

The open area along the southern portion of the east wall leads to an enclosed staircase that rises 20 feet to the level above. The upper level is a single room with arrow slits that face all directions. A dozen embattled drow arcane guards and a house wizard are flinging spells and crossbow bolts at the attacking forces massing outside the villa. (The PCs have no reason to climb the stairs and engage the drow in the upper level. If they try, feel free to discourage them by describing the sounds of intense battle issuing from the room above.)

At the base of the staircase lies the charred corpse of a bugbear stonejack, a sentry that was on duty when the attack began and was blown down the stair by a fireball that traveled in though an arrow slit.

To trigger this encounter, read:

This dark chamber smells strongly of smoke and burned fur. Screams of battle echo down a stairway rising in the east wall. The corpse of a lightly armored goblinoid lies at the base of the stair, charred to a crisp.

The arcane guards know that the PCs came to the villa to meet with Lady Thandysha, but they also heard her order the dread fangs to slay them. Thus, the guards assume that the PCs are spies and try to kill them as quickly as possible. They use the first round of combat to drink their potions of *haste* and follow up with their potions of *cat's grace* once the bugbears have engaged the PCs.

3 BUGBEAR STONEJACKS

hp 39 each; see page 121

CR 5

The stonejacks have not seen the party before and assume that the PCs are part of the force assaulting the villa. They follow the lead of the drow arcane guards and attack the adventurers.

If the PCs defeat the guards and the bugbears, they find themselves alone in the lower level of the tower. None of the villa's defenders in the upper level or in nearby rooms respond to the sounds of battle coming from this chamber—mainly because they have their own troubles to worry about.

10. MORGUE (EL 8)

Use this encounter when the PCs reach area 10 on the map. This small storage chamber is used by the masters of the villa as a morgue for their dead. The funerary tradition of House Xaniqos is to summon a fiendish monstrous spider to enshroud the dead in webbing, which preserves the bodies until they can be transported back to the caverns beneath the Xaniqos estate. There, spiders drain the corpses of fluids at their leisure, and the husks are animated to serve the house as zombie slaves.

Currently, the morgue contains the wrapped corpses of five bugbear thralls and a drow assassin from House Vae who failed in a recent mission to slay Lady Thandysha. The drow corpse has recently animated as a mohrg. It has been struggling to free

2 ARCANE GUARDS

CR 8

Male drow fighter 2/wizard 5

NE Medium humanoid (elf)

Init +7; Senses darkvision 120 ft.; Listen +6, Spot +7

Languages Abyssal, Common, Draconic, Drow Sign

Language, Elven, Undercommon

AC 18, touch 14, flat-footed 15; Dodge (+3 Dex, +4 armor, +1 deflection)

hp 35 (7 HD)

Immune magic sleep effects

SR 18

Fort +5, Ref +4, Will +4 (+6 against spells, spell-like abilities, and other enchantments)

Weakness light blindness

Speed 30 ft. (6 squares)

Melee +1 spiked chain +9 (2d4+2)

Ranged mwk hand crossbow +8 (1d4/19–20 plus poison)

Reach 5 ft. (10 ft. with spiked chain)

Base Atk +4; Grp +5

Atk Options poison (drow poison, Fort DC 13, unconscious 1 minute/unconscious 2d4 hours)

Combat Gear 3 doses of drow poison, wand of *magic missile* (CL 5th, 25 charges), potion of *cat's grace*, potion of *cure serious wounds*, potion of *haste*

Wizard Spells Prepared (CL 5th; 10% arcane spell failure chance):

3rd—*fly, empowered burning hands* (DC 14)

2nd—*scorching ray* (-7 ranged touch), *invisibility*, see *invisibility*

1st—*magic missile, ray of enfeeblement* (+7 ranged touch), *shield, true strike*

0—*detect magic, ghost sound* (DC 13), *touch of fatigue* (+5 melee touch, DC 13), *resistance*

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 7th):

1/day—*dancing lights, darkness, faerie fire*

Abilities Str 13, Dex 16, Con 12, Int 17, Wis 10, Cha 10

Feats Dodge, Empower Spell^B, Exotic Weapon Proficiency (spiked chain), Improved Initiative, Scribe Scroll^B, Weapon Finesse^B, Weapon Focus^B (spiked chain)

Skills Climb +6, Concentration +10, Hide +5, Intimidate +4, Jump +6, Listen +6, Search +5, Spellcraft +6, Spot +7

Possessions combat gear plus mithral shirt, +1 spiked chain, masterwork hand crossbow with 20 bolts, *ring of protection* +1, 12 gp

Spellbook spells prepared plus 0—all; 1st—*alarm, animate rope, identify, silent image*; 2nd—*spider climb, web*; 3rd—*vampiric touch*

Light Blindness (Ex) Abrupt exposure to bright light (such as sunlight or a *daylight* spell) blinds drow for 1 round. In addition, they take a -1 circumstance penalty on attack rolls, saves, and checks when in bright light.

itself from its web shroud, and the undead creature manages to burst free the round after the PCs enter the morgue.

Allow the PCs to attempt DC 17 Listen checks to hear the web bonds tearing the moment before they finally break. If the PCs fail to make the checks, the mohrg makes a surprise attack with its tongue, trying to paralyze the nearest character.

To trigger this encounter, read:

The smell of death fills this storeroom. Six web-shrouded humanoid corpses lie in a heap in the corner.