded burlap from what must once have been sacks of some sort are strewn about the room. Lining the south wall are 3 carts: one clearly contains sand, while the other two seem to contain soil.

A large number of dire rats live in the storage room now. The door was barred shut from the outside to keep them in, but they have since found a way to burrow beneath one of the walls so they can pass in and out of the room when they choose. The rats attack as soon as the door is opened, swarming to the doorway to attack in numbers. They fight to the death to defend their home.

Cursed Dire Rats (14): CR 1/3; SZ S Animal; HD 1d8+1; hp 7 (x2), 6 (x3), 5 (x5), 4 (x2), 3 (x2); Init +3; Spd 40 ft., climb 20 ft.; AC 15; Atk +4 melee (1d4, bite); SA curse; SQ curse, scent; AL N; SV Fort +3, Ref +5, Will +3; Str 10, Dex 17, Con 12, Int 2, Wis 12, Cha 4.

Skills: Climb +11, Hide +11, Move Silently +6. **Feats:** Weapon Finesse (bite).

Combat Tactics: The rats simply swarm the PCs. They follow the PCs out of the room if they are in good numbers and relatively undamaged, but remain in the room if they have been hurt badly.

Area 49: Argrim White's Room (EL8 or 9)

If the PCs convince Argrim to open door 17a, they meet a gray-haired man holding a quarterstaff in one hand. Scars around his white eyes suggest he might be blind, but his confident stance and calm bearing hint otherwise. The room around him is neat and organized. Boxes are stacked against the north wall, and a single set of bunk beds rests against the south wall. Massive boards and slabs of wood are nailed over the door in the east wall. Removing the boards that block the door is easy; once open, the door (it swings inward) reveals a mess of garbage stacked on the other side (Area 52). If the PCs enter from Area 52, the west door leading out to the gardens is blocked. Argrim keeps both doors blocked when he is resting. A single large chest is in the room, but opening it in Argrim's presence would be risky at best.

While Argrim is indeed blind, anyone or anything attacking him on his own ground is in for a rude surprise. Before taking up gardening and tending animals for Lord Morricks, Argrim was a well-known adventurer and spent several years in charge of guard patrols in the hills nearby. Blinded during a battle with a troll, he was forced to seek other employment. Lord Morricks hired him out of friendship and let him do whatever he wanted in the gardens. He has adjusted to his blindness extremely well over the past several years and fights without penalties in his own room.

Argrim White, Male Human Ftr8: CR 8; SZ M; HD 8d10+32; hp 78; Init +2; Spd 30 ft.; AC 15; Atk +11/+6 and +11 melee (1d6+6/1d6+4, +1 quarterstaff); AL NG; SV Fort +10, Ref +4, Will +2; Str 16, Dex 14, Con 18, Int 10, Wis 11, Cha 14.

Skills: Climb +6, Handle Animal +6, Jump +6, Listen +2, Ride (horse) +6, Wilderness Lore +3. **Feats:** Alertness, Ambidexterity, Blind-Fight, Cleave, Power Attack, Two-Weapon Fighting, Weapon Focus (quarterstaff), Weapon Specialization (quarterstaff).



Possessions: Argrim's ring, +1 quarterstaff, masterwork studded leather armor, a silver amulet shaped like a dragon hanging on a silver chain (20 gp).

Description: Life has been hard on Argrim since the curse took hold of the mansion and the surrounding grounds. His hair is prematurely gray and wrinkles drag down his cheeks. His face, though marked by horrible scars near his eyes, is actually rather handsome. Long, thin arms hang from broad shoulders lined with hard muscle, and his wide shoulders taper down his thin body to long, spindly legs. If he did not move with an unnatural grace and ease, he would be easy to picture as a spindly spider.

Personality: Argrim has endured enough hardships and witnessed enough evil that he is very difficult to startle or surprise. His blindness would have sent most warriors with his history into a deep depression, but Argrim never despaired. He retains his confidence and great sense of humor under even the most stressful of circumstances. Although he heard the destruction that occurred and has fought many of the strange creatures and plants around the gardens, he does not know what caused the changes. Promises he made to Lord Morrnick have kept him here all this time, and he is willing to remain here if Lord Morrnick or any member of Lord Morrnick's family asks him to. His ring has kept him safe from the curse, and he is surprised to know that all of the changes around him were caused by a curse — and even more surprised to realize that he has not suffered at all. As long as he wears the ring, he can eat or drink anything on the grounds without fearing the curse, only he does not know that the ring keeps him safe. When informed of his strange immunity, he simply states that the gods favor him due to his faith.

Knowledge: While Argrim does not know about the curse, he does know that dangerous creatures are in the stables (Area 8) and in the old servants' quarters (Areas 50-53). He can also warn the PCs about the cursed group of people in the Great Room (Area 34) and the group of rats he locked in the gardener's storage room (Area 48). He does not know about Koriela (Area 36) or anything about Lord Morrnick's family. If the PCs bring word of Lord Morrnick's death or of Lady Morrnick's rescue, he is willing to leave with them if they help him carry his chest. Rescuing the surviving members of the Morrnick family makes Argrim feel indebted to the PCs. He offers them his ring, telling them it is a magical gift from a priest he once rescued and that they deserve it. If asked, he does not really know what it does, just that it is supposed to protect one from harm.

Combat Tactics: If the PCs foolishly decide to attack Argrim for any reason, he forces them to fight in his room, shutting the door behind them if they leave and try to use ranged weapons. His room is small, but he has kept the center of it very clean specifically for fighting anything that tries to attack him here. If the PCs call off the battle or surrender, Argrim listens to what they have to say but refuses to trust them or to tell them what he knows. While the PCs could potentially defeat Argrim on open ground, fighting him in his room means almost certain death for at least several PCs.

Wood Chest: Hardness 5; hp 25; Break DC 20; Open Lock DC 25.

This chest contains some of Argrim's old armor and weapons. He attacks anyone who attempts to rob him.

Treasure: The chest holds a suit of masterwork full plate, a +1 large steel shield, a +2 short sword, 10 +1 arrows,

2 longswords, 12 throwing daggers, 3 quivers holding 20 arrows each, a money belt with 30 gp, and 3 potions of *cure moderate wounds*.

Area 50: A Sooty Hallway

Soot and ash from a long dead fire cover the floor as well as the broken, burned fragments of the doors that used to stand in the south wall of the hallway. Strange scurrying sounds and high-pitched clicks echo through the stone walls as they stretch toward a large room to the west. This hallway leads to rooms and quarters used by the servants who worked here. Several servants, driven mad by the curse, started fires in all of the rooms; soot and ash on the walls and floors are from the fires they started. Smoke suffocated the unfortunates who lit the fires in the first place, and their bodies provided food for the strange, warped creatures that now live in various rooms on the ground floor.

Area 51: Demolished Bedrooms

These 2 rooms were both quarters for several families of servants who worked at the mansion. Family quarters were provided to married servants who had children. The fires started in these rooms destroyed all of the clothing, beds, and even valuables that were stored here. Searching the burnt remains in both rooms thoroughly only nets loose coins totaling 25 gp, 395 sp, and 534 cp.

Area 52: The Servants' Kitchen (EL 4)

Burnt fragments of chairs and tables are piled in the center of this large room. While the kitchen area along the south wall is recognizable, it is demolished beyond reasonable hope of repair. Even the stone walls and floors are damaged by powerful blows. Flagstones are moved aside in several areas to create small burrows for some of the giant beetles that moved into the area.

A colony of giant beetles has occupied the mansion's ground level. Once normal-size creatures, the curse made them larger and stronger than before. They have been eating a variety of things left behind in the storeroom as well as the very dirt beneath the stones. Detecting the vibrations from the PCs' footsteps, they swarm out of their small burrows and attack.

Cursed Giant Beetles (12): CR 1/3; SZ S Vermin; HD 1d8; hp 7, 6, 5 (x2), 4 (x5), 3 (x3); Init +0; Spd 30 ft.; AC 16; Atk +1 melee (2d4, bite); SA curse; SQ curse, vermin; AL N; SV Fort +2, Ref +0, Will +0; Str 10, Dex 11, Con 11, Int —, Wis 10, Cha 7.

Skills: Climb +4, Listen +3, Spot +3.

Combat Tactics: The beetles have no intelligence, so they simply swarm the PCs and attack, fighting to the death.

Broken tables, cracked rocks, and bent pots and pans are stacked along the west wall, blocking access to several doors. Clearing enough garbage away to open the doors takes 20 minutes. Both doors are blocked or barred from the opposite side with varying degrees of success.

52a. Wood Door: 2 in. thick; Hardness 5; hp 40; Break DC 30.

Argrim White (Area 49) effectively bars this door from the opposite side. He shouts at the PCs to go away if he hears

them banging on his door, believing that the beetles are making an attempt to enter his room. If the PCs speak to Argrim through the door, he unbars it and stands back to let them open it (see Area 49).

52b. Wood Door: 2 in. thick; Hardness 5; hp 20; Break DC 20.

One of the guards fled to the room beyond this door (Area 54) and blocked it to prevent the insane looters from killing him. He was affected by the curse a short while later.

Fragments of wood cling to the hinges in the open doorway in the east wall; the open doorway leads into further servants' quarters (Area 53). More beetles live beyond the open doorway, and PCs who make a successful Listen check (DC 10) can hear their scurrying and clicking. Whether or not the PCs enter that room, the beetles eventually come out in search of food.

Area 53: The Servants' Barracks (EL 3)

Giant beetles live in this room as well. Flagstones from the floor have been thrown to the edges of the room along with the burned remains of broken furniture. A large mound of dirt with several openings occupies the middle of the room. High pitched clicks and chattering sounds, though somewhat muffled by the dirt, clearly indicate that beetles are inside the mound.

This room was once a barracks hall for all of the unmarried male servants. Female servants slept in curtained-off areas of the married servants' quarters. A year or so after the initial destruction, the giant, mutated beetles moved in and created a home for themselves. The giant beetles detect vibrations of the PCs' footsteps through the ground and rush out of the mound to attack. If the PCs avoid this room, there is a 50% chance that they meet all or some of these beetles as the creatures come out in search of food.

Cursed Giant Beetles (8): CR 1/3; hp 7 (x3), 6 (x2), 5 (x2), 4; see Area 52, above.

Combat Tactics: The loose dirt on the floor and their massive hill give the giant beetles a +1 bonus to their AC if they fight in this room. These beetles rush the PCs in an effort to overwhelm them. If the PCs flee and leave behind any fallen comrades, unconscious PCs are dragged into the burrow. The beetles view the PCs as food and follow them if they flee.

Treasure: Several items are hidden deep within the beetles' mound: a mandolin carved of rare ebonywood, with ivory inlays (if a craftsman repairs and restrings the mandolin, it is a masterwork instrument worth 700 gp to a collector or bard); a silver sheath for a short sword (150 gp); 3 flasks of *alchemist's fire*; and an ivory scrollcase containing a strange note.

The note hidden in the scrollcase reads:

"Put this item in any fountain on the grounds. Whatever you do, do not touch it with your bare hand. Return with the Morricks family's secret wine and brandy recipes, and I will pay you 4 times the amount we already agreed on."

The seal at the bottom of the note has been deliberately smudged just enough to cover the original writer's identity from strangers without preventing the original recipient from knowing who sent it.

The seal on the above note can be identified by Jasmine Welk in Grollek's Grove as that of Lord Eldoran. Other people in Grollek's Grove must succeed at a Knowledge (local) check (DC 15). This note is an important piece of evidence that helps prove who created the curse.

Area 54: The Guards' Barracks

A skeleton clothed in rotting leather armor lies in the center of the room, surrounded by tall sets of bunk beds against each wall. Wholesale demolition and destruction has missed this room; other than broken fragments of the wood bar that once held the door shut strewn across the floor, the room is neatly organized, just dusty and unused. Hanging from pegs near the doorway are 3 cloaks bearing the Morrick family coat of arms, and 6 locked trunks rest beside the cots, each holding some of the guards' personal belongings.

Locked Trunk (6): Hardness 5; hp 20; Break DC 20; Open Lock DC 23.

All 6 locked trunks are identical. A successful Open Lock check on the first trunk gives a +3 circumstance bonus to all Open Lock checks when trying to access the other trunks. Each trunk contains various items of clothing and a few personal items, with valuable items of interest listed below.

Treasure #1: 2 masterwork daggers, an ornate silver flask (10 gp), 3 potions of *cure light wounds*, and a silver necklace (5 gp).

Treasure #2: A suit of masterwork black leather armor decorated with blue embroidery; a light crossbow; a masterwork longsword; an ornate, masterwork silver dagger; and a bag that contains 43 gp and 123 sp.

Treasure #3: A mighty composite longbow (Str 15), a masterwork greatsword, and a potion of *darkvision*.

Treasure #4: A *quiver of Ehlonna*, holding 60 arrows (the quiver looks old and worn; only *active study* or *detect magic* reveals its true nature).

Treasure #5: A masterwork light crossbow and a potion of *hiding*.

Treasure #6: A silvered short sword, a quiver of 30 arrows, and 4 potions of *cure light wounds*.

The skeleton in the center of the room has several items on it as well:

Treasure #7: A key that fits the trunk containing treasure #2; a rusty short sword; rotting leather armor; a gold eagle-shaped amulet (45 gp); and a pouch containing 3 gp, 45 sp, and 92 cp.

Area 55: A Short Hallway (EL 2 or 0)

Loud crunching noises mixed with high-pitched clicks and chattering fill the hallway, easily covering up any other noises (-4 circumstance penalty to all Listen checks for monsters and PCs). Shattered wood is scattered across the floor of the narrow hall as it passes through a wide laundry room to the east on its way to a staircase heading up to the first floor of the mansion. Fragments of wood cling to heavy iron hinges set into the stone doorway in the west wall. The wall to the east simply ends a short way down the hall,

leaving a wide-open entry to the laundry room (Area 56) and the staircase heading up to the kitchen (Area 35). More giant beetles are in the storeroom (Area 57), eating their fill of the broken crates and sacks that remain. There is a 50% chance that 5 beetles in the storeroom (Area 57) notice the PCs and charge them. Otherwise, the beetles stay in the storeroom if the PCs do not disturb them.

If these 5 beetles attack the PCs in the hallway, the total number of beetles in Area 57 must be reduced.

Cursed Giant Beetles (5): CR 1/3; hp 7 (x3), 6 (x2); see Area 52, above.

Combat Tactics: The beetles charge the PCs and attack. As far as the beetles are concerned, the PCs are food; thus, if a PC goes down, the beetle stops fighting and begins eating, unless it is attacked.

Area 56: A Large Laundry Room

The architect who designed the mansion was both practical and artistic. An intricate pump next to the large well in the center of the room is used to bring water into the several large, self-draining wash basins along the eastern wall. Wood rods spanning the room are designed for drying wet clothing, sheets, and blankets. The heavy stone of the well and the basins remains undamaged, as do the wood rods along the ceiling. Cursed servants used the laundry that was left here to start some of the fires in the other rooms. The beetles have not noticed anything here that really interests them. Well water can only be obtained with the pump, and it is tainted by the curse the same way as all other sources of water in and around the mansion. The room opens up to the staircase to the kitchen (Area 35) as well as the hallway (Area 55) leading to other parts of the ground floor.

Area 57: A Large Storage Room (EL 5 or 3)

Giant beetles eat the remains of broken barrels and crates strewn about this massive storage room along with whatever might be inside. Size alone suggests this storeroom is capable of holding enough food to supply the mansion for several years. Now, though, it is home to 15 giant beetles that are quite content to eat virtually anything that comes their way. Between the servants who ransacked the room immediately after the curse began and the giant beetles that moved in here recently, anything of value left in the room has been eaten or destroyed.

These beetles are large, healthy, and quite hungry. They attack anyone who enters the room, and once engaged, they follow fleeing victims. These beetles are as content to eat flesh as they are anything else; their mandibles can pierce even the strongest plate mail.

Cursed Giant Beetles (15): CR 1/3; hp 7 (x4), 6 (x3), 5 (x4), 4 (x4); see Area 52, above.

If 5 of the beetles leave to fight the PCs in Area 55, only the following beetles remain:

Cursed Giant Beetles (10): CR 1/3; hp 7, 6, 5 (x4), 4 (x4); see Area 52, above.

Combat Tactics: The beetles swarm the PCs. If a PC goes down, the attacking beetles ignore the battle going on around them and begin to eat their victim.

Concluding the Adventure

Simply surviving exploration of the mansion and grounds without suffering the permanent effects of the curse constitutes a deed in and of itself. If the PCs find a way to eliminate the curse, Richard Arien rewards them with 3,000 gp. If they discover partial proof that Lord Eldoran was the culprit, they receive an additional 2,000 gp. Definitive proof in the form of notes stolen from Lady Sheila Eldoran's home (Area P8) nets them another 2,000 gp.

A 100 XP bonus for each PC is suggested if they rescue both Argrim White and Fourale Krev and escort them back to town. Rescuing Lady Morrnick, both boys, and Larissa is worth another 100 XP each in addition to the treasures that Lady Morrnick bestows upon the PCs. Rescuing Larissa and ending the curse earns the gratitude of Lord Alistair Beval, an extremely powerful merchant. The DM should feel free to adjust any and all treasure items given out in the adventure. If the PCs played their cards properly, they have obtained 2 powerful magic items detailed in the Magic Items Appendix as well as a few new spellbooks and some other magic items.

Successfully overcoming the curse turns the PCs into local heroes. They are treated with the greatest respect and receive the best prices in Grollek's Grove, as well as heavily discounted healing spells and potions from Sarah Lyrean and the clerics in the Temple of Kudrak.

Further Adventures

A new relationship with both the Morrnick family and Lord Beval can be used as the beginning for many other adventures. Lady Morrnick might ask the PCs to help her

lay claim to properties that others have taken over during the past 5 years, offering them half the value of whatever they can recover. Lord Beval, impressed by their courage and heroism, might invite them to the city and request their help tackling a few "interesting" problems.

The PCs may make an enemy of Thyran Whiteoak if they foil his efforts to contact the demon, or they could earn the enmity of the demon itself. Thyran or the demon can easily become long-term enemies plotting against the PCs in the background.

News of their success travels, and the PCs are asked to help investigate other mysteries in and around distant villages and cities.

As heroes, the PCs could be approached by various NPCs in Grollek's Grove with a variety of requests. The NPC Appendix includes various possible side quests and character hooks that the DM might find valuable for enticing the valiant PCs into further adventures.

Failure

The PCs could fail or become disillusioned during the adventure; they might even fall victim to the curse and become part of the problem. In this instance, the DM has several options. The slowly spreading curse could be halted by a different party of adventurers, or the curse could continue spreading, causing serious economic problems as well as panic as it encroaches on nearby trade routes. Alternately, Thyran Whiteoak could make contact with the demonic source of the curse and "end" it temporarily. In such a case, Thyran would swiftly grow in power and influence, providing a long-term enemy for the PCs to overcome.

NPC Appendix

Major NPCs

Statistics and descriptions for **Richard Arien**, **Sarah Lyrean**, **Leah Redoak**, **Aaron Rye**, **Jasmine Welk**, and **Thyran Whiteoak** are listed first. These NPCs provide important quests or quest information and are key to the adventure.

Richard Arien, Male Human **Ari8**: CR 7; SZ M; HD 8d8; hp 36; Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; AC 17; Atk +8/+3 (1d6+3, +2 rapier, crit 18-20) and +7 melee (1d4+2, +1 dagger, crit 19-20); AL LN; SV Fort +2, Ref +3, Will +7; Str 12, Dex 13, Con 10, Int 15, Wis 13, Cha 15.

Skills: Appraise +13, Bluff +7, Diplomacy +13, Disguise +8, Gather Information +13, Innuendo +13, Ride (horse) +12, Sense Motive +13. *Feats*: Ambidexterity, Dodge, Two-Weapon Fighting, Weapon Focus (rapier).

Possessions: +2 rapier, +1 dagger, amulet of natural armor +2, masterwork chain shirt.

Description: Richard is a dashing, handsome gentleman who is only now beginning to show his age. Dressed in the highest fashion, he wears beautiful cloaks and elegant shirts whenever he is seen wandering through town. Penetrating violet eyes draw attention away from the thin scar beneath his left eye and the gray beginning to sprinkle through his black hair. He walks with an awkward gait, holding his frame unnaturally erect as he strides through town.

Personality: Although he never mentions any title, Richard is clearly noble born or at least raised in a noble family. His clipped sentences and rather large vocabulary make most people think of him as nothing more than an annoying "dandy." Richard has worked for the Beval family for many years and thought of Byron Beval as a nephew. He knows that Byron is dead and that he cannot do anything about it, but he desperately wants solid evidence proving who is responsible for the curse so he can act either within the courts or on his own to exact revenge.

Knowledge: Richard is a skilled judge of character and an experienced diplomat. Lord Beval chose him to give out the reward because he knew Richard would not turn over any money until proof was discovered. Richard spends no time worrying about the curse, because he does not really care about the curse itself, only who created it. While he knows many of the people who are possibly involved, he will not mention any names to avoid tainting any evidence.

Information and Interactions: If asked, Richard informs the party that there is a reward of 3,000 gp to the person or group of people that finds a way to overcome the curse, and an additional 4,000 gp to the person or group of people that brings hard evidence of who is responsible for it. The evidence must stand up to scrutiny in a court of law, though Richard will not say how the evidence will be used. He offers a smaller reward for evidence leading to the discovery of hard evidence. Richard makes it clear that he does not care about the curse or about eliminating it. This stance changes only if Larissa Morricks (Area 43) is rescued and speaks to him directly. Larissa was married to Byron

Beval immediately before the curse took effect, so the Beval family considers her one of theirs, and Richard gives a reward to the PCs for saving her on top of any other rewards they might receive.

What does he want? Complete proof requires the following:

1. The note found in Area 53 of the mansion along with Jasmine Welk's testimony that the seal is Lord Eldoran's.

2. Aaron Rye's testimony that his previous employer — Lord Eldoran — did in fact contact a demon and cast the curse.

3. Papers found in Sheila Eldoran's home (Area P8) demonstrating the curse was cast by Lord Eldoran.

If the PCs provide 2 pieces of evidence, they are given half of the stated reward; if they obtain all 3 pieces, they receive the full reward and the Beval family's gratitude. After the PCs provide the first 2 pieces, Richard hints that more evidence might be hidden in Lady Eldoran's home, but he makes no suggestions as to how it could be obtained. If the PCs rescue Larissa Morricks, Richard pays them 5,000 gp and gives any wizard in the party the spellbook he has stored in his chest (see Area M in the Grollek's Grove chapter).

Locations: Richard can be found at his home (Area M) during the day, but is encountered in the Prancing Unicorn (Area D) in the evenings 30% of the time. When Richard learns the PCs intend to investigate the curse, he actively seeks them out and sets up a meeting.

Sarah Lyrean, Female Human **Clr8**: CR 8; SZ M; HD 8d8; hp 40; Init +3; Spd 30 ft.; AC 19; Atk +7/+2 melee (1d8+1, +1 heavy mace); SA spells, turn undead; AL LN; SV Fort +7, Ref +6, Will +11, Str 10, Dex 16, Con 10, Int 12, Wis 19, Cha 15.

Skills: Concentration +11, Diplomacy +8, Heal +15, Knowledge (religion) +12, Spellcraft +6. *Feats*: Brew Potion, Combat Casting, Dodge, Scribe Scroll.

Possessions: Elven chainmail, cloak of resistance +1, holy amulet of Kudrak (amulet of natural armor +1), +1 heavy mace.

Divine Spells Per Day: 6/5+1/4+1/4+1/3+1.

Domains: Protection (generate protective ward, person touched has a +8 bonus to their next saving throw), Strength (1/day, feat of strength, +8 to strength for one round).

Description: Sarah has a mysterious beauty and peace that extend to almost everyone around her. An angular face and sharp nose that would not often seem attractive are overcome by her healthy glow, light blue eyes, and the thick braid of light brown hair pinned in a tight bun at the back of her head. Her youth and slight stature give her an almost childlike grace. She is normally seen in robes, but sometimes she wears the armor given to her by an elven merchant she healed many years ago.

Personality: Sarah is known and loved throughout Grollek's Grove. She grew up here, and everyone in town knows how she heard the "calling" to become a cleric. She has dedicated her life to preserving law and order, helping

anyone who asks. Leah Redoak is one of her good friends; the two have several meals a week together and share information freely. She knows Jasmine Welk, though not as well, and spends some time with her once in a while. She has met Thyran Whiteoak and Richard Arien and thinks they are “gentlemen,” but she knows very little about them.

Knowledge: Sarah’s studies include a great deal of information on demons and demonic magic. While she knows there are ways to overcome demonic curses, her powers are somewhat limited. She does know creating such a curse would require someone willing to let the demon channel its power through him or her. She can suggest there is an item somewhere on the grounds that acts as a focus point for the curse and that finding and destroying such an item would likely end the curse.

Information and Interactions: If the PCs communicate regularly with Sarah or with Leah, they quickly learn that both women talk to each other about the curse and about what has been learned. If the PCs talk to Sarah before beginning their investigations, she directs them to speak to Leah and Jasmine. Once the PCs have determined the curse is demonic in nature, she makes several suggestions. First, she reminds the PCs that demonic magic is chaotic evil in nature; thus, searching for a combined source of chaos and evil might help locate the site of the original curse. Second, she confirms Leah’s suggestion or makes the suggestion herself that a *hallow* spell at the source of the curse should end it. She provides the PCs with a scroll containing the spell if they request it. She reminds the PCs that eliminating the source of the curse will not cure the cursed creatures and plants and that most of them may still need to be destroyed, but eliminating the source does keep the curse from spreading any further.

Sarah provides *potions of remove curse* to the PCs at half their normal cost if she is completely convinced the PCs are truly trying to rid the land of the curse and not simply using the potions to be able to loot the mansion.

Locations: Sarah is found in the Temple to Kudrak (Area J) about 65% of the time. There is a 20% chance she is visiting a sick parishioner and a 10% chance that she is visiting with Leah Redoak (Area N). There is a 5% chance she has stopped by the Prancing Unicorn (Area D) to listen to Jasmine play and to talk to some of the other villagers.

Leah Redoak, Female Human Drd9: CR 9; SZ M; HD 9d8-9; hp 40; Init +3; Spd 30 ft.; AC 18; Attack +6/+1 melee (1d6, +1 *darkwood scimitar*, crit 18-20); SA spells; SQ nature sense, woodland stride, trackless step, resist nature’s lure, *wild shape* (3/day; Large), venom immunity; AL NG; SV Fort +5, Ref +4, Will +11; Str 9, Dex 12, Con 8, Int 14, Wis 21, Cha 16.

Skills: Animal Empathy +15, Concentration +11, Diplomacy +15, Heal +17, Knowledge (nature) +14, Wilderness Lore +17. **Feats:** Brew Potion, Combat Casting, Craft Wondrous Item, Maximize Spell, Scribe Scroll.

Possessions: +2 *studded leather armor*, +1 *darkwood scimitar*, *ring of protection* +1, *amulet of natural armor* +1.

Divine Spells Per Day: 6/6/5/4/3/2.

Description: Age is beginning to bend her back and drag down her shoulders, but Leah’s blue eyes carry a powerful inner life and determination that easily attracts attention. Her silver hair is pulled back into a long braid and decorated with various animal figures carved from a mysterious dark red wood. While her advanced age has made her weak and frail, her mind is sharp, and her knowledge of the world around her is quite amazing. She is rarely seen without **Shriluc**, her tiger companion.

Personality: Leah’s disarming smile and friendly nature rarely overcome the fear generated by her imposing companion. Many of the women in Grollek’s Grove find Leah to be a pleasant, friendly woman who is happy to help them with difficult problems in their gardens or even with healing sick children. Her airy nature and tendency to look at people from the corner of her eye keeps most people from bothering her. While friendly to all whom she meets, her polite behavior seems rather forced when in the presence of heavily armed men. She has many discussions with Sarah Lyrean, and the two women are good friends.

Knowledge: A strong bond with the natural world around her makes Leah a perfect person to investigate the powerful curse on Lord Morricks’s land. The druid council that sent her here told her only to observe, but her brief investigation of the outskirts of the cursed property has led her to believe that something must be done. If the PCs convince her they are determined to put an end to the curse, she helps them in anyway she can without directly intervening.

Information and Interactions: Leah and Shriluc have actually visited the outskirts of the property and seen the curse’s effects. She did not want to risk her faithful companion and has been strictly ordered to observe without interference. When she finds out about the PCs and their interest in investigating the curse, she sends a message asking them to visit her. If Leah is convinced of the PCs’ honorable intentions, she gives them 2 *potions of remove curse* and tells them she is not certain the potions can reverse the effects of the curse but would like them to take the potions just in case.

She explains that she could not risk going further onto the grounds for a variety of reasons. She tells them that nature is suffering there and she would like to help them, but her help must be indirect. She asks for samples of plant leaves, fruits, flowers, and water if the PCs can manage it. If they bring these samples to her, Leah immediately responds, “Ah, children, this is terrible. None of you have eaten any of this have you?” She looks the PCs over carefully and identifies anyone tainted by the curse, directing them to see Sarah Lyrean.

Her studies of the samples reveal several things. First, the magic used to create the curse was definitely demonic and is chaotic evil in origin. Second, she suspects the curse is spread through food and water. Third, the curse is centered someplace close to the mansion. Finally, she believes that she can make amulets to help protect the PCs from the curse. She tells the PCs that she needs a branch or a piece of wood from one of the most cursed trees they can find, preferably something as close to the center of the grounds as possible. If the PCs provide her with the right piece of wood, she makes each of them a small wood amulet

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that is specially keyed to this specific curse (see the Magic Items Appendix). In short, a PC wearing one of these amulets automatically succeeds at 40 consecutive saving throws against the curse. After 40 saving throws, the amulet loses its power. Leah needs 1 full day to make amulets for the whole party.

If the PCs tell Leah about the pond (Area 20) and the demon mists they met there, she tells them to seek Sarah Lyrean's advice. Leah does not know much about demons, but she suggests a *hallow* spell might succeed in disrupting the curse. She gladly provides a scroll with this spell if the PCs request it.

Locations: Leah is almost always at home (Area N), but there is a 10% chance she is wandering in town and a 10% chance she is visiting with Sarah Lyrean at the temple (Area J).

Aaron Rye, Male Human Com1: CR 1/2; SZ M; HD 1d8+6; hp 10; Init +2; Spd 30 ft.; AC 12; Atk +3 melee (1d6+2, club); AL NG; SV Fort +5, Ref +2, Will +1; Str 15; Dex 14, Con 16, Int 12, Wis 13, Cha 8.

Skills: Listen +5, Move Silently +4, Profession (butler) +5, Spot +5. **Feats:** Dodge, Toughness.

Description and Personality: Aaron is a very shy, rabbit-like man who jumps at every sound around him. Though once handsome, shabby clothing, poor hygiene, and his constant tension keep people around him at an arm's length. Light brown hair sprouts from his head in every direction because he never bothers to comb it. He trembles when he speaks and has a hard time looking people in the eye.

Knowledge: Aaron was a servant working for Lord Eldoran at approximately the time of the wedding. While cleaning one day, he entered the room where Lord Eldoran was speaking to a demon through some sort of magical device. The sight paralyzed him with fear, and he has not been the same since. He departed without being noticed and quit working for Lord Eldoran the next day. Constant fear of demons now consumes his life, leaving him with a bare existence that few people would enjoy.

Information and Interactions: If Jasmine takes the time to introduce Aaron to the PCs, he tells them his story. Aaron trusts Jasmine and overcomes his fear long enough to tell his tale, but he does not want to tell anyone else. He is absolutely terrified of testifying before any sort of judge or noble; the PCs must engage in a great deal of coaxing to convince him. Intimidation will not work, as Aaron is far more terrified of demons than of the PCs. In addition, Jasmine refuses to help the PCs anymore if they try to intimidate Aaron. The DM should use Diplomacy checks versus Aaron's fear (DC = 1d10 + 4) to determine how well the PCs influence Aaron.

Locations: Aaron hides in a small shack on the outskirts of town; only Jasmine knows where he lives. The only way to meet Aaron is if Jasmine contacts him and sets up a meeting.

Shriluc, Dire Tiger Companion of Leah Redoak: CR 8; SZ H Animal; HD 16d8+48; hp 120; Init +2; Spd 40 ft.; AC 16; Atk +18 melee (2d4+8 [x2], claws) and +13 melee (2d6+4, bite); Face/Reach 10 ft. by 30 ft./10 ft.; SA pounce, improved grab, rake (2d4+4); SQ scent; AL N; SV

Fort +13, Ref +12, Will +11; Str 27, Dex 15, Con 17, Int 8, Wis 12, Cha 13.

Skills: Hide +0*, Jump +11, Listen +3, Move Silently +9*, Spot +3, Swim +11. *Shriluc has a +4 racial bonus to Hide and Move Silently checks. This bonus improves to +8 in tall grass or heavy forests. Shriluc's immense size must be taken into account when making Hide checks.

Description: Larger and more powerful than a normal druid companion, Shriluc has been with Leah since he was a cub. His stripes include black, orange, and pale orange, with additional patches of white on his face and snout. Horses shy away from his scent, making him rather unwelcome near the wagon trains that pass through Grollek's Grove. Leah keeps him close to her, as she is afraid someone might attack him if she leaves him alone while traveling the city. Shriluc is intensely loyal to Leah and extremely protective; he does not attack anyone unless Leah is attacked or unless she orders it. While the guards are rather concerned about his presence in the city, they have become used to seeing him during the 6 months Shriluc and Leah have lived nearby.

Jasmine Welk, Female Half-elf Brd5: CR 5; SZ M; HD 5d6-5; hp 18; Init +3; Spd 30 ft.; AC 14 (17 when wearing studded leather); Atk +4 melee (1d4+1, +2 dagger, crit 19-20) or +6 ranged (1d8, light crossbow, crit 19-20, 80 ft.); SA spells; SQ bardic music (5/day), bardic knowledge; AL NG; SV Fort +2, Ref +7, Will +6; Str 9, Dex 17, Con 9, Int 17, Wis 14, Cha 17.

Skills: Appraise +11, Balance +11, Bluff +7, Concentration +7, Diplomacy +7, Gather Information +11, Knowledge (local) +11, Listen +7, Perform +11, Sense Motive +7, Spellcraft +7. **Feats:** Dodge, Great Fortitude.

Possessions: +2 dagger, ring of protection +1, masterwork harp.

Arcane Spells Known (Cast Per Day: 3/4/2): 0—dancing lights, detect magic, light, mage hand, prestidigitation, read magic; 1st—cure light wounds, detect secret doors, identify, sleep; 2nd—blur, levitate, mirror image.

Description: Long golden hair frames Jasmine's thin, angular face and silver eyes. Despite her frail appearance, Jasmine has an inner beauty that combines with her exotic eyes and delicate features to create a sense of power and knowledge. She tends to wear blue and green clothing cut to enhance her figure and is rarely seen wearing armor. A dagger kept in a gem-encrusted sheath is always belted to her waist, and she is never seen without her harp. Although thin to the point of being frail, she has a powerful voice that easily entrances those around her.

Personality: Jasmine is known throughout Grollek's Grove and the surrounding area, as she has been living here for almost 12 years. Friendly to everyone she meets, she accepts people for who they are. In all the time she has spent in Grollek's Grove, people can recall her being angry only once. Someone attempted to grope her during a performance and ended up with a dagger in his eye. A calm demeanor, friendly nature, and small, unimposing size have served her well; people are willing to tell her things that they would not even tell their best friends. She has a firm grasp of the politics and history of the area, but will not divulge personal details of others' lives unless there is an

extremely good reason. Conversations with Jasmine can be rather one sided — people often find they speak about themselves while Jasmine focuses her attention on them and asks simple, friendly questions.

Knowledge: Throughout the years, Jasmine has heard many rumors and learned far more about the history of the area than anyone might suspect. She can identify signet rings by family, and in some cases she can even recognize characteristic scratches on rings to give a hint as to their original owner. The secret, seething hatred Lord Eldoran had for Lord Morrnick is known to her. Aaron Rye, one of Lord Eldoran's servants, once told her a story about Lord Eldoran speaking to demons and casting horrible spells. While she suspects Lord Eldoran may be involved with the curse, she has no evidence and loathes saying anything about it until she is certain. Rumors she has heard about Thyran Whiteoak suggest that Thyran cannot be trusted. If the PCs have many dealings with Thyran, Jasmine's mistrust may extend to them as well. Jasmine might make oblique references to Thyran's past, implying to the PCs that he cannot be trusted.

Information and Interactions: Jasmine chooses her words carefully when speaking to the PCs. She is afraid of making accusations that cannot be proven. She also wants to avoid giving out private information. Despite her careful wording, she does her best to make it clear to the PCs that they should treat with Thyran Whiteoak warily. If she knows the PCs are working closely with Thyran, she is extremely reluctant to provide any information. If possible, she directs them to seek out Leah Redoak and Sarah Lyrean for advice on overcoming the curse. She also tells them about Richard Arien, as well as the history of hatred and anger between Lord Morrnick and Lord Eldoran.

If the PCs show Jasmine the note found in Area 53 of the mansion, she is easily able to identify the seal as that of Lord Eldoran. Furthermore, she is willing to testify in front of Richard Arien. After the discovery of the note, she asks the PCs to meet her the next morning so she can introduce them to Aaron Rye. If the PCs convince Aaron to tell his story to Richard Arien, it is considered enough proof to merit half of the reward for identifying the person casting the curse.

Locations: Jasmine is usually found at the Prancing Unicorn (Area D) during the evenings and can be encountered wandering the village during the late afternoon.

Thyran Whiteoak, Male Human Wiz7: CR 7; SZ M; HD 7d4+14; hp 36; Init +2; Spd 30 ft.; AC 15; Atk +6 melee (1d4+3, +1 dagger, crit 19-20) or +5 ranged (1d8, masterwork light crossbow, crit 19-20, 80 ft.); SA spells; AL CE; SV Fort +4, Ref +3, Will +6; Str 14, Dex 14, Con 14, Int 18, Wis 10, Cha 13.

Skills: Alchemy +14, Concentration +12, Knowledge (arcana) +14, Knowledge (demons) +14, Knowledge (history) +14, Scry +14, Spellcraft +14. **Feats:** Brew Potion, Combat Casting, Craft Magic Arms and Armor, Craft Wand, Craft Wondrous Item, Scribe Scroll.

Possessions: Bracers of armor +2, ring of protection +1, cloak of resistance +1, +1 dagger, masterwork light crossbow, wand of magic missiles (20 charges; caster level 7).

Arcane Spells Per Day: 4/5/4/3/2.

Spellbook: 0—all; 1st—charm person, chill touch, feather fall, identify, mage armor, magic missile, protection from good, shield, silent image, sleep, summon monster I; 2nd—blindness/deafness, endurance, invisibility, knock, misdirection, web; 3rd—blink, dispel magic, haste, lightning bolt, non-detection; 4th—arcane eye, bestow curse.

Description: Thyran keeps his pale blond hair neatly trimmed and combed, matching the care he takes in choosing his clothing. Rather than the robes often associated with wizards, Thyran wears fine silk shirts along with dark pants cut in the latest fashions. The bright green and blue shirts he wears highlight the blue in his eyes and his light brown skin.

Personality: A friendly, outgoing personality and an innocent appearance allow Thyran to conceal his true nature. Usually content to stay in the background, his whispered comments have helped increase the fear and tension surrounding the spread of the curse, but few know that he has helped build fear rather than dispel it. He has kept his true chaotic and evil tendencies hidden through the use of *misdirection* and *non-detection* spells. People of Grollek's Grove respect and admire him for his wealth and magical power; none suspect his true intentions. Jasmine Welk heard rumors from wizards who trained with Thyran, rumors that hint of his evilness, but she has not told anyone and will not unless she acquires real proof.

Knowledge: Thyran already knows that the curse cast on Lord Morrnick's mansion and property is based on demonic magic. While he claims to be seeking information to help overcome the curse, in truth he seeks only a way to control it so that he may use it to his own ends. His true goal is to find out which demon granted the power for the curse, or at least what type of demon. Bonding with a demon would profoundly increase his power and abilities in much less time than simple hard work and studying.

Information and Interactions: Thyran, like Leah Redoak, asks the PCs to bring him some of the cursed plants and animals from the mansion and grounds. He also asks for a description of the various things they have seen. He views any notes or other information they find with great interest and offers advice where he can. The information the PCs provide him lets him know that there is a "source" for the curse somewhere on the property. He tells the PCs that he can eliminate the curse if they can find the source and either bring it to him or tell him where it is. The "source" of the curse is a pebble at the bottom of a pond in the garden (Area 20). Thyran knows that this is a weak point between this plane and the Abyss and that it can be used to contact the demon providing the power behind the curse. If the PCs tell him about this area and let him know that they have cleared the garden and property around it of the most dangerous creatures, Thyran might risk going to the pond himself. He knows that nobody is likely to stand aside and let him cast the spells required to contact the demon. If Thyran has a chance to contact the demon by himself, he and the demon make an agreement that eliminates the curse (but for only 50 years) and grants Thyran an impressive amount of power. Thyran immediately departs the area after this development, leaving no clue as to where he is going.

Locations: There is a 50% chance that Thyran can be encountered at the Prancing Unicorn (Area D) at any time. If he is not found there, then he is working in the small home he has rented on the outskirts of town (Area H).

Summary List of Where the Major NPCs are Found

Richard Arien can be found in his home (Area M) or at the Prancing Unicorn (Area D) in the evenings.

Sarah Lyrean is found at the Temple (Area J) 65%, Leah Redoak's home (Area N) 10%, the Prancing Unicorn (Area D) 5%, or somewhere in the village helping parishioners 10%.

Leah Redoak is found at her home (Area N) or visiting Sarah at the Temple (Area J).

Aaron Rye can only be found through contact with Jasmine Welk (area D).

Jasmine Welk is found at the Prancing Unicorn (Area D) every evening.

Thyran Whiteoak is found either at home (Area H) 50% or at the Prancing Unicorn (Area D) 50%.

Guards and Political Figures

These NPCs can help direct the PCs to other NPCs. They are also the NPCs the characters are forced to deal with if they are caught committing a crime.

Lauren Darkbrow, Captain of the Guard, Female Human Ftr5: CR 5; SZ M; HD 5d10+10; hp 38; Init +1; Spd 20 ft. (in full plate); AC 19; Atk +10 melee (2d6+7, +1 *greatsword*, crit 19-20) or +5 ranged (1d6, composite shortbow, crit x3, 70 ft.); AL CG; SV Fort +6, Ref +2, Will +2; Str 16, Dex 13, Con 15, Int 11, Wis 12, Cha 8.

Skills: Climb +6, Handle Animal +2, Jump +6, Ride (horse) +9. **Feats:** Mounted Combat, Point Blank Shot, Power Attack, Precise Shot, Weapon Focus (*greatsword*), Weapon Specialization (*greatsword*).

Possessions: Full plate, +1 *greatsword*, composite shortbow, 20 arrows.

Description and Personality: Lauren is a rather severe, non-sense woman who takes her job a bit too seriously. Though the guards and merchants like her enough, not many people can claim her as a friend. Three matching scars trail from her right temple down her face to end at her jaw line. Gray streaks run through her black hair, which is pulled back into a tight bun behind her head. Many in town point out the fact that she was not hired for her glowing personality; rather, she was hired to wield her near body-length sword on behalf of the townspeople. Though not overtly friendly, she does stop and speak to people that hail her and is willing to discuss the curse with the PCs. Despite the fact that her pay comes from the nobles and merchants in the area, Lauren has a reputation as a very fair arbitrator of disputes.

Knowledge: Some of Lauren's scars were obtained during an initial foray onto the mansion grounds immediately after guests came fleeing from the wedding. Most of the guards traveling with her died or had to be carried out.

That disaster makes her very wary of the mansion and grounds — and wary of people who have been there. She makes it clear that anyone entering the grounds is subject to whatever curse or poison affects it and that the cursed creatures living there attack anything they see. If asked, Lauren suggests the PCs ask Jasmine Welk or Richard Arien for more information.

Miriam Kriel, Magistrate, Female Human Ari6: CR 5; SZ M; HD 6d8-6; hp 34; Init +7; Spd 30 ft.; AC 13; Atk +7 melee (1d6+3, +2 *short sword*, crit 19-20); AL LN; SV Fort +1, Ref +5, Will +10; Str 13, Dex 17, Con 9, Int 16, Wis 16, Cha 18.

Skills: Appraise +10, Bluff +13, Diplomacy +13, Disguise +12, Gather Information +10, Intimidate +13, Knowledge (local history) +11, Perform +5, Sense Motive +12, Speak Language +7. **Feats:** Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Leadership, Skill Focus (Gather Information).

Possessions: A brass key and special robes that are a sign of her office, and a jeweled +2 *short sword* in an ornate leather sheath.

Description and Personality: Miriam is a thin woman with long dark hair and deep brown eyes. Her face is flawless in its beauty, and her voice captivates all those around her. Why she was chosen as Magistrate after the disappearance of her father is easy to see, for she dominates any room she walks into through sheer force of personality. Her friendly, calm nature earns her the respect of both nobles and commoners alike. A reputation for a fair, even application of the law has solidified her position to the point that few people in town could imagine anyone else as magistrate.

Knowledge: Miriam has her own suspicions about Lord Eldoran's involvement in the curse that fell on the Morricks family, but she is unable to voice them due to her position. Lady Eldoran's presence in town is also something she finds very suspicious, but not altogether unusual if the curse has begun to spread. She knows a great deal about Lord Morricks and his family and knows quite a bit about Richard Arien as well, but she will not spend much time talking to the PCs about them. Running the village keeps her extremely busy; she is unwilling to spend a great deal of time with the PCs unless they are brought before her on charges of committing a crime. If the PCs are interested in the curse, she directs them to see Richard Arien.

Information and Interactions: If the PCs find the ornate brass key and holy symbol of Kudrak on the body in Area 40 (treasure #2 in Area 40 of the mansion), they may realize the key matches the one worn around Miriam's neck. The key is a badge of office; if the PCs turn over the key and holy symbol, Miriam informs them that these items belonged to her father and she deeply appreciates their return. Evidence of Lord Eldoran's involvement in creating the curse is not surprising to her, but she says that Lord Eldoran's death prevents her from arresting anyone over it. She does say that families damaged by the curse can make claims against his estate, potentially bankrupting Lady Sheila Eldoran, something that Miriam would find very pleasing (though she will not admit it). If the PCs are caught robbing anyone in town or involved in fighting, Miriam applies the law evenly no matter what her relationship with the PCs might be.

Brent Westlight, Lieutenant of the Guard, Male Human Ftr3: CR 3; SZ M; HD 3d10+9; hp 34; Init +5; Spd 20 ft. (in full plate); AC 21; Atk +7 melee (1d8+2, masterwork longsword, crit 19-20) or +2/+2 ranged (1d6, composite shortbow, crit x3, 70 ft.); AL CG; SV Fort +6, Ref +1, Will +2; Str 15, Dex 13, Con 16, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 14.

Skills: Climb +4, Handle Animal +6, Ride (horse) +6.
Feats: Improved Initiative, Point Blank Shot, Precise Shot, Rapid Shot, Weapon Focus (longsword).

Possessions: Full plate, large steel shield, masterwork longsword, composite shortbow, 20 arrows.

Description and Personality: Brent is a good-natured, friendly young man who gets along well with almost everyone in town. Brent's dark hair, brown eyes, and good looks attract a great deal of attention from most of the young women in Grollek's Grove. Lauren usually has Brent take care of walking the city, talking to merchants, and examining the wagon trains that travel through town while she checks on the outlying guard posts. Brent has a good relationship with the nobles and merchants who keep offices in town and generally trusts their word over that of anyone else.

Knowledge: Brent has an unfortunate knack for forgetting details. He is an excellent guard, but all his mental skills are apparently focused on this aspect of his life and not much remains for anything else. PCs inquiring about the cursed mansion are sent on to Lauren or directed to Richard Arien. Most of the information Brent provides on Lord Morrnick is wrong, as it has been given to him by Lord Morrnick's competitors, many of whom are glad he is out of the picture.

Other NPCs

The following list includes shopkeepers and other NPCs with whom the party might interact. Several NPCs include a small subsection titled "Side Quests and Hooks," which contains suggestions for possible side quests or character hooks the DM can use to entice the PCs into further adventures.

Michael Brath, Male Human Exp3: CR 2; SZ M; HD 3d6; hp 12; Init +2; Spd 30 ft.; AC 12; Atk +1 melee (1d6-1, sharpened leather punch); AL NG; SV Fort +0, Ref +3, Will +4; Str 9, Dex 14, Con 9, Int 12, Wis 12, Cha 12.

Skills: Appraise +7, Craft (armorsmithing) +7, Craft (leatherworking) +7, Diplomacy +7, Knowledge (local history) +7, Profession (tanner) +7, Sense Motive +7.
Feats: Dodge, Great Fortitude, Toughness.

Description and Personality: Michael believes in being a walking advertisement for his work. Leather clothing hangs from his tall, thin frame like a loose blanket. Penetrating dark eyes and shiny black hair highlight his deep brown skin and give him an aura of strength and calm. Michael is known as a kind, gentle man who tends to tease himself as often as he teases others. While many children enjoy seeing work such as his, few can tolerate the smell long enough to stay and watch for long. He welcomes all customers and is happy to talk about his work as well as any other topic that is brought up.

Information: Michael is extremely fond of Lord Morrnick. Lord Morrnick helped Michael start his business with a small loan and refused to charge interest when Michael was finally able to pay him back. He does his best to dispel any rumors about Lord Morrnick being evil, attributing them to simple jealousy on the part of other nobles.

Karlugron De'Flithic, Male Dwarf Exp5: CR 4; SZ M; HD 5d6+5; hp 23; Init +2; Spd 30 ft.; AC 12; Atk +8 melee (1d8+3, masterwork warhammer, crit x3) or +5 ranged (1d6, composite shortbow, crit x3, 70 ft.); SA dwarven traits; SQ dwarven traits; AL NG; SV Fort +2, Ref +3, Will +4; Str 16, Dex 14, Con 13, Int 13, Wis 10, Cha 15.

Skills: Appraise +9, Craft (armorsmithing) +9, Craft (weaponsmithing) +9, Diplomacy +10, Gather Information +10, Knowledge (rare metals) +8, Profession (blacksmith) +8.
Feats: Martial Weapon Proficiency (warhammer), Weapon Focus (warhammer).

Description and Personality: Karlugron's gruff, deep voice often echoes out of the forge. Short and broad, even for a dwarf, his bald head is marred by a number of scars crossing the top of his skull. A long burn mark extends down his left cheek, interrupting even his beard. A thick leather apron and singed eyebrows only highlight his thick arms and broad shoulders in a firm confirmation of his occupation as a blacksmith. Children can often be found sitting on barrels watching him work. A love for children and long stories has made him a well-known character in town. Called "Gronnie" by the children in town, he has a gruff yet friendly nature.

Information and Trade: Karlugron makes and sells weapons and metal armor of all types up to masterwork quality. He sells items at 150% of their normal trade value because the constant traffic through town creates a steady demand. Always happy to talk about events, he is a source of a great deal of information and can provide the PCs with a number of items from the rumor list.

Side Quests and Hooks: Despite his skill, Karlugron has never had the opportunity to work with mithril or adamantite. If the PCs obtain these metals for him, he is willing to construct masterwork armor or weapons with it at half the normal price. Karlugron has a younger brother who disappeared with a group of adventurers searching for someone named "Abysthor" and will reward anyone who can provide him with information concerning his brother's whereabouts.

Furnk Mistwright, Male Gnome Exp4: CR 3; SZ S; HD 4d6+12; hp 26; Init +3; Spd 20 ft.; AC 14; +3 melee (1d4, dagger, crit 19-20); SA gnome traits; SQ low-light vision, gnome traits; AL NG; SV Fort +6, Ref +4, Will +4; Str 10, Dex 16, Con 16, Int 16, Wis 10, Cha 9.

Skills: Appraise +10, Craft (jewelrysmithing) +10, Forgery +10, Knowledge (gems) +10, Knowledge (local history) +10, Knowledge (rare metals) +10, Profession (gem cutter) +7, Sense Motive +7.
Feats: Great Fortitude, Run.

Description and Personality: This gray-haired gnome's ruddy complexion and jolly nature make him very popular in town. Furnk always wears a thick leather apron covered with pockets of various shapes and sizes. While working, Furnk is deeply focused and generally does not like interruptions. Outside of work or when negotiating transactions,

Furnk is humble, sensitive, and has an excellent sense of humor. Unfortunately, he is very opinionated, and his prices are known to change based on whether or not he likes someone. His incredible skill and knowledge, however, cause some merchants and nobles to travel out of their way to commission works from him.

Information and Interactions: As a purveyor of high-priced jewelry, Furnk deals with most of the nobles and merchants passing through Grollek's Grove. Anyone spending money in his store is a good person; the more money they spend, the better they are. Both Lord Morricks and Lord Eldoran are on his list of "wonderful" people because both spent a great deal of money on his jewelry over the years. Nobody in Lord Beval's family ever purchased anything from him, so in his mind the curse was either caused specifically by Lord Beval's family or directed at them. In any case, it is Lord Beval's fault and Furnk cannot be convinced otherwise.

Side Quests and Hooks: Furnk sent his brother Brinkle with several trusted guards to visit Gilean Vel (from the adventure *What Evil Lurks*, published by *Necromancer Games*), and he has no idea what has happened to Brinkle or the chest with 10,000 gp worth of gems he was carrying. Furnk offers a 20% finder's fee as a reward for finding the gems and determining what happened to Brinkle.

Brandarb Quill, Male Halfling Rog9: CR 9; SZ S; HD 9d6+9; hp 54; Init +8; Spd 20 ft.; AC 16 (or AC 21 with +2 studded leather); Atk +10/+5 melee (1d6+2, +2 short sword, crit 19-20) or +11/+6 ranged (1d6, composite shortbow, crit x3, r70 ft.); SA halfling traits, sneak attack (+5d6); SQ halfling traits, evasion, uncanny dodge (Dex bonus to AC, can't be flanked); AL N; SV Fort +5, Ref +11, Will +5; Str 11, Dex 19, Con 12, Int 14, Wis 13, Cha 13.

Skills: Appraise +14, Balance +16, Diplomacy +13, Disable Device +14, Disguise +13, Gather Information +13, Hide +17, Move Silently +18, Open Lock +16, Search +14. *Feats:* Dodge, Improved Initiative, Point Blank Shot, Weapon Focus (short sword).

Possessions: +2 studded leather, +2 short sword, ring of protection +2.

Description and Personality: By all appearances, Brandarb is a jovial merchant whose goal in life is to please his customers. His boyish face and small size conceal his uncanny grace and sharp mind. Brandarb uses his charm and handsome looks to put people at ease; he is remarkably well known in town and almost universally liked. The short sword he always carries sheathed at his side is considered an affectation — everyone would expect Brandarb to scream for the guards at any sign someone was trying to rob him. Nobody outside the thieves' guild knows that Brandarb is the Guildmaster, and while his brother Lorath knows Brandarb is a thief, not even he suspects the full extent of Brandarb's power. Anybody who deals with the guild goes through intermediaries, never meeting the true boss and thus giving Brandarb complete anonymity.

Information and Trade: Brandarb is relatively certain Lord Eldoran had something to do with the curse. Lord Eldoran hired a thief for a "special project" on the night of the wedding. That thief, a member of the guild, was never

seen again. If the PCs ask him any questions about the curse or Lord Eldoran, Brandarb does his best to steer suspicion toward Lord Eldoran and his niece Sheila Eldoran. Obviously, Brandarb provides his information in an indirect fashion and in no way reveals his real reasons for suspecting Lord Eldoran. If a PC is a member of a nearby thieves' guild and seems trustworthy, Brandarb will communicate the reasons for his suspicions to that PC privately. Brandarb sells his goods at fair prices and always seems able to find what people are looking for. Brandarb also buys interesting items at severely discounted rates, always claiming they are "for a friend" or that he knows someone who might be interested in purchasing a particular item.

Side Quests and Hooks: Brandarb has received old treasure maps as payment for some "bad debts" and would be happy either to sell them or trade them for half of whatever the PCs might discover. Brandarb could also ask the PCs to deliver secretly some items to a guild leader in a distant town or city, with or without them knowing they are working for the thieves' guild.

Lorath Quill, Male Halfling Brd2: CR 2; SZ S; HD 2d6+2; hp 9; Init +1; Spd 20 ft.; AC 12; Atk +4 melee (1d4+2, dagger, crit 19-20); SA halfling traits; SQ halfling traits, bardic music (2/day), bardic knowledge; AL NG; SV Fort +2, Ref +5, Will +3; Str 14, Dex 12, Con 12, Int 13, Wis 9, Cha 15.

Skills: Appraise +6, Gather Information +7, Hide +6, Move Silently +6, Perform +7. *Feats:* Point Blank Shot.

Arcane Spells Known (Cast Per Day: 3/1): 0—daze, detect magic, mage hand, mending, open/close; 1st—alarm, identify.

Description and Personality: Lorath is a joyful, charismatic halfling who is constantly performing. His smile stretches to his beautiful emerald green eyes even in the busiest moments, and his good cheer is infectious. Life as a tavern owner has increased his girth quite a bit, so he is not as fast as he used to be, but Lorath still moves through crowds with unusual grace. During business hours, his light brown hair is usually matted tight against his skull by sweat, and beads of perspiration cling to his face.

Information and Interactions: Lorath does his best to keep conversations in his tavern on happy subjects, at least the loud conversations that pass from table to table. Loud discussions of the curse are met with a cheerful, "Now, now, let's not be talking about such darkness in me place." The idea of the curse makes him very uncomfortable. If the PCs ask him about it during a quiet moment, he says, "Curses between nobles is nobles' business." He tells the PCs that Jasmine Welk and Richard Arien are people to talk to if they are interested in history and politics and that Sarah Lyrean is the person to talk to about curses.

Jacob Rain, Male Human Exp3: CR 2; SZ M; HD 3d6+3; hp 14; Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; AC 11; Atk +2 melee (1d4, dagger, crit 19-20) or +4 ranged (1d8, composite longbow, crit x3, 110 ft.); AL NG; SV Fort +2, Ref +2, Will +4; Str 10, Dex 12, Con 13, Int 14, Wis 10, Cha 12.

Skills: Appraise +8, Bluff +7, Craft (bowmaking) +8, Craft (carpentry) +8, Diplomacy +7, Gather Information +7, Knowledge (local history) +8, Profession (bowyer/

fletcher) +6, Sense Motive +6. *Feats*: Endurance, Point Blank Shot, Precise Shot.

Description and Personality: Jacob's extraordinary height only serves to accentuate his gaunt, thin frame. Short blond hair thrusts out of his skull like sharp bristles, adding to his skeletal appearance. Coal black eyes sunk into deep eye sockets enhance his gaunt appearance. Although his appearance does tend to frighten small children, Jacob is well-liked. A friendly smile and a soft, pleasant voice help overcome his awkward appearance. Despite his friendly, outgoing nature, Jacob has a hard time trusting people. Unfortunate business deals have kept him rather poor despite his woodworking skill. He has a poor opinion of all nobles and merchants but treats them civilly because he needs their business. Before starting on any special projects, he generally demands half of his final fee up front.

Information: Jacob had some bad dealings with Lord Morricks. Jacob needed special wood and Lord Morricks demanded a rather high price for it, and now all of Jacob's comments about Lord Morricks are tainted by this event.

Side Quests and Hooks: Jacob desperately wants to create bows that will enhance his reputation and business. He believes he can make extremely high quality composite longbows using thigh bones from a Large or bigger dragon. Not only would he pay well, but if the PCs can provide him with the proper materials, he is also willing to construct a masterwork mighty composite longbow (up to Str 21) for half its normal price.

Martin Whitebrand, Male Human Exp5: CR 4; SZ M; HD 5d6+10; hp 26; Init +2; Spd 30 ft.; AC 12; +3 melee (1d4, dagger, crit 19-20); AL NG; SV Fort +4, Ref +3, Will +4; Str 10, Dex 15, Con 12, Int 13, Wis 10, Cha 14.

Skills: Animal Empathy +10, Bluff +10, Diplomacy +10, Handle Animal +10, Knowledge (animals) +9, Profession (animal trainer) +12, Ride (horse) +10, Wilderness Lore +8. *Feats*: Great Fortitude, Skill Focus (Profession [animal trainer]), Track.

Description and Personality: Martin is a tall, thin-framed man with soft, puffy cheeks and pale blue eyes. Though quite friendly, Martin is far more adept with animals than with people and can sometimes come off as being rather abrupt. Martin often smells like the animals he tends, which, while fine with the animals, usually causes people to give him a wide berth.

Information: Martin refuses to spread rumors, and all of his information on the curse is second hand. An adventurer who tried to explore the mansion arrived back in town with a cursed horse that Martin was unable to calm and eventually had to kill. Martin frowns on anyone who

enters the cursed property with horses or other animals along with them. He believes risking one's own life is fine, but "mistreating" animals by not giving them a choice is improper. Martin's skill as an animal trainer leads to his horses being more stable and calm in a crisis, providing a +2 circumstance bonus to Ride (horse) checks when they are required.

Side Quests and Hooks: Martin would love the chance to train strange, even magical beasts and is willing to pay for the young of a variety of different creatures.

Culpec Z'kiel, Male Human Adp8: CR 7; SZ M; HD 8d6+16; hp 49; Init +0; Spd 30 ft.; AC 10; Atk +6 melee (1d4+2, +1 dagger, crit 19-20); SA spells; AL CG; SV Fort +4, Ref +2, Will +10; Str 12, Dex 10, Con 14, Int 16, Wis 16, Cha 10.

Skills: Alchemy +14, Concentration +13, Diplomacy +11, Heal +14, Knowledge (herbs and plants) +14, Profession (herbalist) +14. *Feats*: Alertness, Brew Potion, Combat Casting, Craft Wand.

Adept Spells Per Day: 3/4/3/1. Choose spells from the adept list in Chapter 2 of the DMG.

Description and Personality: Culpec moved to Grollek's Grove several years ago to pursue his potion-brewing trade. He has done a very good job fitting in with the rest of the village's people by offering discounts on potions to hard-working residents (though not nobles or merchants) and making certain to visit the Waving Hand at least one night a week. His extremely pale skin, yellow eyes, and brightly colored robes make him stand out in a town where most residents have light brown skin and light colored hair, but his features are rather plain and non-descript. His soft voice and calm demeanor make him fade into the background even more; only his brightly striped robes distinguish him in a crowd.

Information and Trade: Culpec trades in potions and has done so for years. The curse has created a panic that has driven an ever increasing demand for potions. Culpec had nothing to do with the curse, nor does he know anything about it, but he has experienced a bias against foreigners in the past. Culpec is afraid that town residents might target him for blame if panic over the curse continues. If Culpec is convinced that the PCs are truly acting to end the curse, he is willing to sell his potions at a 10% discount from the normal prices listed in the DMG.

Side Quests and Hooks: As a foreigner, Culpec can potentially be used to provide information leading the PCs to travel to far-off lands. Closer to home, Culpec might require special herbs for his *remove curse* potions that can only be found in some nearby, troll-infested hills.

Monster Appendix

Random Encounters

All creatures detailed in this section are cursed.

Alligator: CR 4; SZ H Animal (Aquatic); HD 7d8+28; hp 59; Init +1; Spd 20 ft., swim 30 ft.; AC 16; Atk +11 melee (2d8+12, bite) or +11 melee (1d12+12, tail slap); Face/Reach 10 ft. x 20 ft./10 ft.; SA curse, improved grab; SQ curse; AL N; SV Fort +9, Ref +6, Will +3; Str 27, Dex 12, Con 19, Int 1, Wis 12, Cha 2.

Skills: Hide +0*, Listen +5, Spot +5. *A giant alligator gains a +12 racial bonus to Hide checks when submerged.

Badger: CR 2; SZ M Animal; HD 3d8+12; hp 25; Init +3; Spd 30 ft., burrow 10 ft.; AC 16; Atk +4 melee (1d4+2 [x2], claws) and -1 melee (1d6+1, bite); SA curse, rage; SQ curse, scent; AL N; SV Fort +7, Ref +6, Will +4; Str 14, Dex 17, Con 19, Int 2, Wis 12, Cha 10.

Skills: Listen +6, Spot +6.

Boar: CR 4; SZ L Animal; HD 7d8+21; hp 52; Init +0; Spd 40 ft.; AC 15; Atk +12 melee (1d8+12, bite); Face/Reach 5 ft. x 10 ft./5 ft.; SA curse, ferocity; SQ curse, scent; AL N; SV Fort +8, Ref +5, Will +6; Str 27, Dex 10, Con 17, Int 2, Wis 13, Cha 8.

Skills: Listen +9, Spot +8.

Bugbear: CR 2; SZ M (Goblinoid); HD 3d8+3; hp 16; Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; AC 17; Atk +4 melee (1d8+2, morningstar) or +4 melee (1d4+2, claw) or +3 ranged (1d6+2, javelin, 30 ft.); SA curse; SQ curse, darkvision (60 ft.); AL CE; SV Fort +2, Ref +4, Will +1; Str 15, Dex 12, Con 13, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 9.

Skills: Climb +3, Hide +2, Listen +3, Move Silently +6, Spot +3. Feats: Alertness.

Eagle: CR 1/2; SZ S Animal; HD 1d8+1; 5 hp; Init +2; Spd 10 ft., fly 80 ft. (average); AC 14; Atk +3 melee (1d3 [x2], claws) and -2 melee (1d4, bite); SA curse; SQ curse; AL N; SV Fort +3, Ref +4, Will +2; Str 10, Dex 15, Con 12, Int 2, Wis 14, Cha 6.

Skills: Listen +6, Spot +6. Feats: Weapon Finesse (bite, claw).

Fighter, Human Ftr2: CR 2; SZ M; HD 2d10+4; hp 20; Init +0; Spd 30 ft.; AC 15; Atk +5 melee (1d8+3, longsword, crit 19-20); SA curse; SQ curse; AL CN; SV Fort +5, Ref +0, Will +2; Str 17, Dex 10, Con 14, Int 12, Wis 14, Cha 10.

Skills: Climb +8, Hide +2, Jump +8, Listen +2, Spot +2, Swim +8. Feats: Alertness, Blind-Fight, Weapon Focus (greataxe), Weapon Focus (longsword).

Giant Bat: CR 2; SZ L Animal; HD 4d8+12; hp 30; Init +6; Spd 20 ft., fly 40 ft. (good); AC 20; Atk +5 melee (1d8+4, bite); Face/Reach 10 ft. x 5 ft./5 ft.; SA curse, SQ curse, blindsight; AL N; SV Fort +7, Ref +10, Will +6; Str 17, Dex 22, Con 17, Int 2, Wis 14, Cha 6.

Skills: Listen +11, Move Silently +11, Spot +11.

Guest: CR 2; SZ M; HD 3d8+9; hp 18; Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; AC 14; Atk +6 melee (1d6+3, club); SA curse; SQ curse; AL N; SV Fort +5, Ref +1, Will +0; Str 17, Dex 11, Con 14, Int 5, Wis 8, Cha 8.

Skills: Balance +4, Climb +7, Jump +5, Listen +1, Spot +1, Swim +4. Feats: Blind-Fight, Endurance, Toughness.

Halfling, Rog2: CR 2; SZ S; HD 2d6; hp 8; Init +6; Spd 20 ft.; AC 16; Atk +1 melee (1d4, dagger, crit 19-20) or +4 ranged (1d4, dagger, crit 19-20, 10 ft.); SA curse, sneak attack (+1d6); SQ curse, evasion; AL CN; SV Fort +1, Ref +6, Will +1; Str 10, Dex 15, Con 10, Int 14, Wis 11, Cha 12.

Skills: Bluff +6, Climb +6, Disable Device +8, Hide +6, Intimidate +6, Listen +6, Move Silently +4, Search +8, Spot +6, Swim +3. Feats: Improved Initiative.

Leopard: CR 2; SZ M Animal; HD 3d8+6; hp 19; Init +4; Spd 40 ft., climb 20 ft.; AC 15; Atk +6 melee (1d6+3, bite) and +1 melee (1d3+1 [x2], claws); SA curse, pounce, improved grab, rake (1d3+4); SQ curse, scent; AL N; SV Fort +5, Ref +7, Will +2; Str 16, Dex 19, Con 15, Int 2, Wis 12, Cha 6.

Skills: Balance +12, Climb +11, Hide +9, Listen +6, Move Silently +9, Spot +6. Feats: Weapon Finesse (bite, claw).

Monk, Human Mnk2: CR 2; SZ M; HD 2d8+2; hp 14; Init +2; Spd 30 ft.; AC 15; Atk +1 melee (1d6, unarmed strike); SA curse, stunning attack; SQ curse, evasion; AL N; SV Fort +4, Ref +5, Will +6; Str 10, Dex 14, Con 13, Int 13, Wis 17, Cha 7.

Skills: Climb +5, Hide +7, Listen +10, Move Silently +7, Spot +5, Swim +7. Feats: Alertness, Deflect Arrows, Improved Unarmed Strike, Stunning Fist.

Raven: CR 1/6; SZ T Animal; HD 1/4d8; hp 1; Init +2; Spd 10 ft., fly 40 ft. (average); AC 15; Atk +4 melee (1d2-5 [x2], claws); Face/Reach 2 1/2 ft. x 2 1/2 ft./0 ft.; SA curse; SQ curse; AL N; SV Fort +2, Ref +4, Will +2; Str 1, Dex 15, Con 10, Int 2, Wis 14, Cha 6.

Skills: Listen +6, Spot +6. Feats: Weapon Finesse (claws).

Rogue, Human Rog2: CR 2; SZ M; HD 2d6+2; hp 11; Init +2; Spd 30 ft.; AC 16; Atk +2 melee (1d4+1, dagger, crit 19-20) or +3 ranged (1d4+1, dagger, crit 19-20, 10 ft.); SA curse, sneak attack (+1d6); SQ curse, evasion; AL CN; SV Fort +1, Ref +7, Will +1; Str 12, Dex 15, Con 13, Int 12, Wis 13, Cha 10.

Skills: Climb +6, Disable Device +6, Forgery +6, Hide +6, Intuit Direction +6, Listen +6, Move Silently +6, Search +6, Spot +6, Use Magic Device +4. Feats: Endurance, Lightning Reflexes.

Servant: CR 1; SZ M; HD 1d8+6; hp 12; Init +2; Spd 30 ft.; AC 16; Atk +3 melee (1d6+2, club); SA curse; SQ curse; AL N; SV Fort +5, Ref +2, Will +1; Str 15, Dex 14, Con 16, Int 5, Wis 13, Cha 6.

Skills: Balance +4, Hide +2, Jump +3, Listen +1, Move Silently +2, Spot +1, Swim +4. Feats: Dodge, Toughness.

Weasel: CR 2; SZ S Animal; HD 3d8; hp 13; Init +4; Spd 40 ft.; AC 16; Atk +6 melee (1d6+3, bite); SA curse, attach, blood drain; SQ curse, scent; AL N; SV Fort +3, Ref +7, Will +4; Str 14, Dex 19, Con 10, Int 2, Wis 13, Cha 11.

Skills: Hide +9, Move Silently +10, Spot +5. Feats: Weapon Finesse (bite).

New Creatures

Demon Mist

Small Aberration

Hit Dice:	2d8+2 (11 hp)
Initiative:	+2 (Dex)
Speed:	Fly 30 ft. (average)
AC:	16 (+1 size, +2 Dex, +3 natural)
Attacks:	Tendrils +2 melee
Damage:	Tendrils 1d4 plus chaos touch
Face/Reach:	5 ft. by 5 ft./5 ft.
Special Attacks:	Chaos touch
Special Qualities:	Incorporeal, immune to fear, darkvision 60 ft.
Saves:	Fort +1, Ref +2, Will +6
Abilities:	Str 11, Dex 15, Con 13, Int 15, Wis 18, Cha 12
Skills:	Hide +5*, Listen +10, Move Silently +6, Search +7, Spot +10
Feat:	Alertness
Climate/Terrain:	Any (usually near a source of water)
Organization:	Solitary or group (2-5)
Treasure:	None
Challenge Rating:	2
Alignment:	Always chaotic evil
Advancement:	3-6 HD (Small); 7-10 HD (Medium-size)

A demon mist is an incomplete manifestation of a demon on the Material Plane. More of a weakly controlled force of chaos than a real creature, a demon mist spreads fear and madness through its very touch. The creature appears to be a small shaft of mist floating above the ground with no real discerning features. It extrudes thin tendrils of mist that it uses to attack its victims, with each touch of a tendril potentially causing insanity. The translucent vapor that makes up its form is rather resistant to damage but can be dissipated if enough damage is dealt.

Demon mists generally arise in areas where there is a weak point between the Abyss and the Material Plane. Demons use any weakness they can to influence the world with their particular form of chaos and evil. The mists have no ability to feed on their victims and usually prefer to leave them screaming with madness rather than to kill them.

Combat

A demon mist moves slowly toward its victim without showing its nature until it is almost on top of its target. Those who have encountered such creatures before receive a +4 bonus to their Spot check to notice an approaching demon mist. Every successful attack stands a chance of causing insanity through the demon mist's chaos touch ability. Demon mists do their best to alternate their attacks among various targets, seeking to cause insanity in as many targets as possible. Demon mists are immune to fear: they are creations of chaos that can be recreated over and over again by the demons who made them and so have no fear of death or destruction.

Chaos Touch (Ex): Every time a victim is struck by a demon mist, he must succeed at a Will save (DC 12) or go temporarily insane. Chaotic evil creatures and characters receive a +5 bonus to their Will save against this effect. If a victim goes insane, roll 1d6 to determine their next action,

1. Run away in fear.
2. Stop fighting and begin uttering nonsense sounds.
- 3-4. Turn and attack the nearest creature.
5. Drop all weapons and jump up and down screaming.
6. Continue as before, but roll again next round.

The insanity passes after 1d4 hours or when a remove fear spell is cast on the victim.

Incorporeal: Can be harmed only by other incorporeal creatures, +1 or better magic weapons, or magic, with a 50% chance to ignore any damage from a corporeal source. Can pass through solid objects at will, and own attacks pass through armor. Always moves silently.

Skills: *At night, in low light, or in foggy conditions, a demon mist receives a +10 racial bonus to its Hide checks.



Eldoran's Blood Bush

Small Plant

Hit Dice:	6d8+30 (57 hp)
Initiative:	+0
Speed:	0 ft.
AC:	18 (+1 size, +7 natural)
Attacks:	4 whips +6 melee
Damage:	Whip 1d2+2 (4 branches)
Face/Reach:	5 ft. x 5 ft./2 1/2 ft.
Special Attacks:	Flower dart
Special Qualities:	Plant, blindsight, immune to electricity, cold and fire resistance 20
Saves:	Fort +9, Ref +1, Will +1
Abilities:	Str 15, Dex 10, Con 20, Int -, Wis 12, Cha 8
Climate/Terrain:	Any
Organization:	Solitary or cluster (2-4)
Challenge Rating:	4
Treasure:	None
Alignment:	Neutral
Advancement:	7-11HD(Medium-size);12-18HD(Large)

This mutated blood bush is a constant reminder of the horrible curse Lord Eldoran visited upon his neighbor. Its normal brother was named for its blood-red flowers and the thorny, blood-red seed pods that anything passing by had to pick from its clothing or skin. While the mutated bush retains the deep green leaves and deep red flowers, it is far more sinister and dangerous. Known as "Eldoran's Grave Markers" in some places, the bush actively launches its seed pods at creatures that pass by it. Each plant can only be grown from a seed that has germinated inside the warm body of a Small or larger animal. Roots from the germinating seed kill the host and use the nutrients provided to grow rapidly into a deadly plant. It has many branches and almost complete resistance to fire, making it very difficult to kill.

A number of nobles now use this horrid plant to create hedges around their property because they are a powerful deterrent for thieves. Seed pods trade for 20 gp each as

they are difficult to collect safely, most of them being damaged during the plant's attacks.

Combat

Eldoran's blood bushes are simply plants that have a different way of spreading their seeds and defending themselves. Each bush can attack with 4 whip-like branches per round at anything within a few feet of it, but its most dangerous attack is its constant firing of flower-shaped darts at targets in all directions. The bush has a form of blindsight that is dependent on vibration and sound. Its blindsight is only good for a range of about 15 feet from the bush, but is extremely accurate inside that range. Loud sounds and heavy vibrations effectively blind it.

Flower Dart (Ex): Instead of using its whip-like branches, an Eldoran's blood bush can launch 6 flower darts each round (+5 ranged attack, 5-ft. range increment) until it runs out of flowers. Each plant has 6d6+15 (average 36) flower darts to fire and can replace the flowers within 24 hours. These flowers are specially designed seed pods. A successful hit deals 1d2 points of damage and injects a seed into the target. The target needs to spend a round pulling the seed free or suffer its effects. One round after injection, the seed germinates, releasing powerful fear-inducing endorphins that force the victim to make a Will save (DC 15)

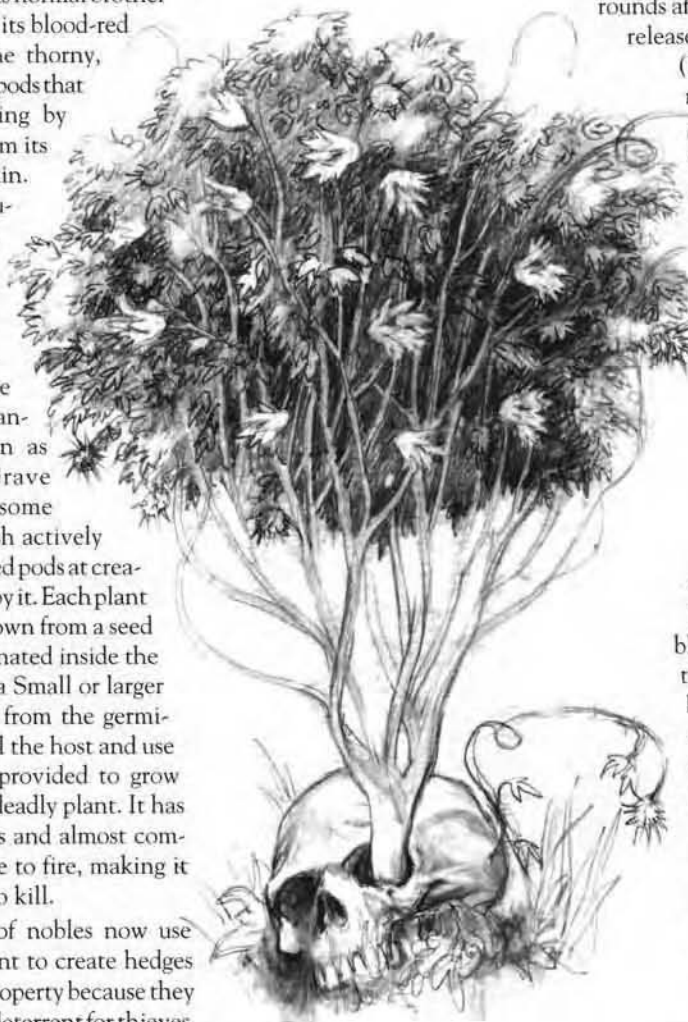
to avoid running away from the area. Three rounds after injection, the germinating seed releases a poison that paralyzes the victim (Fort DC 16 to avoid the effects); 5 rounds after injection, the germinating seed's rapid growth begins to damage the victim at a rate of 1 hit point per round. Germinating seeds can be cut out of the victim within the first 5 rounds; after that time, only magically curing the amount of damage done by the growing seed stops the seed's growth. After stopping the growth of the seed, a remove disease spell is required to eliminate all traces of it.

Plant: Immune to poison, sleep, paralysis, stunning, critical hits, and mind-influencing effects.

Blindsight (Ex): An Eldoran's blood bush uses vibration and sound to locate targets. It is effectively blind beyond a range of 15 feet, but it is considered to have perfect vision under all light conditions within that range. Loud sounds or vibrations effectively blind an Eldoran's blood bush.

Immunities (Ex): The blood bush is immune to all electrical damage.

Resistances (Ex): The Eldoran's blood bush has cold and fire resistance 20.



Magic Items Appendix

The PCs have the opportunity to gain these 3 new magic items during their adventure.

Argrim's Ring

Argrim's ring is a simple gold wedding band inscribed with strange runes intertwined with symbols representing the sun god. Yorith Reslish, an extremely powerful cleric, fashioned the ring for Argrim after Argrim rescued Yorith during one of his many adventures. When Yorith presented the ring to Argrim, he told him it would help protect him from harm. Anyone wearing the ring receives complete immunity to all curses and curse-related effects as well as a +1 bonus on all saving throws.

Caster Level: 20th; *Prerequisites:* Forge Ring, miracle, remove curse. *Market Price:* 15,000 gp.

Leah's Wood Amulets

These strange wood amulets are keyed specifically to the curse on Lord Morricks' mansion and grounds. Anyone wearing an amulet made from cursed wood found on the grounds and blessed in a specific ritual can resist the curse without being forced to make a saving throw. Unfortunately, the amulets lose their power over time. Each amulet starts with 40 charges. After resisting the curse 40 times, an amulet loses its power and begins a rapid decay. Normally, the effort and expense of creating such an item would give it great value. The amulets are far less valuable than usual, however, simply due to their focus on one particular curse.

Caster Level: 9th; *Prerequisites:* Create Wondrous Item, remove curse. *Market Price:* 1,000 gp.

Rokon's Amulet

This gorgeous gold amulet is attached to a thick gold chain. The amulet itself is shaped like an intricate rune that bends and twists in on itself. Shimmering and glowing when exposed to the light, the amulet clearly possesses a great deal of power. Rokon, whoever he was, engraved his name on the amulet either to mark it as his creation or to make certain everyone knew to whom it belonged. The amulet has been around for centuries, its original owner and creator lost to time. Its creation is a mystery, but its power remains rather impressive. Spellcasters wearing the amulet find they can cast 2 additional 1st-level spells each day. The additional spells are calculated after any other extra spells per day from other rings or magical items (such as a ring of wizardry) are taken into account. This amulet works for all classes with spell-casting abilities.

Caster Level: Unknown; *Prerequisites:* Unknown. *Market Price:* 15,000 gp.



Grollek's Grove and Surrounding Area

vineyards

trade road

rocky hills

trade road

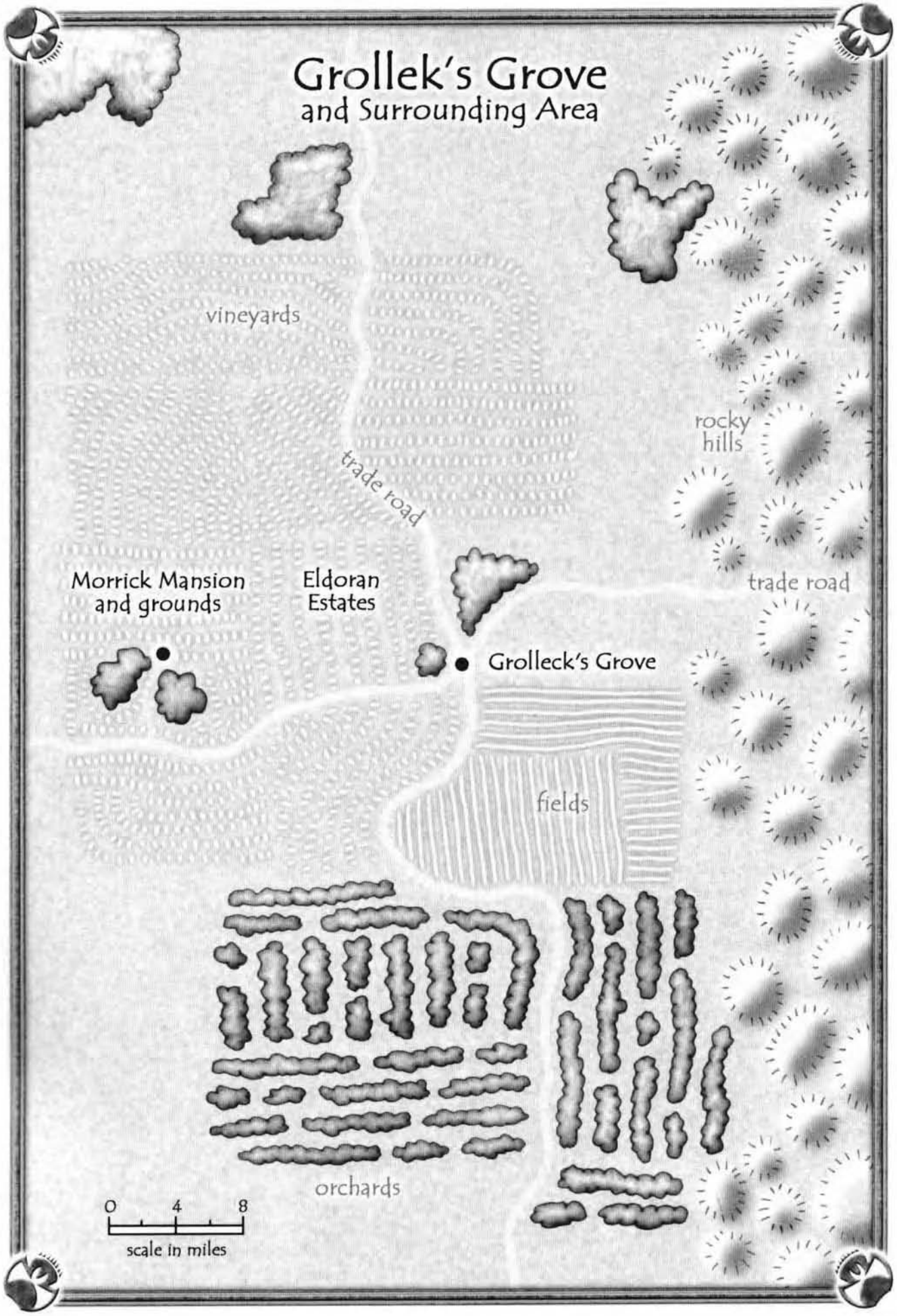
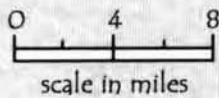
Morrick Mansion
and grounds

Eldoran
Estates

Grollek's Grove

fields

orchards



MORRICK

MANSION

A Deadly Curse is Spreading!

Morricks Mansion and the surrounding vineyards were deserted years ago when a terrible curse twisted every living thing on the property into a mockery of its prior form. Fear now grips the land. The curse spreads and someone needs to stop it. Can you find its source and cure it forever, or will the very curse you are investigating touch you with madness?

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Adventure (Wilderness, Town, Dungeon)
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